

PRESENTING POWER TO THE PEOPLE: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LATE ROMAN BASE-METAL COINAGE AND ITS POLITICAL MESSAGES (284-450)

Volume I: Text and Bibliography

BY

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Abstract

Over the past two and a half decades, studies of Roman imperial coin iconography have increasingly used quantitative analysis to distinguish patterns and contextualise the political messages of individual coins. Several statistically supported studies have surveyed the iconography of coins issued between 69-284 and identified their core ideological trends. This thesis advances the chronological scope of the discipline, undertaking a quantitative study of the Late Roman imperial coinage and its political messages between 284-450. The analysis specifically deals with the base-metal coins, the most pervasive form of communication between imperial regimes and the wider, non-elite citizenry of the Late Roman Empire. Focus on this unique medium enables consideration of at least one side of the dialogue between the state and the typically silent wider Roman populace.

The thesis consists of two main products. First, it creates a new quantitative methodology that can adequately examine Late Roman base-metal coinage and its multi-faceted political messages. This includes defining how to collate a representative database of Late Roman coinage that can be subject to quantitative analysis. The result, a database of 63,557 site-finds from forty-four sites across the empire, has allowed for the investigation of pan-imperial and regional patterns in coin propaganda. Furthermore, the issue of translating the qualitative political messages of coins into quantitative and comparable data is considered at length. A new framework for categorising coins is delineated to overcome this challenge, which better captures the various complexities of numismatic propaganda, including the espousal of multiple messages on a single coin and their varying degrees of presence.

Second, a detailed chronological review of the most common base-metal coins is provided. It identifies those political messages the Roman state most frequently sought to publicise, and how they shaped non-elite citizens' experience of imperial power. The principal findings are that Late Roman base-metal coins predominantly bore messages promoting the emperors' martial valour and victoriousness. Consequently, this thesis posits that the popular experience of imperial power in the Late Roman period was of a coercive, violent and autocratic emperor, who promised little beyond safety for the subservient. Furthermore, it is argued that the exact political function of the base-metal coinage was changed during the Late Roman period. From the 340s, the state ceased utilising base-metal propaganda to foster public support and instead used the same medium to exclude the wider populace from participating in intra-imperial politics. The state's rejection of popular authority is demonstrated to have accurately reflected the power dynamics between the Late Roman emperors and their non-elite subjects.

In sum, this thesis defines a new method of quantifying the political messages of Roman imperial coinage and presents the results of its application to Late Roman base-metal coinage.

To my parents,

For your unrelenting support and belief.

And to Aelyn,

‘I did it!’

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This research would not have been possible without the help of many individuals and institutions. I am profoundly grateful to all those who have played a role in this journey.

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I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Daniel Reynolds (again) and Kevin Butcher, for their expertise and mentorship. Dan's knowledge of Late Antique material culture has been essential. His diligent reading and comments on my impenetrable, data-heavy drafts are the key reason that this thesis has become remotely readable. Furthermore, it is only because of Kevin's tutelage and discerning insights regarding ancient coinage that I would now describe myself as a Roman numismatist rather than a student who likes the pictures on coins. Their patience, kindness, guidance and rigorous feedback have been invaluable at every stage of this research.

I also express my gratitude to those who have given me access to coin collections and broader research projects. These opportunities have been vital to expanding my numismatic knowledge. Maria Vrij, curator of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts Coin Collection, has always been a sounding board for my ideas. It was her availability and encouragement to engage with the Barber's coin collection that first facilitated my move into the world of numismatics. Also, the Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire team (particularly Marguerite Spoerri Butcher). Without being allowed to participate in the CHRE project, I would never have attained the tools, knowledge and cataloguing skills I needed for the data-collection process that underpins this thesis.

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Abbreviations

CHRE	Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project	https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*	https://arachne.dainst.org/project/cilopac
CJ	*Codex Justinianus*	in P. Krueger, T. Mommsen, T. Schoell and G. Kroell (Eds.). 1877. *Corpus Iuris Civilis.* Berlin.
Cohen	Cohen, H., 1880-1892. *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire romain communément appelées médailles imperials*, 8 Vols. Paris.	
CTh	*Codex Theodosianus*	in Pharr, C. (Ed.). 1952. *Theodosian Code* (Corpus of Roman Law, 1). London. AND in Mommsen, T., Meyer, P.M., Krueger, P. (Eds.). 1905. *Theodosiari Libri XVI Cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis*. Berlin.
DOC	Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection	DOC I Bellinger, A.R. 1966. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Volume 1: Anastasius I to Maurice, 491–602*. Washington, D.C. DOC II.2 Grierson, P. 1968. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the*

		Whittemore Collection, Volume 2, Part 2: Heraclius Constantine to Theodosius III, 641-717. Washington, D.C.
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*	Dessau, H. 1892-1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 3 Vols. Berlin.
LRBC I	Late Roman Bronze Coinage Volume 1	Hill, P.V. and J.P.C. Kent. 1976. *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 324-498. Part I, The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine A.D. 324-346*. London.
LRBC II	Late Roman Bronze Coinage Volume 2	Carson, R.A.G. and J.P.C. Kent. 1976. *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 324-498. Part II, Bronze Roman Imperial Coinage of the Later Empire A.D. 346-498*. London.
N.Val.	Novels of Valentinian III	in Pharr, C. (Ed.). 1952. *Theodosian Code* (Corpus of Roman Law, 1). London. AND in Mommsen, T., Meyer, P.M., Krueger, P. (Eds.). 1905. *Theodosiari Libri XVI Cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis*. Berlin.
OCRE	Online Coins of the Roman Empire	https://numismatics.org/ocre/
Pan. Lat.	*Panegyrici Latini*	in C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers. 1994. *In praise of later Roman emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*. London.

RIC	*Roman Imperial Coinage* Series	RIC I	Mattingly, H. and E.A. Sydenham. 1923. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume I: Augustus – Vitellius*. London.
		RIC I (second edition)	Sutherland, C.H.V. 1984. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume I. Revised edition. From 31 BC to AD 69*. London.
		RIC II	Mattingly, H., and E.A. Sydenham. 1926. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume II: Vespasian - Hadrian*. London.
		RIC II.1	Carradice, I.A. 2007. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume II, Part 1. Second fully revised edition. From AD 69 – 96. Vespasian to Domitian*. London.
		RIC II.2	Woytek, B.E. Forthcoming. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume II, part 2: Nerva to Trajan*. London.
		RIC II.3	Abdy, R., and P.F. Mittag. 2019. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume II, part 3: Hadrian. From AD 117 to AD 138*. London.
		RIC III	Mattingly, H. and E.A. Sydenham. 1930. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume III: Antoninus Pius – Commodus*. London.
		RIC IV.1	Mattingly, H. and E.A. Sydenham. 1936. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume IV, part 1: Pertinax – Geta*. London.
		RIC IV.2	Mattingly, H., E.A. Sydenham and C.H.V. Sutherland. 1930. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume IV, part 2: Macrinus – Pupienus*. London.

RIC IV.3 Mattingly, H., E.A. Sydenham and C.H.V. Sutherland. 1930. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume IV, part 3: Gordian III – Uranius Antoninus*. London.

RIC V.1 Webb, P.H. 1927. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume V, part 1: Valerian – Florian*. London.

RIC V.2 Webb, P.H. 1933. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume V, part 2: Marcus Aurelius Probus – Diocletian*. London.

RIC V.4 Mairat, J. 2023. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume V, part 4: The Gallic Empire (AD260-274)*. London.

RIC VI Sutherland, C.H.V. 1967. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume VI: Form Diocletian's Reform (A.D. 294) to the death of Maximianus (A.D. 313)*. London.

RIC VII Bruun, P.M. 1966. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume VII: Constantine and Licinius A.D. 313-337.* London.

RIC VIII Kent, J.P.C. 1981. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume VIII: The Family of Constantine A.D. 337-364.* London.

RIC IX Pearce, J.W.E. 1933. *The Roman Imperial Coinage, Volume IX: Valentinian I - Theodosius I*. London.

RIC X Kent, J.P.C. 1994. *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume X: The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts. AD 395-491.* London.

All references to papyrological evidence have included citation to their papyri.info webpages within the text, for further bibliographical information.

0. Introduction

On 1 March 293, to better secure and administer the vast territories of the Roman Empire after decades of instability, the co-Augusti Diocletian and Maximian expanded the imperial college by each appointing a junior Caesar.[1] They both selected one of their senior military officials, Diocletian electing Galerius and Maximian elevating Constantius I.[2] Each Caesar was also further bound to their Augustus through adoption and marriage.[3] The so-called 'First Tetrarchy' was established. It was the first time imperial power had intentionally been held by four emperors simultaneously, and reintroduced the adoption of competent individuals after a century of short-lived dynastic successions.[4] Under the tetrarchic system, the empire was effectively governed as four parts, with each emperor having their own court and set of palatine ministries.[5] Constantius oversaw the dioceses of *Britannia* (recovered from usurpers in 296), *Gallia* and *Viennensis*; Maximian held *Africa*, *Hispania* and *Italia*; Galerius *Pannonia*, *Moesia* and *Thracia*; and Diocletian *Asiana*, *Pontica* and *Oriens* (Map 1).[6] Yet these divisions were administrative rather than political.[7] The empire officially remained an undivided entity run by four united colleagues, whose residence at separate provincial capitals near frontier regions enabled their more effective policing of critical territories.[8]

Indeed, the contemporary state missed no opportunity to emphasise imperial political unity. The quintessential motif of tetrarchic monuments was embracing collegial emperors, examples of which include porphyry statues at Venice and the Vatican, and a frieze from Diocletian's palace at Nicomedia.[9] Similarly, during the first tetrarchy edicts were issued under the joint authority of all four emperors, publicly presenting legislative centralisation and pan-imperial unity.[10] Then there was the state-produced coinage. Between 294-296, Diocletian enacted monetary reforms that re-established production of multi-denominational silver and base-metal coinages at fourteen mints across the empire.[11] The designs of these post-reform

[1] Rees 2004: 77; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 112, n. 8; Barnes 1982: 4. All dates in this study are CE, unless otherwise stated.
[2] On the respective careers of Galerius and Constantius I prior to their accession as Caesars see Williams 1985: 64-65; Barnes 1982: 35-38; Jones 1971: 227-228, 574-575.
[3] Galerius married Diocletian's daughter Valeria and Constantius I married Maximian's (step-)daughter Theodora (Doležal 2022: 172; Barnes 2011: 47).
[4] Barnes 2011: 47.
[5] Corcoran 1996: 268; Jones 1964: I, 51. As per Doležal (2022: 176-177) though, there was more fluidity between the territories of the Augustus and Caesar in the east, where Diocletian and Galerius moved into one another's areas of control to offer military support as required.
[6] Barnes 1982: 196-197.
[7] Doležal 2022: 170; Rees 2004: 24; Williams 1985: 65.
[8] Doležal 2022: 177-178; Rees 2004: 27-30
[9] For discussion of the embracing emperors motif, including illustrations of these examples, see Şare Ağtürk 2018.
[10] Corcoran 1996: 170-183; *Edict of Maximum Prices* in Frank 1940. As per Barnes 1982: 195 though, *implementation* of these edicts varied between different emperors' territories, suggesting legislative uniformity was more rhetorical than reflective of historical reality.
[11] For overviews of Diocletian's monetary reform see Doležal 2022: 200-203; Bransbourg 2020: 167-171; Abdy 2012a: 584-589; Harl 1996: 148-157; Hendy 1985: 449-462; RIC VI: 93-100; Sutherland 1956. For the fourteen

coinages projected the same core tetrarchic ideology as other state media. Just like the edicts, each mint issued coinage in the names of all four tetrarchs – the obverse portrait and inscription of the coinage made each ruler visible across all imperial territories. As for the reverses of the coinage, the new silver *argenteus* recurrently depicted the four emperors together performing sacrifice (for example **[195]**),[12] continuing to espouse the essential narrative of collegiality and union.[13] The new billon *nummus* was issued across all fourteen mints with a uniform design, depicting the *genius* of the Roman People **[3]**, which envisioned the empire as a single entity occupied by a homogenous populace.[14] Furthermore, the fractional radiate coinage, produced only at eastern mints, bore the inscription CONCORDIA MILITVM alongside the image of Jupiter bestowing victory upon the emperor **[1]**, emphasising singular military consensus and harmony after years of civil wars and army-backed usurpations.[15]

0.1. Aim

What is made evident here is that the Roman 'state', the collective political superstructure of imperial rule, sought to push a common narrative through the various media under its control. In examples from the 'First Tetrarchy', the prevailing themes were collegiality and pan-imperial unity, which obscured any potential disagreements or fraught relations between the emperors.[16] The state was also not concerned with presenting the realities of effectively independent day-to-day governing practised by the individual tetrarchs and their respective hierarchies of officials. What was publicly displayed was rarely a representative insight of the past or present, but a carefully composed narrative.[17] Given the conformity of the political

different mints already active or founded as part of these monetary reforms (*Londinium*, *Trier*, *Lugdunum*, *Ticinum*, *Aquileia*, *Rome*, *Carthage*, *Siscia*, *Thessalonica*, *Heraclea*, *Nicomedia*, *Cyzicus*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*) see RIC VI: 5-6.

[12] All numbers in squared brackets refer to the corresponding types as presented in the 'Iconographic Type Catalogue' (Appendix 8). For definition and discussion of 'iconographic types' see **§0.2.3**.

[13] Of the 292 *argenteus* types listed in RIC VI that were issued during the 'First Tetrarchy' (294-305), the iconography of four emperors sacrificing outside open camp/city gates occurs on 188 (64.4%), in conjunction with a number of different reverse inscriptions (VICTORIA SARMATICA and derivatives, VIRTVS MILITVM, PROVIDENTIA AVGG, VICTORIA AVGG). The basic coin type analysis used here to gauge the frequency with which the 'emperors sacrificing' imagery was issued relative to other *argenteus* designs is admittedly problematic, as will be discussed in **§2.1.1.2**. However, given the minimal presence of the *argenteus* in the site-finds database that has been assembled for this thesis (only 11 examples in its 63,557 coins), coin type analysis has been used as an alternative quantitative method that can indicate very generalised trends. The site-finds database is discussed below in **§0.3** and at length in **§2.2**.

[14] Sutherland 1956: 177-179. For detailed discussion of the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* type **[3]** see **§5.1.1.1**.

[15] The CONCORDIA MILITVM type **[1]** does appear on the pre-reform radiate from 291 and therefore pre-dates the Diocletianic monetary reforms, though was retained as the dominant design on the post-reform radiate coinage, as discussed in **§4.1.1**.

[16] Williams 1985: 65; Leadbetter 2009: 141-146, 156; Doležal 2022: 174.

[17] Wolters 2003: 178. Though Wolters makes this point regarding coinage in particular, it is a conclusion broadly applicable to all such state-derived media. A further example of this adjacent relationship with reality that will feature prominently within the thesis is that of FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman coinage **[69]**. Type **[69]**'s original design touted Constantius II's apparent victory over the Persians at Singara in 344 (Kraft 1958: 158-159; Callu

messaging displayed on these state-produced media, their narratives can be rightly described as programmatic. Furthermore, these political messages, used to project an idealised quasi-reality, may be defined as a form of 'integration propaganda', a communicative framework that sought to perpetuate select socio-cultural values.[18] On this basis, I have used 'political messages' and 'propaganda' as interchangeable terms.

Coinage, through the contents of its images and inscriptions, provides an insight and summation of the state's propaganda programmes and their major components. Since at least the late nineteenth century Roman imperial coins have been systematically used for historical analysis and recognised as '*official* documents…that…like no other form of document, reflected decisions made and implemented by governments'.[19] Imperial coinage is the largest body of intentionally designed, iconographic material produced by the Roman state that remains available to modern academic researchers. The coins provide a vital resource for studying imperial self-representation; for identifying exactly how the hierarchical authority of the Roman Empire understood and evaluated imperial power – the state's 'imperial rulership ideology'. Moreover, because Roman imperial coins were issued semi-continuously and their frequently amended designs are dateable, they can chart changes in the Roman state's ideological programmes in more detail than other less frequently produced media.

This thesis intends to use the coinage to explore these trends in imperial self-representation during the Late Roman period. Within numismatic historiography, 'Late Roman' is a periodisation lasting from the aforementioned Diocletianic monetary reforms (c.294) to the accession of Anastasius I in 491.[20] It was an era during which the Roman Empire underwent extensive transformation. This included the rise of monotheism (ultimately as state-sponsored Christianity); the emergence and demise of five separate imperial dynasties (tetrarchic, Constantinian, Valentinian, Theodosian and Leonid); the permanent division of the empire into east and west; the collapse of the latter; the eventual disappearance of the Augustan monetary system in the face of ongoing, drastic inflation; and the end of socio-political norms that had characterised the 'Classical' world. Through a systematic analysis of numismatic iconography

1987: 137-139; Hollard and López Sánchez 2014: 147-153) – a battle whose result was far more inconclusive than the great Roman triumph being advertised (Barceló 2004: 84).

[18] On the definition of 'integration propaganda' and its differentiation from 'agitation propaganda', which is intentionally subversive and seeks to change attitudes, see Ellul 1979: 64-66, 70-79. On previous applications of 'integration propaganda' to the study Roman visual culture, coins and the ancient world in general, see DeRose Evans 1992: 1-4; Noreña 2011: 18-19; Enenkel and Pfeijfer 2005: 6-8. For further discussion of the term 'propaganda' and the historiography of its debated use in application to Roman coins, see **§1.1**, n.69.

[19] Metcalf 1999: 3. 'Roman Imperial Coinage', the focus of this thesis, refers to those coins produced at official mints directly under the control of the Roman state, as opposed to the local and regional 'provincial' coinages produced at (semi)-independent city mints throughout the eastern Mediterranean until the end of the third century. For definition and discussion of the different types of provincial coinage see Butcher 2004: 18-21.

[20] When 'Late Roman period' is used throughout this thesis it refers to this timespan, unless stated otherwise. The reign of Anastasius I has conventionally been used to mark the transition to 'Byzantine' coinage, due to his introduction of a heavily revised large-module base-metal coinage, the *follis*, which bore Greek numeral denominational marks (see Wroth 1908: I, xi-xii; Grierson 1961: 411, 431-433; DOC I: x, 2; Hendy 1985: 475-477).

over the longue durée, I will assess how the state's presentation of imperial rulership ideology changed (or did not) in the face of these evolutions and disruptions.

A further aspect to consider about Roman imperial coinage is that their political messages, chosen by the state, were not simply issued as part of an exercise in self-affirmation. Rather, they were intended to be consumed by the users of the coinage. The concept of audience targeting and the identification of these different audiences has become a major point of focus within the study of Roman coin iconography.[21] With regard to the Late Roman period, the base-metal coinage in particular was used by the imperial state as a medium for communicating with its wider populace.[22] I define 'wider populace' here as the non-elite: the majority of citizens who simply resided in the Roman Empire, whose labours remained distinct from the imperial government and its hierarchy of office-holders, or the curial classes; 'the people' as opposed to 'the state', or 'the elite'.[23] Base-metal coinage is therefore a rare resource able to show not only how the state wished to publicly envision its own authority, but also indicates what the wider populace were intended to see. This, in turn, allows us to consider how the silent majority of people in the Roman Empire experienced imperial power, through their regular access to such a widely available form of material culture. On this basis, this thesis is limited to the study of Late Roman base-metal coinage. I focus on reconstructing one direction of the dialogue of negotiated authority and legitimacy between the Roman state and 'the people', who are so frequently absent or under-represented in the sources that contribute to our writing of political histories.

0.2. Scope

It is not new to use Roman imperial coinage as the principal device for studying propaganda of the Roman state. Despite earlier resistance, since the 1990s interest has continued to grow in using Roman coin iconography as a source of inquiry into contemporary imperial rulership ideology.[24] However, the Late Roman period has remained much neglected.[25] It was a timespan marked by increasingly centralised imperial control over all coin production. Diocletian's reforms ended Egypt's distinct silver-based monetary system, which eliminated the last form of 'provincial coinage' within the empire, and meant all official coinage was only issued at state-controlled regional mints.[26] A consequence of these changes was the

[21] See, for example, Metcalf 1993; Hekster 2003; Kemmers 2006: 223-240; Ellithorpe 2017: 113-175. For further discussion of 'audience targeting' as a historiographical trend in Roman numismatics see **§1.3**.
[22] See **§1.3.1**.
[23] Van Neffelen 2021: 256.
[24] See Kemmers 2019: 16-17 and further discussions in **§1.1**.
[25] Kemmers 2019: 18, 30-32.
[26] RIC VI: 6, 66, 645; Metcalf 1987. On 'provincial' coinage, see **§0.1**, n.19. For the hierarchical structure of offices controlling the mints and their adjacency to the emperor see **§1.2.1**.

increased standardisation of numismatic iconography and inscriptions. Within numismatic scholarship, these reduced series of reverse designs on the Late Roman base-metal coinage have consequently been dismissed as 'trite and monotonous' or 'banal'.[27] My research seeks to counter these negative assessments and redress the lack of attention toward the Late Roman period. By introducing the same level of systematic iconographic analysis that has been applied to earlier periods of Roman imperial coinage, this thesis will demonstrate that various programmes of deliberate imperial propaganda can still be detected. Moreover, I will address the intentionality behind this banality and monotony, and what it says about the role that the Late Roman state wished for the base-metal coinage to play in its arbitrations with the populace.

0.2.1. Chronological Parameters

This thesis's exact chronological scope diverges slightly from the Late Roman numismatic period already outlined, and instead covers the years 284-450. Diocletian's reforms (c.294) have traditionally marked the Late Roman period's advent because of the notable denominational and metallurgical changes they made to the existing monetary system.[28] While many of Diocletian's reformed denominations received new iconographic designs, the CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter type **[1]** was issued on pre-reform and post-reform radiates.[29] The reforms were more a change in terms of the monetary function and value of the coinage than in its iconography. Given my focus on the propaganda promoted by a coin's imagery and inscription, I have looked to incorporate Diocletian's pre-reform base-silver coinage.[30] Consequently, my analysis starts from the beginning of Diocletian's reign (284). I also selected this earlier start to better contextualise, where possible, the ideological trends of the tetrarchy (and the Late Roman period in general) in relation to what preceded it – namely the uncertainty of the third-century military and political turmoil, to which Diocletian's (and Maximian's) early reign very much belonged.[31]

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[27] Pearce 1933: xxxix; Burnett 1987: 79. Also see Sutherland 1974: 275 on the 'inherent monotony (or near monotony' of Valentinian and Theodosian coins.
[28] See n.11 above.
[29] On the continued issuing of this coin type from the pre- to post-reform periods see **§4.1.1**.
[30] The use of the term 'base-silver' here follows the material descriptor used for the *antoninianus*/radiate denomination by the Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire (CHRE) project. 'Base silver' reflects the coinage's original relation to the silver *denarius* of the Augustan monetary system but also how through severe debasement its silver content had reduced to around 3.5% by 284 (Caza 2021: 35-36), so that 'base silver' effectively performed the equivalent economic function to the Diocletian's post-reform base-metal coinage.
[31] I say 'where possible' here because it was my original intention to provide contextualising analysis of the changes and continuity in coin iconography between the period of the dyarchy (284-293) and first tetrarchy (293-305). However, as further discussed in **§4.1.1.1**, this comparison is unfortunately limited by the lack of the earlier coinage in the site-finds record, which forms the principal data source for the following analysis. For discussion of site-finds as a source see **§0.3** below, and further details in **§2.1.2.1** and **§4.1.4**.

For the end date of my analysis, the death of Theodosius II (450) has been selected as more appropriate than Anastasius's accession (491). This is partly a practical decision, dictated by the thesis's limited length, and helps avoid the complexities of the eastern and western empire's diverging monetary systems in the later fifth century. Declining production quantities throughout the fifth century, as well as issues with collecting representative data for that period (especially for western sites), also make it questionable how informative the inclusion of post-450 coinage would be.[32] Furthermore, the designs of base-metal coinage were extremely limited during the reigns of Marcian (450-457) and the Leonids (457-491), arguably to the point that these coins ceased to function as a means of communicating anything other than the most basic assertions of imperial authority.[33] Their inclusion would add little to the forthcoming discussion. Conversely, it has been essential to incorporate the coinage of Theodosius II, due to its important role in publicly espousing the Christian identity of the Roman Empire at scale for the first time.[34] The reign of Theodosius II therefore marks a vital moment in the slow Christianisation of Roman imperial coinage, one of the few aspects of Late Roman numismatic iconography to have garnered academic attention and which I must also address.[35]

To better navigate through the different elements of imperial ideology encapsulated on the Late Roman base-metal coinage, I have broken down the 167 years under analysis into thirteen periods (Fig.0.1). These broadly follow the periodisations popularised by Richard Reece and John Casey in their respective studies of the coinage of Roman Britain.[36] Some further subdivisions of Reece's and Casey's periods have been introduced to better emphasise iconographic change. I have also made amendments to period boundaries during the fifth century to make them more applicable to the entire Roman Empire, rather than focused on reflecting a specifically British experience.[37] These further divisions are essential in helping to denote distinct ideological programmes or moments of major iconographic shifts that typically occurred in line with regime change and monetary reforms. The use of my amended periodisation framework will better facilitate comparison of, and evolutions in, imperial propaganda.

[32] See **§4.3.1** and **§4.3.3.7** on lower production levels, data-quality issues and even the overshadowing of new fifth century coinage by earlier coinage that continued to circulate.
[33] For brief overviews of the base-metal coinage beyond the scope of this thesis, into the later fifth century and then the early Byzantine period, see **§4.3.3.7** and **§5.2.2.1**.
[34] See **§4.3.3**.
[35] Kemmers 2019: 30-32.
[36] Brickstock 2004: 16.
[37] Butcher 1995: 307.

0.2.2. Spatial Coverage

As for geographical parameters, my analysis has incorporated the base-metal coinage produced and found across the entire Late Roman Empire, rather than just the coinage of a single region. This has enabled comprehensive discussion of all relevant Late Roman base-metal iconography within the period of study. This expansive perspective offers the best means of encapsulating those aspects of imperial rulership ideology that the state most wished to present to its wider populace, and of ascertaining some sense of a common, pan-imperial experience of imperial authority amongst the non-elite masses. The wide-lens approach will provide the basis of analysis, though will be further enhanced by examples of variation in experience between different regions of the empire.[38] The combination of these macro- and microscopic assessments intends to provide a totalising view of the aspects of imperial rulership ideology presented through the base-metal coinage between 284-450.

0.2.3. Limitations of Analysis

Given this significant chronological and geographic scope, one further refinement of focus is required. My analysis has been limited almost exclusively to considering the images and inscriptions of the reverses of Late Roman base-metal coinage. It should of course be recognised that coins are two-sided objects and that any study looking to encapsulate the political messaging of numismatic material must be wary of largely ignoring half of it. This is especially the case since the political messages of Roman imperial coinage could, and did, flow from obverse to reverse.[39] Nevertheless, interwoven propaganda was much rarer in the Late Roman period, when the obverse and reverse showed minimal interaction with one another beyond associating the messaging of the latter with the emperor (and his colleagues) on the former.[40] Moreover, although there was some change in obverse portraiture – from the austere tetrarchic style to the more serene and ageless Augustan-style portraiture of Constantine and his successors – there was little other variance in portrait, head-wear, costume or attributes.[41] Indeed, identification of Late Roman emperors based on their portraiture alone becomes virtually impossible. Within the timeframe of this study, the obverses of base-metal coinage broadly came to play a highly structured though limited role. An emperor's name and titulature alongside a portrait bearing imperial regalia both acclaimed his

[38] There are two tiers for regional sub-divisions used within this thesis. On a 'macro-regional' level, the western and eastern territories of the empire are compared, with each half of the empire further divided into 'micro-regions'. See **§2.3** on the identification of these different regions.
[39] Betjes 2022: 123-127.
[40] Betjes 2022: 127-130 and 327, Graphs 3.8a-b.
[41] Sutherland 1974: 261-262, 269-270, 275; Grierson and Mays 1992: 74. On these tetrarchic and Constantinian portrait styles conforming with other forms of contemporary portraiture see Hannestad 1986: 306-307, 326-332.

authority and legitimacy as ruler, while the same image acclaimed the legitimacy of the coin as money. So too, it encouraged the user of the coin to associate the message of the reverse with the regime of the obverse emperor. Beyond this though, the consistency of the obverse formulations does not warrant further attention compared to the considerably greater changeability in the designs and political messaging of the reverse-types.[42] I will only discuss obverse types when they significantly diverge from the usual formulations of laureate/radiate/diademed emperor, when the state sought to communicate something different in the same space. The most notable instances of relevant obverses are the depictions of the busts of Constantinopolis **[49]** and Urbs Roma **[50]** on the Constantinian coinage in the 330s,[43] or the fleeting appearance of the *manus dei* above the imperial portrait on Arcadius's coronation coinage.[44]

I should also clarify the vocabulary I will use to delineate different base-metal reverse designs. My focus is limited to 'iconographic types' rather than 'coin types'. Both terms are morphological classifications that group coins with similar designs together. However, the individual 'coin types' of the *Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC) and *Late Roman Bronze Coinage* (LRBC) catalogues are differentiated from one another by several elements, including the emperor, obverse design and inscription, reverse design and inscription, and mint mark. These criteria distinguish between series of coins from the administrative perspective of production runs, and therefore more accurately sequence and date coins. In contrast, what I have termed 'iconographic types' combine coins with very similar imagery and inscriptions into larger groups.[45] For example, there are 450 separate coin types of the 'Falling Horseman' design recorded in RIC VIII, which denote minor visual variations in the horseman's position as well as other administrative features. Conversely, I have identified all coinage with the basic design of the emperor spearing a fallen horseman as a single iconographic type **[69]**, since the position of the fallen horseman has no discernible impact on the political message. This approach works to better consolidate and classify the key ideological messages that the Late Roman base-metal coinage was used to communicate. Rather than discussing potentially thousands of different coin types, only 247 different iconographic types have been identified over the course of this research project. These are all presented in the Iconographic Types

[42] The most notable exception to the above-outlined limited functionality of base-metal coinage, largely unique to the Late Roman period, were the recurrent references to the emperor's *felicitas* as part of his titulature – an aspect of imperial ideology that did not really appear on the reverse-types at all (see **§2.3.3**, n.403).
[43] See **§4.2.2**.
[44] See **§4.3.3.4**.
[45] See Noreña 2001: 153-155 and Kemmers 2006: 220 for similar grouping of coins with common reverse imagery.

Catalogue (Appendix 8) at the end of Volume II, and are referenced throughout the thesis with their relevant catalogue numbers in squared brackets (for example **[1]**).[46]

0.3. Method

Despite limiting the scope of this thesis to the reverse designs of the base-metal coinage, the intent to cover the whole empire over 167 years still means that we are dealing with huge quantities of numismatic material. For a prolonged study, it is not possible to overcome the issue of an enormous body of evidence by simply focusing discussion on coins with the most interesting iconography and intriguing political messages. The cherry-picking of iconographic types has been pervasive within studies of numismatic iconography, but often inflates the significance of certain coins when their production and circulation was limited.[47] My analysis looks to gauge the relative frequency with which different aspects of imperial rulership ideology were promoted on the base-metal coinage and made visible to the wider populace. To meet this purpose, it would be entirely inappropriate to adopt a subjective approach of simply selecting those iconographic types I deem most relevant.

Instead, a quantitative approach is required. Because the coins survive in their thousands, it is only by obtaining numerical data that we can properly contextualise the importance of the differing political messages of coins relative to one another. The use of quantitative methods to analyse Roman numismatic material has a long history. Since the 1960s, various techniques have been established and refined in the field of 'Applied Numismatics',[48] including periodisations,[49] formulae[50] and statistical tools,[51] which extract standardised data from the coinage and enable comparison between/within sites or regions. However, these analyses have predominantly used coinage as a proxy for investigating the economic history of sites or

[46] Note that an iconographic type's catalogue number does not necessarily relate to its importance or chronological relationship to other types. The construction of this catalogue was a relatively organic process, in which the first 117 types represented those initially perceived to be the most common. I drew heavily on the summary of types listed in LRBC I; LRBC II; DeRose Evans 2018: 111-113; Caza 2021, and these iconographic types do roughly appear in chronological order relative to one another. Beyond this though, most of the remaining iconographic types represent new entries as they were identified during the creation of the site-finds database used within this study and the associated data-collection process (see **§0.3** and Chapter 2). Some later types, such as the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive WITHOUT Christogram type **[200]**, are the product of decisions to distinguish between different elements of a coin's design that were originally judged to be minor (in this case with SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram type **[100]**), so as to better reflect specific features of the imperial rulership ideology that varied between these types. Finally there is the GENIO AVGVSTI/CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS type **[212]**, which consolidates a number of other types **[15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21]** for reasons outlined in **§4.1.4.3**, n.535.

[47] Sutherland 1984: xxi-xxii; Metcalf 1999: 3; Noreña 2001: 148; Rowan 2013a: 3-4, 24.

[48] The study of numismatic material in relation to its archaeological context (Walton 2012: 5-16; Casey 1988: 39). Also called 'archaeo-numismatics' (Kemmers 2019: 54).

[49] Brickstock 2004.

[50] Ravetz 1964; Casey 1988.

[51] See, for example, Lockyear 2022 and Walton 2012: 15-16 on Cluster Analysis and Correspondence Analysis; DeRose Evans 2006: 63-70 and DeRose Evans 2018: 116-117 on the Chi-Square test.

the fiscal mechanisms of the Roman state.[52] Only in 2001 was a quantitative analysis of the *political* function of Roman imperial coinage first published, when Carlos Noreña investigated the frequency with which different personified virtues were depicted on *denarii* between 69-235.[53] Since then, quantitative approaches to the study of coin iconography have slowly taken root. There are now major quantitative-based surveys that cover coin propaganda for much of the Principate.[54] This thesis is therefore ideally situated to further extend the quantitative-based analysis of coin propaganda into the Late Roman period, expanding this relatively young discipline's chronological range.

However, undertaking a quantitative analysis to identify the predominant political messages of Late Roman base-metal coinage is not without its methodological challenges. First, it is necessary to devise a means of estimating the proportions in which different iconographic types were produced and circulated within the empire. On this basis, I have constructed a database of coins, which will be subject to quantitative analysis, and whose purpose is to represent in microcosm the ever-growing corpus of extant Late Roman coinage. The database is comprised of 63,557 coins, of which 63,451 (99.8%) are base-metal.[55] All coins within the database are site-finds: individual coins deposited accidentally and then recovered during archaeological excavations, which are taken to be representative of their non-lost counterparts.[56] These site-finds are derived from excavations at forty-four sites located across the empire (Map 1).[57] Except for Portus Adurni, a military fort, all these sites were urban centres, whose excavations can be anticipated to have provided those coins most commonly accessible to their wider civilian populations. The contents of the database will be used to postulate which iconographic types were most frequently produced within individual periods, from which we can better understand the proportions that different aspects of imperial propaganda were intended by the state to receive public 'airtime'. Furthermore, the database will provide the basis for considering the rough quantities at which different iconographic types were accessible to the wider populace in different regions of the empire, relative to other coins of the same issue period and older coinage still in circulation. The pan-imperial coverage of

[52] Exemplary of this is the recording of mint marks on Late Roman coins to understand their point of origin, through which the monetary supply to a site or circulation patterns within a region can be determined. Examples are endless, since the method is used in just about every archaeological/numismatic publication that provides a commentary on a catalogue of site-finds. For this method in action, see **§2.3.4**, where quantified mint data has been used to construct circulation zones evidenced within this thesis's site-finds database.
[53] Noreña 2001.
[54] In particular, see Noreña 2011; Manders 2012; Rowan 2013a; Claes 2013; Elkins 2017; Betjes 2022. Manders, Claes and Betjes's works are all indicative of the growth of quantitative-based or -assisted Roman numismatic studies being headed by the Department of History, Art History and Classics at Radboud University, Nijmegen.
[55] Included in these 63,451 base-metal coins are 217 base-silver coins (as defined in **§0.2.1**, n.30), which effectively represent the lowest denomination base-metal currency of Period 1 (284-294).
[56] Reece 1996. See **§2.1.2** for detailed discussion of site-finds as a representative data source and their use over other data sources, such as hoard coins.
[57] A separate bibliography of all published excavations and coin-lists used to construct the site-finds database is provided at the end of Volume I.

the sites that comprise the database will therefore enable the definition of an empire-wide experience of imperial power through the medium of base-metal coinage, as well as the delineation of inter-regional variation.

Second, any quantitative study of the political messages of Roman coinage must devise a framework for translating qualitative evidence – the contents of a coin's inscriptions and iconography – into uniform and measurable data. To date, various methods have been devised for classifying coins into quantifiable categories. However, each has its limitations and problems, either in terms of the categories they create to isolate and summarise different facets of the propaganda on display, or the criteria they use to assign coins to categories. As such, no definitive quantitative analytical framework has yet been devised for encapsulating all presented aspects of propaganda and identifying ideological programmes over an extended chronological span. It is a further purpose of this thesis to fill this void. I aim to define a new quantitative methodological framework for extracting and comparing the ideological content condensed into the reverse designs of Roman imperial coinage. The approach I have taken is to perform a critical re-appraisal of the predominant existing approaches, building on their strengths and looking to rectify their weaknesses. This new method will better reflect the multi-faceted nature of the coin designs, namely the ability of reverse-types to present multiple aspects of imperial rulership ideology simultaneously. Furthermore, it seeks to delineate the interconnection between these different aspects, how different values were emphasised to varying degrees, and so varied in their contribution to the political message of a single iconographic type. Through a more sensitive assessment of the complexities of ideological communication on coinage, we can distinguish more latent patterns in the presentation of different elements of state propaganda over the Late Roman period. Furthermore, we can better understand the proportions in which these different propaganda aspects were presented at any one time, in both the empire as a whole or in distinct geographic zones.

0.4. Structure

Thus far, I have made many assumptions about the nature of Roman imperial coinage. I have presented the coinage as a medium of political communication; that coin propaganda represented the emperor's ideological perspective; that coins targeted propaganda at specific groups; and that coin propaganda was intelligible to those audiences. My position represents a perspective broadly accepted within contemporary scholarship. Roman imperial coinage is now used frequently by researchers to inform wider analyses of state political ideology under different emperors or periods. Nevertheless, many of these assumptions have previously been the subjects of heated debate within the historiography of Roman numismatics.

Since these assumptions underpin my thesis's interpretation of Late Roman base-metal coinage as a historical source, Chapter 1 clarifies the legitimacy of using numismatic material to investigate contemporary state propaganda.

— **§1.1** details the political function of Roman imperial coinage, explaining that it was used as a medium for disseminating propaganda by the Roman state.

— **§1.2** shows that coin designs were selected by the upper echelons of the imperial government, so their political messages should be understood as indicative of individual emperors' broader propaganda policies.

— **§1.3** further addresses how the state targeted separate sections of imperial society with varying propaganda, through coinage of different metal types and denominations. Particular to this thesis, the Late Roman base-metal coinage is identified as intended to circulate amongst and communicate with its wider, non-elite populace. The perspective of this wider Roman populace and their relationship with the coinage has also been considered.

— In **§1.4** I argue that the Late Roman Empire was a highly monetised landscape where base-metal coinage was regularly accessible, meaning its political messages were highly visible.

— Finally, in **§1.5** I demonstrate that the Roman imperial citizenry at large participated within a socio-cultural system of visual forms and formulae, which ensured their understanding of the messages on coins.

All these elements combine to validate using Late Roman base-metal coinage as a source for investigating what the Roman state wanted to communicate to its wider populace, and how the coin propaganda may have affected that audience's understanding of imperial authority.

The quantitative methodological approach that I use to analyse the propaganda of the base-metal coinage is then presented across Chapters 2 and 3. Each chapter provides a detailed solution to one of the two main challenges outlined above in **§0.3**, which any extended quantitative analysis of coin propaganda must deal with. Over the course of Chapter 2, I present the process of collating a body of numismatic data that can provide the basis of a quantitative analysis of coin propaganda, and which may be accepted as representative of the wider corpus of Late Roman base-metal coinage.

— **§2.1** explains why the aforementioned site-finds database is the most appropriate dataset for investigating the propaganda of the base-metal coinage. I focus on outlining the core decisions of this project's data-collection process: which basic method of quantification and data source I have used to construct a database of Late Roman

coinage. Through a review of the basic methods of quantification available, 'gross-coin analysis' (counting examples of individual extant coins) is shown to be most suited for a project with a large spatial and temporal scope. Consequently, I reject the use of 'gross coin type analysis' – the estimation of relative coin frequency using coin type totals from modern catalogues – which has been popularised in recent years. Moreover, site-finds are surmised to be the most appropriate data source for identifying the base-metal coinage that was most accessible to the wider populace. In this process, I also critique the ability of hoards to reflect the most common coinage in circulation, so deviate from many previous analyses that have favoured hoard-based datasets.

— **§2.2** gives more detail on the site-finds database itself. I discuss the exact details recorded for the individual coins that comprise the database, and the nature of the sites selected to provide pan-imperial representativeness.

— **§2.3** interrogates the contents of the site-finds database to demonstrate that the theorised data collection process of **§2.1** *has* resulted in representative data. The premise of this verification process is that distinct zones of circulation and coin use within the Roman Empire are already widely attested within existing numismatic scholarship. Therefore, if clear geographic sub-divisions are also present within the site-finds database, its limited contents cohere with existing historiographic conclusions of intra-imperial regionality and epitomise the wider corpus of extant Late Roman base-metal coinage. What this detailed analysis certainly does distinguish are macro- and micro-regional groups of sites within the site-finds database. Furthermore, these groups provide the basis for examining regional variation in coin propaganda, to nuance the pan-imperial results of the whole database. They will be used to show how inhabitants of different parts of the empire were exposed to different types of base-metal coinage, and help define varied experiences of imperial authority amongst the wider imperial populace.

Chapter 3 delineates the new framework I have devised for translating the qualitative imagery and legends of the coins recorded in the site-finds database into quantified and comparable measures of propaganda.

— In the first step of this process, **§3.1** provides the previously mentioned review of the existing methods for categorising coin propaganda. I outline the successful innovations (for example, the ability to assign a single coin to multiple propaganda categories), and continued limitations (for example, categorisation of a coin primarily based on the contents of its inscription) of these approaches, which are then used to inform my

improved categorisation method. Of particular importance here is my use of the principles of fuzzy set theory to indicate a propaganda category's 'degree of presence' on a coin. This new feature provides a more nuanced assessment of a coin's propaganda, as it captures the interconnection of different aspects of imperial ideology, rather than simply denoting presence or absence.

— With the key characteristics of a new categorisation methodology in hand, **§3.2** details the actual propaganda categories that the coins of the site-finds database have then been assigned to. A study of the panegyrics – speeches of praise directed at the emperors – is undertaken to determine those virtues and ideals most associated with imperial rule during the Late Roman period. I identify fourteen categories, which constitute the core tenets of imperial propaganda that can also be looked for on state-issued coinage. A fifteenth category has also been devised to encapsulate the emergence of Christian faith as a feature of imperial rule, something that remained purposefully absent from the secular panegyrics. The categories are then consolidated into six thematic groupings to better facilitate the comparison of the central aspects of coin propaganda. These propaganda categories and thematic groupings are:

Thematic Grouping	**Categories in Grouping**
MILITARY REPRESENTATION	*Virtus* *Victoria*
DIVINE ASSOCIATION	Religious *Pietas* *Fides*
UNITY AND CONTINUITY	*Concordia* Dynasty *Aeternitas* Messages
ELEVATION	Elevation *Gloria*
OTHER IMPERIAL VIRTUES	Civic *Pietas* *Providentia* Imperial Beneficence
OTHER IMPERIAL BENEFITS	*Saeculum Aureum* *Euergesia* *Restitutor* Narrative

Chapter 4 forms the heart of the thesis. The quantitative methodology (Chapter 3) is applied to the site-finds database and its internal geographic divisions (Chapter 2) to facilitate actual analysis of the propaganda of Late Roman base-metal coinage. A chronological approach is

taken, which primarily focuses on charting the development of one specific thematic grouping: 'Military Representation'. The subsequent analysis is subdivided into three separate parts that relate to distinct chronological phases in the theme's depiction: **§4.1** covers Phase 1 (284-324), **§4.2** Phase 2 (330-408) and **§4.3** Phase 3 (408-450). 'Military Representation' messages were the most prevalent form of propaganda to appear on the base-metal coinage between 284-450. A complete analysis of the other five propaganda themes is unfortunately not possible within the confines of this thesis. However, the data for their presence on the Late Roman base-metal coinage, and of the individual propaganda categories, is also presented as appropriate to contextualise the 'Military Representation' theme analysis.

A central argument presented during this three-phase chronological analysis is that the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy emerged as a permanent feature of the Late Roman base-metal coinage. Essentially, the 'politics of exclusion' is the term I have given to a new propaganda policy applied to the base-metal coinage from the 340s. It saw attempts to engage the wider populace, through reference to specific events or narratives unique to individual emperors, replaced by the endless and simplistic messages proclaiming the emperors' competence and imperial security. These new assertions primarily pertained to the emperor's military prowess, alongside more intermittent expressions of stability ensured through an emperor's continuous rule. In the course of identifying the 'politics of exclusion' in **§4.2** and **§4.3**, I argue how this propaganda policy reflected a changing attitude of the state towards the wider audience of base-metal coinage. Imperial governments no longer envisioned the wider populace as a political body to influence and engage with. Instead, the non-elite Roman civilian citizenry was viewed as a group to be excluded from participating in intra-imperial politics, with base-metal coin propaganda used as a means of promoting this desired marginalization.

The final chapter of the thesis focuses on exploring the 'politics of exclusion' policy, arguably the most significant feature identified by my analysis of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda. Chapter 5 is divided into two parts:

— **§5.1** further delineates the parameters and characteristics of the 'politics of exclusion' policy, moving beyond Chapter 4's restricted focus on the 'Military Representation' theme. In particular, it examines direct references made to the wider populace on Late Roman base-metal coinage, in both imagery and inscriptions. Doing so further elucidates how the Roman state envisioned the political authority of the wider populace. It reveals that at the advent of the Late Roman period, base-metal coinage was used to appeal for public assistance in ensuring imperial security, meaning the non-elite citizenry at large was accommodated as an influential political entity. Nevertheless, in conformance with the observations of Chapter 4, we also see that,

from the mid-fourth century, the base-metal coinage was used to inform the wider populace that they were a passive body.

— **§5.2** then seeks to contextualise the 'politics of exclusion' policy within the historical reality of the Late Roman period, comparing it to the actual contemporary power relations between the emperor and his wider populace. For this purpose, I delineate two general models of emperor-public relations, for the fourth and fifth centuries. The analysis shows that the wider populace was an influential political entity, but that popular power was restricted to pressurising local political and religious leaders. Otherwise, with the single exception of the fifth-century urban populace of Constantinople, the wider populace remained deferential and subservient to their emperors' direct authority. On this basis, I conclude that the 'politics of exclusion' policy's presentation of a passivised wider populace on the base-metal coinage accurately reflected the prevailing reality of popular interaction with imperial power in the Late Roman period.

0.5. Summary

At its core, this thesis seeks to extend the use of quantitative analysis in the study of Roman imperial coin propaganda to the Late Roman period. It is particularly concerned with the negotiation of authority between the state and its typically silent majority of non-elite citizens, so looks to use the intentionally targeted political messages of the base-metal coinage to investigate at least one direction of this dialogue. In its totality though, the constituent parts of the thesis deal with the various complexities faced by any extended chronological and spatial study of Roman coin iconography looking to harness the clarifying abilities of quantitative analysis. As such, it:

1. Provides an extended overview of Late Roman coinage as a historical source.
2. Defines a means of producing and validating a representative database of coins that can be subject to quantitative analysis. This process also provides geographic divisions, which can move analysis beyond pan-imperial observations.
3. Devises a new and improved methodology for quantifying coin propaganda (a fundamentally qualitative form of evidence) that builds on the innovations of previous studies.
4. Undertakes a chronological case study of one identified component of the coin propaganda (Military Representation) to demonstrate the collated database (2) and

new quantitative methodology (3) in action, showing the sort of analysis this approach enables.

5. Seeks to re-contextualise one of the study's most significant findings (the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy) within the wider landscape of Late Roman political relations and power dynamics.

Firstly then, we turn to establishing the central tenets for interpreting coinage as a historical source.

1. Roman Imperial Coinage as a Historical Source

All numismatists must consider the nature of the coinage they study. What information does it provide? What questions can it help answer? Conducting such a review soon makes evident that treating coinage as a historical source often makes assumptions regarding its origins, purpose, and usage. Since the mid-twentieth century, when A.H.M. Jones critiqued the apparently 'exaggerated importance' given to coinage as a means of studying Roman political history, there have been numerous challenges to using Roman imperial coinage for this purpose.[58]

In response to these challenges, this first chapter directly addresses the key assumptions that underpin using coinage as a source for investigating the Late Roman state and its political ideology. I have outlined five basic statements that embody my interpretation of Roman imperial coinage as a valid, informative historical source, and will address each in detail below. These hold that:

1. Roman imperial coinage, having a political as well as economic function, was used by the state to promote select political messages programmatically.
2. These political messages were selected on a top-down basis, so represented how the emperor and his 'government' wished to be perceived by the audience of the coinage.
3. Coins of different metal types and denominations were targeted at audiences of different social statuses, with Late Roman base-metal coinage targeting the wider, non-elite populace.
4. The Late Roman economy was highly monetised, so the wider populace was regularly exposed to base-metal coinage and its political messages.
5. The wider populace understood these political messages, as they operated within the same broader 'semantic system' as the state.

The approach here will firmly establish that coinage was used as a medium of 'propaganda' by the Roman state, which looked to communicate with its wider populace through base-metal coinage specifically, and that this wider populace understood what the state put in front of them. It will verify the legitimacy of using Late Roman base-metal coinage to study both what the state wished to present to its wider populace, and how exposure to these messages may have influenced the wider populace's experience of imperial authority.

[58] Jones 1956, quote on 14.

1.1. The Political Function of Roman Imperial Coinage

Key to understanding numismatic material as a source of historical enquiry is to know its function. Why was coinage produced? The most obvious and uncontentious function of Roman imperial coinage was to serve as money, as a commonly accepted medium of exchange, and it can therefore be used to analyse fiscal or economic activity. In addition, this study holds that Roman imperial coinage was also used by the state as a medium of communication – that it had an additional political function. This understanding of the coinage as multi-functional, as an intentionally political as well as monetary instrument, has become the default position held within contemporary scholarship.[59] However, this has not always been the case. During the second half of the twentieth century, the political function and communicative ability of Roman coinage were seriously questioned. This was a historiographical trend that firmly dismissed coinage as a source for studying Roman politics, so a summary and rebuttal of the position is warranted here.[60]

The predominant argument against the state's use of coinage as a political medium emerged within Anglophone scholarship as a byproduct of pessimistic 'substantivist' interpretations of the Roman economy. The substantivist position was embodied by Moses Finley's account of the ancient economy. He envisioned a uniform economic landscape dominated by the extractive 'command' behaviour of the Roman state and landowning elites, where goods production was largely focused on autarkic 'satisfaction of material wants' to sustain the prevailing hierarchy of privileges and social standing.[61] Finley understood the economy of antiquity to be embedded – it was a political economy, whereby no strictly 'economic' policy existed, as the Roman state was entirely politically motivated and did not enact policy deliberately to bring about economic gain. Alongside land-focused subsidence production, this

[59] This prevailing attitude of Roman coinage as multi-functional is neatly summarised by Fleur Kemmers (2019: 3): 'coins are…their [the Roman state's] ego-documents, offering insights into aspects of representation, communication and economic and financial decision making…'. See also Elkins 2017: 137.

[60] For more extensive historiographical reviews of the arguments against the political function of Roman imperial coinage, as well as these arguments' subsequent dismissal, see Betjes 2022: 27-39; Kemmers 2019: 15-37; Elkins 2017: 4-12; Levick 1999. Similar summaries can be found in the introduction of any recent study that does recognise the political function of coinage. See too Ellithorpe 2017, which is filled with case-studies entirely devoted to demonstrating the use and impact of Roman imperial coinage as a political medium.

[61] Finley 1973. See Finley 1973: 154-155 on the near absolute authority of the Roman state, 44-50 on a hierarchical value system orientated around 'orders' and 'status', 157-161 on the 'satisfaction of material wants'. For the origins of the 'sustantivist' position in application to premodern societies see the works of anthropologist Karl Polanyi (Polanyi 1957 and Polanyi et. al. 1957). For further summaries of the substantivist approach to the Roman economy and the primitivist-modernist historiographical debate the preceded this see Elliot 2020: 3-10; Launaro 2016; Thompkins 2008. I have taken the term 'command' economy from Peter Temin (2012, 2013: 17-18) and judge this a better means of describing Finley's interpretation of the Roman economy than Polanyi's 'redistributive' form of integration. It provides a greater emphasis on Finley's view that the authoritative Roman state and urban landlords were the institutions which defined contemporary economic behaviour.

economic model viewed market-based exchange and profit-orientated production as almost non-existent.[62]

The role granted to coinage within the substantivist system was also limited. It was apparently only produced to ease state expenditure, mainly to pay and maintain its military, and facilitate extraction of taxes from its subjects.[63] The coinage was believed to function only as a means through which the state ensured its self-perpetuation in strictly financial terms. This was the premise forwarded by Michael Hendy in application to the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, which asserted that coinage was issued 'primarily and entirely…to enable the state to tax and spend in a standardised fashion'.[64] This echoed the view of A.H.M. Jones, who when discussing the Late Roman state's policy of gold accumulation specified that the *solidus*, introduced by Constantine I in 309, was 'not in the full sense of the word a coin…[but] was primarily a gold unit for the use…of the imperial treasury'.[65] He similarly sought to explain the ongoing substantial production and debasement of base-metal coinage, which continued until the end of the century, as how the military *stipendium* of the common soldier was paid.[66] Minting of the two main forms of Late Roman imperial coinage, gold and base-metal, was explained away as purely monetary in nature. Coin iconography was not entirely ignored within the substantivist framework, though the obverse portraiture was interpreted only as a basic statement of imperial authority and reverse iconography as highly genericised assertions of competence.[67] In short, substantivism defined Roman imperial coinage as a fiscal instrument, used to ease taxation and indicate to whom that tax was due. It was a financial tool with a narrow and insignificant political dimension.

This view of coinage and scepticism towards coinage's role as a complex instrument of political communication ultimately receded in the latter stages of the twentieth century. The shift was first initiated in the 1980s by German scholars Tonio Hölscher and Paul Zanker, and Danish scholar Niels Hannestad, who each incorporated coinage in their wider analyses of Roman visual culture.[68] They demonstrated that coin iconography was a valuable source for understanding imperial political ideology, contextualising coinage as one component of the

[62] Finley 1973: 59-60, 82, 111.
[63] Studies have posited army costs totalling 50-81% on the state annual outgoings. See Duncan-Jones 1994: 33-46 for the early empire, and Hendy 1989: 18; Lee 2007a: 402-403; Treadgold 1995: 194 for the Late Roman/Early Byzantine Empire.
[64] Hendy 1991: 639. Hendy's conclusion was an expansion of Michael Crawford's earlier assessment of the period 200BCE – 200CE, which maintained that coinage was only ever issued 'to enable the state to make payments, that is, for financial reasons' (Crawford 1970: 46).
[65] Jones 1953: 301-302. See Abdy 2012a: 591-592 on Constantine's introduction of the *solidus* and its gradual spread to pan-imperial use in line with his conquests.
[66] Jones 1953: 311-313
[67] Crawford 1983a: 59; Burnett 1987: 66-71; Hendy 1991: 651; Duncan-Jones 1994: 98.
[68] Hölscher 1982; Hölscher 2004; Hannestad 1986; Zanker 1988. See Kemmers 2019: 16-17 on the identification of this historiographic shift in Roman numismatics.

state's wider programme of 'propaganda'.[69] A more nuanced evaluation of the function of Roman imperial coinage emerged within Anglophone scholarship during the 1990s. This view was encapsulated by Chris Howgego's argument that the substantivist thesis of coinage should be abandoned in favour of a return to a pluralistic understanding of coins as multi-faceted objects, produced to fulfil a variety of roles simultaneously, including a political function.[70] These improved attitudes towards coin iconography's importance were set against wider changes in the prevailing historiographical approaches to the Roman economy. The substantivist model collapsed under ever-mounting archaeological and papyrological evidence for mass production and economising behaviour orientated towards extensive private market exchange.[71] In its place, the model of New Institutional Economics has become dominant. Interest has pivoted to defining the political bodies, laws and social norms ('institutions') that regulated ancient individuals' engagement with an expansive market economy, as well as the 'transaction costs' and 'bounded rationality' that influenced the same individuals' decision-making when engaging in private exchange.[72]

The widespread acceptance of Roman imperial coinage as possessing a political function has generated an explosion of academic literature about coinage as a source of historical inquiry

[69] A subsidiary debate to arise contemporary to these works regarded the usage of the term 'propaganda' and the appropriateness of its use in application to Roman coinage. Within Anglophone scholarship, criticism was mainly orientated around earlier descriptions of Roman coinage as 'propaganda' by Harold Mattingly (Mattingly 1917: 66; Mattingly and Sydenham 1923: 22). This term was argued to have been entirely anachronistic and tarnished by Mattingly's own experiences of the nefarious use of mass media by governments particularly during the First and Second World Wars (Levick 1982: 104-106; Wallace-Hadrill 1986: 67; Burnett 1987: 66-71; Howgego 1995: 70-73). However, revisions to the definition of 'propaganda' have seen its increasingly common acceptance as an appropriate term of use within modern Roman numismatic scholarship. Central to this has been the adoption of Jacques Ellul's typological distinction between different forms of propaganda (Ellul 1979, esp.64-66, 70-79), such as 'agitation' and 'integration' propaganda. 'Agitation' propaganda seeks to change attitudes and features the subversive aspects of propaganda that the late-twentieth century numismatics studies opposed. 'Integration' propaganda is aimed at 'stabilising the social body' and reinforcing existing attitudes. Ellul himself deemed 'integration' propaganda to be a uniquely modern phenomenon, but this has come to be the definition of propaganda now considered most appropriate in application to the Roman world. The presence of 'integration' propaganda has been used to frame discussions of Roman art by DeRose Evans (1992: 1-4), and in Roman numismatics by Noreña (2011: 18-19) and Manders (2012: 28). Enenkel and Pfeijfer 2005: 6-8 have also placed emphasis on integration as a key element of propaganda in the ancient world that helps to circumvent modern connotations of forceful or coercive implementation. The continued usage of the term 'propaganda' throughout this thesis similarly conforms to the definition of 'integration' propaganda, because it better accommodates the understanding that the Roman state was an active participate and believer in the ideology it was publicly presenting on coinage and other media. For further review of discussions around coinage as propaganda see Cribb 2009: 500-503.

[70] Howgego 1990 (esp. 25); Howgego 1995: 71-73.

[71] See Wickham 2005 for an extensive review of the Roman economy during Late Antiquity based principally on ceramic evidence, which demonstrates specialised market production and commercially orientated long-distance trade alongside an extractive state structure. Also see Dark (1996; 2001; 2006) who uses the extensive archaeological evidence of market-orientated mass-production to define the Late Roman economy as 'proto-industrial'. On economising behaviour in papyrological evidence see Rathbone 1991; Rathbone 2002; Bagnall 2005, which counters Hendy's (1991: 640-647) arguments regarding the lack of literary evidence for economic rationality in the Roman world.

[72] See Elliot 2020: 10-18 for a useful summary of New Institutional Economics. Elliot 2020 is also indicative of an increasing trend to critique New Institutional Economics and explore alternative approaches to writing histories of the Roman economy (see, for example Erdkamp 2014; Bernard 2020; Candy 2022; Van Limbergen et. al. 2022).

into the political ideology and policy of the Roman state.[73] In the wake of earlier debates, it is now safe to assert that Late Roman imperial coinage, as a body of material culture predominantly produced under state control, was a medium used to express select political messages.

1.2. The Selection of Coin Iconography and Imperial Directives

The next point to consider is who was responsible for selecting these political messages of coins. Should we interpret iconography and inscriptions as communicating the emperor's ideals and policies, or as chosen by mint officials disconnected from the Roman state's upper echelons? If the coinage is to be treated as a form of top-down propaganda, through which the head of the empire sought to communicate with their subjects, the involvement of the emperor (or his direct delegates) in selecting coin iconography must be demonstrated.

Determining exactly who was responsible for selecting coin iconography has garnered considerable attention within Roman numismatics, though such work has primarily been concerned with the Principate.[74] Conclusions regarding which tier of the state hierarchy made decisions around coin design have significantly varied. These have ranged from assertions that it was the emperors themselves down to the lowly mint workers, with each scholar's position reflecting their assessment of the significance of coinage as a political medium.[75] The bottom-up perspective of type selection has been particularly championed by Barbara Levick, who argued for the total absence of direct imperial involvement.[76] Instead, she contended that coin iconography was chosen by unsupervised mint officials, who used it as a means of publicly flattering the emperor. Levick's approach intended to resolve the issue of a lack of literary evidence that definitively demonstrates the emperor's direct involvement in type selection, but arguably over-compensated by failing to recognise coinage was a persuasive medium that externally publicised imperial legitimacy and authority to 'non-state' audiences.[77]

Chris Howgego has provided a more appropriate interpretation, to which this thesis holds. He has defined imperial coinage as simultaneously a mechanism for asserting imperial power and 'a means of active self-identification' for the state.[78] It grants coinage a reflexive, self-legitimising function, while also acknowledging the state's outward focus and desire to convey political messages to the wider populace. This two-way definition also coheres with the

[73] See, for example, Noreña 2001; Hekster 2003; Wolters 2003; Kemmers 2006; Metcalf 2006; Hedlund 2008; Beckmann 2009; Elkins 2009; Noreña 2011; Manders 2012; Wienand 2012; Claes 2013; Rowan 2013a; Rowan 2013c; Wolters and Ziegert 2014; Ellithorpe 2017; Elkins 2017.
[74] For overviews of this debate, see Kemmers 2019: 15-32; Wolters 1999: 255-265.
[75] Kemmers 2022b: 341.
[76] Levick 1982.
[77] Sutherland 1986: 86; Wallace-Hadrill 1986.
[78] Howgego 1995: 40, 44.

growing consensus that selection of coin designs was made within the upper echelons of the imperial government; if not by the emperor himself then by members of his inner circle who were involved in forming the state's political rhetoric.[79] Even if evidence of direct imperial involvement is lacking, the image-selectors' close affiliation with their emperor makes it appropriate to understand their selection as synonymous with the emperor's whims, in effect making their choices proxies of the emperor's direct involvement.

1.2.1. Centralised Iconographic Selection in the Late Roman Period

Close correlation between the emperor and his inner circle with the process of iconographic selection is particularly evident in the Late Roman period. Following Diocletian's administrative reforms, a centralised hierarchy of control between the imperial courts and the mints becomes visible.[80] Imperial finances were separated into three departments: the praetorian prefecture, the *res privata* and the *res summa* (*sacra largitiones*). The head of the latter was the *rationalis summae rei* (*RSR*), later the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (*CSL*), whose responsibilities included control of the imperial mints.[81] One *RSR/CSL* was attached to each emperor's court, being a principal member of that emperor's *consistorium*.[82] Directly below and answering to

[79] Kemmers 2022b: 341; Elkins 2017: 148-149. There has also been much debate regarding the exact official responsible for iconographic selection during the Principate, and of the varying statuses of these possible figures. Levick (1982) suggested the *a rationibus* was responsible for iconographic selection, a view since supported by Claes (2014). Howgego (1995: 70) alternatively favoured the *triumviri monetales.* The office of *a rationibus* was originally occupied by a single freedman in the early empire before being passed to equestrian officials (see Davenport 2019: 307-309; Eck and Groß-Albenhausen 2006). However, the freedmen who held this office were specifically freedmen of the emperors, and Claes (2014) makes it clear that they were very much involved in palace politics. On the *triumviri monetales* see Stevenson, Smith and Madden 1889: 817-819. Under the early empire these existed as three magistracies. Augustus's reforms to this office and his later command to cease the inscribing of these magistrates' names on the coinage suggests imperial interest in and oversight of their work. It seems apparent that, regardless of the whether a freedman of the imperial palace or senior magistrate had control over iconographic selection during the Principate, both would have had intimate knowledge of contemporary state propaganda to inform their designing of the coinage.

[80] The following structure of officials and their responsibilities presents the commonly held model of monetary production within Late Roman scholarship, as attested by Carson 1956: 232-239; Jones 1964: I, 427, 438; RIC VI: 88-93, 105-108; King 1980a: 144-146, 152; Hendy 1985: 371-386; Van Heesch 2012; Bond 2016: 238. It should also be noted that although the principal source for this model is the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a document that dates to the early fifth century, it is widely accepted to reflect the administrative arrangements of the Diocletianic and Constantinian periods (Hendy 1985: 376). Any deviation or further clarification of this model is discussed in the following footnotes.

[81] For further discussion of all the *comes sacrarum largitionum*'s responsibilities, which included collection of certain fixed taxes, control of mines and state factories, production of state military and civic uniforms, and provision of the military donatives and *stipendia* see Jones 1964: I, 427-437; King 1980a.

[82] Jones 1964: I, 333-341; Gizewski 2006a. It should be raised here that there appears to be some confusion, or at least a general lack of clarification, with regard to the number of *CSLs* and the level that they operated at. In both their works, King (1980: 142) and Hendy (1985: 376-377) state that the *comites largitionum* existed within every diocese of the eastern empire, and in Illyricum, Italy, Gaul and Africa in the west. These follow what has been stated in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Orientis* 13 and *Occidentis* 11). However, what neither make clear is whether the *CSL* and the *comites largitionum* are the same office or not. As per *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Orientis* 1 and *Occidentis* 1, the respective registers of dignitaries list a singular *CSL* for the east and west. In turn, the *comites largitionum per omnes dioceses* (*Notitia Dignitatum*, *Orientis* 13), *comes largitionum per Illyricum* and *Italicianarum* (*Notitia Dignitatum*, *Occidentis* 11) are all stated to be *sub dispositione viri illustris comitis sacrarum largitionum* ('under the control of the illustrious man, *comes sacrarum largitionum*'). This distinguishes the *comes largitionum per* [diocese] as a regional position subordinate to the senior *CSL*. Given the document's dating to the early fifth century, the presence of one *CSL* in the east and one in the west reflected the contemporary administrative division of empire

the *RSR/CSL* were the *procuratores monetarum*, each in charge of an individual mint.[83] Each *procurator* was supported by several *praepositi*, the supervisors of daily operations within the mints.[84] In theory, from the end of the third century, there was a centralised command structure that placed control of what coinage was minted, and in what quantities, in the hands of one of the emperor's chief financial ministers, whose proximity to the emperor would have ensured an intimate knowledge of contemporary propaganda policy.

However, because we lack any further evidence regarding the actual functioning of these control mechanisms, questions have been raised about the extent to which the *RSR*s*/CSL*s practised their hypothetical regulatory influence over coin production.[85] Yet we do know from Lactantius and others that imperial portraits were produced at different imperial courts and consequently sent to other emperors and cities.[86] Centralised distribution of portraiture sets a precedent for iconographic selection of the reverse-types of coinage. This is only further vindicated by the conformity of design within Late Roman base-metal coinage. Iconographic selection by the *RSR* took immediate effect in the tetrarchic period following Diocletian's administrative and monetary reforms. Sutherland has argued how the iconographic conformity of the First Tetrarchy demonstrated the pre-eminent position of Diocletian's *RSR* over those of the same office at the other tetrarchs' courts, whereas, following Diocletian's abdication (305), increased competition and conflict between emperors was accompanied by iconographic variation that reflected each emperor's *RSR* now acting more independently.[87] This shows that, even when greater variation between iconographic types emerged in different parts of the empire, there continued to be coherence between those types produced within a single emperor's domain, under the authority of a single *RSR/CSL*. This coherence within

between the courts of Arcadius and Honorius. As such, we may anticipate that the total number of *CSLs* would have changed in line with the varying number of separate imperial courts throughout the fourth century.

[83] *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Orientis* 13; *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Occidentis* 11.

[84] *CIL* VI 1445. For discussion of the mints' internal structure and roles below the *praepositi* see Woytek 2012.

[85] Jones 1964: I, 438; King 1980a: 151; van Heesch 2012: 163.

[86] See Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 25 on Constantine I sending his portrait to Galerius to receive the senior emperor's recognition. Examples of the distribution and setting up of these images in public urban centres can be found in Libanius, *Orations* 19, which related the assault of these images by the Antiochenes, or in Zosimus, *New History* 4.37.3, which discussed the erection of Magnus Maximus's statue in Alexandria following his initial recognition by Theodosius I. The connotations of centrally produced official portraiture to be distributed as required very much echo Arrian, *Periplus of the Euxine Sea*, 1.1-2, in which the author requested for Hadrian to send a statue of himself to Trapezus to replace an unflattering one constructed by the locals. Cassiodorus's overview of the Roman officials' functions from the mid-sixth century notably also claimed that the *CSL* held responsibility for the imperial portrait on coinage (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 6.7.3). On this basis and the evidence of the high degree of iconographic uniformity across the empire particularly under the First Tetrarchy, Sutherland (RIC VI: 108) has reasoned that master cartoons for reverse coin types were also created at the imperial courts and distributed to the regional mints accordingly.

[87] RIC VI: 92-93. An important observation by Sutherland is of some rarer variation that could occur within these regions, which demonstrates the limits to contemporary communication and co-ordinated, centralised control. Similarly, see Van Heesch 2012: 175, which asserts that the coinage and monetary decisions may have been controlled by a sophisticated administrative system but were nonetheless also still governed by 'bounded rationality'. For an overview of 'bounded rationality' see Elliot 2020: 13.

separate imperial domains persisted throughout the Late Roman period.[88] The evidence for top-down engagement with the base-metal coinage is reinforced by Johan van Heesch's study of control marks, which has concluded that they were an administrative mechanism enforced on the mints by the centralised authority of the *RSR/CSL*.[89] Regional, and at times pan-imperial, conformance in the iconographic designs of base-metal coinage and even its non-propagandistic visual components (i.e. control marks) demonstrates that the *RSR/CSL did* regularly exercise his control over what coinage was produced. In turn, regardless of whether the emperor provided explicit directives about coin design, the *RSR/CSL*'s proximity to the emperor ensured that the coinage he ordered to be produced was espousing political messages that conformed with his emperor's wider propaganda policy.

1.2.2. The Emperor as Coin Designer in Contemporary Literature

Not only was coin design a top-down selection process but contemporaries perceived this to be so, and equated coin propaganda with the contemporary state. It was a common conceit of the historical and biographical writers, during their rare discussions of coinage, to present emperors as the driving force behind iconographic change. From the early Principate, Suetonius stated it was Augustus who chose the Capricorn iconography for his silver coinage to advertise his birth constellation.[90] So too, it was apparently Nero who directed for coinage to be struck depicting him as a lyre player, to celebrate his recent successes during his tour of Greece (66/67).[91] This continued to be a feature of literature throughout the Late Roman period and beyond. The *Historia Augusta* included passages stating how Gallienus 'ordered coins to be struck in his honour, which showed him hauling the Persians into captivity',[92] and how

[88] See Chapter 4 for identification and discussion of numerous further examples of regional variation in iconographic types, whose parameters correlate with the boundaries of different emperors' domains.
[89] Van Heesch 2012.
[90] For example, RIC I (second edition) Augustus 124-130; Suetonius, *Augustus* 94.12. Of note is that Suetonius's various key administrative positions under Hadrian, as an *a studiis*, an *a bybliothecis*, and an *ab epistulis* (Merlin 1954: 27-28, no.73) may have afforded him access to archives that indicated such direct imperial decision-making.
[91] For example, RIC I (second edition) Nero 73-82; Suetonius, *Nero* 25.2.
[92] *Historia Augusta, The Two Gallieni* 12.1. There is no coin type of Gallienus that overtly commemorates a victory over the Persians in a comparable manner to the VICT GERMANICA aureus (RIC V.1 Gallienus 122) or VICTORIA GERMANICA radiate (RIC V Gallienus 308). However, Geiger (2013: 224) has identified the PAX FUNDATA type, depicting two bound captives wearing curled hats beneath a trophy (RIC V.1 Gallienus 652), as a possible type that celebrated Odaenathus's victory over the Persians, as per the *Historia Augusta*. Alternatively, Manders (2012: 297-298) has suggested that a variety of reverse-types depicting a lion, sometimes radiate, with a bull's head between its claws (RIC V.1 Gallienus 601-602, 604-605), may refer to Odaenathus's Persian victories in 262-3 and 267. The validity of the ancient author's claim about Gallienus minting of coinage commemorating a Persian victory is therefore questionable when we turn to the numismatic record. The reliability of the author is then made further questionable when we consider their claims that Gallienus granted the imperial title and authority of Augustus to Odaenathus as well as having promoted his Persian victories on the coinage. Only the *Historia Augusta* claims Odaenathus was promoted to Augustus and this is not widely accepted by historians, whereas there is more agreement over Odaenathus holding the titles of *Dux Romanorum* ('Commander of the Romans') and *Corrector Totius Orientis* ('Restorer of the whole East') (Bryce 2014: 290-291). The author of this section of the *Historia Augusta* was not accurate in their description of these third-century events. As a fourth-century writer they did however correctly present the contemporary reality that only the current Augustus was able to confer that title on

Severus Alexander 'had himself depicted on many of his coins in the costume of Alexander the Great'.[93] Eusebius portrayed Constantine as responsible for introducing Christianised coin designs and for commanding the issue of coinage in commemoration of his mother Helena.[94] Similarly, John of Ephesus claimed that Tiberius II introduced the cross-potent-on-steps reverse on the *solidus* following a vision he had received.[95] Furthermore, both Arab and Byzantine sources presented Christ's depiction on Justinian II's first-reign *solidi* (692-695) as a reaction by the emperor himself to either Abd al-Malik's coin reform or the appearance of Muslim formulations on imported Egyptian papyri.[96] In these texts, selection of coin iconography was never attributed to the state in general, but envisioned as a deliberate action of the emperor, motivated by his personal desires.

It has been suggested that the ancient historians' proclivity for presenting direct imperial involvement in iconographic selection may just be a literary mechanism, used to ''collapse' the processes of imperial responsibility', that is, to avoid discussion of complex minting infrastructure.[97] However, the assumed connection between the emperor and his coinage persisted beyond elite literature. Jesus's command from the Gospel of Mark to 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's' is one source that again clearly equated coinage as representative of its official issuer.[98] This very perspective was re-emphasised by St Augustine:

> 'Caesar, my brothers, did not make the coinage; the *monetarii* makes it…it is commanded to the artisans, [Caesar] issues his commands to his servants. His image was stamped on the coinage; on the coinage is the image of Caesar.'[99]

Within this sermon, again targeted at a wider, non-elite audience, there was a clear envisioning of a top-down command structure, of imperial directive, in the production of coinage. Moreover,

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another individual, while other groups such as the senate were presented as just giving nominal approval. Since the author therefore provided an accurate presentation of one state mechanism, we may also anticipate that this passage correctly reflected a general expectation of the author and their contemporaries that the emperor was able to influence iconographic type selection whenever they wished.

[93] *Historia Augusta*, *Severus Alexander* 25.9.

[94] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.15, 3.47. See also Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.2 on minting of coins in Helena's name.

[95] John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.14. For the first *solidi* bearing this reverse design see DOC I, Tiberius II nos.1-4, 38, 58, 62-63.

[96] For example, DOC II.2 Justinian II nos.AV7-8, 10. Theophanes AM 6183 presented Justinian as being provoked by Abd al-Malik and 'refused to accept the minted coin that had been sent…because it was of a new kind that had never been made before'. Al-Baladhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State* 240 said how the introduction of an inscription on the papyri praising Allah led to Abd al-Malik receiving 'from the Byzantine king a message, saying "You have recently introduced…some inscription we hate. If you leave that out, well and good; otherwise, you shall see on the *dînârs* the name of your Prophet associated with things you hate"'. This again considered Justinian as reactionary and personally threatening to change the coin iconography. See Vrij 2018: 114-119 for systematic comparison of these sources.

[97] Wallace-Hadrill 1986: 68, n.6.

[98] Gospel of Mark 12.17.

[99] Augustine, *Sermons* 90.10, trans in Bond 2016: 240.

Augustine overtly recognised the apparatus of monetary production in a way the historical texts simply did not, but still arrived at the same conclusion that it was the emperor who issued commands regarding the coinage. Similarly, the anonymous author of the *De Rebus Bellicis*, a rare example of an extant *libellus*, clearly thought that directly petitioning the emperor was the most appropriate way of encouraging monetary reform, and even gave suggestions on coin design.[100] The recurrent assumption of direct imperial control across texts of different genres undermines the notion that it was simply a literary trope to conveniently wash over the complexities of imperial administration and monetary production. From the perspective of assessing how coin propaganda may have impacted the wider populace's experience of imperial authority, it is essential to recognise that the coinage was understood to be derived from the emperor, that its political messages were being directed on a top-down basis, as part of a dialogue between ruler and subject.

Ultimately, it does not matter if the emperor was regularly involved in selecting coin iconography or not. Those close to him were. Furthermore, those engaging with coinage and external to the state structure assumed the messages and ideology espoused on the coinage came from the emperors themselves. Late Roman imperial coin iconography had a top-down focus, formed under the influence of the emperor and his inner circle as well as within the framework of court rhetoric and ideology. Under imperial guidance, coinage presented programmatic messages which constituted a necessary component of what made it a medium of state propaganda. With these key points in mind, we can be confident of its ability to provide insight into what elements of imperial rulership ideology the state wished to publicise.

1.3. Audience Targeting over Different Metal Types

I have established that Roman imperial coinage was a centrally designed medium that espoused propaganda. Yet, despite this common function and origin, Roman numismatic material is not a homogenous corpus of a single unit of account. It is comprised of a series of metal types and denominations. The Augustan monetary system, which persisted relatively unchanged for the first two centuries CE, continued to orientate around the silver *denarius* of the Republican period, though also consisted of the gold *aureus* and various base-metal fractions (*sestertius, dupondius, as, semis* and *quadrans*).[101] It collapsed during the third century, during which time production of base-metal denominations had ceased, and gold and

[100] *De Rebus Bellicis* 3.4. On the structure of submitting *libelli* to the emperor and consequent response see Schiemann 2006. Also see Wiedemann 1979 which argues that the language focused on a singular recipient and the careful choices of subject matter indicate the *De Rebus Bellicis* as a personalised appeal to Valentinian I. For further discussion of the *De Rebus Bellicis* see **§1.5.1**, n.162.

[101] Wolters 2012: 335-338. Note also the issuing of the *quinarius* in both gold and silver, which were half values of the *aureus* and *denarius* respectively. As per Wolters 2012: 336 these were regularly minted under the Julio-Claudians but never in large quantities.

silver coinage faced near-continuous debasement.[102] Only with Diocletian's late-third-century reforms was a tri-metallic monetary system restored.[103] This underwent various changes, including the *aureus*'s replacement by the Constantinian *solidus* and its later fractions (*semissis* and *tremissis*).[104] Despite repeated reforms attempting to resurrect it, the multi-denomination base-metal system also repeatedly collapsed in the face of rampant inflation, though at least one base-metal denomination was always in production.[105] Examination of Roman imperial coinage from any of these periods will demonstrate iconographic variation between these denominations as well as over time, so we cannot simply talk about the propaganda of imperial coinage in a generalised, uniform manner. It is necessary to consider why this variance occurred on contemporaneously produced coins. This will help identify which specific denominations or metal types are the most suitable source for investigating this thesis's interest in the propaganda presented to the wider Roman populace.

Some differences in denomination design were entirely practical, to enable quick visual distinction. Certain denominations were identifiable by their obverse portraiture, such as the emperor with radiate crown that persistently appeared on the *dupondius*, *antoninianus* and post-Diocletianic reform base-metal fraction.[106] Different reverse designs also performed this entirely functional purpose when obverse portraiture was not so distinct.[107] Beyond this possible basic use though, the substantivist approaches to Roman numismatics during the

[102] Estiot 2012: 540-545; Verboven 2017. This debasement was so severe that the silver *antoninianus*/radiate, an overvalued two-*denarius* piece introduced in 215 that became the predominating denomination, had a silver fineness of merely ~2.5% by 270. The silver fineness of the radiate was increased to about 5% under a reform of Aurelian in 274, though this improvement was short-lived.
[103] Sutherland 1956.
[104] For summaries on Late Roman gold coinage see Abdy 2012a: 589-591; Moorhead 2012: 602-609; Hendy 1985: 386-394.
[105] For summaries of the history of base-metal coinage over the fourth century see Caza 2021 (esp. 35-45); Harl 1996: 158-175; Hendy 1985: 449-475. These all present a picture of repeated debasement and re-tariffing, in which reforms attempting to re-implement a multi-denominational base-metal system (348, 362, 379) ultimately failed and were followed by legislation demonetising the larger denominations (354/356, 371, 395). Note that until c.364 the single *nummus* denomination contained at least a fraction of silver (billon coinage). On the end of billon coinage see Caza 2021: 256-257; Moorhead 2012: 614-615; Reece 2012: 25-26; Harl 1996: 171-172; Hendy 1985: 471-474.
[106] Wolters 2012: 338 on the *dupondius*. As per Abdy 2012b: 507, *antoninianus* may be an inaccurate term for the new denomination introduced by Caracalla in 215, perhaps invented by *Historia Augusta* in the early fourth century. Much of modern scholarship now uses the term 'radiate' to identify this coinage based on its persistent use of the radiate imperial portrait. Similarly, the version of this denomination revised by Diocletian's reforms is also referred to as a post-reform 'radiate fraction' (as per RIC VI).
[107] The clearest evidence of this in the Late Roman period are the base-metal coin designs immediately following reforms that introduced multiple denominations, whereby each denomination had its own distinct iconographic type. This is clearly visible between Diocletian's reformed CONCORDIA MILITVM fractional radiate **[1]** and GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* **[3]** in the eastern empire. So too, as part of the base-metal coin reform of 348, designs of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO series differed in accordance with both denomination and which emperor they depicted (see Caza 2021: 157-161). Reverse design differentiation between denominations then became a persistent feature of Byzantine coinage, on both base-metal and gold coinage. As per DOC I: xi, from Anastasius's reforms in 498 most base-metal coinage had reverses simply stating their denominational value in Greek numerals. On the gold coinage, the *solidus* showed a standing Victory with long cross, the *semissis* a seated Victory inscribing a shield, and the tremissis a walking Victory with wreath and *globus cruciger*. This then changed in Tiberius II's reign, with the *solidi* then depicting a reverse of cross-potent-on-steps, the *semisses* had a lone *globus cruciger*, and *tremisses* had a lone cross.

1980s and 1990s, which emphasised coinage's monetary function and denounced its political dimension, have argued that iconographic variation was the result of either largely unsupervised artistic expression within the mints, or was an administrative mechanism for mints to delineate production quantities.[108]

Nevertheless, it is now widely accepted that this variance, particularly between the political messages of coinage of different metal types, was because the state intended to target the different social groups who used the different denominations. A key early advocate of this perspective was William Metcalf, in his study of coinage referencing *liberalitas* during the Principate.[109] He argued that the precious metal coinage, which primarily depicted a personified *liberalitas*, presented a more abstract conception of the virtue to the 'higher classes', whereas the base-metal coinage instead showed more concrete scenes of the emperor physically distributing coinage (*congiarium*), emphasising imperial *liberalitas* in action to the urban 'lower classes'. Olivier Hekster's more expansive survey of the Principate has further emphasised that iconographic variation across denominations was used to target distinct audiences.[110] Over the past two decades, examples of audience targeting that take note of denomination/metal type have gradually expanded.[111] Furthermore, a caveat of Hekster's article, which noted a 'near-absence of geographical audience targeting', may also be amended in light of ever-growing evidence to the contrary.[112] Indeed, the analysis of the surviving record of Late Roman base-metal coinage in Chapter 4 will recurrently discuss evidence of audience targeting within the dominions of different emperors.

1.3.1. Identifying Late Roman Base-Metal Coinage as Intended for Use Amongst the Wider Populace

The premise that distinct social groups were targeted with different political messages (or differently rendered political messages) over different denominations is well recognised. On this basis, this thesis subscribes to Sutherland's long-attested audience targeting model, that coins of different metal types were directed at distinct groups during the Late Roman period.[113] Broadly speaking, it posits that gold coinage was issued to meet state expenditure, so circulated within the state apparatus and was distributed primarily to its higher-ranking military

[108] Crawford 1983a: 59; Burnett 1987: 79; Duncan-Jones 1994: 97, n.4; Duncan-Jones 2005, esp. 485.
[109] Metcalf 1993. For definition of *liberalitas* as an imperial virtue and its depiction on coinage see Noreña 2011: 82-92; Beckmann 2015.
[110] Hekster 2003. Hekster does however, provide a few caveats, most notably that differentiation across denominations and subsequent targeting of different social groups was a recurrent – but not permanent – feature of all imperial coinage.
[111] See, for example, Ellithorpe 2017: 146-175; Noreña 2011: 88-92, 144-146, 176; Grunow Sobocinski 2006: 596-599; Zschucke 2000.
[112] See, for example, Ellithorpe 2017: 113-145; Elkins 2015: 108-116; Buttrey 2007; Kemmers 2006: 223-240.
[113] See RIC VI: 110. This model has been vindicated by later analyses, as per n.114-116.

and civic officials.[114] The intermittently issued silver coinage was also primarily for state expenditure purposes, and more specifically military pay.[115] Conversely, the base-metal coinage was the 'people's coin', for daily use amongst the wider populace.[116]

One potential challenge to this interpretation of the base-metal coinage must be immediately addressed. In existing historiographic models of coin circulation within the Roman Empire, it is the army who are identified as having been the initial recipients of base-metal coinage.[117] As such, it may be assumed that the soldiers were the primary audience of the base-metal coinage. That the military certainly was *an* audience cannot be denied.[118] However, the Roman state also anticipated that the base-metal coinage would come to be used in private exchange amongst its wider populace, so treated it as a medium for disseminating propaganda to this broader group. For example, the *Edict of Maximum Prices* (301) overtly addressed its discussions of monetary use in 'daily exchange of the cities' (*diurna urbium conversatione)* to 'our provincial citizens' (*provinciales nostri communis*).[119] The state's awareness of the prevalence of base-metal coinage in such private exchange is inferred by the fact that most common products listed in the edict necessitated the use of base-metal denominations.[120]

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[114] See also Banaji 2001, esp.46-65; Banaji 2016a; Banaji 2016b: 112-127. Jairus Banaji also argues that the Roman monetary system in Late Antiquity is marked by 'the introduction of a stable gold coinage and its progressive diffusion as a mass currency' (Banaji 2001: 45) and points to papyrological evidence that attests to the payment of most professionals except casual labourers in gold by the sixth century (Banaji 2001: 76). However, within the context of the fourth century at least, he frames the continuous expansion of the gold coinage as driven by the demands of an expanding imperial bureaucracy and officer class to be paid in money. This was so much so that he argues the concentration of wealth in gold amongst imperial officials saw the establishment of a new aristocracy. So too does he outline how both the state and this aristocracy relentlessly looked to extract gold coinage from wider society through mechanisms such as taxation and rent.

[115] See also Banaji 2001: 43-44; Moorhead 2012: 609-610. For overviews of the complex history of silver coinage and its various denominations during the Late Roman period see Abdy 2012a: 586, 592, 594-595; Moorhead 2012: 609-612.

[116] Sutherland 1956: 176. For the first and second centuries CE Sutherland (1959: 53) also has posited a similar model based on archaeological evidence, of the common soldiery and wider populace largely only having access to *asses* and *dupondii*, proportionally fewer *sestertii* and almost no silver or gold coinage, which instead circulated amongst persons like army officers and civic officials.

[117] See Kemmers 2009a; Aarts 2005: 11; Harl 1996: 242-246 for various summative models of the coin supply in the Roman Empire. All these proposed models specify the military as a principal recipient of base-metal coinage, either directly as pay or through exchanging their wages of silver coinage with state money-changers (*nummularii*). See Jones 1964: II, 623-624, Hendy 1985: 289, 459-460; Moorhead 2012: 615 on payment of the soldiers' annual *stipendium* in base-metal coinage during the Late Roman period.

[118] On the army as a target audience of imperial coin propaganda in general see, for example, Ando 2000: 314; Hekster 2003: 27-29; Kemmers 2005: 39-49; Hekster 2007: 251-253; Kemmers 2009b (esp.850-852); Kemmers 2014; Claes 2023; Papageorgiadou 2023: 213-218. For further discussion of the army as an alternative audience of the Late Roman base-metal coinage see **§5.2.1.5**.

[119] *Edict of Maximum Prices* in Frank 1940, 313.

[120] See *Edict of Maximum Prices* in Frank 1940, 310-421, which includes hundreds of items, particularly foodstuffs for daily consumption, valued between one and 100 *denarii*. Of note here is that the value of the *argenteus*, the single pure silver denomination in production at the time of the edict, had a fixed value of 100 *denarii* (Abdy 2012a: 586), so any item less than this would have necessitated using the base-metal *nummus* or its radiate fractions. Also see Allen 2009: 330, which, based on the *Edict of Maximum Prices*, estimates the daily income of city-dwelling, unskilled, free male labourers to have been twenty-five *denarii* per day in cash, and the equivalent of 11.1 *denarii* per day in kind. Again, this cash payment would have been only a quarter of the *argenteus*, and even if these wages were only paid in bulk periodically, we may anticipate they were still paid in base-metal coinage or immediately changed into such via a moneychanger to enable the labourers to purchase the goods they needed. It is worth noting that in the above discussion and any further analysis involving the *Edict of Maximum Prices* what I have called the *denarius* is the same as what many other analyses have called the *denarius communis.* I have

Moreover, all edicts concerning the use of base-metal coinage in the Theodosian code were addressed to non-military officials.[121] The extant legal evidence consistently indicates that the state desired to regulate coin usage not amongst soldiers but in the civic sphere. The institution responsible for producing base-metal coinage assumed it would inevitably and predominately be used by the wider populace, even if initially dispersed amongst the military. Furthermore, Reece has argued that the state used base-metal coinage as 'bait' to recapture precious metal coinage, in that base-metal coinage was produced and made available to those in need of currency more suited for high-velocity, low-value transactions in exchange for their unwieldy gold and silver.[122] This suggests the wider populace's predominant usage of base-metal coinage was not one of serendipitous convenience. Rather, it posits that base-metal coinage was specifically produced to meet the monetary demands of the wider populace to reclaim the intrinsically valuable precious metal coinage the state so needed and wanted.

This model asserts it was always the state's intention for base-metal coinage of significantly lower intrinsic value to be the predominant money used by most of its citizens. Given this thesis's interest in the propaganda presented by the state to the wider populace, this is of great significance. By recognising that the different denominations of Late Roman coinage were intended to target different audiences we can:

1. Better acknowledge the complexity of the political messages they bore.
2. Attain a greater appreciation of the time and effort given to targeting these different groups.
3. Narrow down the field of inquiry within this study, to draw upon only those sections of the wider body of imperial coinage most appropriate to its aims.

Focusing on base-metal coinage and its political messages shows us at least one direction of the dialogue between the emperor and his subjects at large, and therefore the aspects of imperial rulership ideology that the state wished this wider populace to be exposed to.

1.4. Monetisation and the Availability of Coinage

Late Roman coinage of different metal types communicated different aspects of a centrally selected propaganda programme to different social groups, and studying the base-metal

decided not to follow this convention since, as Melville Jones (2017) has demonstrated, the term *denarius communis* is an entirely modern invention.

[121] CTh.9.21.1-10; 9.23.1-2; 11.21.1, 3; which are all addressed to the Praetorian Prefects, Vicars or Count of the Sacred Largesse. CTh.9.23.2 even talks about seizing any 'decargyrus' (the larger base-metal denomination circulating at that time) 'found in public use' (*quae in publica potuerit conversatione deprehendi*).

[122] Reece 2003: 142-143. Also see Bransbourg 2020 for the state's application of enforced levies and taxes in precious metal on the wider populace and the compensatory role played by base-metal coinage in these processes.

coinage will provide the best insight into what political messages the state sought to present to its wider citizenry. Before considering the method for interpreting these messages, we must also establish whether the state's intent to present certain propaganda through its base-metal coinage met with historical reality. As a first step in confirming this, in this section I will demonstrate that the Late Roman period was highly monetised, that the wider populace had frequent contact with the base-metal coinage, and so were regularly exposed to its political messages.

It is first appropriate to explain what is meant by 'monetisation' and to clarify its use as a framework for answering this study's aims before we assess the actual degree of monetisation within the Roman Empire. Our interest is in ascertaining the availability of coinage, but the 'monetisation' of Roman society refers to the availability of *all* different forms of money. Money is a social construct – anything commonly used as a form of exchange within a structured environment, like a market, is money.[123] Koenraad Verboven has identified three different types of money, or 'monetary modes', within the Roman monetary system: 'currency' (coinage), 'commodity' (both bullion and bulk goods like grain or oil) and 'account' (debit/credit).[124] With multiple 'monetary modes' co-existing, an inhabitant of the empire would have had their direct interaction with coinage diluted by alternative methods of exchange.

As such, increased monetisation may not have equated to increasingly common engagement with coinage. However, the account mode, more accessible for general usage than the commodity mode due to its immateriality, was inherently connected to the availability of coinage. While Harris has argued that the quantity of credit money in the Roman world far exceeded the total supply of coinage in circulation, this availability was fundamentally rooted in assumed access to coinage as a means of repayment.[125] For example, in the predominantly credit-based internal economies of estates in Roman Egypt, it was assumed that goods accumulated from tenants could be easily converted into coinage, to allow interaction with the wider market economy.[126] Moreover, these estates' payment of non-permanent labourers in physical currency indicates a cash-monetised rural landscape immediately beyond their boundaries.[127] Even in the case of extremely developed credit-money systems physical coinage still retained a foundational presence. While increased monetisation can refer to the

[123] See Verboven 2009, esp. 29, which defines money as a 'social construct that structures exchange and relations between social actors'. This redefinition of 'money' was in opposition to Moses Finley's more simplistic definition that money in the Roman world 'was essentially coined metal and nothing else' (Finley 1999: 196).
[124] Verboven 2009: 5.
[125] Harris 2008; Howgego 1992: 15; Verboven 2009: 29.
[126] See Rathbone 1991: 318-330 for analysis of the papyri accounts of the Appianus Fayyum estate from the mid-third century, which he suggests are indicative of practices in the wider rural economy of the surrounding Arsinoite nome. Here some 30% of the Appianus estates' total expenditure went on permanent staff, with most of this expenditure being wages credited to internal accounts rather than paid in cash.
[127] Rathbone 1991: 322-323. Rathbone 1991: 319 also does indicate that permanent staff were able to withdraw their internal estate credit as coinage.

growing increased availability of non-coinage monies, monetisation in the Roman world was contingent on the ability to easily liquidate these into coinage if required. As a general point, greater monetisation would ultimately equate to a greater number of coins in circulation.

A further provision is that this assessment of monetisation is *not* a commentary on the relative strength or weakness of the Roman economy. Using coin volumes as a proxy for assessing economic prosperity and market exchange is highly contentious.[128] We only need to establish if access to coined money (and its political messages) was a common feature of life within the Roman Empire; whether the wider populace had regular access to *some* coinage, not if they had access to *enough* coinage. For our purposes, 'monetisation' is quite simple: a high level of available money in any form was contingent on a general availability of coinage. The greater the volume of coinage in circulation and the greater its diffusion throughout the empire, the greater the degree of exposure to coin propaganda experienced by the wider imperial populace as the intended audience of base-metal coinage.

1.4.1. Monetisation under the Principate

With these caveats in mind, we will first gauge the level of monetisation achieved during the Principate to contextualise the subsequent consideration of the Late Roman period. The prevailing consensus within current Roman economic historiography is that the empire became a highly monetised space over the first three centuries CE, and that coin use became prevalent across the social spectrum. Earlier models, such as Hopkins's 'thin veneer' of coinage operating atop a much wider natural economy, or pessimistic substantivist assertions of low monetisation in a predominately autarkic economy, have been supplanted by qualitative and quantitative analyses.[129] Luuk de Ligt's and Chris Howgego's overviews of literary and papyrological material have highlighted the ubiquitous presence of coinage in daily exchange contexts, alongside the relative absence of non-monetised exchange like barter.[130] The

[128] See Elliot 2020: 24-25, which raises issues with many modern historians 'conflating monetisation with marketisation', and how this betrays modernist assumptions that more money must have resulted in a larger, stronger market economy. Also worth noting is Reece's assertion 'that large numbers of copper coins in a period in any given region represent monetisation, not wealth', and how 'copper coinage tells one nothing therefore about the condition of an economy' (Reece 2003: 143).

[129] Hopkins 1980: 104; Jones 1953: 293; Hendy 1989: 9.

[130] De Ligt 1990: 30-39; Howgego 1992: 16-22, 30. Both observe widespread evidence in contemporary literature of rural-urban interconnection and the prominence of cash as the standard means of exchange in each of these spaces, which built on similar conclusions made by Millar in regard to Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (Millar 1981: 72-75). Evidence of barter – arguably the principal form of non-monetary, reciprocal, direct exchange of commodities – is notably absent from Roman literary evidence. This is so much so that Richard Duncan-Jones could only support his argument for the common presence of barter in the Roman world by asserting that evidence of such exchange in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, a source predating the Roman Empire by two millenia, was 'characteristic of the pre-modern world' (Duncan-Jones 1994: 20-21). Contrary to this, and as per Howgego (1992: 16, n.148), there was in fact a trend in the Roman literature to emphasise barter itself as something specifically non-Roman and non-civilised. This was not simply a trope limited to the elite literature. The *Apophthegmata Patrum*, a collection of fifth-century texts of 'direct and unsophisticated' language concerned with the monks of the Egyptian desert, provides us with a religious text derived from oral tradition. It contains just two direct references to barter in

prevalence of coined money has been vindicated by estimations of coin production quantities, such as Duncan-Jones's calculation that the total coinage in circulation by the mid-second century amounted to around twenty trillion *sestertii* in value.[131] Although Duncan-Jones's quantitative methodology has been criticised, his basic conclusions have nevertheless helped to shift perspective to a general acknowledgement that the total coinage in circulation under the early empire was substantial.[132] In the centuries immediately before the Late Roman period, the territories under imperial hegemony saw large quantities of coinage enter into circulation and percolate throughout Roman society. Coinage was widely available, which ensured that its propaganda was highly visible to the wider populace.

1.4.2. Monetisation and the Late Roman Period

Analysis of the Late Roman economy and coinage within it has experienced a similar historiographical trajectory to the studies of the Principate, though on a slightly delayed timescale. Regarding the Late Roman economy, arguments of economic regression under an autarkic state and aristocracy, and of the decline of urban spaces and peasant status, have been abandoned. It is instead asserted that inter-regional trade networks between urban areas were sustained, as was profit-orientated production for private market exchange, whilst certain rural areas experienced economic expansion.[133] Consequently, negative assessments of monetisation in the Late Roman period have been overturned, and the fourth-century empire is now argued to have been as heavily monetised as during the Principate, if not more so.[134] The state produced vast quantities of base-metal coinage, in particular, to pay its soldiers and lure back precious metal bullion from the wider economy.[135] Recurrent debasement of the billon *nummus* in the first half of the fourth century; re-tariffing of its nominal values; ceasing to add silver to the base-metal coins from the Valentinianic period; and even the various short-lived reforms that increased weight and/or silver content, have all been identified as features

comparison to ongoing themes of monetary exchange and accrual by the monks themselves. On the *Apophthegmata Patrum* see De Ligt 1990: 37, n.42-43; Cross and Livingstone 1997: 88; Gould 1986: 136-138.

[131] Duncan-Jones 1994: 168-170. Note that while Duncan-Jones states 'the total circulating medium might have amounted to roughly HS20 billion in the mid-second century', he is referring to a British billion (a million million or 1,000,000,000,000), a now defunct definition that has been replaced in general usage by the US definition of a billion as a thousand million (1,000,000,000). This definition is not explicitly stated but reflected in his other figures, such as bronze coinage making up some 'HS20,517 million' (actually 20.517 billion or 20,517,000,000) of the total face value of coinage in circulation.

[132] On criticism of Duncan-Jones's calculations and methodological basis see Howgego 1996 and Verboven 2009: 98, both of which call into question Duncan-Jones's estimation that gold constituting as high as 70% of the face value of the total coinage in circulation. However, Verboven 2009: 98 still gives his support to the general conclusion that 'the Roman coinage supply in the early Empire was abundant', echoing Jongman's assertion that 'it is now more difficult to maintain that Rome was an under-monetised economy' (Jongman 2002: 38). See too Howgego 2024: 81-83, 87, 91 on the general abundance of coinage under the Principate and staggering scale of coin production, which could see the issuing millions of coins in a matter of days.

[133] See Weisweiler 2022: 103-105 for a more extensive charting of this historiographical change and associated bibliography.

[134] See Carlà 2009: 14; Banaji 2016c: 18; Banaji 2016b: 112-127.

[135] See **§1.3.1**, esp. n.122.

of a base-metal coinage produced to support the state's precious metal extraction policy.[136] Beyond intermittently issuing legislation to demonetise certain base-metal coinage, the state seemingly lacked any mechanism to extract the base-metal coinage it was continuously injecting into the economy.[137] As such, the total monetary stock would have been rising in absolute terms, making interaction with coinage more frequent, even if price inflation throughout the fourth century meant that more coinage was needed for the same purchases.[138] By the early fifth century, the stock of base-metal coinage appears to have been so abundant that the eastern empire switched to a policy of intermittent production to just top-up the existing pool.[139]

Even when the supply of coinage from centralised state mints dwindled in certain regions, subsequent 'epidemic' production of imitation coins continued to emulate the iconography of their contemporary official counterparts.[140] With the five British sites in this thesis's dataset, for example, 85.2% of the Falling Horseman coins **[69]** were imitations.[141] Because of these imitations, the Falling Horseman coins comprised the most prevalent iconographic type from Period 8 (348-363) at the British sites (average of 62.7%), just as at the dataset's other thirty-nine sites (average of 74.1%).[142] Regional solutions were found to maintain a highly monetised landscape, and copiers' sensitivity to contemporary official types meant Britain's experience of coin propaganda remained comparable with regions that had consistent official coin supply. Exposure to the political messages of base-metal coinage was still maintained even at moments of unofficial or de-centralised production.

[136] Caza 2021: 34-46; Bransbourg 2020; Bagnall and Bransbourg 2019; Harl 1996: 172-174.
[137] Reece 2003: 142-143; Jones 1964: I, 442; Jones 1953: 310-314. On demonetisation legislation issued in 353/356, 371 and 395 see Harl 1996: 169-175 and Hendy 1985: 291-294, 472-475.
[138] On price inflation see Bagnall 1985; Banaji 2001, esp. 222; Carlà 2009, esp.27-31.
[139] Guest 2012: 116-118, 120-121.
[140] It is now widely accepted that imitation coins copied the most recent official iconographic types in production, so can be dated to a similar period as their official counterparts (Kent 1959a; Bastien 1985: 164-171). See Bastien 1985 on the four fourth-century 'epidemic' outbreaks of imitation coinage production in Gaul. These were the most severe examples of the imitation of base-metal coinage, which circulated around the empire. Egypt also experienced an outbreak of cast coinage under the tetrarchy (Bagnall 1985: 51-52; Soto Marín 2020). Britain paralleled much of the struck imitations of Gaul, with especially large-scale imitation of base-metal coins dated to 330-341 (Boon 1974: 127-136; Reece 2002: 57), as well as of silver *siliquae* dating from 363 and into the early fifth century (Guest 2005: 102-109). While small-scale imitation forgery was relatively continuous, often using the casting method rather than striking, in the case of the above listed large-scale imitation periods it has been generally accepted that, whether legally produced or not, these were being created to facilitate market exchange rather than as a profit-making criminal enterprise. There are perhaps questions of whether imitations were of sufficient visual quality to communicate the propaganda of their official counterparts. This was certainly not an issue for the epidemic of cast coinage in Egypt. Also, the Constantinian copies of Britain have been noted for often attaining such a comparable level of quality with their official counterparts that only metallurgical analysis can accurately differentiate them (King 1978: 45; Ponting 1994: 23, 97; Reece 2002: 57-58). Furthermore, while the epidemic of Falling Horseman copies from the 350s in Gaul and Britain were certainly of a lower visual quality, the original design was so unique that even poor imitations remain identifiable with their intended iconographic type.
[141] Also see Reece 2002: 58; Reece 2012: 24 on the general absence of official Falling Horseman types in Britain.
[142] See Appendix 6, Period 8 for further comparison of pan-imperial and regional proportions of the Falling Horseman type **[69]** against other contemporary iconographic types.

Britain is also notable as a region that exemplifies increased monetisation in the Late Roman period. The first two-and-a-half centuries of imperial rule in Britain had established a landscape of monetised market exchange across its southern and eastern parts, in urban and rural areas alike.[143] Into the fourth century, a greater level of coin-loss is evident in western Britain too, pointing to growth of 'Roman' settlement patterns in the same area.[144] This is also the region and period in which Dark has identified the emergence of proto-industrial urban centres.[145] Here we see that, at the fringes of the empire, up until at least the formal withdrawal of imperial control from Britain in 410, a landscape under imperial control was still steadily moving towards Roman-style organisation, which included greater economic organisation based around nucleated living and increased market exchange that included regular interaction with cash.[146] In regions free of disruption from external threats, the Late Roman period stands as a timespan of increased monetisation in comparison to the Principate. The circulating cash pools of the Mediterranean were maintained, while away from these littoral settings the processes of urbanisation and expansion of the empire's monetised market economy continued up to at least the end of Roman political control.

1.4.3. Changes in Coin Quantities and Exchange Methods, and Money Bags: An Interruption to Iconographic Engagement?

Access to base-metal coinage was therefore extremely common in the Late Roman period. The volumes of base-metal coinage in use had arguably become so abundant by the end of the fourth century that how payments were made had to change. This risked drastically reduced engagement with the coin iconography. At the beginning of the fourth century, the value of base-metal coinage relative to the cost of essential goods was high enough that purchases would have involved the physical interaction with, and counting out of, individual

[143] See Walton 2012: 94-114 for the extraordinarily dense coverage of coin finds especially in southern and eastern England. The coin finds of this region have typically been located along roads and interpreted as villas or nucleated large farmsteads, while both the nature of the deposits formed through coin-loss, alongside the presence of weighing equipment at many of these sites, indicates that these were certainly areas of numerous transactions (Brindle 2017: 278-279). Reece (2015: 162-163) has however compelling argued that these deposits of coins and weights should instead be interpreted as temporary open market sites rather than fixed settlements. This picture is further filled out when we incorporate the extensive quantity of coin hoards (Bland 2018a: 97-120) located in rural areas as the exact opposite to site-finds, which produces the picture of a monetised landscape beyond urban centres, with sites of storage scattered around and between sites of exchange. For comparable development of monetised market nodes and the common presence of Roman coinage throughout another rural area of the empire see Aarts 2015: 223-224 on the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region between the Flavian period and the mid-third century. However, this comparison ends in the fourth century, as in contrast to south-east Britain the presence of recurrent external threats to this region saw coinage increasingly limited to military contexts.

[144] Brindle 2017: 277-278.

[145] Dark 1996: 12-14; Dark 2001: 26.

[146] In fact, according to Walton 2012: 168-169, the data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme points to similar levels of coin-loss and implied commercial activity between both the period of 388-402 and the Early Medieval period, from which I would suggest a continuation of exchange patterns established by Roman presence even after the formal political withdrawal from the island.

coins. Hence, both payer and payee would have been exposed to the coin propaganda in most simple transactions. However, price inflation during the fourth century was so severe that the purchasing of basic goods went from requiring tens of individual base-metal coins to needing hundreds or even thousands for a single transaction.[147] This steady escalation in the number of base-metal coins required to obtain essential foodstuffs is demonstrated by Figure 1.1, which proposes the number of contemporary *nummi* needed to purchase a single *artaba* of wheat (enough to sustain one adult male for roughly a month) in Egypt between 305-353.[148] The initial three purchases (305, 312 and 312/313) proposed here could have been made by physically passing over individual coins. However, the eighty-three *nummi* already required by 314 would have been cumbersome to count out, and the hundreds of *nummi* required for the same purchase by 335 would have been entirely impractical. To facilitate the movement of these much larger quantities of money, it has been suggested that transactions changed, so that base-metal coinage was exchanged by weight, poured from bag to bag, rather than individually passing from hand to hand.[149] Fixed values of base-metal *nummi* were also occasionally sealed up in leather bags (*folles*) or roles of papyrus, further inhibiting physical interaction with the coinage.[150] We must therefore briefly consider whether these changes in the way base-metal coinage typically moved, provoked by increased monetisation, actually meant that its political messages became *less* visible to the majority of Roman citizens.

However, archaeological evidence indicates that physical engagement with coinage continued. Firstly, hoard evidence suggests that coinage still moved around in relatively small bodies. This can be seen in Figure 1.2. It is a histogram of the number of *nummi* in a sample of twenty-three fourth- and fifth-century 'purse' hoards, all homogenous depositions interpreted as the accidentally lost contents of purses, that represent bodies of coinage actively circulating together.[151] It is difficult to compare these hoards directly because the

[147] See **§1.4.2**, n.138.
[148] For the method and process of calculating required coin quantities presented in Figure 1.1 see Appendix 1. For estimation on the calorific value and amount of sustenance provided by an *artaba* of wheat see Schütze 2016: 42-43. Also supporting the ability to make regular transactions with only a few coins at the beginning of the fourth century is the presence of a vast number of goods listed in Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices (301), which could only be purchased using the *nummus* or its radiate fraction, as discussed above (**§1.3.1**, n.120).
[149] Bagnall 1985: 53; DeRose Evans 2013: 145. This is supported by the presence of weighing equipment alongside clusters of lost coins at many archaeological sites associated with market exchange (Reece 2015: 162-163; Brindle 2017: 278-279).
[150] Harl 1996: 166; Hendy 1985: 338-342.
[151] See DeRose Evans 2013: 137-138 on the classification of 'purse' hoards. The sources for the hoards used here are as tabulated below, including the fifteen examples of fourth- and fifth-century purse hoards currently present in the CHRE database [accessed 09/01/2024], and a further eight examples from other publications:

Hoard Name	Coin Total	Earliest Coin (Year)	Latest Coin (Year)	Source
LOSEGO	8	326	361	CHRE Database
ÉPIAIS-RHUS BURIAL 144	8	375	387	CHRE Database
APHRODISIAS NORTH HOUSE 1997	10	353	395	Hoover 2000
SARDIS MMS-I 1985 HOARD	10	395	475	DeRose Evans 2013
SCULPTOR'S WORKSHOP HOARD 1969	12	341	455	Hoover 2000

nummi comprising them often differed in value. Yet it is notable that none of these representations of portable wealth used for daily economic activities exceed 100 coins. They only ever equate to what DeRose Evans has called 'grocery money' and suggest that in the face of rising prices, many individuals resorted to more frequent, lower volume purchases: exchange velocity of coinage and interaction with its propaganda would have increased. Similarly, purse hoards likely represented a portable fraction of an individual's wealth that was otherwise stored in bulk elsewhere,[152] which also would mean regular engagement with the base-metal coinage as it was moved between savings and the individual's 'active' purse. The difference between these purse hoards and the number of coins in the sealed *folles* bags, which consisted of 1,000 *nummi* or more, is also striking.[153] *Folles* bags were associated with transportation of coinage or as prestigious prizes in competitions.[154] These were niche contexts, meaning that sealed bags' potential imposition on coinage's political function is less relevant to our consideration of the wider populace's exposure to imperial propaganda.[155] Finally, we must recognise that interaction with coins in the Roman world was never limited to moments of economic exchange, and that they also assumed socio-cultural functions as non-monetary objects.[156] This can be seen in the careful selection of certain iconographic types as grave goods, where we find a deliberate rejection of coinage as a monetary object, as well as a careful selection policy that speaks to engagement with the coin iconography.[157] The abundance of coinage needed to make certain purchases as the fourth century progressed

SARDIS LONG NORTH HALL (BATH COMPLEX) 1968 HOARD	12	335	491	DeRose Evans 2013
SAINT-QUENTIN BURIAL 21	15	351	383	CHRE Database
ALTLINSTER	16	300	312	CHRE Database
COCA 1971-1973	20	342	393	CHRE Database
ARENA HOARD 1998	22	337	395	Hoover 2000
CHOUY	25	306	392	CHRE Database
HUMAYMA 1995	28	335	455	Harvey 2022
SARDIS MMS-I 1983 HOARD	29	364	475	DeRose Evans 2013
VERMAND BURIAL 21	32	351	383	CHRE Database
DELPHI (?)	37	296	303	CHRE Database
MÃLAGA 1995 - ROMAN THEATRE	39	347	406	CHRE Database
HAWARA 2 (1938)	43	324	477	CHRE Database
NIEDERZIER WÃŒSTWEILER	47	330	350	CHRE Database
LOUPIAN 1982	70	340	363	CHRE Database
SARDIS "BYZANTINE FORT" 1991 HOARD	71	395	491	DeRose Evans 2013
FUSSACH	74	347	354	CHRE Database
SARDIS MMS-III 1986 HOARD	83	351	475	DeRose Evans 2013
VALENCIA - CALLE AVELLANAS	88	335	423	CHRE Database

[152] The evidence for saving hoards is so abundant that Bland et. al. 2020: 56 actually suggests the need to not simply consider this as the default interpretation of coin deposits.
[153] Melville Jones 1990: 118; Abdy 2012a: 592-593 (which also points to *folles* bags of gold *solidi*); Ramskold and Tillack 2022: 168.
[154] Ben Abed 2006: 128-129; Ramskold and Tillack 2022: 167-169.
[155] It is also worth noting, as per Ramskold and Tillack 2022, that the lead seals used to close money-bags bore designs that imitated coin iconography. Hence even the users of these bags would still have seen comparable political messages, even if in lower volumes relative to handling the coinage directly.
[156] Aarts 2005; Kemmers 2022b.
[157] For further discussion of this repurposing of coinage as grave-goods see **§1.5.2**.

led to some change in how certain coin-based transactions were made, which no doubt caused a degree of separation between the coins' political messages and intended audience. Nevertheless, material evidence of small open purses and non-economic engagement with coinage reveals that contact with base-metal coin iconography continued in the highly monetised Late Roman Empire.

1.5. Audience Reception

The upper echelons of the imperial state used base-metal coinage to present political messages to the empire's wider, non-elite populace. Moreover, in the Late Roman period, the public was frequently exposed to these political messages because access to base-metal coinage was commonplace. However, the widespread visibility of coin propaganda does not guarantee it was understood. In the final part of this chapter, I will therefore show that the political messages of base-metal coinage *were* comprehended by the wider imperial populace.

This will be done in three parts. Firstly, I will confront and critique earlier scholarship's scepticism towards public understanding of coin propaganda. I focus primarily on countering Michael Crawford's argument that ancient writers' apparent lack of mentioning or interpreting coin iconography equated to Romans' general lack of knowledge or understanding of coin propaganda. I will instead argue for the need to treat the elite-produced chronographic histories and the state-produced coinage as very different sources, and how it is unreasonable to assume that the former should provide frequent acknowledgement and discussion of the latter. Secondly, I will highlight that the archaeological record and material culture provide abundant evidence of ancient people's engagement with, and understanding of, obverse- and reverse-types. This will be illustrated by examples of deliberately defaced coins and the use of coins bearing specific images in ritualised contexts. Finally, the recurrence of iconographic motifs across public and private contexts will be shown to support the wider conclusions of Roman visual culture studies: a shared 'semantic system' existed across the Roman Empire, meaning that anyone living within the bounds of Roman cultural influence likely possessed an intuitive understanding of these pervasive images.

1.5.1. Coinage in Literature: A Problematic Framework for Interpretation

The foremost challenge against the commonly-held notion that coin iconography was understood by a wider audience came from Michael Crawford. Crawford contended that the general lack of attention to coinage in Roman literary evidence undermines the idea that

contemporaries had a general awareness of coin iconography and its political messages.[158] This argument's main issue has been to associate the interests of Roman writers, who largely belonged to an elite minority, with the experiences and understanding of the wider imperial populace.[159] Firstly, these ancient biographic and annalistic historians had specific objectives and operated within genre constraints that had little to do with coin propaganda.[160] When they made references to coin iconography, these were only ever fleeting, used as evidence secondary to the core narrative.[161] Concern was with personalities, actions and events, so discussion of programmatic imperial self-promotion or systematic consideration of imperial coin types had no place in the Classical canon.[162]

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[158] Crawford 1983a. A similar line of argument regarding the dearth of literary evidence and particularly the lack of address of major numismatic innovations is also presented in Duncan-Jones 1994: 97-99.

[159] Regarding writers of histories under empire, numerous examples of their 'elite' status and influential connections are possible. As for the major authors of the biographic and annalistic histories written under the Principate, Suetonius achieved prominence and favour within the courts of Trajan and Hadrian (Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 4-8), while Tacitus and Cassius Dio were both senators who had held various public offices (Pagán 2017: 6-9; Millar 1964: 13-24). See also Millar 1964: 6-7 on other historians of the Principate being either senators, *equites*, or in some way attached to prominent senators or the emperor himself. The same is similarly true for the Late Roman period. For example, the possible author or authors of the *Historia Augusta* have been argued to be learned men and biographers likely working on behalf of the senatorial aristocracy during the early fourth century (Magie 1921: xii-xv; Klaus-Peter 2006b). Lactantius served in the courts of both Diocletian and Constantine I (Bowen and Garnsey 2003: 2-4). Aurelius Victor served within the growing imperial bureaucracy of the mid-fourth century, including as governor of Pannonia Secunda under Julian, in turn becoming a senator, and later serving as prefect of Rome in 389 (Bird 1994: vii-xi). Ammianus Marcellinus is believed to have been from a curial family and served as a Roman military officer (Barnes 1998: 1-2). Eutropius had served in senior secretarial positions for Constantius II and Valens (Bird 1993: vii-xviii).

[160] Sutherland 1986: 86-87. Sutherland also raises the point here that historians writing under the Principate rarely held positive views of the imperial state, making it unsurprising that they were typically unwilling to discuss the political messages of coinage which aimed at its glorification. See also Kemmers and Myrberg 2011: 93 on the distinction between Roman imperial coinage and literary evidence, which enables the writing of 'contrastive' rather than 'complementary' histories.

[161] See, for example, the previously mentioned passages of Suetonius (*Augustus* 94.12; Suetonius, *Nero* 25.2), in **§1.2.2** above. Here coins were only described when the emperors had used them to publicise certain topics Suetonius had already chosen to discuss: Augustus's birth constellation (the Capricorn) and Nero's tour of Greece (66/67). For a survey of references to coinage in Roman biographic and chronographic histories see Wolters 1999: 312-313, which covers both indications of an ability to identify specific emperors on the coinage's obverse and differentiate between the various imagery of reverse-types. It is worth noting that though this body of evidence is not particularly large, its significant chronological spread attests to a consistent attitude towards coinage as a background feature of the Roman Empire. As Kemmers 2022b: 345 has indicated, this does suggest Crawford's argument for the general absence of texts addressing coinage (later repeated by Cheung 1998: 53) is somewhat exaggerated.

[162] There is however one exceptional text of the Late Roman Empire whose anonymous author showed more explicit interest in the coinage, and deserves brief attention here: the *De Rebus Bellicis*. This was a mid-fourth century treatise, likely produced 366-370 (Carrié 2020: 298), that sought to advise the emperor on monetary reform and military innovation. This included the author's submission of three illustrations of recommended coin designs (*De Rebus Bellicis* 3.4). The overt desire to advise the state on coin iconography shows a Roman citizen who was interested in numismatic phenomena and who recognised the programmatic display of iconography on coinage. Unfortunately, although all derived from a now lost earlier manuscript, the *Codex Spirensis*, there is a general inconsistency between the coin design illustrations in the three surviving *De Rebus Bellicis* manuscripts: Manuscript C (Fig.1.3, produced in 1436), M (Fig.1.4, produced in 1542) and P (Fig.1.5, produced c.1443) (see Thompson 1952: 7-9 for dating of manuscripts). This makes identification of the author's original illustrations effectively impossible, but the various designs from these manuscripts emulate pre-existent iconographic motifs of imperial coinage: depictions of Victories (Figs.1.3a and 1.3c), a garlanded altar (Fig.1.3a), personification-like figures (Figs.1.3b and 1.5b), togate imperial figures (Figs.1.4a, 1.4c and 1.5c) and Herculian deity-like figures (Figs.1.4b and 1.5a). Whichever manuscript most accurately represents the original illustrations likely also indicates the Anonymous's understanding of historic formulations of numismatic propaganda. Of further significance is the 'non-elite' status of the anonymous author (Carrié 2020: 300-301) in contrast to writers of histories (n.159), so his

Secondly, in the highly monetised Roman world imperial coins were mundane objects of daily life, so were unsurprisingly largely ignored by the literary elite. Ordinary objects were held to be self-evident and required no further attention or explanation, as is made overt by Socrates Scholasticus's statement that it would be 'superfluous' to describe the well-known landmarks of Constantinople.[163] Assumed knowledge of coin iconography specifically is present in various first- to fifth-century religious texts, where instruction of the non-elite laity anticipated that audience's general awareness of coins and ability to differentiate between depicted emperors.[164] We should not interpret an ancient author's lack of attention to a subject with a lack of knowledge of that subject, especially when its relevance was peripheral to their main concerns. Crawford's own words are of great relevance here: 'the range of things [on coins] which were regularly noticed, or at any rate noticed *and recorded*, is curiously limited'.[165] The ancient biographer/historian's primary interest in high politics, the deeds of emperors and the exceptional makes their neglect of mundane coinage entirely understandable. As such, it is inappropriate to use elite-produced Roman literature as a prism through which to assess wider Roman society's ability to recognise and interpret coin propaganda.

Going a step further, it is problematic to try and ascertain the wider Roman audience's understanding of coin iconography from any literary evidence. A literature-based investigation uses text as a tool for interpreting non-textual sources, which fails to acknowledge the capacity of iconographic media to function as clear modes of communication in and of themselves. Reliance on literary sources as the primary method of analysis is an issue of modern literary bias that extends far beyond Crawford's line of argument, and its effect on modern interpretations of coin iconography is discussed in **§3.1.2.2**. Here though it can simply be emphasised that the Romano-Byzantine world was a highly visual one, in which images were entrusted to communicate meaning without written reinforcement.[166] Therefore, not only was coinage outside the purview of most literature but the contemporary audience would have

apparent comprehension of coin design may be more clearly associated with the wider populace. The final point to note though is that the *De Rebus Bellicis* is an entirely unique text that has survived by accident (Thompson 1952: 6-17; Reece 1979: 59-60). Its unusual transmission may allude to a genre of numismatic writings that simply did not garner interest from later audiences and therefore became extinct. This raises the notion that the apparent paucity of literature acknowledging coinage may have been exacerbated by the surviving Classical canon's dependence on the selection policy of Medieval copyists. Equally though, the *De Rebus Bellicis*'s direct addressing of coinage's iconographic designs could just be an unusual interest of the Anonymous author. Ultimately, the *De Rebus Bellicis* may have provided overt discussion of coinage, but the numerous uncertainties surrounding this source only further supports the notion that it is unreasonable to base an assessment of the wider public's comprehension of coin iconography on surviving Roman literature.

[163] Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.16.

[164] For examples from Christian texts see *Gospel of Mark* 12.16-17; Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus* 3.8.6; Cassian, *Conferences* 1.20; John Chrysostom, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 5.2; Augustine, *Sermons* 90.10 and 229W. As per Lambert 1906: 241-243, there were also a number of Talmudic texts that instructed the rejection specifically of coinage bearing Hadrian's image, following that emperor's violent suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt.

[165] Crawford 1983a: 51 (my italics).

[166] Brubaker 2013: 253.

considered it as able to speak for itself, making it largely redundant to explain the self-evident political messages in words as well. We should instead look to verify contemporary comprehension of coin iconography by considering evidence of the Roman populace's direct engagement with such imagery.

1.5.2. Evidence of Engagement on Coinage and in Coin Deposits

The iconographic engagement so frequently absent from the literature is however evident in the archaeological record, on the coins themselves and the contexts in which they have been discovered. The former is most clearly expressed by the defacement of obverse coin portraiture. The deliberate damaging or alteration to the coinage alludes to an audience who were aware of political events (current or historic) and who made judgements on a coin's validity not just based on its monetary value, but also on their attitude to the depicted emperor. One recurrent example of this was the despoiling of Nero's portrait on base-metal *asses* with countermarks attesting various other sources of authority, including the senate and people of Rome (SPQR or PR, as per Fig.1.6) or the new emperor.[167] In all these instances, deliberate countermarking, rather than recasting or overstriking, points to defacement performed by the state administrative apparatus. The counter-markers still allowed the coinage's continued circulation and acknowledged that it retained monetary value, but also deemed it necessary to revise the political messaging. The concern that motivated these emendations shows the Roman state's anticipation of an audience sensitive to the contents of a coin's obverse, who would recognise the continued presence of a now condemned emperor on the coinage, as well as the relevance of his image disfigured with the state's countermark.

Beyond this top-down driven defacement that assumed a receptive audience, we also find non-official and non-elite groups performing similar activities. *Asses* with chisel blows mutilating the portrait of Caligula have been recovered from Rhineland military contexts.[168] These suggest participation of private individuals in state-directed *damnatio* actions, since official policy was that such coinage should be destroyed.[169] So too, many *asses* bearing cuts and piercings have also been found at the battlefield of the Teutoburg forest, likely performed by the Germanic troops as an anti-Roman act.[170] In both these illustrations of defacement we

[167] On the SPQR and PR countermarks see Crawford 1983a: 55-56; Calomino 2016: 68. Other examples of this SPQR countermarking can be seen on coins from the following collections: American Numismatics Society (1953.171.1302, 1953.171.1303, 1953.171.1308), British Museum (1872,0607.1, 1843,1024.8, R.10077); Bibliothèque de France (ark:/12148/cb439285632, ark:/12148/cb43928564d, ark:/12148/cb43928553r), and Münzkabinett der Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (18225424) [all accessed 28/05/2024]. As per Calomino 2016: 68-70, there are examples of countermarks bearing the names and imperial titutalure of Galba and Otho, as well as monograms of Vitellius and Vespasian.
[168] Chantraine 1968: 22.
[169] On the senate's decree and consequent action to melt down Caligula's coinage see Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 60.22.3.
[170] Kemmers and Myrberg 2011: 98-99.

find that even people on the fringes of the Roman Empire engaged with and acknowledged coinage as a political medium, even at the expense of undermining its monetary function.

There are numerous further instances of erasure, both of condemned individuals' images and inscribed names, which attest to a mixture of official and unofficial editorial engagement.[171] It is also significant that many of the incidents of physical engagement with coin obverses, including the above examples, occurred on base-metal coinage, so were often either addressed to or performed by the wider populace. These cases of vandalism and denunciation of imperial portraiture should be understood as the material culture counterpart to various public chants of mockery and rejection directed at emperors, which Anthony Kaldellis has cited as evidence of the contemporary populace understanding and reacting to the current political context.[172] Defaced coins point to a dialogue between the emperor and his subjects on everyday objects that the narrative literary sources and their concerns with high politics cannot be expected to reflect. The pre-requisite of this dialogue was an audience that at least sporadically interacted with the coins and engaged with the political messages symbolically portrayed.

While defacement of actual coins shows a general ability to identify the depicted emperor, widespread understanding of reverse iconography also becomes evident when we consider the depositional contexts of excavated coinage. A votive coin of Domitian found on the wreck of an indigenous Celtic ship at Blackfriars (London) is an excellent example of this deliberate selection.[173] The coin's reverse depicted Fortuna, goddess of luck, who holds a ship's rudder, which had been carefully deposited face-up in the mast socket so that it would touch the mast's base. The use of a coin with such a relevant reverse iconography and its deliberate positioning suggests at least a basic level of comprehension involved in this repurposing. Selectivity of reverse-types is again evidenced by coins found in Late Roman graves at Cologne, many of which notably bore messages pertaining to the afterlife (including types like HERCVLI IMMORTALI,[174] MEMORIAE AETERNAE **[172, 205]** and MEMORIA FELIX **[14]**).[175] Comparably, coins recovered from a first-century Roman cemetery at Petinesca (Switzerland) reflect depositors' preference for reverse-types related to triumph over death.[176] These are instances of a 'positive' selection policy, whereas the opposite is also demonstrable. In his

[171] See Calomino 2016 for a chronological survey of this evidence throughout the Principate. For a later interesting example of public engagement with coin imagery also see the defaced Justinian II first-reign *solidus* in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts collection (BIRBI-B4467 [accessed 06/12/2023]). Here the emperor's nose has been chipped off to deliberately emulate the slitting of his nose upon being deposed in 695.
[172] Kaldellis 2015: 146-147.
[173] Delgado 1997: 64.
[174] RIC V Postumus 347.
[175] Gorecki 1975: 271-276.
[176] Frey-Kupper 2006: 59-60, which discusses the recurrence of coinage depicting the eagle and its connotations with apotheosis. What is further striking is that Frey-Kupper denotes the comparable rarity of these eagle types in the site-finds of Petinesca's inhabited areas.

study of the coin finds from two temples in Martberg and Castellberg (Germany), Michael Nüsse has argued that the conspicuous absence of Sol, Mars, Jupiter, and Victoria types indicated the depositors' deliberate desire to avoid including types with martial associations in their dialogue with the gods.[177] We can see evidence of selection policies that not only considered what was most appropriate for their purpose but also what was least appropriate. Both instances anticipate that selectors possessed at least some familiarity with the different reverse-types available to them, as well as a basic understanding of those reverse-types' original, state-selected political messages. Only with such knowledge at hand were the selectors able to repurpose coin iconography to their own ends.

These are but a few examples of an ever-growing body of evidence that indicates care and attention given to considering which reverse-types should be incorporated into different cultural activities.[178] What is most striking about the recurrent illustration of deliberate choice in compiling grave goods and votive deposits at sanctuary sites is coherence within the range of selected reverse-type content over a prolonged period. Unlike the votive coin from the Blackfriars shipwreck, which shows a single moment of careful choice, burial site and sanctuary depositions involved numerous separate selections by different individuals. That any sense of a 'selection policy' can be detected is indicative of broader cultural practices of iconographic selection across society, which occurred in non-elite and non-official contexts. When we consider the wider Roman populace's recognition of obverse- and reverse-types in unison, it becomes apparent that sensitivity to political messages on coins, and their repurposing to perform non-monetary functions, were endemic features of Roman society at large.

1.5.3. Coinage in a Wider, Shared Semantic System

The ability of the Roman imperial populace to decipher the propaganda of state-produced coinage becomes more understandable when we consider the iconography present in Romano-Byzantine material culture more broadly. Doing so makes evident that the ideologically communicative iconography used on state-produced coinage and other media was in no way exclusive to the realms of public 'art'. The same imagery was defused into private contexts too. The parallels are particularly clear between the coinage and other objects of similar size, and here I will outline two examples to better elucidate the pervasion of common imagery across Roman society.

[177] Nüsse 2013: 272-280 (esp.278).
[178] For surveys and case-studies providing further examples evidencing selective use of reverse-types particularly in votive depositional contexts see Kemmers 2022b: 345-249; Kemmers 2018a; Ellithorpe 2017: 28-46; Wythe 2007: 46-47.

First are the 'holy rider' bronze amulets of the sixth to seventh century, which depict a figure (usually a saint) charging on horseback and spearing a prostrate monster (Fig.1.7).[179] The basic symbolic form directly emulated an image used on Roman imperial coinage from the time of Vespasian and into the Late Roman period, with the only differences being that the coins depicted the emperor on horseback rather than a saint, and his prey were barbarians rather than demons.[180] The different identities of the rider and his enemy on these objects, as well as the different reasons for production and use, ultimately changed the messaging and function of the iconography. The holy rider amulet was an apotropaic private religious object envisioning the wearer's protection against evil, as the depicted Christian saintly intercessor strikes down a demon. Conversely, the coinage was a public and political medium, advertising to its audience that the emperor was their protector, securing their safety by striking down the enemies of the Roman polity.

Second are the marriage rings also from the Early Byzantine period (sixth-seventh century) which repeatedly depicted a husband (left) and wife (right) extending and clasping their right hands (*dextrarum iunctio*),[181] both flanking Christ (centre), who stood blessing the union (Fig.1.8).[182] Again, there was precedent for this iconographic motif on earlier imperial coinage. These include *solidi* of Honorius depicting the marriage of Theodosius II and Aelia Eudocia,[183] and *solidi* of Theodosius II depicting the marriage of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia (Fig.1.9), though in each case it was the incumbent senior emperor rather than Christ who was the centre figure presiding over the union.[184] Here as well, the changed identity of certain figures shifted the image's precise messaging, asserting that the legitimising authority and guardianship of the marriage was either imperial or divine.

In both the private and public uses of the charging rider and *dextrarum iunctio*, the same basic iconographic forms were carefully altered to communicate distinct and contextually relevant messages. Private use was not simply a direct imitation of public imperial symbols.[185] Yet,

[179] Nowakowski 2017; Nesbitt 2014, Figs.13.2, 13.6.
[180] See RIC II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 386; RIC V Claudius Gothicus 227; GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor charging horseback type **[72]**; FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor charging horseback type **[198]**; VIRTVS AVGG ET CAESS NN Emperor charging **[218]**. Such imagery is similarly evident on a silver plate of the fourth-century Vinkovci hoard, decorated with a secular hunting image of rider spearing a lion (Vulić et. al. 2017: 136, Fig. 17).
[181] See Kalavrezou 2003: 217, 222 on the recurrent presence of the *dextrarum iunctio* and its antecedence in the Roman period with pledges of faith.
[182] For further examples, see the following items in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum collection: BZ.1961.3; BZ.1953.12.8; BZ.1968.7 [all accessed 04/07/2024]. See also the medallions of the marrying couple and Christ from a marriage belt in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZ.1937.33), and Kalavrezou 2003: 230, n.5 for another example in the Louvre, both of which present particularly high status versions of this iconographic form.
[183] See Gökyıldırım 2009: 167, nos.12-14. This coin type is not recorded in either RIC X or Grierson and Mays 1992, but the hoard under discussion contains three of the same coin type.
[184] There is also however an identical marriage scene to the wedding rings depicted on a *solidus* type of the marriage of Marcian and Pulcheria, with Christ as the central figure (RIC X Marcian 502).
[185] For similar repurposing of another imperial motif see Zanker 1988: 276. This covers the use of the *corona civica* and the laurel wreath in private contexts such as funerary art, where the rendered meanings of past service and

regardless of their differences in precise details and meanings, the objects that bore comparable iconographic forms did so because they were drawing on a common visual vocabulary that embodied the same core messages. For the charging rider and *dextrarum iunctio*, focus was on invoking an intercessory authority to provide protection or bless a union. The state and its wider populace were expressing key aspects of cultural value through the same basic iconographic framework. Each group had enough understanding of these same core messages to make the changes required for their own purposes.

These are examples of what modern historians have dubbed a Roman 'picture language', 'semantic system', 'shared pictorial vocabulary' or 'symbolic system', which all assert that under Roman hegemony a set of cultural ideals became formalised and codified into a shared repertoire of images.[186] Pivotal to the 'semantic system's' establishment was the emergence of a radically changed corpus of political imagery under Augustus, which consequentially permeated into the private sphere, and was internalised to form part of a new widespread mentality.[187] As we have seen, common imagery diffused across non-luxury items and material culture associated with the non-elite, and not just amongst the households and burial contexts of the most wealthy Romans. The arena of public 'art' and politics may have been the birthplace of much of the imagery that proliferated under Roman imperial rule, but it was widely adopted across the social spectrum for its aesthetic and cultural value rather than its political significance. Furthermore, the 'semantic system' persisted with little change into the Late Roman period and beyond, which enabled communication amongst a diverse audience regardless of level of education or literacy.[188] As such, during the timeframe under study within this thesis, the wider populace of the Roman Empire can be expected to have had an implicit understanding of the relatively fixed body of iconographic motifs that embodied Roman culture's central values. The propaganda of the base-metal coinage was entirely intelligible and familiar to its broader audience, who interacted with it not as a secondary language but as native speakers.

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recognition were entirely divorced from the public political use of such imagery in connection with the emperor to imply 'the salvation of the citizens and the state'.

[186] See Toynbee 1956 on the concept of a common 'picture-language' in Roman art and coinage, although discussion of this was largely limited to highlighting the consistent forms within state-produced items. Such an idea was developed by Tonio Hölscher (1982, 2004) and Paul Zanker (1988, esp. 269, 2010), which respectively referred to a 'semantic system' and 'shared pictorial vocabulary' that encompassed both the public and private domains of Roman society. Carlos Noreña's discussion of a 'symbolic system' (2011: 14-20) has then offered further nuance by emphasising distinct agency and choice of various groups within the empire to engage in common forms of symbolic expression, which resulted in a conventional means of expression that we now view as 'Roman'.

[187] Zanker 1988: 265-295. For further discussion of the 'semantic system's' emergence in the Early Imperial period, in notable contrast to the iconographic flux of the Late Republican period, see **§3.1.2.2**.

[188] Hölscher 2004: 87-92; Kemmers 2022b: 345. Their conclusions directly counter the argument that an individual's understanding of imperial propaganda required a certain level of education or 'intellectual sophistication' (see, for example, Cheung 1998: 54; Hannestad 1986: 331, 338; Crawford 1983a; Wallace-Hadrill 1981).

1.6. Conclusion

In the preceding review, I have demonstrated that Roman imperial coinage had a political function, which intended to communicate diverse aspects of propaganda to its audience. This propaganda was selected on a top-down basis by the state itself to promote the emperor's legitimacy amongst his subjects (as well as working as a medium of self-definition). Furthermore, I have argued that coinage of different metal types and denominations included political messages that targeted audiences of different social statuses. On this basis, base-metal coinage has been identified as a key medium through which the Late Roman state sought to address the majority of non-elite imperial citizens. Together, these conclusions justify using coinage to investigate the intentions and values of its producer – the Roman imperial state – by considering which aspects of propaganda were most frequently selected for display to the wider populace.

However, regardless of the state's intentions, for coinage to have been a viable political medium it required the engagement of its intended audience. I have therefore also shown that, during the Late Roman period, the Principate's well-established market economy and voluminous private exchange persisted (or even expanded), as did the diffusion of coined money throughout urban and rural contexts. A high degree of monetisation guaranteed most Roman citizens were exposed to the coinage and the political messages that the state intended for them to see. In turn, I have contended that the wider populace of the Roman Empire largely understood the political messages of the coinage. This has been demonstrated by archaeological evidence, in which the defacement or repurposing of coinage for non-economic reasons was based on an understanding of the original coin iconography. So too, we have seen that the basic iconographic forms impressed on coinage were also used in private contexts on non-state media, and attest to the existence of a widely understood 'semantic system', which was firmly established by the Late Roman period. Hence, the base-metal coinage had an amenable audience sensitive to the principal tenets of imperial rulership ideology and the core visual formula through which these were communicated. By recognising widespread receptiveness to the propaganda of base-metal coinage, we can also use it to assess how the state's intended messages may have shaped the wider populace's experience of imperial authority. With these core concepts of how one can use and interpret evidence from Roman imperial coinage established, we can now consider how a quantitative-based analytical approach offers the best means for investigating the base-metal propaganda as a source of both the intentions of its producer (the state) and experience of its recipients (the wider populace).

2. Quantitative Methodology 1: Defining a Database and Verifying Representativeness

While I have argued that Late Roman base-metal coinage is a valid source for investigating those aspects of imperial rulership ideology most visible to and targeted at the wider imperial populace, there is no doubt that it constitutes a truly enormous corpus of evidence. Faced with this amount of material, a common approach to exploring Roman imperial coin propaganda has been to cherry-pick iconographically interesting types and use these as representative examples of ideological features or political/cultural developments. Yet this subjective selectivity often inflates the significance of the coinage under discussion, when its production and circulation was limited, which has led to numerous calls to contextualise a coin's frequency within the wider corpus of types issued contemporaneously or of types still in circulation.[189] With these critiques in mind, I would argue that Roman imperial coinage is not only well suited to quantitative analysis but that such analysis is mandatory. Quantification offers the best means of achieving a clear contextual understanding of single coins and their political messages within the vast milieu in which they circulated.

The groundwork of my quantitative-based analysis of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda is established in Chapters 2 and 3. Together they chart the key methodological aspects that underpin this thesis's quantitative methodology. This chapter's purpose is first to define an appropriate dataset of numismatic evidence to subject to quantitative analysis, before Chapter 3 formulates how I have gone about encapsulating and measuring the fundamentally qualitative propaganda of imperial coinage.

What follows is divided into three sections:

— **§2.1** explores the theory behind constructing a database that is best equipped to accurately represent the different proportions of base-metal iconographic types available to the wider populace of the Late Roman Empire.

— **§2.2** provides an overview of the site-finds database, the product of a data collection process that followed the decisions outlined in **§2.1**, and whose contents form the principal dataset used in this thesis's base-metal coin propaganda analysis.

— Finally, **§2.3** provides an analysis of the site-finds database's contents to demonstrate that the theoretically representative database *is* actually representative. Through this analysis, I will also identify the presence of groups of geographically-related sites in

[189] Sutherland 1984b: xxi-xxii; Metcalf 1999: 3; Noreña 2001: 148; Rowan 2013a: 3-4, 24.

the site-finds database, which will give regional nuance to the chronological analysis of base-metal coin propaganda in Chapter 4.

In its entirety, Chapter 2 looks to delineate a repeatable method of obtaining numismatic data for quantitative analysis that is both theoretically sound and demonstrably vindicated as representative.

2.1. Database Construction and the Method of Data Collection

All quantitative analyses of Roman imperial coinage draw upon predefined datasets of numismatic material, requiring an initial data collection process. Investigations into the trends and changes in coin propaganda, like this thesis, are particularly concerned with determining the volumes of coins with different inscriptions and iconography. Yet it is impossible to assemble a dataset that comes close to capturing the exact number of the various iconographic types issued over a prolonged period. Studies with broad temporal and spatial perspectives instead aim to collate representative datasets, which demonstrate the relative rather than absolute volumes of different iconographic types.

To achieve this representativeness, a further step is required before data collection starts. First, it is necessary to answer two basic questions: how will I count the coins, and where will I get the data from? Doing so helps ensure the dataset is compiled using those forms and sources of numismatic data best able to tackle each study's specific aims. Accordingly, previous analyses of Roman imperial coin propaganda have devised several basic methods for quantifying relative coin volumes, such as gross coin analysis, gross coin type analysis and die-studies. So too, three source types have been typically used to construct databases: site-finds, museum collections and hoards.

In the following section, I will also answer these two questions, delineating the choices underpinning my data collection process and why I deemed the other options unsuitable. I will show that gross coin analysis and site-finds are the most appropriate quantification method and data source for compiling a dataset equipped to examine this thesis's specific interests: namely, the propaganda most frequently issued by the state on base-metal coinage, the day-to-day currency used by the wider populace.

2.1.1. Question 1: The Basic Means of Quantification – How am I Counting the Coins?

2.1.1.1. Gross Coin Analysis

The basic method of quantification used in this thesis and many other prolonged thematic or chronological numismatic studies is gross coin analysis.[190] It is simple yet effective: extant examples of different coins are counted to determine the proportions in which they were produced relative to one another. Individual coins are recorded into a database and grouped with similar examples, so the total number of coins displaying specific themes can be compared. By comparing the varying coinage profiles from different regions and periods, we can distinguish trends in public promotion of the different aspects of imperial rulership and how spatially and/or temporally distinct groups of the wider populace may have experienced imperial power differently.

2.1.1.2. Gross Coin Type Analysis

However, gross coin analysis faces one main issue: an ill-defined, open-ended data collection process. Gross coin analysis's means of providing a 'representative' dataset is rooted in the law of large numbers. The more coins recorded in a database, the closer that database comes to the actual number of coins produced, thereby increasing its accuracy because statistical anomalies (rare coins) are drowned out. Yet the desire to continuously increase the total number of coins in a database is inhibited by practical constraints. Data collectors must decide when their database's coin total is high enough for that database to act as a microcosm of the coinage issued and in circulation during the period under study. Ultimately, this threshold is subjective, and all databases constructed on the grounds of gross coin analysis may be improved by further data collection.

Gross coin type analysis is an alternative method of quantification devised to circumvent the manually laborious and potentially indefinite data collection process of gross coin analysis. Rather than looking at raw coin totals, it compares a finite number of distinct coin types as defined by the *Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC) catalogues. It uses a dataset with a fixed and arguably more manageable upper limit. The method has been popularised over the last decade by Erika Manders and other Dutch numismatists.[191] However, the desire to create a database with clearly fixed parameters introduces issues that make gross coin type analysis

[190] See, for example, Noreña 2001; Noreña 2011; Elkins 2011; Rowan 2013a; Elkins 2017.
[191] Manders 2012. This is effectively the foundational application of gross coin type analysis, being used to assess the iconography of Roman imperial silver coinage from 193-284. Further examples of gross coin type analysis coming out of Radbound University, Nijmegen, include Claes 2013, Hekster 2015: 299 (using data provided by Manders); Betjes and Heijnen 2018; Hekster et. al. 2019, Betjes 2022 and Hillen 2023.

more problematic than gross coin analysis. Consequently, I have judged it inappropriate for use within this thesis.

Firstly, the RIC volumes form a problematic source. The original ten RIC volumes (1923-1994) were produced by numerous authors making different editorial and interpretive choices. Many of the older volumes are outdated, with revised versions pending.[192] Any study spanning multiple RIC volumes must 'clean' the coin type data they provide to address these issues of editorial inconsistency or outdated classification.[193] This introduces a level of subjective modification prior to any analysis, which can significantly impact final values derived from the database.[194] The advantage of constructing a database using a commonly accepted coin classification system is immediately undermined.

Furthermore, existing uses of gross coin type analysis have assumed a correlation between the number of different RIC coin types and the volumes in which a coin type was produced. However, the RIC's classification system, separating coins based on administrative/technical features, can at best only indicate general trends in actual coin quantities.[195] For example, if five RIC coin types of Hercules and fifteen of Jupiter belonged to emperor X, gross coin type analysis would simply conclude 75% of emperor X's coins depicted Jupiter. But that figure would be wholly inaccurate if, say, the Hercules types were all 'common' (each representing hundreds of actual coins) and seven of the fifteen Jupiter coin types were considered 'rare' (representing only tens of coins each). No two coin types represent the same quantity of actual coins issued. A possible revision would be to allocate each coin type a fractional value relative to its rarity/frequency, instead of assuming all coin types hold a value of '1'. Yet, even between RIC volumes, no uniform coin type rarity/frequency index exists upon which such a 'fuzzy

[192] The first revision of the RIC series was of Mattingly's original RIC I catalogue (Sutherland 1984). Following this, the original RIC II (Vespasian to Hadrian = Mattingly and Sydenham 1926) has since been divided into three new volumes: RIC II.1 (Vespasian to Domitian = Carradice 2007), RIC II.2 (Nerva to Trajan = Woytek, Forthcoming) and RIC II.3 (Hadrian = Abdy and Mittag 2019). A new volume (RIC V.4 = Mairat 2023) has also just been released on the Gallic Empire 260-274. As per the General Editor's foreword in RIC X, revisions to some of the more problematic volumes, particularly RIC V.1 and V.2 are also apparently underway. So too, Sam Moorhead has produced a separate RIC volume on the coinage of British usurpers Carausius and Allectus, which is in the process of publication. Nevertheless, current research must often contend with the severely outdated original volumes.

[193] For discussions of this 'cleaning' process see, for example, Claes 2013: 29-33 and Betjes 2022: 43-48.

[194] For example, Betjes 2022: 46 discusses the issue of different RIC volumes inconsistently identifying the same personification, either as a soldier, *Virtus*, Mars, Minerva or Roma. In his process of normalisation Betjes notes his decision to adjust all these previous identifications to *Virtus*. Whether one agrees with Betjes or not, a decision like this would have major consequences on the overall dataset. Moreover, these decisions are necessarily informed by our wider interpretation of Roman political ideology and ultimately risk us imposing our pre-established narratives on the data during the cleaning process, so the quantitative evidence naturally comes to support pre-established qualitative hypotheses.

[195] See Manders 2012: 53-62 on the 'representativeness of coin types', in which she attempts to demonstrate the correlation between the results of gross coin type analysis and the more time-consuming gross coin analysis, which compares her own data of types grouped in her 'Divine Association' category to specific coin hoard data. This is only able to demonstrate a loose correlation between the two data types, suggesting that gross coin type analysis, if used as a more convenient proxy for gross coin analysis, can only present very general trends in the latter. In fact, her limited demonstration of this correlation with just one of her many categories has been a chief criticism of her work. On critique of Manders's approach see Rowan 2013b; Langford 2014.

logic'-based system could be constructed.[196] To date, coin type analyses have not accommodated the impact of different coin types' rarity within their quantitative methodology, making the veracity of their results questionable. Moreover, I see no immediate means of revising coin type analysis to overcome this issue.[197]

2.1.1.3. Die-Studies

Finally, die-studies' unsuitability in application to this thesis also deserves brief comment. It is a quantification method that involves inspecting visually similar coins to estimate the number of dies used to produce that coin series. The total number of dies and their frequency within the assembled database is fed into calculations that approximate the total number of coins each die could produce, from which the total size of the issue is then extrapolated.[198]

Die-studies' validity has been debated since the 1990s. Most notably, its chief detractor, Ted Buttrey, dubbed it 'mathematically untenable' and reliant on easily corruptible figures.[199] Beyond this, a further critique has been that die-studies' calculations only estimate the *maximum* possible number of coins struck. This is particularly problematic when trying to quantify base-metal coinage production, which was governed by the state's need to regulate the inflow of fresh currency rather than striking dies to exhaustion.[200] Questions around the legitimacy of die studies' heavily extrapolated calculations, combined with the further complicating factors of production practices and imperial minting policy leave me with serious concerns over whether it can provide meaningful insights into production volumes.

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[196] See, for example, Figure 2.1, which shows the various rarity/frequency indexes used across the five RIC volumes that cover the Late Roman period (RIC VI-X). These either used varying numerical values related to the quantity of actual coins the authors had seen (RIC VI and VII), or degrees of rarity that were simply based on the respective authors' subjective impressions (RIC VIII, IX, X).

[197] It is worth noting here that in RIC II.3: xxiii-xxiv Richard Abdy has proposed a revised system of allocating rarity/frequency rating to coin types based on the frequency in relation to the largest know published hoards. Should this system be extended to other RIC catalogues in the future, it may offer a possible means of revising gross coin type analysis to better reflect the nuance of coin rarity. However, it is also worth noting that Abdy's proposed system first necessitates the undertaking gross coin analysis of hoards anyway. Furthermore, Abdy still warnings against the continued subjectivity of his new frequency system, and how such a system 'represents a relative rule of thumb within each denomination'. Consequently, cross-denominational comparison (i.e. Hekster 2015: 299) based on this frequency system would not be possible.

[198] The calculations formulated by Carter (1983) and Esty (1986) initially proved most influential in this area. Further revisions of the preferred formulae used in die-studies have since been made by Esty (2006, 2011).

[199] Buttrey 1993. For the back-and-forth, pessimistic and optimistic assessments of die-studies as an appropriate method of quantifying coin production also see Buttrey 1994, 1996, 2011; Buttrey and Buttrey 1997 (pessimistic position), and de Callataÿ 1995, 2011 (optimistic position).

[200] Gandila 2009: 156. This discrepancy may be well demonstrated in the case of the SPES REIPBVLICAE Emperor and captive type **[129]**. The coin was issued in *Rome* for Valentinian II, Theodosius I and Arcadius but is exceedingly rare - it occurs only seven times in my entire site-finds database, constituting just 0.01% of all Period 10 coinage, with none of these coins making it through the 'cleaning' process (see Appendix 2, **§2.3** on data-cleaning process and parameters). Grierson and Mays 1992: 116 nevertheless suggests that since this type was struck for Arcadius at all five *officinae* in *Rome* (each therefore having at least one die each), it must have been a substantial issue. However, the conflict between the surviving coin record and conclusions drawn from our apparent understanding of the imperial minting structure surely raises questions over this notion that there was a direct, consistent relationship between the quantity of die numbers, mint marks or *officinae* involved in production and the actual volumes in which these coins were produced.

Die-studies have nevertheless often been the preferred means of quantitative numismatic analysis used when studying short reigns or coin issues of limited size.[201] Yet visually distinguishing unique dies and die-links is extremely time-consuming, making it exceptionally difficult to apply to the larger issues of imperial coinage.[202] Even if we ignore the questions about die-studies' quantitative validity, the extended chronological and geographic scope of this thesis, looking at the whole empire over one and a half centuries, still prohibits using die-studies as the basic method of quantification.

2.1.2. Question 2: Selecting a Representative Data Source – Where Will I Get the Data From?

2.1.2.1. Site-Finds

Gross coin analysis stands out as the best quantification method for constructing a database oriented towards extended chronological study. Yet its potentially open-ended data collection process can only be overcome by compiling a significant body of representative coinage. To achieve such representativeness the sources used to populate the database with raw coin numbers must be carefully selected.

I have identified site-finds to be the most suitable source type from which to assemble a gross coin analysis-based database. Site-finds are individual coins recovered during the excavation of a site, so provide provenanced spatial data.[203] This enables analysis to move beyond generalised, pan-imperial discussions of Roman coin propaganda, instead facilitating investigations of the iconographic types that typically circulated within specific geographic areas and inter-regional comparison of these numismatic profiles. Site-finds are also commonly accepted to be deposited through accidental loss, appearing in their greatest density around points of economic activity (such as urban forums).[204] The uniform circumstance of accidental deposition means that site-finds are not impacted by issues of

[201] Bland 2018b. Bland has used die-studies extensively in his analysis of the coinage of Gordian III (Bland 1991 and 2023), Jotapian (Bland 1993), and Vabalathus and Zenobia (Bland 2011). See also Goodwin and Gyselen 2015, which applies die-studies to the Irbid hoard, with less than 1,000 base-metal coins from a single mint providing a monograph's worth of analysis.
[202] Carson 1956: 228; Howgego 2009: 287; van Heesch 2011: 314-316; Rowan 2013a: 25.
[203] Metcalf 2012: 7-8.
[204] See Reece 1996 for an overview of the basic assumptions around site-finds, including their characterisation as accidently lost coinage. In addition to being formed from coin-loss, it is worth mentioning the suggestion of Reece (Reece 1984a: 173; 1994: 255-256; 2002: 92) that site-finds may also consist of deliberately discarded coins that were no longer deemed as economically viable. This argument was raised in respect to the fourth- and fifth-century coinage at Carthage and Rome, though was rebuked by Metcalf (1988: 340) and Morrisson (1988: 245-246) in their examinations of coinage from other areas of excavation in Carthage. See also, Casey 1988: 40, which adamantly states that 'coins…are most emphatically not rubbish…they are not usually deliberately thrown away'. The presence of 'redundant' coinage amongst the site-finds record has since been raised by Butcher (2016: 234-235; 2001-2002: 35), though he has also indicated the difficulty of identifying these. Otherwise, the presence of discarded coins as site-finds has seen little further discussion.

'selector bias'. This distinguishes site-finds from museum collections and hoards, which are at risk of having their representativeness inhibited by the subjective choices of their collectors.[205]

One significant bias of site-finds must be acknowledged. Site-finds provide a distorted view of the coinage in circulation, since lower value coinage, both in terms of metal content and denomination, are typically over-represented.[206] Loss of more valuable coinage, especially precious metal coinage, was more noticeable and extra time would have been invested into its recovery.[207] There is also the practical reality that lower denominational coinage was more suitable for frequent, low-cost transactions (especially in comparison to precious metal coinage) so saw more use and greater opportunity to be lost, whilst higher intrinsic value coinage was hoarded, not seen.[208]

The general absence of precious metal coinage within the site-finds record for the Late Roman period is arguably beneficial to this thesis's focus on base-metal coinage and the necessity to compile a database containing a substantial sample of coins. Conversely, given the multiple periods in which the state tried to re-establish a multi-denominational base-metal system during the fourth century, site-finds' inability to accurately reflect the relative availability of higher denomination base-metal coins may be a point of concern.[209] For example, a comparative study of tetrarchic base-metal coins found in site-finds and hoards (**§4.1.4**) shows that facets of contemporary propaganda presented on the higher denomination *nummus*, notably non-military religious messages, are repressed in the site-finds record of the eastern empire, relative to the military messages that dominated the pervasive lower denomination fractional radiate. This suggests that using supplementary hoard-based data alongside site-finds data is desirable when dealing with at least *some* periods of multi-denominational base-metal production, to ensure we understand all aspects of imperial rulership ideology the state intended to be seen.[210] Yet, as **§4.1.4.4** will demonstrate, the higher denomination coins only

[205] For further discussion of selector bias and its impacts on museum collections and hoards see **§2.1.2.2** and **§2.1.2.3** below.
[206] Butcher 2016; Elkins 2009: 42; Lo Cascio 2008: 161-162; Duncan-Jones 2003: 163-165.
[207] See Reece 1996: 341 and Metcalf 1969: 94, which mark this as one of the key assumptions underpinning interpretations of site-finds. This is vindicated at least within the results of my own site-finds database, where precious metal coins are virtually absent (see **§2.2**).
[208] Peter 1996: 19; Mundell 1998; Butcher 2016: 228-229.
[209] On the differences between hoards and site-finds, in which the former is more prone to containing higher value coinage and the latter lower value coinage, see Butcher 2016: 232-233; Lianta 2013: 106-107; Butcher 2001-2002: 31-36, 81; Reece 1996: 341; Peter 1996: 19; Duncan 1993: 167-168; Haley 1989; Noeske 1979. On monetary reform and the multi-denominational systems see Hendy 1985: 448-475, Caza 2021. See also **§4.1.4** for demonstration of how there was only a notable difference in hoards and site-finds compositions during the relatively short periods in which these multi-denominational systems survived.
[210] Variance between site-finds and hoards recurred on occasion during the first half of the fourth century at points of monetary reform that re-introduced multiple denominations, such as the three-tiered FEL TEMP REPARATIO of 348 or Julian's two-tiered coin series that sought to revive Diocletian's weight standards. However, of note here is that the discrepancies between these later fourth century hoards and site-finds seem less significant than the substantially different coin types and political messages found in tetrarchic hoards and site-finds. In the first instance, there was often more consistency between the propaganda of different base-metal denominations. For example, in the case of the multi-denominational FEL TEMP REPARATIO series a solidly military character

circulated briefly before being hoarded, so the significance of their political messages was fleeting. Site-finds may occasionally provide a slightly distorted vision of the state's *intended* base-metal propaganda programme, but their great strength is as a concrete indicator of the coins *in use* by the wider populace, the coins that typically changed hands in daily economic activities. They present to us the political messages that were being received and engaged with by the wider populace. This stands in notable contrast to hoards, which were intentional accumulations of coins removed from circulation and stripped of their ability to communicate state propaganda.

When using site-finds it is also necessary to judge how complete the site-finds record is for a particular site. Does it accurately encapsulate coin-loss at the whole site? This requires consideration over whether the excavations were well conducted to ensure the resulting catalogue of coins is close to those originally lost.[211] To best combat this issue, careful selection of suitable sites and publications is required. During my data-collection process, virtually all selected sites were from publications with extensive contextual information, providing confidence in the quality of excavations undertaken.[212] Equally, I gave preference were possible to site-finds lists derived from urban excavations of areas of economic activity, where use and loss of coinage was most common.[213] For example, in lieu of a clear site-finds list for the forum area in Augusta Treverorum,[214] I instead used the coins recovered from the

pervades across most of the higher, middle and lower denominations (see Caza 2021: 157-167 and **§4.2.4.1**). As such, even when hoards of this period contained more higher denomination coinage than the site-finds record, there is no substantial variation in the sort of political messages presented by either data source. Furthermore, the revivals of a multi-denominational base-metal coinage system were so short-lived, and contemporary hoarding habits so rapidly removed almost all the more-highly silvered coinage from circulation, that we may assume the higher denomination base-metal coins circulated very little (see **§4.2.4.1** and **§4.2.4.2**). Their political messages therefore arguably have little relevance to discussions of the propaganda observed by the wider populace. It is only in Periods 2 (294-307) and 3 (307-317), from establishment to slow demise of Diocletian's multi-denominational base-metal coinage, that the difference between hoard and site-find contents is of significant concern. As for the second half of the fourth century, the end of billon coinage and its permanent replacement with pure copper coinage sees a general similarity between the composition of hoard and site-finds.

[211] For further discussion of these methodological issues affecting the representation of site-finds see Noeske 1979 and Peter 1996: 18-25.

[212] The only site in the site-finds database to lack contextual information on the associated excavations is Sparta (Duncan 1993). Its inclusion despite this lack of information is partly due to availability, Sparta's ability to be compared to a geographic concentration of other Greek sites, and finally the opportunity to simply test the representativeness of a more poorly provenanced example in comparison with the majority of better provenanced sites. See **§2.3.4.3** and **§2.3.5.4** for this comparison of sites and the demonstration that Sparta provides a body of site-finds that meets the criteria expected in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkan peninsula.

[213] For example, the incorporated site-finds from Athens (Thompson 1954 – notably the site with the largest coin total in the dataset) and Rome (Reece 1982) were both selected not only because they were major urban centres but also because they were derived from excavations at each city's forum. Otherwise though, where possible a more completionist approach has been taken to incorporate the site-finds from all excavations of a single site, such as the twenty-three different publications covering the various excavations at Corinth or the eleven for Carthage.

[214] Augusta Treverorum is the name for the Roman city built at the site of modern-day Trier. It is the name used throughout this thesis specifically when discussing the site that appears within the site-finds database and site-finds data derived from it. This is to distinguish it from discussions of the mint of the same city and the coins it produced, here referred to as *Trier*, though also called *Treveri* in some other numismatic literature. As such, 'coins from Augusta Treverorum' would refer to coins recovered from the site of Roman Trier, whereas 'coins from *Trier*' would refer to coins produced by the mint of Roman Trier. For the other cases that the site-finds database sites and Late Roman mints when both were at the same location (for example, Rome, Arelate, Antioch, Alexandria),

Amphitheatre, another area of public engagement and exchange, to represent the coin-loss profile for the site at large.[215] Beyond this, disruption to the archaeological record over the intervening centuries between deposition and excavation is possible. We can do little else than acknowledge any significant intrusions on the Late Roman context recorded by excavation reports. This is hoards' primary advantage; as typically sealed deposits, sometimes even found within a vessel, it is far easier to ensure all coins are recovered.[216] Otherwise, use of site-finds continues to work under the assumption that well excavated and preserved sites accurately reflect actual loss.[217]

In sum, within the context of this thesis's concerns regarding how the state used coinage to present itself to its wider non-elite citizenry and how said audience subsequently experienced imperial power, site-finds stand out as a particularly representative source of numismatic data because they:

1. Have clear geographic providence that enables inter-regional comparison.
2. Lack selection bias in their deposition.
3. Provide the best indication of the coinage received and engaged with by the wider imperial populace.

2.1.2.2. Museum Collections

An alternative data source, which can be used to quickly assemble a large quantity of numismatic material, is museum collections. The numismatic collections of western European and American institutions were the principal sources used by the earlier RIC catalogues to collate and typologise Roman imperial coins.[218] The combined collections of the British

references to the mint have been italicised. As such, 'coins from Rome' would refer to coins recovered from the site of Rome, whereas 'coins from *Rome*' would refer to coins produced by the mint of Rome.

[215] The quantity of site-finds for Augusta Treverorum was further expanded by the incorporation of the Late Roman stray-finds collections from the Provincial and State Museum of Trier (Noekse et. al. 2004). These were a body of coins recovered from across the city of Trier and its immediate vicinity but that otherwise lacked any further provenance – in effect the sort of regionally representative museum collection discussed below in **§2.1.2.2**. Given this lack of clarity over provenance, once digitised I compared the two assemblages, specifically looking at the respective propaganda category scores for each across the thirteen periods devised for use in this thesis. This demonstrated a surprisingly high degree of similarity between the body of firmly provenanced amphitheatre coins and the less certain stray-finds from the museum collection, giving confidence in the latter's accurate representation of the site of Augusta Treverorum in general. For discussion of the various propaganda categories and the scoring process see **§3.1.3**, **§3.2.3** and Appendix 5.

[216] It should be noted that we are again talking about most hoards here. However, this certainty comes under threat when disaggregated hoards are found on modern agricultural land, where activities like ploughing have caused the original hoard to be scattered across a wider area. On issues of hoards in ploughed contexts see Horsnæs et. al. 2013; Horsnæs and Henriksen 2015. For an example of such a hoard distributed across a large area, see the Tagesgård hoard of 110 *denarii* found scattered around an area circa 140 x 90m (Rasmussen 2014: 176-178).

[217] Reece 1996: 341.

[218] For example, the original version of RIC II (1926) includes no direct references to evidence from contemporary hoards or excavation reports in its select bibliography, abbreviations or index, and was principally assembled from consultation of the British Museum (London), Gnecchi Collection (Rome), Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris), and Kunsthistoriches Museum (Vienna), alongside the earlier catalogues of Ernst Babelon and Henry Cohen. For the period under study here, RIC IX (1933) does include reference to twenty-three different hoards as 'illustrative

Museum and the American Numismatic Society alone contain over 55,000 coins dating between 284-450, and information on many of these is digitally available.[219] Using just these two collections would provide a dataset nearly comparable in size to my own site-finds database of 63,557 coins gathered from ninety-six separate publications.

However, as site-find and hoard evidence have drastically increased in volume and accessibility over the past century, museum collections have increasingly been dismissed as unreliable data sources. The major critique is that museum collections suffer from modern collector bias. It is often summarised as modern collectors favouring collecting one of each coin type, meaning their collections over-represent rare coins and under-represent common coins.[220] The reality is arguably more complex, as the motives of individual collectors or institutional collection practices substantially vary.[221] Nevertheless, modern coin collections are, in general, highly inconsistent sources, stamped by the intertwining personalities and preferences of their various collators, that inevitably risk presenting a corrupted view of relative volumes of the different iconographic types visible to Late Roman audiences. Museum collections' lack of homogeneity in the assembly process puts them at an immediate disadvantage in comparison to accidently lost site-finds.

Despite the methodological minefield created by the variance in collection policies, there have been arguments advocating for the representativeness of major museums' base-metal coin collections. Andrei Gandila and Constantina Katsari have asserted how any rarer base-metal coins derived from a modern collector's potential interest in completing 'sets' are obscured by most of the collection being comprised of the thousands of common coins more widely available for acquisition.[222] However, the restriction to using only major museum collections to overcome the collector bias issue then imposes another constraint on the analysis. Major

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of the period' but is again predominantly based on the consultation of seventy-five different collections and sales catalogues.

[219] British Museum = 37,087 coins [accessed 07/11/2022]. American Numismatic Society = 20,132 coins [accessed 07/11/2022].

[220] Grierson 1961: 445-446; Grierson 1967: 323-324; Grierson 1986: 38-39.

[221] See Case 2009; Gandila 2009: 158-161 for discussions of the great variation in collector bias. Case's study of coin collecting specifically identifies four different motives ('extension of self', 'financial motivation', 'addiction' and 'social'). This range of motives and their varying potential impact on an individual's collection is particularly notable given the relative uniformity of Case's survey subjects (majority adult, American white males in their fifties and sixties, as per Case 2009: 740). Determining and accounting for collector bias only becomes more complex when we start to factor changing cultural influences and antiquarian practices around coin collecting that reach back to the renaissance (Beard 2021: 78-117; Ireland and Seaby 2005: 1-4). Discussion here is framed in terms of how different motives impact collections of private individuals, but such collections often form the basis of major collections. For example, the Hunterian in Glasgow is based on the private collection of William Hunter, while the Barber Institute of Fine Art in Birmingham predominantly consists of the donated collections of Philip Whiting and Geoffrey Haines. A further layer of convolution is to then consider the effects of contemporary institutions' individual collection policies, which often differ in their interest to preserve or accumulate examples from certain periods or regions.

[222] Gandila 2009: 154-162; Katsari 2003. (esp. 159). Both also argue that selectivity by modern curators is generally more limited to the collecting of precious metal types, whereas collections of base-metal coinage (the main focus of this thesis) are generally more representative as they have been 'subject to more random selection' (Gandila 2009: 159).

museum collections' purpose has been to assemble coinage from across the entire Roman Empire. This generalist focus means that major collections can only be used to construct a pan-imperial viewpoint of the commonly available coinage. The American Numismatic Society's collection of 20,000+ coins issued between 284-450 cannot provide insight into proportional volumes of iconographic types in a specific Roman province. The widely accessible coin collections of major museums lack the geographic contextual data inherent to site-finds, so are limited to providing a macroscopic perspective on the Roman Empire.

Conversely, another type of museum collection may provide geographically rooted coin data. Distinct from collector-derived museum collections are those of regional or urban museums primarily consisting of locally recovered coins. Theoretically, these suffer less from individuals' collector biases, being more akin to decontextualised site-finds or hoards from local excavations. Most notably, Richard Reece used local museum collections in northern France,[223] southern France[224] and northern Italy[225] to analyse regional coin-loss over time, which culminated in an interregional comparison.[226] A central component of these articles is Reece's 'subjective estimate' of each collection's 'archaeological reliability'.[227] These 'subjective' assessments are essential but also highlight the care and time required when engaging with localised collections. Can the museums confirm the local origin of their coins by providing accurate provenance for acquisitions that often predate the diligent recording of contemporary archaeological and curatorial practices? Furthermore, there is the practical issue of access, given that few collections of regional museums are digitised for public use. The chief advantage of museum collections over site-finds – that the online availability of major collections allows a large dataset to be rapidly assembled – this therefore lost. Given the ever-increasing availability of hoard and site-finds data through publication and digitisation,[228] researchers have access to far more viable data sources with clear geographic provenance.

2.1.2.3. Hoards

The two major extended chronological surveys of coin iconography to use gross coin analysis are Carlos Noreña's study of the silver and base-metal imperial coinage produced between 69-235, and Clare Rowan's study of the Severan dynasty's silver coinage (193-235).[229] To provide spatially defined data and produce databases of significant size, both used hoards as

[223] Reece 1972a.
[224] Reece 1967.
[225] Reece 1971.
[226] Reece 1973. This interregional comparison also included Britain, which used a dataset primarily derived from site-finds. On Reece's provisional British dataset see Reece 1972b.
[227] Reece 1973: 227.
[228] For example, Oxford's CHRE.
[229] Noreña 2011, which is an extensive development of his original survey of just the silver coinage for the same period (Noreña 2001); Rowan 2013a.

their source type.[230] However, at least for meeting my aim of constructing a dataset that represents the coinage targeting, distributed to and circulating amongst the wider imperial populace, I would argue hoards have some significant problems. In this sub-section, I will provide a critique of hoards that draws on the contents of Noreña's and Rowan's databases. In no way is this a criticism of the results and consequent historical analysis that either author has provided. Both works are ground-breaking in their use of quantitative analysis for studying coin iconography. My intention here is only to question the data that future quantitative analyses of coin propaganda may use and push for further methodological refinement. Principally, I will assert that hoards have increasingly been acknowledged as complex deposits that suffer from the influence of ancient depositors' selection bias. Furthermore, the larger hoards often used in iconographic analyses arguably provide insight into the coinage and propaganda circulating amongst an elite minority rather than wider society.

The collective term 'hoard'[231] encompasses an array of complex deposits, further sub-dividable into coins accidentally lost (like purse hoards), buried with intention of recovery (like savings hoards), or purposefully abandoned (including votive).[232] Hoards' lack of uniform reasons for deposition makes me query whether they are suitable sources for comparing the occurrence and distribution of different political messages on coins. In defence of using hoards, both Noreña and Rowan have asserted that, irrespective of the differing motivations behind their collection and deposition, they are predominantly underpinned by economic instinct.[233] While both scholars do concede that there is *some* evidence of ancient hoarding practices that were not motivated by economic reasoning,[234] these are dismissed as rare incidents, whose possible distortion of the data would be overcome through the law of large numbers. Noreña and Rowan conclude that the complicated and varied selection bias plaguing modern coin collections is therefore largely absent from hoards, so the coins they contain must be indicative of those in circulation. Yet this interpretation is increasingly at odds with the growing emphasis within numismatics regarding hoards' complexity. Greater interest is now being given to find contexts, material cultural as well as economic function, and even the impact of gender on depositional choice.[235] It is nearly two decades since Richard Hobbs

[230] Note too that in her comparison of the data that can be derived from gross coin type analysis and gross coin analysis, Erika Manders used hoard-based data for the latter (see **§2.1.1.2**, n.195).
[231] As per the CHRE project [accessed 30/07/2024], just the term 'hoard' can vary in its meaning. Within this thesis, I have held to the basic definition used by the project, with a 'hoard' being 'any group of coins which appears to have been deposited together'.
[232] For recent critical assessments of hoards see Naylor and Bland 2015; Bland 2018a; Bland et. al. 2020.
[233] Noreña 2011: 29-30; Rowan 2013a: 25-26.
[234] Some type selection within hoards beyond economic reasoning has long been accepted as an intermittent phenomenon, as per Crawford 1983b: 198-199; Howgego 1994: 12. Note that Howgego in particular outlines the presence of hoards belonging to the period of study covered in this thesis that are reflective of selection on a political basis as well as economically motivated.
[235] Elkins 2009: 42-46; Kemmers 2018b: 63-65; Kemmers 2022a: 21-22. Investigation into the complexity and context of different hoards that give greater consideration of their non-economic elements have increasingly come

stated that there is no unified theory of hoarding, and the increasingly prevalent trend to consider the unique character of each hoard ensures that this continues to be the case.[236] I am not looking to write off hoards as a possible data source, but would suggest the need for data collectors to overtly define their selection process. It should be made clear why specific hoards are used, with hoards impacted by the selection bias of ancient assemblers on non-economic grounds ideally excluded, rather than all hoards simply treated as equally 'representative'. The difficulty though is that we are unlikely to possess the required provenance information for most hoards. Because of this increasing insistence on the complexity of hoards, of their lack of uniformity, I have deemed it too problematic to confirm their 'representativeness' for data collection.

Furthermore, we should consider what a hoard's size may tell us about its 'owner', and whether the coins deposited by this 'owner' are themselves representative of those available to wider society. An extreme example of hoard size is the Reka Devnia hoard, consisting of over 100,000 coins which span four centuries from Mark Anthony to Gordian III.[237] This hoard alone constitutes a major part of both Noreña's and Rowan's silver coin datasets (52.5% and 48.2% respectively).[238] It remains the single largest Roman coin hoard discovered and was surely not a savings hoard associable with a member of the wider imperial population, but likely connected with the Roman state.[239] It has recently been suggested that this hoard is not actually representative of contemporary coinage in circulation,[240] which in turn raises concerns over whether other large hoards that arguably belonged to state or elite owners may equally be inappropriate indicators of widely available coin types.

Most of the other hoards that comprise Noreña's and Rowan's respective datasets are admittedly much smaller. Excluding the Reka Devnia hoard, Noreña's dataset consists of 70,510 coins from 104 hoards and Rowan's dataset consists of 87,084 coins from fifty-five hoards (mean averages of 678 and 1,583 coins per hoard respectively). In fact, as per Figure 2.2, in each dataset over half of the hoards used consist of between one and 700 coins.[241] Nevertheless, even if we ignore the Reka Devnia hoard's contribution to Noreña's and

to the fore alongside the demise of the traditional 'threat and response' narrative of hoarding, that hoarding increased during periods of external threat to protect wealth (see Hobbs 2006: 128-134; Bland 2018a: 7).
[236] Hobbs 2006: 134-142.
[237] See CHRE Hoard ID3406, 'Reka Devnia 1929' [accessed 27/09/2024]. Though covering a longer period than under study here, it is staggering that a single hoard can provide a dataset larger than my own.
[238] The Reka Devnia hoard contributes 77,911 coins to Noreña 2011's total dataset of 148,421 imperial silver coins, and 81,096 of the 168,180 silver coins in Rowan 2013a's dataset.
[239] On its status as the largest Roman coin hoard see Metcalf 2002. Unfortunately, we have very little contextual information about the hoard, other than that it was discovered in two vessels buried inside a building of unknown function within the city of Marcianopolis (Depeyrot 2004: 5). However, the hoard was almost certainly buried in response to the city's besiegement and possible sack by Cniva's Gothic army in 250-251 (Depeyrot 2004: 7-19).
[240] Hellings and Spoerri Butcher 2017.
[241] In Noreña's dataset seventy-five of 104 hoards have 700 coins or less in them and thirty-one of fifty-six hoards for Rowan 2013a.

Rowan's datasets, Figure 2.2 also indicates that the combined total coinage of these smaller hoards constitutes no more than 25.7% and 13.1% of either dataset.[242] A significant proportion of the data contributing to these analyses belong to a minority of large hoards that may have had no relation to the wider populace. To take this further, if we accept the 'average' individual was able to compile a hoard of up to, say, 1,500 coins, then 42.2% and 73.5% of the coins in Noreña's and Rowan's respective datasets are still derived from deposits that we cannot associate with wider Roman society. Any figure like 1,500 coins is arbitrary, and it is impossible to use extant sources to ascertain the likely liquid wealth pool of an 'average' person for any period of Roman imperial history.[243] However, this hypothetical scenario makes clear that existing hoard-based analyses of coin iconography are dominated by hoards that likely belonged either to the wealthy 'elite' minority or were part of the state largesse. By extension, if we cannot be confident that larger hoards correlate with their smaller counterparts, we must question whether datasets predominantly compiled using these larger hoards can represent the coins and coin types regularly used across the empire. Datasets dominated by large

[242] Note that when the Reka Devnia hoard in included in both datasets, the contribution of hoards containing up to 700 coins is reduced to just 12.2% for Noreña 2011 and be down to 6.8% for Rowan 2013a.

[243] To provide some very rough context though, Figure 2.3 shows a summary of the number of coins recovered from purse hoards and suspected purse hoards dating to the third century. As discussed in **§1.4.3**, these are presumed to be collections of accidentally lost coins more associable with daily exchange and broadly indicative of individuals' portable wealth. From Figure 2.3, it is clear that for an individual to carry more than 100 coins on their person was rare. The rough figure of 1,500 coins proposed above assumes that an 'average' Roman's stored wealth may reach to at least fifteen times more coins than the amount they carried on their person. The data presented in Figure 2.3 has been taken from the CHRE database, showing all hoards found in purses or interpreted as purse hoards, totalling a sample of thirty-four hoards. The geographic scope is largely concentrated on north-western Europe, in line with the CHRE's overall database:

Country	Total Hoards	CHRE Hoard References
Austria	1	ID3758
Belgium	3	ID9142; ID8518; ID8557
Bulgaria	1	ID12302
England	4	ID14752; ID14845; ID14932; ID14933
France	10	ID5952; ID3952; ID3764; ID7542; ID6106; ID16706; ID3873; ID6214; ID3493; ID5879
Greece	2	ID6714; ID6712
Hungary	1	ID12855
Italy	1	ID16767
Jordan	1	ID18735
Luxembourg	2	ID7442; ID7439
Scotland	1	ID18585
Switzerland	6	ID6475; ID6451; ID6675; ID6456; ID9315; ID9330
Turkey	1	ID20042

The chronological scope of 200-285 was selected to provide some further comparison with the Reka Devnia hoard, whose terminal data is 251. Note that these hoards all consist of silver and/or base-metal coins, and include a variety of denominations, including *denarii*, radiates, *sestertii*, *dupondii*, provincial coinages and even imitation coins. As a result, the coin totals are not strict indicators of the purchasing power of each purse. For example, the single largest purse in the dataset (Sceaux-Sur-Huisne hoard, ID5879) is an outlier in terms of coin total and contains some 423 coins, though these are all *minimi* of the late third century and would be worth a fraction of earlier purses of only a few silver-rich *denarii*. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the next five largest hoards (Gerasa hoard, ID18735, 155 coins; Merbes-le-Château 2006 hoard, ID8557, 122 coins; Nemesvámos-Baláca hoard, ID12855, 86 coins; Vaise hoard, ID3493, 81 coins; Athens Agora South House A hoard, ID6712, 58 coins) are all from contexts that indicate the purse was being stored with or in a money box at the time, meaning that these may be interpreted as close to representing the entire monetary, liquid wealth of their respective owners.

hoards may be limited to only capturing the political messages received by the minority socio-political groups to whom they once belonged.

Ultimately, both large hoards and site-finds have issues and, if used in isolation, any database constructed with either of them will provide an imperfect representation of the Roman imperial coinage in circulation. As Markus Peter noted, a more ideal source type would be unintentionally deposited hoards such as purse hoards, whose simultaneous loss avoids issues of selection and depositional variation that affect most other hoards, while also providing complete single deposits that site-finds cannot.[244] However, it would be a truly mammoth task to assemble a database of such specific hoards whose coin total is large enough to enjoy the effects of the law of large numbers. In lieu of this ideal dataset, site-finds stand as the preferred data source for use in constructing a large database that seeks to investigate the political messages of base-metal coins distributed to and seen by the wider imperial populace, and accommodate inter- and intra-regional comparison.

2.2. The Site-Finds Dataset

By using gross coin analysis as a basic method of quantification and site-finds as a data source, I have compiled a database of 63,557 coins from forty-four urban sites (Map 1), all issued between the accession of Diocletian in 284 and the death of Theodosius II in 450.[245] My preference for site-finds in part due to its base-metal coinage bias is vindicated in that the database contains just 106 precious metal coins.[246]

Each coin in the database has been grouped to an iconographic type based on its reverse iconography and inscription, with a total of 247 different iconographic types identified.[247] Also recorded are other key distinguishing details of each coin, including its earliest or latest possible production date; issue period (as per my periodisations, Fig.0.1); standard reference information (for example, RIC or LRBC type); material (for example, gold, silver, base-metal), denomination (for example, *nummus*, fraction, AE2/3/4); issuing mint and obverse emperor/empress/deity. Furthermore, provenance information is included, indicating the site

[244] Peters 1996: 21.
[245] This does not include the coinage from the British Empire of usurpers Carausius and Allectus (286-296), whose fleeting but distinct coin propaganda has been judged beyond the scope of this thesis. As for the inclusion of fourteen coins in the site-finds database whose issue date may extend up to 455 (the death of Valentinian III) see **§4.3** n.680.
[246] This breaks down to seven gold coins and ninety-nine silver coins. Combined they constitute less than 0.2% of the entire dataset, and never contributes more than 0.6% of the coinage for a single period. Note that this excludes the 217 'base-silver' coins that pre-date the Diocletianic reforms, which I have treated as *de facto* base-metal coins because they were the lowest denomination coins of their issue period.
[247] On the definition of 'iconographic type' and its differentiation from 'coin type' see **§0.2.3**. The complete list of all 247 iconographic types, including example images, reverse inscriptions and descriptions are available in the Iconographic Type Catalogue (Appendix 8). The process of defining these iconographic types is outlined in **§0.2.3**, n.46.

to which the coin belongs, its publication of origin and original catalogue number. Coins of the same coin type (same obverse emperor/design, denomination, mint and reverse design) from the same site and publication have often been grouped as a single line of data, and their total quantity is denoted. A visual example of the database and its contents is presented in Figure 2.4.

As per Map 1, sites have been selected to provide representative coverage of the entire empire, as well as a series of spatial clusters (namely the *Britannia*, *Moesia* and *Oriens* dioceses). Where possible, I selected major administrative centres – diocesan and provincial capitals – to act as hubs indicative of iconographic types available within their broader regions.[248] Otherwise, the sites used comprise civic urban centres that could provide significant quantities of Late Roman site-finds and/or help fill geographic holes.

Figure 2.5 provides a tabulation of coin totals for each site, as well as the totals for each of the Late Roman dioceses represented in the database.[249] This shows that, although some regions are significantly better embodied, each diocese is represented by at least two sites. Moreover, except for *Viennensis*, each diocese contributes at least 1,000 coins to the database. Nevertheless, it has been necessary to combat the disparity in different sites' coin totals, so that the sites with larger coin totals do not dominate the data derived from the site-finds database. Accordingly, a series of basic measures for normalising the data have been applied, as detailed in Appendix 2, to ensure each site (and period) is equally represented in any subsequent analysis. These statistical amendments are uniquely applicable to bodies of site-finds and offer a further advantage over hoards, whose results can so often be skewed by particularly large examples (see **§2.1.2.3** above).

[248] The diocesan capitals present include Antioch (*Oriens)*, Augusta Treverorum (*Gallia*), Carthage (*Africa)* and Rome (*Italia Suburbica*). The provincial capitals present include Alexandria (*Aegyptus*), Apamea (*Syria II Salutaris*), Caesarea Maritima (*Palestina I*), Corinth (*Achaea*), Lindum (*Flavia Caesariensis*), Rotomagus (*Lugdunensis II*) and Sardis (*Lydia*). For mapping of dioceses, provinces, and capitals see Stier et. al. 1956; Talbert and Bagnall 2000.

[249] The only Late Roman dioceses not represented in the site-finds database are *Pannonia* and *Pontica*. For *Pontica*, this is due to the lack of published excavations with clearly provenanced site-find catalogues. As for *Pannonia*, I remain unaware of any published excavations of major urban centres, such as Siscia or Sirmium, that would provide sufficient site-finds data to act as representative sites for the diocese. Nevertheless, there are a substantial number of site-finds coin-lists available for *Pannonia* available within the *Fundmünzen der Antike* (FdA) project catalogues that cover modern Austria (*Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Österreich*), Slovenia (*Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Slowenien*) and Croatia (*Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Kroatien*). These resources offer a potential future opportunity to fill this regional gap in the site-finds database. As it stands though, there is one clear advantage to having no *Pannonia* sites. As will be denoted in **§2.3.3**, n.258 below, *Pannonia* was the one diocese that often moved between the nominal control of western- and eastern-based emperors. The absence of any sites in *Pannonia* in the site-finds database avoids a potential complicating factor and helps to present more distinct boundaries within the data, between clearly 'western' and 'eastern' sites, as will be discussed in **§2.3.4.1.**

2.3. Validating the Representativeness of the Site-Finds Database and Identifying Regional Variation

To this point, I have mapped out my key decisions made prior to collecting data for a quantitative numismatic analysis, and how these have sought to provide a representative dataset of Late Roman base-metal coinage. Furthermore, I have given a basic outline of what my data collection process produced: the site-finds database. In this chapter's final part, I will demonstrate that the assembled database *is* broadly representative of base-metal coinage issued and accessible during the Late Roman period. Doing so will affirm the validity of using the site-finds database to underpin this thesis's core analysis of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda (Chapter 4).

To verify the representativeness of the site-finds database, I will delineate the presence of different geographic groupings within it. It is well established in Roman numismatics that there are recurrent and regionally distinct patterns in the site-finds record, often shaped by administrative and economic mechanisms that supersede the influence of a site's specific history.[250] On this basis, a numismatic dataset that accurately presents a cross-section of those coins most widely available should also contain evidence of these regional patterns. Demonstrating geographic conformity between sites in my site-finds database will therefore attest to its internal coherence.

As will be shown, two tiers of inter-site divisions are present within the site-finds database: a macroscopic division between sites in the western and eastern imperial territories, and various micro-groupings within these two halves of the empire. As such, this process of assessing the database's validity also has the advantage of defining the parameters for comparative inter-regional analysis. The Late Roman Empire was not a homogenous social, cultural or economic space. It is, therefore, a great strength of the site-finds database to facilitate a more nuanced study that can move beyond pan-imperial assessments of coin propaganda, to better represent the reality of a diverse empire in which the experiences of the wider populace may have varied.

[250] See, for example, Ravetz 1964: 212; Collis 1974: 190-192; Ryan 1982: 25. These primarily discuss Britain or north-western Europe, but the regionally specific nature of coin deposits is also the prevailing conclusion of Noeske (2000: I.1, 205-207) in his analysis of available site-find information from fourth- to eighth-century Roman Egypt.

2.3.1. Analytical Approach

My process of identifying the regionality present in the site-finds database has been structured around the study of two forms of proxy data conventionally used to ascertain sites with comparable coin populations:

— The first type of proxy data used is mint volumes. This considers the proportional presence of coins from different identifiable mints at each site. We can construct an outline of how, and from where, each site was supplied with base-metal coinage. Data can then be compared to group sites with similar profiles of coin supply and delineate regional circulation zones.

— The second form of proxy data is coin-loss volumes, inspected on a period-by-period basis. As discussed in **§2.1**, site-finds are typically derived through accidental loss and indicative of their non-lost counterparts – that is, the quantities of coinage *in use* at a site from different periods.[251] Through comparison of these volumes, we may determine when various coin-related activities, like monetary exchange, hoarding, demonetisation, debasement, or administrative changes in regional production volumes, resulted in the increase or reduction of new coinage at respective sites.[252] Construction of coin-loss profiles per-site then allows for inter-site comparison, where sites with comparable patterns of coin-loss may be identified as having had similar patterns of coin use and economic experience.

The hypothesis here is that by combining these forms of proxy data – therefore identifying sites within the same zone of coin supply and circulation, and with similar patterns of coin use over time – we can derive groups of sites whose residents likely saw the same iconographic types in comparable volumes. These groups can then be used to explore regional variation in the experience of imperial rulership ideology through coinage.

[251] I want to emphasise that analysis here is limited to discussing coin-loss periods based on a coin's date of issue. I am considering the volume in which coinage from a certain period was at some point present in the economy relative to coins issued in other periods. I have not used contextual information to determine when the coinage was lost and therefore exited live circulation. In short, coin-loss here means coins lost *from* a certain period, not coins lost *during* a certain period.

[252] For overviews on the mechanisms by which new base-metal coinage is believed to have entered into the hands of the wider imperial populace see Aarts 2005; Kemmers 2009a. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delineate the extent to which these different coin-related activities impacted each site, but the resulting coin-loss volumes are important here to ascertain sites whose experience of such activities was broadly similar. There is the possibility of a site's unique individual history differentiating it from general trends but, as per **§2.3.5.1**, n.301 there are very few instances of this in the site-finds database.

2.3.2. Proxy Data Overview: Caveats and Limitations

Before setting out the methods for analysing these two forms of proxy data and discussing their results, some brief notes on data quality are warranted. For the mint representation analysis, only coins whose production may be confidently assigned to a specific mint were usable. In the site-finds database, this amounts to 30,033 of 63,557 coins, with the remainder coming from uncertain mints.[253] The per-site median of coins from known mints is 44.8%, though, as per Figure 2.6, the range of exact values is large, from a low of 16.2% (Nemea) to a high of 84.3% (Augusta Treverorum). As Figure 2.6 also shows, the raw number of coins from known mints varies significantly between sites. In some cases, as with Ilium and Heraclea Sintica, even when the proportion of coins from known mints exceeds the median, the number of actual coins is still rather low. The partial nature of this data would typically suggest that we should be wary of its ability to provide meaningful results. Nevertheless, as will be proved, the site-finds database's mint representation data is surprisingly coherent. There are very few anomalous datapoints to suggest sites ever substantially deviated from predominantly being supplied by those mints in closest proximity.

Regarding the coin-loss data, two points should be noted. Firstly, the data's quality will always be limited by practical issues of coin identification[254] and periodisation processes,[255] which results in the volumes of some periods being artificially heightened or depressed. Secondly, using coin-loss to determine the exact volumes of coins from different periods available at a site faces several problems. For the Late Roman period, most notable are the varying hoarding

[253] There are a great variety of practical identification issues that limit our ability to accurately record the coins excavated, and that may result in biased over-representation of certain mints. Sometimes entire iconographic types or variations of iconographic types with specific markings are unique productions of certain mints, while certain mint marks are more unique and visually distinctive than others. When this is the case, such mints are those most likely to be detected. This is typical of types that were only issued at *Rome*, such as the relatively well represented VRBS ROMA FELIX type **[107]** from Period 11 (388-408), where the mint mark of the coin does not need to be read to ascertain the mint of origin. By contrast, the Propontic base-metal mints often issued coins with comparable designs and used similar mint marks, like the basic SMHA, SMNA or SMKA for *Heraclea*, *Nicomedia* or *Cyzicus* respectively. Even the minor wearing of a coin's mint mark from one of these mints can mean it is recorded as of an uncertain mint.

[254] In terms of how issues in identifying site-finds can impact the data, typical are the opposing situations in which coins with more unique designs remain distinguishable even when heavily worn, compared to iconographic types with similar iconography that cannot be confidently identified when worn. For example, I have assigned all variations of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type under the same iconographic type **[69]**. The lack of need to distinguish between its various sub-types, alongside its highly recognisable iconography ensuring its easy identification, means that even very poorly preserved examples can be recorded with confidence. The enormous number of coins of type **[69]** in the site-finds dataset is likely somewhat beholden to this (see **§2.3.5.1**, n.300). Conversely, a great many coins are often recorded at the end of site-finds catalogues as uncertain late-fourth or fifth century victory types. The 'Victory advancing with wreath' iconography was so prevalent in the Late Roman period that the coin's inscription must be readable to identify the exact iconographic type. As such, most of these worn coins could not be included in the site-finds database. Although base-metal coin production appears to have declined into the fifth century (Guest 2012), it must be acknowledged that these identification issues for the later periods has resulted in their under-representation in the site-finds dataset in comparison to earlier periods.

[255] For choices I have made in dating certain iconographic types that may have resulted in the artificial over- or under-representation of some periods in the site-finds database see Appendix 3.

practices and the state's episodic demonetisation of some base-metal coins.[256] Both led to large quantities of coins from certain periods being purposefully withdrawn from use and consequently being absent from the coin-loss record. Coin-loss data cannot give an unedited view of the volumes in which coins of different periods were produced and used. Nevertheless, these infringements on coin-loss data's quality impact all sites, so they remain broadly comparable. Substantial variations in sites' period-by-period coin-loss volumes usually indicate differences in quantities of coinage available and used, not the effect of unequal data-quality issues.

2.3.3. Proxy Data Overview: Methods of Analysis

The final elements to outline before investigating the two forms of proxy data are the exact methods used for these analyses. For the mint representation analysis, a site-by-site comparison of coin totals from different mints was undertaken. To present regional supply patterns, each mint's contribution to a site was calculated as a percentage of that site's total of all coins from known mints. The mint data was also simplified to better distinguish geographic trends, by consolidating the twenty-three mints present in the site-finds database into a two-tier geographic hierarchy (Fig.2.7 and Map 2).[257] Firstly, using the west-east partition of *Pars Occidentis* and *Pars Orientis*, the Late Roman state's highest administrative division,[258] mints were denoted as 'western' or 'eastern'. Beneath this upper tier, following a further hierarchical division of the Late Roman state, each mint was also grouped into its relevant diocese/fiscal unit.[259] This produced two contingency tables, Figures 2.8 and 2.9: the forty-four sites comprise the samples (rows) in both, while the variables (columns) are the grouped

[256] See **§2.1.2.1**, n.209-210 above.
[257] See Lockyear 2022 on the importance of simplifying complex data to enable better analysis of numismatic material. Note that not all these twenty-three mints were permanently active throughout the Late Roman period, as further discussed in **§2.3.4.2** n.283 and n.285 below. A key advantage of grouping mints together under larger geographic boundaries is that it enables the inclusion of all mint data, including short-lived mints (for example, *Amiens* or *Carthage*). The data used remains unedited and inclusive, helping to better distinguish regional supply, but the overarching patterns are smoothed. The potential anomalies created by short-lived mints are obfuscated and do not require constant notation.
[258] Barnes 1982: 195-200; Hendy 1985: 371-386. The terms '*Pars Occidentis*' and '*Pars Orientis*' are the precise nomenclature used in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (c.395, see Klaus-Peters 2006a) to refer to the administrative division between the western and eastern empire. The exact boundaries between the *Pars Occidentis* and *Pars Orientis* intermittently changed over the period of study, with the diocese of *Pannonia*, and therefore the mints of *Siscia* and *Sirmium*, often alternating between the two halves of empire. As per Hendy and Barnes, upon the division of the empire under the dyarchy and then tetrarchy *Pannonia* belonged to the eastern imperial territories of Diocletian and Galerius. On this basis *Pannonia* and its mints have been identified as part of the *Pars Orientis* throughout this study. Note though that by the end of the fourth century the *Notitia Dignitatum* identified *Pannonia* as part of the *Pars Occidentis.* However, of the 30,033 coins recorded with identifiable mints in the site-finds dataset, just 882 come from either *Siscia* or *Sirmium* (2.9%). As such, while identifying said coins amongst the western mints rather than the eastern would ultimately have some effect on the quoted absolute figures and percentages in the following analysis, the relatively minor contribution of these *Pannonia* mints is not enough to undermine the broader trends that will be identified. Furthermore, it is an issue limited only to this mint-based analysis, as none of the forty-four sites within the site-finds dataset were in *Pannonia*, meaning they can be more certainly identified throughout the study as permanently located in the western or eastern empire.
[259] Hendy 1985: 379.

mints, either under the broader labels of *Pars Occidentis*/*Pars Orientis* or assigned to their respective dioceses. These have formed the basis of the mint representation analysis, allowing for direct comparison of percentages, or conversion into basic graphical visualisations.

For the coin-loss data, coin totals for each of this thesis's thirteen periods (Fig.0.1) were also compared on a site-by-site basis. To enable comparison of periods of significantly different lengths, each period's coin total was adjusted to a per-annum figure.[260] Then, the per-annum totals for each period were calculated as percentages of that site's per-annum total.[261] Beyond this though, no further means of consolidation or simplification was possible. The process produced a single contingency table, Figure 2.10, again with the forty-four sites as the samples (rows), and the thirteen periods as its variables (columns). This data has then been formulated as bar graphs and line-graphs in the below analysis, with any further revisions to Figure 2.10's data outlined as relevant.

However, despite attempts to simplify the mint representation and coin-loss data as much as possible, both remain relatively complex – Figure 2.9 contains 440 individual datapoints, whereas Figure 2.10 contains 572. Interpreting these datasets through direct inspection or basic visualisations alone is not an adequate or comprehensive method of analysis. I have therefore used two forms of multivariate analysis employed by previous numismatists and archaeologists to simplify and identify latent structures within intricate datasets. These are:

— Correspondence Analysis (CA): A statistical technique for analysing and visualising relationships within multi-dimensional data – that is, a contingency table with several inter-connected variables.[262] These multiple dimensions are reduced to a two-dimensional biplot, where variables and samples are simultaneously displayed.[263] Distance between variables or between samples is measured in standard deviations,

[260] For further discussion of adjustment to per-annum figures see Appendix 2, **§2.2**.
[261] These percentages are always cited to one decimal place, so remain comparable to the per mill values often used in other coin-loss studies, such as Reece 1973; Casey 1988; DeRose Evans 2018: 115.
[262] Application of Correspondence Analysis to numismatic data has primarily been championed by Kris Lockyear (1996a, 2000, 2022). Lockyear 2022 provides an excellent introduction to CA for numismatists and advocates for the technique's usefulness. For other useful introductions and investigations into the use of CA in the broader discipline of archaeology see Shennan 1997: 308-341; Baxter 1994: 136-145. All Correspondence Analysis conducted within this thesis used the statistical analysis software "R", with a script written in accordance with Lockyear 2022; Kassambara 2017; and Baxter and Cool 2010.
[263] Inevitably, this reduction of dimensions is unable to represent all variables and samples equally and sees some data loss. The total amount of data captured by the Correspondence Analysis calculations and then represented on the produced biplot is expressed as a percentage. The total captured by each biplot, and therefore the extent to which it provides a representative visualisation of the datasets subjected to CA, will be denoted in the proceeding footnotes. Note to that each of a CA biplot's two dimensions represent a proportion of the total data captured, which is displayed as a percentage next to the dimension number in each of the relevant Figures below (Figs.2.12-14, 2.16-18 and 2.20).

both horizontally and vertically, to indicate degrees of variation.[264] Samples or variables plotted at similar vertical and/or horizontal standard deviations indicate a likely close relationship. Identifying closely plotted samples helps to determine groups of sites within the data, while judging a group's proximity to the different variables delineates the criteria that make the sites similar.

— Hierarchical Agglomerative Cluster Analysis – A technique that creates dendrograms to again visualise similarity between samples in a contingency table, using a pre-selected similarity co-efficient and grouping method.[265] First, it pairs the most similar individual samples, then sequentially joins the next most similar samples to these initial pairs, producing larger and larger clusters until all samples are united as a single cluster. As is conventional when applying Cluster Analysis to archaeological material, the below analysis uses Euclidean distance as its similarity coefficient.[266] Conversely, there is less consensus regarding the best grouping method. I have followed Michael Baxter's recommendation of analysing the same sets of samples twice, using Ward's Method and Average Linkage.[267] Each has slightly different characteristics: Ward's Method is known to be more aggressive in its grouping, coercing samples into stricter clusters, whereas Average Linkage is better at indicating outliers.[268] On this basis, when both methods produce comparable results, we may be confident that demonstrably similar groupings of sites have been identified. Regarding the actual interpretation of the dendrograms, similarity is designated by the height at which samples or clusters combine, as measured on the y-axis; adjacency between separate

[264] In this thesis, Correspondence Analysis has only been used to produce symmetric biplots. A symmetric biplot displays both samples and variables at their principal coordinates. The samples and variables are overlayed as separate configurations that forces their display within the same scale to ease visualisation. This means that while the variable-to-variable and sample-to-sample distances are accurately depicted, the variable-to-sample distance is not and the relationship between variables and samples only indicates general trends. By contrast, it is also possible to produce asymmetric biplots using Correspondence Analysis. These still plot the variables at their principal coordinates, but the samples are now plotted at their standard coordinates, which then accurately reflects the distance between variables and samples. The asymmetric biplot therefore provides an accurate reflection of the actual distance between the variables and the samples. However, this method of display is generally unpopular, because it produces less aesthetic results. Samples are typically bunched towards the centre of the biplot, which makes it more difficult to distinguish groups or patterns amongst them. Since the purpose here is specifically to compare and differentiate between samples, I have deemed asymmetric biplots to be an unhelpful visualisation. For further information on the symmetric and asymmetric biplots in CA see Greenacre 2016: 68-71.

[265] As per Seber 1984: 372 and Baxter 1994: 157 concerns have been raised regarding the application of hierarchical agglomerative Cluster Analysis to archaeological data, and it has been argued as only useful when applied to data that already has a hierarchical structure. However, this analytical method seems particularly appropriate for application to the coin-loss data. As per **§2.3.5.1** and n.300 below, the hierarchical structure of this dataset is suggested by common, pan-imperial patterns of coin-loss in certain Periods (5, 8 and 9) and subsequent general divergence of coin-loss patterns between eastern and western sites over other periods (namely Periods 6, 10 and 11). On previous successful applications of hierarchical agglomerative Cluster Analysis to Roman numismatic data see Lockyear 1996 and 2000 (hoards); Walton 2012: 34 (stray-finds).

[266] Baxter 1994: 156. The numismatic analyses of Lockyear (1996b; 2000) and Walton (2012) have notably differed in their use of D-Max based cluster analysis. In line with this, cluster analysis on the below discussed datasets was replicated using the D-Max distance measure. The results showed no points of significant deviation from the Euclidean-based analysis and have therefore not been discussed any further below.

[267] Baxter 1994: 154.

[268] Baxter 1994: 158-159; Baxter 2003: 93.

clusters is not an indicator of similarity.[269] Interpreting the dendrograms also requires identifying a 'cut' point – a horizontal line at a selected similarity level, below which the final level of clusters for interpretation is specified. However, as there is no objective method for identifying the appropriate cut point, it is a decision reliant on the subject expertise of the analyst.[270] The method of determining appropriate cut points is outlined below (**§2.3.5.2**) before the application of Cluster Analysis to the coin-loss data.

As will also be delineated in the forthcoming analysis, all Correspondence Analysis and Cluster Analysis have been applied to contingency tables with the samples and variables used in Figures 2.8-2.10 or selected segments of these, unless stated otherwise.

2.3.4. Proxy Data Analysis 1: Mint Representation Data

2.3.4.1. Macro-Regional Groupings

Scattergram Analysis

Using the per-site mint representation data, the first significant geographical division identifiable within the site-finds database is between the *Pars Occidentis* and *Pars Orientis*. By looking at the proportions of coins from 'eastern' or 'western' mints at each site, a simple scattergram (Fig.2.11) makes evident that most sites were predominantly supplied by the mints from one half of the empire or the other.[271] Much like the mints themselves, most sites may be classified as characteristically 'western' or 'eastern'. Sixteen sites (blue box) are immediately distinguished as having been western-supplied and were all located in the *Pars Occidentis* (Map 1). Twenty-five sites (red box) predominantly had an eastern supply and were all located in the *Pars Orientis*. This does include two possible outliers, Jerusalem and Nemea, whose quantity of western coins is higher than the other 'eastern' sites, though this is likely a data quality issue.[272]

This leaves only three sites which had greater equality between eastern and western supply: Bouthroton, Sabratha and Carthage (green box). Nevertheless, the proportion of western and eastern mints at these three outliers coheres with their more liminal geographic positions.

[269] Baxter 1994: 144.
[270] Baxter 1994: 162-164. Note that in favour of relying on the analyst's subject expertise rather than being entirely beholden to the data, Digby and Kempton 1987: 138 even advocate for 'cutting certain joins on the dendrogram rather than choosing a single similarity threshold'.
[271] In the case of Figure 2.11, the term 'predominantly supplied' has been defined as at least two-thirds (66.6%+). Figure 2.11 is a visualisation of the data in Figure 2.8.
[272] For further discussion of Jerusalem as an outlier and the questionable quality of its data see **§2.3.4.3**, n.289. The quality of the mint data for Nemea is also highly questionable. As per Figure 2.6, Nemea is the worst represented site of the dataset in terms of the proportion of coins from the site with known mints (only 16.2%) as well as having the least actual number of coins with known mints (37 coins). Nevertheless, despite Nemea's extremely limited dataset it should be noted that its east-west split is relatively consistent with its geographic position, especially considering Bouthroton's liminal position to its northwest (see below).

Bouthroton was located on the edge of *Pars Orientis*, with its coastal location northwest of the Greek heartland and proximity to Italy (and affiliated sea lanes) explaining its more even west-east supply.[273] Carthage's western location still saw most of its coinage supplied by western mints, but its status as the diocesan capital of *Africa*, a trading region with clear economic ties to the eastern empire,[274] again makes the site's quantity of eastern coinage unsurprising. Only Sabratha was technically located in one half of the empire (*Pars Occidentis*) but predominantly supplied by mints in the other (*Pars Orientis*). Nevertheless, its peripheral position far from any minting region; its coastal position that made it accessible to eastern trade; and its more eastern position relative to Carthage, whose significant eastern contacts have already been noted, all suggest Sabratha's coin supply profile is hardly anomalous. Rather it closely relates to Sabratha's liminal position, almost straddling the eastern/western administrative division of the empire, like Bouthroton.

Correspondence Analysis

As a basic visualisation, Figure 2.11 suggests the sites within the site-finds dataset do conform to a widely-attested conclusion of Roman numismatics: a site's geographic location and its predominant points of coin supply are heavily correlated. This is further vindicated when the data is subjected to Correspondence Analysis (CA). To further test this geography-related hypothesis, I applied CA to two adapted versions of Figure 2.9, where either all eastern or all western mints were grouped to a single variable. The resulting biplots (Figs.2.12-2.13), clearly confirm the west-east division between sites.[275]

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[273] Bouthroton's closest mint as the crow flies was *Thessalonica* (~350km), which only supplied 16.2% of the site's coinage compared to the more distant *Rome* (~896km), which supplied 36%, making it Bouthroton's predominant supplier of western coinage (81.6% of Bouthroton's western coinage). However, the realities of much faster travel via sea than land in the Roman world meant that Bouthroton was effectively equidistance from *Rome* and *Thessalonica*, between eight to nine days travel from either mint city. In turn, Bouthroton's next largest eastern contributors, *Constantinople* (12.5%) and *Nicomedia* (8.1%), were further afield than *Rome*, at between eleven to twelve days travel. Even in the site-finds database, where most sites are eastern, on average sites have a higher proportion of coins from *Rome* (12.5%) than *Thessalonica* (6.8%), which would in turn suggest that coinage production volumes were typically higher at *Rome* than *Thessalonica*. This is also supported by *Rome* either having the same number or more *officinae* in operation at any one time than *Thessalonica* during the fourth and early fifth centuries (see LRBC I: 13-14, 20 and LRBC II: 58, 77). Given Bouthroton's effectively equal distance from *Rome* and *Thessalonica*, and the apparent higher production volumes across the Late Roman period at the former mint, the proportions of Roman and Thessalonian coins at Bouthroton seem highly consistent with the site's geographic position. On travel speed in the Roman period see Duncan-Jones 1974: 368. Estimations of travel times here have been derived using ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World, for travel during the summer months between the mint cities and the city of Corcyra, across the straits of Corfu from Bouthroton, as this is the closest available city on the application.

[274] Despite the largely independent exchange systems of the eastern and western Mediterranean identified by Wickham (2005: 709-722), it is the African provinces of *Proconsularis* and *Byzacena* that are denoted as the exception in their orientation to inter-regional exchange and their penetration of eastern trade networks. See Hayes 1972: 414-415, 423 455-456 and 462-463; Reynolds 1995: 14-16 for the penetration of African Red Slipware in particular into the eastern Mediterranean in third and fourth centuries.

[275] In both cases the amount of data captured by the two dimensions is extremely high (91.7% and 92.7% respectively), giving confidence that the majority of sites are accurately positioned in the biplots. I chose to exclude coins from the diocese of *Africa* (mint of *Carthage* only) from Figure 2.12's contingency table and subsequent biplot. When included they contribute less than 1% to the variables, with their positioning on the biplot therefore offering

In Figure 2.12, the biplot is predominantly defined by Dimension 1 (horizontal), where the move from the negative to positive pole identifies the transition from sites predominated by eastern coinage to sites with an increasing proportion of coins from western mints. Striking here is how this transition directly mirrors spatial progression from the eastern to north-western empire. While most sites located in the *Pars Orientis* tightly cluster around the 'Eastern' variable, the previously discussed outliers are present as a more diffuse group, slightly towards the positive horizontal pole. Their vertical spread indicates greater variation of different western mints present at these sites, which Dimension 2 (vertical) captures in its geographic transition from *Italia* (positive pole) to *Gallia* and *Britannia* in the north-west (negative pole).

Figure 2.13's layout is extremely similar. The simple change is that western-located sites now cluster around the 'Western' variable (horizontal negative pole), contrasting to most eastern sites tightly aligning amongst the eastern dioceses (horizontal positive pole). The exceptions again are Bouthroton, Nemea, Sabratha and Jerusalem, which are scattered between the western and eastern horizontal clusters, to capture their varying, though less severe, degrees of dominance by eastern mints. Carthage's position slightly away from the western core again captures its above-average eastern connections for a western site.

By comparing these biplots, we can also observe the more intense clustering of the eastern-located sites around the 'Eastern' mints variable in Figure 2.12 (located between roughly -0.5 and -0.75 standard deviations) versus the slightly larger spread of western sites around the 'Western' variable in Figure 2.13 (between -0.75 and -1.25 standard deviations).[276] The eastern sites (excluding outliers) had a more self-contained coin supply and circulation pool, more exclusively limited to *Pars Orientis* mints alone.[277] Conversely, the western sites were more prone to penetration of coins from eastern mints. The exceptions to this observation are the seven British and Northern Gallic sites, whose position towards the empire's north-western periphery saw predominantly local supply by mints in *Britannia*, *Gallia* and *Viennensis*.[278] Yet, being those sites furthest from the *Pars Orientis*, their lack of eastern coins only further

no relevant insight. Since they only contribute 42 coins of the 30,033 coins with known mints their exclusion is of no real concern.

[276] The eastern sites forming a more coherent and consistent group than their western counterparts is further supported by the fact that the eastern site data used to make Figure 2.16 had a higher phi-squared co-efficient than the western site data used for Figure 2.14: 0.171840709 vs. 0.14422366. On phi-squared co-efficients as a means of comparing degrees of statistical significance see Shennan 1997: 115-116.

[277] The occasional exception is the presence of coins from the mint of *Rome*, particularly at the sites of the *Oriens* diocese (see Eastern Group 1 in Figure 2.19 below, where *Italia* predominantly refers to coins from *Rome*), which may suggest an underlying connection through trade or direct state activity between these geographic zones.

[278] See Figure 2.12, with the extremely tight clustering of this group at around -1.5 standard deviations on the horizontal axis.

demonstrates how the contents of the site-finds database conform to the expected model of supply by geographic proximity.

Summary and Interpretation

Two macro-regional groupings are present in the site-finds database, as per Figure 2.11:

- ‘Western’ sites: sites located in, and predominantly supplied by mints located in, the *Pars Occidentis*.
- ‘Eastern’ sites: sites located in, and predominantly supplied by mints located in, the *Pars Orientis*.

These overarching structural features of coin supply conform with the principal administrative formations and economic ties of the Late Roman Empire. As has been outlined above, the *Pars Occidentis*/*Orientis* division was the empire’s upper-most partition – each region had independent bureaucratic hierarchies, including two distinct minting structures, each under the ultimate control of a different *comes sacrarum largitionum*.[279] Initial control and impetus behind base-metal coin production and supply was therefore similarly separated between these two halves of the empire. The archaeological evidence of long-distance exchange of bulk goods, particularly captured by amphorae and pottery remains, also indicates that the eastern and western Mediterranean operated as largely independent exchange systems.[280] Simply put, the Late Roman Empire was effectively administered as two distinct territories, which shaped two separate exchange systems, and the base-metal coinage was largely bound to circulate within whichever system it was minted in. That the empire formally continued to be a single entity, and these eastern and western exchange systems remained somewhat permeable, is reflected in outliers like Bouthroton and Sabratha. Both were located near the west-east administrative boundary but their mixed coin supply reflected how the two economic spheres did see some cross-over. Nonetheless, away from this internal frontier two distinct circulation zones persisted in line with the administrative superstructure. The striking extent to which this west-east administrative and economic division is present in the site-finds database both advocates for its ‘representativeness’, and provides a useful macro-regional partition for guiding investigation into how the wider populace’s experience of coin propaganda may have varied.

[279] See **§2.3.3**, n.258 on the *Pars Occidentis/Orientis* administrative subdivision, and **§1.2.1** for discussion of the office of *comes sacrarum largitionum* and the hierarchical minting structure.
[280] Wickham 2005: 709-722. The main exception here being penetration of African ceramics into the eastern Mediterranean (see n.274 above).

2.3.4.2. Micro-Regional Groupings 1: The Western Groups

Taking this mint representation analysis a step further, we can look within these two macro-groups to distinguish different patterns of circulation and supply on more refined regional levels. Doing so identifies the presence of various micro-groups within the site-finds database, which further attests to its valid use as a source for investigating even more localised experiences of base-metal coin propaganda.

Correspondence Analysis

Starting with the 'western' sites, three obvious groups can be distinguished. Firstly, to identify provisional groupings I applied CA to a section of the Figure 2.9 data, grouping all coins from eastern mints under the 'Eastern' variable and only including the western sites as samples. This produced Figure 2.14.[281] What mainly distinguishes the western sites, presented by Dimension 1 (horizontal), is their juxtaposing prevalence of coins from north-western or Italian mints. Dimension 2 (vertical), though less significant in its contribution to the biplot, denotes the relative prominence of *Viennensis* coins (mint of *Arelate*) versus all other mints. The resulting curve, moving left to right, effectively replicates a direct geographic line from the *Pars Occidentis*'s northwest to its southeast and Mediterranean heartland, with most sites located in relation to their closest mints (Maps 1-2). The three provisional and geographically coherent groups distinguishable here are:

1. The British Sites (Portus Adurni, Durnovaria, Verulamium, Lindum and Venta Silurum) and Augusta Treverorum.
2. The Iberian Sites (Conimbriga, Baelo Claudia and Saguntum) and Zilil.
3. The Italian sites (Verona, Rome and Tridentium).

Raw Data Comparison

Having identified these preliminary intra-western groupings, we can turn to the raw data of proportional mint diocese representation per-site (Fig.2.15) to better understand and nuance these groupings:

— Western Group 1 is defined by having had coins principally from *Gallia*, followed by *Viennensis* and *Italia*.[282] Portus Adurni is the exception, having more British coins, though all group members possessed above-average quantities from *Britannia*.[283] I

[281] As with Figures 2.12-13, the amount of the data captured by Dimensions 1 and 2 is extremely high (93.2%).
[282] Again in line with geographic proximity, for all the British sites and Augusta Treverorum the principle *Gallia* mint present is *Trier*. It provides between 42.4-54% of these sites' coinage in comparison with the more distant *Lugdunum*, which provides between 12.8-20.3%. Rotomagus, whose inclusion in this group is discussed below, differs slightly in its *Gallia* coins, with an almost even split between *Trier* (23.5%) and *Lugdunum* (24.6%).
[283] Note that the mint of *Londinium* was only in operation between 287-325. With the exclusion of the coinage of the British usurpers Carausius and Allectus from the site-finds database, only coins from *Londinium* that post-date

have also added Rotomagus to Western Group 1 here. Though its higher proportion of *Viennensis* coinage makes it a slight outlier, Rotomagus otherwise conformed to the above supply pattern and its geographic position supports its membership in this north-western group.

— Western Group 2 is defined by high proportions of Italian coins, followed by *Viennensis* and then *Gallia*. Also, its sites had a significant supplement of coinage from the 'eastern' Propontic mints (*Thracia* and *Pontica/Asiana*). Closer inspection of the *Italia* contributions shows that this was mostly supply from *Rome*, with small quantities of coins from *Aquileia* or *Ticinum*.[284] While the three Iberian sites strictly adhered to this supply pattern, Zilil varied slightly with *Viennensis* as its principal supplier, followed by *Rome*.

— Western Group 3 is all Italian – Italian cities dominated by Italian mints, which supplied at least 65% of the identifiable coins for each site. Within the supply from *Italia*, individual mint contribution corresponds exactly with the geographic proximity model. Rome was dominated by coins from its own mint (61.8%), whereas the north Italian cities of Verona and Tridentium were less dependent on *Rome* (22.1% and 26% respectively) and more so their local mint at *Aquileia* (37.8% and 42.8% respectively).[285] This group shows a greater eastern orientation: more coins came from *Pannonia* (principally *Siscia*) than adjacent *Viennensis*, whose minor contributions were equal to even more easterly *Moesia* (*Thessalonica*).

— Lying outside these three groups are four remaining western sites, which I have chosen not to assign to groups: Arelate, Massalia, Carthage and Sabratha.

    — Though Arelate and Massalia were very close, the former was far more beholden to coinage from the *Arelate* mint (*Viennensis*), whereas Italian coinage was much more prevalent at Massalia. While this correlates with

Constantius I's reconquest of Britain (296) are included here. That this mint was only in operation during the earlier periods of study, when coin-loss was consistently lower, explains the relatively small numbers of *Londinium* coins at these sites in general. Similarly, Portus Adurni's above average coin-loss for Period 4 (see Figs.2.21-22), when the *Londinium* mint was still in operation, explains the comparably higher representation of the *Britannia* diocese at this site (see Fig.2.15) and again correlates with the geographic proximity model. Conversely, *Trier*, the consistently best represented mint at all British sites, remained in operation until about 430. As the closest mint to *Britannia* following *Londinium*'s closure it effectively occupied the role of the 'local' mint. The mint of *Amiens*, near the northern coast of modern France, also had an above average presence at British sites in line with its proximity to them, though in the context of the whole dataset its short period of operation (350-353) resulted in unsurprisingly negligible contributions (1.3-0.8%, compared to a 0.2% pan-imperial average). On the operating dates of these mints see RIC VI: 113; RIC VII: 96; LRBC I: 4; LRBC II: 45.

[284] Conimbriga: *Rome* = 26.4%, *Aquileia* = 3.5%, *Ticinum* = 0.3%. Baelo Claudia: *Rome* = 28.2%, *Aquileia* = 3.9% *Ticinum* = 1.9%. Saguntum: *Rome* = 34.5%, *Aquileia* = 3.4%, *Ticinum* = 3.4%. Zilil: *Rome* = 20.4%, *Aquileia* = 3.1%, *Ticinum* = 1%.

[285] Verona also had the highest proportion of coins in the site-finds database from the other northern Italian mint of *Ticinum* (4.1%), though the mint's closure in 326/327 (LRBC I: 13) made its contribution to the mint representation dataset minimal.

Massalia's closer proximity to *Italia*, it also suggests the two sites' supply and circulation patterns faced different directions. This is reinforced by the two sites' very different coin-loss profiles.[286] Regardless of their geographic proximity, differing patterns in coin supply/circulation and use over time suggest Arelate's and Massalia's residents were exposed to differing volumes of iconographic types, making their experiences of base-metal coin propaganda likely no more similar than was common to all 'western' sites.

— In contrast, Carthage and Sabratha were more distant from one another and, because their coin supply correlated so closely with their geographic positions, the results show enough variation in supply to support keeping them ungrouped. While both had coins mainly from *Italia* (principally *Rome*), this was proportionally much higher at the closer Carthage. Conversely, Sabratha had much higher proportions of 'eastern' coins, most notably from *Oriens* mints. Whereas Carthage remained a 'western' site with above-average eastern influence, Sabratha was effectively a liminal 'eastern' site in a western location.

2.3.4.3. Micro-Regional Groupings 2: The Eastern Groups

Correspondence Analysis

We now turn to the eastern sites, where another three groups can initially be distinguished. I again applied CA to an edited version of Figure 2.9, using only eastern sites as samples and grouping the 'western' mints under a single variable. This produced Figure 2.16.[287] Its chief differentiating feature, captured by Dimension 1 (horizontal), is the contrast between sites either dominated by coins from *Oriens* mints (negative pole) or any other eastern mint diocese.[288] The sites divide into two halves, between the negative and positive horizontal planes. Jerusalem and Abu Mina occupy the middling ground, though are the two most poorly represented samples in the biplot. Further inspection has identified these two sites as eastern outliers but for different reasons. The Jerusalem data's deviation from the broader patterns of regional coin supply and circulation is likely due to poor data quality.[289] Abu Mina is the

[286] This variation in coin-loss profiles is in evidence both in the results of Correspondence Analysis (Fig.2.20), whereby Arelate's position towards the extreme negative vertical pole contrasts with Massalia's location into the vertical positive plane, as well as the Cluster Analysis results (Figs.2.23-24), where both sites are grouped to distinct clusters.
[287] Once again the proportion of data captured by the resulting biplot is very high (88%).
[288] While the two extreme variables of Dimension 1 are *Oriens* and *Moesia*, the large horizontal distance between *Oriens* and the next well represented eastern diocese, *Pontica/Asiana*, versus minor horizontal distance between *Pontica/Asiana* and *Moesia* indicates the presence of *Oriens* coins as the major differentiating factor for this dimension.
[289] Jerusalem is the only site within the broad eastern and western groupings that stands out as having an unusually high supply of western coins relative to both its easterly position and the comparable supply profiles of the other sites in Syria-Palestine. This is primarily due to *Rome*'s inflated presence at the site, providing 22% of the coins with identifiable mints, which is over double the 8.86% mean average of the five other Palestinian sites. However,

dataset's single undefined outlier whose unusual mint representation cannot be satisfactorily explained. Its unique status as a pilgrim site offers a tempting solution, as it would have attracted long-distance travellers who brought coins from their home territories, though data-quality issues again prevent drawing any definitive conclusions.[290] Excluding these two sites, Apamea to Kourion forms a relatively coherent horizontal cluster: a provision Eastern Group 1. Geographic influence is again noticeable, as the sites defined by their possession of *Oriens* coins were unsurprisingly those located in the *Oriens* diocese.

Dimension 2 (vertical) differentiates the sites predominated by coins of *Pontica/Asiana* and *Thracia* (the closely located Propontic mints) versus sites with an increasing proportion of coins from the more westerly *Moesia*. Another geographic division is evident, as the westerly sites appear towards the positive vertical pole, and easterly sites to the negative pole. Two further groupings can be postulated: the Anatolian sites cluster tightly at the negative pole (Eastern Group 2), leaving the amalgam of Balkans and Greek sites, from Iatrus to Heraclea Sintica (Eastern Group 3). These groups are even better presented through a new biplot (Fig.2.17), produced from a contingency table that excluded Eastern Group 1 sites and

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Jerusalem's data comes from a single publication (Reece 2008) of 161 coins, of which only fifty-nine (37%) could be assigned to mints, and in this publication Reece himself raises concerns over the limited information on Jerusalem's coin-loss profile. Also of note here is the inflated presence of *Rome* specifically, whose coins are generally easier to identify and therefore can lead to inflated representation (as per **§2.3.2**, n.253 above). As such, it is questionable whether Jerusalem's limited sample can support any conclusion that the city's coin supply substantially differed from wider provincial trends. Moreover, as will be discussed below in relation to Figures 2.25-2.26, Jerusalem's coin-loss pattern conformed with the majority of eastern sites, further supporting the notion that its anomalous identity in the mint representation data is an issue with data quality rather than the site being a genuine outlier. Nevertheless, because of this potential data-quality issue I have kept it separated from Eastern Group 1, to not obscure potential patterns within the coin propaganda data results (Chapter 4).

[290] Abu Mina clearly conformed to the broad definition of an 'eastern' site, but has a very unusual mint representation profile when we look into which eastern mints constituted its main suppliers. The site's large proportion of Constantinopolitan coinage – forty-one, 27% of those coins with known mints from the site – makes *Constantinople* its highest contributing mint and puts it at odds with the geographic proximity model of supply and circulation held to by nearly all the other sites. The presence of fourteen coins from *Thessalonica* (9.2%) also proposes another unexpected dimension to Abu Mina's coin supply, though somewhat mirrors similar figures at the Palestinian sites Pella (nine coins = 8.7%) and Gerasa (twenty-four = 7.4%). Ignoring these coins from *Constantinople* and *Thessalonica* sees Abu Mina then agree with the geographic proximity model (*Alexandria* becomes largest supplier, then *Antioch*, and so forth). This leaves the question as to whether the unusually high presence of Constantinopolitan and Thessalonian coinage reflect actual supply that genuinely differentiated Abu Mina and its coin circulation from nearby Alexandria and the sites of adjoining Syria-Palestine, or if these are quirks in the data obscuring Abu Mina's conventional supply profile. Unfortunately, a satisfactory answer remains elusive. Unlike Jerusalem, Abu Mina's coin-loss, though also still conforming to broad trends of an 'eastern' site, was less comparable to its nearest neighbours (see Figs.2.25-26). The nature of Abu Mina coins as 'einzelfunde' ('single finds' = site-finds) is confidently attested by Noeske (2000: I.1, 168) which eliminates the possibility of explaining away the *Constantinople* or *Thessalonica* coins as possible undetected purse hoards (this is also further suggested by the even temporal spread of the *Thessalonica* coins especially, between Periods 3-12). Alternatively, Abu Mina is the only pilgrim site within the site-finds dataset. This site function may have had ramifications on the coin supply profile as it did on the coin-loss profile (see Noeske 2000: I.1, 164), namely by attracting extra-provincial visitors. It is therefore tempting to suggest the pilgrim-site status as responsible for Abu-Mina's deviation from the expected regional supply pattern and the above average presence of coinage from other circulation spheres. However, the quality of the Abu Mina data ultimately prevents proper investigation of whether this detected deviation is genuine. The site was extensively excavated (Noeske 2000: I.1, 168, 179-180) so the coin population recovered is likely broadly representative, but only a relatively small sample of 152 coins, 24.1% of the site total, have known mints. Thus, only by knowing the mints of the other 479 uncertain coins can we either vindicate the profile of mint representation discussed above, or entirely debunk this in favour of the more conventional regional supply pattern. Currently we cannot confidently draw any conclusions regarding Abu Mina's coin supply and circulation pattern.

outliers. Doing so firmly places the sites of Eastern Groups 2 and 3 respectively in the negative and positive horizontal planes.

Nevertheless, the Eastern Group 3 sites remain quite widespread in Figures 2.16-2.17. To refine this group, I also applied CA to just its ten sites. From the result, Figure 2.18, Dimension 2 (vertical) is of primary interest.[291] It distinguishes two subgroups, largely consistent with sites' geographic positions. First, the sites of the Greek heartland (Bouthroton to Nemea, within ~0.35 standard deviations), defined by a great connection to the easterly mints (*Pontica/Asiana*, *Oriens*) and *Moesia*. Second, the Balkan sites (Histria to Iatrus, within ~0.1 standard deviations), had greater than average numbers of coins from more north-western *Pannonia*. These have been designated Eastern Groups 3.1 and 3.2 respectively.

Only two sites, Heraclea Sintica and Sparta, have not been assigned to sub-group 3.1 or 3.2, though they remain certain members of Eastern Group 3. Heraclea Sintica, actually poorly represented in Figure 2.18, had the highest proportion of coins from *Moesia* of any site, reflective of its proximity to the *Thessalonica* mint (Maps 1-2). It stood between the northern Balkans and Greek heartland but belonged to neither. Meanwhile, Sparta is well represented in Figure 2.18 but had a closer affiliation to the Balkan sites' supply profiles (3.2) rather than its neighbouring Greek sites (3.1), making it somewhat anomalous. Sparta is the one site in the site-finds dataset whose coin data came with almost no contextual information about the excavation, meaning no explanation can be offered for this abnormality.[292] Nevertheless, Sparta's relatively high proportion of coins with known mints (47%) and clear adherence to Eastern Group 3's broad supply/circulation patterns support its continued inclusion.

Another three provisional and geographically coherent groups have been delineated here:

1. The *Oriens* sites (see Fig.2.5), excluding Jerusalem and Abu Mina.
2. The Anatolian sites (Ilium, Sardis, Arykanda, Sagalassos).
3. The Greek and Balkans sites, further sub-divided as:
    3.1. The Greek sites (Bouthroton, Nemea, Corinth, Kenchreai, Athens), excluding Sparta and Heraclea Sintica.
    3.2. The north Balkan sites (Iatrus, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Histria).

[291] Dimension 1 (horizontal) simply reinforces an aspect previously identified: Bouthroton and Nemea had higher proportions of western coinage than their closest neighbours.
[292] Duncan 1993: 140-141 and 155-157. For further discussion of about this site's inclusion see **§2.1.2.1**, n.212.

Raw Data Comparison

With these intra-eastern groupings identified, comparing the raw data of proportional mint diocese representation per-site (Fig.2.19) can help better detail their supply and circulation trends:

— Eastern Group 1 sites mainly possessed coins from *Oriens* mints. *Oriens* here really meant coins from *Antioch* for all sites but Alexandria, whose coinage came principally from its own mint.[293] Proportional presence of coins from other supply regions largely follows the geographic proximity model, *Pontica/Asiana* and *Thracia* usually being the second and third best represented. Slight variation within this group's supply was caused by differing levels of contribution from *Italia* (*Rome*), varying from negligible to significant. Yet only at Pella does *Italia* displace *Thracia* as the third most prevalent supply region.[294]

— Eastern Group 2 sites had a predominance of coins first from *Pontica/Asiana* and then *Thracia* as a close second, while *Oriens* coins (principally *Antioch*) remained a constant third. This group shows extreme conformity to the geographic proximity model: moving from western Anatolia (Sardis and Ilium) to southern Anatolia (Sagalossos and Arykanda) saw *Thracia* coinage decrease and *Oriens* coinage increase. There is even a notable increase in the proportion of *Antioch* coins at Arykanda compared to Sagalossos, where the former's closer proximity to Anatolia's southern coast suggests it had stronger affiliation with Syria-Palestine.

— Eastern Group 3 is defined by the continued high proportion of coins from *Pontica/Asiana* and *Thracia*, and above average presence of *Moesia* and/or *Pannonia* coins. Sites in Group 3.1 lacked *Pannonia* coins and had more coins from *Pontica/Asiana* than *Thracia*. The differences in figures for this latter observation are small but may indicate these sites' greater connection to the Aegean and western Anatolia, where sites were principally reliant on *Pontica/Asiana* coinage. Eastern Group 3.2 sites show the exact opposite trend, drawing more from inland connections with adjacent *Pannonia*, and had more coins from adjacent *Thracia* than slightly more distant *Pontica/Asiana*. Bouthroton and Nemea are outliers because they possessed more *Italia* coins. However, this is geographically explainable, and when ignored both

[293] Alexandria (site of): *Antioch* = 15.8%, *Alexandria* = 40.7%. Antioch (site of): *Antioch* = 67.7%, *Alexandria* = 3.8%. Apamea: *Antioch* = 72.1%, *Alexandria* = 4.1%. Berytus: *Antioch* = 41.3%, *Alexandria* = 12.5%. Caesarea Maritima: *Antioch* = 31.9%, *Alexandria* = 13.8%. Gerasa: *Antioch* = 38%, *Alexandria* = 10.1%. Samaria-Sebaste: *Antioch* = 50.6%, *Alexandria* = 8.6%. Pella: *Antioch* = 43.7%, *Alexandria* = 10.7%. Capernaum: *Antioch* = 32.2%, *Alexandria* = 12.3%. Kourion: *Antioch* = 31.3%, *Alexandria* = 15.3%.

[294] In terms of most to least prevalent regions of supply then, Pella is more comparable to Jerusalem. However, Jerusalem's severely higher proportion of *Italia* coinage still demarcates it as an outlier from Eastern Group 1.

sites otherwise conformed to group 3.1's coin supply criteria, so I have kept them in the sub-group.

2.3.4.4. Micro-Regional Groupings: Summary and Interpretation

Investigating variation within the *Pars Occidentis/Orientis* mint representation data has identified three micro-regions of sites in either half of the empire. As per Map 3, Western Group 1 brackets together the north-western sites of *Britannia* and *Gallia*; Western Group 2 the south-western periphery of *Hispania*; and Western Group 3 *Italia*. Eastern Group 1 is a large set of sites from the south-eastern *Oriens* diocese; Eastern Group 2 combines the *Asiana* sites and Eastern Group 3 those of *Moesia* and *Thracia*. Repeatedly, sites with comparable coin supply and circulation patterns matched up to Late Roman diocesan boundaries. In four of the six micro-groups, all sites were located within a single diocese. Western Group 1 and Eastern Group 3 sites were admittedly scattered over two dioceses each, though when we consider my division of Eastern Group 3, the sub-groups of sites were again neatly differentiated by diocese location (3.1 = *Moesia*, 3.2 = *Thracia*).[295] What this shows is, on an even more localised level than already proposed in **§2.3.4.1**, the Late Roman state's fiscal administrative divisions were the prevailing influence on coin supply and circulation. The boundaries of these dioceses remained permeable to base-metal coinage of other regions, most notably neighbouring dioceses, but movement of base-metal coins into and between urban sites occurred first and foremost on an intra-diocesan level. The site-finds dataset vindicates how coin supply and circulation were heavily shaped by the official fiscal apparatus, in line with the conclusions of wider scholarship. This attests to the database's suitable use as a microcosm of differing coin populations across the Late Roman Empire. Furthermore, these micro-groups provide a provisional framework for investigating regional variation in the popular experience of base-metal coin propaganda.

2.3.5. Proxy Data Analysis 2: Coin-Loss Data

To further test the cohesiveness of both the proposed macro- and micro-regional site groupings, we now turn to consider the second form of proxy data: coin-loss. Should sites within these macro- and micro-regions be shown to have had similar levels of coin-loss, and thereby coin use, it may be ascertained that their populations were exposed to similar quantities of base-metal coins from different periods, on top of the same regionally supplied iconographic types.

[295] Notable too is that Heraclea Sintica, whose coin profile virtually occupied middle ground between *Moesia*- and *Thracia*-located sites, was itself located virtually on the border of these two dioceses.

2.3.5.1. Macro-Regional Groupings: Correspondence Analysis

The first step taken was to verify if the *Pars Occidentis/Orientis* division also existed in the coin-loss data. To do so, CA was applied to an edited Figure 2.10, which included only Periods 2-11 as variables.[296] The result was Figure 2.20.[297] The variables' conformance to a horseshoe-curve, the traditional shape for a dataset using chronologically progressive variables, provides confidence in these results' validity.[298] Dimension 1 (horizontal) distinguishes between sites with higher coin-loss in the later periods (negative pole) and Period 6 (positive pole).[299] Dimension 2 (vertical) differentiates the middle periods (negative pole) from the earlier periods (positive pole). Division between 'eastern' and 'western' sites is immediately distinguishable: the former are in the negative horizontal plane, reflecting a Period 10-11 (388-408) coin-loss peak, and the latter are in the positive horizontal plane, reflecting a Period 6 (330-340) peak.[300] The caveats are the Italian sites dispersed amongst their eastern counterparts, and the scattered six samples in the top-right quartile that may indicate a small number of sites whose unique histories caused deviation from regional trends.[301] 'Core versus

[296] Analysis was initially run on all data in Figure 2.10, including Periods 1 and 12-13 but there were obviously identifiable issues with their data that obscured the broader patterns within the coin-loss profiles data. There is a large degree of inconsistency in the representation of pre-reform coinage for Period 1, of which there are only 216 coins in the site-finds database. Many sites lacked coinage from this period, including the two Egyptian sites, which were still operating under the different regional monetary system in this period, and British sites that were under the control of Carausius, whose coinage has not been recorded into the site-finds database. Similarly, there are again several sites that simply did not have coinage from Periods 12-13 because of the absence of Roman authority in their region following the steady demise of Roman control in sections of western Europe into the fifth century. The choice was therefore made to compare only Periods 2-11, in which all sites are known to have experienced the same basic conditions by operated both under the same reformed monetary system and all being under the sway of the Roman state.

[297] The proportion of data captured by Dimensions 1 and 2 in the biplot is 64.3%, lower than the strongly representative mint volumes biplots, though still represents a significant proportion of the original data.

[298] Lockyear 2000: 407. The horse-shoe curve starts with Period 2 in the top right, moving more or less sequentially to Period 6 in the bottom right before sweeping out left to end with Period 11. Note this horse-shoe curve is even more refined when Periods 5 and 9 are ignored. These are notably poorly represented by the biplot, each contributing less than 3% to Figure 2.12. See n.300 below for further discussion of these periods.

[299] Note that Periods 11, 10 and 6 alone contribute roughly 80% of the data to this dimension.

[300] Also worthy of brief comment here are those variables most poorly represented in the biplot which, given CA's focus on visualising degrees of difference between variables (Lockyear 2000: 406), may be indicative of commonality. In the case of Figure 2.20, these are Periods 5 (324-330), 8 (348-363) and 9 (363-378), which can indeed be distinguished as points when coin-loss volumes were universally similar. Period 5 (324-330), covering the initial triumph and sole rule of the Constantinian household, is consistent across the dataset as having particularly low coin-loss: 'eastern' sites average just 2.88% and 'western' sites 2.63%. Period 8 (348-363) includes both the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]** and SPES REPVBLICE Emperor **[76]** iconographic types. These constitute 15.6% (9,946 coins) and 5% (3,163 coins) of the site-finds database – respectively the most numerous type and seventh most numerous type – so Period 8 was unsurprisingly a common period of substantial coin-loss across the empire. It is the period with the highest average coin-loss at 'eastern' sites (17.98%) and second highest average amongst 'western' sites (17.64%). Finally, Period 9 (364-378), the initial Valentinianic period, saw no peak or dearth in coin supply but rather just a generally consistent pan-imperial supply; at eastern sites, Period 9 coins constitute on average 10.92% and 9.98% at western sites. While the focus of this sub-chapter is distinguishing regional division, this brief note is here to make the point that, for the coin-loss data at least, there were also moments of pan-imperial conformity that indicate how the Roman Empire ultimately did exist as a single, united governmental superstructure able to uniformly influence all its inhabitants. The 'eastern' site averages and 'western' site averages cited here are per-period mean averages calculated using the datapoints for all 'eastern' sites (Kourion to Sparta) and all 'western' sites (Carthage to Venta Silurum) in Figure 2.10.

[301] Of these sites, Augusta Treverorum, for example, appears to deviate quite significantly from the predominant cluster of western sites in the bottom right quartile because its coin-loss profile peaked in Period 4 (317-324) rather than Period 6 (330-340). This may reflect the city's prominence as an imperial residence and prefecture capital

periphery' may be a more appropriate differentiator here, though as the most eastern of the 'western' sites there is still a geographic pattern to the Italian sites' coin-loss profiles. On a macro-scale, the regional patterns of coin use broadly matched those of coin supply, and on a micro-level within the western sites, the drift towards more 'eastern' features emerges with the move from right (the north-western sites) to left (the Italian sites). The highest division of the empire's administrative hierarchy, splitting west and east, significantly shaped coin-loss as well as supply.

2.3.5.2. Micro-Regional Groupings and Cluster Analysis: Defining the Cutline

Next, it was necessary to look within these western and eastern macro-groups, to confirm if the mint representation micro-groups also featured in the coin-loss data. To do so, I applied Cluster Analysis to the western sites and the eastern sites separately.[302] However, as denoted in **§2.3.3**, Cluster Analysis dendrograms must be horizontally 'cut' at some point to delineate the final number of clusters to be inspected. As there is no strict statistical method for identifying the best cut height for each dendrogram, a brief aside is needed here to ascertain a consistent measure of similarity and determine a uniform cutline before consulting the coin-loss dendrograms.

For this purpose, I first identified a group of spatially related sites with theoretically comparable coin-loss profiles: the British sites. It is well established within numismatic literature that most British sites experienced coin-loss patterns that were broadly alike, while differing from elsewhere in the Late Roman Empire.[303] The subsequent step was to confirm this maxim held for the five British sites in the site-finds database, for which I used two basic visualisations. The first is a simple line-graph of relative coin-loss volumes from 284-450 (Fig.2.21).[304] It indicates how the British sites experienced very similar trends. Coin-loss gradually increased between Periods 1-4 (284-324), dropped over Period 5 (324-330), rose exponentially to a Period 6 peak (330-340), drastically diminished in Period 7 (340-348), continued into a lower

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under Crispus during Period 4 (Wightman 1971: 58-59; Barnes 1982: 83-84). Ultimately though, this small number of just six sites would suggest that only in a minority of cases did a site's unique history cause its coin-loss profile to vary from wider regional patterns of coin-loss detected for the eastern and western empires.

[302] For the coin-loss data some further standardisation to the contents of Figure 2.10 was undertaken prior to applying Cluster Analyses. Instead of raw percentages, clearer clustering of sites was ascertained by instead using the Annual Average Coin-Loss per Thousand (AACL/1000) formula to provide the datapoints for each period at each site. As per Casey 1988 and DeRose Evans 2018: 115, this is a normalising formula that has been widely used within numismatic analysis of coin volumes over time, and is calculated as follows: AACL/1000 = $\frac{Total\ of\ coins\ in\ period}{length\ of\ period\ (years)} \times \frac{1000}{Total\ number\ of\ coins\ from\ site}$.

[303] On the establishment of this prevailing conclusion see Reece 1972b; 1973; 1974; 1987: 98-117; 1988; 1991; and Casey 1988. On more recent research that has built on this to distinguish further smaller variations in coin-loss profiles within British regions and especially between different types of sites see Reece 1995; Lockyear 2000; Walton 2012. As per Bland et al. 2020: 322-325; Bland 2020: 128-129, Britain's distinction from other regions also appears to extend to hoarding patterns.

[304] Figure 2.21 is a visualisation of the British sites per-annum coin-loss data in Figure 2.10.

dip in Period 10 (378-388), and generally increased again in Period 11 (388-408). No sites rendered any coins from Periods 12-13 (408-450). There was some deviation, such as Durnovaria and Verulamium lacking the other sites' upsurge in coin-loss from Periods 8 (348-363) to 9 (363-378). Portus Adurni had higher coin-loss in the early periods, perhaps influenced by its status as a military site compared to the other British *civitates*. It still conformed with the other British sites' coin-loss trend though, just on a larger scale. Variations are relatively minor and the British sites' generally tight conformance to uniform pattern of coin-loss is evident.

That there was something distinctly 'British' about these similar coin-loss profiles is shown when the data assumes another form. Using a method devised by Richard Reece, which visualises each site's degree of departure above or below the whole site-finds database's average per-period coin-loss values, we get Figure 2.22.[305] Whether the data points are close together is of less interest, as the data's format (cumulative percentages) is intended to spread the results to ease readability and visual comparison. Important here are the similar shapes of each site's lines, again showing common peaks and dips in their divergence from the pan-imperial average.[306] Through this comparable deviation from other sites' coin-loss profiles, we can see how the British sites not only had a coin-loss pattern comparable to one another, but that it was a regionally specific pattern. The British sites within the site-finds database agree with the broader historiographic narrative of *Britannia* experiencing arguably uniform patterns of coin use over time internally, which otherwise varied from typical coin use in the continental Roman Empire. By determining a micro-regional group of sites with analogous coin-loss profiles within the site-finds database, we now have a pre-defined gauge of similarity to look for in the Cluster Analysis dendrograms, an anticipated clustering of sites which can help identify valid cut points.

2.3.5.3. Micro-Regional Groupings: The Western Groups

Cluster Analysis

With the British sites identified as the potential guiding cluster, and the prevailing west-east split between sites within the coin-loss data already attested, we will initially consider the resulting dendrograms from Cluster Analysis conducted on the western sites. Starting with Figure 2.23, the result of using Ward's Method of clustering, we find four of five British sites,

[305] See Reece 1995. This is done by calculating a site's coin-loss as a cumulative percentage from Period 1 to 13, then deducting the pan-imperial mean (itself calculated as the average of all sites' per-annum percentages on a per-period basis – Figure 2.10's data). The x-axis then represents the pan-imperial mean and a site's deviation over or under this mean is visualised by its per-period position on the y-axis. It should be noted that this method has been largely supplanted by other multivariate analytical techniques, since their unsupervised algorithms provide greater speed and consistency in identifying groups within large datasets. However, as per Lockyear 2000: 419-420, this method continues to be of use when used in conjunction with Cluster Analysis.
[306] Reece 1995: 188.

the *civitates* (Verulamium, Lindum, Durnovaria and Venta Silurum), united at a low height of 16.83. Portus Adurni's absence is no doubt due to its higher volume of coin-loss between Periods 1-4 (284-324) (Figs.2.21-22). It is instead initially paired with Augusta Treverorum, the site with the highest coin-loss in Period 4 (317-324),[307] although these sites' higher join indicates less similarity than between the four British *civitates*. Nevertheless, I have already established Portus Adurni was the most unusual of the other British sites but still adhered to their shared coin-loss pattern, while its joining with Augusta Treverorum is also consistent with the mint representation analysis's Western Group 1. The British sites' internal uniformity justifies a cut-point where Portus Adurni joins with the other British sites, at 42.2. Doing so distinguishes three clusters of western sites, some of which strongly correlate with the mint representation of the western micro-groups:

— C1 almost perfectly replicates Western Group 1, only missing Rotomagus.

— C2 includes all four sites of Western Group 2 plus Arelate. Notably, the *Arelate* mint was the predominant coin supplier for both its own city and *Hispania*.

— C3 shows greater geographic diffusion, mainly because it includes Rotomagus and Massalia. However, all three Italian sites (Western Group 3) are present, as are the two African sites Carthage and Sabratha, both of which showed some reliance on the mint of *Rome*. Further evidence for the geographic proximity model within the coin-loss data is also visible here, with the pairing of neighbouring northern Italian sites Verona and Tridentium at a relatively low similarity level (17.19).

With these basic clusters in place, for further verification and revision we turn to Figure 2.24, which uses the Average Linkage clustering method. Average Linkage's aptitude for distinguishing outliers immediately helps refine the initial aggressive clustering of Ward's Method.[308] Augusta Treverorum's more unique coin-loss profile is better represented (C1), separating it from Portus Adurni and allowing the latter to join its fellow British sites at a proportionally lower dissimilarity level. This provides a new cutline at 19.63,[309] and several amended clusters:

— The new C2 is now refined to only the British sites. While there is evidently similarity in coin supply and circulation between the members of Western Group 1, this dataset continues to present the prevailing conclusion that in terms of coin use, as indicated by coin-loss, British sites even vary from those continental sites located in north-

[307] See **§2.3.5.1**, n.301 above.
[308] See **§2.3.3**, n.268 on the characteristic differences of these two clustering methods.
[309] Note that Ward's Method uses squared distances, which exaggerates the distances between lower level clusters and subsequently has higher join points (Shennan 1997: 244). As such, Ward's Method dendrograms have accentuated scales that are not directly comparable to the results of Average Linkage dendrograms.

western Europe and away from the Mediterranean core.[310] Moreover, Rotomagus (C6) remains distinct from Augusta Treverorum, as in Figure 2.23. In both cases, these sites are only linked in the final cluster, so the site-finds database provides no evidence of comparable coin-loss in *Gallia* beyond the usual 'western' features.

— C4 exactly repeats C2 from Figure 2.23, again denoting *Hispania* as a diocese in which coin supply/circulation and use were consistent.

— Rome (C3) is now identified as the 'western' site with the most unusual coin-loss profile, only merging with a cluster at the second to top join. Looking at Figure 2.10, Rome had an exceedingly large proportion of coinage from Period 8 (348-363) and Period 9 (363-378).[311] Consequently, its proportionally deflated number of coins from Periods 6 (330-340) or 10-11 (388-408) means it did not conform to the above-defined typical coin-loss patterns of 'western' or 'eastern' sites.[312]

— Verona's and Tridentium's continued grouping (C5) underscores that northern Italy experienced common coin use, but Rome's separation undermines the coherence of Western Group 3. While all members of Western Group 3 still conform to more general patterns of supply, the site-finds database proposes significant differences in coin-loss patterns between northern and central *Italia* that make its contents unsuitable for postulating a specifically 'Italian' experience of imperial propaganda through base-metal coinage. While Western Group 1 can be revised to just include the British sites, I have abandoned the use of Western Group 3 as an analytical tool.

Summary and Interpretation

The Cluster Analysis of 'western' sites makes evident that even sites in the same micro-regional supply/circulation zones often experienced greater variation in coin-loss. While residents at sites like Augusta Treverorum and Rotomagus, or between the central and northern *Italia* sites, may have been exposed to the same iconographic types because of comparable supply, the varied use of coins from different periods meant these iconographic types would have been seen in different volumes. These sites' inhabitants would have been confronted by broadly the same political messages on coins, but to varying degrees of prominence within the circulating coin pool, causing somewhat different experiences of base-metal coin propaganda throughout the Late Roman period. In this respect, the coin-loss data

[310] See **§2.3.5.2**, n.303 above.
[311] 36.43% of coins recovered from Rome date to Period 8 (348-363) – the second highest representation of this period in the dataset – compared to a pan-imperial average of 17.85%. The 29.51% of coins from Rome in Period 9 (363-378) makes it the site with proportionally the greatest number of coins for this period in the entire database, compared to pan-imperial average of 10.49%.
[312] Only 5.51% of coins from Rome date to Period 6 (330-340), compared to the 'western' site average of 27.6%, and only 12.72% to Periods 10-11 (378-408), compared to the 'eastern' site average of 28.63%.

exposes how the site-finds database is more limited in presenting a regional experience of base-metal coin propaganda below the broad west-east division.

Nevertheless, regardless of this greater variance within the coin-loss data, two micro-groups certainly expose more local patterns of coin use. Uniform coin-loss at the British sites appears in the Cluster Analysis just as within the simple line-graph visualisations used above. Combined with their specifically north-western supply pattern (previous Western Group 1), this comparable coin-loss data delineates *Britannia* as a zone in which the wider populace saw the same iconographic types in similar volumes. The same was evident in Late Roman *Hispania*. Simply put, for these two micro-regions we can be confident that residents had analogous encounters with imperial rulership ideology through the medium of base-metal coins. They will prove useful for further enhancing the pan-imperial or 'western' experiences of coin propaganda in the forthcoming analysis of the Late Roman period (Chapter 4).

2.3.5.4. Micro-Regional Groupings: The Eastern Groups

Cluster Analysis

The Cluster Analysis 'eastern' site dendrograms provide a more mixed assessment. There is greater variation between the Ward's Method and Average Linkage dendrograms compared to the western clusters, but generally far lower levels of dissimilarity. Looking first at the Ward's Method dendrogram, Figure 2.25, a cut point of 20.32 distinguishes five separate clusters:

- The sites of C1-3 have no geographical relationship.
- Conversely, C4 contains most of Eastern Group 1. It also includes some lower-level clusters that suggest common coin use and loss on a more focused regional level, like the paired Syrian sites of Antioch and Apamea, and the even lower clustering of Palestinian sites Capernaum, Caesarea Maritima and Gerasa.
- The only missing members of Eastern Group 1 are Samaria-Sebaste and Pella, though they are paired together in C5, at a dissimilarity level equally as low as the other sites of Roman Palestine. Separation of the Palestinian sites into two clusters poses interesting questions about the varied use of base-metal coinage within a provincial area.
- Lastly, C6 suggests significant parallels between the coin-loss profiles of Heraclea Sintica (Eastern Group 3) and four of the other Greek sites (Eastern Group 3.1).

Using a cutline of 12.01 on the Average Linkage dendrogram, Figure 2.26, presents both change and continuity:

- Figure 2.25's C4, with its majority of Eastern Group 1 sites, is repeated in C6.

— However, Average Linkage's less aggressive clustering breaks up Figure 2.25's C6, so undermines the notion of an archetypically 'Greek' coin-loss profile. Heraclea Sintica now becomes an outlier (C2). The Greek urban hubs of Athens and Corinth are still paired together though (in C3), as are the more peripheral Kenchreai and Nemea (C5), which may allude to intra-regional variation in coin-loss profiles influenced more by site function than geographic position.[313]

— The Eastern Group 3.2 sites are disaggregated in both Figures 2.25 and 2.26, although this variation arguably reflects the impact of greater geographic diversity and specific historical events on circulation and coin use at sites in the contested and unstable Danubian frontier region.[314]

— Finally, there is little affiliation between the Eastern Group 2 sites in either Figure 2.25 or 2.26, so the site-finds database does not demonstrate a particularly 'Anatolian' pattern of coin-loss.

Summary and Interpretation

On the face of it, the Cluster Analysis of the 'eastern' sites would broadly appear to match up with the general conclusions of the 'western' sites. Once we look in more detail beyond the basic west-east division, geographically affiliated urban sites that operated within the same micro-regional zones of base-metal coin supply/circulation were far less likely to also have had a uniform and diocese-specific experience of coin-loss (and use). Within the *Pars Orientis* macro-group, only the Eastern Group 1 sites appear to have had highly comparable coin-loss profiles on top of supply profiles. In addition to the British sites and Western Group 2, Eastern Group 1 certainly provides another useful micro-grouping of sites at which we can be confident that the experience of base-metal coin propaganda was broadly similar.

However, attention must be drawn to the fact that, in the above 'eastern' sites analysis, the proposed cuts were far lower than for the western sites. If the cut level is adjusted in Figure 2.26 to match the respective Britain-based cutline of Figure 2.24 (see red cutline), this places all but three (Histria, Ilium and Sparta) outlying eastern sites into a single cluster. That is to say, twenty-three of twenty-six eastern sites had a measurably greater degree of similarity in their coin-loss profiles than the well-associated British sites. Such a trend strongly agrees with

[313] See Walton 2012: 30-32 on extensive scholarship comparing site coin-loss profiles in relation to site function for British site-finds in particular.
[314] See Duncan 1993: 172-173. The distinction of Histria, a black sea emporium, from in-land Iatrus and Nicopolis ad Istrum is certainly consistent with geographic variation. However, the difference between Iatrus and Nicopolis ad Istrum is somewhat surprising because of their geographic proximity and direct connection via road (Poulter 1995: 5, 8). Consultation of the raw coin-loss data in fact does suggest a similar pattern of coin-loss at Nicopolis ad Istrum and Iatrus, with the key differentiating factor being the former's substantially higher loss of coins from Period 8 (348-363) (a feature also observed by Butcher 1995: 309). If this one period of significant difference is ignored then, the coin-loss profiles of these two inland Danubian sites are more closely related than the Cluster Analysis results suggest.

Noeske's own conclusions about coin-loss across the *Oriens*, that coin-loss trends were primarily determined by contemporary imperial monetary policy (for example, debasement, demonetisation or increased production).[315] While micro-regionally unique patterns of coin-loss may have been lacking, the administrative structure of the eastern empire was influential enough to ensure a far greater adherence to a highly standardised pattern of coin-loss at sites within its territories than in the west. An eastern city's unique history then only appears to have resulted in minor deviation away from the prevailing patterns of coin-loss.

Based on this macro-regional assurance that the wider populace of the eastern empire would have generally seen the coins from a certain period in comparable numbers, in addition to how people in the same diocese would have likely seen the same iconographic types, I have deemed Eastern Groups 2 and 3 to also be valid indicators of regionally specific experiences of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda. All the originally proposed 'eastern' micro-regional groups therefore remain valuable for providing Chapter 4's chronological analysis of the base-metal coin propaganda with greater spatial nuance. Continued demonstration of regionally coherent data within the site-finds database also provides one final reminder of its legitimate ability to accurately represent in microcosm the base-metal coinage available to the Late Roman populace.

2.4. Conclusion

The preceding chapter has explored in some detail the steps taken to obtain a body of numismatic data that can be used as the basis of this thesis's core analysis: a chronological overview of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda. Throughout, I have emphasised the importance of constructing a database whose contents are 'representative' of the different types of base-metal coinage actually issued by the state and visible to the wider populace. **§2.1** has delineated my two main decisions in pursuit of this 'representativeness'. The first choice was to use gross coin analysis, the counting of extant examples, as a basic quantification method. This was instead of undertaking a chronologically limited die-study or using gross coin type analysis, which is underpinned by issues of subjectivity and inconsistency. Secondly, I selected site-finds as a data source. Here I have argued that bias within the site-finds record towards base-metal coinage and lower denominations is beneficial to my specific focus on that coinage most often used and visible to the wider populace. In turn, I have questioned the hoards' suitability for encapsulating visible, widely available coinage, partly due to inconsistent and unclear impact on composition by ancient collector bias, and that many hoards do not appear to have been affiliated with the wider populace at all.

[315] Noeske 2000: I.1, 205-207. For similar conclusions also see Guest 2012.

Moreover, site-finds' status as lost coins (therefore lacking selection bias) and clear provenance make them a far more methodologically consistent data source than coins from museum collections.

Following a brief overview of the site-finds database itself (**§2.2**), the actual product of my data collection process, I have then undertaken an extensive assessment of the database's contents to verify its theoretical 'representativeness' (**§2.3**). I focused on proving the presence of regionality, a widely acknowledged feature of the Late Roman numismatic landscape, which has had the additional benefit of defining groups of geographically related sites that I will use to investigate more localised experiences of the base-metal coin propaganda. Through analysing two forms of proxy data, that of mint representation and coin-loss, I have ascertained sites that experienced comparable exposure to the different forms of imperial propaganda on coinage due to those coins being supplied by similar mints, circulating within a similar regional limit, and being used in comparable volumes. The final set of proposed regional groups evident in the site-finds database are:

- Macro-regional:
    - 'Western' sites (*Pars Occidentis*)
    - 'Eastern' sites (*Pars Orientis*)
- Micro-regional:
    - British Sites
    - Western Group 2 (*Hispania* sites)
    - Eastern Group 1 (*Oriens* sites, except Abu Mina and Jerusalem)
    - Eastern Group 2 *(Asiana* sites)
    - Eastern Group 3 (*Moesia* and *Thracia* sites)

In sum, the site-finds database is a body of over 60,000 base-metal coins from sites across the Roman Empire that can confidently be accepted as representative of the coinage most frequently available to the wider, non-elite imperial populace between 285-450. It is now necessary to define how we can translate the propaganda of the coins in this database – the qualitative political messages espoused by reverse iconography and inscriptions – into quantifiable metrics that can in turn be subject to comparison and analysis.

3. Quantitative Methodology 2: Categorising Coin Propaganda

The previous chapter has delineated the decisions I made to construct a database of Late Roman base-metal coins that can be subject to quantitative analysis. Moreover, an extensive review was undertaken to verify that the database's contents represent those coins that were available to the wider imperial populace in different parts of the empire. This latter process focused on coins as economic objects, considering easily quantifiable elements – the number of coins from individual mints or issued in different periods. From this information, I drew broader conclusions about regional coin supply, circulation and coin use in the Late Roman period.

However, the principal focus of this thesis is the *political* dimension of the base-metal coins – the propaganda that the imperial state sought to communicate through them. The issue here is that a coin's political messages, communicated through its reverse inscription and imagery, are a qualitative form of evidence. To gain an understanding of these messages and the volumes in which they occurred, it is not enough to simply count the relative proportions of different iconographic types from a site and/or period. Another step is required: we must convert the fundamentally qualitative propaganda of coins into common numerical values that can be measured and compared.

This has typically been done by assigning each coin/coin type/iconographic type to at least one of several categories that encapsulate the various aspects of imperial iconography or propaganda. The proportional 'popularity' of the different categories can then be compared within or between different periods to ascertain the propaganda policies used by emperors and their governments. This chapter outlines the categorisation framework I have used to translate the raw data of the site-finds database into categorical measures of coin propaganda. This process will be addressed in two parts:

- **§3.1** will outline the theoretical considerations that underpin my application of categories to the coinage. It is structured as an evaluation of the most pertinent categorisation methods that have been used in quantitative analyses of coin iconography and propaganda. Through assessing the strengths and weaknesses of previous methods, I will outline my own newly devised categorisation framework.
- In **§3.2**, I will delineate the actual propaganda categories being measured by my categorisation framework. To define these categories, I have turned to the rhetorical praise of the late-third and fourth-century secular panegyrics, a body of literature that

provides invaluable insight into idealised aspects of Late Roman imperial rule. By identifying those virtues and benefits that contemporary authors favoured and anticipated that their emperors wished to be associated with, we will obtain a series of suitable imperial propaganda categories that can also be expected to have featured on the state-issued coinage.

In short, Chapter 3 addresses how I have categorised each coin, and what these categories are. In conjunction with how to obtain the data in the first place (Chapter 2), this explanation of how to interpret the data completes the overview of the thesis's quantitative methodology. Furthermore, it proposes improvements to existing methods, with the intention of better encapsulating all the basic elements of a coin's multi-faceted political messages. Only with this complete methodology in hand can we undertake a quantitative-based assessment of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda (Chapter 4).

3.1. Defining the Coin Propaganda Categorisation Framework

Devising a categorisation framework has been a requirement of all quantitative analyses of Roman imperial coin iconography and propaganda, regardless of the method of quantification or the data source they have used,[316] so multiple approaches have already been formulated. Nevertheless, no entirely appropriate model for categorising the coinage of the Late Roman period currently exists. As a result, one must necessarily be formulated here to enable further analysis. This section aims to review the existing approaches of quantitative analyses of Roman imperial coin iconography to understand their strengths and limitations. I will focus on Carlos Noreña's single-categorisation and Erika Manders's multi-categorisation models.[317]

Three main critiques of the existing approaches will be raised here. The first is assigning each coin to a single category, which, among other issues, risks prioritising one aspect of a coin's propaganda at the expense of other messages it may have espoused. Second is the prevailing desire to use a coin's inscription as the chief means of interpreting that coin's political messages and assigning coins to categories on this basis, as this frequently relegates the images to a secondary, supportive role in the communication of imperial ideals. I will argue how the inscription-led interpretative framework differs from how contemporaries engaged with a coin's imagery and inscription, and is dependent on a modern proclivity for literary evidence that constrains our interpretation of the political messages of coins. Third is the issue that existing categorisation methods have all worked from the binary position that a

[316] For a critical assessment of the available basic quantification methods and data sources for Roman numismatic analysis see **§2.1**.
[317] Noreña 2001; Noreña 2011; Manders 2012.

propaganda category either is or is not present on a reverse-type, and so typically document just the overt, 'headline' messages of a coin. I will show how the binary approach does not accommodate the inherent interconnection between many of the different aspects of imperial ideology evoked on the coinage. Moreover, it cannot record more discrete attestations of additional political messages on top of those immediately obvious, nor does it allow for distinction between what may be classed as a coin's primary or secondary message.

In response to these issues, I will define the key characteristics of my new categorisation methodology, which are:

1. The ability to assign a single coin to multiple categories to adequately reflect the multi-faceted nature of propaganda presented.
2. Giving equal credence to the various and sometimes divergent messages relayed by a coin's inscription *and* iconography.
3. To consider the varying degrees of presence of different categories on a single reverse design by using fuzzy set theory, to move beyond the existing binary 'yes/no' categorisation method.

3.1.1. The Single Categorisation Model: Limitations to the Topic and Period of Study

The foundational work on the application of quantitative analysis to Roman imperial coin iconography is Carlos Noreña's 2001 article, which explored the presentation of personified virtues on *denarii* between 69-235.[318] Noreña produced a framework for classifying the reverse-types of the coinage under study, assigning each to one of five broad categories:[319]

1. 'Personifications'.
2. 'Gods, goddesses, and minor deities'.
3. 'Inanimate objects and miscellaneous scenes'.
4. 'The emperor and various members of the imperial family'.
5. 'Provinces, cities, and rivers'.

The 'personifications' category was then divided into two subcategories:

[318] Noreña 2001; later further developed and extended to base-metal coinage too in Noreña 2011.
[319] Noreña 2001: 153-154.

— 'Virtues', those qualities attributable to the emperor's character.[320]

— 'Benefits' of imperial rule, presented by personified forms of abstract ideals like *Pax* or *Annona*.[321]

This straightforward categorisation method proved highly effective for Noreña's specific study of the virtue personifications during the first two centuries CE, and the placing of each coin/coin type into one general, monolithic category has consequently seen repeated use.[322] However, I would argue that this single-categorisation model becomes problematic when taken outside the analytical context for which Noreña first formulated it.

Two issues will be touched on here. Firstly, except for the 'personifications' category, the other categories present simplified and largely uninformative summaries of the coinage's multi-faceted political messages. Secondly, and in conjunction with the first issue, the single-categorisation method is inappropriate for interpreting Late Roman coinage, as personified virtue types had long ceased to be the main means of expressing idealised imperial rule on the coinage. Together these points determine why this thesis, focused on capturing all the major facets of base-metal coin propaganda between 284-450, cannot simply adopt Noreña's original method, and instead favours a more complex multi-categorisation approach.

3.1.1.1. Issues in Application Beyond the Original Category of Focus

It should be clarified that Noreña's categories were not devised to delineate all aspects of imperial propaganda, but were 'only intended to isolate different iconographic categories'.[323] This means that coins expressing the same core messages through different visual conventions, such as invoking the emperor's *pietas* through the personified virtue (Fig.3.1) or only the attributes of priesthood (Fig.3.2), were separated into different categories.[324] However, the need to capture the full conceptual expression of different virtues was overcome for Noreña's study period since his focus, the personifications, constituted the predominant

[320] Noreña 2001: 154-155 first distinguishes 'virtues' from other personifications. This is further developed in Noreña 2011: 59-63. The identification of the virtues follows those outlined by Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 310, n.56 (*Aequitas, Clementia, Indulgentia, Iustitita, Liberalitas, Munificentia, Patientia, Pietas, Providentia, Pudicitia* and *Virtus*).
[321] Noreña 2011: 101-111 introduces discussion of the non-virtue personifications as the advertised 'benefits' of imperial rule. The 'benefits' espoused on coinage and identified by Noreña (2011: 108-109) are *Abundantia, Aeternitas, Annona, Concordia, Fecunditas, Feliticas, Fortuna, Hilaritas, Laetitia, Libertas, Pax, Perpetuitas, Salus, Securitas, Tranquillitas* and *Victoria*. Noreña also suggests further sub-division under the groupings of material, social and judicial benefits (2011: 101-107).
[322] See, for example, Rowan 2013a; Ellithorpe 2017; Betjes and Heijnen, 2018; Glomb et. al. 2023.
[323] Noreña 2001: 154, n.41.
[324] A further example, given by Noreña himself (2001: 154, n.41) is of presenting imperial affiliation with Hercules by depicting the god himself (as per RIC III Commodus 399A) or only depicting an attribute of the same deity, such as his club (RIC III Commodus 253). Each would be assigned to the different iconographic group, either 'gods, goddesses, and minor deities' or 'inanimate objects and miscellaneous scenes'.

means through which imperial ideals and values were conveyed.[325] The point here is that Noreña recognised that these imperial values could be expressed in various ways. Still, his categorisation framework was intentionally created to isolate one valuable iconographic formulation. Virtues were the foundational values upon which imperial rule was built and expressed.[326] His quantitative analysis of coins bearing virtue personifications, the clearest and most common ideological expressions, offered a legitimate means of identifying what values the state most wished to publicise. On those coins depicting personified virtues the political message was one-dimensional: X emperor is good and legitimate because he possesses Y virtue. A simple single-categorisation approach was sufficient for analysing these iconographic types.

Unfortunately, this framework of assigning coins to singular categories and subcategories (for example, RIC I (second edition) Vitellius 125 = Personification = Virtue = *Aequitas*) becomes immediately problematic for analysing the political contents of the other broad iconographic categories. If we consider, for example, the category of 'gods, goddesses and minor deities', a single deity was rarely used to present the same uniform concept over time. The figure of Hercules was deployed on coinage in various capacities, such as to promote the emperor as a great traveller, as a defender and warrior, as an indicator of dynastic continuity, and as a dutiful fulfiller of tasks.[327] Because of the diverse messages the state may have looked to communicate through the same deity, a simple aggregation of how often a certain god was depicted would provide very limited information. Whereas the personified virtues presented discrete and easily quantifiable Roman ideals, deity-bearing coin types require substantial qualitative analysis to elucidate the contexts within which these gods were presented.[328] Equally, due to the flexibility of deities' presentation, basic numerical data taken for a prolonged period is of little use apart from contextualising the volumes in which other categories were produced, which is exactly the limited parameters within which Noreña used it.

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[325] Noreña 2001: 59, 153-154. At least during Noreña's period of study (69-235), most virtue-espousing coinage conformed to a fairly straight forward model of the emperor's name and portrait on the obverse, with associated virtue inscribed on the reverse, typically with the label AVGVSTVS/AVGVSTI (or abbreviated AVG) and a personification of that virtue as the accompanying image. As per the hoard-based data of Noreña 2011 (Appendices 3 and 4), personification types constituted 54.5% of silver coins and 57.2% of bronze coins.

[326] See Charlesworth 1937; Wallace-Hadrill 1981; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 12-13, 23; Noreña 2011: 37-63. Nixon and Rodgers, and Noreña, both provide discussion of the virtues as the central component for presenting imperial rule particularly in panegyric, as well as underpinning the Greek philosophical tradition. Wallace-Hadrill and Noreña however take particular pains to stress the lack of a fixed 'canon' of Roman virtues derived from the Greek tradition. See **§3.2.2** for further discussion regarding a 'canon' of virtues, and **§3.2.3** for identification of a group of core virtues that may nevertheless have crystallised by the Late Roman period.

[327] See RIC II: 34 on the use of Hercules on Hadrianic coinage to promote the emperor as 'the great adventurer, traveller, and friend of man'. On the use of Hercules in a variety of contexts on coinage of the Severan period, including to promote Septimus Severus's home city of Lepcis Magna, see Rowan 2013a: 41-45, 47-49. On Maximian's numismatic association with Hercules as the great 'doer', in conjunction Diocletian's link with Jupiter as the overseer and decision-maker, see Hekster 2015: 297-300 and *Pan. Lat.* X, esp. 11.6.

[328] Again Rowan 2013a is the example *par excellence* of the contextualisation of such quantitative data. Also Hekster 2015: 297-300.

Further problems also arise with a single-categorisation approach when a reverse design features elements from multiple categories and presents no clear main message. This is well demonstrated by a Late Roman example, the CONCORDIA MILITVM radiate type **[1]** of the dyarchy and tetrarchy, that depicts the emperor receiving a *victoriola* from Jupiter. Which element should be prioritised when assigning the coin type to a single category? To use Noreña's iconographic classification system, both the deities and imperial family members categories would apply. The equal size of the emperor and Jupiter was a deliberate choice, indicating both were the shared subject matter, neither was an adjunct of the other.[329] In addition, the inscription's reference to *concordia* and the attribute of the *victoriola* attest to two imperial benefits on display, though only the latter would fit within the 'personification' category. This iconographic type espoused multiple messages simultaneously, including military concord, divinely ordained imperial rule, and triumphant imperial dominion of the dyarchy/tetrarchy. Not only are iconographic categories unable to capture the full range of these messages, but choosing to prioritise one of these facets over another is counter to the intended design of the coin. To reduce this iconographic type to a singular numerical representation of an erroneously prioritised message would be knowingly misrepresentative.

3.1.1.2. Issues of Application Beyond the Original Period of Study

This issue with accurately categorising the CONCORDIA MILITVM type **[1]**, a prevalent late third-century iconographic type,[330] also exposes the second problem with Noreña's personification-focused categorisation model. It is only suitable for providing quantitative insights into imperial coin iconography during Noreña's period of analysis (69-235), when the personification types constituted over half of all silver and base-metal coinage being issued.[331] From the end of the second century though, personifications were less frequently used to communicate imperial values. Under the Severans and their successors, there was an increasing trend towards using coinage to promote imperial affiliation with different deities.[332] Especially from Gallienus's reign (253-268), reverse-types depicted gods like Hercules, Jupiter, Sol and Mars, below legends that branded these deities as emperors' companions (COMES/COMITI) or personal protectors (CONSERVATOR).[333] As per Erika Manders's quantitative analysis of the silver coinage between 193-284, there was also a significant

[329] This may be contrasted to a specific sub-type of the IOVI CONSERVAT radiate type from *Ticinum* (RIC V Diocletian 220-221, dating 285-286), where the standard central figure of Jupiter with thunderbolt and sceptre sees the addition of a small Diocletian as an adjunct in left of field.
[330] The CONCORDIA MILITVM type **[1]** was issued in very large quantities at the eastern mints of *Siscia*, *Heraclea*, *Cyzicus*, *Antioch* and *Alexandria* between 291-307. In the site-finds database it constitutes on average 46% and 77.5% of coins from 'eastern' sites for Periods 1 (284-294) and 2 (294-307) respectively (see Appendix 6, Periods 1 and 2).
[331] See **§3.1.1.1**, n.325 above.
[332] Rowan 2013a: 6.
[333] Hekster 2015: 256-259; Hedlund 2008: 213-216; Possenti 1995; Turcan 1978: 1022-1025; Nock 1947.

increase in reverse-types depicting military themes. This was so much so that her gross coin type analysis suggests the military types and depictions of deities had together surpassed personified virtues and benefits as the prevailing reverse-type designs.[334]

The changes were even more severe on Late Roman coinage. Base-metal coinage of the early fourth century, under the tetrarchy and its competing successors, was dominated by depictions of emperors' divine *comites*.[335] These deity-focused designs abruptly ceased, first with Constantine's abandonment of Sol iconography around 318, followed by Licinius's defeat at Chrysopolis in 324. At this point, the triumphant Constantinian regime chose to emphasise imperial virtues and benefits in a manner almost unrecognisable from the earlier personification model, with the pan-imperial issuing of the PROVIDENTIAE AVGG/CAESS 'camp gate' types **[29, 30]**. As the first base-metal iconographic types to be issued at all imperial mints since the Third Tetrarchy (306), the choice of such an ambiguous type that deliberately avoided the earlier model of personification or deity depiction is significant.[336] Following this, the only personification that continued to be frequently depicted was Victory, who constituted the prevailing 'protagonist' of base-metal reverse iconographic types alongside the military emperor.[337] Because Noreña's single-categorisation method was specialised for interpreting the direct political messages of the personification types, its application beyond his original study period becomes increasingly problematic, and is virtually inapplicable to the Late Roman period when personification types had all but disappeared.

3.1.1.3. Summary

The strength of Noreña's single-categorisation framework is that it was designed to identify and quantify one specific visual motif for communicating imperial rulership ideology on coins – the virtue personifications – when that iconography was most common. Its focus on personifications avoided the various shortcomings of the other more generalised categories. However, this thesis seeks to consider all prevailing features of imperial propaganda present on Late Roman base-metal coinage, rather than focusing on select pre-defined themes. It is therefore essential to distinguish a method of categorisation that presents the entire coin

[334] Manders 2012: 49.
[335] See RIC VI: 110-111; RIC VII, 46, 52; **§4.1.1**; **§4.1.2**; **§4.1.3.2**.
[336] Caza 2021: 59.
[337] On the figures of Victory and the military emperor see **§4.2.3.1** and **§4.2.3.2**. There continued to be some brief presentation of traditional personifications up until the mid-fourth century, though these was restricted to coinage of empresses (namely *Pax*, *Pietas* and *Securitas*), or very limited medallion issues. The personification types of empresses include the SECVRITAS REIPVBLICE and PAX PVBLICA types **[42, 59]** issued for Helena (324-329 and 337-340 respectively), SPES REPVBLICAE and SALVS REIPVBLICAE types **[43, 44]** issued for Fausta (324-326) and PIETAS ROMANA type **[58]** issued for Theodora (337-340). These coins appeared in relatively very low numbers, even proportionally within their own periods, comprising a combined per-site average of 15.6% of coins dating to Period 5 (324-330) and just 0.5% for Period 6 (330-340). On medallions see Toynbee 1944: 179-192. Note that of the virtues so prevalent in previous periods, only *Virtus* appeared on the medallions of the fourth century.

population as best as possible, while negating the prioritisation issues inherent in the single categorisation method. My categorisation framework must recognise the multi-faceted nature of the coinage under study and accommodate its nuanced and overlapping political messages. Instead, a methodology that can assign multiple categories to a single coin is required.

3.1.2. Image and Inscription: The Importance of Acknowledging the Independent Components of Coin Propaganda

My need to encapsulate the numerous propaganda elements on single iconographic types leads us to the great strength of the second major pre-existent categorisation framework. In her gross coin type analysis of the Roman imperial silver coinage issued between 193-284, Erika Manders introduced the first multi-categorisation approach.[338] Manders recognised the increased departure of the coinage from the personification formula already explored by Noreña, the frequency in which coinage was used to carry multiple political messages, and devised a more appropriate method to capture all this information. I strongly agree with Julie Langford that amongst Manders's principal successes was this modification of Noreña's methodology to place coins in more than one category and thus 'acknowledge the multivalence of some types'.[339] Manders's work marks a fundamental evolutionary point for the methodology underpinning quantitative analysis of Roman imperial coin propaganda. Consequently, it has been adopted by many other numismatists trained at Manders's home institution of Radboud University, Nijmegen, which continues to produce groundbreaking research on Roman coin propaganda.[340] In line with this scholarship, all future analyses of large bodies of Roman numismatic material spanning a prolonged timeframe should incorporate a multi-categorisation framework.

Nevertheless, Manders's multi-categorisation methodology also has its limiting factors and requires further modification to quantify more accurately all of each coin's political messages. The main issue I shall address here is how Manders's approach predominantly uses coin legends to assign coins to specific categories. This constructs a hierarchical relationship between inscription and image, assuming most images to have been simple, subordinate visualisations of the written, readable messages they appeared beneath. However, as I will argue, it is an interpretative approach based on modern bias towards literary evidence, which conflicts with how the Romans used words and images as independent and equal modes of communication. To demonstrate the latter, I will first outline the prevailing conclusions in Roman Art History regarding word-image relations and demonstrate their validity by providing

[338] Manders 2012. On gross coin type analysis see **§2.1.1.2**.
[339] Langford 2014: 1.
[340] See **§2.1.1.2**, n.191.

examples of images' and inscriptions' usage on state monuments. Finally, I will briefly assess the function of reverse inscriptions on the coins themselves, which again will vindicate the independent operation of word and image, that combined to present multiple ideological aspects. Ultimately, this sub-section's key critique is that, during the categorisation process, we need to treat the image and inscription as distinct vehicles for projecting propaganda. By doing so, we will emulate more closely how contemporary Roman audiences engaged with the coinage, which can better reflect all the political messages they may have comprehended.

3.1.2.1. The Inscription-First Approach and its Limitations

Manders's work improves upon Noreña's methodology, taking 'fuller advantage of the complex nature of numismatic evidence by including in her analysis both types (i.e., images) and legends (text)'.[341] Yet, in Manders's own words, 'the difference between the specific coin types is in turn based on both the images *and especially the legends present on them*'.[342] Similarly, Manders states that placing a coin into multiple categories occurs only when the inscription 'fails to indicate how to interpret a complex image'.[343] It is an inscription-first approach to categorising the coins. *Reading* the words on the coinage is prioritised. Those words are then used as a prism to interpret the subservient imagery. Only in exceptional circumstances is the imagery interpreted as independent of the inscription.

Failure to acknowledge the iconography's equal importance to the inscriptions, as a self-supporting vehicle for imperial propaganda, has been David Biedermann's chief critique of Manders's quantitative methodology.[344] Furthermore, he has argued that Manders's results could have been substantially altered had her categorisation criteria taken account of exclusively visual formulations of virtues evidenced in archaeological material.[345] Indeed, because of this inscription-led classification process, Manders only placed 2.1% of the 8,227 coin types in her database into more than one category.[346] The multi-categorisation innovation seems to have only been deployed in a limited capacity. This reintroduces the single-categorisation approach's prioritisation issue, and the unexploited ability to apply multiple categories to single coins, as per Biedermann's critique, invites questions regarding the validity of the quantitative analysis's results.

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[341] Langford 2014: 1.
[342] Manders 2012: 40, my italics.
[343] Manders 2012: 48, n.162.
[344] Biedermann 2013: 282: 'Virtues of the emperor are only interpreted as such if they are named in the legend. Manders acknowledges that references to victories, the army and especially images of the emperor in military dress are 'indirect references to virtus' (170) even if the legend VIRTVS is missing, but nonetheless ignores the fact that there was more than one way to display the emperor's virtus, including the use of images without an explicit legend.'
[345] Biedermann 2013: 282.
[346] Manders 2012: 49, n.163.

3.1.2.2. Modern Literary Bias and the Independence of Image and Word in the Roman World

The issue at hand is that this restrictive method of 'reading' and interpreting coinage is rooted in a modern and anachronistic bias towards literary evidence, which runs counter to how Roman imperial coin propaganda was intended to be consumed by its contemporary audience. This inclination to favour the word over image, and try to 'read' iconography specifically in the light of contemporary literature, has often been an issue within modern numismatics.[347] In recent decades though, this interpretative framework has been undermined in the field of (Roman) Art History by critical assessments of the modern 'eye'. Scholarship has particularly demonstrated the more nuanced, often playful interrelations and independent abilities of word and image in Roman literature and material culture, and emphasised the capability of the image to communicate in its own right.[348] These developments have nevertheless been slower to infiltrate the field of numismatics, so I am advocating for their adoption to overcome the narrowed perspective of the image-first approach to coin categorisation. Doing so will better reflect all aspects of propaganda attested through the separate vehicles of a coin's iconography and inscription.

Here I should further clarify the orthodox position of Roman Art History, which is also attested by numismatic analyses of the Roman Republic. The prevailing chronology posited is that, by the early first century CE, a body of widely recognisable iconographic motifs had been established, which remained fairly static throughout the imperial period. The prominent role of 'labelling' inscriptions – inscriptions that did no more than explain the iconography, and the 'reading' of which provides adequate explanation of the coin's political messages – has been much discussed in modern scholarship. Yet the recognised peak of 'labelling' inscriptions' usage has been placed during the Late Republic, a period of iconographic flux in which the visual presentation of deities and new political ideals underwent a prolonged process of definition and redefinition.[349] With the end of the Republican period and the move into the

[347] For a useful example, see Rowan 2013a: 36-37. Here Rowan provides a brief historiographic overview of an unusual coin type of Clodius Albinus (RIC V.1 Albinus 10) with inscription SAECVLO FRVGIFERO and image of an enthroned, bearded god wearing a robe and fez-like headpiece. Earlier identifications had looked to assert that this was a regional deity named Saeculum Frugiferum, as per the inscription, yet it is only Rowan's recent consideration of the imagery in isolation that provides the correct identification of this figure as the Hadrumentine deity Baal Hammon.

[348] Hölscher 2004 (1987); Elsner 1996; Elsner 2007; Squire 2009: 71-89; Zanker 2010; Squire 2022. For similar developments in the field of Byzantine visual culture studies see, for example, Onians 1980; Corrigan 1992: 104-123; Brubaker 2006; 2013. See also Braider 1993: 13 on the general bias of modern western culture to promote and favour text over image, and his aim to address this issue as pertaining to art of the High Medieval to Early Modern periods.

[349] On the Late Republic as a period of iconographic flux and gradual iconographic refinement see Hölscher 2004. For consideration of this process with regard to general representations of deities see Clark 2007, on coinage in particular see Woytek 2022 and Hölscher 1982. Also see case studies of Cornwell 2020 on *pax* and Arena 2012: 40-43 on *libertas*. Both provide excellent examples of the ideas expressed by Hölscher 1982: 273-274, regarding the establishment of a political ideal in visual form and the gradual refinement of its semantic range. On

Principate came the settling of these definitions, and the crystallisation of the visual forms for presenting these ideals and virtues. The result of this process was a 'semantic system': the formalisation and codification of Roman cultural ideals which remained largely unchanged throughout the imperial period.[350] With this transition to an established semantic system in the imperial period,[351] the identificatory inscriptions that had taken a central role in helping to establish this very system during the Republican period were made redundant. The visual formulae for presenting deities, virtues and other ideals had been set, so the identificatory inscription, a text that merely functioned to 'describe' the image, was no longer needed.

Now for some concrete examples. All these elements – the development of a fixed semantic system, the capacity of images alone to convey messages without supporting inscriptions, and the general disappearance of identificatory inscriptions – are evidenced by the use of images and words in public spaces during the Principate. The state publicly promoted and commemorated imperial success and ideals through monuments as well as coins, yet text played a very limited role on these. The columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, for example, consisted of interrelated pictorial scenes that combine historical narrative and idealised representation of Roman virtues, and included no accompanying inscriptions to explain each scene.[352] The friezes were packed full of deities, personifications and the emperor in idealised poses that sought to communicate various facets of imperial rulership ideology to the Roman populace, but there was no concern for the need to describe these scenes with words. So too, the Ara Pacis Augustae. Much has been written about the identity of the ambiguous seated goddess holding two infants on one of its eastern friezes, who like all figures of the monument remained unlabelled.[353] Yet the identificatory problem here is one specific to the modern

development of Roman visual culture, the emergence of the 'image' and its increasingly political orientation in the Late Republican period see Haug 2022.

[350] Hölscher 2004 and **§1.5.3**. Hölscher's central hypothesis regarding the Roman semantic system, the persistence of set forms and the concurrent use of different styles as a means of differentiating genre and context rather than as chronological development, continues to be supported in contemporary scholarship. See, for example, Haug 2022: 2; McFadden 2022.

[351] It should be noted that Zanker (1988; 2010) emphasises the emergence and establishing of many images and symbols under the Augustus, thereby arguably extending the flux and setting of the semantic system to the early imperial period. Nevertheless, the establishment and existence of a stable core picture language throughout the remainder of the imperial period still stands.

[352] For useful overview studies of these monuments see Coarelli 2000 and Beckmann 2011. Note that the only inscriptions on these monuments were dedicatory, just stating who they were apparently constructed by and for. They provide no insight into how the friezes and the figures they presented should be interpreted. On the inscription of Trajan's Column see *CIL* VI.960 = *ILS* 294. While Trajan's conquest of Dacia, which the column itself presents, is mentioned in this inscription, it is only as part of the standard formula of listing all the emperor's titles. The original inscription of the column of Marcus Aurelius has been lost, but its replacement, erected by Pope Sixtus V, also alludes to its dedicatory contents - see here [accessed 02/06/22].

[353] For the frieze of the unidentified goddess see Reed Digital Collection, Ara Pacis Augustae [accessed 23/06/2022]. Modern scholarship has identified the goddess as Tellus (Petersen 1902); Eirene (Gardthausen 1908); Italia (Van Buren 1913); Venus (Galinsky 1966 and Thornton 1983); Pax (Torelli 1982: 38-42 and De Grummond 1990: 663-677); Ceres (Spaeth 1994) and Latona (McClean 2022). The lack of a satisfactory identification has led to more recent discussions of the monument to generally avoid engaging with this identification debate and instead accept the figure as a general indication of abundance (see Zanker 1988: 173-174; Kleiner 1992: 96; Lamp 2009: 6, n.9.).

audience – the contemporary public to whom this monumental imagery was addressed, operating within the cultural context of the imperial semantic system, would not have had this issue.[354] Finally, the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, constructed under the later Julio-Claudian emperors, is also worthy of attention.[355] While the reliefs of its south building were dedicated to the emperors and heroes, the north building reliefs presented personifications of the peoples of the empire. Of particular interest here was the intermittent use of inscriptions on this monument. In the case of the hero reliefs, figures like Aeneas, with his father on his back, or Hercules, with club and lionskin, received no inscriptions – these were firmly part of the semantic system and needed no supporting label. In contrast, the personified *ethne* ('nations') were accompanied by identificatory inscriptions. These were obscure personifications that did *not* exist within the fixed pictorial vocabulary of the semantic system. Just as was the case during the period of iconographic flux in the Late Republic, the viewer was assisted by the labelling text to understand visually undefinable personifications. However, such obscure personifications made minimal appearances, and it was the now visually well-defined gods, goddesses, heroes, virtues and benefits that constituted the central themes of imperial art.

3.1.2.3. Reverse Legend Functions: An Overview

The key takeaway here is that the relationship between word and image posited by Roman Art Historians and vindicated by public visual propaganda of imperial monuments is sharply at odds with Manders's inscription-first categorisation approach. The coins drew on the same iconographic vocabulary, operated within the same semantic system, to convey their political messages. Furthermore, the base-metal coinage was communicating with the same wider public who were engaging with public monuments. Why would the Roman imperial coinage then persistently adhere to a simple relationship where the inscription and imagery did little more than mirror each other, so that reading the inscription was usually enough to understand and categorise all elements of propaganda being communicated?

A short survey of the functions of the reverse legends on the coinage is warranted here. It will show that the coins were not unusual outliers that adopted a different usage of words and images. Rather, contrary to Manders's interpretative approach, the coinage corresponded with how the Romans used images and words independently, as delineated in **§3.1.2.2** above. The conclusions drawn here provide a summary of a larger investigation I have undertaken into the functioning of the reverse legends. That study offers a revision of Sven Betjes's quantitative analysis of reverse legends, which itself argued for the predominance of 'labelling' inscriptions, and effectively legitimised the inscription-first approach by suggesting that it *did*

[354] Neudecker 2015: 354.
[355] Squire 2022: 59-61; Aphrodisias Excavations Project [accessed 17/11/2023].

imitate how the Romans interpreted the propaganda of most imperial coins.[356] My full re-appraisal of Betjes's conclusions and the quantitative results supporting this are provided in Appendix 4.

Let us first consider Figure 3.3. It is a visualisation of a dataset of 14,910 coin types that referenced imperial virtues and benefits.[357] They provide a useful case-study, as the greater variety of virtue and benefit personifications and potential unfamiliarity of their iconography compared to, say, gods and goddesses, meant these were the iconographic forms most in need of identificatory labelling inscriptions. The first thing to note though is that, for the first two and a half centuries of imperial rule, from the Julio-Claudians (27BCE-68CE) to the Severans (193-235), most of these coins had inscriptions and images that showed no link. Either personified virtues/benefits were not identified by the coin's inscription, or the inscription referred to a virtue/benefit that was not then visually represented. In the cases when written labels may be expected to be most required, the independent functioning of iconography and imagery occurred most of the time.

Then from the mid-third century until the end of the fifth century, 'attributive legends' became the dominant form of inscription on the virtue and benefit coin types. 'Attributive legends' refer to those reverse inscriptions that may have included reference to the figures visually depicted, but more importantly provided non-visualised information that added to the iconography's message. For example, two separate reverse-types could depict personified *virtus* but have inscriptions like VIRTVS AVG TR P COS or VIRTVS EXERCITVS, which gave different emphasis.[358] These inscriptions were not intended to tell its audience who the widely recognisable personification was, but to inform them who exactly that ideal was to be associated with: the Augustus/emperor or the army. Their principal purpose was 'attributive' rather than descriptive.[359] What Figure 3.3 clearly shows though is that, throughout the

[356] Betjes 2022: 131-148.

[357] The dataset used here is of all RIC coin types referring to a virtue or benefit (as per Noreña's specifications – see **§3.1.1**, n.320-321) in its inscription or iconography. It has been assembled using the OCRE database for the purposes of coin type analysis to emulate the data collection process of Betjes. Regarding these results, it must be noted that, while the data has been cleaned in an attempt to emulate Betjes' original criteria of categorisation and periodisation, there is still a level of subjectivity in the categorisation process that will likely have somewhat skewed the figures in favour of my argument. Also, as it is only a secondary dataset constructed for the purposes of this critique there are likely to be minor errors that make the dataset less 'clean' than Betjes's own. As such, the results presented here should, as is always the case with gross coin type analysis, only be read as indicative of general trends rather than exact figures.

[358] See, for example, RIC IV Septimius Severus 24 (*denarius*) and RIC VI Alexandria 141.

[359] A note should be made here that the evidence for the independence of word and image does not entirely disregard the reality that attributive inscriptions often did also point to the identity of the figure they depicted. This is especially, though not exclusively, the case for coin types of virtue personifications. However, to continuously turn to these inscriptions as a tool of interpretation and categorisation, as per previous numismatic analyses, continues to perpetuate the modern elevation of literature and underplay the significance of the imagery itself (Squire 2009: 80-87). Moreover, the correlation between the figure visually presented on coinage and the virtue or benefit that may be named in the inscription was in no way consistent (Wolters 1999: 269; Friedl 2013: 135-137; Betjes 2022: 46). This is only an issue that becomes more marked in the first half of the fourth century. The demise of depicting personifications and the increased presence of the emperor/empress in their stead leads to ambiguity

imperial period, 'identificatory legends', inscriptions that simply stated the identity of coins' visual contents, were exceedingly rare. Instead, the inscription and imagery were used to relay entirely separate information, or the inscription gave additional information that built on the visual contents.

One final element should be raised regarding the Late Roman period. From the fourth to mid-fifth century at least, notably in line with the decline of personification types, most reverse inscriptions included no identificatory reference to iconographic contents at all, either as part of an 'identificatory' or 'attributive' legend. This can be seen in Figure 3.4, which compares reverse legend functions for all coinage in the site-finds database. With two exceptions, Periods 3 (307-317) and 6 (330-340), the vast majority of base-metal coins issued after Diocletian's monetary reforms (294-296) had legends that showed no interaction with the iconography at all, or bore 'complementary legends' that communicated additional, non-labelling information.[360] Overall, just 20.6% of coins in the site-finds database have 'attributive' or 'identificatory' legends, so in most cases the coin inscriptions gave no clue as to how the iconography should be interpreted. The inscription-first approach is therefore not only arguably at odds with how the Romans interpreted their own coinage, but is also an impractical categorisation method for dealing with Late Roman coinage. By necessity, my categorisation framework must treat inscriptions and iconography as two modes of communication.

In sum, this overview has shown that many inscriptions of reverses functioned to provide additional information to the messages of the iconography, giving focus and nuance. Otherwise, the inscription and image usually operated independently, with visual and written elements then combining to communicate a variety of messages simultaneously. The reverse inscriptions were hardly ever used just to describe the image to its audience. The designers of Roman imperial coinage operated within the same 'Roman' mentality as those who produced public monuments, and saw images and inscriptions as distinct instruments for projecting propaganda. An inscription-led categorisation framework therefore runs entirely

over whether the image was of the virtue/benefit mentioned by the inscription, an affiliated deity or the emperor/empress. For example, it is uncertain whether the female figures on the SECVRITAS REIPVBLICE Branch type **[42]**, SPES REPVBLICAE Empress and children type **[43]**, SALVS REIPVBLICAE Empress and children type **[44]**, PIETAS ROMANA type **[58]** and PAX PVBLICA type **[59]** all depict their associated obverse empresses (Helena, Fausta and Theodora) or the personifications stated in the reverse legends. Looking to use the apparent identificatory component of attributive legends assumes correlation between inscription and image that is evidently not always present. It risks forcing the identification of figures ambiguous to us to conform to the erroneous inscription-first interpretive framework – a self-fulfilling prophecy in which we assume correlation and then confirm correlation in the case of uncertainty.

[360] The 'Limited (or no) interaction between image and legend' and 'complementary legend' categories used here are those used by Betjes in his own coin type analysis. See Betjes 2022: 133-135 and 138-140 for further definition of these categories and examples of the sorts of inscriptions they cover. Note that this general trend towards the increase of 'complementary legends' after the tetrarchic period was a key conclusion of Betjes (2022: 141-148). Betjes's analysis does however suggest that 'labelling' legends continued to have a significant presence, appearing on over a third of coins. Conversely, the results from my site-finds database indicate a much more severe shift, as after the mid-fourth century coins with an identificatory element in their inscription ('attributive' or 'identificatory') never made up more the 15% of any period total.

counter to how these coins were both designed and interpreted by contemporary audiences, and using it runs the risk of failing to capture key political messages present only in the imagery.

3.1.2.4. Summary: The Necessity for Emulating the Roman 'Eye'

The premise of this discussion has been that a multi-categorisation approach is required for any holistic quantitative analysis of the propaganda espoused by Roman imperial coinage. The messages of the coinage were multi-faceted, simultaneously presenting numerous aspects of imperial rulership ideology, and therefore a method of classifying each coin must necessarily accommodate these. Multi-categorisation methodologies have emerged over the last decade or so to meet this requirement. Yet a leading feature of these has been the use of an inscription-led approach to classification, whereby the coin's reverse legend is assumed to have typically described the accompanying image. It is an interpretative framework that places the image in a subordinate position to the inscription by assuming that it was typically just a picture reinforcing a political message that can otherwise be read.

However, I have argued that such an interpretative framework is problematic because it did not emulate how contemporaries interpreted coins. It has instead been strongly asserted that a coin's iconography was rarely subservient to its inscription. Rather, in most cases the reverse inscription worked in an attributive capacity to further develop the iconography's message rather than just describe it. Alternatively, particularly during the Late Roman period, inscription and image functioned as independent vehicles of propaganda, with both components then coalescing to communicate a multi-faceted message. This has been shown through reviewing qualitative conclusions from Roman imperial Art History regarding the independent usage of words and images; demonstrated in select examples of imperial monumental imagery; and through a summative overview of how Roman imperial coin reverse legends functioned.[361]

My principal notion underpinning this re-evaluation of the coin categorisation process is that, by ascertaining how word and image functioned as separate components on this state-issued medium, we can devise a framework that replicates as best as possible how the Roman 'eye' consumed and comprehended coin propaganda. We will never be able to attain a level of understanding of the messages on the coinage comparable to a contemporary Roman audience, simply because we do not exist within the same semantic system. We lack their inherent level of understanding provided by cultural context. Yet by trying to imitate the interpretative process of Roman imperial society, by looking to understand different technologies of communication (for example, the written word and images) and the

[361] For the full quantitative analysis of reverse legends' function see Appendix 4.

relationship between these in the same manner as those designing and consuming coin propaganda, we best position ourselves to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various overlapping aspects of imperial rulership ideology that the coinage was used to promote.

3.1.3. Using Fuzzy Set Theory to Overcome the Limitations of Binary Categorisation

The final issue I wish to address is how a coin's membership within a category, or a category's presence on a coin, should be recorded. To date, all classification methods of Roman imperial coin iconography and propaganda have denoted a coin's membership within a category using a binary 'yes/no' approach. However, as will be shown, this method fails to recognise the interrelation between different aspects of imperial propaganda and the insinuated presence of propaganda categories that remain unmentioned by the coin's image or inscription. Furthermore, the binary approach cannot distinguish between an iconographic type's main and subsidiary messages, the recognition of which provides a more accurate understanding of its intended function.

To resolve these problems, I will propose a new way of scoring a category's relative presence on an iconographic type, which uses the basic principles of fuzzy set theory. It is a method that offers a more nuanced measurement of the proportions in which different aspects of imperial rulership ideology appeared on Late Roman base-metal coinage. This is a challenge to the little-considered tenet that underpins existing single and multi-categorisation approaches, and promises to impact the data derived from quantitative analyses profoundly.

3.1.3.1. The Binary Categorisation Approach and its Shortcomings

All current quantitative studies of Roman imperial coin iconography and propaganda have approached the question of whether a coin should be affiliated with a category simply. The answer provided is either 'true' ('yes, that coin belongs in that category') or 'false' ('no, that coin does not belong in that category'), so a category is only ever considered completely present or utterly absent. This assumes an absolutist perspective of categorisation and is a simplification that fails to accommodate the inherent connection and affiliation between different components of imperial rulership ideology. As already discussed, the semantic system of Roman ideals emerged in an organic, extended process.[362] Unsurprisingly, many of the imperial values promoted through the coinage were entangled and inter-related. Consequently, the overt presence of one propaganda category may have insinuated the

[362] See **§1.5.3** and **§3.1.2.2**, n.349-350 on Tonio Hölscher and the semantic system.

background presence of an affiliated category. For example, the virtue of *virtus* and the imperial benefit of *victoria* had a dependent relationship, as the latter was the positive result when the former was practised.[363] We may therefore anticipate that a citizen engaging with the common iconographic motif of Victory with trophy and captive motif would not only have noted the overt statement of their emperor's victoriousness.[364] They would also have been struck by the insinuated message of that emperor's military prowess (*virtus*), the necessary pre-requisite to achieving victory.

When trying to ascertain the presence or absence of the different facets of idealised Roman rule, we must recognise that each aspect of propaganda, each category being measured, was not mutually exclusive. In turn, because of these contingent relationships between different elements of imperial propaganda – particularly between virtues and benefits – basic statements of whether a category is 'present' or absent' are not very helpful. As we have seen in **§3.1.1** and **§3.1.2**, existing binary approaches are also only likely to recognise a category as present when clearly attested by a coin's inscription or the 'protagonist' of its iconography. They subsequently miss out on capturing the background presence of those elements which may not be overtly displayed but form an intrinsic underlying aspect of the messages presented. The effect of the binary approach is a framework that presents the façade of clear, monolithic data – results that largely fail to capture the reality of entanglement between different virtues and ideals.

Moreover, a binary system's limit to only allocating single affirmative values cannot recognise a hierarchy of ideals and messages that may be presented by an iconographic type. The CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter type **[1]** again provides a useful example. As outlined in **§3.1.1.1**, several messages were relayed on this type. The two that took centre stage though were the notion of stability through concordant relations communicated by the inscription, and the emperor's fostering of correct religious relations communicated through the image of his exchange with Jupiter. These comprised the 'headline' or 'main' messages, which would both be captured by Manders's multi-categorisation framework. Yet imperial victory was also promoted through the small *victoriola* that Jupiter passed to the emperor. A binary categorisation method faces a choice in such circumstances. The CONCORDIA MILITVM type can be classified to include the promotion of imperial victory, which would present that dimension as comparable to the type's emphasis on the emperor's fulfilment of his religious duties. Alternatively, the victory reference can be entirely ignored because it was subordinate to the 'main' messages. Of course, neither option allows for the political messages

[363] For further discussion of this inter-connection, that the Roman sense of victory was contingent on military success, see **§3.2.3**, n.405.
[364] For examples of the Victory with trophy and captive motif see the SARMATIA DEVICTA type **[40]**, ALAMANNIA DEVICTA type **[41]**, or SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive types **[100, 200, 201]**.

of the CONCORDIA MILITVM type to be accurately represented in a quantitative form. To ignore a component of the political messages re-introduces the problem of subjective prioritisation that plagues the single-categorisation approach, whereas to recognise the victory component fails to accommodate the gradation of the messages and emphasis on emperor-deity relations that was intended by the type's designers.[365] The ability to differentiate *degrees of presence* would provide a more nuanced understanding of the different aspects of imperial rulership ideology that were valued and promoted across different parts of the empire and at different times.

3.1.3.2. The Solution: A Fuzzy Set Theory-Based Scoring System

To reflect levels of interconnectivity between categories, the degrees of centrality or 'strength' of the message on a coin, and even the hierarchy of ideals and components of the message, I have abandoned the binary categorisation approach. Instead, to develop the multi-categorisation framework further and reduce the issues of over-simplification inherent in all categorisation processes, I have sought to implement the basic parameters of fuzzy set theory.[366] My new framework looks to establish the presence of a category on an iconographic type on a 'continuum of grades of membership'.[367] It should be noted that how fuzzy set theory has been deployed here is not an exhaustive or exact replication of the statistical relationships expressed by Lofti Zadeh. This thesis is the first attempt to implement any aspect of fuzzy set theory to an analysis of Roman numismatic iconography. It is in part an investigation into the feasibility of applying the theory's basic tenets of varying degrees of inclusion within identified sets. Here the 'set' of fuzzy set theory is comprised of fifteen predefined categories of imperial propaganda, the 'members' of the 'set'.[368] Each of the 247 iconographic types in the site-finds database has been scored between 0 and 1 to identify how far 'in' to each set member (category) it is. This scoring has been implemented through a simple five-value format, as defined below:

Score	Definition	Explanation
{1}	Category is fully present on iconographic type /	Category/set member is clearly present and central to the political message of the iconographic type, either embodied in the 'protagonist' figure(s) of the

[365] The secondary position of victory through the attribute of the *victoriola* differs from the many Late Roman iconographic types which depict Victoria herself as the coin's protagonist, such as the recurrent VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory with wreath and palm types **[61, 154, 167]** or the proliferous late fourth century SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive types **[100, 200, 201]**, where imperial victory was clearly intended to be the central message. For further discussion of the role of victory as a background feature underpinning professions of positive emperor-deity relations on base-metal coinage of the dyarchy and early tetrarchy see **§4.1.1**.
[366] Zadeh 1965.
[367] Zadeh 1965: 339.
[368] See **§3.2.3** for the defining of these categories.

	iconographic type is fully in set member.	iconography through their identity or pose, or overtly stated in the inscription. These are aspects that identify the iconographic type in question as 'fully in' that category/set member.[369]
{0.75}	Category has fairly strong presence on iconographic type / iconographic type is fairly in set member.	Category/set member forms an important aspect of the iconographic type's political message, communicated through adjuncts and attributes whose deliberate inclusion indicates emphasis on a specific ideological element that is not otherwise communicated through the identity of the 'protagonist' figure(s) alone (for example, *Pax* with standard - PACI PERPET type **[26]**).[370] Such attributes and/or adjuncts may be uncommon in combination with the 'protagonist', not part of the standard repertoire essential to their visual identification (as per **{0.5}** entry).
{0.5}	Category has moderate presence on iconographic type / iconographic type is moderately present in set member.	Category/set member is less overt, yet is inherently associated with the 'protogonist' figure(s). This is often echoed by the peripheral adjuncts and attributes whose presence is primarily required to identify the 'protagonist' figure(s),[371] rather than to specifically communicate this category as a central aspect of the iconographic type's propaganda. For example, Roma with her helmet, spear and shield, or Hercules with his club and bow. These attributes are primarily present because they are the 'costume' of those figures. They are not included to specifically communicate the category of *virtus* as a central message of the coins, but the militant aspect of these

[369] Kvist 2007: 477

[370] While this iconographic type may primarily stress *restitutor* and *aeternitas* messages, depicting *Pax* with her usual attribute of a branch, the inclusion of the uncommon second attribute of a standard in the hand of *Pax* also highlights the essentially military method used to attain this peace. The use of fuzzy logic to assign a score of **{0.75}** to the *virtus* category here therefore allows recognition of the empire's fundamentally militant understanding of peace (see Cornwell 2017) and its association with the emperor's military prowess (in this case Constantine's final victory over Maxentius), while ensuring that such a notion does not totally obliterate or undermine the more prevalent presence of the other categories. For details on the categories mentioned here see **§3.2.3**.

[371] See Moorhead 2013: 26-30 for a useful summary of the standard presentations of deities and personifications with their usual attributes on Roman imperial coinage.

		figures' 'personalities' forms an inherent background component that should not be ignored.
{0.25}	Category is somewhat present on iconographic type / iconographic type is fairly out of set member.	Category/set member is not directly represented by the iconography or inscription but is alluded to through the presence of attributes and adjuncts affiliated with other categories/set members. This scoring looks to represent the inherent interconnection between certain categories/set members. For example, the above-discussed connection between *virtus* as an imperial virtue and *victoria* as the corresponding benefit associated with *virtus*'s performance. A captive as an adjunct associated with *victoria* can therefore also be seen to have an inherent connection to *virtus*, which this scoring level seeks to capture and communicate. This same virtue-benefit relationship can also be seen between *providentia* (imperial foresight) and most abstract benefits expressing prosperity.[372]
{0}	Category has no presence on iconographic type / iconographic type is fully out of set member.	Category/set member is not present in, or insinuated by, the iconography or inscription.

The purpose of this sequential scoring is to provide a more refined understanding of coin propaganda than the binary categorisation approach. Its ability to do so is well demonstrated by looking at the data on the 'elevation' category derived from the site-finds database, in comparison to the results that a binary scoring approach would provide.[373] Of the 247 iconographic types in the site-finds database, only thirty-five overtly communicate 'elevation' propaganda through their iconography or inscription. In terms of actual coins, this means that the binary approach would recognise the 'elevation' category as present on just 2,282 of 63,557 site-finds (3.6%). However, I have identified a further eighty-two types as making less direct references to the 'elevation' category or presenting political messages that are

[372] See the '*providentia*' category section on the representational categories table (Appendix 5) for its inherent connection to various different categories.

[373] The 'elevation' category is one of the fifteen categories whose proportional presence has been measured in the site-finds database as the basis of the quantitative analysis into the propaganda of espoused by Late Roman base-metal coinage. See **§3.2** for discussion on the process undertaken to identify these categories. The 'elevation' category has specifically been selected here as one of the more severe examples of the difference between results derived from using the binary and fuzzy set theory classification methods.

underpinned by the recipient recognising the emperor's elevated status. Again, in terms of actual numbers, my approach recognises that a total of 39,321 site-finds (61.9%) made some degree of reference to the 'elevation' category. My fuzzy set theory-based method's ability to better reflect the 'elevation' category's presence across the duration of the Late Roman period is also visualised in Figure 3.5.[374] It shows the per-site average proportional presence attained by the 'elevation' category within the total coinage of each period, differentiating between the results of using the traditional binary-based categorisation approach or a gradated scoring system.[375] The binary assessment suggests the 'elevation' theme played a minimal role on the coinage of the Late Roman period, except for between 324-330. However, a system that recognises *degrees of presence* instead demonstrates how the concept of the emperor's elevated position above all other Romans maintained a notable background presence on the base-metal coinage. My use of the fuzzy set theory-based approach within this thesis promises a more nuanced understanding of the individual categories of propaganda as well as their inter-relation.

3.1.3.3. Summary

The preceding critique of the binary classification process shows its limited ability to accurately encapsulate all aspects of propaganda present on Late Roman imperial coinage. As has been continuously stressed, Late Roman coinage was often multi-faceted and used to communicate complex and layered messages with gradations of meaning. Furthermore, the aspects of imperial rulership ideology that typically constituted the forms of propaganda espoused by these coins were interrelated and often contingent on one another. Simply put, the black-and-white approach of existing categorisation methods does not accommodate these complexities and its continued use risks presenting an over-simplified picture of those forms of propaganda most frequently evoked by the Late Roman state on coinage. The proposed solution is to use a gradated scoring system, informed by fuzzy set theory, to denote each propaganda category's degree of presence on an iconographic type.

This is the last proposed innovation to the methodologies that have previously been used to enable the translation of qualitative coin propaganda into something measurable and therefore subjectable to quantitative analysis. It forms the final dimension of my categorisation methodology, being applied in addition to using a multi-categorisation approach that pays equal attention to the imagery and inscription. The combined usage of all these aspects aims

[374] The binary results in Figure 3.5 have been attained by marking all iconographic types with a score of **{1}** for the 'elevation' category as overt and therefore present, whereas all iconographic types with a score of **{0.5}** or **{0.25}** have instead been marked as absent, as not captured by the binary approach. None of the 247 iconographic types have been scored at a **{0.75}** for the 'elevation' category, hence its absence from the preceding comment.
[375] For discussion of the calculations and statistical methods used to create per-site and per-period averages see Appendix 2.

to represent the recorded coinage as accurately as possible. With the parameters of this multi-categorisation method delineated, we will now define the various categories of propaganda that will be measured on each iconographic type within the study. We can then interpret their relative proportions within the site-finds database and undertake a more focused, chronological analysis.

3.2. Defining the Categories – Late Roman Imperial Rulership Ideology in the Panegyrics

I have now outlined the key features of the categorisation framework that will be used to translate qualitative coin propaganda into quantifiable metrics. The last aspect of my quantitative methodology that needs to be defined here is the exact propaganda categories, whose degrees of presence I am looking to measure on the coinage. Unfortunately, this process is not as straightforward as looking at the iconographic types to distinguish the most common political messages. The primary issue here is interpreting and capturing the various interconnected aspects communicated by the imagery. Since we are not operating within the same semantic system as the original Roman audience of the coinage, we cannot expect to obtain a complete understanding of the key propaganda themes communicated by undertaking a simple visual inspection. Equally, as per **§3.1.2**, we cannot rely on the limited and sometimes deceptive perspective of the inscriptions, especially given the increased separation between the inscriptions and imagery of coinage during the Late Roman period.

To define the propaganda categories used within this study, an alternative and more accessible source is required to identify those aspects of imperial rulership ideology most favoured by the Late Roman state. This source will act as an intermediary, informing us of those same ideological aspects we may anticipate were promoted on state-produced coinage. For this purpose, I have selected the Late Roman panegyrics. Compared to the picture language of coinage, the panegyrics' survival in written form makes them immediately more accessible to the literate, and literarily dependent modern audience.[376] Moreover, the

[376] I would like to acknowledge here that using a literary source in this manner does seemingly reintroduce the issue of modern literary bias that was explicitly opposed in **§3.1.2**. However, the exact issues discussed there, of the inscription-first categorisation approach, are mitigated here by only using text to define the parameters of what may be present on the coinage. Text is not used to directly explain an associated image. Nevertheless, this approach does arguably base its understanding of the 'period eye' on an understanding of 'period texts', which still pushes the primacy of text over image (Squire 2009: 80-85). As per Squire, 'the problem lies not with the recourse to texts *per se*, but rather with the ways in which the texts have been used – with the deeply engrained tendency to value texts over and above images, and indeed to turn images into texts' (Squire 2009: 85). As it stands though, I see no alternative solution. I would argue that panegyrics and coins, though two different sources, were ultimately products of the same intellectual system (as will be discussed further below) and endeavoured to project comparable ideas. Furthermore, the process of applying any form of quantitative analysis to Roman imperial coin propaganda is fundamentally reductive. It necessitates devising summative categories that condense large intellectual ideas into digestible single words or phrases. As such, I would argue that the reduction of images into

panegyrics' length, often amounting to hundreds of lines and equating to hours of speech, facilitates a far more comprehensive exploration of the political ideals, virtues and benefits favoured in the Late Roman period than the physically limited dimensions of coin obverses and reverses.[377]

This section will start by discussing the exact nature of the panegyrics as a source. It will address their points of origin, demonstrating that while panegyrics were *not* state products like the coinage, they nonetheless participated in publicly articulating the same ideological system of imperial power that the state intended to propagate. Moreover, due consideration will be given to the Late Roman panegyrics as an oratorical medium with a firmly rooted tradition. I will demonstrate that a careful reading of these sources helps distinguish those values central to contemporary imperial propaganda – my propaganda categories – from other elements of superficial praise specific to the panegyric genre.

The overview of the panegyrics' literary character will be followed by the outlining of fourteen principal propaganda categories, which have been derived through a critical analysis of the *Panegyrici Latini*, a collection of eleven panegyrics by Gallic orators (c.289-389). In turn, a brief overview of Greek secular panegyrics will show that the list of core categories was not unique to the *Panegyrici Latini* or part of a specifically western, Latin oratorical tradition, but underpinned a cross-linguistic, Roman imperial political ideology. Finally, attention will turn to another, smaller body of praise literature, the Christian panegyrics. By analysing these, I will delineate one further propaganda category – Christian faith – which was deliberately neglected in the secular panegyrics but whose emergence on Late Roman coinage is of great interest.

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something readable (and therefore also measurable) is ultimately an unavoidable aspect of any quantitative analysis of Roman coin iconography.

[377] On length of panegyrics see Omissi 2018: 58, n.88, which suggests the shortest extant examples would have taken at least thirty minutes to read aloud while the longest would take multiple hours. With regard to the extensive coverage of contemporary ideological aspects in the panegyrics, it is worth noting that the eleven panegyrics in the *Panegyrici Latini* collection each made reference to at least twelve of fifteen propaganda categories identified below in **§3.2.3** and **§3.2.5**, while *Pan. Lat.* VIII and *Pan. Lat.* VI both refer to fourteen. The panegyrists seemingly took a 'completionist' approach, whereas presentation of these propaganda categories on the base-metal coinage was clearly more selective. For example, the iconographic types in the site-finds database whose iconography and inscriptions combined to espouse the most propaganda categories are the VICTORIAE DD NN AVG ET CAE(S) Vot Mvlt WITH *Chi-Rho* type **[210]** and the GLORIA ROMANORVM Empress type **[106]**. Both made at least some degree of reference to eleven of the fifteen categories. These were not always the overt references found in the panegyrics though, so when these types' fuzzy logic-based scores for each category are added together they score only 7 and 6.75 out of 15 respectively. This reflects the practical reality of how the coinage had to operate within restrictive parameters that simply did not hinder oratorical or literary media. Furthermore, within the cleaned site-finds dataset a coin on average only referred to six of the fifteen propaganda categories and had an average fuzzy-logic based score of 4 out of 15. The significant gap between the highest scoring iconographic types and the average scoring coin suggests that Late Roman base-metal coins had the capacity to provide far more comprehensive coverage of the various facets of imperial propaganda than they usually did. Unlike the panegyrics, the reverse-types appear to have been composed to communicate more limited, focused messages. On the criteria determining a category's presence on an iconographic type and its relative score, see Appendix 5.

3.2.1. Late Roman Secular Panegyrics – A Representative Source of Contemporary Political Ideology

Before proceeding, it is worth providing brief clarification on what panegyrics are and what makes them useful tools for investigating Late Roman political ideology. A panegyric was a publicly performed rhetorical oration, aimed at eulogising an individual. Though originating in the Classical Greek world, under the Principate panegyrics became praise speeches typically addressed to and performed before an incumbent emperor at a variety of official events, such as imperial visitations, anniversaries or the orator's accession to high office.[378] As per Quintilian's first-century treatise, these imperial panegyrics almost always adhered to one of two narrative models; they either gave a chronological account of the subject's life and deeds, or sequentially assigned virtues to the emperor before citing his various achievements as evidence of these.[379] The purpose of all panegyrics, though, was to emphasise 'the celebration of deeds which our hero was the first or only man or at any rate one of the very few to perform'.[380]

The *de facto* example of an extant panegyric is Pliny the Younger's speech of thanks (*gratiarum actio*) to Trajan upon receiving the consulship in 100. It is the longest extant Latin panegyric and comprehensive in its praise, assigning thirty different virtues to Trajan, and was used as a model by later orators.[381] There are few further examples from the Principate, but this is fortunately not an issue for the Late Roman period. A corpus of forty-eight 'secular' prose panegyrics has survived, which span roughly a century between c.289-389.[382] Instead of a single, exemplary speech like Pliny's, this body of literature was addressed to different emperors by numerous speakers, delivered on a variety of occasions and over a prolonged period. Regardless of these variations in time and place though, evident throughout these Late

[378] See Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 1-3, 10-14 for an historical overview of panegyric and its formulaic formation.
[379] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 3.7.10-18 (esp.15-16). See also Menander Rhetor, *Second Treatise* 1, an instructive text on panegyric composition from the late-third or early-fourth century CE that posits a structure highly comparable to that outlined by Quintilian.
[380] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 3.7.16 (trans Russell 2002).
[381] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*. See Noreña 2011: 37 for a useful summary of Pliny's descriptions of what an ideal emperor should be, including all virtues. Its prominence in the Roman literary canon is demonstrated by its inclusion at the beginning of the *Panegyrici Latini* collection, evidently as a point of instruction and inspiration for the various Gallic orators (Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 4).
[382] Omissi 2018: 43 and Appendix 1. There are panegyrics that post-date this period but, as per MacCormack 1981: 6-7, those from beyond the fourth century increasingly shift away from the classical panegyric structure centred on describing characteristics of the emperor and are instead concerned with describing court ceremony. Note that Omissi defines this collection as 'secular – or perhaps more properly, non-Christian' to differentiate them from the distinct genre of Christian works such as the Constantinian orations of Eusebius of Caesarea or the funerary orations of Ambrose of Milan, whose themes significantly differ (also see Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 439-440 and MacCormack 1976: 60-67 on secular and Christian panegyrics as distinct genres). For further discussion on the Christian panegyrics see **§3.2.5** below. While Omissi 2018: 45 does emphasise that these surviving secular orations only represent a tiny sample of the thousands of panegyrics that would have been written and performed over this period, it is fair to consider these surviving texts as reasonably representative given their mix of languages (both Greek and Latin texts survive), that they were written by ten to sixteen different authors, and delivered to eleven different emperors in an array of different cities.

Roman praise speeches is a collection of common ideals that represent a broader political ideology which pervaded the Late Roman period in general.[383] These will form suitable categories of propaganda whose presence would also be worth investigating on the contemporary coinage. Yet this assumes a correlation between the political ideology selected for inclusion in the panegyrics and on the coinage, so we should also consider these panegyrics' points of origin before identifying their core themes.

Who exactly produced these prose panegyrics, and who was their intended audience? Late Roman prose panegyrics were not the direct products of the state, and so were not a medium used to formally announce specific imperial programmes. Of the extant panegyrics, the majority of identifiable authors were professional rhetoricians or philosophers, certainly part of a highly educated cultural elite, but not part of the imperial administration or acting as a direct mouthpiece of the state at the time of their performance.[384] Their point of origin differs from the coinage, whose political messages were selected through a centralised administrative network that deferred to instructions directly from the emperors' *consistoria*.[385]

However, this difference in orientation does not undermine panegyrics as a viable source for understanding contemporary imperial values and rulership ideology. Although not active members of the imperial administration at the time of their speeches, all identifiable orators had held important state offices or had some personal affiliation with the emperors during their careers.[386] Even if composing their praise independently of state oversight, the panegyrists moved in close proximity to the imperial court, remaining well-informed of contemporary events and the current emperors' ideological preferences. This is particularly reflected by the fact that the panegyrics were ephemeral orations whose specific contents were heavily shaped by the current political situation.[387] It is here rather than in the selection of coin iconography

[383] It should be noted that, given this variation, Sabine MacCormack has previously argued these 'panegyrics are not a good basis upon which to generalize', and that 'it is a mistake to extract from them singly or collectively an amalgam of qualities attributable to the late antique 'ideal emperor'' (MacCormack 1976: 54). However, this has been subsequently refuted by an array of literature advocating for the value of panegyric for understanding imperial ideology (see Steinbock 2014: 53-54).

[384] Omissi 2018: 54-56; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 7-8, 28-31. Nixon and Rodgers provide a compelling refutation of MacCormick's earlier suggestion (1976: 55) that the contents of panegyrics were produced under the direct control of the state. The argument of Steinbock (2014: 51-53), which also favours the notion of the direct state production, is too eager to make this assertion at the first signs of correlation between speech and coin, and remains unconvincing in light of Omissi's observations.

[385] See **§1.2** on the central role of the emperor and his 'cabinet' in choosing coin iconography in the Late Roman Empire.

[386] Omissi 2018: 56; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 29. Obvious exceptions to this are Julian as Caesar and the consuls giving a *gratiarum actio*.

[387] For discussions of the panegyrics as ephemeral compositions specifically concerned with court policy and climate contemporary to composition see Omissi 2018: 48-52; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 34-35; MacCormack 1981: 6. The panegyrics of Constantine are excellent examples of this ephemerality, progressing from the Herculian narrative of imperial colleagues Maximian and Constantine in *Pan. Lat.* VII (307), to a post-tetrarchic ideology of Constantinian association with Sol/Apollo in *Pan. Lat.* V (311/312), then with an unspecified personal deity in *Pan. Lat.* XII (313) and *Pan. Lat.* IV (321). There is also the shift from Constantine as born to rule and endowed with virtues through his hereditary connections (*Pan. Lat.* V and *Pan. Lat.* VI), to attestations of Constantine's own achievements following the victory over Maxentius (*Pan. Lat.* XII and *Pan. Lat.* IV). Of further note is Nazarius's

that Barbara Levick's argument – for a group of well-informed individuals trying to garner the emperor's goodwill by praising him in line with his personal preferences – makes more sense.[388] Consequently, panegyrics show us a reverberation back to the emperor and imperial court of the ideologies that the state sought to propagate through its own media.[389] Indicative of this desire to parrot the emperor's ideals back at him are the presentations of divinity in *Pan. Lat.* XII. Here the author tried to capture the shifting religious affiliation of Constantine, which he either did not understand or approve of. The result was the conflicting depiction of Constantine's personal relationship with an anonymous god alongside a more traditional presentation of Constantine still possessing divine attributes himself.[390] The orator's ideals and values were secondary here to the emperor's, which had to be addressed in some manner even if awkward for the panegyrist. The corpus of extant panegyrics effectively forms an echo chamber of state ideology. They are of incredible use as Roman citizens' protracted articulation back to the imperial government of the very notions their ruler sought to espouse, and therefore clearly participated in presenting the same political ideology that we would expect to find on a state-produced mode of communication like coinage.

3.2.2. Late Roman Political Ideology, Panegyrics, and their Deceptive Tropes

Before we identify the elements of imperial rulership ideology that repeatedly underpinned the Late Roman panegyrics, I would also like to consider in more detail the panegyric genre, its tradition of formulaic construction, and how this affected the panegyrics' content. The purpose of this detour is to highlight the tropes of the genre more broadly, so that we can distinguish the composer's blind conformance to structural models and surface-level performative rhetorical flourishes from what actual ideals and virtues received sincere, concentrated attention. Through this critical appraisal, we can ensure the categories will reflect those aspects of imperial rulership ideology genuinely valued by the state. In turn, we will avoid

lack of coverage of contemporary events in *Pan. Lat.* IV, which instead revisited Constantine's defeat of Maxentius. This silence regarding events of the previous eight years, deliberately ignoring the first civil war between Constantine and Licinius, further highlights the sensitivity of the panegyrics to contemporary events, making palpable the cold war between the eastern and western emperors through these omissions (Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 338-342).

[388] Levick 1982; see **§1.2** for discussion of the validity of this argument in relation to selection of coin iconography.

[389] Omissi 2018: 53, 56-57. Also Steinbock 2014 which, even though he erroneously equates both coinage and panegyric to state-production (see n.384), nevertheless demonstrates the close parallel between the political messages of these two media during Diocletian and Maximian's dyarchy. Also see Omissi 2018: 61-63, which denotes how the repetition of panegyrics, their formula and their imperial themes were effective in creating an echo chamber that continuously asserted imperial authority. This was done both through authoritarian model of pushing orator and audience to submit to emperor regularly, as well as alternative less totalitarian interpretation that presents orator and audience as an engaged community shaping and performing the ritual of panegyric that allowed expression of 'that most vital of political fictions in the Roman Empire, that the emperor governed through the *consensus omnium*, 'the consent of all''.

[390] Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 293.

looking for superficial forms of praise on the coinage, whose primary appearance in the panegyrics was necessitated by the parameters specific to that medium.

The first aspect of panegyrics to emphasise is their comprehensive presentation of the emperor as the apogee of humanity. Continuously communicated were assertions that the panegyric's subject was the 'best of emperors',[391] or more specifically the most virtuous individual.[392] Consequently, a wide variety of virtues were mentioned throughout the orations to further attest to this basic premise. Again, this was Pliny's purpose in attributing thirty different virtues to Trajan in his panegyric.[393] The completionist attitude towards the emperor's qualities continued to be a feature of panegyrics in the Late Roman period, and is well captured by Lester Born's summary of all the elements attested in the *Panegyrici Latini*:

> 'He [the emperor] must be noble, wise, brave, dignified, kind, merciful, just, devoted to his people, chaste in his private life, moderate, generous, truthful, prudent, self-restrained, modest. The prince should be a good soldier; show mercy to the enemy…provide for his people in peace; reward the deserving and help the needy; correct public morals, and check the royal expenditures. He should be a leader in mind and example, who is himself hardworking and good'.[394]

We must acknowledge that this exhaustive coverage of imperial virtues was a common conceit of the panegyric genre. Many virtues were simply mentioned in passing and combined to form a rhetorical façade concealing the elements of imperial rulership ideology genuinely valued by the state. Their inclusion was to help enforce the wider image of a most virtuous emperor. Their brief appearances made a collective contribution to this goal rather than providing any significant insight into contemporary Roman political ideology if we consider them in isolation. This is not to say that all these virtues did not have value within the Roman intellectual landscape and that their attribution to the emperor was meaningless. However, despite the occasional incorporation of a great range of virtues, some elements were far more fundamental to the construction of imperial power than others.[395] The process of identifying

[391] See, for example, *Pan. Lat.* X.14.2; *Pan. Lat.* XI.18.5; *Pan. Lat.* IV.4.1, 4.5, 9.5, 16.4.
[392] For example, *Pan. Lat.* IX.20.1, notably describes Constantius I and his imperial colleagues as 'the best masters of all virtues'; *Pan. Lat.* X.14.2 says how Maximian 'offered mutual examples of all the virtues'; and in *Pan. Lat.* II.5.3 Pacatus, in reference to Theodosius I, proclaims that 'the gods gave us this unique man, in whom flourish simultaneously all the virtues'.
[393] See **§3.2.1**, n.381 above.
[394] Born 1934: 23. Note too that Born (1934: 24) also demonstrates the same wide net of ideals occur beyond the *Panegyrici Latini*, in the other extant Late Antique Latin panegyrics of Ausonius, Symmachus and Merobaudes: 'the prince should be generous, brave, merciful, statesmanlike, strict, in his attention to duty, fostering peace and harmony under his rule, kind, affectionate, indulgent where possible, moderate in food and drink, chaste, vigorous, considerate, just, wise in speech, rewarding the good, interested in the sick and needy. The good ruler expects no return in kind for his benefices; let him be approved by his acts; let him share his plenty with the many. Nothing can be enjoyed as "good" if secured through cruelty'.
[395] Noreña 2011 and 2001.

the core categories of propaganda evidenced within the panegyrics thus necessitates careful consideration, to differentiate these from the general noise of numerous other virtues whose inclusion was primarily to bolster the rhetoric of distinguishing the 'best' emperor.

Beyond exclamations of virtues in general, a further trope to be wary of is the presentation of four cardinal virtues. It was a structural device advocated by Menander's instructive treatise and consequently saw repeated use in the Late Roman prose panegyrics.[396] However, as has been argued by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and Carlos Noreña, there was no 'canon' of cardinal virtues that constituted the primary means for evaluating emperors.[397] This is confirmed by examples of the four-virtues trope in the *Panegyrici Latini*, where there was a lack of consistency in the virtues that different orators selected to constitute the quartet.[398] Rather than providing insight into the core values of contemporary political thought, it was a structural feature primarily repeated as an allusion to the four cardinal virtues of Platonic philosophy and therefore meant to advertise the orator's learnedness.[399] Moreover, some of the virtues included in the group of four essential imperial qualities only received nominal coverage. Within the *Panegyrici Latini, iustitia* (justice), for example, one of the four virtues of the Platonic canon and Augustan shield,[400] was continuously mentioned as a matter of course, but these mentions were typically in passing.[401] Its presence was not necessarily indicative of something genuinely important to the image of the contemporary emperor but required as part of the

[396] Menander Rhetor, *Second Treatise* 1.21 advises for the composer of panegyric to 'divide the deeds you are going to praise according to the four virtues (courage, justice, moderation, and intelligence)'. On the consequent repetition of this structuring method in the *Panegyrici Latini* see Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 23.

[397] Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 300-307; Noreña 2011: 61, *contra* Charlesworth 1937; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 23. The arguments of Wallace-Hadrill and Noreña were particularly in opposition to the notion that the virtues of Augustus's Golden Shield (*virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas*) came to form a set of four cardinal virtues comparable to those postulated in Greek philosophy, and which constituted the primary means through which emperors of the Principate were evaluated. On the Golden Shield of Augustus see *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 34.2 (trans. Cooley 2009). For commentary see Cooley 2009: 266-271, as well as Welch 2019. The latter frames the assigning of these virtues by the senate to the emperor as an ideological element specific to the period, part of deliberate attempt to reframe Augustus's *pietas* to express public rather than familial duty, and the emperor as the first citizen. Also denoted here is how such notions soon gave way to an 'emperor as saviour' narrative, indicating the ephemeral nature of the virtues espoused by the Golden Shield.

[398] The rule of four cardinal virtues is a particularly popular formulation in the *Panegyrici Latini*, although the listed virtues were regularly changed and the listings provided the only mention for many of these: *Pan. Lat.* XI.19.2 (*fortitudo, continentia, iustitia, sapientia*); *Pan. Lat.* VIII.19.3-4 (*gravitas, lenitas, verecundia, iustitia*); *Pan. Lat.* IX.8.2 (*continentia, modestia, vigilantia, patientia*); *Pan. Lat.* VII.3.4 and IV.4.1-5 (*continentia, fortitudo*, *iustitia, prudentia*); *Pan. Lat.* VI.6.1 (*misericordia, iustitia, providentia,* and *fortitudo* covered in 6.2-4); *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.4 (*pietas, clementia, pudicitia, divina praecepta*); *Pan. Lat.* III.5.4 (*aequitas*, *temperantia, fortitudo, providentia*); *Pan. Lat.* II.40.3 (*constantia, patientia, prudentia, fortitudo*).

[399] On the four cardinal virtues of Greek philosophy (wisdom/σοφία, courage/ἀνδρεία, temperance/σωφροσύνη, justice/δικαιοσύνη) see Plato, *Republic* 4.427-435 (trans Emlyn-Jones and Preddy 2013).

[400] See n.397 and n.399 above.

[401] As a virtue affiliated with the emperor, or as a benefit of an emperor's action, *iustitita* appears a total of thirteen times in eight of the eleven panegyrics. As a virtue see *Pan. Lat.* X.3.3, 11.3; *Pan. Lat.* XI.19.2; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.19.4; *Pan. Lat.* VII.3.4, 5.1; *Pan. Lat.* VI.4.4; *Pan. Lat.* III.5.4, 21.4; *Pan. Lat.* II.31.3. These references almost entirely appear in a list of virtues, with the examples in *Pan. Lat.* VII and III specifically alluding to the Platonic cardinal virtues. As a benefit of imperial rule see *Pan. Lat.* VI.6.1; *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.2. These are both minor references to the re-establishment of justice within a much larger restoration narrative. *Iustitia* is interestingly also a theme that receives little attention in Pliny's panegyric (see Pliny, *Panegyricus* 56.7, 59.2, 61.7), as per Benoist and Gangloff 2019: 23. Also see Hekster 2020a for notable infrequency of the promotion of *iustitia* as a central aspect of imperial power in visual media, and especially on coinage.

allusion to a Greek intellectual tradition. We must recognise that some of the four virtues cited may only be present as a linguistic device, not the collective attestation of the principal aspects that underpinned imperial rulership ideology.

3.2.3. The Core Propaganda Categories of the *Panegyrici Latini*

The point to take away from the above consideration of the panegyrics is that the recurrent mentioning of a virtue or ideal did not mean that it formed a foundational tenet of contemporary political values. As well as being potentially useful sources for identifying contemporary rulership ideology, the panegyrics were also rhetorical compositions with their own tropes, whose purpose was to provide an unrestrained eulogising of imperial grandeur while simultaneously reflecting the performer's intellectual prowess. With these issues in mind, a careful reading of the *Panegyrici Latini* has been undertaken to identify those themes that orators most frequently sought to associate with their rulers, those flattering aspects they thought the emperor most wanted to hear. These eleven Gallic panegyrics have been used as they provide a useful sample, given that they are a series of speeches by different writers addressing different emperors, being performed at a variety of locations and official occasions over the course of roughly a century (c.289-389).[402] We may anticipate that the more entrenched themes common to most of these orations were those features also common to the political ideology held to by the Late Roman state. Indeed, when we look beyond the rhetorical veneer of general imperial virtuosity, certain topics recur as the main aspects of these praise narratives. These topics have been reduced to fourteen categories, which we can also look for on the coinage. These propaganda categories are:[403]

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[402] See Nixon and Rodgers 1994 for discussions of the composers, occasion, dating and historical background of each of the *Panegyrici Latini*.

[403] The below footnotes are not exhaustive records of all references to the themes under discussion but mean to indicate the prevalence of each identified category. However, line reference examples have not been provided for *virtus* or *victoria* since these concepts are so proliferous throughout the works. For an overview of the *Panegyrici Latini*, including discussion of the prevalence of *virtus* and *victoria*, see Seager 1983. One topic not listed below, but which recurred in the panegyrics, is *felicitas.* This was the corresponding benefit derived from the emperor's *pietas*, which delivered imperial military success and was evidence of divine support. Within the *Panegyrici Latini* the benefits of *felicitas* and *fortuna*, previously viewed as separate aspects by Noreña (2011: 136-140, 165-174), coalesced to present the same values. For examples of this theme see *Pan. Lat.* X.5.2; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.6.2, 7.2, 13.1, 18.6; *Pan. Lat.* IX.4.1, 8.1, 10.1; *Pan. Lat.* VII.2.2, 7.2, 12.1; *Pan. Lat.* VI.6.1, 18.3; *Pan. Lat.* V.2.3, 8.5; *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.3, 3.1, 6.4, 8.3, 9.3; *Pan. Lat.* III.9.1,14.6. It has not been included as a category here because of its general absence from the reverse-types of Late Roman imperial coinage. This was likely somewhat due to its near permanent attestation on the obverses of the coinage, expressed as part of the 'PF' (*pius felix/felicitas*) epithet in imperial titulature. 'PF' was a combined appellation that first appeared on the gold coinage of Commodus (RIC III Commodus 225), and later Elagabalus (RIC IV Elagabalus 175A), then reappearing on some radiate types of Trebonnianus Gallus in Antioch (251-253) and Aemilian in *Rome* (253), before being used across the empire from Valerian and Gallienus's reigns. Its usage dramatically increased from the tetrarchic period and became a near permanent feature of obverse titulature on most Late Roman coinage, as indicated by Betjes's coin type analysis (2022: 324, graph 3.5). Regarding the Late Roman base-metal coinage, of the thirty-eight different Augustus obverse legend variations listed in LRBC I (324-346) only twelve bare the abbreviations PF. However, of the sixty-six Augustus obverse legend variations listed for my period in LRBC II (346-450) fifty-four bear the abbreviation PF. If we discount some of the exceedingly rare legends (CONSTANT-IVS AVGVSTVS; D N MAGNENTIO - PERPETVO AVG; MAG MAGNE-NTIVS AVG; FL NEP CONST-ANTINVS AVG; D N GRATIAN-VS AVGG AVG; D

— ***Virtus***: Manliness, courage or military prowess in general. This term was continuously applied to the emperor and sometimes to the army/soldiers. When affiliated with the emperor, it referred to both his personal ability as a skilled and sometimes savage fighter, and as a talented commander. Another recurrent term that similarly communicated ideas of military 'might' was *fortitudo*. This was not an alternative concept but simply a synonym.[404] Its use provided the most consistent example of vocabulary variation within the Latin secular panegyrics when communicating a key theme. This variation of vocabulary was not paralleled on the coinage though, which consistently referenced *virtus* in inscriptions.

— ***Victoria***: Closely associated with the insistence of the emperor's *virtus* was the presentation of *victoria* (victory), the associated benefit of imperial rule derived from the practical implementation of the virtue of *virtus*. The interpretation of *victoria* within this thesis then is that it was a fundamentally militaristic benefit.[405] While occasionally presented in the panegyric as a deity and entity in and of itself, as in visual media, *victoria* more often appeared in panegyrics as a prescribed achievement of the specific emperor being praised.

— ***Restitutor* Narratives**: Beyond the general assertions of imperial military victory, the panegyrics also recurrently depicted the emperor as a great restorer, re-establishing

N GRATIANVS AVGG AVG; D N ARCA-DI AVG; D N HONO-RI AVG; deduced due to their appearance on a maximum of three base-metal RIC types) this becomes fifty-four of fifty-eight legends. There was evidently a further increased uptake of PF abbreviation in the imperial titulature of base-metal coin obverses after Constantine I. Also see Kent 1987: ix, though his interpretation that the P should be interpreted as *perpetuus* has been consequently refuted by Grierson and Mays 1992: 77. This 'PF' trend lasted beyond my period of study, while under Leo I (457-474) preference seemingly shifted to asserting the emperor's perpetual rule (*perpetuus*, through various forms: PERPET, PRPET, PERPE, PERP, PER, PPA). PP AVG then became a standard feature of imperial titular into the Byzantine period. By comparison, the obverse inscriptions of the Caesars strictly associated them with the title *Nobilissimus* through the abbreviation NOB, though with no Caesars after Julian there would have been an increasing predominance of the 'PF' inscription on all base-metal coinage post-363.

[404] For earlier equation of *virtus*/*fortitudo* see Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* II.XVIII.43: 'the term virtus is derived from 'man'; a man's chief quality is fortitude' (*appellata est enim ex viro virtus; viri autem propria maxime est fortitudo*).

[405] This martial interpretation of *victoria* takes a contrary position to many other previous studies, which have stressed the development of a general 'theology of victory' that encompassed any and all aspects of imperial success (see Gagé 1933; Fears 1981: 737-739, n.2; Noreña 2011: 147, n.157; Betjes 2022: 157-158). However, my reading of *victoria* is that it was the benefit of imperial rule always underpinned by the notion that the emperor possessed the capacity to successfully enact violence against and defeat his enemies. This is continuously presented in the *Panegyrici Latini*, where the victories cited were expressed within a framework of realism, as triumphs over people or persons, over 'barbarians' and 'tyrants'. Intangible victory was to be obtained through physically overcoming an opponent. This intrinsic military character of victory is certainly borne out on the Late Roman base-metal coinage. Into the Late Roman period, the figure of Victory was less frequently used to celebrate specific campaigns or wars, and instead rigorously asserted as a constant companion to the emperor, an aura of success (Betjes 2022: 157-158, 169-173, 194-196, 222-229). Yet this sense of the emperor perpetually possessing victory was still rooted in the notion of physical, military action. It is most telling, for example, that on the various late-third century iconographic types that depicted Jupiter bestowing victory upon the emperor (see types **[1, 125, 140, 161, 186, 191]**), the emperor was always depicted wearing the military costume: a cuirass, *paludamentum*, and sometimes holding a *parazonium* (Galavaris 1958; Stevenson et. al. 1889: 600). The point was to emphasise the emperor in a specifically military capacity as he received Victory.

Roman order, which consequently made him greater than his predecessors.[406] Such narratives were often expressed through the concepts of *salus* and *libertas* as beneficial products derived from the emperor's *virtus*.[407] These *restitutor* narratives were primarily militarily orientated, focusing on the emperor's defeat of barbarians and usurpers. However, the concept also received occasional application to civic restoration, which had some exceptional yet interesting parallels on the coinage.[408]

- ***Pietas**:* This was a central and complex Roman virtue referring to 'duty' in a range of contexts.[409] However, this virtue's application developed over the fourth century and saw an increased use specifically in religious contexts.[410] On this basis, I have distinguished here between *pietas* in the different ways it overlaps with *religio* and *officium*:[411]
    - **Religious *Pietas***: This refers to the emperor's correct religious activity, as demonstrative of his working relationship with a deity/deities, which emphasised imperial duty as conceived within the framework of traditional Roman religion.[412]
    - **Civic *Pietas***: This refers to the emperor's tireless and selfless performance of mundane duties on behalf of and for the benefit of the Roman polity, not for his benefit.[413] Especially important here are the repeated citations of the emperors'

[406] On being greater than predecessors note, for example, the presentations of Constantine the restorer outdoing all previous emperors, including his father from whom in part his own legitimacy was derived (*Pan. Lat.* XII.24.4; *Pan. Lat.* IV.14.6). In turn Mamertinus presented previous emperors (including Constantine I) as having fostered corruption and secured power through wealth, while Julian was the new saviour, a truly virtuous emperor who was restoring virtuous governance of the empire (*Pan. Lat.* III, esp. 11.1). There were also occasional references made to the instability of the Gallic Empire as a means of presenting recovery under the current emperor (*Pan. Lat.* VIII.10.1, *Pan. Lat.* IX.4.1, *Pan. Lat.* V.4.2-3). For standard presentation and emphasis on restoration of the Roman polity see *Pan. Lat.* X.3.1; *Pan. Lat.* XI.5.3, 15.3; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.1.3, 1.5, 10.4, 17.2, 21.1; *Pan. Lat.* IX.17.5, 18.2, 18.5, 19.4; *Pan. Lat.* VII.10.2-5, 11.4; *Pan. Lat.* VI.2.2, 5.3-4, 6.1, 7.5, 10.5, 21.3; *Pan. Lat.* V.4.3, 12.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.1.1, 7.7, 11.1; *Pan. Lat.* IV.3.3, 17.2, 33.6; *Pan. Lat.* III.3.1, 7.1-3, 15.1, 23.4; *Pan. Lat.* II.2.4, 30.5, 47.6.

[407] *Pan. Lat.* XI.3.6; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.1.4.2-4, 8.1, 9.6, 10.1, 18.4, 19.1-2; *Pan. Lat.* VII.2.5, 4.3, 8.3, 9.4, 11.1; *Pan. Lat.* VI.6.1; *Pan. Lat.* V.7.6, 14.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.4, 3.1-2, 7.3, 10.5, 12.2, 12.4, 19.4, 20.1; *Pan. Lat.* IV.2.2, 6.5, 19.3, 27.5; *Pan. Lat.* III.2.2, 30.4; *Pan. Lat.* II.1.2, 2.2-4, 20.5-6, 31.1. See also Walser 1955: 364-366 on connection between *securitas* and *libertas* in the Late Roman period.

[408] *Pan. Lat.* IX.3.2-4.1, 5.1, 6.4, 14.4, 16.5; *Pan. Lat.* VI.22.4; *Pan. Lat.* V.4.4; *Pan. Lat.* IV.35.3-4; *Pan. Lat.* III.9.4, 10.1. On parallels in coinage see Woods 2017 for civic renewal expressed on the PROVIDENTIAE AVGG/CAESS Gate types **[29, 30]**, as well as discussion of the REPARATIO REIPVB type **[90]** in **§4.2.4.2**.

[409] For an overview of *pietas* see Noreña 2011: 71-77.

[410] Seager 1983: 163-164.

[411] On this useful formulation of the different concepts with which *pietas* overlaps, such as *religio* and *officium*, see Noreña 2011: 71 and Hellegouarc'h 1963: 276-279. Noreña 2011: 71-73 also places great emphasis on the importance of familial *pietas* which I have captured within the category of 'dynasty'.

[412] *Pan. Lat.* XI.11; *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.5, 8.5. 22.4; *Pan. Lat.* V.14.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.1.1, 2.4-5, 3.3, 4.1, 4.4, 11.4; *Pan. Lat.* IV.2.6, 12.1, 15.2-3, 16.1-2, 26.1; *Pan. Lat.* III.15.2; *Pan. Lat.* II.6.4, 29.3-4, 31.3. See **§2.3.5** for the use of this term to distinguish between the religious conceptions of these secular panegyrics and 'faith' (*fides*) as the central element of Christian texts.

[413] *Pan. Lat.* X.4.4, 11.5, 13.5, 14.4; *Pan. Lat.* XI.6, 11.3-5, 18.5, 19.2; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.5.4, 13.3, 19.3; *Pan. Lat.* IX.19.2; *Pan. Lat.* VII.3.1, 5.1, 7.4, 9.2-3, 11.5-7, 13.3; *Pan. Lat.* VI.7.4, 8.6, 14.2, 20.1-3, 23.1; *Pan. Lat.* V.2, 7.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.9.3-4, 11.2, 26.2; *Pan. Lat.* IV.8.5, 10.1, 13.3, 19.3, 26.4-5; *Pan. Lat.* III.1.2, 3.3, 12.1-3; *Pan. Lat.* II.2.1, 3.5, 10.1, 11.1-3, 13.4.

continuous movement, the emperor as an active performer of deeds, or his alarming speed.[414]

— ***Providentia***: The emperor's foresight, again capturing his unique relation with divinity above normal humans, and as further evidence of his good statesmanship that ensured Roman order, the natural way of things.[415]

— ***Concordia****:* Concord between imperial colleagues as a further means of securing imperial order.[416] This notion of imperial concord and associated stability was similarly encapsulated by *fides* as the trust and loyalty between imperial colleagues,[417] or functioned in a hierarchical capacity as trust and loyalty of the army and citizenry to the emperor.[418]

— **Dynasty**: The assertions of dynasty, support for imperial heirs and expressions of familial *pietas*,[419] framed as the best methods for perpetuating the existing order.[420] Although not a particular feature of the panegyrics, dynasty was often promoted on the contemporary coinage through the benefit of *spes* (hope).[421]

— ***Aeternitas* Messages**: Messages of preservation that specifically emphasised the eternal continuation of the contemporary emperor's reign, the invincibility of the emperor and the continued existence of Rome. These ideas were frequently presented through the terms *aeternitas* (often referring to the city of Rome) and *perpetuitas* (particularly associated with the emperor). These messages were frequently affiliated with presentations of dynasty in the secular panegyrics. Support for the children of the Constantinian and Theodosian dynasties especially was accompanied by calls for the incumbent father emperors to rule forever.[422] Also

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[414] *Pan. Lat.* XI.2.4, 3.2, 3.4, 3.9, 4.4, 8; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.3.2, 6.1, 13.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.9.3-6, 22.1-3. *Pan. Lat.* IV.3.4, 6.5, 33.1; *Pan. Lat.* III.6.4, 7.1. As a point of contrast, see Amminanus Marcellinus, *History* 16.10.9-11 and 21.16.7 on public appearances of Constantius II that encapsulate the juxtaposing ideal of an inhuman emperor depicted through lack of movement or exertion. The contention and co-existence between two imperial ideals of the diligent, active emperor and superior passive emperor existing above petty human affairs is captured in *Pan. Lat.* XII.9.6.

[415] *Pan. Lat.* X.5.2; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.6.2, 7.2, 13.1, 18.6; *Pan. Lat.* IX.4.1, 8.1, 10.1; *Pan. Lat.* VII.2.2, 7.2, 12.1; *Pan. Lat.* VI.6.1, 18.3; *Pan. Lat.* V.2.3, 8.5; *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.3, 3.1, 6.4, 8.3, 9.3; *Pan. Lat.* III.9.1,14.6.

[416] *Pan. Lat.* X.9-11.5, 13; *Pan. Lat.* XI.6.3, 19.4; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.20.5; *Pan. Lat.* VII.1.4, 9.2, 13.3; *Pan. Lat.* VI.1.4, 23.1; *Pan. Lat.* V.3.2; *Pan. Lat.* IV.9.2, 9.5, 10.2-4, 13.5; *Pan. Lat.* III.3.2, 5.2.

[417] *Pan. Lat.* VII.9.2; *Pan. Lat.* VI.16.1.

[418] *Pan. Lat.* VIII.7.3; *Pan. Lat.* III.6.1.

[419] Noreña 2011: 71-73.

[420] *Pan. Lat.* VII.14; *Pan. Lat.* VI.2-4; *Pan. Lat.* V.2.5, 4.2; *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.3, 26.5; *Pan. Lat.* IV.4.1-2, 5.5-6, 14.6, 36.2, 37; *Pan. Lat.* II.45.3. Note that the language of the dyarchy and tetrarchy also expressed its hierarchy and continuity through the familial relations of emperors as brothers (*Pan. Lat.* X.1.5, 10.6; *Pan. Lat.* XI.7.7; *Pan. Lat.* VII.11.4; *Pan. Lat.* VI.15.6), or father and son (*Pan. Lat.* VIII.13.2-3; *Pan. Lat.* IX.8.1).

[421] Noreña 2011: 110 accepts the dynastic component of *spes* but rejects this as a benefit of imperial rule. However, the panegyric authors present imperial dynasty as a means of maintaining internal order, and dynastic succession is clearly envisioned within this rhetorical framework as a benefit to the Roman polity rather than as a personal desire of the current ruler.

[422] On general presentation of the emperor as immortal, unconquerable or perpetual see *Pan. Lat.* XI.3.2, 3.7, 6-8, 9.4; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.2.2, 3.1-3, 5.4, 7.3, 9.6, 13.3-4, 14.3, 15.2, 15.5, 17, 20.5, 21; *Pan. Lat.* IX.8.2, 9.2, 16.4, 21.2;

scattered throughout these works was an emphasis on the Roman polity as an eternal political formation.[423]

— ***Saeculum Aureum***:[424] This refers to all other ways that messages of preservation, stability and continuity were promoted, primarily through the emperor as defender or conservator of the state, or through the non-material benefits derived from his actions, most notable of which was *securitas* (particularly affiliated with the Roman polity).[425]

— ***Euergesia***: Encapsulated here are the specific references to the material benefits derived from an emperor's activities or the 'socio-economic achievements accomplished by the emperor'.[426]

— **Elevation**: This covers 'all forms of representation placing the emperor or members of the imperial family beyond the human ranks'.[427]

Pan. Lat. VII.1.1, 2.2, 2.5, 8.9, 12.6, 13.3, 14.5, *Pan. Lat.* VI.1.4, 8.4, 12.1; *Pan. Lat.* V.1.3, 8.2; *Pan. Lat.* XII.15.4, 26.4-5; *Pan. Lat.* IV.2.6, 18.4; *Pan. Lat.* III.28.4, 30.1; *Pan. Lat.* II.10.1.

[423] For example, *Pan. Lat.* VII.2.2 and *Pan. Lat.* X.1.4.

[424] This theme is an adaption of the category by the same name as defined by Manders (2012: 43). The main point of adaption is that, for both the fourth century panegyrics and coinage, the focus is less on the plethora of conventional abstract benefits of the principate, as per Noreña 2011: 108 (to which Manders' grouping primarily looks to capture) but focused on stability, often in the form of *securitas*. Note too that presentation of certain abstract themes have also been isolated from this category to better capture their relevance: *concordia* as a category in its own right; *libertas* and *salus* moved to *restitutor* narratives; and *spes* primarily grouped to the category of dynasty.

[425] For examples of security as maintenance of existing stability see *Pan. Lat.* VIII.3.2; *Pan. Lat.* VII.1.4; *Pan. Lat.* VI.8.1; *Pan. Lat.* XII.2.6-3.1; *Pan. Lat.* IV.2.6; *Pan. Lat.* II.45.1, 45.4. Note however, that *securitas* as a benefit was not exclusively used as an expression of continuity, but also sometimes appeared in conjunction restoration narratives. For further discussion on the decision to assign *securitas* to this category when working with the coinage see Appendix 5, n.97.

[426] This is a category that has been directly adapted from Manders's iconographic analysis (2012: 44) but whose presence has then been verified as another recurrent feature of the panegyrics. On reference in the panegyrics to imperial success leading to physical benefits for the empire, especially crop fertility, see, for example, *Pan. Lat.* X.11.3; *Pan. Lat.* XI.14.3-4, 15.2-4; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.21.1-2; *Pan. Lat.* VI.22.2-7; *Pan. Lat.* V.13.4-6; *Pan. Lat.* IV.38.4. This idea of high crop yields as a benefit of imperial action is also used extensively as a metaphor, as per *Pan. Lat.* V.10.4; *Pan. Lat.* III.22.1-5.

[427] Again, this is another category that has been adopted wholesale from Manders's work (2012: 45). Its presence is nevertheless clear in all the Late Roman panegyrics since their very premise is to elevate the emperor above his subjects. The necessity to assert the subject of the panegyrics' superiority through their achievement of unique feats or unique right to rule is notably attested in both Quintilian's (*The Orator's Education* 3.7.16) and Menander Rhetor's (*Second Treatise* 1.8) treatises on panegyric composition. Furthermore, the continuous listing of virtues also attests to the concept of elevation by insistence that the emperor was the *most* virtuous figure (see **§3.2.2**, n.391-392). As per the exempla of Pliny's *Panegyricus* (see **§3.2.1**, n.381), the emperor was shown to possess all the important virtues even if seemingly conflicting, effectively being superhuman in comparison to normal good people who may demonstrate a few virtues. This extension of the virtue framework to wider society is an underlying theme of the *Panegyrici Latini,* since nearly all the orations start with garish self-deprecation regarding their composer's unworthiness and dubious oratorical skill to deliberately present the possession of the virtue of modesty (*modestia*). The most concerted presentation of the orator's own virtuosity is in Claudius Mamertinus's *gratiarum actio* to Julian (*Pan. Lat. III*). Here Mamertinus asserts his taking of the consulship was compelled by his sense of duty (*pietas*) (1.2, 17). Moreover, his own lack of greed and his *gravitas* make him ideal for public office, in contrast to the vices and injustice prevalent amongst other governors and soldiers (1.4). This modelling of virtuous administrator versus sinful administrator is directly comparable to the model of virtuous emperor versus impious, wicked tyrant that is a general feature when discussing usurpers in panegyrics (see, for example, *Pan. Lat.* XII.3-4 where damnation of Maxentius provides important juxtaposition to the praise of Constantine). Mamertinus's focus on Julian as an excellent administrator and restorer of meritocracy over plutocracy are the primary themes of this panegyric. By focusing on these civic virtues specifically, such as Julian's fairness, generosity, and foresight, while giving considerably less attention to Julian's military prowess (see Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 390), Mamertinus constructs a narrative that not only praises the emperor but justifies his own elevation to consul, continuously emphasising how he too is virtuous if he has been elevated to high office by the most virtuous emperor.

— ***Gloria***: This refers to the glory, renown, or fame of an individual, and appeared as a recurrently referenced but unquantified metric. However, just like virtues, the emperor was distinguished from his subjects by possessing more glory than them.[428] It provided a further dimension to the model of virtues and benefits, being the thing that was obtained through the deeds performed by virtuous individuals.[429] Thus an emperor was the most virtuous, and by performing deeds that demonstrated his virtue the Roman polity gained specific benefits, such as security, or freedom, while the emperor himself gained glory. Although the term was used to refer to fame or glory in general, it predominantly appeared in association with imperial military success.[430]

— **Imperial Beneficence**: A final element recurrent in the panegyrics was a desire to assert the dual nature of the emperor, not only as a mighty warrior who smites his enemies but as a compassionate statesman towards his fellow Romans. This was primarily presented through his merciful actions towards defeated native enemies (*clementia*, occasionally *misericordia*),[431] as well as personal generosity and beneficent engagement with his subjects (*beneficium,*[432] *liberalitas,*[433] *amicitia,*[434] and *indulgentia).*[435]

3.2.4. Continuity Between the Propaganda Categories of Latin and Greek Panegyrics

These fourteen key categories embody the core aspects of imperial propaganda which recur throughout the eleven speeches of the *Panegyrici Latini*. Yet points of commonality are perhaps to be expected in the *Panegyrici Latini*, given its collated format as a corpus of Gallic

[428] *Pan. Lat.* IV.16.2 and *Pan. Lat.* III.11.1. See n.427 above on the emperor as the 'most virtuous' person.
[429] This is best presented in by *Pan. Lat.* IV.5.6: 'his numerous virtues advance on no single road, but all lead to the same end of glory' (*Non simplici quidem itinere numerosae eius virtutes ingrediuntur, sed omnia ad eundem gloriae exitum ferunt*).
[430] See *Pan. Lat.* X.3.4, 4.4, 5.4, 8.5; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.5.2, 10.4, 14.2, 17.3; *Pan. Lat.* IX.9.1; *Pan. Lat.* VI.3.3, 13.1; *Pan. Lat.* XII.15.1, 25.1; *Pan. Lat.* IV.17.2, 31.2, 32.2, 37.3; *Pan. Lat.* III.3.1; *Pan. Lat.* II.8.1, 10.3, 23.4, 33.4 for use in association with military success. See *Pan. Lat.* X.2.2; *Pan. Lat.* XI.19.6; *Pan. Lat.* IX.3.1, 4.1, 6.5, 12.2, 14.4; *Pan. Lat.* VII.1.4; *Pan. Lat.* XII.20.2; *Pan. Lat.* IV.16.5; *Pan. Lat.* III.11.1, 22.5; *Pan. Lat.* II.7.1, 27.5 for use in reference to other non-military contexts. Note that many of the non-military contexts come from *Pan. Lat.* IX and III, the two panegyrics which focused more on civic virtues.
[431] *Pan. Lat.* XI.5.3; *Pan. Lat.* VIII.7.3, 19.3; *Pan. Lat.* IX.14.5, 21.2; *Pan. Lat.* VII.4.4; *Pan. Lat.* VI.5.3, 6.1, 10.4; *Pan. Lat.* V.2.2, 5.3, 5.6, 21.1; *Pan. Lat.* XII.4.4, 5.6, 6.1, 7.7, 12.1, 13.3 20.2; *Pan. Lat.* IV.3.3, 4.5, 8.1, 9.2, 21.2, 22.2, 33.2; *Pan. Lat.* II.24.2, 31.3, 34.4, 43.4, 44.2-3, 45.4. One specific aspect of presenting *clementia/misericordia* worthy of further comment is the imagery of a compassionate, weeping emperor, emphasising his accessibility and emotional connection with his subjects: *Pan. Lat.* V.7.1, 9.
[432] *Pan. Lat.* X.3.1; *Pan. Lat.* IX.15.5; *Pan. Lat.* VII.1.2; *Pan. Lat.* VI.14.2, 20.3; *Pan. Lat.* V.1.1, 1.4, 10.4, 13.6; *Pan. Lat.* IV.35; *Pan. Lat.* III.1.1-2, 9.1, 22.1, 31.3, 32.1-2; *Pan. Lat.* II.9.3, 17.4, 18.2-3, 19.1-2
[433] *Pan. Lat.* IX.3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 9.2, 11.2, 19.1; *Pan. Lat.* V.10.4, 11.2, 12.1, 14.1; *Pan. Lat.* XII.15.1; *Pan. Lat.* IV.33.4; *Pan. Lat.* III.10.2, 12.1-3, 18.2-6, 22.3; *Pan. Lat.* II.36.3. On *liberalitas* as an expression of imperial generosity see Noreña 2011: 84-90.
[434] *Pan. Lat.* III.16-17, 18.4, 21.2, 25.3, 26.1, 26.5; *Pan. Lat.* II.16.
[435] *Pan. Lat.* IX.6.1, *Pan. Lat.* V.1.3; *Pan. Lat.* IV.26.5; *Pan. Lat.* III.12.1

orations, in which the later writers likely had access to the earlier speeches.[436] Questions may then be raised as to whether these categories were features specific to either a Latin western, or even a Gallic, rhetorical tradition. In anticipation of such queries, I will briefly extend this survey to incorporate the Greek prose panegyrics. The purpose here is to attest to the universality of the above-defined propaganda categories, showing that the panegyrists of the Greek-speaking eastern empire operated within the same conceptual landscape as the Latin west. It will vindicate that we are discussing a common pan-imperial Roman political ideology that it is appropriate to look for on the coinage.

The Greek secular panegyrics provide a slightly more disparate body of texts compared to their Latin counterparts, making generalisation more difficult, yet many of the themes identified above continued to be espoused.[437] In some cases topic, rhetoric and structure was so similar to the Latin panegyrics that the language of composition was the only significant differentiating feature.[438] Overt discussion of virtues (ἀρεταί) as the means of evaluating emperors was directly comparable to Latin panegyrics.[439] So too do we continue to find reference to the structural trope of four cardinal virtues.[440] Similarly presented was the emperor's dual nature of the mighty, victorious warrior emperor and beneficent statesman,[441] while often the deeds of war rather than peacetime formed the greater part of these orations.[442] This was especially reflected in Themistius's *Oration* 15 (381), which deliberately promoted Theodosius I's civic virtues of justice, mercy, generosity and the like as of greater importance than his military capabilities. Here the work's conceit, of deliberately subverting the elements prioritised for praise, indicated the prevailing martial preoccupation of many other Greek panegyrists.[443]

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[436] Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 3-8.
[437] Noreña 2011: 54-55.
[438] This is especially evident in Julian *Oration* 1.1-5D, which clearly and overtly follows the panegyric structure advised by Menander (Wright 1913: 2-3), much like many of the Gallic orators, and even makes reference to 'the rules of panegyric' (τῶν ἐπαίνων νομός) (5B) by which he must abide.
[439] On direct discussion of virtues as a means of evaluating emperors see, for example, Libanius, *Oration* 59.5-8, 27, 166; Libanius, *Oration* 19.65; Libanius, *Oration* 20.50; Julian, *Oration* 1.4A-5B, 6C, 11D, 32B, 45C, 49A; Julian, *Oration* 2.52D, Themistius, *Oration* 1.5-6, 8a; Themistius *Oration* 6.72c, 73c, 78d; Themistius *Oration* 14.182b-c, 183a; Themistius, *Oration* 15.195d-196a, 197c.
[440] Libanius, *Oration* 59.121-125; Julian, *Oration* 1.10C, 16C, 16D.
[441] Libanius, *Oration* 59; Libanius *Oration* 19.16-22, 65; Julian, *Oration* 1 in general, but especially 1.1A; Themistius, *Oration* 3.42c-d, 45b-d; Themistius, *Oration* 15. A feature of the Greek secular panegyrics is the greater credence given to justice/δίκαιος, which is more systematically associated with imperial beneficence and moral rulership (Libanius *Oration* 59.49; Julian *Oration* 1.48B-49A; Themistius *Oration* 6.76c; Themistius *Oration* 15.187a-b, 189a-d). This virtue could be drawn out as another potential propaganda category, yet has not been because of its total absence from the coin iconography (see Hekster 2020a).
[442] Lieu and Montserrat 1996: 106. Libanius's *Orations* 19 and 20 provide examples of panegyrics in which military exploits are in fact almost entirely absent, yet it is a very specific subject matter that determines this. Both are concerned with the riots in Antioch (Libanius's home city), so focus on celebrating Theodosius's statecraft, clemency and generosity towards the city. These are directly comparable to *Pan. Lat.* XI with its own specific subject matter of praising Constantius I's generosity to the panegyrist's home city of Autun. Moreover, these panegyrics also continue to perpetuate the standard pattern of emperors devastating barbarians and usurpers while forgiving and justly dealing with the transgressions of their Roman subjects, again also a feature persistent in the *Panegyrici Latini* (Seager 1983: 163; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 23)
[443] As a point of direct comparison, Themistius's *Oration* 14, which was addressed to Theodosius I upon his accession to imperial office only two years prior (379), notably focused on praising the emperor as restorer of a

It was Themistius, unusual in his originality, who arguably departed most significantly from the traditional formulae and contents of the Latin panegyrics.[444] Most notable was his unique strategy of directly addressing imperial Christianity and seeking to reconcile it with central values of Hellenic philosophy and Christian thought, particularly through emphasising the virtue of *philanthropia* ('love of mankind') and the emperor's embodiment of this.[445] Nevertheless, his innovative approach was still underpinned by an adherence to expressing many of the core themes identified in the Latin panegyrics, such as the military prowess discussed above; *concordia* between imperial colleagues;[446] and *restitutor* narratives;[447] as well as the ideology of divinely-bestowed imperial rule and the emperor's connection to the granting deity (religious *pietas*).[448] Even when innovation was demonstrated by one of the period's most famous writers, the core imperial values still retained a persistent presence.

Conversely, Libanius's *Oration* 59 (346-348),[449] in praise of Constantius II and Constans, is particularly demonstrative of continuity, and possible direct interaction, between the Latin and Greek secular panegyrics. Libanius's depiction of the deceased Constantine I emphasised the emperor's personal divinity *and* his special relationship with an anonymous superior deity, analogous to the contradictory presentations of imperial divine status in the earlier *Pan. Lat.* XII (313) and *Pan. Lat.* IV (321).[450] Moreover, Libanius's brief coverage of Constantine did not fail to mention the defeat of Maxentius and the 'liberation' of Rome as the emperor's primary achievement, again echoing the core concerns of *Pan. Lat.* XII and *Pan. Lat.* IV. Libanius even included the literary juxtaposition of order-bringing, virtuous, legitimate emperor versus the chaos-sowing, viceful and tyrannical usurper.[451] Coverage of Constantine I's civil wars with Licinius also remained absent from *Oration* 59, much like in *Pan. Lat.* IV, despite Constantine's ultimate triumph two decades prior by the time of Libanius's composition. The correlation between *Oration* 59, *Pan. Lat.* XII and *Pan. Lat.* IV is sometimes so close to suggest Libanius was drawing directly from these earlier Gallic panegyrics, just as Pacatus later would, despite

golden age specifically secured through military exploits. So too, Julian's panegyrics to Constantius II include the contradiction of attempts to deviate from the emperor's military deeds only to relapse into such a preoccupation. Julian, *Oration* 1.5a-b asserted the importance of Constantius II's virtues over his achievements, but most of the oration was centred around discussion of Constantius's military exploits (17C-42D), occasionally broken up by fleeting focus on civic virtues, such as imperial concord (19A-20C), clemency (38B) or beneficence (41A-B). Moreover, Julian *Oration* 2 systematically equated Constantius II's deeds with various Homeric heroes, in which the emperor's military successes again predominated.

[444] See Heather and Moncur 2001: 57 on Themistius's innovative style, particularly in *Orations* 1 and 3.

[445] Heather and Moncur 2001: 61-68.

[446] Themistius, *Oration* 6; Themistius, *Oration* 14.183a; Themistius, *Oration* 15.194d-197c.

[447] Themistius, *Oration* 3.44a-b, 46d-47c; Themistius, *Oration* 14.180c-d; Themistius, *Oration* 15.197a-c.

[448] Heather and Moncur 2001: 3-4. This is a recurrent theme throughout many of Themistius's orations, and is particularly prevalent in *Oration* 6.

[449] On the date of this oration see Greenlee 2020: 143, n.53.

[450] Libanius, *Oration* 59.16, 27, 48, 58-59, 72. The recurrent term used for the anonymous deity is 'Almighty' (κρείσσων), comparable to the anonymised 'deus', 'divina mens' (divine mind) or 'divinum numen' (divine power) in *Pan. Lat.* XII. (2.4, 2.5, 4.1, 13.2, 16.2, 26.1) and 'deus' or 'quibus…divinum…numen' ('that divine will') in *Pan. Lat.* IV (7.3, 7.4, 16.2, 18.5, 26.1, 28.1).

[451] Libanius, *Oration* 59.19-21, compared to *Pan. Lat.* XII.3-4.

Libanius's greater dislocation in space and language.[452] Alternatively, we may deduce that the political ideology of Constantine's court was so embedded that Libanius continued to echo the same narrative that we have already witnessed being peddled by more contemporary Latin orators in Trier (*Pan. Lat.* XII) and Rome (*Pan. Lat.* IV).[453] Either way, we find the same core ideals being espoused by both Latin and Greek secular panegyrics, operating within the same wider literary tradition, demonstrative of a broader correlation with the primary difference being merely the language of composition.

3.2.5. The Christian Panegyrics

It is clear then that the Late Antique Latin and Greek secular panegyrics participated in the same intellectual system and were dominated by the same recurrent elements of imperial propaganda, which have then been largely captured in the fourteen categories devised above. However, there is one feature of Late Roman coinage that the secular panegyrics provide little insight into: the emergence of Christianity. As mentioned in **§3.2.4**, Themistius alone of the secular panegyrists sought to directly address the topic of emerging imperial Christianity, while other panegyrics provided only euphemistic references to an unspecified deity.[454] To redress this intentional omission, we will finally consider the small body of 'Christian' panegyrics to derive further categories that encapsulate the ideology underpinning the presentation of Christian motifs on Late Roman imperial coinage.[455]

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[452] For discussion of Pacatus clearly using and alluding to the earlier Gallic panegyrics of the *Panegyrici Latini* see Hanslik 1942: 2059; Galletier 1955: 60-61; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 6-7; Lippold 2012: 362. Similarly, the Greek panegyrics of Julian drew directly from the works of Libanius. One example can be seen in the coverage of Vetranio's usurpation, where the depiction of Constantius II as a brave but also as a wise military commander and orator able to outwit his opponent (Julian, *Oration* 1.30D-33C), very much echoing Libanius's depiction of the same emperor as 'being possessed of courage and intelligence in equal measure' (Libanius, *Oration* 59.90, trans. Dodgeon 1996). Libanius states himself that Julian became familiar with his work as a young man (Libanius, *Oration* 18.13-14), while the two would later become friends (see Julian, *Letter* 58). Here the examples of Pacatus's and Julian's works show that we should not be surprised to see consistency between the panegyrics emerging in many cases due to direct allusion to their predecessors.

[453] See Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 289-290 and 338 for the locations that *Pan. Lat.* XII and *Pan. Lat.* IV were originally performed at.

[454] On Themistius's attempts to reconcile Hellenic philosophy and Christian thought see **§3.2.4**, n.445 above. See MacCormack 1976: 60-64 on purposeful avoidance of discussing emperors' 'personal' Christian affiliations in the Latin prose panegyrics. For examples of the euphemistic language used in secular panegyrics to reference the Christian god see **§3.2.4**, n.450 above. This contrasts directly with the overt references to traditional Roman deities that dominate the earlier *Panegyrici Latini* especially. For example, see the formulation of Diocletian and Maximian's respective affiliations with Jupiter and Hercules in *Pan. Lat.* X (c.289) and *Pan. Lat.* XI (291). This same relationship then appears in reference to Constantius in *Pan. Lat.* IX.7-8, 10.3, 16.2 and 18.5 (c.297/298). So too, in *Pan. Lat.* VII.2.5 (307) the phrase 'emperors forever Herculian' (*imperatores semper Herculii*) again repeats Maximian's Herculian identity and also extends it to his new son-in-law Constantine I. Then in *Pan. Lat.* VI.21.4-22 (c.310) there are attestations of Apollo as Constantine I's companion deity following his break from the tetrarchic government.

[455] The corpus of Christian panegyrics is very small in fact. MacCormack 1976 in her summary indicates the general disinterest of Christians to engage with the panegyric genre, and makes reference only to the now lost panegyric of Paulinus of Nola to Theodosius I, as well as Ambrose's funerary orations to Valentinian II (*De Obitu Valentiniani*) and Theodosius I (*De Obitu Theodosii*).

A brief review of these works and their central features is required. Immediately evident is how Christian panegyrics emulated the structure of their secular counterparts, continuing to discuss the emperor's legitimacy through the description of his virtues and the benefits of his rule.[456] Despite this, there is little overlap in the virtues that Ambrose and the secular panegyrists selected as points of focus. Some of the main virtues associated with Valentinian II and Theodosius I as good Christian emperors were mercy (*misericordia*), justice (*iustitia*), humility (*humilitas*) and self-discipline (*sobrietas*).[457] While there was some commonality with the promotion of imperial beneficence identified as a key theme of the secular panegyrics above, there was more correlation with the additional virtues typically mentioned in passing, which did not form part of the secular panegyrics' central narratives.

The lack of overlap was intentional, with Christian panegyrics composed in conscious juxtaposition to their secular counterparts.[458] Whereas the secular panegyrists remained deliberately silent on the emperor's religious affinity and continued to present his *pietas* in an ambiguously polytheistic and Roman manner, the Christian orations loudly asserted the emperor's Christian faith (*fides*) as the defining aspect of his identity and legitimacy. Paulinus's summary of his now lost panegyric denoted how he praised Theodosius 'not so much as an emperor but as a servant of Christ…a man who was first citizen not in kingship but in faith'.[459] Ambrose similarly made constant reference to the *fides* of the emperor, but it was his subversion of the literary device of emperor's virtues versus usurper's vices that highlights the importance of this aspect to his presentation of imperial authority.[460] In his discussion of Theodosius I, Ambrose greatly curtailed this formulation, simply juxtaposing the emperor's faith with the 'faithless tyrants' (*perfidiam tyrannorum*).[461] Here the focus on a single aspect of the emperor, rather than the usual rambling list of virtues, made clear that this was to be valued above all else.

Moreover, Ambrose's orations sought to undermine the prevalent position of military virtues as a key tenet of imperial rule. His funerary oration for Valentinian II avoided discussions of the standard topics of imperial *virtus* or victory. Ambrose then went even further in his funerary

[456] See Jerome, *Epistles* 58.8, that praises Paulinus's adherence to pre-existing structure in his panegyric to Theodosius I. Overt reference to *virtutes* of good individuals recurs throughout the funerary oration of Valentinian II (*De Obitu Valentiniani* 9, 12, 27, 46, 62, 69, 70, 72, 74, 79) while Ambrose makes reference to many of the individual civic virtues in both his funerary orations that also appear in their 'secular' counterparts.
[457] Ambrose, *De Obitu Valentiniani* 10-17, 37; Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 16, 25-26, 27-28, 33-34.
[458] MacCormack 1976: 65-67.
[459] Paulinus of Nola, *Epistles* 28 (trans. Walsh 1967). Faith as the primary virtue also appears in other contemporary Christian literature: see Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 716 ('Faith, the queen of virtues'/*virtutum regina Fides*).
[460] For examples of this literary model in 'secular' panegyrics see **§3.2.4**, n.451 above.
[461] Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 4. The rhetorical importance of asserting imperial *fides* above all is arguably further reflected in Ambrose's flexible relationship with historical accuracy in this instance, since one of the usurpers he was condemning as 'faithless', Magnus Maximus, was an avowed Nicene like Ambrose and Theodosius. A letter of Magnus Maximus to Valentinian II shows the former championing 'Catholic' Christianity and chastising the latter for his Arian affiliations (*Collectio Avellana* 39). Also on Maximus's Catholicism see Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* 2.49-50; Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.14; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 441-443, 492, n.108.

oration for Theodosius I, making a concerted effort to divest the emperor of such military values. He declared that the 'faith of the emperor…produces strength in his soldiers'.[462] *Virtus* was carefully assigned to the army and soldiers alone, not to the emperor, and made subsidiary to the emperor's faith. Ambrose also stressed how the victory of the armies came from Theodosius's *fides*, that the emperor was 'mighty because of his faith' (*validus fide*).[463]

In sum, the few extant Christian panegyrics presented a fleeting attempt to reappropriate and reorientate the existing panegyric genre. There was no intent to incorporate the emperor's Christian identity into the existing body of preferred virtues and benefits. Instead, an entirely different conception of imperial power was proposed, which deliberately disregarded imperial military might in favour of Christian faith as the defining characteristic of the emperor, supported by a limited selection of civic, emotive virtues that equally received little attention in the 'secular' panegyrics.

It appears the one useful term that the Christian panegyrics can provide for categorising Christian motifs of the late fourth and early fifth-century coinage is the centralised concept of faith (*fides*). I have selected it as a fifteenth propaganda category. While there is overlap with the category of religious *pietas*, these have been separated to distinguish the secular panegyrics' concept of appropriate religious practice and imperial duty on behalf of the state, from the notions of faith as the paramount virtue referring to specific belief in the Christian god. *Fides* delineates the overt profession of the Christian faith as a primary feature of imperial identity (of the emperor or empire). It differs from the ambiguous presentation of imperial Christianity within the traditional pagan framework of personal relationship with a companion deity that is captured by the category of religious *pietas*. Furthermore, it should be noted that the *fides* category, as it applies to coinage, pertains to a more generalised notion of Christian faith than in the Christian panegyrics. Ambrose's aim was not just to promote the emperor's Christian faith, but to emphasise the emperor's *correct* Christian faith.[464] Conversely, there is almost no evidence that the Roman state used coinage to engage with internal Christian theological and political issues.[465] Beyond this broader definition of *fides* though, the Christian

[462] Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 6 (trans Liebeschuetz 2005): '…quam et fides imperatoris militum virtus est.' *Virtus* only appears here in this oration, in the sense of military strength or courage. Its usage for the remainder of the oration is noticeably avoided, appearing only with quotations of scripture. It is also noticeable that in referencing the emperor's might in the next passage (see n.463 below), an alternative word, *validus*, is used, while *fortitudo*, the synonym of *virtus* (see **§3.2.3**, n.404) appears only once (*De Obitu Theodosii* 8), in reference to the strength Honorius and Arcadius stand to gain through the soldiers' loyalty. Again, that *virtus* had been previously employed in this capacity for the military and now an alternative word is sourced suggests concerted effort to avoid applying it to the emperors. It is also possible here that Ambrose followed the formulation set out in Paulinus's panegyric to Theodosius, which also attributed the emperor's victories over usurpers to faith alone (Gennadius, *De Viris Illustribus* 49).

[463] Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 6-7 (trans Liebeschuetz 2005).

[464] Liebeschuetz 2005: 176.

[465] The single overt instance of this appears to be Magnentius's promotion of Nicene over Constantius II's Arian Christianity on the SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types **[75, 202]**. For further discussion of this type and its propaganda **§4.3.3.3**. Apart from this, the only suggested appearance of the coinage used to profess *correct*

panegyrics' deliberate opposition to the secular panegyrics and the broader imperial ideological system within which they operated means they also provide little overlap with the values that appeared on state-produced coinage.

3.3. Summary and Final Steps in Applying the Quantitative Methodology

The preceding analysis has shown that the extant Late Roman secular panegyrics are a suitable source for ascertaining those aspects of political ideology most valued by the contemporary Roman state. Though the panegyrics themselves were not state products, their orators reverberated back to the emperor those qualities they thought he most wanted to be associated with, and which can be expected to have also appeared on media produced by the imperial government, such as coinage. By analysing these sources and being sensitive to genre-specific quirks, I have identified fifteen categories to frame the investigation of the propaganda of Late Roman base-metal coinage. These are:

1. *Virtus*
2. *Victoria*
3. *Restitutor* Narratives
4. Religious *Pietas*
5. Secular *Pietas*
6. *Providentia*
7. *Concordia*
8. Dynasty
9. *Aeternitas* Messages
10. *Saeculum Aureum*
11. *Euergesia*
12. Elevation
13. *Gloria*
14. Imperial Beneficence
15. *Fides*

A complete overview of the quantitative methodology used in this thesis has now been provided. **§3.1** delineated the approach taken for categorising the political messages of the representative body of Late Roman site-find coins, whose process of collation was outlined in Chapter 2. I have particularly stressed the need to encapsulate all aspects of propaganda present in images and inscriptions, as well as measure their different degrees of presence. In **§3.2**, I have then specified what these categories were – the different aspects of imperial propaganda that will be measured within the collected corpus of Late Roman site-finds.

Beyond the features of the quantitative methodology discussed in this chapter, I have made several further decisions in the actual application of this methodology. The most subjective element has been the process of denoting the fifteen categories' presence on each of the 247 iconographic types within the site-finds dataset following the parameters of fuzzy set theory outlined in **§3.1.3**. A table of the precise elements of inscriptions and iconography that have

Christianity, rather than Christianity in general, are the CONCORDIA AVG(GG) Cross types **[105, 156]** (issued 404-406). It has been noted here that *concordia* could carry connotations of religious Orthodoxy, as opposed to heterodoxy (*discordia*) (RIC X: 59, which points to the use of *concordia*/orthodoxy versus *discordia*/heresy in Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 709-710, 734-735). For further discussion of this type and its propaganda see **§4.3.3.6**.

been judged to indicate a specific category's presence on a coin, complete with its fuzzy logic-based score, is provided in Appendix 5.

All further decisions are less contentious means of better facilitating quantitative analysis of Late Roman base-metal coinage. This has included the application of various calculations to help normalise the data within the site-finds database, as outlined in Appendix 2. These calculations mainly focus on enabling comparison between sites and/or periods with significantly different coin quantities. It has also included the 'cleaning' of the site-finds dataset to remove extremely rare, outlying coinage whose presence within a site's coin list may introduce anomalous disruptions to the results of propaganda frequency.

Finally, I have clustered the fifteen categories into a further six self-explanatory thematic groupings, as outlined below. These groupings provide a simplified vision of the broader themes and points of commonality between the propaganda categories. They provide a clearer comparison of the coinage from sites, periods and regions within the site-finds database that is otherwise obscured by the noisy data generated by the fifteen propaganda categories and their various interconnections.

Thematic Grouping	**Categories in Grouping**
MILITARY REPRESENTATION	*Virtus* *Victoria*
DIVINE ASSOCIATION	Religious *Pietas* *Fides*
UNITY AND CONTINUITY	*Concordia* Dynasty *Aeternitas* Messages
ELEVATION	Elevation *Gloria*
OTHER IMPERIAL VIRTUES	Civic *Pietas* *Providentia* Imperial Beneficence
OTHER IMPERIAL BENEFITS	*Saeculum Aureum* *Euergesia* *Restitutor* Narrative

With my method of quantitative analysis fully defined, we can apply it to the site-finds database and the investigate the insights it provides into the propaganda of Late Roman base-metal coinage.

4. 'Military Representation' – A Case-Study of the Most Prevalent Theme on Late Roman Base-Metal Coinage[466]

Now the thesis's quantitative analytical approach has been delineated (Chapters 2 and 3), this chapter will consider what political messages dominated the Late Roman base-metal coinage. It will also act as a 'test run' for the new categorisation method devised in Chapter 3, demonstrating the data it produces and the sort of analysis it facilitates. For these purposes, I will undertake a comprehensive study of one facet of imperial propaganda, the 'Military Representation' thematic grouping ('MR' from hereon), between 284-450. I will do so by exploring the results derived from the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, a slightly reduced total of 58,854 coins, which has seen the removal of extremely rare and anomalous iconographic types from the site-finds database.[467] Furthermore, geographic nuance will be provided by using the macro- and micro-regional divisions defined in **§2.3** to move analysis beyond a simple pan-imperial overview. The other five thematic groupings (see **§3.3**) will also be periodically discussed in relation to 'MR' where relevant. However, the limits of this research project prevent similarly detailed analyses of each theme.

The 'MR' theme is comprised of the two propaganda categories that embody how the Late Roman state looked to espouse military power. These are *virtus*, the virtue of martial prowess and courage, and *victoria*, the benefit of imperial victory derived from *virtus* in action. I have chosen to focus analysis on 'MR' because, despite combining only two of this study's fifteen identified propaganda categories, the site-finds database identifies it as the ideological theme that the Late Roman state most frequently sought to promote amongst its wider populace. In terms of raw coin numbers, 55,827 of the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset's 58,854 coins (94.86%) include some degree of reference to 'MR', scoring between **{0.25}** and **{1}** for either *virtus* or *victoria*. By then considering the typical score for these coins that professed 'MR' at some

[466] All data cited in Chapter 4 is contextualised with reference to relevant charts and tables (Figs.4.1-27), except for data on the proportional presence of individual iconographic types within their periods of issue. These latter datapoints can instead be found in Appendix 6, which provides a per-period breakdown of each iconographic type's proportional present in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. These tables include each iconographic type's presence as a percentage of for all coinage for its issue period (pan-imperial), as well as the type's proportional presence within main macro- and micro-regional site groupings outlined in **§2.3**. References to the relevant tables of Appendix 6 will be footnoted accordingly. Furthermore, 'helper' tables are included at the top of each page when discussing individual periods, which include pertinent information such as period dates; key emperors; and the most important iconographic types alongside their per-period pan-imperial proportions. However, it is recommended that Appendix 6 is consulted in conjunction with much of the following analysis, especially in any instance of inter-regional comparison of iconographic type volumes. On the process for calculating the propaganda category/theme scores and the proportions of iconographic types that appear throughout this chapter see Appendix 2, **§2.4-5**.

[467] See **§2.2** for a full overview of the site-finds database. See Appendix 2, **§2.3** for further discussion of the cleaning process applied to site-finds database.

level, we see that most martial messages were overtly communicated. As per Figure 4.1, over 80% of these coins have scores of **{1}** for either *virtus* or *victoria*.[468] The *virtus* or *victoria* messages on Late Roman base-metal coinage were rarely tangential to the coin's principal message (scoring **{0.75}** or **{0.5}**), and never merely insinuated by other propaganda elements (scoring **{0.25}**).[469] This near continuous and often explicit expression of the 'MR' theme results in it being the best-represented thematic grouping in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset by some margin, scoring 87.7% (Fig.4.2).[470]

A brief overview of the 'MR' scores on a per-period basis also indicates its general prevalence throughout the 167 years under study here. By comparing the number of coins with any 'MR' reference versus those with none (Fig.4.3), the years 324-330 (Period 5) are identified as the only period when attestations of imperial military might and triumph were largely absent from base-metal coinage.[471] The exact per-period 'MR' scores (Fig.4.4) show a more nuanced perspective, capturing the shifting degrees of presence over time. The variations of Figure 4.3 are greatly accentuated and suggest three distinct phases – that is, three groups of periods – in the usage of the 'MR' theme on the base-metal coinage. These phases will form the basic chronological framework for the following quantitative-based study of how the 'MR' theme was formulated on base-metal coinage throughout the Late Roman period:

[468] This is particularly pronounced for the twenty most frequently occurring iconographic types in the cleaned site-finds dataset. They constitute 85.4% of the coins in the entire cleaned dataset, and between them have an average 'Military Representation' score of 0.925.

[469] See **§3.1.3.2** for further information on the criteria identifying the individual fuzzy-logic scores.

[470] The values presented by Figure 4.2 are calculated by simply adding together the theme scores for each coin in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset and then dividing by the total number of coins, so are unadjusted scores based on raw coin totals. Alternatively, it is possible to adjust these values to per-annum scores (see Appendix 2, **§2.2**), which levels out the over-representation of longer periods with higher coin totals. Even if this is done though, the new totals in the below table show only very minor changes to the Figure 4.2 totals:

Military Representation	Divine Association	Unity and Continuity	Elevation	Other Imperial Virtues	Other Imperial Benefits
83.6%	43.7%	29.1%	59.3%	44.6%	52.1%

[471] The predominant iconography occurring on base-metal coinage across the empire during Period 5 was a two-turreted gate with an open door, surmounted by a star. It appeared on both the PROVIDENTIAE AVGG Gate and PROVIDENTIAE CAESS Gate types **[29, 30]**, which together constitute a pan-imperial average of 75% of Period 5 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset (see Appendix 6, Period 5). The gate iconography has been typically identified as a 'camp gate', the gate of a military encampment, in British numismatic catalogues (RIC VII; LRBC I; Carson 1990), so may be assumed to have carried military messages. However, I have followed David Woods's compelling re-interpretation (Woods 2017), which identifies the open gates as that of a city receiving the emperor, whose *providentia* is tied to messages of provision and renewal. Woods's explanation of the gate therefore divests types **[29, 30]** of military connotations as well as countering earlier arguments (Alföldi 1955; Elkins 2015: 124) that these types were promoting a programme of fortification building. Consequently, there was a virtual absence of 'MR' messages (6%) during Period 5. Base-metal coinage was instead primarily used to promote the Constantinian dynasty and the restoration of a united empire after Licinius's final defeat in 324. The *restitutor* narrative category dominated (78.7%) alongside emphasis on the re-establishment of intra-imperial *concordia* (75.5%). Soo too, the Augustus's and Caesars' divine foresight (*providentia* – 78.7%) was recurrently cited as the means through which the empire's stability was secured, as were promises of the empire's resulting material benefits (*euergesia* – 76.1%). Finally, the coins of this period also recurrently emphasised the elevated, untouchable status the imperial position (elevation – 79.3%). Again, also see Appendix 6, Period 5 for the highly comparable proportions of different iconographic types in the western and eastern empires in Period 5, which indicates pan-imperial promotion of the same core messages.

— Phase 1 (Periods 1-4, 284-324) covers Diocletian's and Maximian's dyarchy, the tetrarchic period and collegial imperial rule up to Constantine I's final triumph over Licinius. 'MR' messages were expressed in their most complex and indirect forms during this phase, often assuming a subordinate position to more overt declarations of the emperors' personal affiliation with traditional Roman deities. It is also a phase when the iconographic types available to the wider populace significantly varied on a regional basis. Moreover, unique to Phase 1 is the dissimilarity between its site-finds and the base-metal coins recovered from hoards. How these differences may have impacted the data from the site-finds database will be addressed accordingly.

— Phase 2 (Periods 6-11, 330-408) reaches from the inauguration of Constantinople to the death of Arcadius. It is defined by the near-persistent issuing of base-metal coins that prioritised explicitly espousing 'MR', except for brief interruptions by two *vota* coin series in Periods 7 (340-348) and 10 (378-388). Phase 2 also saw striking uniformity in the prevalence with which 'MR' messages were promoted across the empire. Within this phase, Period 6 (330-340) will be discussed in isolation. It stands out as a timespan when 'MR' messages were formulated in an exceptional manner, as multiple iconographic types combined to communicate an interwoven narrative of Constantinian triumph. Moreover, analysis of Periods 7-11 will show how the Late Roman state purposefully altered the political function of base-metal coinage. Coin propaganda was limited to making genericised statements, mainly emphasising imperial martial prowess, as a means of preventing the wider populace from engaging in contemporary intra-imperial politics.

— Phase 3 (Periods 12-13, 408-450) continues until the death of Theodosius II, marking the effective end of the Theodosian dynasty. It is distinguished from Phase 2 primarily based on the available data. Far fewer site-finds date to Periods 12 and 13, with so few from western sites that analysis here is restricted to considering just the eastern empire. Beyond these limitations though, the continuous presentation of 'MR' messages to some degree carried over from Phase 2, even if the exact formulations of these messages differed. The most significant change of this phase will be shown as occurring in Period 13, when base-metal coinage was used for the first time to programmatically promote Christianity, which supplanted 'MR' messages as the medium's central theme.

4.1. Phase 1 (Periods 1-4, 284-324) – 'Military Representation' from the Establishment of the Dyarchy to the Defeat of Licinius

Phase 1 covers the various iterations of collegial rule and intra-imperial competition that defined late-third and early-fourth-century Roman politics. Within this thesis's chronological parameters, Phase 1 was when the most complicated and subtlest formulations of the 'MR' theme were espoused on Late Roman base-metal coinage, as well as when the highest quantities of base-metal coins with no martial contents were issued (Fig.4.3). The iconography of base-metal coin propaganda during Phase 1 was defined by two recurrent motifs:

1. Depictions of the emperors' various companion deities, used to assert their divinely supported rule.
2. Portrayals of the *genius* of the Roman people/emperor performing libations, which communicated the continuation of 'correct' religious practices to ensure divine favour and imperial security.

Central to both was the category of religious *pietas*, the performance of duty in a religious context.[472] Consequently, as per Figure 4.5, the periods of Phase 1 are unusual because they have higher scores for the 'Divine Association' theme than for 'MR'. Contrary to the phenomenon evident in the dataset as a whole, during this phase expressions of imperial *virtus* and *victoria* were often subservient to messages focused on religious *pietas.*[473] This assessment of the 'MR' theme during Phase 1 is centrally concerned with how martial messages were expressed in relation to, as facets of, or even in opposition to, the prevailing overtly religious paradigm of fostering divine support.

However, there are clear changes in how 'MR' messages were expressed *within* Phase 1, between periods, which necessitates sequential chronological discussion. Periods 1 (284-294) and 2 (294-307) will be discussed together, as their base-metal coins formulated 'MR' messages in very similar ways. Periods 3 (307-317) and 4 (317-324) warrant individual attention. Furthermore, Phase 1 is distinguished as a timespan when the control of eastern and western sites by different imperial colleagues and rivals caused consistent regional variation in the iconographic types available to the wider populace. As per Figure 4.6, a

[472] For further definition of religious *pietas*, as well as its distinction from civic *pietas* and Christian *fides*, see **§3.2.3** and **§3.2.5**. See **§5.1.1** for further discussion of the divine *comes* and *genius* motifs within the framework of their religious *pietas* messages, particularly on how these iconographic types actively engaged with the contemporary wider imperial populace as a political entity.
[473] For discussion of the coins with overt 'MR' messages dominating the site-finds dataset as a whole see Chapter 4 introduction above.

consequence was the significant divergence between the prevalence of 'MR' messages at western and eastern sites, contrasting with the highly comparable west-east scores of Periods 6-11 (330-408).[474] The following analysis will provide due attention to each period's regional characteristics.

A final feature that will be addressed is the major difference between Phase 1 iconographic types found in hoards and site-finds. During Periods 2 and 3 in particular, base-metal coins of discernibly different intrinsic values were issued. The higher-value coins dating to these periods were typically hoarded, while their less valuable counterparts were usually lost (site-finds). The site-finds database is liable to over-represent the lower value base-metal coinage and present a biased, distorted picture of the propaganda issued during Phase 1. To confront this issue, I will complete the Phase 1 assessment by comparing the site-finds database with a supplementary dataset of hoard coins. The purpose is to nuance the analysis of 'MR' messages and delineate the site-finds database's limitations when used to ascertain what the state intended to communicate. Nevertheless, I shall also argue the site-finds dataset *does* accurately reflect how visible the 'MR' messages were to the wider imperial populace.

4.1.1. Periods 1-2 (284-307): Divinely Granted Imperial Victory

During Periods 1 (284-294) and 2 (294-307), the pan-imperial 'MR' scores are relatively low, just 52.9% and 43.8% respectively (Fig.4.4). Yet, as per Figure 4.3, most of the coinage in both periods still made *some* degree of reference to 'MR' (Period 1 = 97%; Period 2 = 77.2%). The difference between Figures 4.3 and 4.4 is what identifies Periods 1 and 2 as being when attestations of imperial military prowess and victory were less obvious and direct.[475]

Victoria is the category that contributes most to Period 1's 'MR' score, scoring 51.5% compared to 4.9% for *virtus*. The figure of Victory appears on 186 of the 198 (93.6%) Period 1 coins in the 'cleaned' site-find dataset. This is almost exclusively in the form of the victory-on-globe attribute – the *victoriola* – that was usually endowed by Jupiter.[476] The recipient figure

[474] Regional difference between proportions of available iconographic types, caused by administrative divisions or even civil war, does not always impact the total scorings for thematic groupings. For example, in Periods 8 and 11, the variation between western and eastern averages (see Appendix 6, Period 8 and Period 11) does impact on the 'MR' scores for these different regions (Fig.4.6). In both instances, the mints of competitors (Constantius II and Magnentius), and colleagues (Valentinian II and the Theodosians) produced their own iconographic types, but these different coin designs still sought to communicate broadly similar messages, which focused on imperial *virtus* and *victoria*.

[475] Period 13 (425-450) is the exception here, whose more subtle expression of 'MR' is discussed in **§4.3.3**.

[476] Of the eleven different iconographic types that constitute these 186 coins, Jupiter proffers forward the *victoriola* in his right hand on 175 of them (94% - types **[1, 8, 122, 125, 155, 161, 176, 183, 186]**) while on another eleven the *victoriola* is presented by the personification Pax (type **[223]**).

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
1	284-294	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	34.7%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	13.0%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVG Emperor and Jupiter **[125]**	9.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS Jupiter and Hercules **[122]**	9.9%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	8.0%
2	294-307	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	48.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308		
		Constantius I	293-306	GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	26.7%
		Galerius	293-311	Vota wreath **[4]**	15.3%

was the emperor, either depicted standing opposite the endowing deity or implied as the recipient on the obverse.[477]

The transition to Period 2 (294) was marked by Diocletian's monetary reform, which introduced a new multi-denominational base-metal coinage with greater type standardisation across the imperial mints.[478] The 'cleaned' site-finds dataset is dominated by two Period 2 types: the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* type **[3]**,[479] and the CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter fractional radiate type **[1]**.[480] The GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* is one of the few iconographic types in the site-finds database, outside of the Period 5 coinage, to have a substantial presence within its own issue period and to contain no 'MR' references. Its absence of 'MR' messages helps explain the reduction from Periods 1 to 2 in coins that made any mention of 'MR' and the overall 'MR' scoring, as seen in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. By contrast, in the CONCORDIA MILITVM fractional radiate we find a standardised version of Period 1's various 'Jupiter proffering *victoriola*' types,[481] so that motif continued to be the primary manner in which 'MR' messages were espoused.[482]

Within these initial two periods, 'MR' messages were almost solely orientated around *victoria*, the propaganda category of imperial victory. These messages were presented through the iconography, but in a subsidiary capacity. Personified Victory held a miniaturised and subordinate position, as an attribute passed from deity to emperor. The *victoriola* acted as a visual mechanism that facilitated communication of more central concerns: exclaiming divinely ordained imperial rule through positive and personal emperor-deity relations (predominantly emperor-Jupiter relations). Diocletianic base-metal propaganda was concerned, first and foremost, with informing the wider populace that the emperor was divinely ordained and performing his religious duties (religious *pietas*). Only then on some of the coinage was it also considered important to promote martial messages, specifically in relation to the emperor's generalised receipt of victory from a traditional Roman deity.

[477] On the presentation scenes, in which a deity or Victory on the reverse bestows an object such as the *victoriola* or wreath to the imperial portrait on the coin's obverse, see Betjes 2022: 178-179.
[478] RIC VI: 1-2, 4-7, 93-100; Hendy 1985: 378-380, 449-462. Note Diocletian's monetary reforms were implemented across the empire over several years, actioned in the east first c.294 and then only applied to western mints as late as 296. For the purpose of this quantitative analysis, I have had to apply a strict date of change to a single year (294). Consequently, some pre-reform coins issued in 295 or 296 have had their dates artificially modified to 294 to ensure they are assigned to Period 1 and the correct monetary system (see Appendix 3). As such, all Period 1 coins are *antoniniani* belonging to the old monetary system and all Period 2 coins are *nummi* or fractional radiates belonging to Diocletian's new base-metal monetary system.
[479] 26.7% of all Period 2 coinage (see Appendix 6, Period 2).
[480] 48.9% of all Period 2 coinage (see Appendix 6, Period 2).
[481] See n.476 above for Period 1's various Jupiter with *victoriola* types.
[482] This also sees the Period 2 *victoria* and *virtus* scores, 42.4% and 5.5% respectively, largely mirror Period 1's.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
1	284-294	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	34.7%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	13.0%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVG Emperor and Jupiter **[125]**	9.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS Jupiter and Hercules **[122]**	9.9%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	8.0%
2	294-307	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	48.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308		
		Constantius I	293-306	GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	26.7%
		Galerius	293-311	Vota wreath **[4]**	15.3%

4.1.1.1. Inter-Regional Variation in Periods 1-2

There is also some regional variation in the 'MR' scores to consider. Period 1's negligible total, of just 198 coins, unfortunately does not accommodate meaningful inter-regional comparison.[483] As for Period 2, it is the mixed distribution of the CONCORDIA MILITVM fractional radiate type **[1]**, with its standardised presentation of the 'Jupiter proffering *victoriola*' motif, that most impacts different regions' 'MR' scores. Type **[1]** was only issued at the eastern mints, with its Jupiter-oriented imagery pertaining to Diocletian and Galerius, the emperors of the tetrarchy's Jovian household who directly administered the eastern imperial territories. This regionally limited production resulted in the substantially higher presence of type **[1]** in the east, where it constitutes a per-site average of 77.5%, compared to only 12.3% in the west.[484] By contrast, the western dataset is comprised of a much larger amount of the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummi* (38.4%) than in the east (17.5%).[485] The result is a pronounced variation in the Period 2 average 'MR' scores for eastern and western sites. The prevalent position of *victoriola*-bearing type **[1]** coins in the east sustains the region's relatively significant 'MR' score of 52%, while their decreased presence alongside a significantly higher proportion of non-militaristic *genius* coinage sees the average western score drop down to 31.9% (Fig.4.6).

'MR' messages were instead primarily espoused at western sites by another iconographic type. In place of the CONCORDIA MILITVM fractional radiates of the eastern empire, western mints periodically produced their own lower denomination base-metal coins.[486] These western fractions bore *vota* messages that promoted the tetrarchs' respective first and second *decennalia*.[487] Due to their intermittent issue, in line with their iconographic function of anniversary celebration, the western fractions do not exist as a western counterweight to the east's prevalent CONCORDIA MILITVM fractional radiates.[488] Yet they still constitute a notable average of 34.9% of Period 2 coins at western sites. On these *vota* types, the *victoria*

[483] This low number of coins means that any minor differences in the totals of iconographic types dramatically effects the themes' and categories' overall scoring percentages. As such, we should already be weary of this limited sample's ability to accurately represent pan-imperial trends. Furthermore, most of these coins come from eastern sites (154 = 77.8%), while only nine of the eighteen western sites provide the remaining forty-four coins. The data coverage is arguably not sufficient enough to support meaningful west versus east comparisons.
[484] See Appendix 6, Period 2.
[485] See Appendix 6, Period 2.
[486] The majority of these western *vota* types were produced as the small radiate fractions, though those issued at *Trier* were produced as the still smaller laureate-headed fractions (RIC VI: 93, 150).
[487] See Mattingly 1950: 175-179, and for all Period 2 base-metal *vota* types specifically see RIC VI Rome 74-89, RIC VI Ticinum 36-42, RIC VI Trier 609-614, 682-688, 748-753, 791-793; RIC VI Carthage 35-38; RIC VI Aquileia 128.
[488] Depeyrot 1982: 20-21.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
1	284-294	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	34.7%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	13.0%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVG Emperor and Jupiter **[125]**	9.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS Jupiter and Hercules **[122]**	9.9%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	8.0%
2	294-307	Diocletian	284-305	CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter **[1]**	48.9%
		Maximian I	285-305, 306-308		
		Constantius I	293-306	GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	26.7%
		Galerius	293-311	Vota wreath **[4]**	15.3%

propaganda category was referenced in a more restrained manner, in which the bordering *corona civica* in part insinuated the victory that underpinned the main messages of imperial continuity and stability.[489]

For Period 2, the presence of non-militaristic *nummi* noticeably suppressed 'MR' scores in both east and west. However, messages of imperial victory were proportionally more prevalent in the east where formulations of the *victoriola* imagery flourished across the extensively issued fractional radiates, which far outweighed the *nummus*. Fractional radiates were not as frequently found in western contexts though, and when they were they typically bore more subtle expressions of imperial victory peripheral to *vota* messages that asserted the emperors' longevity. Alongside the proportionally higher presence of the non-militaristic *nummi* in the west, the intermittent and indirect *vota* coinage marks Period 2 coins of western sites as having some of the most infrequent and understated expressions of 'MR' in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.

4.1.2. Period 3 (307-317): Victory Through Gods Old and New

Period 3 saw the earlier subtle expressions of 'MR' messages largely disappear. Comparing the typical 'MR' scores of individual coins for Phase 1 (Fig.4.7), we see nearly 60% of Period 3 coins scored **{1}** – made overt references – a striking change from the virtual absence of **{1}** scoring coins in Periods 1-2. The result is a much smaller gap between Period 3's proportion of coins that made any 'MR' references (Fig.4.3, 83.3%) and its total 'MR' score (Fig.4.4, 78.2%). For Period 3, when coins did espouse 'MR', they typically did so explicitly, and most *did* espouse 'MR'. Presentations of the emperors' divine *comites* remained a recurrent subject. Yet, alongside these deity-focused motifs, the 'MR' theme was also frequently prioritised as a central aspect of the base-metal coin propaganda, rather than being a subsidiary element.

Furthermore, the general increase in coins referencing 'MR' is due to reduced emphasis across the empire on other pre-established aspects of tetrarchic propaganda, namely the non-militaristic *genius* types. Having comprised on average over a quarter of the Period 2 site-finds, *genius* coins continued to be present (types **[3, 212]**) but at lower proportions in both the east (average of 10.7%) and west (average of 9.1%). Moreover, the *genius* types also became more regionally specific, as the western-produced type **[3]** appeared almost

[489] On the significance of the wreath border and the breadth of meaning it espoused see Appendix 5, n.110.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
3	307-317	Galerius	293-311	SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	51.7%
		Maximinus II Daia	306-313	IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	14.3%
		Licinius I	308-324	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	9.6%
		Constantine I	306-337	GENIO AVGVSTI/ CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS **[212]**	6.1%
				GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	4.0%

exclusively at western sites,[490] and the eastern-produced type **[212]** appeared only at eastern sites.[491] A key feature of the Period 3 site-finds then, is the state's increasing move away from base-metal coins with no military component, in favour of divine *comes* messages that always had some 'MR' component.

4.1.2.1. The Emergence of Constantinian Sol, Embodiment of Virtus

What really differentiates Period 3 from Periods 1 and 2 is the proportionally enormous increase in coins that promoted the *virtus* propaganda category, whose pan-imperial score spikes up to 58.6%.[492] The main contributor to the upsurge in *virtus* messages was Constantine I's SOLI INVICTO COMITI type **[22]**, which alone constitutes a pan-imperial average of 51.7% of Period 3 coins.[493] Type **[22]** still conformed to the trend of presenting a companion deity on the base-metal coinage but departed from the established tetrarchic formula of promoting Jupiter. Sol was advanced as an alternative, non-tetrarchic deity (or even an anti-tetrarchic deity)[494] from whom imperial legitimacy was derived, which shifted formulations of 'MR' to emphasise *virtus* rather than being solely orientated around the emperor's receipt of divinely bestowed Victory.[495] Sol was an inherently militaristic deity, with

[490] The GEN(IO) POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) type **[3]** of Period 3 was produced only at *Londinium*, *Trier*, *Lugdunum*, *Ticinum*, *Ostia* and *Rome*, and used the shortened inscription GEN POP ROM. Type **[3]** coins comprise all Period 3 *genius* types at western sites and 1.3% at eastern sites (in actual numbers this is a single coin).

[491] For further discussion of the GENIO AVGVSTI/CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS grouped type **[212]** and its production at various eastern mints during Period 3 see **§4.1.4.3**, n.535-536. No coins of type **[212]** are found at western sites but it constitutes 98.7% of the Period 3 *genius* types at eastern sites.

[492] For comparison, Period 1 scored just 4.9% for *virtus*, and Period 2 just 5.5%. Conversely, Period 3's pan-imperial *victoria* score of 47.3% remained similar to Period 1's 51.5% and Period 2's 42.4%.

[493] See Appendix 6, Period 3.

[494] The narrative that Constantine I always intended to dismantle the tetrarchic system and reunite the empire under a single dynasty is predominantly a revisionist product of literature and panegyrics produced after Licinius's final defeat (324). For further discussion of the revisionist narrative of ultimate Constantinian triumph see **§4.2.2.3**. However, there are some earlier, more intermittent signs of anti-tetrarchic sentiment formulating within Constantine's court by the 310s (see Digeser 2014). As per RIC VII: 48, it is also tempting to interpret Constantine's selection of Sol, a specifically militaristic conquest deity, as a part of this antagonistic, anti-tetrarchic attitude. This is further supported by the fact that, as per n.495 below, Constantine could have easily used the established tetrarchic deity Hercules to promote his martial traits. The decision not to draw on existing modes of formulating support from a militaristic deity indicates a desire to invoke support from outside the tetrarchy's ideological framework.

[495] Note that the other tetrarchic deity, Hercules, was equally able to provide emphasis on imperial *virtus*. Hercules was used in exactly that role in contemporary court literature such as *Pan. Lat.* XI and *Pan. Lat.* IX, where his association with Maximian I and Constantius I helped construct their identity as great 'doers' and military champions. However, despite his prominent position in tetrarchic propaganda, base-metal coinage depicting Hercules and promoting the specific characterisation of imperial power that he embodied are very rare. Numerous base-metal iconographic types depicted Hercules in Period 1 (for examples, **[122, 123, 146, 147, 257, 258, 259, 265]**), but very few actual examples appear in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, on just 2.3% of Period 1 coins. In fact, Hercules appears more frequently on Period 1 site-finds in conjunction with Jupiter (9.9%) than he does alone. In a supplementary base-metal hoard data taken from the CHRE (downloaded 14/04/2024, further discussed in **§4.1.4.1** below), a higher 11.9% (fifty-one coins) dating to Period 1 depicted Hercules alone, but this is still dwarfed by the 50.1% (215 coins) that depicted Jupiter. In turn, only one Period 2 coin in the site-finds database, a HERCVLI VICTORI type **[118]**, depicted Hercules. It was found at Histria, and is removed from the database by the data-cleaning process (see Appendix 2, **§2.3**). Similarly, only seven Period 2 base-metal coins from the hoards dataset (0.3%) depict Hercules. What this all shows is that the state intentionally chose to largely *not* present Hercules on the base-metal coinage, so 'MR' messages under the dyarchy and loyal tetrarchic emperors primarily took the form of victory-endowing Jupiter.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
3	307-317	Galerius	293-311	SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	51.7%
		Maximinus II Daia	306-313	IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	14.3%
		Licinius I	308-324	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	9.6%
		Constantine I	306-337	GENIO AVGVSTI/ CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS **[212]**	6.1%
				GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	4.0%

integral connections to the Roman legions. Roman soldiers had been responsible for first spreading Sol worship beyond Syria, and Sol had been formally designated as the protector of the legions upon the cult's official recognition by the Roman state.[496] Depictions of Sol as Constantine's divine *comes* sought to project this military identity, with Sol consistently depicted performing *adlocutio* and holding other attributes of dominion like a whip and globe.[497] These deliberate visual renderings of Sol presented the deity as supreme military commander, the embodiment of imperial *virtus* through which victory would be derived.

Furthermore, the selection of a divine companion who could embody imperial military prowess was not a solely Constantinian innovation. Constantine I's adoption of Sol was parallel by Maxentius's use of Mars, the traditional Roman war god, as his companion deity.[498] However, Maxentian Mars coins have no presence within the site-finds dataset at all.[499] This absence was likely because of Maxentius's legacy being subject to *damnatio memoriae* at the hands of Constantine I, which is well evidenced on sculptures and inscriptions.[500] Consequently, Period 3 site-finds are dominated by the triumphant Constantine's Sol coinage.

[496] Halsberghe 1972: 116-117; Liebeschuetz 1999: 187-192. See too Stephenson 2009: 79-84 on Aurelian's elevation of Sol and his own military identity. This overt association between Sol and the Roman army is also encapsulated particularly well on the VIRT EXERC Sol in camp type **[134]**. Though exceedingly rare in the site-finds dataset (only a single example is recorded, from Pella) the depiction of Sol performing his typical *adlocutio* pose atop a military camp in conjunction with a legend espousing the *virtus* of the soldiers makes a clear statement about this god's continued inherent military identity.

[497] On the specifically military character of the *adlocutio*, an emperor/general's address to the soldiers, see Stephenson 2009: 70; Gizewski 2006b; Melville Jones 1990: 4. Of the ten iconographic types in the site-finds database that depict Sol (**[22, 24, 28, 134, 174, 178, 199, 224, 232, 256]**), only two (**[174, 178]**) do not depict the deity performing *adlocutio*, and one of these is a bust so is restricted from doing so. Therefore, Sol performing this pose does not only dominate in volume due to the prevalence of the SOLI INVICTO COMITI type in the Period 4 site-finds, but also predominates across the different iconographic designs. See also Stephenson 2009: 76-77 on how from the third century patron gods, including Sol, were specifically selected who could emphasis the emperors' possession of supernatural *virtus*.

[498] Drost 2013: 77-78; Bardill 2012: 84-85; Van Dam 2011: 243; Hekster 1999: 731-733; Cullhed 1994: 46-49. Mars frequently appeared on earlier Roman imperial coinage, from Augustus onwards, including extensive use on the civil war coinage of 69, as well as by the Severans and many other third-century emperors (see Manders 2012: 118-121; Rowan 2013a: 233-236). However, Mars's consistent usage was effectively abandoned under the dyarchy and tetrarchy. As per Hekster 2015: 299, of the 498 coin types of Diocletian and Maximian that depicted deities, only twenty-seven (5.5%) depicted the non-tetrarchic deities Mars, Sol and Minerva. As for tetrarchic Mars-bearing iconographic types in the entire site-finds database, there are seven examples of the MARTI (PATRI) PROPVGNATORI Mars advancing type **[214]**, one from Berytus and six from Augusta Treverorum, as well as a single example of the VIRTVS AVGG ET CAESS NN Mars type **[159]** also from Augusta Treverorum, though all eight are removed during the cleaning process (see Appendix 2, **§2.3**).

[499] There are only seventy-nine coins depicting Mars in the entire site-finds database, and fifty-one of these date to Period 3, contemporaneously to Maxentius' reign. These are generally rare occurrences though, since only twenty-seven of the fifty-one coins make it through the cleaning process (see Appendix 2, **§2.3**). Twenty-one of these are of the MARTI CONSERVATORI Mars standing type **[13],** primarily of Constantine I from *Trier* and *Lugdunum*, constituting 0.8% of the pan-imperial average for Period 3. Five further coins of the VIRTVS/VIRTVTI EXERCITVS Virtus/Mars type **[23]** come from eastern mints and were issued in the names of Maximinus II and Galerius. Clearly some general usage of the companion Mars persisted, more often by Constantine I specifically, though even these examples were intermittent and do not compare to the programmatic associations with Sol and Jupiter that dominate Period 3.

[500] Varner 2004: 216-220; Vam Dam 2011: 249-250; **§4.2.2.2**, n.562-563. Note that Hostein 2004: 230 also mentions the defacement of a great number of Maxentius's coins as part of this *damnatio memoriae* in action.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
3	307-317	Galerius	293-311	SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	51.7%
		Maximinus II Daia	306-313	IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	14.3%
		Licinius I	308-324	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	9.6%
		Constantine I	306-337	GENIO AVGVSTI/ CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS **[212]**	6.1%
				GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	4.0%

Strikingly, despite having only been produced at western mints and dominating western sites, the SOLI INVICTO COMITI type **[22]** also penetrated the eastern empire. While in the west type **[22]** constitutes a per-site average of 70% of Period 3 coinage, a lower 38.5% average amongst eastern sites still makes it their single most profuse type.[501] Moreover, type **[22]** not only circulated within the eastern regions that Constantine seized following the battle of Cibalae (316), namely the Balkans and Greece, but across the east in general. Within Eastern Group 1, this western-produced coinage comprised a per-site average of 50.1%, outnumbering all other Period 3 iconographic types, just as it did at British sites (average of 74%) and the sites of Western Group 2 (average of 87.2%).[502] At the ends of the empire, in the north-west, south-west and even the east, that was beyond Constantine's control, his divine martial companion, Sol Invictus, was more visible on the coinage of daily exchange than any other contemporary expression of Roman rulership ideology.

4.1.2.2. The Licinian Counter: Jupiter's Continuity in the East

Constantine's innovative promotion of Sol was somewhat counterbalanced by the eastern emperors' preference for Jupiter as the supreme deity and head of their tetrarchic household. Both Licinius and Maximinus II Daia continuously issued the IOVI CONSERVATORI and IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS types **[8, 155]** to promote this pre-established divine companionship. As for these types' iconography, the Jupiter-emperor exchange motif of Periods 1 and 2 disappeared. Nevertheless, 'MR' messages effectively remained the same, whereby the lone Jupiter still bestowed victory on the emperor by proffering the *victoriola* or *fulmen* (lightning-bolt) to the imperial portrait on the coin's obverse.[503] Faced with the western emperors' pivot to invoking *virtus*-embodying divine companions, the eastern emperors kept their base-metal propaganda conservative, adhering to tetrarchic tradition as a means of asserting legitimacy. As products of the eastern mints these Jovian coins have a more pronounced presence at eastern sites, averaging 36.4% of Period 3 coinage, so appeared in comparable numbers to the SOLI INVICTO COMITI coinage.[504] Yet they saw almost no penetration into the west. Only IOVI CONSERVATORI **[8]** coins are found at western sites, averaging just 6.6%. No type **[8]** coins are present at British sites and very few at Western Group 2 sites (average of 2.5%). In contrast to Constantine's widely diffused Sol coinage,

[501] See Appendix 6, Period 3.
[502] See Appendix 6, Period 3.
[503] See Betjes 2022: 178-179 on the motif of a reverse figure (deity or personification) presenting an object to the obverse imperial portrait. On identification of the *fulmen*, Jupiter's lightning-bolt, as another victory-assuring attribute much like the *victoriola* see Gagé 1930; Gagé 1931; Scott 1982: 437.
[504] See Appendix 6, Period 3. Note this figure is combining the Jupiter types **[8, 155]**.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
3	307-317	Galerius	293-311	SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	51.7%
		Maximinus II Daia	306-313	IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	14.3%
		Licinius I	308-324	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	9.6%
		Constantine I	306-337	GENIO AVGVSTI/ CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS **[212]**	6.1%
				GENIO POP(VLI) ROM(ANI) **[3]**	4.0%

Licinius and Maximinus were largely unable to promote their traditional, Jovian, divinely ordained victory narratives beyond their own territories.[505]

4.1.3. Period 4 (317-324): Constantinian Innovation Versus Licinian Conservatism

Moving onto Period 4, the first element to note is the decline in the overall 'MR' score from Period 3, dropping to 63.5% (Fig.4.4). Moreover, although the gap between the proportion of Period 4 coins expressing any 'MR' messages (Fig.4.3, 72.2%) and Period 4's overall 'MR' score (Fig.4.4, 63.5%) remains relatively small, it is still greater than Period 3. An inspection of the per-coin 'MR' scores (Fig.4.7) further reveals a shift between these periods. Period 4's more consistent, explicit espousal of 'MR' gave way to an increase of non-militaristic coins (**{0}** scores) and the emergence of more subtle expressions (**{0.5}** scores), which dilutes the proportion of **{1}** scoring coins. Of all the Phase 1 base-metal coinage, Period 4 issues showed the greatest degree of inconsistency when it came to prioritising the 'MR' theme.

This inconsistency was because, again unlike Period 3, the iconographic motifs used to project 'MR' messages in Period 4 significantly varied between western and eastern imperial territories. Whereas Licinius's eastern mints continued to produce divine *comes* types in conformance with the pre-established tetrarchic model, Constantine's western mints produced a litany of new and distinct iconographic types. The catalyst was a monetary reform in 318 which, in addition to revising the fiduciary value of the *nummus*, ended not only the production of Constantine's extensively issued Sol coinage, but stopped the depiction of all traditional Roman deities at Constantinian mints.[506] The same iconographic policy would later be extended to the whole empire upon Constantine's establishment of pan-imperial hegemony in 324. Until then though, base-metal coin design and propaganda diverged on a regional basis, with notable consequences for how 'MR' messages were expressed.

4.1.3.1. Commonality: Constantinian Vota *Coinage in the West and East*

One single point of commonality between eastern and western Period 4 site-finds is nevertheless evident. After the 318 reform, Constantinian mints periodically issued a variety of simple *vota* types **[4, 5]**. These celebrated Constantine I's (and less frequently Licinius's)

[505] This assumes that the Sol coinage travelled east before Constantine took control of the entire eastern empire in 324. Hoard evidence does point to nearly all Period 3 coinage having left circulation by the end of Period 4 (324) (see (**§4.1.4.4** and Figure 4.11). This supports the notion western Sol coins did move east during a very limited timespan close to their time of production. Note too that Johannes Wienand (2012: 299-304) has also argued that Constantine I's earlier Sol coinage was quickly and actively demonetised following the 318 monetary reform.
[506] See Bruun 1958 (with dating revisions in RIC VII: 151-158); RIC VII: 48; Wienand 2012: 299-304; Wienand 2011. Note that Wienand particularly asserts how this reform and consequent debasements in the years immediately after the reform had the effect of quickly driving the older Constantinian, Licinian and tetrarchic coinage, including the Sol types, out of circulation.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
4	317-324	Licinius I	308-324	Vota wreath **[4]**	27.3%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	17.3%
		Licinius II	317-324	VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories **[34]**	14.4%
		Constantine I	306-337	BEATA TRANQVILLITAS **[39]**	11.5%
				SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	6.0%
		Crispus	317-326	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	5.7%
		Constantine II	317-340	VIRTVS EXERCIT Vota standard **[37]**	4.8%

second *decennalia* (VOT XX); then Constantine's third *decennalia* (VOT XXX); as well as the *quinquennalia* (VOT V) and subsequently first *decennalia* (VOT X) of Crispus, Constantine II and Licinius II (again less frequently), who had all become Caesars in 317.[507] These *vota* types constitute an average of 31.1% of Period 4 site-finds in the west and 29.2% in the east.[508] Significant here is that these *vota* types were biased towards depicting the Constantinians over their Licinian counterparts.[509] Within the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, 92.8% of Period 4 *vota* coinage with identifiable emperors depicts the Constantinians.[510] These *vota* coins' primary message was the general presentation of Constantinian longevity, but also included the more subtle insinuation of victory through the *corona civica* that borders the central inscription.[511] Much like the Sol coinage of Period 3, this *vota* coinage saw the same surprising penetration of Constantinian propaganda beyond its initial region of production.

4.1.3.2. Continuity: Jupiter, Divine Comes *in the Licinian East*

Except for the pan-imperial diffusion of Constantine's simple type **[4, 5]** *vota* coins, the base-metal coin profiles of western and eastern sites are very different. The mints of the east and west, under the control of the opposing regimes of Licinius and Constantine, produced coinage

[507] RIC VII: 56-61; Bruun 1954a. For a summary of the various *vota* types of Period 4 see Mattingly 1951: 221-229.
[508] See Appendix 6, Period 4. These figures are the sum of the average scores for the simple *vota* types **[4, 5]**. With regard to these western and eastern averages, it should be noted that there is some distortion because the west-east divisions are made on the basis of wider administrative divisions that remain coherent within the context of the Late Roman period at large (see **§2.3.3**, n.258). However, for Period 4 they do not directly correlate to the regions controlled by Constantine I and Licinius I because of the former's seizure of much of the Balkans and the Greek peninsula after his victory at Cibalae in 316. Consequently the eastern sites under Constantine's control now had site-finds profiles more in accordance with his western territories rather than their traditional eastern neighbours. This is visible, for example, when comparing the Period 4 iconographic type averages of Eastern Group 3.1 (Greece) and Eastern Group 1 (Syria-Palestine and Alexandria), whereby in the former there is a considerably higher degree of Constantinian *vota* coins and other western types (for example, **[4, 5, 34, 37]**) than specifically Licinian types (for example, **[8, 155]**). Nevertheless, even if the eastern figure for the *vota* types **[4, 5]** is adjusted to be an average of only the sites that remained in Licinian control, this predominantly Constantinian *vota* coinage still comprised 22.8% of Period 4 coins.
[509] See Bruun 1954a, which highlights several factors influencing the higher representation of Constantinians over the Licinians on the *vota* coinage. Among these is the fact that Licinian obverses were not issued on these *vota* types at the western mints of *Londinium*, *Trier* and *Lugdunum*. At the Italian mints of *Rome*, *Ticinum* and *Aquileia* depictions of the Licinii ceased in 321 with the transition from depicting the *soluta* of the Caesars' quinquennial vows (Vot V) to the *suscepta* of their decennial vows (Vot X). Moreover, even at the mints that did depict the Licinii there is evidence of production bias. For example, at *Rome* between 317-321 Constantine's obverse was struck at all four active *officinae*, whereas obverses of the co-Augustus Licinius I and the three Caesars were primarily struck at a single *officina* each. See also Bruun 1958: 33 for comparable neglect by a number of Constantinian mints in depicting the Licinii on his Sol coinage prior to this.
[510] Of the combined 446 *Vota* wreath and *Vota Mvlt* wreath types **[4, 5]** from Period 4 with identifiable emperors on their obverses, there are 162 coins of Constantine I (36.3%), 152 of Crispus (34.1%) and 100 of Constantine II (22.4%), while only twenty-three of Licinius I (5.2%) and nine of Licinius II (2%). This can also be further supplemented by the coin-level data from the hoards dataset derived from the CHRE database (see **§4.1.4.1**), that provides a comparable picture to the site-finds dataset though in lower numbers. Of the sixty-one *Vota* wreath and *Vota Mvlt* wreath types, there are twenty-five coins of Constantine I (41%), sixteen of Constantine II (26.2%), fifteen of Crispus (24.6%), three of Licinius I (5%) and two of Licinius II (3.2%). Note too that in both these samples there is no geographic bias within diffusion of these types related to the regions which these emperors controlled.
[511] For further discussion of the *corona civica* as a means of espousing imperial victory see **§4.1.1.1** above and Appendix 5, n.110.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
4	317-324	Licinius I	308-324	Vota wreath **[4]**	27.3%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	17.3%
		Licinius II	317-324	VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories **[34]**	14.4%
		Constantine I	306-337	BEATA TRANQVILLITAS **[39]**	11.5%
				SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	6.0%
		Crispus	317-326	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	5.7%
		Constantine II	317-340	VIRTVS EXERCIT Vota standard **[37]**	4.8%

with markedly different points of emphasis, and which formulated expressions of 'MR' in alternate ways. 'MR' messages in the east show much continuity with Period 3, as is insinuated by each period's similar 'MR' score (Fig.4.6, Period 3 = 72.8%, Period 4 = 69.4%). While the production of Sol coinage only continued for the first year of Period 4 (317-318), type **[22]** still constitutes a surprising 7% average of Period 4 coins at eastern sites. The IOVI CONSERVATORI types **[8, 155]** were continually produced at Licinian mints until the emperor's final fall in 324, and consequently became the period's most recurrent base-metal iconographic motif in the east. These victory-granting Jupiter types provide on average 34.3% of Period 4 site-finds at eastern sites.[512] Their conservative expressions of Jupiter demonstrate Licinius's continued attempts to formulate his own claims of legitimacy within the existing tetrarchic structures, as the rightful heir of Diocletian and Galerius, who had made him Augustus.[513] In the east, the main paradigm through which 'MR' was expressed, as an aspect of the emperor's divine *comes*, remained unchanged.

4.1.3.3. Innovation: Non-Tetrarchic Virtus *and* Victoria *in the Constantinian West*

Conversely, the site-finds in the western empire saw major change in the form of 'MR' messages and their explicitness. Juxtaposed to the eastern sites, the western average 'MR' score substantially declined between Periods 3 (85.9%) and 4 (55.1%) (Fig.4.6). The main cause was the replacement of the overt *virtus*-embodying Sol coinage with a number of iconographic types that promoted Constantinian *vota* messages. As discussed in **§4.1.3.1**, in the first instance projections of Constantine's militant divine companion gave way to simple *vota* types **[4, 5]**. The large proportion of type **[4, 5]** coins, combined with their more subtle expression of imperial victory through the peripheral *corona civica*, is partially responsible for the overall suppression of the Period 4 western average 'MR' score. However, other *vota*-focused coinage also pervaded the west in Period 4. Between 318-324 western mints produced three other important iconographic types:

— The VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories type **[34]** (318-320).

— The VIRTVS EXERCIT *Vota* standard type **[37]** (319-321).

— The BEATA TRANQVILLITAS type **[39]** (321-324).

[512] When this figure is adjusted to an average of only the eastern sites still under Licinian control, the proportion of IOVI CONSERVATORI coins **[8, 155]** rises to 44.7%.
[513] On Licinius's parallel adherence to tetrarchic tradition and aesthetic in sculpture see Smith 1997. On the elevation of Licinius to Augustus by Galerius at the conference of Carnuntum in 308 see Barnes 1981: 32-33.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
4	317-324	Licinius I	308-324	Vota wreath **[4]**	27.3%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	17.3%
		Licinius II	317-324	VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories **[34]**	14.4%
		Constantine I	306-337	BEATA TRANQVILLITAS **[39]**	11.5%
				SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	6.0%
		Crispus	317-326	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	5.7%
		Constantine II	317-340	VIRTVS EXERCIT Vota standard **[37]**	4.8%

Types **[37, 39]** promoted the recurrent cycle of the Constantinian emperors' quinquennial and decennial celebrations, whereas type **[34]** invoked the *vota publica*, annual public vows undertaken by the *Populi Romani* that requested continued divine support for their emperor.[514] Alongside the simple type **[4, 5]** *vota* coins, these three types comprised a wider *vota* series. They encapsulate the principal aspects that the state sought to promote amongst the wider populace of the western empire during Period 4, comprising on average 82.9% of coinage at western sites.[515]

Of these additional *vota* coins, the BEATA TRANQVILLITAS type **[39]** was most responsible for western sites' declining Period 4 'MR' scores, more so than the type **[4, 5]** coins. Type **[39]**'s iconography of the globe and *vota*-inscribed altar provided a *vota* message, as well as invoking the emperor's divinely inspired foresight (*providentia*) as a guarantee of stability.[516] Its production marked the return of a well-represented non-militaristic iconographic type in the west, following the end of the *genius* types' **[3, 212]** production in Period 3. Produced only at *Londinium*, *Trier* and *Lugdunum*, type **[39]** comprises on average 24.7% of western site-finds issued in Period 4, although this figure is particularly swayed by the type's total dominance at the north-western sites, where it constitutes between 41.2-55.6% of Period 4 coinage.[517] The prevalent production of this non-militaristic type is a key reason that the average proportion of coins expressing *any* 'MR' messages at western sites is suppressed, at 72.8%. By contrast, on average 93.3% of Period 4 site-finds at eastern sites made some degree of reference to 'MR'. Type **[39]** coins had a minimal presence in the east (on average 2.4% of Period 4 coins),[518] while eastern mints produced no non-militaristic types to detract from their divine *comes* coinage.

In the remaining two Constantinian *vota*-espousing types (**[34, 37]**), we find more overt 'MR' messages. Moreover, both iconographic designs foreshadow some of the key motifs used to espouse the *virtus* and *victoria* propaganda categories throughout the remaining Late Roman period. On the VIRTVS EXERCIT type **[37]**, below a legend exclaiming the army's *virtus*, a *vota* message was emblazoned on a *vexillum* (military standard) and flanked by two bound captives, who further insinuated imperial military victory. Because of this type's blatant praise

[514] RIC VII: 56-58.
[515] See Appendix 6, Period 4.
[516] On the long-established links between *providentia* and altar iconography see Scott 1982. On the globe as an expression of imperial *providentia* see Appendix 5, n.78.
[517] See Appendix 6, Period 4. The BEATA TRANQVILLITAS type **[39]** constitutes an average of 45.9% of Period 4 coins at the British sites, as well as 41.2% and 55.6% of Rotomagus's and Augusta Treverorum's Period 4 coinage respectively. This compares to comprising on average only 17.3% of Period 4 coinage at Western Group 2 sites. As for the three Italian sites, only a single example of type **[39]** was excavated at Verona, none at Tridentium and just two at Rome.
[518] See Appendix 6, Period 4.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
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				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	17.3%
		Licinius II	317-324	VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories **[34]**	14.4%
		Constantine I	306-337	BEATA TRANQVILLITAS **[39]**	11.5%
				SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	6.0%
		Crispus	317-326	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	5.7%
		Constantine II	317-340	VIRTVS EXERCIT Vota standard **[37]**	4.8%

of the military, Patrick Bruun has suggested it was a donative, to be given to the troops at an imperial anniversary.[519] Type **[37]** only constituted on average 6.2% of western sites' Period 4 coinage. However, in its expression of *virtus* we find the re-establishment of iconographic features once prevalent on the coinage of the Principate, which would again rise to prominence during Phase 2 (330-408) now that Constantine had ceased drawing on the divine *comites.* The coinage's direct appeal to the soldiers would later underpin the narrative of Constantinian triumph that dominates Period 6 (330-340) base-metal coinage across the empire.[520] The *vexillum* and bound captives would become the main attribute and adjuncts (except for perhaps the *hasta/*spear) to be persistently depicted alongside the emperor from the mid-fourth century as the principal expressions of imperial *virtus*.[521]

The VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories type's **[34]** iconography and inscription also established another major recurrent aspect of later base-metal coinage: Victory. Type **[34]**, comprising an average of 20.9% of Period 4 western site-finds, was the first Late Roman iconographic type issued in a significant volume to make the figure of Victory its 'protagonist', instead of an attribute or adjunct. In the absence of traditional deities and personifications, Victory would survive as a malleable figure, still as a goddess to pagans but as an abstract ideal for Christians.[522] In this dual guise Victory, alongside the 'protagonist' emperor, would later dominate Late Roman base-metal coinage in Phase 2 (330-408). Recurrent presentations of the protagonist Victory or twin Victories on base-metal coinage would get underway in Period 6 (330-340 – Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**),[523] before becoming the central iconography of Period 7 (340-348) coinage (VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories **[64]**).[524] Yet it was with this VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories type that the figure of Victory began to re-emerge after years of neglect by the Tetrarchy.[525]

In sum, most Period 4 site-finds found in the western empire belonged to a multi-type *vota* series. Within this wider series though, in the years immediately after Constantine abandoned

[519] RIC VII: 58.
[520] See **§4.2.2**.
[521] See **§4.2.3.2**.
[522] Betjes 2022: 153-228, esp.160-162 on the continued use and interpretation of Victory on coinage after the 318 iconographic 'purge'.
[523] See **§4.2.2**.
[524] See **§4.2.3.1**.
[525] Betjes 2022: 198. For other near-contemporary depictions of Victory as a base-metal coin's 'protagonist', note that the sole figure of Victory was presented on the VICTORIA CAESS NN Victory w/ wreath and palm type **[138]**, issued at *Thessalonica* only in 319, as well as with a captive as adjunct slightly later on the SARMATICA DEVICTA type **[40]** (322-325) and ALAMANNIA DEVICTA type **[41]** (324-325). Victory as protagonist also appeared on two of the early iconographic types of the new mint of Constantinople, the LIBERTAS PVBLICA **[48]** and CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE **[142]** types between 326-330. However, all these types are exceedingly rare, in combination contributing only ten coins to the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. They would not have provided much visibility to the increasingly pre-eminent position of Victory on numismatic iconography.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
4	317-324	Licinius I	308-324	Vota wreath **[4]**	27.3%
				IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) **[8]**	17.3%
		Licinius II	317-324	VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories **[34]**	14.4%
		Constantine I	306-337	BEATA TRANQVILLITAS **[39]**	11.5%
				SOLI INVICTO COMITI **[22]**	6.0%
		Crispus	317-326	IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS **[155]**	5.7%
		Constantine II	317-340	VIRTVS EXERCIT Vota standard **[37]**	4.8%

a centuries-long tradition of depicting anthropomorphic deities on the coinage, we find the formulation of a variety of methods for projecting 'MR'. These methods drew on pre-existent iconography and language and delineated some of the main means by which 'MR' messages were communicated for much of the rest of the Late Roman period.

4.1.4. Phase 1 (284-324): Site-Finds Versus Hoards

One final point to consider, specifically regarding Phase 1, is whether site-finds alone accurately capture the proportional volumes of different iconographic types, from which the 'MR' theme score is calculated. As raised in **§2.1.2.1**, in the years immediately following Diocletian's monetary reform (c.294-296), the different denominations of this newly implemented base-metal system were used in distinct ways by the Roman populace across the empire. The higher denomination *nummi* were predominately used as a form of wealth storage and hoarded. The lower denomination fractional radiates were used more freely in everyday transactions, so were lost more frequently and constitute most site-finds.

The distinct contents of hoards and site-finds during the late third and early fourth centuries are particularly pertinent to this evaluation of the 'MR' theme, given the distinct messages presented on the *nummus* and fractional radiate. The non-militaristic *genius* designs **[3, 212]** were restricted to the *nummus*, showing a preference for promoting traditional religious practice and pan-Roman identity.[526] Meanwhile, the fractional radiate principally presented the emperors' relationship with a specific deity, underpinned by the receiving of victory. Because of the bias towards the lower denomination fractional radiate in the site-finds database, we must acknowledge it likely inflates some 'MR' scores by suggesting that a larger proportion of divine *comes* coins were produced relative to other contemporary types. Conversely, the prevalence of non-militaristic messages exclusive to the *nummi* may be understated in the site-finds database. A brief comparison of Phase 1 site-finds and hoards is warranted here to ascertain the extent of divergence between these data types, and the impact on the site-finds database's ability to accurately reflect the base-metal coin propaganda most visible to the wider populace.

[526] See **§5.1.1** for detailed discussion of the *genius* types and their political content.

4.1.4.1. The Parameters of Analysis: Defining Chronological Divergence and Convergence of Site-Finds and Hoard Composition

To further contextualise the Phase 1 'MR' scores, I first compiled a secondary database of base-metal coins from hoards.[527] Then, to ascertain exactly which Phase 1 periods experienced diverging site-find and hoard compositions, I compared the pan-imperial 'MR' scores derived from the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset and hoards dataset (Fig.4.8). The primary point of difference is shown to be Period 2 (294-307), immediately after Diocletian's reforms. The details behind these significantly different 'MR' scores will be delineated below, but the headline here is that the data confirms the biases already anticipated above. More *nummi* with non-militaristic messages in hoards substantially suppress 'MR' messages in the hoards dataset.

Although to a much lesser extent, there is also a notable deviation between the datasets' scores for Period 3 (307-317) that merits attention. The circumstances of base-metal coin production in Period 3 were very different from Period 2, so this deviation is somewhat surprising. By 307 Diocletian's multi-denominational base-metal system had effectively

[527] This hoard database was initially compiled using the available coin-level data from the CHRE project (downloaded on 14/04/2023) and includes all coins minted between 294-330. Period 1 has been excluded given the low quantity of the site-finds data (as addressed in **§4.1.1.1** above) and the sole issuing of radiates so that it avoids the divergence in hoards and site-finds introduced by Diocletian's reforms. This provided a dataset of 2,926 coins from seventy-nine hoards, although the coverage of western hoards was notably poor for Periods 2 and 3 in particular, providing only a combined ninety-five coins. This is despite western hoards being extremely well known for these periods and therefore required some degree of addressal. As such, I collected coin-level data for a further 2,284 coins from seven tetrarchic era western hoards already on the CHRE database but that were lacking detailed per-coin information. Two of these were from Britain (YEWDON VILLA, Hoard ID59, King 1980b and DOWNSIDE, Hoard ID1859, Minnitt 1992), one from Germany (BITBURG-ERDORF, Hoard ID20601, Weiller 1991), two from France (SELTZ 1930 5, Hoard ID12490, Amandry 1979, and COL DU CHAT, Hoard ID12491, Gautier 1979), one from Northern Italy (SCARNAFIGI 1987, Hoard ID15049, Barello et. al. 2016) and one from Portugal (MONTE MOZINHO 1948, Hoard ID17656, Lira 1985). Selection of these hoards was made on a geographic basis with the intent to provide a more broadly representative picture of the western empire when combined. This increased the total hoards dataset to 5,209 coins from eighty-six hoards. This breaks down to 2,990 coins for Period 2, 1,929 coins for Period 3, 248 coins for Period 4 and 42 coins for Period 5. The coinage of the British Empire (Carausius and Allectus) was not included, as these are beyond the scope of this thesis. Upon downloading the CHRE data, it was manually cleaned as best as possible, with dating of coinage refined and revised where necessary to make it consistent with the periodisations and dating choices applied to the site-finds database (see Appendix 3). Each coin was then assigned its corresponding iconographic type to allow comparable analysis with the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. While the data in the CHRE is open-sourced and the product of multiple contributors, it is checked at a number of steps by both the contributor and project team to eliminate most cases of human input error. All data used in the supplementary hoard database is derived from validated hoards that have undergone this review process, so may be assumed to be largely accurate digitisations of the publications from which the hoards are derived. However, whereas several methods have been applied to normalise the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, such as the cleaning mechanism to remove extremely rare and distorting types as well as other adjustments that give sites with very different quantities of coins equal weighting (as per Appendix 2), no similar methods of normalisation are applicable to the hoards. It is not possible to adjust the data to compare the occurrence of iconographic types as percentages within their period of issue on a per-hoard basis, in comparison with the per-site basis of the site-finds dataset, because the sample sizes of most hoards are too small to derive meaningful figures from. Consequently, there is an unavoidable bias within the hoards dataset whereby the results are more influenced by the profiles of larger hoards. Because of both the limited sample size of the subsidiary hoards dataset and the skewing of the data towards results derived from the larger hoards, it is only suitable for detecting broad trends or points of general agreement/disagreement with the more refined results of the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.

collapsed, with base-metal mints almost exclusively producing *nummi*. Bias towards the *nummus* or fractional radiate in different depositional contexts therefore does not apply to Period 3. However, during Period 3 the *nummus* was subject to severe debasement, especially between 308-313.[528] This created a situation in which a *nummus* produced at the beginning of Period 3 had a much higher intrinsic value than a *nummus* issued at the end, despite both retaining the same fiduciary value. As will be explored below, the result was that the earlier Period 3 *nummi* were hoarded and the later Period 3 *nummi* were more openly used and lost, becoming site-finds.[529] How this consequently created some divergence in 'MR' scores between the site-finds and hoards will also be explained.

Both Period 2 and 3, timespans when base-metal coins of different intrinsic values had been issued, saw divergence between the 'MR' scores of the site-finds and hoards datasets. However, by Period 4 (317-324) these 'MR' scores had become very similar – there is less than a ten percentile point variation. Period 4 was also when, following the 318 monetary reform,[530] the base-metal coinage came to consist of a single *nummus* denomination, issued at a stabilised weight standard. It marks a clear point from which the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset on its own can accurately encapsulate the proportions of base-metal iconographic types being issued. The only significant variation had become inter-regional, rather than compositional differences related to whether the context of deposition was purposeful (hoard) or accidental (site-find).

4.1.4.2. Period 2 (294-307)

If we compare the proportional volumes of iconographic types between the two datasets for Period 2, the striking difference is that the hoards are dominated by the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* type **[3]**. As per Figure 4.9, type **[3]** constituted 72.9% of all Period 2 hoard coins. Otherwise, four further *nummus* types are prevalent in the hoards: the SACRA MONETA type **[7]** (10.4%), GENIO AVGG ET CAESARVM NN type **[2]** (4.2%), PROVIDENTIA DEOR(VM) QVIES AVGG type **[9]** (4.2%) and the SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL/AVCTA KART type **[126]** (2.8%). Together, these five *nummus* types encompass almost all Period 2 coins in the hoard dataset (94.5%), and none provide any reference to 'MR'. By contrast, the victory-endowing CONCORDIA MILITVM Emperor and Jupiter type **[1]**, which comprises nearly half of Period 2 site-finds (48.9%), has negligible presence in the hoards (1%). The

[528] RIC VI: 100; Hendy 1985: 457-458, 461; Haley 1989: 91-98; Harl 1996: 163.
[529] This was effectively a text-book example of the economic principle of Gresham's Law in action, in which, because they were treated as having the same face value, the 'bad' coinage of lower intrinsic value drove the 'good' coinage of higher intrinsic value out of circulation. On Gresham's Law see Mundell 1998.
[530] See **§4.1.3**, n.506 above.

most proliferous fractional radiate type, which consistently depicted the emperor receiving the *victoriola*, was consciously absent from contemporary hoarding.

A regional comparison only reinforces that denominational variance between hoards and site-finds was a pan-imperial phenomenon. Both eastern and western hoards are unsurprisingly dominated by the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI *nummus* **[3]**, although it is less prevalent in western hoards (62.9% versus 77.7%). The SACRA MONETA type also makes up a significant and highly comparable proportion of western and eastern hoards (11% and 10.1%). There are some minor differences between western and eastern hoards, but variation in iconographic types largely conforms to the geographic proximity model. For example, the GENIO AVGG ET CAESARVM NN type **[2]** of *Cyzicus* is far more prevalent in eastern hoards, whereas the SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL/AVCTA KART type **[126]** of *Carthage* recurs more frequently in western hoards. What remains persistent is these are all *nummi*. By contrast, the western *vota* fractions (type **[4]**) that comprised on average 34.9% of western site-finds are virtually absent from western hoards (0.5%), while the CONCORDIA MILTIVM fractional radiates **[1]** that dominate the eastern sites barely appear in eastern hoards (1.2%). Despite some minor type variations, *nummi* are the prevailing Period 2 coins found in western and eastern hoards.

For Period 2, neither site-finds nor hoards alone sufficiently reflect the base-metal propaganda programmes of the contemporary state. Rather, by considering these two data sources in combination, we can better appreciate that the 'MR' theme was less prominent than captured in Figures 4.3-4. The *nummi*, with their typically non-militaristic messages of divine association and religious duty, were far more proliferous and visible across the empire than the coin-loss record suggests.

4.1.4.3. Period 3 (307-317)

Moving on to Period 3, by this point Diocletian's multi-denominational base-metal system was failing. Although production of fractional radiates had effectively stopped, the *nummus* was subject to several weight reductions between 307-313 (from c.8.1 grams to c.3.38 grams), followed by relative stability until the 318 re-tariffing and beyond.[531] Much like Period 2, Period 3 encompasses another stretch of years when coins of significantly different intrinsic value were being produced and were treated differently by the Roman populace. There are roughly twice as many higher-weight, pre-313 *nummi* than lower-weight, post-313 *nummi* in the hoards

[531] On the declining weight standard of the *nummus* particularly between 305-313, before a relative period of stability until 318 see RIC VI: 100-105; RIC VII: 8-13; Caza 2021: 38-40. The implementation of this decline in weight standards was noticeably more delayed at the eastern mints, where most of the Period 3 coins in the hoards dataset are derived from.

dataset.[532] By comparison, no bias for higher quality coinage is visible in the site-finds data, where coins from the later years of Period 3, after the weight reductions, are more numerous.[533] The presence of different Period 3 coins in the site-finds and hoards datasets is not as clear-cut as the distinct denomination-based patterns evident for Period 2. Nevertheless, the material worth of Period 3 coins did still influence whether they were hoarded or used and lost, causing some divergence in hoard and site-find compositions.

How did this continued compositional difference affect the ability of either dataset to reflect the prominence with which the 'MR' theme was promoted in Period 3? The pan-imperial 'MR' scores (Fig.4.8) of the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset and hoards dataset suggest considerably less difference than in Period 2. However, consideration of the Period 3 coins in hoards and site-finds of western and eastern imperial territories reveals significant regional differences in the ability of a single data type to assess the 'MR' theme's likely prevalence.

Even if the Period 3 coins that comprise western site-finds and hoards often differed in size and weight, they still often bore the same political messages. The *nummus* iconographic types produced at western mints during Period 3 were very consistent. Constantine's Sol Invictus coinage **[22]** was issued between 307-318, so for the entirety of Period 3, as was the now exclusively western GENIO POP ROM type **[3]** (307-317). Together, as per Figure 4.10, types **[3, 22]** comprise the majority Period 3 coins in both the site-finds (79.1%) and hoards (79%) datasets.[534] Consequently, the Period 3 'MR' scores for the western site-finds and hoards are very similar, (84.9% and 77.1% respectively). Iconographic standardisation and continuity in the west during Period 3 meant general conformance in the propaganda content of site-finds and hoards. Regardless of its apparent bias toward the later and lighter coinage, the site-finds dataset can reliably represent the proportions of different propaganda categories on Period 3 base-metal coinage found in western contexts.

It is eastern site-finds and hoards that continue to present very different pictures of how frequently 'MR' messages were promoted on Period 3 coins. The average 'MR' score for site-finds from eastern sites is 72.8%, while the eastern hoards' 'MR' score is only 33.7%. What differentiates these data types is the presence or absence of several non-militaristic *genius*

[532] The Period 3 hoard data consists of 1,280 coins produced between 308-313, compared to 649 coins produced between 314-317. If these figures are normalised to per-annum average production levels (dividing total coins by total years in the period) to enable comparison between two periods of differing length then the earlier period coinage outweighs the later period coinage at a ratio of 213.33 : 162.25.

[533] The Period 3 site-finds data consists of 512 coins produced between 308-313, compared to 669 coins produced between 314-317. Again normalising these figures to per-annum average production levels to enable comparison between two periods of differing length here produces a significantly different ratio of 85.33 : 167.25, with the coins from the post-weight reductions period clearly subject to a much greater degree of loss.

[534] The figures quoted here combine the individual total of types **[3, 22]** in the 'cleaned' site-finds and hoards datasets. Individually, the overtly militaristic type **[22]** constitutes most Period 3 coins in site-finds (70%) and hoards (62.3%), The non-militaristic type **[3]** is the second most frequently requiring Period 3 type in western contexts, comprising on average 9.1% of site-finds and 16.7% of hoard coins.

type variations **[212]**, all of which still depict type **[3]**'s semi-nude *genius* with *cornucopiae* and *patera*, but with legends identifying it as the *genius* of the Augustus, Caesar or Imperator.[535] Type **[212]** coins were almost exclusively produced at eastern mints.[536] They remain almost entirely absent from either western site-finds (0%) or hoards (0.4%) (Fig.4.10). In eastern contexts the difference is far more pronounced. **[212]** types dominate eastern hoards (61%), while comprising a much lower 10.4% of Period 3 eastern site-finds. Notably, these *genius* types were produced only between 308-314, and all except one of the 370 **[212]** types in the hoards dataset pre-date the final 313 weight reduction. The prevalence of the non-militaristic type **[212]** coins in hoards, which is the primary contributor to a depressed 'MR' score, is because they are of earlier issue and higher weight. Conversely, the site-finds consist of both Constantine's *virtus*-espousing Sol coinage **[22]** and the eastern emperors' victory-touting IOVI CONSERVATORI types **[8, 155]**.[537] Unlike the **[212]** coins, all three of these latter types were issued throughout Period 3, and so appear on the later, lighter coinage that more often occurs in the site-finds dataset. The takeaway here is that, much like Period 2, we are faced with a situation where the eastern site-finds or hoards alone can only partially reflect contemporary propaganda.

[535] Note that **[212]** has been used as a grouped type for **[15, 16, 17]**, which all have the same iconography of *genius* with *cornucopiae* and *patera* but just with adjusted legends, as well as **[19, 20, 21]**, who all have the same legend (GENIO AVGVSTI) but include minor iconographic variations with the *patera* replaced in the *genius*'s hand by either a *victoriola*, head of Sol or head of Serapis. When recorded as individual types their numbers were too low and they were removed from the site-finds database by the cleaning mechanism (discussed in Appendix 2, **§2.3**). They have been collectively assigned to this new type to ensure their prominence is captured as a broad iconographic series. In the hoard dataset at least, the standard iconography of *genius* with *patera* (types **[15, 16, 17]**) is most prevalent (258 examples). There are a notable number of the Sol-head subtype **[20]** (109), but only a single Serapis-head subtype **[21]** and two victoriola subtypes **[19]**.

[536] Most of these *genius* subtypes of type **[212]** – the standard GENIO CAESARIS **[15]** and GENIO AVGVSTI **[16]** coins – were produced at all the eastern mints, though type **[16]** was also briefly produced at *Aquileia* between 312-313 (RIC VI Aquileia 130-132). The GENIO IMPERATORIS subtype **[17]** was only produced at *Heraclea*, *Cyzicus*, *Antioch* and *Alexandria*. The GENIO AVGVSTI iconographic variants with *victoriola* **[19]** and Sol-head **[20]** where produced only at *Antioch*, and the Serapis-head variant **[21]** only at *Alexandria*. Based on the below tabulation of the identifiable examples of all these type **[212]** coins from both the site-finds and hoards datasets it is evident that they were produced in higher volumes at the more easterly mints of the Propontus and the *Oriens*:

	Site-Finds Qty	Site-Finds %	Hoards Qty	Hoards %
Aquileia	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Siscia	3	4.1%	6	1.6%
Serdica	1	1.4%	7	1.9%
Thessalonica	5	6.8%	26	7.0%
Heraclea	15	20.5%	38	10.3%
Nicomedia	16	21.9%	32	8.6%
Cyzicus	8	11.0%	111	30.0%
Antioch	15	20.5%	138	37.3%
Alexandria	10	13.7%	11	3.0%
TOTAL	73		370	

[537] As per Fig.4.10, types **[8, 22, 155]**, all 'MR' promoting designs, combine to provide on average 74.9% of Period 4 site-finds at eastern sites. See **§4.1.2** for further discussion of these types in eastern contexts.

4.1.4.4. Interpretation: The Site-Finds Database's Limitations and Capability

What is clear from this evaluation of the variation between the collected hoard and site-find data for Phase 1 is that differences in composition occurred when coinage of determinably different intrinsic values were either produced simultaneously (Period 2) or within a short number of years (Period 3). Higher-value coinage was actively withdrawn into hoards while the lower-value coinage was more freely used and lost. The compositional bias this creates within site-finds and hoards data then becomes relevant to analyses of base-metal coin propaganda when the coins of different denominations or noticeably different intrinsic values also bore distinct political messages.

As we have seen, these distinctions in political messages between the *nummus* and fractional radiate were certainly the case in Period 2. A variety of *nummus* designs were issued, but their common feature was an absence of 'MR' messaging, whereas the fractional radiate, particularly prevalent in the east, typically portrayed the emperor receiving victory from Jupiter (type **[1]**). As for Period 3, the restricted issuing of non-militaristic *genius* coins (type **[212]**) in the eastern empire and on the earlier, higher-weight *nummi*, created a discrepancy specifically between the political profile presented between eastern site-finds and hoards.

Regarding Periods 2 and 3, there are evidently some issues around how accurately the site-finds dataset can reveal to us the proportion in which the state intended to depict 'MR' messages on base-metal coinage, compared to how frequently it intended to instead present non-military messages on the under-represented *nummi*. It must be accepted that the site-finds dataset's pan-imperial and macro-regional 'MR' scores are certainly over-inflated for Period 2. Furthermore, the proportion of coins depicting 'MR' messages is likely inflated for Period 3 eastern sites.

However, the extent to which the state intended to promote different iconographic types is *not* the same as the proportions in which different iconographic types were seen by the wider populace. It is important to consider that because the non-militaristic *nummi* were usually hoarded, and removed from circulation, their political messages were no longer being engaged with. Moreover, these *nummi* circulated only very briefly before ending up in hoards, limiting the wider population's opportunities to interact with their specific aspects of imperial propaganda. Figure 4.11 demonstrates the rate that *nummi* issued in Periods 2 and 3 were removed from active circulation, based on the *terminus post quem* of the hoards they belonged to.[538] By the start of Period 3, over a third (35.1%) of Period 2 coins had already stopped

[538] The data used in Figure 4.11 consists only of *nummi* from the hoards dataset detailed in **§4.1.4.1**, n.527 above. The non-*nummi* (twelve fractions, four imitation *nummi* and one silver argenteus) have been removed, leaving a total of 2,990 Period 2 *nummi* and 1,922 Period 3 *nummi* from ninety-three hoards.

circulating, rising to over three-quarters just two years later (309). Almost all Period 2 *nummi* were in hoards by the beginning of Period 4 (317), with each coin having circulated for less than a decade on average (9.6 years).[539] Period 3 *nummi* were hoarded even faster. Each coin averaged just 5.6 years between production and hoarding, with only half (44.9%) still circulating by Period 4, and virtually all in hoards by Period 5 (324-330).[540]

At their time of issue, the non-militaristic *nummi* would have diluted the prevalence with which 'MR' messages were promoted on base-metal coinage. Yet their time in active circulation and opportunity to communicate their propaganda was limited. This starkly contrasts with the major militaristic iconographic types of the mid- to late-fourth century, which often continued to circulate well into the fifth century, and whose messages would have had far more influence on public perceptions of imperial power.[541] The 'MR' scores for Periods 2 and 3 derived from the site-finds dataset certainly are over-inflated in terms of what the state sought to communicate, and also how prevalent 'MR' messages may have been when the non-militaristic *nummi* were being initially issued and distributed. However, the speed in which the non-military message-bearing coins were hoarded – removed from the sphere of daily exchange and interaction – indicates that the site-finds dataset is accurate in its projection of the proportions that 'MR' messages were seen and experienced by the wider imperial populace, and captures the legacy of the actually witnessable propaganda on the base-metal coinage.

4.1.5. Phase 1 (284-324) Overview

During Phase 1, from the rise of the dyarchy to the demise of the tetrarchy, 'MR' messages on base-metal coinage were typically expressed either alongside, in subordination to, or entirely displaced by, the 'Divine Association' theme. The predominant iconographic types presented the emperors' divine *comites* as well as the *genius* of the Roman People or emperors to promote messages of divinely ordained imperial rule and correct religious practice respectively. As the tetrarchy began to break down after 307, the messages of correct religious practice, rare examples of coinage that espoused no 'MR' messages, gave way to more pervasive presentations of divine companions. These deities' relationship with their associated emperors was underpinned by notions of endowing victory. While presentation of Jupiter, the supreme tetrarchic deity, continued under the eastern emperors, Constantine I's ongoing

[539] A Period 2 *nummus*'s average time in circulation has been produced by calculating the average number of years between the latest production date and *terminus ante quem* for every Period 2 coin in the hoards dataset.
[540] The average time in circulation has been calculated as per n.539 above, but with Period 3 coins instead.
[541] For analysis of the prolonged circulation of these later types, such as the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type **[69]**, the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive type **[82]** and variations of the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive type **[100, 200, 201]**, see **§4.2.4.1, §4.2.4.2** and Figures 4.17, 19-20.

successes in the west resulted in the continued expansion of coinage that presented Sol as his new, supporting deity. Of note is that Sol was a consciously non-tetrarchic deity, whose martial character placed more overt emphasis on imperial victory attained through military might (*virtus*).

Throughout Phase 1 the empire was recurrently administered by different emperors in the east and west. During Periods 1 (284-294) and 2 (294-307), this division was a purposeful and co-ordinated sharing of the empire by colleagues, but during Periods 3 (307-317) and 4 (317-324), partition was more often the result of intra-imperial competition and conflict. With this changing and tumultuous political scene as its background, the proportional presence of different iconographic types frequently varied between the western and eastern territories, as demonstrated during Periods 2, 3 and 4. In all three periods, the east was distinguished by the high presence of coinage that depicted the divine companion Jupiter bestowing victory upon the emperor (types **[1, 8, 155]**).

By contrast, in the west base-metal iconographic types varied from period to period. In Period 2 an assortment of non-militaristic *nummi*, including the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]**, were more common than in the east. These were supplemented by an intermittently issued *vota* fractional radiate (type **[4]**) that made only passing reference to 'MR' through its wreath border. During Period 3 focused promotion of the emperor's divine *comes* also came to be the dominant form of propaganda produced at western mints, in the form of the Constantinian Sol coinage (type **[22]**). In period 4, the Sol coinage was abandoned, and significant iconographic innovation took place in the Constantinian west. Several base-metal iconographic types (**[4, 5, 34, 37, 39]**) were produced to emphasise *vota* messages, though types **[34, 37]** were particularly significant in their simultaneous espousal of 'MR' messages. These two types restored the usage of earlier, non-tetrarchic visual motifs to communicate 'MR' messages, which continued to be used on base-metal coinage for much of the remaining Late Roman period: the protagonist figure of Victory, the military standard and defeated captives. While types **[34, 37]** were not necessarily statistically significant within the body of Late Roman site-finds at large, they were important as iconographic proto-types.

In closing the analysis of Phase 1, the site-finds dataset has been compared with hoards data. The purpose was to interrogate the reliability of the site-finds dataset alone to accurately reflect the proportional presence of the 'MR' theme. This comparison makes clear that the composition of the site-finds record and hoards varies when looking at coinage that dates to periods that included the production of base-metal coins of determinably different intrinsic values (Periods 2 and 3). The Period 2 and Period 3 coins found as site-finds or in hoards often differ in their designs, which also causes the two data types to produce notably different

'MR' scores. Consequently, I have concluded that the 'MR' scores from the site-finds dataset are likely over-inflated for Period 2 in general, and for Period 3's eastern sites. Nevertheless, I have argued that these biases only affect the site-finds dataset's representation of what the Roman state *intended* the wider populace to see and in what volumes. It does not undermine the same dataset's ability to measure those aspects of imperial propaganda that stayed in active circulation and remained most visible to the wider population.

4.2. Phase 2 (Periods 6-11, 330-408) – 'Military Representation' from the Commemoration of Constantinople to the Death of Arcadius

Phase 2 covers much of the remainder of the fourth century into the early fifth. Following the 'MR' theme's near total absence on Period 5 base-metal coinage (324-330), the political contents of Phase 2's coins are markedly distinguishable from Phase 1. Not only did some expression of 'MR' appear on almost every Phase 2 coin (Fig.4.3), but these messages were almost always an overt and central aspect of the coin's propaganda (Fig.4.4), rather than appearing subordinate to another facet of imperial rulership ideology.[542] The shift between Phases 1 and 2 was due to a change in the predominant visual motifs used to express 'MR' messages. The companion deities of Phase 1 had ceased to be depicted on Constantinian coinage from 318, and, except for Victory, personifications also became exceedingly rare.[543] This change in iconographic policy was given pan-imperial application following the establishment of Constantinian hegemony in 324. Following the brief hiatus from espousing 'MR' messages between 324-330, an alternative visual vocabulary for presenting *virtus* and *victoria* was developed, distinct from the preceding tetrarchic motifs.

The component parts of these alternative means of projecting 'MR' messages were not innovative. They drew on the wider corpus of earlier Roman numismatic iconography and inscription, much of which had been side-lined during the tetrarchic period.[544] However, in Period 6 (330-340), when these revised formulations of 'MR' messages were first issued, the existing library of iconography and inscriptions was used in a unique manner. Like the remainder of Phase 2, during the 330s overt expressions of *virtus* and *victoria* predominated. Nevertheless, these expressions were also distinctively formulated in a multi-coin series, deploying iconography with interrelated messages to participate in a cross-media narrative of

[542] The exceptions here are Periods 7 (340-348) and 10 (378-388), whose depressed 'MR' scores are the result of two separate series of simple *vota* coinages also issued during these periods. For further discussion see **§4.2.3.3**.
[543] See **§4.1.3**, n.506 above.
[544] On the provisional re-establishment of some of the core 'MR' motifs on Constantinian coinage in Periods 4 (318-324) – namely Victory, the military standard and bound captives – see **§4.1.3.3**.

Constantinian triumph. A decade of exceptional propaganda provided a revisionist account of Constantine's success in the civil wars of the 310s and 320s, and his subsequent reunification of the empire. Of particular interest is how the Period 6 coinage intentionally drew the public's attention *to* intra-imperial politics and conflict. Consequently, Period 6 will be discussed in isolation from the rest of Phase 2 in **§4.2.2**, forming one of the three major sub-sections that comprise **§4.2**.

The second major sub-section, **§4.2.3**, will provide an overview of the remainder of Phase 2 (Periods 7-11, 340-408). Although intra-imperial turmoil in the forms of religious disagreements, civil wars and usurpations continued, we shall see that, in marked contrast from Period 6, propaganda related to contemporary politics became increasingly obscured on the base-metal coinage. From the 340s 'MR' messages assumed a heavily formulaic format. The earlier use of various traditional deities and personifications was replaced by the recurrent issuing of two figures: Victory and the emperor. They were respectively used as the embodiment of *victoria* and *virtus*. Through the analysis here I will posit a central contention of this thesis, that from the mid-fourth century, the state intentionally changed the political function of the base-metal coinage. Emphasis was shifted to presenting genericised messages of imperial competence, aimed at placating the wider imperial citizenry while simultaneously ensuring their lack of awareness and non-participation in contemporary politics. This change in base-metal propaganda policy – what I have dubbed the 'politics of exclusion' – will then be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Finally, **§4.2.4** will provide a more thorough examination of the major iconographic types issued between Periods 7-11 and their 'MR' messages. Of primary interest here will be the Late Roman state's increased tendency to depict violence on base-metal coins. I will show how the performance of violent actions by the emperor and Victory emphasised 'MR' messages and undermined the simultaneous presentation of other ideological aspects like imperial beneficence. Furthermore, I shall consider the impact of increased production volumes during Phase 2 and the consequent dominance that images of imperial military violence would attain within the circulating body of base-metal coinage available to the wider Roman populace.

4.2.1. Phase 2 Inter-Regional Comparison

Before continuing to the analysis of Period 6, one final general feature of Phase 2 should be briefly explored: the overall uniformity in 'MR' messages. Unlike Phase 1, which required consistent consideration of the variations between western and eastern sites, little inter-regional deviation is visible from 330-408. As per Figure 4.6, the difference in average 'MR'

scores at western and eastern sites is generally minimal between Periods 6-11. Apart from the significant difference in Period 7 (39.7 percentile points), the next largest deviation is Period 10's difference of 7.3 percentile points. The Phase 2 average per-period difference (again excluding Period 7) is just 3.8 percentile points. Conversely, Phase 1 has a substantially higher per-period average difference of 17.3 percentile points between western and eastern sites. In combination, the individual categories of *virtus* and *victoria* ensured the relatively equal presence of 'MR' messages across the empire on the Phase 2 base-metal coinage.

Even when we inspect the individual category scores for *virtus* and *victoria* at western and eastern sites, pan-imperial similarity remains evident. In the case of *virtus* scores (Fig.4.12), Period 10 shows the greatest east-west variation within Phase 2 (18.1 percentile points), but the overall average difference between the western and eastern sites is 9 percentile points (including Period 7). It is proportionally much lower than Phase 1's 14.2 percentile point difference. The *victoria* scores (Fig.4.13) are broadly analogous. Period 10 is again the key difference (13.9 percentile point change between the western and eastern averages), and Phase 2's average difference of 7.8 percentile points contrasts with Phase 1's much higher average 15.3 percentile point gap. As with the 'MR' theme's scoring, the *victoria* average difference again excludes Period 7, which is visible as the main timespan of regional deviation during Phase 2. Period 7's west-east variation will be addressed in **§4.2.3.3** below. Otherwise, the following Phase 2 analysis does not require the same degree of inter-regional comparison as Phase 1. Further investigation of geographic variation is only raised when deemed relevant.

4.2.2. Period 6 (330-340): A Triumphalist Constantinian Narrative of Reunification and Victory Monuments

Period 6 marks the beginning of the continuous, overt presentation of 'MR' messages on the base-metal coinage that would last into the fifth century. However, the exact form that the espousal of imperial *virtus* and *victoria* took in Period 6 is notably unique and specifically Constantinian in character. The iconographic types issued throughout the 330s promoted a personalised propaganda programme of Constantinian triumph. Significantly, it was arguably the final time that a base-metal coin series was used to directly mirror, and present to a wider non-elite audience, the key political narratives also visible in the elite literature of the imperial court. That is to say, Period 6 was the last time the base-metal coinage was used alongside other media to present a political narrative on a pan-imperial scale – both spatially and hierarchically – that sought to incorporate the wider imperial populace in the dialogue of intra-

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
6	330-340	Constantine I	306-337	GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard **[53]**	51.5%
		Constantine II	317-340	GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards **[52]**	23.7%
		Constantius II	324-361	Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**	10.5%
		Constans	333-350	Wolf and Twins w/VRBS ROMA Obv. **[50]**	9.2%

imperial politics.[545] As we shall see in **§4.2.3**, following Period 6, 'MR' messages were deliberately genericised, giving the wider imperial audience little insight into the specific activities of their emperors or the struggles between them.

4.2.2.1. An Interconnected Series: Contextualising the GLORIA EXERCITVS, CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA iconographic types

One iconographic type of prolonged and slightly amended issue dominates the coinage produced in Period 6. Over 70% of Period 6 coinage in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, from both eastern and western sites, consists of the GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards and One standard types **[52, 53]**, minted from 330-335 and 336-340 respectively.[546] In isolation, types **[52, 53]** present generic Roman military triumph and a targeted appeal to the soldiers, to secure their loyalty to Constantine I.[547] However, the two standard type was first issued alongside the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]**, all struck in commemoration of the inauguration of Constantinople on the eleventh of May 330. The introduction of these celebration issues was carefully coordinated across all active mints, which simultaneously ceased issuing Period 5 types and implemented a reduced weight standard for the new *nummi*.[548] The effort made to produce these new iconographic types concurrently across the empire indicates that they collectively constituted an inter-related series, presenting a conjoined programme of political messages.[549] It was a three-type series that defined the base-metal coinage for the 330s and the remainder of Constantine I's life.

[545] The exceptions are the coinage of some of the later usurpers. Vetranio's HOC SIGNO VICTO ERIS type **[190]**, complete with the emperor holding a *labarum*, clearly looked to publicly assert his legitimacy through affiliation to the Constantinian dynasty and distinction from contemporary usurper Magnentius. Similarly, by using the inscription REPARATIO FEL TEMP on his coinage **[84, 85, 208]**, Procopius was echoing the moniker of the late Constantinian household's FEL TEMP REPARATIO series, a dynasty to whom he claimed relation (Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 26.6.1; Zosimus, *New History* 4.4.2), with one of his types also depicting a *Chi-Rho* **[85]**. In these examples, the usurpers sought to use their coinage to make public exclamations of legitimacy, involving the wider audience in their bid for power through specific dynastic messages. However, these coins are extremely rare. No coins of Vetranio and only three coins of Procopius are present in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. Later usurper coinage, of emperors like Magnus Maximus and Eugenius, also produced their own iconographic types that referred to imperial renewal and new dynastic establishment, especially through the invoking of *spes* (for example, types **[92, 130]**). Nonetheless, these later usurper coinages, both in their inscription and iconography, generally adhered to the more generic formulations of imperial power on base-metal coinage being used by legitimate emperors. They did not show significant deviation or originality in their expressions of legitimacy as earlier usurpers had.

[546] Together, types **[52, 53]** constitute a western average of 71.2% and an eastern average of 78% (Appendix 6, Period 6).

[547] Ramskold 2011: 131. Caza 2021: 100 also indicates how this imagery, with its reference to the *signiferii* (standard bearers), who managed military camps' savings banks, may have been intended to make a more material appeal for army loyalty through a reminder that it was the emperors who paid them.

[548] Caza 2021: 85; Ramskold 2011: 129-130. The change in the base-metal weight standard was from 1/96 to the Roman pound to 1/132.

[549] The inter-relation of these coins is further evidenced by the production of two hybrid types, which paired the obverses of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]** with the reverse of the GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard type **[53]** (Caza 2021: 88). These hybrids were rare, but were produced at *Thessalonica*, *Heraclea*, *Constantinople*, *Cyzicus* and *Nicomedia*, under the direction of the regional *rationalis summarum*. They were official coins, not accidently produced mules. The interchangeability of the obverse and reverse iconography indicates that the individual designs of types **[49, 50, 52/53]** were not considered mutually exclusive, but were tied together as part of an inter-dependent political narrative.

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Despite a further debasement of the *nummus* in 336,[550] offering with it another opportunity to alter the existing predominant iconographic types, issuing of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types continued unchanged. Only the GLORIA EXERCITVS design was altered, from two standards (type **[52]**) to one (type **[53]**), because of the *nummus*'s reduced flan size.

The CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]** do constitute a lower proportion of Period 6 coinage than the GLORIA EXERCITVS types. Like types **[52, 53]**, types **[49, 50]** were issued across the entire decade, but constitute on average only 27.5% of the Period 6 coinage at western sites, and 14.3% at eastern sites.[551] Nevertheless, they still had a substantial enough presence for us to assume a contemporary audience's familiarity with the iconography. The abundant imitation of types **[49, 50]** in Britain, alongside the GLORIA EXERCITVS coins, further stresses widespread knowledge of these designs.[552] Consequently, because of their interconnection, we must consider the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA coins in conjunction with the GLORIA EXERCITVS coinage to ascertain what the state most wished to publicise during Period 6.

4.2.2.2. Locative Victories: Expanding the Interpretation of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types

Let us consider the precise political messages of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]**. Together, types **[49, 50]** have conventionally been interpreted as promoting Constantinople as a new imperial capital, comparable to Rome.[553] However, it should be briefly acknowledged here that there has been much debate within modern scholarship regarding the actual status originally granted to Constantinople. In particular, it has been contested that Constantine's equation of Constantinople as equal to Rome was an anachronistic revision by later writers, which allocated the new city a level of prestige not established until Theodosius I settled there in the 380s.[554] Surveys of wider literary sources have nevertheless ascertained

[550] Caza 2021: 86. The change in the base-metal weight standard was from 1/132 to the Roman pound to 1/192.
[551] See Appendix 6, Period 6.
[552] On the prevalent copying of these iconographic types in Britain, and the significant difficulties in clearly distinguishing between official coins and imitations see Reece 2012: 22-23; Ponting 1994: 23, 97; King 1978: 45. Keeping these difficulties in mind, from the British sites in the site-finds database an average of 44% of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]** have been identified as imitation coins. Just the imitations of types **[49, 50]** comprise on average 15.5% of all Period 6 coins from British sites. By comparison, copies of the generally commoner GLORIA EXERCITVS types **[52/53]** together constitute on average 17.3% of British sites' Period 6 coins. The similar volumes in which types **[49, 50]** and **[52/53]** were imitated points to copiers great familiarity with the entire three-type coin series.
[553] Caza 2021: 105; RIC VII: 49.
[554] For fifth and sixth century sources emphasising Constantinople's premier status from its foundation, see Zosimus, *New History* 2.30; Philostorgius, *Ecclesiastical History* II.9; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* I.16; Hesychios of Miletus, 1, 42. Note that Dagron 1974: 21 and 46-47 indicates how these fifth century writers, as a matter of course, assigned to Constantine 'all that is considered…as indispensable to the establishment of a Roman capital', though that they were also producing their works in a very different political landscape from 324-330, in which Constantinople had long since attained its position as the pre-eminent imperial capital. Conversely, Constantine's equation of Constantinople as equal to Rome remained surprisingly absent in contemporary writers' discussions of the city's foundation (see Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 48, Praxagoras of Athens; Aurelius Victor,

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that there were contemporary references to Constantinople as a 'second Rome'.[555] Moreover, numismatic analysis of the initial types produced at *Constantinople* between 326-330 further indicates that Constantine intended to equate his new capital with Rome.[556] In light of the ever-increasing evidence, we can accept that types **[49, 50]** were partially intended to project, on a pan-imperial scale, a message of the cities' comparable status.

However, the elevation of Constantinople's status as an imperial capital has generally been treated as the only purpose of types **[49, 50]**, ignoring another important function of Constantinople's foundation. Constantinople was not just meant to be a new imperial capital to rival Rome, but a victory monument, renovated and consecrated to glorify Constantine's defeat of Licinius and reunification of the empire.[557] The city itself was located close to the sites of Licinius's downfall. The reverse iconography of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS type, depicting Victory on a ship's prow, referred to the great naval victory against Licinius's fleet at the Hellespont on 24th September 324, which secured the crossing to Asia Minor and the final successful battle against Licinius at Chrysopolis.[558] More than just a generic visualisation of a sea battle though, Maria Alföldi has compellingly argued that the Victory iconography was based on the Liburna, an actual monument set up in Constantinople to commemorate the naval victory.[559] This was comparable to the Wolf and Twins depicted on the reverse of the VRBS ROMA type, which was not only a scene inherently tied to the foundation of Rome but

De Caesaribus 41). Also adding to the questioning of Constantinople's acclaimed status in the fifth century texts is that after Constantine I the city remained a relative political backwater. Until Theodosius I's accession in 379 emperors spent an average of less than one month a year in the city, the longest stretch of which was Procopius's occupation during his usurpation from September 365 to May 366 (Dagron 1974: 77-86; Croke 2010: 241). On Constantinople's elevated status as *the* imperial capital and a major Christian centre under Theodosius I see Nicholson 2009 and Croke 2010.

[555] On argumentation for framing Constantinople as a "second Rome" rather than "new Rome" see Bühl 1995, 37-40. See also Calderone 1993. Of particular interest are the contemporary references made by Optatianus Porphyrius, *Carmina* 4.6 and 18.34, which refer to Constantinople as 'another Rome' and Rome itself as Constantinople's sister. Optatianus proved highly aware of other fundamentally Constantinian political elements and incorporated references to these in his poetry. Most notable is use of *Chi-Rho* imagery (*Carmina* 19; Squire 2015, esp. 108-115), and that the *Carmina* was effectively a panegyric composed to ingratiate Optatianus with Constantine I in order to earn reprieve from exile (Edwards 2005). It seems most probable that his lexical choices around the framing of Constantinople were also reflective of the language used within Constantine's court. In the intervening years, following the emperor's death but prior to the further elevation of the city by Theodosius, Constantine's aim to equate Constantinople with Rome was also referenced in Julian, *Orations* 1.8b-c; *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* 30 and Eutropius, *Breviarium Historiae* 10.8. Furthermore, the literary paradigm of emperors founding their equivalent to Rome was a more general feature of the period. Diocletian is reported as having sought to make Nicomedia comparable to Rome (Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 7; Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 22.9.3) and Constantine I is reported as previously having called Serdica 'my Rome' (Peter the Patrician, *History* F211).

[556] Ntantalia 2001; Olbrich 2006; Ramskold 2011; Ramskold and Lenski 2012.

[557] See *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* 30 (trans. Stevenson 1996), which states both how 'Constantine*, in memory of his famous victory,* called Byzantium Constantinople…and wanted it to become the equal of Rome' (my italics). Constantinople's foundation as a *nikopolis*, a 'victory city', has been discussed by Stephenson 2009: 192-194, 339; Barnes 2011: 112-113; Speidel 2024: 107-110. See also Wienand 2012: 393-396 for discussion of Constantinople's foundation specifically with reference to Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic tradition of establishing victory cities.

[558] Caza 2021: 107; Alföldi 1947: 11.

[559] Alföldi 2004.

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a sculpture present in the city.[560] Just as type **[50]** presented the Wolf and Twins statue as the embodiment of Rome and its foundation, type **[49]** depicted the Liburna statue to symbolise Constantinople's foundation upon a great naval victory.

Moreover, selecting the site of Byzantium was significant. The ancient Greek city had become a residence of Licinius following defeat in his first civil war with Constantine. Constantine selected the site not only to commemorate his final victory at a nearby and tactically beneficial location. He was actively usurping the space of his rival, glorifying his triumph by overwriting the very landscape and space that Licinius had built on and occupied.[561] Constantine had done the same in Rome after defeating Maxentius, asserting control over the city by erecting new buildings and monuments.[562] The seizure of Maxentius's space was even extended to the coinage, where Constantine was promptly cast as 'liberator of our city [Rome]' (LIBERATORI VRBIS SVAE), a deliberate twisting of Maxentius's self-proclaimed title of 'defender of our city' (CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE).[563] The early building activities at Constantinople parallel Constantine's activities in Rome, including the construction of the Column of Constantine, an alternative form of Roman triumphalist architecture to Rome's Arch of Constantine. Placed in the forum of Constantinople, it was a statement of Constantinian supremacy over the urban topography, secured through his personal, divinely inspired victory.[564] Mirroring his triumph over Maxentius, the creation of Constantinople from the ruins of Byzantium shows the claiming of an opponent's space. These are the elements also promoted through types **[49, 50]**. In

[560] Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita* 10.23; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 15.20; Cicero, *In Catilinam* 3.8.19, *De Divinatione* 1.20, 2.47. See also Osborne 2020: 148-150 for discussion of the *Lupa Capitolina*, a Wolf and Twins statue once displayed outside the Lateran Palace, and later at the Capitoline hill, that is believed to be either from the fifth century BCE or a High Medieval casting of an earlier ancient statue. For a study of the history of the she-wolf motif on Roman coinage as a symbol of *romanitas* from the republican period onward see Dulière 1979, 1: 138-191.

[561] See Barnes 2011: 111-113 and Stephenson 2009: 192-194, 339 on Byzantium as Licinius's capital and his own personal restoration of the city, which was erroneously credited to Septimus Severus by later Byzantine authors. Note too how Barnes, counter to Noel Lenski (2008: 267), stresses how Constantine I did not simply rename and reconstruct Byzantium but effectively demolished the existing city, including its temples, before ritually remarking the perimeter of the city himself.

[562] See Stephenson 2009: 141-158 for Maxentius's building campaign at Rome and Constantine's own construction programme as a means of eradicating his now defeated rival's legacy. This process of Constantinian eradication and usurpation of the Maxentian building legacy is best summarised by Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26: 'In addition, all the monuments which Maxentius had constructed in magnificent manner, the temple of the city and the basilica, were dedicated by the senate to the meritorious services of Flavius [Constantine]'. For comprehensive analysis of Constantine's activities in Rome see Ross Holloway 2004. For discussion of the epitome of this triumphalist architecture, the Arch of Constantine, see Peirce 1989; Ross Holloway 2004: 19-56.

[563] For Constantine on base-metal as 'liberator' see the LIBERATORI VRBIS SVAE type **[132]**. As RESTITVTOR VRBIS SVAE, see RIC VI Rome 312. For Maxentius as 'defender' on base-metal coinage see the CONSERV VRB SVAE type **[12]**, CONSERV VRB SVAE Roma and emperor in temple type **[187]** and CONSERV VRB SVAE Roma and Victory type **[192]**. Also see RIC VI Rome 177-178 and RIC VI Ostia 2-3 for Maxentius as CONSERVATOR VRBIS SVAE on gold aurei. A further example of Constantine usurping Maxentius's space on coinage, is the FVNDAT PACIS base-metal type **[141]**. It was also issued at *Rome* in 313, as part of the commemoration of Constantine's victory, bearing Constantine's image on the obverse and Mars, Maxentius's preferred divine companion, on the reverse. Constantine appears to have actively sought to seize possession of Maxentius's divine patron too. On Maxentius's affiliation with Mars see **§4.1.2.1**, n.498.

[564] On Constantine's initial building activities in Constantinople see Dagron 1974 and Mango 1985. On the forum of Constantine see Bauer 1996: 168-187. On the column of Constantine see Bardill 2012: 28-36; Bauer 1996: 173-177; Fowden 1991.

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envisioning Rome and Constantinople on the coinage, the state was promoting the sites of Constantine's greatest victories, where he had erased his rivals and imprinted himself on the physical landscape.

4.2.2.3. Beyond the Coins – A Wider Revisionist Narrative of Constantinian Victory

Having argued that types **[49, 50]** were commemorations of specific Constantinian victories, I want to briefly set aside the coins and consider the wider political rhetoric of literary evidence formulated under Constantine I. It was his victories, and the two victories against Maxentius and Licinius in particular, that came to define the narrative of Constantine's reign and expressions of legitimacy. Yet it is a narrative that evolved, as is evidenced by the various orations of the *Panegyrici Latini*. The earliest panegyrics addressing Constantine I, *Pan. Lat.* VII (307), VI (c.310) and V (311/312), notably predate any of his major military victories. Consequently, all three speeches claimed Constantine was legitimate because of his imperial heritage, through blood and marriage. Meanwhile, Constantine's possession of *virtus* was only assured on the basis that his relatives had been militarily successful.[565] There was then a substantial shift in *Pan. Lat.* XII (313) and IV (321), following the victory over Maxentius, whereby Constantine's legitimacy was now entirely based on the evidence of his own prowess. Maxentius was framed as an illegitimate tyrant and Constantine's victory cast as for the benefit of the *res publica,* bringing unity and stability. This conception of a triumphant militant emperor, who throws down tyrants in a quest to reunite the empire, also underpinned the *Vita Constantini* and became the defining final expression of Constantinian power.[566]

This triumphalist portrayal of Constantine I was a revisionist narrative. It was expanded gradually in line with Constantine's achievements, not formulated from his early reign. The expansion and accommodation of new successes is further reflected in Constantine's *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints*, delivered in April 325 at Nicomedia to the bishop Eusebius and his congregation.[567] The emperor encapsulated his personal understanding of success as orientated around 'deeds of valour, victories, [and] triumphs over my enemies'.[568] In Constantine's *Speech*, as the last emperor standing, he extended his list of triumphs, including the defeat of Licinius 'in several successive battles',[569] and classified all vanquished emperors

[565] See, for example, *Pan. Lat.* VII.2-5; *Pan. Lat.* VI.2-8; *Pan. Lat.* V.2-5.
[566] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.9. On this fundamental paradigm of victory against tyrants, and the construction of fallen emperors as tyrants through the victory of successful emperors both under the Constantinian dynasty and beyond, see Omissi 2018. See also Wienand 2012: 483-505 on the formulation of Constantine as the eternal victor and triumphator particularly after 324.
[567] See Barnes 2011: 113-120 for a comprehensive overview on the validity of this source, the location and date of the speech.
[568] Constantine, *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints* 22, (trans. Barnes 2011: 116). Note that this is the same framing of imperial success, in the forms of *virtus* and *victoria*, so prevalent in the later *Panegyrici Latini* and on the Period 6 base-metal coinage.
[569] Constantine, *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints* 25.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
6	330-340	Constantine I	306-337	GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard **[53]**	51.5%
		Constantine II	317-340	GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards **[52]**	23.7%
		Constantius II	324-361	Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**	10.5%
		Constans	333-350	Wolf and Twins w/VRBS ROMA Obv. **[50]**	9.2%

who persecuted Christianity as 'tyrants'.[570] Moreover, it included a contrived allusion to Maxentius sympathising with these eastern persecutor tyrants, allowing Constantine to bring the eastern audience's attention to his previous victory at Rome, which was otherwise irrelevant.[571] The *Speech* reflects the Constantinian state's desire to persistently push a specific narrative to all audiences.

The reframing of Constantine's eradication of tyranny differed from Nazarius's more limited presentation of Constantinian victory in 321, only a few years earlier.[572] Nazarius had focused on Constantine's triumph over the tyrant Maxentius (312) but avoided any reference to the more recent success over Licinius at Cibalae (316). The omission was likely due to the existing truce between Constantine and Licinius in 321, making any celebration of Constantinian success during their first civil war uncouth. Again, it shows the reality of an evolving narrative of Constantinian propaganda that did not simply pedal messages of imperial reunification and victory from the outset.[573] Nevertheless, by the 330s the culminating narrative of Constantinian victory against tyranny had been consolidated and revised to present the inevitable rise of Constantine and his reunification of the empire.

*4.2.2.4. Contextualising the CONSTANTINOPOLIS, VRBS ROMA and GLORIA EXERCITVS types **[49, 50, 52/53]***

Back to the coins. The revised literary narrative of Constantinian triumph and reunification provides an important framework for interpreting the predominant three-type base-metal series of Period 6. The 'second Rome' interpretation of types **[49, 50]** alone fails to accommodate the GLORIA EXERCITVS coinage introduced at the same time. Alternatively, all three types are better contextualised, and their interconnection reflected, when read as part of Constantine's wider political narrative. On the GLORIA EXERCITVS types **[52, 53]** two soldiers stood together, projecting ideas of military success and unification under Constantinian rule after years of division and civil war.[574] Simultaneously, the depictions of

[570] Constantine, *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints* 22. A further example of this revisionist history is in the panegyrical account of Constantine's reign by the contemporary pagan Praxagoras of Athens (see Barnes 2011: 195-197). Praxagoras focused primarily on Constantine's defeat of Maxentius and then Licinius, who were both presented as oppressive and cruel rulers. By contrast, Lactantius's *On the Death of the Persecutors*, whose account only covers up to 312, condemned Maxentius (18, 44), but presented Licinius as a semi-heroic partner to Constantine and foil to the tyrant Maximinus Daia. See also Usherwood 2022: 115-116 for discussion of revisionism within Eusebius's work, particularly across the various editions of his *Ecclesiastical History* issued in 313, 315, 324 and 326, in which there is the adjusted presentation of Licinius from Constantine's co-emperor to an insane tyrant.
[571] Barnes 2011: 119.
[572] *Pan. Lat.* IV.
[573] For further discussion of the evidence for genuine collaboration between Constantine I and Licinius both before and after their first civil war, and therefore that Constantinian hegemony was by no means inevitable, see Usherwood 2022: 111-128, esp.122-125.
[574] Hollard and López Sánchez 2014: 121-126 have even suggested that the two soldiers present the two reunited halves of empire under a new Constantinian dyarchy, with Constantine I ruling the east from Constantinople, and Constantine II ruling the west from Arelate (renamed in 328 as Constantina).

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
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		Constantine II	317-340	GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards **[52]**	23.7%
		Constantius II	324-361	Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**	10.5%
		Constans	333-350	Wolf and Twins w/VRBS ROMA Obv. **[50]**	9.2%

Roma **[50]** and Constantinopolis **[49]** advertised the sites of Constantine's two greatest military victories. Collectively, the series embodied Constantine's 'inevitable' reunification of the eastern and western empires.[575] The CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types not only sought to equate the former city with the latter. Rather, they participated in a broader programme to promote Constantine's two great victory monuments, where he threw down the tyrants threatening the empire and restored stability to the *res publica*.

Through the base-metal coinage, the victory monuments were propagated to a pan-imperial audience. Their presentation across the empire and to a wider public shows similarity to an earlier depiction of a major victory monument on coins. Base-metal coinage depicting Trajan's column appeared across the north-western empire, whereas other more specifically regional architectural coin types were limited to Italy and Rome, where they were most relevant.[576] These earlier examples help to emphasise that, throughout the Roman Empire's history, *victoria* messages were of great importance and had pan-imperial relevance. While Constantinople was physically adorned as a city of Constantinian victory, the base-metal coinage of the period was used as a vehicle to make the victory monument portable. The base-metal coinage enabled local propaganda to be escalated to a pan-imperial scale. Furthermore, in Period 6 we find the careful designing of base-metal propaganda, so that it disseminated the same multi-layered messages of victory as those spread to elite audiences through literature and oration.

4.2.2.5. Regional Prioritisation: A Western Promotion Strategy

A last aspect of the Period 6 coinage to address is an intriguing regional variation. While the pan-imperial propagation of the three-type series holds, there is a notably higher presence of CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types at western than eastern sites.[577] Moreover, of type **[49, 50]** coins with identifiable mints in the site-finds database, 68.4% and 65.3% respectively were produced at western mints, despite only constituting five of the thirteen different mints to produce these iconographic types.[578] By contrast, only 37.4% of all GLORIA EXERCITVS types **[52, 53]** with discernible mints were produced in the west. These figures suggest the western mints produced types **[49, 50]** in higher volumes, both in absolute

[575] The base-metal series' participation in the wider Constantinian triumphalist narrative is further supported by another iconographic type. Base-metal type **[197]** was also issued at *Constantinople* in 330, with Constantinopolis on its obverse and depicting Pax on its reverse. The affiliation of Constantinopolis with Pax again echoed that the city was founded on the basis of Roman peace, a benefit ultimately underpinned by the emperor achieving victory and the vanquishing his enemies (Cornwell 2017; 2020).
[576] Elkins 2015: 114-116.
[577] Types **[49, 50]** combine to contribute on average 27.5% of Period 6 coins at western sites, compared to an average of 14.3% at eastern sites (Appendix 6, Period 6).
[578] Of these western mints it is the two Gallic mints of *Trier* and *Lugdunum* that make the greatest contributions. *Trier* provides 41.3% of all the Constantinopolis types **[49]** and 34.1% of all Urbs Roma types **[50]**, while *Lugdunum* provides 13.2% and 13.7% respectively.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
6	330-340	Constantine I	306-337	GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard **[53]**	51.5%
		Constantine II	317-340	GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards **[52]**	23.7%
		Constantius II	324-361	Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**	10.5%
		Constans	333-350	Wolf and Twins w/VRBS ROMA Obv. **[50]**	9.2%

numbers compared to the east, and at proportionally higher quantities relative to the other iconographic types of the period. The result is that their specific political messages would have been more pronounced to the populace of the western empire.

An even sharper contrast emerges when comparing the proportional volumes of different Period 6 types at the two extremes of empire. Let us consider the British sites of the peripheral north-west, and the Eastern Group 1 sites with a firm connection to the Mediterranean core (Map 3). Substantially higher proportions of both types **[49, 50]** are visible at the British sites, together constituting on average 40.7% of Period 6 coinage.[579] Along with types **[52, 53]**, types **[49, 50]** are the only Period 6 iconographic types from British sites present in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. Given that coin-loss peaked at British sites during Period 6,[580] the three-type series dominates the *Britannia* diocese's overall Late Roman site-finds record. Conversely, the *Oriens* diocese generally lacked type **[49, 50]** coins. Their combined average of 8.9% at Eastern Group 1 sites is considerably lower than both the British sites and the western average.[581]

It is tempting to interpret these regional variations as deliberate audience targeting. As messages central to the constructed unitary victory narrative of Constantinian hegemony, the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types had pan-imperial relevance and were produced at all mints. Yet greater prioritisation was given to producing these types at the western mints. There, base-metal coins were utilised to promote Constantine's new capital amongst the western imperial citizenry, with whom Rome would hold greater ideological relevance. Furthermore, it spread the propaganda of Constantinian reunification and triumph into the empire's western periphery, beyond the areas it had any immediate political significance.

4.2.2.6. Period 6 Summary

Not only did most Period 6 coinage espouse overt 'MR' messages, but the vast majority also belonged to a prolonged three-type series. This series communicated a specifically Constantinian narrative of great military deeds and victory, through which the Roman Empire was saved from tyranny and legitimate imperial authority restored. It was a propaganda programme of the coinage spread across the empire, and especially into western territories. Yet the tale of the triumphant Constantine smiting down tyrants was developed and presented to all social echelons, in the literature and speeches of court and church as well as on the

[579] See Appendix 6, Period 6.
[580] See **§2.3.5.2**.
[581] This combined total of types **[49, 50]** compares roughly to the 7.3% of briefly issued Quadriga coinage **[56].** Note, however, that whereas type **[49, 50]** were continuously produced 330-340, type **[56]** was only issued between 337-340, as a commemoration coinage for the recently deceased Constantine I.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
6	330-340	Constantine I	306-337	GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard **[53]**	51.5%
		Constantine II	317-340	GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards **[52]**	23.7%
		Constantius II	324-361	Victory on Prow w/Constantinopolis Obv. **[49]**	10.5%
		Constans	333-350	Wolf and Twins w/VRBS ROMA Obv. **[50]**	9.2%

coinage. During Period 6, the base-metal coinage was selected to participate in a pan-imperial, inter-social and multi-media propaganda campaign. It was the last time the Late Roman state looked to use base-metal coinage in such a manner.

4.2.3. Periods 7-11 (340-408): The Return of Victory and Rise of the Emperor

We have seen that during the latter years of Constantine I's reign engagement with contemporary politics and political revisionism, aspects more associable with modern concepts of *deceptive* 'propaganda', were intrinsic elements of the base-metal coinage. However, they were also elements that soon disappeared from the base-metal coinage, only a few years after Constantine I's death (337), at the advent of Period 7 (340-348). Overt 'MR' messages continued to prevail on the iconographic types produced for the remainder of Phase 2, until 408. Yet formulations of the 'MR' theme changed. As per Figure 4.14, most site-finds produced during periods 7 to 11 bore reverse iconography that depicted one of two figures: either Victory or the emperor.[582] From Period 7, as we shall see, the western mints under Constans initiated the substantial production and re-popularising of Victory-focused coinage. In Period 8 (348-363), the use of the emperor too was re-established. He appears as the protagonist on 97.2% of the Period 8 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, primarily because of the dominant presence of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type **[69]** and SPES REPVBLICE type **[76]**.[583] From Period 9 (363-378) and even beyond the bounds of Phase 2, into Period 12 (408-425), Victory and the emperor co-existed as the two prevailing figures through whom the pervading 'MR' messages were communicated.

Within this sub-section of the Phase 2 analysis, I will further explore what characterised these precise expressions of 'MR'. I will first consider the Victory coins and their notable presentation of a generalised victory. Then I will demonstrate the state's proclivity to display the emperor in a specifically military guise. Additionally, I will briefly address the presence of two *vota* coin series in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset that date to Period 7 (340-348) and 10 (378-388). As Figure 4.14 also shows, these two series form the only major deviations from the explicit promotion of the 'MR' theme during Phase 2. Finally, I will end this sub-section by positing how the revised formulation of 'MR' messages, and even the diverging *vota* coins, reflect an amendment in how the state intended the base-metal coinage to function. It was a new policy,

[582] Note that in the instances of the high proportion of emperor coinage in Periods 1 (284-294) and 2 (294-307), this is not in the context of the emperor as sole protagonist, as is the case for the remaining periods. Rather the emperor appeared alongside a companion deity (usually Jupiter) and typically receiving a *victoriola* from that deity. These 'emperor and deity' types constitute over 99% of both the Period 1 and 2 'with emperor' types displayed in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. For further discussion of these 'emperor and deity' types see **§4.1.1**.
[583] See Appendix 6, Period 8. See **§4.2.4.1** for further discussion of these two types and the establishment of the emperor as a recurrent figure in the wider FEL TEMP REPARATIO series.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
7	340-348	Constantius II	324-361	VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories **[64]**	44.9%
		Constans	333-350	Vota Mvlt wreath **[5]**	44.6%
8	348-363	Constantius II	324-361	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]**	73.3%
		Magnentius	350-353		
		Constantius Gallus	351-354	SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
		Julian II	355-363		

which I have called the 'politics of exclusion', introduced from the mid-fourth century. The state looked to intentionally genericise the base-metal coin propaganda, aiming to restrict the information relayed to the wider populace.

4.2.3.1. The Return of Victory and its Genericisation

In depictions of Victory as an iconographic type's protagonist we find overt emphasis on *victoria*, the concept she embodies. The recurrent appearance of Victory on Roman imperial coinage, and especially her role in promoting individual emperors' specific successes, has recently received extensive attention from Sven Betjes.[584] Of particular interest here is how the usage of the personified Victory shifted in the mid-fourth century, following a period of little use under the tetrarchy. When the protagonist Victory once again appeared in large volumes on base-metal coinage, she came to stress a generic victory. Emphasis was now placed on the emperor as a permanent possessor of victory rather than victory being something tied to individual events.

The re-establishment of Victory as a protagonist had been foreshadowed during the reign of Constantine I, on the VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP Two Victories type **[34]**.[585] It was not until after his death that Victory stood front and centre on an iconographic type that received continuous and extensive production. In Period 7, the mints of the western empire under Constans's control heavily focused on promoting the authority of himself and his brother Constantius II, based on their possession of victory. This was done through issuing the VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories type **[64]** from 341-348.[586] Type **[64]** dominates at western sites, constituting on average 83.3% of their Period 7 site-finds.[587] The exact formulation of this type's iconography, with its twin Victories each holding a wreath and palm,

[584] Betjes 2022: 176-230. Also see Noreña 2011: 146-165 for Victory as a fundamental aspect of Roman politics and in the context of coinage during the Principate.
[585] See **§4.1.3.3**.
[586] There has been some debate within the field of Late Roman numismatics surrounding the issuing of base-metal coinage at western mints during Period 7. First forwarded by Kent in RIC VIII, and since supported by other pre-eminent numismatists such as Callu (1986: 184-198) and Reece (2002: 30; 2012: 23), is the argument that no coinage was produced at the western mints between 341-346. Under their dating, all VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories types **[64]** belong to the period 346-348. Kent's conclusions have however been questioned due to their reliance on British hoards. The dating used in this study, of Caza (2021: 129-130, 137), follows the argumentation of Depeyrot (1992: 63; 2001: I, 87-89). Depeyrot instead asserts that while hoard evidence suggests Britain may have suffered a decrease in coin supply during between 341-346, continental hoards indicate the western mints continued production at a slow, regular pace. Depeyrot's interpretation is largely supported by the site-finds database, as of the 2,604 Period 7 coins with known mints, 1,169 (46.6%) belong to western mints (here 'western' also includes *Siscia* and *Thessalonica*, which were also under Constans's control and producing his iconographic types). Also noteworthy is that, in terms of site-finds, the British sites do not seem to have been particularly poorly supplied when compared to other periods. Following per-annum adjustment of figures, on average Period 7 coinage constitutes 12.6% of all British sites' Periods 1-13 site-finds. This is slightly higher than the pan-imperial average of 11.7% and just below the western average of 13.3%.
[587] See Appendix 6, Period 7. See also RIC VIII: 33-34, which specifies that this focus on the category of *victoria*, through the figure(s) of Victory, was also a persistent feature of Constans's precious metal coinage.

Period(s)		Key Victory Types	Pan-Imperial Average
7	340-348	VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories **[64]**	44.9%
9	363-378	SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory **[81]**	52.9%
11	388-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive **[100, 200, 201]**	51.4%
		VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	15.5%

was new to imperial coinage, though the design was derived from Constantine I's VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP type **[34]**.[588] In what we may consider to be Constans's main base-metal type, we see the first major resurfacing of the protagonist Victory as a key motif for presenting 'MR' messages. The propaganda category of *victoria* so central to imperial rulership ideology could not have been expressed more clearly.

However, the twin Victories of type **[64]** remained unspecified and generalised. Shawn Caza has speculated that its initial issuing, in mid-341, may have referred to the contemporary external victories of Constantius II against the Scythians and Constans against the Franks.[589] Yet type **[64]** continued to be produced until 348, and unlike earlier types, had no indication in its inscription,[590] nor any distinct imagery,[591] to tie it to the emperors' earlier triumphs over barbarians. Even if Caza's interpretation is correct, the intervening years would have divested type **[64]** of its affiliations with any specific campaigns, converting it into a celebration of general imperial victoriousness.[592] The selection of twin Victories and an inscription similarly as unique as the iconography, advertising 'the victories of our Lords and Augusti', shows a deliberate effort to promote victoriousness as something shared between two concordant emperors. Unlike the previous period, Period 6 (330-340), when Constantine I's triumphalism was promoted through reference to the actual apogeic victories against other emperors, specific victories remained unreferenced. This particularly included the deliberate absence of references to further intra-imperial conflict, namely Constans's defeat of Constantine II upon the latter's 'invasion' of Italy in 340, which secured Constans's complete control of the western empire. Constans did not use the coinage to condemn his older brother when he took possession of Constantine II's western territories, in marked difference from Constantine I's own overt celebrations of reunification.[593] Nor was any reference made to the escalating

[588] Caza 2021: 137.
[589] Caza 2021: 139.
[590] For Late Roman base-metal types with inscriptions identifying specific victories, there are two clear examples. The SARMATIA DEVICTA type **[40]** celebrated Constantine I's defeat of the Sarmatians north of the Danube in 323. The ALAMANNIA DEVICTA type **[41]** celebrated Crispus's successful campaign against the Alamanni confederation on the Rhine in 323. For dating of these campaigns see Barnes 1982: 75, 83.
[591] The clearest examples of imagery on Late Roman base-metal coinage indicating specific campaigns are the CONSTANTINOPOLIS and VRBS ROMA types **[49, 50]** discussed in **§4.2.2**, whose reverses depicted public statues found at their respective sites.
[592] Also see Noreña 2011: 162-163 on how repeated issuing of Victory type coins worked to blur the boundaries between distinctive moments of victory and a generalised victory possessed by the imperial monarchy.
[593] The only evidence of any sense of condemnation on coinage is Herbet Cahn's suggestion that precious metal coinage depicting Constantine II was demonetised (Cahn 1987: 202), which would indicate a policy of subtle erasure rather than public defamation. Erasure of Constantine II is also in evidence on some inscriptions across empire, where the emperor's name has seemingly been removed: *CIL* 3.474 and 3.477 from Smyrna (Asia); *CIL* 3.5207 at Celeia (Noricum); *CIL* 5.8030 at Brescia (Italy) and *CIL* 8.12272 at Avita Bibba (Africa). It has been regularly asserted (see Hedrick 2000: xii; Flower 2006: xx, 5-9; Omissi 2016: 170-175) that the implementation of *damnatio memoriae* was typically actioned as attempts to revise the historical narrative rather than erase it, as was also evidenced in the above discussion of the Period 6 coinage (**§4.2.2.3**). Triumphant emperors were typically interested in using their defeated opponents as tools for advertising their own authority and legitimacy. It is notable that Constans's dealing with Constantine II demonstrates an alternative, subtler approach to erasure. There is one

Period(s)		Key Victory Types	Pan-Imperial Average
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9	363-378	SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory **[81]**	52.9%
11	388-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive **[100, 200, 201]**	51.4%
		VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	15.5%

tensions between Constans and Constantius II in the mid-340s.[594] Instead, the base-metal coinage of the western empire continuously presents a façade of ever-victorious imperial unity to the wider populace.

Moreover, the other Victory types produced throughout the remainder of Phase 2 continued promoting *victoria* in a strictly generalised manner. At two other times, during Periods 9 and 11, the protagonist Victory was highly favoured on newly produced iconographic types (Fig.4.14). The SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory type **[81]**, constitutes a per-site average of over half (52.9%) of Period 9 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.[595] Its inscription offered no clear connection to specific events, other than perhaps Valentinian and Valens's ongoing attempts to fortify the Germanic and Danubian frontiers.[596] 'SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE' is indicative of the growing trend on fourth and fifth century imperial coinage to repeatedly use bland slogans.[597] As for the imagery, Victory bearing a wreath was a very basic and well-established motif within Roman imperial coinage.[598] It made clear reference to the propaganda category of *victoria* and little else.

As for the Victory coinage of Period 11, the predominant design is that of the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive types **[100, 200, 201]**. Together these depictions of Victory holding a trophy and dragging a captive constitute a pan-imperial average of 51.4%.[599] Originally issued in 388 and with an inscription asserting the restored health of the *res publica*, types **[100, 200, 201]** have been interpreted as a celebration of Theodosius I's defeat of Magnus Maximus in the same year.[600] Other than the context of their original issuing and distribution, most likely as military *stipendium*, to the common soldiers,[601] there was nothing to associate types **[100, 200, 201]** with a precise event. Regardless of its relevance to the

example of a more 'active' public condemnation of Constantine II: though still unnamed, a rescript of Constans from April 340 refers to his deceased brother as 'the enemy of the state and of ourself' (*CTh*.11.12.1). The revisionist condemnation of Constantine II appears to have been more limited to later historical literary evidence. As William Lewis (2020) has recently argued, the vilification of Constantine II as an invader of his brother's Italian territories was a retrospective account pedalled by Constans's court, confined to the bubble of the 'elite', and captured primarily in their literary products. It was to cover up the fact that the Constans, the younger Augustus, had sent his soldiers to ambush Constantine II, who was senior Augustus and had every right to tour his unified empire, just as his predecessors had.

[594] On these internal hostilities between Constantius II and Constans see Baldus 1984: 98-103; Portmann 1999; Barceló 2004: 78-91. On the manifestation of this conflict and later reconciliation in the panegyrics of Themistius and Libanius see Greenlee 2020.

[595] See Appendix 6, Period 9.

[596] Vagi 1999: I, 534, 585.

[597] Betjes 2022: 175. The two other most prevalent examples from Phases 2 and 3 are GLORIA ROMANORVM (see types **[72, 82, 94, 99, 102, 103, 106, 108, 109, 110, 139, 151, 188, 243]**) and SALVS REIPVBLICAE (see types **[97, 98, 100, 117, 171, 200, 201]**).

[598] Caza 2021: 132, 271.

[599] Appendix 6, Period 11. Note there are also a few other Period 11 simple Victory with wreath types with slogan inscriptions – types **[61, 167, 171]** – which together comprise an pan-imperial average of 17.4%.

[600] Caza 2021: 316; Doyle 2015: 164.

[601] Moorhead 2012: 615.

Period(s)		Key Victory Types	Pan-Imperial Average
7	340-348	VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN Victories **[64]**	44.9%
9	363-378	SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory **[81]**	52.9%
11	388-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive **[100, 200, 201]**	51.4%
		VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	15.5%

defeat of a usurper, the inscription was not unique, having recently appeared in a very different context, on the coinage of Theodosius I's first wife, Flacilla.[602] The continuous issuing of these types at all eastern mints between 388-395 also increasingly disassociated them from a single event, transforming the inscription into a slogan of Theodosian rule.[603] Regarding the iconography, Victory, the captive and the trophy were all staples of the semantic system and depicted in a conventional, unremarkable manner.[604] There was nothing to differentiate this Victory from any other.

Types **[100, 200, 201]** were indicative of a wider phenomenon. Other iconographic types have also been connected to specific imperial successes because of their issue date, but again lack any explicit identification of these events. The state was aware of the mechanisms of base-metal coin distribution, and even intended for this coinage to reach the wider populace.[605] The lack of reference to specific events in the inscription or iconography of the Phase 2 victory coins was deliberate. Once we look beyond their original distribution in a precise context, usually to the army, once they were in the hands of the wider populace, the purposeful lack of specification points to an intended understanding of generalised victory.

4.2.3.2. The Rise of the Emperor, Virtus *Personified*

The second figure to recurrently appear on base-metal coinage from the mid-fourth century was the emperor. In contrast to the protagonist Victory, the person of the emperor had no pre-existing inherent link with the 'MR' theme. As a protagonist of reverse-types, the emperor also had the potential to assume a range of attributes and adjuncts, dressed to communicate the different ideological values that personifications had previously embodied. However, despite the recurrent opportunity to be depicted in numerous ways, the emperor almost exclusively assumed a military guise on the Late Roman base-metal coinage. Of the 58,854 coins within the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, 25,049 (42.6%) have a protagonist emperor on their reverse. Of these 25,049, some 24,191 (96.6%) depict the emperor in military dress. More specifically, the emperor was usually not only depicted in military dress. On 22,407 of these 25,049 emperor coins (89.5%), the emperor bears overtly military attributes: the spear (*hasta*) and/or standard (*vexillum*).[606] While in military dress and even when holding his spear or standard,

[602] See **§4.3.3.4** for discussion of Flacilla's coinage.
[603] See n.597 on inscriptions being used as generic slogans. Type **[100]** was also issued at *Aquileia* 388-402 and at *Rome* 388-408.
[604] The only exception here was the particularly violent treatment of the captive, which will be discussed at length in **§4.2.4** below.
[605] See **§1.3.1**.
[606] The emperor in military attire and holding the spear appears on 17,414 of these site-finds (69.5% of emperor coins) and the emperor in military attire holding an army standard appears on 4,993 of these site-finds (19.9% of emperor coins).

Period(s)		Key Emperor Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]**	73.3%
		SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
9	363-378	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive **[82]**	43.9%
10	378-388	REPARATIO REIPVB **[90]**	13.7%
		Assorted Emperor types **[82, 93, 94, 95, 99]**	7.2%
11	388-408	VIRTVS EXERCITI Emperor and Victory **[104]**	11.3%
		GLORIA ROMANORVM Three emperors **[108]**	5.9%

the emperor could also bear non-military attributes. The depiction of other attributes was rare though. 3,930 coins depict the emperor also carrying a globe, with its insinuations of imperial *providentia*.[607] Otherwise, the only other regularly recurring secondary attribute held by the emperor was the *victoriola*, which is again clearly associated with the 'MR' theme.[608] Consequently, the prevailing visualisation of the emperor, following his emergence as a principal feature of the base-metal coinage from Period 8, was as a vehicle for expressing imperial military prowess. Secondary to this were rarer examples, on which further aspects of imperial rulership ideology were simultaneously promoted through the emperor's other attributes.

Here I want to emphasise the importance of choice by the Roman state when selecting reverse-types. The continuous presentation of the emperor as the apex military figure on base-metal coinage was a preference of the contemporary state. As shown in Figure 4.15, other contemporary iconographic types depicted the emperor in alternate guises. Nevertheless, the overlayed line graph of emperor-bearing coins as a proportion of each period's coin totals shows that even when non-military depictions were present (Periods 4, 6 and 7), these constituted very few coins. The non-military depictions comprise only 858 of the 25,049 emperor-as-protagonist coins (3.4%). On these types, the figure shown was almost exclusively a veiled, deceased emperor.[609] These deceased emperor motifs then disappeared after Constantius II's final commemorative issues for Constantine I, the VN MR type **[62]**, which ceased production by 348. In her analysis of Late Roman medallions, Jocelyn Toynbee suggested that the figure of the emperor alone came to embody all the key virtues and benefits expected of him.[610] However, the lack of an entirely standardised depiction of the emperor on coinage suggests that different attributes were adopted to emphasise specific aspects of

[607] On the globe as an expression of imperial *providentia* see Appendix 5, n.78. Also note that of these 3,930 emperor with spear/standard and globe coins, 3,159 (80.4%) are SPES REPVBLICE Emperor types **[76]**, issued within a relatively short time span (358-362).
[608] Other attributes depicted being held by the emperor, in conjunction with the spear or standard, include the long cross, *globus cruciger* and olive branch, though in combination examples of these equate to just three coins in the site-finds database.
[609] Of these 858 coins, the majority are commemorative depictions of Constantine I: 285 Quadriga types (**[56]** – Period 6, 337-340) and 560 VN MR types (**[62]** – Period 7, 342-348). There were earlier examples of veiled, deceased emperors on the base-metal coins, reflected in the ten examples of Constantine I's REQVIES OPTIMOR(VM) MERIT(OR) type (**[177]** – Period 4, 317-318), which depicted a deified, veiled Claudius II. On the base-metal coinage, the only deviation from depicting either living emperors in military attire or deceased emperors veiled was the somewhat ambiguous IOVI CONSERVATORI AVG Eagle type (**[119]** – Period 4, 318-319). The figure depicted upon the eagle's back on type **[119]** has been identified in RIC VII as Licinius, likely due to the apparent lack of beard and either diademed or radiate headwear. However, the figure also holds Jupiter's attributes (*fulmen* and sceptre) so may be a depiction of the deity, which would also conform with the iconography of other contemporary IOVI CONSERVATORI types. There are just three examples of type **[119]** in the 'cleaned' site-finds data.
[610] Toynbee 144: 179.

Period(s)		Key Emperor Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]**	73.3%
		SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
9	363-378	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive **[82]**	43.9%
10	378-388	REPARATIO REIPVB **[90]**	13.7%
		Assorted Emperor types **[82, 93, 94, 95, 99]**	7.2%
11	388-408	VIRTVS EXERCITI Emperor and Victory **[104]**	11.3%
		GLORIA ROMANORVM Three emperors **[108]**	5.9%

imperial authority. Endowing the emperor with attributes was essential to providing the audience with a prism for interpreting imperial power, focusing on a specific facet of imperial rulership ideology. The evidence of non-military representations shows fleeting examples of this variation. Yet, from the mid-fourth century, base-metal depictions of the emperor always prioritised expressing his military identity. The wider public were continuously presented with an emperor of limited dimensions, almost always bearing a spear or standard. These displays of a specifically military emperor were so consistent that he was effectively established as the new embodiment of *virtus*, becoming a fundamental method for promoting 'MR' messages alongside Victory.

4.2.3.3. Moments of Deviation: The Vota *Coinage*

The 'MR' messages of Periods 7-11 are defined by the straightforward depictions of Victory and the military emperor. Respectively, these figures personified the propaganda categories of *victoria* and *virtus*. There was, however, one alternative that the state occasionally chose to present on the base-metal coinage instead of Victory or the emperor. As Fig.4.14 shows, during Periods 7 and 10, two major series of simple *vota* types **[4, 5]** were also extensively issued. As we have already seen, the 'MR' theme continued to feature on types **[4, 5]**, but was referenced as a subsidiary element to the principal message of stability through continuity, by the *corona civica* border.[611] These two *vota* series' abundant presence relative to other contemporary types significantly depress Periods 7 and 10's 'MR' scores (Fig.4.4). The state's decision to twice diverge from the predominating Victory/emperor motifs and their overt 'MR' messaging requires brief consideration.

Firstly, Period 7 was the only timespan within Phase 2 that saw significant inter-regional variation in the prioritisation of 'MR' messages.[612] This is because, following years of pan-imperial unity under Constantine as the sole senior emperor, in Period 7 the empire was again divided between two Augusti, Constans in the west and Constantius II in the east.[613] Their base-metal propaganda policies differed. I have already discussed Constans's focus on promoting generic imperial victories.[614] Constantius II's Period 7 base-metal coinage instead

[611] For discussion of the *corona civica* and its use on Phase 1 coinage see **§4.1.1.1**, **§4.1.3.1**, **§4.1.3.3**.
[612] See **§4.2.1**.
[613] From 337-340 the empire had been divided between the three sons of Constantine I now as Augusti. However, there is no discernible variation in iconographic types and their associated political messages between the mints controlled by these brothers within the site-finds database. The continued production of the GLORIA EXERCITVS One standard, VRBS ROMA and CONSTANTINOPOLIS types **[52, 50, 49]** throughout 337-340 obscures any possible region variation between the different emperors' territories.
[614] See **§4.2.3.1**.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Vota Types	Average
7	340-348	Constantius II	324-361	Vota Mvlt wreath **[5]**	65.7% (Eastern)
		Constans	333-350		
10	378-388	Gratian	367-383	Vota Mvlt wreath **[5]**	44.5% (Pan-Imperial)
		Valentinian II	375-392		
		Theodosius I	379-395		
		Arcadius	383-408	Vota wreath **[4]**	4.4% (Pan-Imperial)

fixated on imperial continuity. The VOT XX MVLT XXX design was continuously issued at all Constantius's mints from 342-348, asserting that imperial security was beholden to the longevity of his imperial rule. Consequently, the *Vota Mvlt* wreath type **[5]** comprises on average 65.7% of Period 7 coins at eastern sites, compared to a diminutive 14.2% western average.[615] The *vota* coinage was also supplemented at Constantius II's eastern mints by the VN MR type **[62]**, which venerated the deceased Constantine I.[616] Type **[62]** only attained visibility at eastern sites, constituting a notable average of 15.8% of Period 7 coins.[617] It drew on traditional Roman religious practices of deifying deceased imperial relatives, and included an obverse inscription that labelled Constantine I as *divus*.[618] Constans's refusal to produce this commemorative coinage may have been for religious reasons.[619] Nevertheless, Constantius II, a Christian too, willingly used existing imagery and the structures of deifying imperial ancestors to construct his legitimacy, just like his father.[620] In sum, Constantius II's base-metal coinage during Period 7 was orientated around his longevity and legitimate dynastic connection to a newly deified emperor, not explicit promotions of his military prowess or inherent possession of victory.[621]

As for Period 10, the *vota* coins were not primarily limited to focusing on the prolonged reign of just one emperor. Rather, between 381-384, simple *vota* types **[4, 5]** were recurrently issued to promote the relevant anniversaries of all the incumbent Valentinian and Theodosian

[615] See Appendix 6, Period 7. These figures also include the VOT XV MVLT XX types issued for Constans in 347-348. The VOT XV MVLT XX coins are considerably rarer due to their limited period of issue and being produced only at *Antioch*. Of the 2,363 *Vota Mvlt* in wreath type **[5]** coins from Period 7 in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, 2,091 (88.5%) are VOT XX MVLT XXX coins, while only ninety-two (3.9%) are VOT XV MVLT XX coins. The remaining 180 (7.6%) are uncertain *vota* coins.

[616] Type **[62]** was the final iteration of a series of base-metal types commemorating Constantine I, which were initially produced by Constantine II and Constantius II (though not by Constans) shortly after their father's death in 337. The initial commemorative types, depicting a veiled Constantine I, were the AETERNA PIETAS type **[57]**, issued only by Constantine II at his Gallic mints, as well as the Quadriga type **[56]**, issued at all mints of Constantine II and Constantius II. Both types were produced between 337-340. Following Constantine II's death Constantius II issued a new commemorative type in 341, the IVST VEN MEM type **[63]**, which was then replaced by the VN MR type **[62]**, issued from 342-348.

[617] See Appendix 6, Period 7. By contrast, the VN MR type **[62]** had almost no presence in the west (average of 2%). The briefly issued IVST VEN MEM type **[63]** is considerably rarer, being entirely absent from the west and only has an eastern average of 0.2% (a single coin from Ilium). As for the Period 6 commemorative types (see n.616 above), the Quadriga type **[56]** has a relatively low average of just 6% at eastern sites and is again entirely absent from western sites, whereas the AETERNITA PIETAS type **[57]** is entirely absent from the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.

[618] Bruun 1954b; Caza 2021: 117-119, 145-147.

[619] Caza 2021: 90, 145.

[620] See Hekster 2015: 288-296 for how Constantine I stressed his affiliation with deified family members, including his father Constantius I, father-in-law Maximian and apparent ancestor Claudius II Gothicus. This was done across various media, including milestone inscriptions and coins. Hekster also outlines that similar practices were used by Maxentius.

[621] As per Caza 2021: 118, the dynastic connection was also overtly stated by identifying Constantine I as *Pater/Pater Augustorum* ('Father of the Augusti') on the obverse inscriptions of the various commemorative types (see n.616 above) through the inclusion of P or PT AVGG.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Vota Types	Average
7	340-348	Constantius II	324-361	Vota Mvlt wreath **[5]**	65.7% (Eastern)
		Constans	333-350		
10	378-388	Gratian	367-383	Vota Mvlt wreath **[5]**	44.5% (Pan-Imperial)
		Valentinian II	375-392		
		Theodosius I	379-395		
		Arcadius	383-408	Vota wreath **[4]**	4.4% (Pan-Imperial)

emperors.[622] Production was coordinated across individual emperors' domains, at most imperial mints, resulting in more uniform distribution of the *vota* messages. The *Vota Mvlt* wreath coinage **[5]** alone is the most common Period 10 iconographic type amongst both eastern and western sites.[623] In the two periods of Phase 2 (7 and 10) that a concerted effort was made to produce types prioritising facets of imperial ideology other than 'MR' messages, which subsequently forced the 'MR' theme to the periphery, the simple *vota* message was the main design chosen. While the Phase 2 base-metal coinage is principally defined by repeated depictions of Victory and the military emperor, the *vota* coins identify a second favourite narrative of the Late Roman state. When deviation from overt espousal of 'MR' messages did occur, the focus was nearly always limited to asserting that the wider populace's safety was guaranteed by their emperor's continued rule.

4.2.3.4. A Change in the Political Function of Base-Metal Coinage: The 'Politics of Exclusion'

Throughout this overview of Periods 7-11 (340-408), I have looked to stress that the base-metal coinage was used in a patently different manner than the intricate, multi-coin narrative of Constantine I's later reign (Period 6, 330-340, **§4.2.2**). Constantine's government had used the base-metal coinage as an active form of propaganda, deliberately engaging with the wider audience, seeking to impress upon them a revised narrative of Constantinian triumph. Common imperial citizens were treated as an entity who *needed* to be convinced of their emperor's legitimacy, so the emperor's specific achievements were cited as proof of his competence.

However, from Period 7 (340-348), the repeated messages of base-metal coins – the emperor's victoriousness, military prowess, and long reign – were simplistic, even one-dimensional. The iconographic types most favoured by the state typically stated little more than 'remember citizen, you are safe because the emperor is forever victorious/is the mightiest warrior/will reign for a long time'. The division of the empire under Constantius II and Constans

[622] For detailed coverage of these various *vota* types and their suggested dating see Caza 2021: 305-306, 310, 313-314, 320-322; Mattingly 1951: 241-245, 250; LRBC II: 42-43 and RIC IX: xxxvii-xxxviii. The principal types are as follows. Three types were initially struck 381-382, in unison, for different emperors' anniversaries: VOT XV MVLT XX for Gratian, VOT X MVLT XX for Valentinian II and VOT V MVLT X for Theodosius I. These types were later upgraded in 383 to a VOT XX MVLT XXX for Gratian and a VOT X MVLT XX for Theodosius I. Following Gratian's death in 383 a VOTIS V was immediately struck by the usurping emperor Magnus Maximus, while a VOT V type was struck for Arcadius with his elevation to Augustus in the same year. It is of note that, following his initial usurpation and prior to his open conflict with Theodosius I, Maximus was looking to operate within the same propaganda framework on his base-metal coinage as his predecessor Gratian, from whom he had seized power, and that was still being used by the other 'legitimate' emperors.

[623] Type **[5]** comprises an eastern average of 53.1% and western average of 32.2% for Period 10 site-finds (Appendix 6, Period 10).

therefore marks a key turning point, from which the base-metal coin design was intentionally constrained.[624] A further element was that references to contemporary intra-imperial conflict or disputes were purposefully avoided. The base-metal coinage was no longer being used as a medium to promote a certain position, meaning that no invitation was extended to the wider populace to become involved in internal issues. Emphasis was exclusively placed on the emperor, who alone assured imperial security, as most coins did little more than continuously assert his military competence. This new base-metal propaganda policy arguably demonstrates the opposite of audience targeting. It reflects the state's desire to present a veneer of imperial legitimacy to anyone engaging with the base-metal coinage, rather than focus bespoke messages on an individual group. I have dubbed this new policy the 'politics of exclusion'. It is one of the most intriguing aspects of the Late Roman base-metal coinage to be identified in this quantitative assessment and will be further investigated in Chapter 5.

This revision of the political function of base-metal coinage, the adoption of an 'exclusionary' policy, persisted for the remainder of the Late Roman numismatic period and into the Byzantine period. It arguably marks the apogee of a transition to increasingly 'banal' and 'conventionalised' coinage, which Andrew Burnett asserted began in the second century.[625] What we must recognise, though, is that this was an active decision. The imperial state first chose to modify how they used base-metal coins, chose to make their messages 'banal'. Then the state chose to sustain this new policy, despite its clear departure from how base-metal coinage had been used as a political medium in the late third and early fourth centuries. A distortive field of propagandistic 'noise' was intentionally generated, that simultaneously assured the wider populace of imperial competence whilst excluding the same audience from any political involvement or decision-making.

As for the character of these 'conventionalised' messages, it is also striking that 'MR' messages were particularly preferred when coin production surged. As per Figure 4.16, Periods 8, 9 and 11 were among the periods to which most coins in the site-finds database

[624] The precise dating of this moment of change to the co-rule of Constantius II and Constans and is indicated by the sudden cessation of a further base-metal coin series upon Constantine II's death. Between 337-340, commemorative types were struck for Thedora (PIETAS ROMANA **[58]**) and Helena (PAX PVBLICA **[59]**). They were initially issued following the murder of much of the extend Constantinian family (descendants of Constantius I's second marriage to Theodora) in the summer of 337. Richard Burgess has interpreted types **[58, 59]** as a public recognition of these events, and argued that type **[58]** in particular was 'an act of expiation' to Theodora as mother and grandmother of Constantius I's now deceased offspring (Burgess 2008: 24). Types **[58, 59]** are poorly represented in the site-finds database but clearly sought to continue publicising major contemporary political events. Burgess nevertheless also compellingly argued that Constantine II was the author of these types, first issuing them at his mint of *Trier* immediately following the massacre, then forcing his two brothers to also produce these base-metal types upon their joint elevation to Augusti in September 337 (Burgess 2008: 22-23). While Constantius II and Constans begrudgingly conformed to Constantine II's demands as senior Augustus, their unwillingness to strike types **[58, 59]** is clearly indicated by their production immediately halting upon Constantine II's death in 340. From that point any further engagement with intra-imperial politics similarly ceased on their base-metal coinage.

[625] Burnett 1987: 79.

belong, identifying them as moments of high coin production. They also have some of the highest 'MR' scores. These periods either followed or encompassed significant monetary reforms, in 353, 364 and 395, indicating that 'MR' propaganda was always loudly attested in the aftermath of those legislations.[626] It is surely of great significance that whenever the Roman state issued new directives for base-metal designs to signify a change in base-metal coinage, they did not take the opportunity to shift to a different core narrative. Instead, they actively doubled down on espousing generic, exclusionary messages encapsulated by the 'MR' theme. What this makes clear is that deliberately basic, 'banal' expressions of the emperor's military power and his often-inherent possession of victory formed the backbone of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda.

4.2.4. The Escalation of Military Violence on Late Roman Base-Metal Coinage

One final feature of the 'MR' messages to emerge on Late Roman base-metal coinage deserves separate consideration. In this last sub-section of the Phase 2 analysis, I will delineate the Late Roman state's increased tendency to publicly promote overtly violent iconography. The programmatic visualising of brutal force first emerged in Period 8 (348-363), alongside the preference for depicting the figure of the emperor. The principal iconographic type of the 350s, the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type **[69]**, was emblazoned with the image of the emperor spearing a barbarian enemy. Images of killing would remain largely absent after Period 8, though a change had occurred. Base-metal coins of the late fourth and early fifth centuries came to repeatedly display active abuse and violence towards captives, as an additional feature of 'MR' messages orientated around the emperor and Victory. In this review of the escalation of violence on the Late Roman base-metal coinage, we will see another method through which the state looked to accentuate messages of *virtus* and *victoria*.

A further element that will be continually pushed in the following analysis is how these messages of imperial aggression became a dominant feature of the coinage in live circulation. For this purpose, the site-finds data has been supplemented by hoard evidence. Together these data sources will illustrate that the major violence-espousing iconographic types were not only produced in large numbers relative to other designs and coins of other periods, but that they continued to circulate well beyond their periods of issue. On this basis, I will advocate

[626] Hendy 1985: 468-475; Harl 1996: 170-175; Moorhead 2012: 615-617.

that, across the empire, the wider populace would have been increasingly exposed to coins emphasising their emperor's fundamentally threatening authority.

Finally, the aggrandising of violence on numismatic material will be placed within the broader context of Roman visual culture. It will be recognised that the evolving representation of violence on base-metal coinage aligned the medium more closely with other forms of Roman visual media, both public and private, where displaying overt violence was already well-established. However, unlike many other earlier examples of violence depicted on state media, the base-metal coinage will be shown to have presented an increasingly one-dimensional vision of imperial power. In this regard, I shall argue that prioritising violence undermined the simultaneous espousal of other aspects of imperial propaganda. I will focus on how the state twisted and rejected established methods for communicating imperial *clementia*, the principal expression of beneficence, which was traditionally referenced to balance depictions of imperial severity. Furthermore, I will conclude that this intentional simplification of the base-metal coin propaganda exposes another facet of the 'politics of exclusion'. The singular message of a brutal, triumphant emperor provided very generalised assurances that the empire's safety was guaranteed, while also coercing the obedience and non-engagement of its wider populace.

4.2.4.1. The Falling Horseman Type: Normalising Violence on Base-Metal Coinage

Nowhere is violence better presented on Late Roman coinage than on the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type **[69]**. It is both the origin point of the trend in depicting overtly violent imagery and its most extreme case. Type **[69]** is the most frequently occurring iconographic type in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, totalling 9,946 of the 58,854 coins (15.6%). Its proliferous production marked the shift towards depicting the aggressive subjugation of, and violence against, the non-Roman 'other' on imperial coinage in general.

Type **[69]**'s inscription, FEL(icium) TEMP(orum) REPARATIO ('Restoration of Happy Times'), espoused a traditional narrative of the return to a golden age, and was used across the entire reformed base-metal series of 348 to celebrate Rome's 1,100th anniversary.[627] By comparison, its iconography – a Roman footman spearing an enemy horseman – was unique.[628] The original design, struck mainly for Constantius II, depicted the emperor[629] slaying a Persian

[627] Mattingly 1933; Kent 1967: 83-85; RIC VIII: 35; Depeyrot 1982: 106; Olbrich 2004. Discussions of renewal have been particularly related to depictions of the phoenix in this coin series. The phoenix appears atop a pyre or globe, either as the main image on the smaller denomination type of Constantius II (**[66]**), or as an attribute of the emperor on both Constans's initial higher and lower denomination Galley types (**[68]**).
[628] See Hollard and López Sánchez 2014: 149-153 on loose parallels, particularly the depiction of Hercules striking down a horseman on Roman provincial coinage.
[629] There has been some inconsistency and disagreement within earlier scholarship regarding the identity of the spearman on the Falling Horseman type **[69]**, and also the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Hut type **[65]**. Rather than being identified as 'emperor', the protagonist figure on these iconographic types have also been labelled as the non-committal 'warrior' (Mattingly 1928: 233), a 'soldier' (Cohen; RIC VIII), 'legionary' (Robertson 1952) or '*Virtus*' (LRBC II; DeRose Evans 2018: 111-113). The ambiguity arises because the figure was depicted in a helmet, in

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	Constantius II	324-361	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]**	73.3%
		Magnentius	350-353		
		Constantius Gallus	351-354	SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
		Julian II	355-363		

horseman (wearing a Phrygian hat, bearded and with trousers), a reference to his victory over the Sassanians at Singara in 344, when the Persian crown prince was killed.[630] The image did not remain static though. Between 348-358 the Falling Horseman type **[69]** was issued as part of multiple base-metal series, at declining weight standards.[631] Numerous minor iconographic variations occurred between series and across different mints, which altered the orientation of the fallen horseman, the horseman's identity, and the position of the emperor.[632] However, what remained unchanged was the overt presentation of the emperor's *virtus*, crystalised in his merciless killing of Rome's enemies – arguably the most violent image depicted on Roman coinage.

The issuing of type **[69]** in 348 was not the first time the moment of peak violence had been depicted on coinage. The image of a charging Roman horseman spearing an enemy soldier had previously been used as coin iconography.[633] Moreover, unlike the falling horseman iconography, the charging horseman motif was used on private, non-monumental media such as gravestones and jewellery, identifying it as established within the Roman picture language.[634] These scenes on coinage also included the barbarian victims with arms raised in petition, that captured notions of an emperor merciless in the face of his enemies. Yet as an iconographic type used on coinage, the charging horseman motif had limited usage.[635] It was

contrast to the diademed figure on FEL TEMP REPARATIO types **[67, 68]**, who was clearly the emperor. Kraft 1958: 143-153 has nevertheless compellingly argued that the helmeted figures on types **[65, 69]** were the emperor, on the basis that they wear attire consistent with an individual of high military rank. They are also clearly male, so cannot be the armoured female personification of *Virtus*. Kraft's identification has become generally accepted in modern numismatics (see, for example, Caza 2021: 158; Malone 2009). It is also supported by the fact that the single iconographic type produced immediately after the FEL TEMP REPARATIO coinage, the SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor type **[76]**, depicted a male helmeted figure holding the globe – the attribute of *providentia* and dominion. Due to the disappearance of deities and most personifications from base-metal coinage by Period 8, this globe wielding figure could only be the emperor.

[630] Kraft 1958: 158-159; Callu 1987: 137-139. Hollard and López Sánchez 2014: 147-153 indicate how the victory at Singara was framed as a new Gaugamela, the battle at which Alexander the Great had defeated Darius III in 331BCE, and how this new coin imagery parallels contemporary literary allusions that equated Constantius II to Alexander.

[631] Caza 2021: 157-166,175-176.

[632] Caza 2021: 176-184; Bruck 1961: 16-20.

[633] See Malone 2009: 59-60 for this motif on coins during the Principate. For the Late Roman period, the charging emperor on horseback spearing enemy motif appears on three different iconographic types in the site-finds database: the VIRTVS AVGG ET CAESS NN Emperor charging type **[218]**, FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor charging horseback type **[198]** and GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor charging horseback **[72]**.

[634] On charging horseman iconography appearing on tomb stones of Roman cavalry officers from first century CE see Kraft 1958: 154; Ferris 2000: 155-160. On examples of this same motif on amulets and silver plate see Nowakowski 2017; Nesbitt 2003, Figs.13.2, 13.6; Vulić et. al. 2017: 136, Fig.17. Also see similar motifs on the Bellerophon mosaic at Hinton St Mary (Neal and Cosh 2005: 156-160, no.172.1) and on the Arch of Constantine (Ross Holloway 2004: 22-23).

[635] See Malone 2009: 59-60 on the charging horseman motif's rarity on imperial coinage during the Principate. For the Late Roman period, there are only thirty examples of coins bearing the charging horseman motif in the site-finds database: one type **[218]**, one type **[198]** and twenty-eight type **[72]**. All these coins appear only at western sites (primarily Western Groups 1 and 2 sites) and only the single **[218]** coin makes it through the data-cleaning process to appear in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. Not only is the charging horseman motif therefore evidently rare, but the complete disappearance of the twenty-eight **[72]** coins from the 'cleaned' dataset shows that, even when it had a wider presence in terms of raw numbers, other contemporary iconographic types totally overshadowed it.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	Constantius II	324-361	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman **[69]**	73.3%
		Magnentius	350-353		
		Constantius Gallus	351-354	SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
		Julian II	355-363		

with the Falling Horseman type **[69]** that the coinage was first used to distribute the image of a Roman actively killing his enemy on a massive scale.

Scale of Production and Circulation

It is difficult to overstate the prevalence of the falling horseman image within the surviving body of Late Roman base-metal coinage. In the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, type **[69]** constitutes a per-site average of 73.3% of coins issued during Period 8, which was a timespan of particularly high base-metal coin production across the empire.[636] These factors indicate that the Falling Horseman type would not have only been prevalent relative to other iconographic types produced from the same issue period, but would have come to stand out against any other iconographic type already in circulation.[637] Its mass production and distribution on a pan-imperial scale provided the violent iconography with the opportunity to make a deep impression on the contemporary audience.

This universal presence of type **[69]** was not accidental. In the face of inflation and hoarding, the reformed multi-denominational base-metal system of 348 was short-lived. The Roman state could not control this economic breakdown, but it did get to choose which iconographic types survived through its reactionary debasements of the base-metal coinage. The FEL TEMP REPARATIO coin series, with its original six different iconographic types and three denominations, was already collapsing by 351.[638] The middle denomination was no longer produced, Magnentius's types were replacing the reform coinage in the west, and only three FEL TEMP REPARATIO iconographic types remained in the east.[639] By 352 only the Falling Horseman type, as a single denomination, continued to be issued in the east, and then also in the west too following Magnentius's death in August 353.[640] Significant here is that the Falling Horseman type was selected for continued production over all other contemporary FEL TEMP REPARATIO types, whose various designs provided more traditional expressions of imperial military prowess, victory and revival. From the late 340s into the mid-350s, a timespan in which Constantius II first faced down the Sassanians and then Magnentius, his mints prioritised the continuous production of the most brutal display of imperial power to date.

Moreover, the visibility of the Falling Horseman motif would have been further heightened by contemporary demonetisation legislation. In 354, Constantius II's government sought to

[636] See Appendix 6, Period 8. On high volumes of Period 8 coinage found across the empire see **§2.3.5.1**.
[637] See also Figure 4.18, which shows the similar proportions of coinage depicting 'fatal violence' (i.e. the Falling Horseman type) as present in relatively equally proportions amongst the Period 8 coins of eastern and western sites.
[638] Caza 2021: 159-163.
[639] Caza 2021: 163-164. The FEL TEMP REPARATIO types still being issued in the east were Falling Horseman type **[69]** and Emperor and one captive type **[127]** in the higher denomination, and the Phoenix type **[66]** in the lower denomination.
[640] Caza 2021: 164-166.

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		Julian II	355-363		

withdraw the coinage of the defeated usurper Magnentius as well as the higher denomination (and more highly silvered) *maiorina*, originally introduced in 348.[641] Alongside debasing the base-metal coinage, which also triggered widespread hoarding in response, the demonetisation legislation significantly impacted the coinage in live circulation. This is reflected by the contents of the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset when we consider all the coinage that dates to the FEL TEMP REPARATIO coinage's full issue period, 348-358. Of the coins that can be confidently dated, some 83.9% were produced between 353-358. These were coins unaffected by the demonetisation legislation and were all Falling Horseman types. The predominance of these later coins as site-finds indicates the Magnentian and higher value coinage issued between 348-353 had been actively removed from circulation by the state and through private hoarding.[642] Conversely, the post-353 Falling Horseman coins of lower intrinsic value continued to be used and lost. So the Falling Horseman type **[69]**, the most distinct and violent assertion of a 'Return to Happy Times', did not only benefit from continued production through another failed period of monetary reform. Its visibility within the live circulation pool was also enhanced because most of the other iconographic types issued 348-353 quickly disappeared into the imperial mints or into the ground. Type **[69]** combined with the victory-orientated coin types of Periods 6 (330-340) and 7 (340-348) still in circulation,[643] though added an increasingly violent paradigm to the framing of imperial power.

The Falling Horseman type's violent imagery continued to have a significant presence within circulating coin pools into the fifth century. In late 358 the base-metal coinage was further

[641] *CTh*.IX.23.1.3. There is some issue around the exact dating of this law to either 354 or 356, though it appears the law most likely belongs to the earlier date and was then reissued at the later date (Abdy 2012a: 596). On this dating issue see Hendy 1985: 291-292; Harl 1996: 170, n.31. On discussions of the coinage subject to this demonetisation law see Hendy 1985: 293-294; Harl 1996: 167-170.

[642] Of the 10,465 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset that date between 348-358, 7,051 are strictly datable either to the more restricted periods 348-353 or 353-358. Of the 3,414 coins from this period that cannot be strictly datable to the either 348-353 or 353-358, 3,337 (97.8%) are Falling Horseman types. The majority of these would most likely belong to the period 353-358 if their stricter dating were possible, especially since the smaller coinage of this later period were more vulnerable to wear and therefore become less identifiable. However, the site-finds database is obviously more biased towards the lower denomination coinage that is more prominent between 353-358. The higher denomination AE2 coins of 348-353, being more precious, were less susceptible to loss or ended up in hoards. Nevertheless, by ending up in hoards the large denomination/AE2 coins were no longer being looked at. Also worth noting is that of the 1,138 coins strictly datable to 348-353, 680 (60%) are AE2 Falling Horseman types whose comparable iconography to the post-353 coinage and wear may explain their lack of recall. In addition, 158 of the 348-353 coins (13.9%) are the lower denomination AE3 FEL TEMP REPARATIO Phoenix types **[66]**, as are 132 (11.6%) of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Galley types **[68]**. Neither of these lower denomination AE3 coinages issued from 348 were impacted by the demonetisation legislation. As such, of the total 7,051 coins strictly datable to 348-358 in the site-finds dataset, only 168 (2.4%) consist of coinage dating 348-353 that would have been clearly subject to state-enforced withdraw. This would suggest the demonetisation policy was extremely successful. A further point of comparison to also demonstrate the general hoarding response to both the demonetisation legislation and the continued debasements enacted between 349-353 can be provided by looking at the non-Falling Horseman type coinage dating to 348-353 from the CHRE hoards dataset (data downloaded 24/04/2023). Though a small sample size, of the 574 coins of known types from this period, only five (0.9%) date to hoards with a *terminus post quem* after the 354 demonetisation legislation. This again supports the notion that such coins were promptly removed from circulation once their usage was made illegal by the state.

[643] On the Period 6 coinage see **§4.2.2**; on the Period 7 coinage see **§4.2.3.1**. Coins from both earlier periods would have been the prevailing coinage in circulation, given the prompt and successful demonisation of even earlier tetrarchic coinage (see Wienand 2012: 299-304).

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
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		Constantius Gallus	351-354	SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
		Julian II	355-363		

debased, and a new design, the SPES REPVBLICE emperor type **[76]**, replaced the Falling Horseman type.[644] This effectively ended the presentation of killing imagery on the coinage.[645] Type **[76]** coinage, devised to celebrate the thirty-fifth year of Constantius II's reign, incorporated messages of the emperor's foresight, longevity and worldly dominion through his holding of the globe attribute.[646] With a spear in his hand though, the emperor's *virtus* still retained a central position, as a means by which such a long rule had been assured. Yet, while the Falling Horseman coinage's production had stopped, type **[69]** coins maintained their widespread presence by continuing to circulate well beyond their period of issue. This is evidenced by both hoards and the site-finds record. Regarding hoard evidence, Figure 4.17 displays when 1,455 Falling Horseman coins were withdrawn from the economy, based on the *terminus post quem* of the hoards they belong to.[647] We can see that at least 30.9% remained in circulation until the end of Phase 2, in 408. A notable 8.4% belong to hoards that closed after 450, beyond the chronological scope of this thesis, and over a century after type **[69]** was first issued. Furthermore, site-finds from sites such as Berytus and Carthage demonstrate the not infrequent occurrence of the Falling Horseman types in contexts datable to the later fifth century and beyond.[648] The Falling Horseman type **[69]** was the most violent base-metal

[644] The new weight standard of the single base-metal *nummus* denomination was now 1/156 to the Roman pound (~2.08g per coin). See Caza 2021: 152-154 on reducing weight standards 348-358.

[645] Depictions of the moment of killing are almost entirely absent on base-metal iconographic types for the remainder of the Late Roman period. The more traditional motif of the emperor on horseback with spear in hand and riding down a supplicating enemy appears once again on a single base-metal type of Valentinian (RIC IX Aquileia 43). There are no examples of this base-metal type in the site-finds database. It was extremely rare and may have been a medallic issue (Caza 2021: 319, RIC IX: 103).

[646] See Callu 1986: 209-213 on the issuing of type **[76]** to mark Constantius II's thirty-fifth anniversary. On the globe as an expression of imperial *providentia* see Appendix 5, n.78.

[647] This supplementary dataset of hoard coins is derived from validated data downloaded from the CHRE database on 24/04/2023. While hoards were not necessarily compiled in a single instance and can consist of different coinage removed from circulation over a period of time, the selection of the hoards' *terminus post quem*, the earliest date from which the hoard may have been closed, has been used here to place any possible biases on earlier rather than later deposition. Regarding hoard evidence from the CHRE database in general, it is also worth noting that the principal hoards of interest here, of the fifth century and Byzantine period, fall out of the CHRE's period of focus (30BCE-400CE). Because of this earlier focus, the number of coins dating to hoards with a *terminus post quem* beyond the fourth century are always likely to be under-represented in the CHRE data. Nevertheless, the continued presence of smaller numbers of Late Roman base-metal coinage are well attested in these later periods elsewhere (see, for example, Bijovsky 1998, Harris 1941: 145).

[648] On Berytus, see Butcher 2003: 96-99. See also Butcher 2003: 282-283 for further hoard evidence not present in the CHRE dataset, where a Falling Horseman type occurs in a hoard with a *terminus post quem* of 491. On Carthage, see Reece 1984a, esp. 172-173, in which he concludes that the majority of fourth century coinage was lost in the fifth and sixth centuries. The prolonged circulation of fourth century coinage has also been observed at Nicopolis ad Istrum (Butcher 1995) and Dichin in Bulgaria (Guest 2019: 250-257). See also Bijovsky 2012: 75-102 for extensive coverage of this phenomenon of prolonged circulation of fourth century coinage into the fifth and sixth centuries in general within the region of Roman Palestine. It should however be noted that this sustained presence of fourth century coinage seemingly only equated to continued circulation and engagement with their political messages in areas that remained under the yoke of the Roman state's authority, its monetary system, and its habits of highly monetised exchange. By contrast, Johan van Heesch's discussion of the northern Gaul into the fifth and sixth centuries has demonstrated the continued presence of fourth century base-metal coinage, but has denoted how the retraction of Roman administrative control from this area was soon followed by the significant diminishment of the previous intense levels of coin-usage. Instead, earlier coins were increasingly consolidated not as mediums of exchange, whereby their iconography may continue to have been seen, but as 'special-purpose money or positional goods' (van Heesch 2022).

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		Magnentius	350-353		
		Constantius Gallus	351-354	SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor **[76]**	19.2%
		Julian II	355-363		

iconographic type, with its singular emphasis on the emperor's merciless assault on the foreign enemies of the Roman commonwealth, and it had profound spatial and temporal reach.

4.2.4.2. The Continuity of Violent Iconography Beyond the Falling Horseman Type

Although the Falling Horseman type's brutal killing imagery would not be repeated, violent iconographic motifs became common on the base-metal coinage during the remainder of Phase 2, from Periods 9-11 (363-408). In these later cases, violence was primarily evoked through the way captives were portrayed. Base-metal iconographic types produced under the Valentinian and early Theodosian emperors frequently included a bound captive, either at the feet of the emperor in military array or a trophy-bearing Victory. What is striking is how these captives were frequently depicted, either as victims of *calcatio* (the ritualised trampling on the neck or back of the enemy, also called 'spurning'),[649] or being dragged by the hair.[650] These portrayals were markedly different from the use of captives on earlier imperial coinage. Conventionally, bound captives appeared as passive adjuncts, next to a protagonist (the emperor, deity or personification), whose aloof non-engagement with the captive implied their restraint and mercy.[651]

This is not to say that the 'spurned' and 'dragged' captive motifs were Late Roman iconographic innovations. Visualised aggression towards captives had become more established on imperial coinage from the 260s, following the increased militarisation of the imperial office.[652] However, as with the killing iconography, it was not until the mid-fourth century that these expressions of imperial violence were issued in significant volumes on base-metal coinage and therefore became central features of contemporary imperial rulership ideology. This popularisation is well reflected by the site-finds record. Figure 4.18 presents a per-period breakdown of the average proportion of site-finds at eastern and western sites with iconography depicting passive captives, captives subject to non-fatal violence (*calcatio* or

[649] Malone 2009: 61; Grierson and Mays 1992: 79.
[650] For a much earlier reference to this hair-dragging imagery see Suetonius, *Nero* 41.2, which describes a public sculpture depicting a Gallic soldier being dragged by a Roman. This would suggest the dragging theme was already an established visual motif in the first century CE, though in this example the Roman was on horseback. See also Davenport 2020a: 120-121 for depiction of the exact motif of the emperor dragging a defeated captive by the hair on second/third century terracotta votive statuettes from Egypt. By contrast, the dragging captive motif only appeared on coinage for the first time on an aureus of Severus II in 305 (RIC VI Siscia 153). It then debuted on base-metal coinage in the VIRTVTI EXERCITVS Virtus/Mars type **[23]** around 312 (for example, RIC VI Nicomedia 78b). However, this was not a permanent feature of the iconographic type. Type **[23]** was also rare even within its own issue period (Period 3, 307-317), with a pan-imperial mean average proportional presence of 0.01%. It was not until the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive type **[82]** of Period 9 that this motif was depicted in significant volumes.
[651] Brilliant 1963: 150. On an alternative earlier design schema, which also used passive bound captives but under a military standard, see discussion of the VIRTVS EXERCIT *Vota* standard type **[37]** in **§4.1.3.3**.
[652] Malone 2009. Note however that Malone suggests the increased presence of violence on coinage was well established by the early fourth century. This is a much earlier date than I have suggested, but Malone provides no data on coin volumes. It is clear from his examples that violence occurred on more types in general, but this did not translate to the depiction of violence in significant volumes relative to other iconographic types.

Period(s)		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
9	363-378	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive **[82]**	43.9%
11	388-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive **[100, 200, 201]**	51.4%

dragging scenes), depictions of fatal violence (namely, the Falling Horseman type), or no captives at all.[653] The depiction of the empire's enemies was generally infrequent on the base-metal coinage before the mid-fourth century, though when they did appear it was almost exclusively in the pre-established formulation of a passive adjunct captive. The presence of passive captive is most visible in Period 4 (317-324), particularly at eastern sites, as the adjunct was permanently added onto Licinius's IOVI CONSERVATORI types **[8]** from 321, next to an indifferent Jupiter. The Falling Horseman type in Period 8 (348-363) was the point of change across the empire. Following this, both the presence of captives and their violent treatment occupied substantial proportions of the coinage in both Periods 9 (363-378) and 11 (388-408), primarily expressed through the dragging of victims. At eastern sites, there is also a slightly higher presence of 'dragging' types (Periods 9 and 11) and the rarer *calcatio* iconography (Period 10).

The key distinction between the earlier depictions of the passive captive and later presentations of violated captives on coinage was the protagonist's active engagement with the captive. The emperor or Victory's hand was extended to clasp the captive aggressively and drag them along the floor, or the emperor's foot was applied to suppress the captive.[654] In both cases, the iconographic type's protagonist deliberately enforced the downward position of the captive, to emphasise continued oppression. The performing of an action upon the captive changed the iconography from a generically military image to something explicitly, intentionally violent. An even more explicit means of emphasising imperial *virtus* had been defined.

Scale of Production and Circulation

These base-metal coins depicting assaulted captives are indicative of the Falling Horseman type's violent legacy. Moreover, just like the Falling Horseman coins, they played a major role in perpetuating the visibility of imperial brutality within the available pool of circulating base-metal coinage. Two prevalent iconographic types stand out, that incorporated the dragged captive iconography: the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive type **[82]** of Period 9, and the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory with captive types **[100, 200, 201]** of Period 11. Both were designs heavily favoured by the state for production within their own issue periods. Type **[82]** is the second-most common Period 9 iconographic type in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset,

[653] The passive captive also appeared as an adjunct on some variations of the IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) type **[8]** and SOLI INVICTO COMITI type **[22]** during Period 3 (307-317). Types **[8, 22]** are extremely common Period 3 designs, but minor variations to the iconography like the presence/absence of captives does not impact their thematic grouping scores, so were not denoted at the time of data collection. As such, the proportional presence of the passive captive is somewhat under-represented for Period 3.

[654] As Malone 2009: 58 indicates, this is a vital change in imperial iconography: 'the standard depiction of the emperor as armed and armoured is military, but not explicitly violent. Violence requires a level of activity and a relational, personal element, in that the violent action needs to be inflicted on some target'.

Period(s)		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
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11	388-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive **[100, 200, 201]**	51.4%

constituting a pan-imperial average of 43.9%.[655] Type **[100]** alone is the most common Period 11 iconographic type, and in conjunction with types **[200, 201]** constitutes a pan-imperial average of 51.4% of Period 11 site-finds.[656] The significant presence of 'dragging' iconography in Periods 9 and 11, as outlined in Figure 4.18, is wholly because of these types and their proportionally high production.

These iconographic types also circulated for much of the remainder of the Late Roman period. We can again turn to hoard evidence to evaluate when these iconographic types were being withdrawn from the economy.[657] Type **[82]** coins showed significant continuity until at least 423 with up to 44% still in circulation, and 19.1% were still not hoarded until sometime after 450 (Fig.4.19).[658] Types **[100, 200, 201]** showed even greater continuity beyond the scope of analysis here, as 51.1% continued to circulate beyond 450 (Fig.4.20).[659] Many of these assaulted captive types remained available and in use by the wider populace during the fifth century.[660]

Additionally, the continued presence of types **[82]** and **[100, 200, 201]** was further accentuated because, much like the Falling Horseman type, they were unaffected by further demonetisation legislation. Type **[82]** was issued as part of the single denomination AE3 de-silvered base-metal system implemented by Valentinian I and Valens in Period 9. Types **[100, 200, 201]** were smaller AE4 coins, part of a three denominational AE2/AE3/AE4 base-metal system that Gratian first reintroduced c.381, and which continued in various iterations and weight standards.[661] Then, in 395 the Theodosians issued an edict that sought to remove from circulation the '*maior pecunia'/'decargyrus nummus'* – the larger, AE2 denomination.[662] I raise this here, as amongst the AE2 coinage of Period 10 was the REPARATIO REIPVB type **[90]**. Type **[90]**, which depicted a typical *clementia* scene of the emperor raising up a turreted female, was the only coinage in the site-finds database to overtly promote imperial beneficence and not also include a 'MR' message. Yet, as per Figure 4.21, hoard evidence suggests it was promptly removed from circulation by 403, following the implementation of the

[655] See Appendix 6, Period 9.
[656] See Appendix 6, Period 11.
[657] See **§4.2.4.1**, n.647 on the use of the parent hoard's *terminus post quem* to estimate a coin's date of withdraw from live circulation, and on the limitations of CHRE for post-fourth century hoards.
[658] The data used here was downloaded from the CHRE database on 02/05/2023, using only validate hoards. Figure 4.19 is based on a dataset of 350 type **[82]** coins from thirty-two hoards.
[659] The data used here was downloaded from the CHRE database on 02/05/2023, using only validate hoards. Figure 4.20 is based on a dataset of 618 type **[100, 200, 201]** coins from twenty-eight hoards.
[660] Based on hoard evidence from across the empire, this data presents, on a pan-imperial level, a similar continuity of earlier coinage in later Roman/Post-Roman British hoards (Bland et. al. 2020: 272-274).
[661] See Caza 2021: 283-297 for a summary of the sub-periods in which this multi-denominational system was produced. Production patterns of the different denominations varied both over time and between regions, as the zones of control of the Valentinian, Theodosian and usurper emperors (Magnus Maximus and Eugenius) continuously shifted.
[662] *CTh.*9.23.2. Also see Hendy 1985: 474-475 and Harl 1996: 174 for discussion and equation of these Latin descriptions to the AE2 denomination.

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demonetisation legislation.[663] The key expressions of imperial violence on the AE3 type **[82]** and AE4 type **[100, 200, 201]** coins would only have been further enhanced as less menacing messages like AE2 type **[90]** were demonetised or hoarded in reaction to state sanction, thereby disappearing from the public eye.

A final element to consider is that types **[82]** and **[100, 200, 201]** belonged to periods of relatively high base-metal coin production. Period 9 stands out as a period of abundant coin-loss across the empire, and this was equally true of Period 11, especially in the eastern empire.[664] As will be shown in **§4.3**, this stands in marked contrast to the substantial reduction in production and loss of Phase 3 coinage across the empire, but especially in the west. The point here is that not only were the assaulted captive types often favoured for production during their own issue periods, but they were issued in much higher quantities than later iconographic types. Depictions of violence that became common in the wake of the Falling Horseman type were not only temporary features of Phase 2. The combination of substantial production and continued circulation meant overtly violent imagery would comprise a common element of the base-metal coinage available to the wider populace until Anastasius I's monetary reform (498).

4.2.4.3. *Beyond the Coinage: Expressions of violent* Virtus *and the Counterweight of* Clementia *on other media*

At this point, I would like to step back briefly and consider the context within which these coins emerged. The purpose of this digression is to identify how Phase 2's violence-espousing coins conformed or deviated from existing methods for communicating ideal characteristics within the wider landscape of Roman visual culture. Within a numismatic context, the Falling Horseman and assaulted captive base-metal coins embody a highly impactful alteration to 'MR' messages, and would have notably increased the wider imperial populace's exposure to an explicitly brutal formulation of imperial rule. However, depictions of violence were not uncommon in the Roman world. Beyond the bounds of numismatic iconography, scenes of physical aggression and subjugation had long pervaded Roman visual media. They can be found in contexts across the social spectrum, from public imperial monuments glorifying great military victories, to wall paintings in private residences glorifying gladiatorial combat or even riots.[665] Roman society's general proclivity for illustrating violence identifies it as a cultural keystone. It performed an essential role in visualising Roman power structures, asserting strict hierarchical and patriarchal relations between different groups, such as Roman over non-

[663] The data used here was downloaded from the CHRE database on 19/07/2023, using only validate hoards. Figure 4.21 is based on a notably smaller sample dataset of 100 type **[90]** coins from fourteen hoards.
[664] See **§2.3.5.1** and the overlay on Figure 4.16.
[665] Lusnia 2020; Davenport 2020a.

Roman, master over servant, and emperor over subject, all based on notions of strength and domination.[666] Moreover, presentations of imperial violence performed a dual function, insinuating protection and coercion.[667] The Roman citizenry was shown through different media that their all-powerful emperor ensured the continued safety of the Roman polity, while simultaneously issuing the underlying threat that any challenge to the commonwealth or imperial power would be met with equally brutal action. Through the general proliferation of violence on Phase 2 base-metal designs, the content of Late Roman coinage was arguably brought more in line with other visual media, to evoke a well-recognised feature of Roman society.

Yet these scenes of violence rarely occurred on non-numismatic visual media in isolation. During the Principate, images of violence and military prowess used to communicate *virtus* came to be continuously counter-balanced and nuanced by associated portrayals of *clementia*. Much like the imperial benefit of *pax*, which so often encapsulated peace through conquest, *clementia* was a virtue whose typical presentation was entirely beholden to and preceded by violence and victory.[668] The traditional motif used to communicate *clementia* as an aspect of imperial rule was the *submissio* scene, depicted in conjunction with *virtus* scenes, in which the benevolent individual extended his hand downward to receive a supplicating subjugated individual, typically a barbarian.[669] The expression of *clementia*, the benevolent virtue *par excellence*, was underpinned by the understanding of the main figure's ability to successfully commit violence, and demonstrated by their active restraint from doing so.

The integrated portrayal of violent *virtus* and *clementia* initially occurred on public monuments of the Antonine emperors. The prominence given to expressions of *clementia* and its importance as an extension of *virtus* is well demonstrated on Trajan's column. In her discussion of the victory monument, Melissa Barden-Dowling points to the vital positioning of the *submissio* scene. It was not only placed after the scenes of Roman military violence and expressions of *virtus* but was the culminating scene of the first Dacian war, displayed at the centre of the column and clearly visible from the ground. The focus on Trajan's clemency as his final action, in a scene of submission to his person, both emphasised the emperor's control and focused on the incorporation of new peoples into the empire.[670] Moreover, on the column of Marcus Aurelius depictions of *crudelitas*, of Romans brutalising non-Romans, were again

[666] Lusnia 2020: 681-682.
[667] Davenport 2020a: 122-123.
[668] On the formulation of the ideology of *pax* in the late republican and early imperial periods see Cornwell 2017; 2020.
[669] Barden-Dowling 2006, esp.262-268 and Figs.25-27.
[670] Barden-Dowling 2006: 257-258. As a further point of comparison see Kousser 2006 on the presentation of the figure of Victory on monumental state architecture, deliberately depicted as a beautiful, elegant figure to encapsulate the desirable aspects of Roman imperialism brought to new peoples through conquest.

juxtaposed by the presentation of *clementia*.[671] Barden-Dowling's assessment of these scenes' deliberate coordination is again pertinent, as she states how 'by the illustration of the horrors of cruelty, the benefits of clemency are made generally clear'.[672] On these imperial monuments, an intrinsic and symbiotic relationship between imperial violence and mercy was established.

From the mid-second century, the *virtus-clementia* inter-connection was also extended into the private sphere. On biographical sarcophagi in particular, the elite sought to profess the possession of the same personal virtues that legitimised the emperor, drawing on the same semantic system. Scenes espousing *virtus* followed by *clementia* were again continuously repeated.[673] Based on this continuous association between these two virtues, which also extended into the literary sphere, Barden-Dowling advocates for *clementia* as an inherent aspect of *virtus*.[674] These examples demonstrate that, during the high imperial period and beyond, the interlinked notions of *crudelitas* and *clementia* were expanded into the private domain. By the Late Roman period, it was well established within the Roman value system that a good Roman male not only had the capacity for courageous and ruthless actions, but could also be measured in the controlling of his strength and demonstration of clemency.

4.2.4.4. Deviation on the Late Roman Coinage: Unmitigated Violence

It is therefore striking that the Falling Horseman and assaulted captive types showed a complete commitment to espousing only violent actions, only the emperor's capacity for *crudelitas*. In fact, from the mid-fourth century, the Roman state chose to prioritise iconographic types that deliberately suppressed underlying or affiliated notions of imperial *clementia*.[675] In the case of the Falling Horseman type **[69]**, the focus was entirely on the moment of killing, only on the emperor's violent demonstration of his *virtus*. There was no alternative, *clementia*-insinuating base-metal design ever issued alongside the Falling Horseman type in sufficient quantity to indicate the state's intention to provide an offsetting or culminating scene of imperial restraint and mercy.[676] As for the later 'dragging' and *calcatio*

[671] Barden-Dowling 2006: 261-262.
[672] Barden-Dowling 2006: 262.
[673] On bibliographic sarcophagi, which recurrently depict standardised figural scenes to express the deceased's possession of the *virtus* and *clementia* as well as *pietas* and marital *concordia*, see Birke 2013: 59-60; Stewart 2008: 72; Wrede 2001; Kampen 1981. See Barden-Dowling 2006: 263-264 on the General type sarcophagi and their popularity from the mid-second century.
[674] Barden-Dowling 2006: 264-269.
[675] Grierson and Mays 1992: 79-80.
[676] Within the wider FEL TEMP REPARATIO series there were no clear depictions of an offsetting *submissio* scene. The most overt possible display of imperial *clementia* on these coins may have been the highly ambiguous FEL TEMP REPARATIO Hut type **[65]**. There are several interpretations regarding the identity of the figure being led from the hut, though none have proved conclusive (Mattingly 1933: 192). These include a Roman citizen being saved from barbarians (Ferrando 2010: 29) or a barbarian being brought into the empire, perhaps referring to Constans's settlement of the Salian Franks in Toxandria (c.342) (Kraft 1958: 159-160; RIC VIII: 35). Is the figure being benevolently led into the folds of empire or ruthlessly dragged from their home? There is also the more subtle

('spurning') base-metal types, I have already remarked above how the emperor's or Victory's active engagement with the captive(s) differed from earlier expressions of an aloof yet merciful emperor.[677]

Moreover, I would argue that much of the violent images used on Phase 2 coins were deliberate subversions of the *clementia* motifs. Two of the main design subtypes of the Falling Horseman type showed the fallen horseman holding his hand up towards the emperor.[678] The gesture emulated the subjugated position and petitioning for mercy that is central to the typical compositions of the *clementia* motif.[679] Yet on the Falling Horseman types any petition was firmly rejected. By choosing to develop such an original design that specifically focused on the moment of killing, the stress was entirely focused on espousing the *virtus* of the emperor and army, of superior Roman might over their inferior barbarian enemies, with the conscious move away from any peripheral reference to clemency.

The interactions with the captives too echoed a twisted *submissio* scene. The emperor's or Victory's hand was extended to aggressively clasp the captive and drag them along the floor rather than benevolently proffered to raise them. Alternatively, the 'spurning' emperor's foot was applied to suppress the captive. In both cases, the iconography's protagonist (the emperor or Victory), effectively rejected their usual role on the *submissio* scenes, where they would have elevated the captive. Instead, the downward position of the captive was actively maintained. The intention was to communicate continued oppression, rather than the captive's upward transition from a defeated to accepted individual, as was the case on Trajan's column.

The sudden upsurge in the state's use of violent imagery on the base-metal coinage therefore not only formed a new means for emphasising 'MR' messages. It also marked a further breaking with conventional 'MR' messages by undermining the ability to espouse traditionally affiliated messages of imperial beneficence simultaneously. In particular, the proliferation of the emperor and Victory performing brutal actions worked to deconstruct the extant inter-

expression of imperial *clementia*, through the depiction of passive captives, on the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor and captives type **[67]**. Type **[67]** was the middle denomination of Constantius II, produced between 348-350, alongside the first Falling Horseman coinage, which itself was Constantius II's large denomination (Caza 2021: 159-163). Type **[67]** may therefore have originally featured as a propagandistic display of *clementia*, offsetting the Falling Horseman type's extremely violent depiction of imperial *virtus*. Yet type **[67]** would have had very limited success in this role. There are just fifty-five examples in the site-finds database, and all are removed during the cleaning process, showing their relative rarity in relation to other contemporary site-finds. Alternatively, a clear demonstration that the separate scenes of *virtus* and *clementia* from other media could be combined onto a single coin type, is a short-lived contemporary base-metal type of Magnentius issued at *Aquileia*, with the inscription GLORIA ROMANORVM. It presents a captive on the left being spurned by an emperor bearing *victoriola* and *labarum*, while the captive to the right raises their arms in the *submissio* pose (RIC VIII Aquileia 148). Again though, this type is extremely rare and does not appear in the site-finds database at all.

[677] See **§4.2.4.2**, esp. n.651.

[678] See the top-right and bottom-left subtype examples of type **[69]** in Appendix 8. These correspond respectively to the FH2 and FH3 subtypes in LRBC II: 108, FH1 and FH3 in RIC VIII: 38, and subtypes A and C in Caza 2021: 178. For further details on the subtypes see Appendix 8, n.171. Of note is that subtype FH3/FH3/C, the 'reaching' horseman, was the most common, being the only subtype produced at all fifteen active base-metal mints.

[679] Barden-Dowling 2006, esp.262-268 and Figs.25-27.

twined relationship between *virtus* and *clementia*. In contrast to preceding periods, which accommodated implications of a multidimensional emperor who could be both strong before his enemy and clement in victory, the base-metal coinage was now used to present to the wider populace a stripped-back version of imperial power. The fundamental message to come through the Phase 2 coinage, after the interwoven narrative of Constantinian triumphs and unification, was that the emperors were militarily powerful and ruthless.

In the case of this decision by the state to simplify the base-metal propaganda, I would argue that we are detecting a further characteristic of the 'politics of exclusion' in action. More so than ever, the Roman citizenry was only shown generic statements of imperial military competence and little else. These messages had been transformed into increasingly blunt expressions of an underlying reality: imperial rule was fundamentally underpinned by violence and coercion. Furthermore, it promised the Roman citizenry that all threats to the state, both internal and external, would be dealt with ruthlessly. In this regard, while the façade of the emperor as a competent ruler was maintained regardless of their actual skills, the pretence of the emperor as a benevolent individual had dropped. Furthermore, the absence of culminating scenes of imperial clemency and acceptance, even as implicit through the presentation of a passive, un-abused captive, reflects a marked change in imperial rulership ideology compared to under the Principate. By the mid-fourth century, earlier conceptions of expansionism and the active accommodation of new peoples had ended, supplanted by centuries of external pressure, invasion and internal usurpations. The gracious mercy and attitude of incorporation or accommodation towards defeated enemies, so central to the submission scene on Trajan's column, were gone. Opinion had shifted to seeing the empire as a monolithic structure at its full size, something static to be protected against its enemies – enemies who only threatened the Roman world order and required violent, unyielding suppression.

4.2.5. Phase 2 (330-408) Overview

The overarching feature of base-metal coin propaganda in Phase 2 was its domination by the 'MR' theme. 'MR' messages not only occurred on the vast majority of coinage issued 330-408, but were communicated overtly. Imperial *virtus* and *victoria* constitute the fundamental aspects of imperial rulership ideology and authority that the state intended to communicate to its wider populace from the mid-fourth century. Unlike Phase 1 (284-324) and, as will be discussed below, unlike Phase 3 (408-450), Phase 2 is also notable as a timespan during which coin propaganda remained relatively uniform across the empire. Consequently, exposure to these overt expressions of imperial military prowess was effectively universal. As has been argued in **§1.4.2**, a defining aspect of life as a resident of the Late Roman Empire was having access

to coinage, and so being a resident of the Roman Empire from the mid-fourth century onwards meant being exposed to images of imperial *virtus* and *victoria* daily.

The only notable exceptions to the broader trend of 'MR' messages having an uncontested pan-imperial presence occurred in Periods 7 (340-348) and 10 (378-388). In both instances, the deviation from continual expression of imperial military competence took the form of simple *vota* messages. The *vota* series emphasised that enduring imperial security was provided by the longevity of emperors' ongoing rule. On these coins, 'MR' messages once again assumed a peripheral role, in the bordering *corona civica*, insinuating inherent imperial victory as a support structure of this longevity. During Period 10, this alternative messaging constituted its own pan-imperial programme, though in Period 7 the adverts of imperial continuity were more clearly restricted to Constantius II's eastern territories.

The clearest change in the formulation of 'MR' messages during Phase 2 arose in the transition between Periods 6 (330-340) and 7 (340-348). During Period 6, the coinage was dominated by a personalized narrative, promoting Constantine I's triumph and reunification of the empire. The use of the CONSTANTINOPOLIS, VRBS ROMA and GLORIA EXERCITVS types **[49, 50, 52/53]** collectively asserted Constantine's authority and two major victories. His role as a triumphant leader who brought stability and unity to the empire was therefore contingent on drawing the wider populace's attention to specific intra-imperial conflicts, and telling them a revised narrative of actual events. However, Period 6 was the last time base-metal coinage was effectively used within an interconnected series of types, as well as in conjunction with other media, to comprehensively communicate a contemporary political narrative. Subsequent iconographic types would become more straightforward assertions of imperial authority, which provided less insight into the specific activities of the emperors or the struggles between them.

In contrast, Periods 7 to 11 (340-408) marked a shift in the political functioning of base-metal coinage. The return to a division between the western and eastern empires under Constans and Constantius II simultaneously saw a change to presenting generic expressions of 'MR'. This genericisation was a deliberate decision by the state, to actively move away from orientating messages around contemporary political issues. It became the intention to exclude the wider imperial populace from contemporary politics, rather than see them as a body whose support was to be fostered beyond the most basic statements of competence and legitimacy. This 'politics of exclusion' reflected a strategic decision by the emperors to present themselves as the sole providers of imperial security and authority, without engaging the broader population in the complexities of their rule. These messages were primarily formulated through the recurrent depiction of either Victory as the obvious embodiment of *victoria*, or the emperor as the embodiment of *virtus*.

Furthermore, from Period 8 (348-363) a novel and aggressive form of propaganda emerged on the base-metal coinage. The extensive production of the Falling Horseman type promoted more so than ever before the emperor's explicit performance of violence and conquest. Overtly violent imagery became commonplace on base-metal coinage for the remainder of Phase 2 and beyond. The result was to portray the emperor, first and foremost, as a ruthless conqueror. Conversely, expressions of benevolence and clemency, which had often been interwoven with *virtus* messages during the Principate, were abandoned. Here we can witness a further key shift in the role that base-metal coinage was intended to perform, with emphasis increasingly placed on brutal imperial power and suppression of perceived enemies. This change in imagery reflected the changing attitudes towards the empire's enemies, seeing them as threats to be violently suppressed rather than incorporated or shown mercy.

Lastly, the Phase 2 coinage, with its overt and often violent 'MR' messages, continued circulating during the fifth century and dominated the publicly available base-metal coinage. The sustained visibility of these coins was enabled by several factors, including particularly high production volumes during Phase 2, and that coins with the most prominent displays of violence were never subject to contemporary demonetisation policies. The coinage of Phase 3 (408-450) would come to differ substantially from that of Phase 2, first in how it formulated its overt 'MR' messages, and then in how it ceased to prioritise the 'MR' theme in favour of Christianity. Yet these later coins, issued at substantially lower volumes, would never be able to achieve the same level of presence as their Phase 2 counterparts.

4.3. Phase 3 (Periods 12 and 13, 408-450) – 'Military Representation' in the Eastern Empire Under Theodosius II

The third and final phase covers Periods 12 (408-425) and 13 (425-450), from the death of Arcadius in 408 to the death of Theodosius II in 450.[680] During Phase 3, the Roman world continued to be predominantly ruled by the Theodosian dynasty. However, the western and eastern empires were now governed separately by two distinct court systems and were on

[680] There is no convenient single stopping point for this study during the mid-fifth century that is applicable to base-metal coin production in both the eastern and western empires. Although stated as 450, the ending of Phase 3 has been staggered in accordance with the eastern and western mints' different cycles of coin production and iconographic change, which can be tied to the accession of new emperors. The final eastern-produced coins recorded in the site-finds database, as stated above, are of Theodosius II and were produced in 450 at the latest. The final western-produced coins are of Valentinian III, and may have been produced up to his death in 455. However, all the iconographic types of Valentinian III present in the site-finds database were first issued during the lifetime of Theodosius II, with the latest beginning to be produced in 445. There are only fourteen coins of Valentinian III among the 2,111 total Period 13 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset whose possible date of issue extends up to 455, though all these coins may equally have been produced before 450.

different trajectories.[681] Two main aspects distinguish Periods 12 and 13 from Phase 2 (330-408):

1. A sharp drop in the overall quantity of available site-finds compared to the general abundance of Phase 2 coinage. Given the continued circulation of large quantities of Phase 2 coinage throughout the fifth century (**§4.2.4**), we must keep in mind that any new features of imperial propaganda found on Phase 3 coinage were unlikely to have attained much visibility amongst the wider populace. Consequently, the following analysis is largely limited to delineating changes in what the state wished to present via its base-metal coinage, rather than in what was visible to the wider populace.
2. The collapse of much of the western empire's base-metal production and distribution systems as imperial control receded from northern and western territories. Beyond the general decrease in site-find quantities between Phases 2 and 3, the political decline in the west resulted in a significant imbalance between the number of Phase 3 coins found at eastern and western sites. Western sites do not provide a sufficient sample of site-finds for either Period 12 or 13 to facilitate inter-regional comparison, and analysis of Phase 3 coin propaganda has been restricted to considering just the eastern empire.

Phases 2 and 3 are therefore distinguished, first and foremost, on the grounds of data quality. These data quality issues will be dealt with in greater detail before exploring the base-metal coin propaganda of Periods 12 and 13.

Regarding the presentation of 'MR' messages during Phase 3, it is first notable that virtually all newly issued base-metal coinage continued to espouse either imperial *virtus* or *victoria* to some degree (Fig.4.3), just like in Phase 2. Yet when we consider the actual 'MR' scores (Fig.4.4),[682] we find that a major point of differentiation is not the transition between Phases 2 and 3 (Period 11 to 12) but a substantial drop-off between Periods 12 and 13. Beyond the data-quality issues that require their separate treatment from Phase 2, we can see that there

[681] See Blockley 1997; Heather 2001; Lee 2001 for the political histories of the western and eastern empires in the fifth century, ultimately seeing collapse of the former and continuation of the latter.

[682] The asterisked-marked (*) Periods 12 and 13 category/theme scores on Figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.12, 4.13, 4.16, 4.23, 4.26 have been produced by using a reduced number of sites. Ten western sites have been excluded on the grounds that they provide no Phase 3 coinage. These are Durnovaria, Lindum, Portus Adurni, Venta Silurum, Verulamium, Rotomagus, Arelate, Baelo Claudia, Zilil and Sabratha. This is because the corresponding '0%' category/theme scores they each provide heavily disrupt the pan-imperial and western site averages to which they contribute, producing exaggeratedly suppressed scores. A further three western sites – Augusta Treverorum, Conimbriga and Saguntum – have also been excluded, as their negligible Phase 3 coin totals are not sufficient enough to provide insight into contemporary available coinage (see **§4.3.1.3**, n.695 for further discussion of these sites). This just leaves five western sites – Carthage, Rome, Tridentium, Verona and Massalia – contributing to the Period 12 and 13 category/theme scores. The refinement here is aimed at representing only the category/theme scores for regions still under imperial political control, as signalled by supply of new coinage. The reduction of these geographical areas specifically in the west is outlined below in **§4.3.1.3**. Consequently, all pan-imperial averages for Periods 12 and 13 draw only on a total of thirty-one sites (all twenty-six eastern and the five western); while the western averages for the same period are constructed using only the five western sites.

is a substantial degree of variation *within* Phase 3. Much as with Phase 1 (284-324, **§4.1**), separate and sequential treatment of each period is required. For Period 12 the following analysis will demonstrate how the overt presentation of the 'MR' theme remained a central feature of the base-metal coinage, alongside a new complementary emphasis on concord between the western and eastern emperors. Conversely, for Period 13 we will see that explicit 'MR' messages disappeared, and that while references to *virtus* or *victoria* continued they now assumed a peripheral position. In their place, we find the first attempt by the state to pervasively promote the Christian identity of the Roman Empire above anything else.

4.3.1. Data Quality Caveats and Regional Restrictions

As already stated, Periods 12 and 13 have been treated as distinct from Phase 2 as neither is particularly well represented within the site-finds dataset in terms of total coin volumes. This is made evident by Figure 4.22, which displays the per-annum average number of coins for each period in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset. Periods 12 and 13 are shown to be the second and third worst represented. Only Period 1 (284-294) contributes fewer coins per year (average of 19.8), and I have already argued its diminutive coin total prevents meaningful inter-regional analysis as well as only allowing tentative, generalised pan-imperial conclusions to be drawn.[683] The continuously low apparent coin-loss over a forty-seven-year period makes Phase 3 the worst-represented phase by quite some margin. It provides on average just 65.9 coins per-annum, compared to Phase 1's average of 106 coins per-annum and Phase 2's considerably higher average of 652.3 coins per-annum.

This dearth of Phase 3 coinage is due to three factors, which will be briefly explored before considering Periods 12 and 13 in sequence:

1. There was a general change to base-metal production policy from the early fifth century.
2. Practical issues of preservation have hindered numismatists' ability to accurately record fifth-century base-metal coins.
3. Base-metal coin production at western mints in particular retracted in the face of external political pressures.

4.3.1.1. Changes in Production Policy

Firstly, the Roman state's approach to base-metal coin production changed in the early fifth century. Large volumes of base-metal coinage were issued throughout Phase 2, in response

[683] See **§4.1.1.1**.

to the continuous demand created by rampant price inflation, and much of this coinage continued to circulate well into the fifth century.[684] As inflation reduced into the fifth century and prices somewhat stabilised, the Phase 2 coinage continued to fulfil the demands of day-to-day monetary activities.[685] New base-metal coinage was then only periodically issued to supplement the existing supply.[686] The considerably lower per-annum averages for Periods 12 and 13 in the 'cleaned' site-finds database (Fig.4.22) are in part a reflection of the lower levels of coin production throughout Phase 3.

These lower production levels are highly relevant to how the Phase 3 coinage may have affected the wider populace's experience of imperial power. Ultimately, analysis of the different iconographic types minted within individual periods is limited to identifying only what the contemporary state wished to prioritise for public promotion. It does not tell us how visible the political messages were relative to the other coin propaganda already in circulation. I have already emphasised that during Phase 2, coins bearing overt 'MR' messages were issued in massive quantities and remained highly visible to the wider populace as they continued to circulate, even into the sixth century.[687] Conversely, the intermittent minting activity and much lower production in Phase 3 would have made it extremely difficult for any new coinage to cut through the countless earlier coins still in use that almost all depicted violent military emperors or Victory. We must keep in mind that the innovative narratives on Period 12 and 13 base-metal coinage, identified below, were likely obscured from the public's view by already available coins. The Phase 3 analysis is consequently restricted to discerning what the state wanted to portray, not what its subjects necessarily saw.

4.3.1.2. Preservation Issues for Phase 3 Coinage

A second, specifically modern factor impacting the Phase 3 data is the challenge of accurately preserving and recording fifth-century base-metal coinage. During Phase 3, base-metal coinage generally declined in size and visual quality, making clear identification of iconographic types much more difficult. This applies to both Periods 12 and 13 in the west, where only small AE4 coinage (<15mm) was produced, and to the eastern coinage from 425, from which point production of AE3 coinage (19-16mm) was similarly replaced by smaller, lighter AE4 issues.[688] Moreover, *Roman Imperial Coinage* Volume X, which covers 395-498,

[684] On fourth century inflation see Bagnall 1985; Hendy 1985: 464-475; Harl 1996: 164-175. On high production volumes see Depeyrot 1982: 18-21, 49-52, 75-76, 101-102, 138-140; Guest 2012 and 2019: 247-250. This is similarly reflected in the site-finds database, in which most coins recorded date to Phase 2 (see Fig.4.16 and **§2.3.5.1**). On the continued circulation of Phase 2 coins see **§4.2.4.1** and **§4.2.4.2**.
[685] On the stabilisation of inflation into the fifth century see Moorhead 2012: 622; Gorini 1996: 189; Burnett 1987: 151-152. For collected price data see Ruggini 1961: 360-406; Carlà 2009: 22-31.
[686] Guest 2012: 116-118, 120-121 and Guest 2019 *contra* Safrai 1998: 5-25, 133-153.
[687] See **§4.2.4**.
[688] Moorhead 2012: 616-620; RIC X: 17-22; Grierson and Mays 1992: 44-47. Note that there was a lot of inconsistency in size, weight standards and metallurgic composition even within the broader AE4 descriptor.

was only published in 1994, meaning many compilers of coin-lists before the mid-1990s often lacked suitable cataloguing resources to properly identify Phase 3 coins. Because of these issues, most publications used to create the site-finds database list many uncertain fifth-century coins at their rear, which I could not include due to their lack of specific dating or iconographic information.[689] It must be acknowledged that the severely low number of Phase 3 coins in the site-finds database is in part caused by practical issues that have prevented the recording of excavated fifth-century coinage with the same degree of accuracy as their fourth-century counterparts.[690] There is no doubt that the lower coin quantities of Periods 12 and 13 do capture some of the impact of contemporary lower production volumes, yet these suppressed figures are certainly exaggerated by preservation and recording issues.

4.3.1.3. Western Sites and the Secession of Coin Supply

Furthermore, this dramatic reduction in overall period coin totals is partly because of the virtual absence of any Phase 3 coinage at most western sites. With the gradual influx of barbarian peoples and the decline of imperial control in much of the western empire during the fifth century, new base-metal coinage was almost exclusively produced at *Rome* alone. The major Gallic mints of *Trier*, *Lugdunum* and *Arelate* had previously supplied much of the base-metal coinage circulating in the north-west empire and Iberian peninsula.[691] However, after 395 all three mints ceased regular production of base-metal coinage, and on their infrequent resumption of service new coins were issued in low volumes.[692] Phase 3's geographically restricted production is reflected in the cleaned site-finds dataset. Base-metal coins from the mint of *Rome* make up 177 of the 180 Phase 3 coins with identifiable western mintmarks.[693] In line with diminishing imperial control and the model of coin supply through geographic proximity, new base-metal imperial coinage largely ceased to penetrate any regions of the

[689] Of the ninety-six different excavation reports and coin-list publications used to create my site-finds database, only thirty-four were published after 1994. This also includes publications such as Butcher 1995, that makes no reference to RIC X in its catalogue and therefore may be presumed to have been written and submitted for publication prior to the availability of RIC X. Moreover, there are instances within these thirty-four publications of coin-lists from excavations compiled prior to RIC X's availability and then only published later, as with some of the Abu Mina coinage in Noeske 2000.

[690] On this issue of inaccurate recording see Moorhead 2012: 622-623; Tek 2002: 228; Tek 2016: 245 and **§2.3.2**, n.253-254.

[691] For discussion of coin supply to these regions see analysis of Western groups 1 and 2 in **§2.3.4.2**. See RIC X: 27-28 and 137 for base-metal production at the Gallic mints during Phase 3.

[692] In summary, at *Trier* this included only the VRTVS ROMANORVM Emperor w/ standard and shield type **[213]**, issued for Valentinian III and Theodosius II likely sometime between 440-445. There is a single example of this type from Sardis in the site-finds database and it is removed during the cleaning process. *Lugdunum* and *Arelate* only issued the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor w/ standard and shield type **[151]** for Honorius, in a brief production run around 418. There are eleven examples of type **[151]** in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, ten of which were found at Massalia, though none have identifiable mints. RIC X also lists a single Victory type issued for Johannes at *Arelate* between 423-425 (RIC X Johannes 1911), though it is not represented in the site-finds database.

[693] Of the other three coins, there is a gold *solidus* of type **[246]** and silver half-*siliqua* of type **[74]** from *Ravenna* and a gold *tremissis* of type **[114]** from *Mediolanum*, all rare examples of lost precious metal coins.

western empire beyond *Italia*, *Viennensis* and *Africa* (Map 1).[694] Of the eighteen western sites within the site-finds dataset, only Carthage, Verona, Tridentium, Rome and Massalia provide any coinage for both Periods 12 and 13.[695]

Yet, even within this more refined region of continued circulation, the sample of coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset is extremely poor. Carthage, Verona, Tridentium, Rome and Massalia only provide 215 Phase 3 coins in total, and 124 (57.7%) come from Carthage alone. The region of continued supply in the west has a miserly Phase 3 per-annum coin-loss average of 4.6, compared to the eastern sites' average of 61.2 coins per-annum over the same timeframe. Ultimately, just as with Period 1, the data quality is so poor for the west that inter-regional comparison would not be meaningful. With the eastern sites providing 2,877 of the 3,097 (92.9%) Phase 3 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, this analysis will focus on the eastern empire alone.

4.3.2. Period 12 (408-425): A Tale of Two Emperors, Embodiments of *Virtus* and *Concordia*

At least for the Period 12 site-finds from eastern sites, beyond the caveats of lower production levels and data quality issues, there is a continuity from Phase 2 of prevalent 'MR' messaging. Virtually all Period 12 coins espoused the 'MR' theme to some degree (99.8%, Fig.4.3), and the eastern sites had an exceedingly high average 'MR' score (91.5%, Fig.4.6). The eastern site-finds not only almost always featured martial propaganda but overt espousal of these elements persisted.[696] The high 'MR' scoring is sustained principally due to the repeated issuing of two iconographic types through Period 12: the GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors globe/shield types **[109, 110]**. These coins, depicting Theodosius II and his uncle Honorius standing side-by-side with either a shield or orb between them, constitute on average 79.8% of Period 12 coins at eastern sites.[697] Both were modifications of the earlier type **[108]** that also included Arcadius, and which was heavily issued between 406-408.[698]

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[694] Harl 1996: 182-183.

[695] Other than these sites Conimbriga and Saguntum each provide a single coin dating to Period 12, while Augusta Treverorum has three Period 13 coins. By contrast, of the above listed sites with both Period 12 and 13 coins Tridentium has the fewest Phase 3 coins, providing fourteen different examples, an exponentially larger sample size than Conimbriga, Saguntum or Augusta Treverorum. While the evidence of some Phase 3 base-metal coinage within the Iberian peninsula and northern Gaul may suggest some degree of continued supply, such low coin numbers and the cessation in production by local mints indicate that the structures of economic activity and exchange present in the fourth century were collapsing.

[696] As per Figure 4.24, of all the 811 Period 12 coins in the site-finds dataset, including the forty-four coins from western sites, 795 (98.2%) have an 'MR' score of **{1}**. Just two coins have a slightly more subtle **{0.75}** score, and eleven the more peripheral **{0.5}** score. Conversely, only two coins have an 'MR' score of **{0}**.

[697] See Appendix 6, Period 12.

[698] As per Appendix 6, Period 11, type **[108]** on average constituted 10% of eastern sites' Period 11 coinage, though this is a period in which coinage was issued in much higher numbers (see **§4.3.1.1** and Fig.4.22). In raw coin

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
12	408-425	Arcadius	383-408	GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors shield **[110]**	50.0%
		Honorius	393-423	GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors globe **[109]**	29.8%
		Theodosius II	402-450	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram **[100]**	7.1%
		Johannes	423-425	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.6%

Of further interest beyond the continuity of overt 'MR' messages is that the Period 12 eastern site-finds also demonstrate a shift back from a *victoria*-orientated narrative (Fig.4.13) to again focus on promoting imperial *virtus* (Fig.4.12). The Period 12 average eastern *virtus* score (80.9%) is the third highest macro-regional *virtus* score within the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, only exceeded by the eastern and western average scores from Period 8 (348-363, 99.5% and 89.3% respectively). As with the Period 8 coinage, the high Period 12 eastern average *virtus* score was attained by the continuous presentation of the emperor(s) in military attire, in this instance always with a spear in hand on the two emperors types **[109, 110]**.

However, the Period 12 depictions of the emperor differ from the Phase 2 coins. As has been discussed in **§4.2.4**, Phase 2 iconographic types of the emperor regularly depicted him killing, kicking or dragging captives, which also prevented the simultaneous explicit presentation of other adjoining imperial virtues or benefits. Yet on types **[109, 110]**, we no longer find the projection of *virtus* being enhanced by the emperor's performance of violent actions. The ever-militarised emperor appeared alongside his imperial colleague and family member, communicating a dual message of imperial *virtus* and *concordia*. As per Figure 4.23, this dominance of types **[109, 110]** at eastern sites sees the *concordia* propaganda category achieve its highest macro-regional average score (87.4%) during Period 12. Furthermore, it is the only significantly high *concordia* score since Period 7's (340-348) western average score of 83.3%. Immediately striking is the historical parallel between Periods 7 and 12. Although the empire was never constitutionally divided formally, both were times during which the western and eastern empires were *de facto* governed separately by two independent Augusti, neither of whom held *de iure* seniority over the other.[699] Within the specific political context of

numbers, there are 1,245 examples of type **[108]** in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, compared to a combined 725 examples of types **[109, 110]**.

[699] It is the established convention of modern scholarship to discuss the western and eastern regions of the empire as forming into distinct political entities during the fourth century, before dividing for good in 395. Despite this, it has also been stressed that the Roman state itself, particularly through its legislation, continued to assert the formal unity of all territories of the Roman Empire, being constitutionally undivided until the west's demise during the late-fifth century (Millar 2006: 3-5). Nevertheless, the repeated reality of various co-emperors often in charge of different western and eastern territories respectively throughout the fifth century has made it necessary to accept these emperors often practiced *de facto* independent rule from one another. This has often been accepted as the political reality established upon the meeting of the brothers Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans at Sirmium in September 337, where they ratified their zones of control and collectively elevated themselves to the rank of co-Augusti (Burgess 2008). William Lewis's recent critical reappraisal of the political situation between 337-340 has however emphasised that, while the empire was 'divided in practical function (i.e. legislatively, financially, administratively, and militarily)' (i.e. *de facto* independent), Constantine II was the *de iure* senior Augustus and could intervene in the territories of his junior brothers (Lewis 2020: 58-73). This argumentation pushes back the division of empire into effectively independent domains to between 340-350, under the nominally equal co-Augusti Constantius II and Constans. Though Davenport 2020b has recently suggested a greater degree of co-operation between Constantius II and Constans during the 340s than has typically been acknowledged, especially in collaborating in the appointment of senior officials, this cooperation was based on two colleagues of equal rank operating within their own domains. On the political division of empire into west and east under courts of Arcadius and Honorius in 395, again seeing these imperial territories effectively ruled by independent Augusti of equal status, see Williams and Friell 1994: 143-171; Blockley 1997; Grant 1998: 37-48; Errington 2006: 40-42; Millar 2006: 5-7. By contrast, in the intervening period between the two 'divisions' of empire in the 340s and in 395, despite the recurrent splitting of territory into zones of control under multiple emperors, there was a frequently observable hierarchy within the imperial college. One emperor recurrently claimed the position of *de iure* senior Augustus even

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
12	408-425	Arcadius	383-408	GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors shield **[110]**	50.0%
		Honorius	393-423	GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors globe **[109]**	29.8%
		Theodosius II	402-450	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram **[100]**	7.1%
		Johannes	423-425	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.6%

Period 12, we can witness the eastern state's desire to promote to its wider populace the fiction of a still monolithic, singular Roman Empire. It was a conservative vision of an unchanged Roman world during an age of division and fluctuation.

The most notable aspect of Period 12 is the eastern state's interest in bringing *concordia* to the fore. As per Figure 4.23, *concordia* was a benefit of imperial rule that made inconsistent, fleeting appearances on base-metal coinage. Yet what remains relevant to this broader analysis is that 'MR' messages' prominent position was not usurped but shared. The trend established in the mid-fourth century, of depicting the emperor as a specifically military figure, as *virtus* personified, continued. The façade of military competence remained, although it was as fictitious as imperial unity since the emperors had now ceased to lead military campaigns.[700] During Period 12, the exclusionary function of coinage was extended to incorporate another dimension to its existing propaganda rather than fundamentally change. Base-metal coinage now espoused the falsehood of continued pan-imperial unity to the wider populace, in the face of declining intra-imperial relations, the independent functioning of eastern and western imperial courts and the beginnings of western collapse.

4.3.3. Period 13 (425-450): A Christian Roman Empire

The transition into Period 13 marks a significant shift in the elements of imperial rulership ideology that were prioritised for communication on base-metal coinage in the eastern empire.

if *de facto* independent rule of the emperors within their respective territories may have persisted. This is immediately recognisable in Constantius II's elevation of Gallus and then Julian to the junior rank of Caesar following Constans's murder in 350. Despite the occasional lack of assistance provided to his brother Valens (Errington 2006: 20-24), Valentinian I clearly retained the position as senior Augustus (RIC: xvii-xviii, Lenski 2002: 28-35), which is a status further supported by his apparent ability to enforce legislative conformity across both his and Valens's territories (Lenski 2002: 364-372, esp. 268). This contrasts to the inability of Constans or Constantius II to apply their legislation to one another's territories during their effective independence between 340-350 (Lewis 2020: 62-64). Upon Valentinian I's death in 375, Valens projected his position as now senior Augustus by using the title *Maximus Augustus*, at least claiming to seniority, regardless of Gratian's apparent opposition (RIC IX: xix; Lenski 2002: 356-360, 367). Gratian too sought to push his own position as senior Augustus and the influence of the western empire over the east following Valens's death (RIC IX: xviii-xix). This hierarchy within the imperial college is also clearly echoed on the base-metal coinage in the simple *vota* types **[4, 5]** produced in the early 380s, which imply seniority through reference to different reign lengths (see **§4.2.3.3**, n.622 above on this *vota* coinage). Finally, an essential aspect of imperial politics from the appointment of Theodosius I in 378 was his gradual usurpation of the position of senior Augustus from the Valentinianic dynasty (RIC IX: xix-xxii, Heather and Moncur 2001: 213-216; Omissi 2018: 255-290).

[700] With minor exceptions Theodosius I was the final emperor to personally campaign while holding imperial office until Heraclius (610-641). John Lydus (*De Magistratibus* II.11.4-5, III.41.3) includes the story that Theodosius I had forbidden his sons from campaigning. On this lack of campaigning and the consequent strategies deployed by non-military emperors to construct their military credentials and assert control over the army see Lee 2007a: 383-394. Lee's analysis includes coverage of the obverse bust of a military emperor (helmeted, cuirassed, and with a spear across his shoulder) that assumed a permanent position on the *solidi* of the eastern empire across much of the period of non-military emperors, from the reign of Arcadius to Justinian I. RIC X: 8, 47 asserts that the revival of this military portraiture was planned by Theodosius I before his death, based on *exagia* evidence, and thus looks to undermine its connection to attempts to promote non-military emperors. However, as Lee shows, projections of military competence were a central element of state political messages during the Late Roman period. It is surely significant that the continuous presentation of emperor in military dress on a coin's obverse was first given programmatic coverage on Arcadius's coinage, as the period of non-military emperors began, even if the prototype can be traced back to Theodosius I.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
13	425-450	Theodosius II	402-450	Cross in wreath **[114]**	69.1%
				CONCORDIA AVG Victory **[113]**	10.6%
		Valentinian III	425-455	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.9%
				VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory w/ wreath and palm types **[167]**	4.4%

Although nearly all newly issued base-metal coinage continued to bear some indication to the 'MR' theme, these inferences now held a peripheral position. The momentous shift away from overt 'MR' messages is well presented in Figure 4.24. 98.1% of Period 12 site-finds can be seen to have had a clear 'MR' score of **{1}**. There is then a significant decline in Period 13, where now only 14.8% of coins have a score of **{1}**. Instead, 84.5% of Period 13 coins score **{0.5}**, bearing iconography in which 'MR' messages only had a 'moderate' or background presence.

What contributed to this downturn in explicit 'MR' messages was a significant shift in the preferred iconographic motifs issued on the base-metal coinage. The emperor as a 'protagonist' suddenly disappeared from eastern site-finds.[701] Eastern mints did resume production of some Victory types, which on average constitute a notable minority of 24.6% of Period 13 coins at eastern sites.[702] However, as per Figure 4.14, this proportion of Victory types remains incomparable with the considerably higher quantities issued during Phase 2, when emperor types also provided a significant counterbalance. The emperor and Victory, who for around eighty-five years, since 340, had acted as the primary vehicles for communicating 'MR' on base-metal coinage, who embodied the core aspects of *virtus* and *victoria*, ceased to be the state's favoured modes of iconographic expression.

These well-established figures were replaced as the predominant image on base-metal coinage by the Latin cross. It was a simple motif recurrently presented at the centre of the Cross-in-wreath type **[114]**, produced across the eastern empire and at *Rome*.[703] Type **[114]** dominates the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, comprising on average 69.1% of Period 13 coins at eastern sites.[704] As the embodiment of the eastern state's shift in base-metal propaganda policy during Period 13, it warrants particular attention.

[701] Five iconographic types in the site-finds dataset date to Period 13 and include the figure of the emperor (**[112, 165, 175, 213, 246]**). Of these, only one VICTORIA AVG Emperor(?) with spear and globe type **[165]** and one VICTORIA AVGGG Emperor w/long cross and victoriola type **[246]** appear in the cleaned site-finds dataset. The type **[165]** coin is of Valentinian III, found at Rome and issued at the *Rome* mint. The type **[246]** is a gold coin of Valentinian III, found at Augusta Treverorum and issued at *Ravenna*. There are no examples of emperor types from eastern mints in the site-finds dataset, and of these Period 13 emperor types, only the CONCORDIA AGV Two emperors base-metal type **[112]** was ever produced in the eastern empire, at *Thessalonica* and *Constantinople* for Theodosius II.

[702] As per Appendix 6, Period 13, the most common Period 13 Victory type from eastern sites was the CONCORDIA AVG Victory type **[113]**. Type **[113]** was produced across the east (at *Heraclea*, *Constantinople*, *Nicomedia*, *Cyzicus* and *Antioch*) and comprises on average 10.6% of Period 13 eastern site-finds alone. Type **[113]** is however ultimately outweighed by a series of other western-produced Victory types **[61, 100, 116, 153, 167, 171]**, which together provide on average the remaining 14.6% of eastern Period 13 site-finds that are victory types.

[703] LRBC II, nos. 867, 2004, 2234, 2238-2239, 2460-2461, 2604-2606, 2810. There are also cross-in-wreath coins attributed to *Carthage* with the anonymous obverse DOMINORVM NOSTR P AVG, though their dating and issuing authority remains contested. See Grierson and Mays 1992: 224 for a summary of the scholarship on this anonymous coinage, including suggestions that it may be early Vandalic or produced during the rebellion of Count Boniface (423-429).

[704] A brief warning should be made about the very high proportion of the Period 13 coinage that the cross-in-wreath type constitutes at eastern sites, particularly in comparison with the less represented CONCORDIA AVG Victory type **[113]** (see n.702 above). For much of the period 425-450 most active eastern mints (*Heraclea*, *Constantinople*,

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
13	425-450	Theodosius II	402-450	Cross in wreath **[114]**	69.1%
				CONCORDIA AVG Victory **[113]**	10.6%
		Valentinian III	425-455	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.9%
				VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory w/ wreath and palm types **[167]**	4.4%

On the cross-in-wreath coinage expressions of *victoria* and *virtus* were again moved to the margins, insinuated by the *corona civica* border.[705] Despite 'MR' losing its place as the principal message of most base-metal coinage, the repeated appearance of the wreath did at least mean that implications of imperial victory continued to persist as a background element of coin propaganda. In this regard, we find a parallel to Periods 7 (340-348) and 10 (378-388), when the focus was moved away from the 'MR' theme to prioritise *vota* messages that were nevertheless surrounded by the *corona civica*.[706] Unlike other aspects of imperial rulership ideology that could come and go, 'MR' messages had become so intrinsically tied to expressions of imperial authority that they were rarely entirely removed, but just shifted to a fringe position. In these circumstances, *victoria* became an ideological keystone, supporting other expressions of imperial power rather than being the defining feature of the emperor's legitimacy. Yet, in either role, the omnipresence of 'MR' messages indicates how *victoria*, a defining aspect of Roman imperial rule since its inception,[707] remained vital to the Late Roman state's conception of authority.

As for what displaced the 'MR' messages, through the cross-in-wreath type the Late Roman state chose to foreground a clear expression of Christian faith and identity – the *fides* propaganda category. Period 13 was not the first time Christian faith had been promoted as a central element of a Late Roman base-metal iconographic type. However, the pervasive issuing of the cross-in-wreath type marks the first clear and unproblematic prioritisation of imperial Christian identity *at scale*. To demonstrate the ground-breaking nature of this change

Nicomedia, *Cyzicus* and *Antioch*) mainly produced just the CONCORDIA AVG Victory type **[113]** and the Cross-in-wreath type **[114]**. They were minted at the same *officinae*, both were AE4 coinages of the same weight standard, and were likely concurrently struck (see LRBC II and RIC X: 92-93). Yet the contents of the site-finds database suggest that the Cross-in-wreath type was produced in much greater numbers than the CONCORDIA AVG Victory type (eastern average of 69.1% vs. 10.6% of Period 13 coinage). The only evidence to support why there should be such a disparity between these two types is that the cross-in-wreath was also produced at *Alexandria* and *Rome* (see LRBC II: 63, RIC X: 93). Based on the 'known mints' evidence from the site-finds dataset for the cross-in-wreath type though, only seven of 387 examples are from *Rome*, of which four are found at eastern sites, and only two are from *Alexandria*. These figures do not really support the notion that either the *Rome* or *Alexandria* mints were a major source of cross-in-wreath types for the eastern empire. The significant difference in the numbers of type **[114]** and **[113]** coins is instead likely because of the data-quality issues raised in **§4.3.1.2** above. The simple iconography of a cross-in-wreath is much easier to identify, and can only be one iconographic type. The figure of Victory appears on multiple iconographic types, so a Victory-bearing coin often cannot be confidently identified unless the inscription or mint mark can also be determined. As such, there is the real possibility here that many of the unidentifiable Late Roman 'Victory types' at the back of eastern sites' coin-lists may be CONCORDIA AVG Victory types. If they could be correctly recorded, type **[113]** may act as a counterweight to type **[114]**. If so, Period 13's average theme and category scores would look very different. 'MR' messages would continue to maintain a much greater presence, while 'Divine Association' messages, and in particular the *fides* messages (see below), would be suppressed. As for now, we can only go by the current data available. Furthermore, this possible data imbalance does not undermine the reality that the Cross-in-wreath coins constitute the most consistent expression of *fides* in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.

[705] See Appendix 5, n.110.

[706] See **§4.2.3.3**.

[707] On the centrality of victory to imperial power see, first, Gagé's 'théologie de la Victoire impériale' (Gagé 1933). This 'theology of victory' as a broad framework of legitimisation underpinning Roman imperial authority has continuously been used and development within modern scholarship. For extensive bibliographies sees Fears 1981: 737-739, n.2; Noreña 2011: 147, n.157; Betjes 2022: 157-158.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
13	425-450	Theodosius II	402-450	Cross in wreath **[114]**	69.1%
				CONCORDIA AVG Victory **[113]**	10.6%
		Valentinian III	425-455	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.9%
				VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory w/ wreath and palm types **[167]**	4.4%

in political messaging, to distinguish Period 13 as the first major publicising of imperial Christianity on coinage, what follows is a survey of the earlier expressions of Christianity on the base-metal coins.

4.3.3.1. Christianity and Base-Metal Coinage in the Early Fourth Century

Possible expressions of Christian faith on the coinage of the first Christian emperors, Constantine I and his sons, have been the subject of extensive analysis.[708] The detectable instances were largely refined to medallic coins, often of precious metal, whose circulation was restricted by low production numbers and distribution to specific elite audiences. Christian symbols began to appear on widely circulating base-metal coinage in the 330s, most notably on the GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards and AETERNA PIETAS types **[52, 57]**. Yet they were constrained to specific mints, functioning as control marks selected by local officials rather than being part of a coordinated regional or pan-imperial programme promoting Christianity.[709] During the first half of the fourth century, neither under Constantine I's politically engaged base-metal propaganda (**§4.1.2.1**, **§4.1.3**, **§4.2.2**), nor the genericising, exclusionary policy applied to base-metal coinage by Constantius II and Constans (**§4.2.3**), was the emperor's Christian faith focused on, as a means of advocating imperial legitimacy. The recurrent decision to keep expressions of Christianity off coinage remains surprising, given the Constantinian dynasty's open affiliation with the religion following Constantine's divinely granted victory at the battle of the Milvian Bridge (312).

4.3.3.2. Interpreting the Labarum: A Symbol of Divinely Granted Military Victory

I must clarify that there was the occasional insinuation of the Constantinian dynasty's Christian affiliation, though this was restricted almost exclusively to the symbol of the *Chi-Rho* (☧), Christ's monogram. Furthermore, the *Chi-Rho* always appeared in a military context, almost always on the military standard, the so-called *labarum*. This specifically martial context is of central importance, as it shows how the *Chi-Rho* never once appeared on the Constantinian base-metal coinage as a simple expression of an emperor's 'faith' (*fides*).[710] Within an imperial context, the *Chi-Rho* first appeared as a symbol of victory, revealed to Constantine I by the Christian god before the battle of the Milvian Bridge (312).[711] Accordingly, it originates as the symbol of Constantine's personal relationship with a new divine companion, through which he

[708] See, for example, overviews by Bruun 1962; RIC VII: 61-64; Bruun 1997; Abdy 2012a: 592-593; Wigg-Wolf 2014; Abdy 2016; Woods 2018.
[709] Bruck 1961: 27-29; Abdy 2012c; Appendix 7, **§7.2.1**.
[710] *Fides* is the category devised within this study to distinguish all forms of representation promoting the specifically Christian identity of the emperor, empress and/or empire and faith specifically in the Christian god, correlating with the essential virtue that a Christian emperor possessed according to Christian panegyrists. For further discussion of this category see **§3.2.5**.
[711] Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 44.4-5; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.28-29.

Period(s)		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Galley **[68]**	1.1%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor and captives **[67]**	0%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor and one captive **[127]**	0%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor w/labarum **[240]**	0%
9	363-378	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive **[82]**	43.9%

attained victory. The strictly personal nature of this connection is demonstrated in that, during Constantine I's lifetime, the *Chi-Rho* only appeared on coins that bore him on their obverse.[712] Only after Constantine I's death did the *Chi-Rho* appear on coins that depicted his Christian sons.[713] In this regard, the *Chi-Rho* represents an exact parallel to the tetrarchic emperors' promotion of their affiliation with a victory-granting Jupiter, Maxentius's connection with Mars, or Constantine's own association with Sol.[714] Hence, the *labarum* symbolised the emperor's intimate negotiation with a divine *comes*, and represented the incorporation of the Christian god into the existing framework of traditional Roman religion. Consequently, I have classified the *labarum*, first and foremost, as a symbol of the emperor's religious *pietas*, evidencing performance of his religious duties.[715] The concept of strictly Christian faith (*fides*) was only ever an ambiguous, secondary feature of the *labarum*.

The *labarum* also embodied other ideological aspects beyond its promotion of an alternative companion deity. The original *labarum*, as described by Eusebius and attested on the SPES PVBLIC *Labarum* and snake medallion **[43]**, was a *vexillum*, a standard with a banner containing the icons of the emperor and his sons, surmounted by the *Chi-Rho*.[716] These sources indicate the actual form of the imperial military standard, on which the images of the emperors were as much a component as the promotion of Constantine's new divine patron. As a motif on Late Roman base-metal coinage though, the *labarum* was simplified. Firstly, on FEL TEMP REPARATIO base-metal series (introduced in 348), the first programmatic presentation of the *labarum*, there was a visual elision, with the *Chi-Rho* placed inside the *vexillum*'s banner.[717] There was also an increased tendency into the late fourth century for the mints to depict the *labarum* by just using an X or ∗ instead of the *Chi-Rho* in the *vexillum*'s banner. This process of visual simplification, likely driven by the restrictive physical parameters of the base-metal coinage, obscures important components of the real *labarum* from the modern viewer. The images of the emperors were a fundamental component, and the simplified *labarum* would no doubt bring to a contemporary user's attention all components of

[712] There are some exceptional appearances of the *Chi-Rho* on non-Constantinian coinage during his reign. The obverse of RIC VII Trier 372 depicts Crispus holding a shield with a *Chi-Rho* design. However, there were many variations in the shield's design, including Medusa's head and Victory crowning the emperor (RIC VII: 197, n.372). The *Chi-Rho*'s irregular appearance here was due to minter's choice rather than programmatic depiction of Crispus with the *Chi-Rho*. Similarly, the *Chi-Rho* appeared as an officina mark $\frac{\text{P}}{\text{ASIS}*}$ at *Siscia* with an obverse of Licinius I on a VOT XX type, but is so rare that it could never be considered as regular (RIC VII: 418).
[713] Only after Constantine I's death did the *Chi-Rho* appear in the *labarum*, on the GLORIA EXERCITVS Two standards type **[52],** with obverses presenting Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans (Abdy 2012c). As per n.717 below it was not until the 348 coin reform that the *Chi-Rho*, in the form of the *labarum*, was taken up in earnest by Constantine I's surviving sons, Constantius II and Constans.
[714] See **§4.1.2**.
[715] Alos see Appendix 7, **§7.2** for further discussion of the *labarum*.
[716] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.28-29.
[717] See types **[67, 68, 127, 240]** and Appendix 7, Table 3.

Period(s)		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	FEL TEMP REPARATIO Galley **[68]**	1.1%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor and captives **[67]**	0%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor and one captive **[127]**	0%
		FEL TEMP REPARATIO Emperor w/labarum **[240]**	0%
9	363-378	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive **[82]**	43.9%

the emperor's actual military standard. In this sense, the *Chi-Rho* on the base-metal coinage also acted as a short-hand for the emperor's image, a general symbol of imperial authority, in addition to any religious significance it may also have embodied.[718]

Finally, we should also acknowledge the limited capacity in which the *labarum* was deployed on Late Roman base-metal coinage. The *labarum* really achieved prominence via the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive type **[82]**, where it is held by the emperor. Type **[82]** constitutes a pan-imperial average of 43.9% of coins from Period 9 (363-378) and is the sixth most populous type in the site-finds database. It exemplifies the prevailing role of the *labarum* – an attribute of the emperor. In this respect, the *labarum* was just one of several interchangeable facets of the emperor's wardrobe. Along with the spear and captive in particular, it was a visual means of primarily emphasising the emperor's *virtus*. In this regard, the *labarum* remained subordinate to the 'protagonist' emperor who held it. Any strictly Christian messages that the *labarum* could communicate were always a distant second to the core 'MR' messages on display.

In short, the *Chi-Rho*, when displayed in the *labarum*, was a highly complicated, multi-faceted and arguably deliberately ambiguous symbol. It was not intended to function as a simple statement of the emperor's or empire's Christian identity. The continuous selection of the *labarum* also suggests that the state favoured using a formulation of the *Chi-Rho* that was so open to interpretation whilst their subjects were only slowly converting to Christianity. Its variety of meaning allowed Christians and pagans alike to project their own preferences onto the *labarum*.[719] This intentional ambiguity also shows a further element of the 'politics of exclusion' in action; deliberately vague peripheral symbology could invite the audience to effectively read into imperial propaganda what they wanted to see in their rulers.

[718] See Appendix 7 on the transition from the *vexillum* bearing the emperors' image to the emergence of the *labarum* as a continued symbolising of the same divinely-inspired imperial authority; the *labarum*'s first programmatic depiction on base-metal coinage from the 348 monetary reform; and the evidence for interpreting alternative symbols within the *vexillum*'s banner (such as X or ⁎) as iconographic short-hand for the *Chi-Rho*. In further support of this interpretation that the ☧ also functioned as an irreligious statement of rulership see Abdy 2016: 169-170, which explores the earlier usage of the symbol not as a *Chi-Rho* but a *Rho-Chi*, an abbreviation for the Greek ΑΡΧΩΝ, to denote a ruler.

[719] See Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.17 on the ability of contemporary Christian and pagan audiences to interpret the same iconography in line with their own religious beliefs. Also see **§4.3.3.3**, n.724 for interpretation of the *Chi-Rho* by *Trier* mint officials as a statement of support for the Constantinian dynasty over Magnentius rather than as a Christian religious symbol. For the origins of this policy of numismatic ambiguity under Constantine I see Woods 2018, esp. 376-382. For discussion of visual and conceptual ambiguity as a wider feature of Late Roman iconography see McFadden 2022: 211; Elsner 2006.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	Magnentius	350-353	SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES without wreath **[75]**	0%
				SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES w/wreath **[202]**	0%
		Julian II	355-363	SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull **[77]**	0.2%

4.3.3.3. Forerunners and Exceptions 1: Fleeting Expressions of Religious Identity

It was only in 353, in the Gallic territories of Magnentius, that a pointedly Christian base-metal iconographic type was first programmatically produced. The SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types **[75, 202]** depicted a large *Chi-Rho* at their centre, which uniquely did not appear as part of the *labarum*, flanked by an A (alpha) and ω (omega) to symbolise Christ's eternity and indivisibility. It was a design that divorced Christ's monogram from its usual military context and made a specifically religious statement.[720] Through these coins, Magnentius expressed his support for the western orthodox Christian position on the nature of the indivisible godhead, and his opposition to the Arian Constantius II.[721] Types **[75, 202]** were the first instances of base-metal coins explicitly promoting an emperor's Christian identity as an intended legitimising factor. Furthermore, on these types we see a usurper's brief attempt to weaponize contemporary theological divisions, inviting the audience's support in the current intra-imperial power struggle. They represent a break from the exclusionary political policy still applied to base-metal coinage in Constantius II's territories.

However, despite their innovative expressions of Christianity and the use of religion within imperial propaganda, the visibility and impact of types **[75, 202]** were extremely limited. Both had an extremely brief production period, from January to August 353,[722] and were quickly removed from circulation with the demonetisation of all Magnentian coinage.[723] Moreover,

[720] Note that continued stigma towards crucifixion meant that the cross would only emerge as the *de facto* Christian symbol into the fifth century (Abdy 2016: 181-182). Prior to this, during the fourth century, the *Chi-Rho* was used as the principal symbol of Christianity in private contexts, divorced from imperial, Constantinian associations. See, for example, the use of the *Chi-Rho* as central to depictions of the passion on mid-fourth century sarcophagi (Harley-McGowen 2018; Toynbee 1956: 213-214), as a principle feature of Christian mosaics and walling paintings at Frampton (Toynbee 1962: 202-203, no.199), Hinton St. Mary (Toynbee 1964a) and Lullingstone villa (Toynbee 1964b: 221-227), or inscribed on liturgical vessels in the Water Newton, Mildenhall and Kaiseraugt hoards (Kent and Painter 1977: nos.30, 32, 35-40, 42, 44-45, 47-48, 74-76, 83).

[721] Bastien 1983: 270-271; Vagi 1999: I, 513; Caza 2021: 234.

[722] Caza 2021: 233-235

[723] On the demonetisation of Magnentian coinage see **§4.2.4.1** n.641. The demonetisation of these SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types in particular appears to have been very successful. Only two examples of the 'without wreath' version **[75]** appear in the entire site-finds database, one at Rome and one at Arelate, and both are removed in the cleaning process. Due to missing coin-level data, these types are currently also poorly attested on the CHRE database, occurring only in the Werl hoard (Hoard ID19966 – 1 coin) and Grand-Duche de Luxembourg 1911 hoard (Hoard ID13320 – 115 coins), both of which are estimated to have closed in 353 based on their composition (based on CHRE data accessed 14/08/2023). However, the CHRE database does currently include a total of 11,052 base-metal coins of Magnentius and Decentius from 163 hoards. This provides a useful proxy dataset for the hoarding of the SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types in general. As can be seen in Fig.4.25, 74.6% of these Magnentian coins belong to hoards with a *terminus post quem* of 355 or earlier, and only 2.7% belong to hoards with a *terminus post quem* after 362. This suggests the majority of Magnentian coinage had already been hoarded in the period immediately after Magnentius's fall (353), while nearly all was hoarded in under a decade (based on CHRE data accessed 14/08/2023). Moreover, see Bland 2018a: 106, which gives specific attention to the Coleshill hoard as a particularly good example of a hoard embodying the trends of Reece Period 18 (my period 8, 348-363) in Britain. The latest coins in this hoard are of Magnentius from 353 and 766 of its 3,237 (23.7%) coins are Magnentian. This immediate hoarding may also be due to the high weight standards of Magnentius's *Chi-Rho* coins (issued at 1/36, 1/48 and 1/72 to the Roman pound), all of which were higher than the 1/120 weight standard introduced at the resumption of Constantius II's rule in the west after Magnentius's final defeat. On these differing weight standards see Caza 2021: 155, 215-216, 234-235 and Hendy 1985: 470-471, though these also note that Constantius II's

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	Magnentius	350-353	SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES without wreath **[75]**	0%
				SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES w/wreath **[202]**	0%
		Julian II	355-363	SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull **[77]**	0.2%

most inhabitants of Gaul were still pagan in the 350s, making it highly questionable as to whether a political statement orientated around Christian theology was widely understood.[724]

There is only one other example from the mid-fourth century of a base-metal coin series that specifically advertised the emperor's personal beliefs and engaged in contemporary religious struggles. Although promoting paganism rather than Christianity, Julian's AE1 SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull type **[77]** was issued across the empire between 362-363.[725] It was part of a wider policy of pagan revival initiated by the emperor also evident in literature, imperial edicts and contemporary visual media.[726] Yet, as with Magnentius's *Chi-Rho* coins, Julian's untimely demise meant that the base-metal coinage was only very briefly used as a medium for promoting an overtly religious propaganda programme, instead of making generalised assertions of imperial military competence. Furthermore, Julian's pagan bull coins also had a very short time in circulation. They appear to have been rapidly demonetised by the late 360s, when the new Valentinian emperors only issued non-silvered AE3 base-metal coins.[727] Both Magnentius's and Julian's attempts to break from the new norm of making generic statements

initial coinage issued from 353, despite being smaller, had the equivalent or higher silver content than the later Magnentian types.

[724] On the questioning of these types' understandability see Bastien 1983: 270-271. The limited extent to which this religiously orientated messaging was understood is further highlighted by the base-metal coinage issued during the 'Treveri Revolt' in 353. Sometime after the issuing of the SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types **[75, 202]** there was a short-lived revolt against Magnentius at Trier, during which the SALVS AVG NOSTRI base-metal type was produced (RIC VIII Trier 332-337; Kent 1959b; Caza 2021:237-238). This coinage retained the A ☧ ω iconography of the aforementioned Magnentian coins **[75, 202]**, yet amended the inscription to indicate the revolt's support for a single imperial master, Constantius II. However, as has been discussed above, the inclusion of the A and ω on the Magnentian types was a theological statement *against* Constantius II. The continued inclusion of these on the SALVS AVG NOSTRI type suggests that Magnentius's centrally directed message had fallen on deaf ears amongst the largely pagan populace of Trier, not being understood as anti-Constantinian and so retained. Moreover, the retention of the *Chi-Rho* on newly carved coin-dies rather than adopting an alternative design suggests the minters still associated this symbol with Constantinian triumph, therefore deeming it to be an appropriate statement in support for Constantius II. Though divested of its military trappings, the *Chi-Rho* seems to have been used as an assertion of loyalty to the Constantinian household in much the same way as the *labarum* had recently been used on Vetranio's base-metal coinage (**[70, 173, 190]**; Caza 2021: 196-201), which further advocates for the multi-faceted, ambiguous meaning of the *Chi-Rho* (see **§4.3.3.2** above).

[725] For discussion of type **[77]** see Woods 2000; Tougher 2004; Caza 2021: 247-248.

[726] On Julian's repealing of anti-pagan legislation, restoration of temples and rescinding of Christian rights see Julian, *Orations* 7.228b-c; Heather and Moncur 2001: 53; Tougher 2007: 54-62. For suggestions of revival of pagan imagery in contemporary material culture, particularly on silver plate, see Kitzinger 1977: 30.

[727] On the metrology and weight standard of Julian's SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull type **[77]** see Caza 2021: 242-243; Hendy 1985: 471. For an iconographic type issued on a pan-imperial scale (at *Lugdunum*, *Arelate*, *Aquileia*, *Sisica*, *Sirmium*, *Thessalonica*, *Heraclea*, *Constantinople*, *Nicomedia*, *Cyzicus* and *Antioch*) it is poorly represented in the site-finds database, which includes just thirty-three examples. Only two examples are included in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, though this severe reduction is likely because type **[77]** belongs to the same issue period (Period 8, 348-363) as the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman and SPES REIPVBLICE Emperor types **[69, 76],** which typically drown out all other types. Nevertheless, when compared to Julian's AE3 *Vota* in wreath type **[5]**, issued over the same period of 362-363, and of which there are 207 in the whole site-finds database (eighty-two in the 'cleaned' dataset), there is the clear indication that the higher value Bull types were less prone to coin-loss. Yet there is little evidence of the type **[77]** in hoards either (RIC VIII: 82; Bland 2018a: 107-110; Depeyrot 2001: II, 17; Noeske 2000: I, 96, 270). Consequently, Callu (1980: 96) concluded that the coinage, with its higher silver content, must have been deliberately demonetised instead.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
8	348-363	Magnentius	350-353	SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES without wreath **[75]**	0%
				SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES w/wreath **[202]**	0%
		Julian II	355-363	SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull **[77]**	0.2%

about the emperor's victoriousness, military competence or long reign, and instead revert to promoting 'right religion', just as under the tetrarchy,[728] were ultimately fleeting failures.

4.3.3.4. Forerunners and Exceptions 2: Late Roman Christian Empresses

Moving into the late fourth century, further presentations of Christian faith and imperial religious identity were only ever intermittent elements of base-metal coin propaganda. Moreover, on the rare occasions Christian motifs were deliberately selected for public promotion, they almost exclusively appeared on empresses' coins. Overtly Christian symbology first reappeared on base-metal coinage in Period 10 (378-388), and was primarily limited to the iconographic types of Flaccilla, Theodosius I's wife. The SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and shield type **[97]**, depicting Victory inscribing a *Chi-Rho* on a shield, was first issued at eastern mints between 383-384.[729] It was then replaced by the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Empress type **[98]**, produced from 385-387, and which presented a praying empress with cross in field.[730] Their iconography focused on advertising the empress's piety and Christianity, which twinned with a narrative of female imperial power evident in contemporary literature.[731] The coinage of Arcadius's wife Eudoxia, issued between 400-403, retained Flaccilla's type **[97]** and introduced the GLORIA ROMANORVM Empress type **[106]**, that showed the enthroned empress crowned by the hand of God (*manus dei*). The other iconographic types of later empresses in the site-finds database are the CONCORDIA AVG Empress type **[211]** of Pulcheria, Eudocia and Gallia Placidia and the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Cross type **[117]** of just Gallia Placidia. The Cross-in-wreath type **[114]** from *Rome* was also issued for Gratia Honoria as well as Valentinian III.

All are types characterised by explicit promotion of the empress's pious Christian identity. Yet since empress coinages were only intermittently produced, these types have minimal presence as site-finds.[732] They would not have achieved much visibility within the pool of

[728] For discussion of the *genius* types **[3, 212]** and their promotion of correct traditional Roman religious practices see **§4.1.1** and **§5.1.1**.
[729] Caza 2021: 312-313.
[730] Caza 2021: 315.
[731] Holum 1990: 23-25. Gregory of Nyssa, *Επιταφος Λογος Εις Πλακιλλαν Βασιλισσαν* 884 highlights Flaccilla's 'zeal for the faith' ('*ὁ της πιστεως ζηλος*'). Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 40 makes a direct connection between Flaccilla, 'a soul faithful to God' ('*fidelis anima deo*'), and 'Helena of holy memory' ('*sanctae memoriae Helena*') who was 'filled by the Spirit of God' ('*infuso sibi dei spiritu*'). In these instances, Flaccilla was presented as conforming to the model of a pious Christian empress first established by Eusebius in his depiction of Helena. On the construction of Helena as the model Christian empress see Coon 1997: 97-103; Hillner 2022: 309-346.
[732] In the entire site-finds database of 63,557 coins only 550 of these are empress types (0.9%). Unsurprisingly, as these coins are rare even within their periods of issue, the cleaning process removes most of them. In the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset only ninety of 58,854 coins are empress types (0.2%). Note these figures include earlier non-Christian coinage of Fausta, Helena and Theodora too. The later Christian empress types achieve little more prominence on a per-period basis. Of Flaccilla's two types only the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and shield type **[97]** is present in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, constituting a per-site pan-imperial average of just 0.3% (Appendix 6, Period 10). Of Eudoxia's types, again only the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and shield type **[97]** is present in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, constituting a pan-imperial average of only 0.1% (Appendix 6, Period 11). In Period

Period(s)		Key Emperors/Empresses		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
10	378-388	Flacilla	379-386	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and shield **[97]**	0.3%
				SALVS REIPVBLICAE Empress **[98]**	0%
		Arcadius	383-408	GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor w/ standard, shield and captive **[99]**	0.2%
11	388-408	Eudoxia	395-404	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and shield **[97]**	0.1%
				GLORIA ROMANORVM Empress **[106]**	0%

coinage in live circulation relative to the typically militarised types of emperors. Whereas base-metal coinage of emperors continuously prioritised 'MR' messages, empresses could not appear in military dress, so were depicted as sources of state stability through their piety, assuring a Christianised form of victory.[733] This compromise reflects the emperors' desire, until at least Period 13 (425-455), to retain focus on their military competence over their Christianity. Their wife's, sister's or mother's association with Christianity was sufficient for assuring viewers of imperial faith.

Arcadius's accession coinage, the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor with standard, shield and captive type **[99]**, is the exception that proves the rule. The type's obverse is unique for an emperor's base-metal coinage, depicting Arcadius crowned by the *manus dei*. It is the most overt depiction of divine election on base-metal coinage, yet was not retained on emperors' obverse portraiture.[734] Despite there being a readily available means of visualising divinely endowed Christian authority, the state actively chose not to use that iconography in association with the emperor. Conversely, the *manus dei* motif *was* regularly used on fifth-century empresses' obverse portraiture.[735] The *manus dei*'s absence from emperors' coinage reflects the primacy given in the late fourth century to more traditional iconography. Emphasising the emperor's Christian piety was considered less essential for empire-wide promotion, being limited to the literature of the imperial court or the intermittently issued empress coinage.

12, the CONCORDIA AVG Empress type **[211]** has a notably higher presence with an eastern site average of 4.3% (Appendix 6, Period 12). The SALVS REIPVBLICAE Cross type **[117]** has an eastern site average of 1.2% in period 13 (Appendix 6, Period 13). As for the Cross-in-wreath coins **[114]** of Period 13, there is only a single example of this reverse-type paired with a Gratia Honoria obverse in the site-finds database.

[733] James 2001: 104-108.

[734] The *manus dei* as a feature of an emperor's obverse portraiture only appears again on a single Visigothic tremissis type of Valentinian III (RIC X Visigoths 3714) and single solidus type of Basiliscus (RIC X Basiliscus 1004). Both examples are rare and occur well after the cross-in-wreath type had introduced Christianity as a recurrent and defining element of emperors' coinage. The single other obverse type to seemingly espouse the emperor's Christianity prior to Period 13 was the military bust emperor with spear and cross-bearing shield, depicted on the CONCORDIA AVGG Constantinopolis w/*victoriola* type **[196]**. This was issued only between 401-403 at *Constantinople*, *Nicomedia*, *Cyzicus* and *Antioch* for Arcadius, Honorius and Theodosius II (RIC X Arcadius 85-100), and constitutes a low average of 2.2% of Period 11 coins at eastern sites. Moreover, in this latter case, the expression of the emperor's Christianity was fleetingly tacked on to the continued advertisement of the emperor's military prowess.

[735] For the *manus dei* on the obverses of empresses across all metal types see RIC X Arcadius 10-15, 32, 50, 74, 77-84, 101-105 (Eudoxia); RIC X Theodosius II (East) 228-229, 248, 253, 256, 262, 281, 289, 296, 304, 332, 335, 384, 388, 290, 428 (Eudocia); RIC X Theodosius II (East) 205-206, 211, 214, 220, 224, 226-227, 252, 255, 261, 280, 288, 295, 303, 316, 322a, 326-327, 334, 340, 345, 383, 387, 420, 425, 427 and RIC X Marcian 512, 516 (Pulcheria); RIC X Theodosius II (East) 230-231, 263, 305, 317, RIC X Honorius 1333, RIC X Theodosius II (West) 1804, 1808 and RIC X Valentinian III 2007, 2012, 2020 (Gallia Placidia); RIC X Valentinian III 2021-2022 (Gratia Honoria); RIC X Theodosius II (East) 264, 269, 290, 298, 306, 318, 328-329 and RIC X Marcian 513 (Licinia Eudoxia); RIC X Leo I (East) 606-607, 631-633 (Verina). For overviews of the *manus dei* on coinage see MacIsaac 1975; Lacam 1992: 149-161.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
11	388-408	Valentinian II	375-392	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram **[100]**	40.9%
		Theodosius I	379-395		
		Arcadius	383-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive WITHOUT Christogram **[200]**	0.6%
		Honorius	393-423	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive - Christogram Uncertain **[201]**	9.9%

*4.3.3.5. Forerunners and Exceptions 3: The SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive type **[100]***

There is one potentially exceptional base-metal iconographic type whose extensive production did see the widespread presentation of Christian symbology before Period 13. A variation of the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive coin design was produced throughout Period 11 (388-408), which included a Christogram floating in the left of field (type **[100]**). Type **[100]** constitutes the most common iconographic type issued during Period 11, a timespan of high base-metal coin production (Fig.4.16).[736] This Christogram-bearing type would have become very noticeable to the wider populace from the end of the fourth century.

Nevertheless, there are two characteristics of type **[100]** that stop me from branding it as the first genuinely widespread promotion of imperial Christianity on base-metal coinage. Firstly, the Christogram, a possible promotion of imperial Christian faith, remained subordinate to a central narrative of military triumph that the advancing Victory with trophy embodied. Type **[100]** similarly continued the trend of Phase 2 coins for depicting violence against a captive, thereby accentuating the 'MR' messaging above other propaganda elements.[737] Here I must acknowledge Christopher Doyle's argument, that type **[100]** referred to Theodosius I's defeat of Magnus Maximus (388), and that the Christogram was included to frame the victory in specifically Christian terms.[738] Doyle therefore centralises the Christogram, making it a critical component to the interpretation of the main 'MR' message. However, Doyle's interpretation is undermined by the reality that Maximus followed Nicene Christianity like Theodosius I, and was acknowledged as a devout ruler.[739] It is somewhat incongruous that Theodosius I's regime would have chosen that victory, over a recognised orthodox Christian adversary, as the moment to innovate and, for the first time on base-metal coinage, promote a specifically Christian triumph.[740] There is not sufficient evidence to support the notion that the Christogram's inclusion was to Christianise the core 'MR' message.

[736] On high production during Period 11 also see **§4.3.1.1**, n.684. As per Appendix 6, Period 11, type **[100]** constitutes a pan-imperial average of 40.9% of Period 11 coins, with an eastern average of 44.1% (most common iconographic type) and western average of 36.3% (second most common iconographic type after **[61]**). Totalling at 4,708 coins, type **[100]** is the second most common iconographic type in the entire 'cleaned' site-finds dataset.
[737] See **§4.2.4.4**.
[738] Doyle 2015: 164 particularly stresses the connection between the iconographic type and Paulus Orosius, *History Against the Pagans* 7.35, which expresses the Christian god's abandonment of Maximus and Theodosius I's victory in Christian terms, as a 'bloodless victory'.
[739] On Maximus's Catholicism see Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* 2.49-50; Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.14; Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 441-443, 492, n.108; Omissi 2018: 280-282. Furthermore, Magnus Maximus had justified his invasion of Italy, which ultimately provoked open conflict with Theodosius I, as in defence of 'Catholic' Christianity and against the 'heretical' Arian leanings of Valentinian II's court (see *Collectio Avellana* 39).
[740] It should however be noted that in some sources which address Theodosius I's war against Maximus, the latter's Christian faith or support from the Christian god are aspects attacked to accentuate Theodosius I's own piety. Pacatus's construction of Maximus as a tyrant includes a brief and effectively fictious accusation of Maximus's apparent impiety (*Pan. Lat.* II.29.4-5) though focus is generally on his civic vices and coercive government (Omissi

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
11	388-408	Valentinian II	375-392	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram **[100]**	40.9%
		Theodosius I	379-395		
		Arcadius	383-408	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive WITHOUT Christogram **[200]**	0.6%
		Honorius	393-423	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive - Christogram Uncertain **[201]**	9.9%

My scepticism is further supported by a second characteristic of type **[100]**. It was one of two design variants. The alternative design, type **[200]**, depicted Victory with a captive and trophy but no Christogram. Moreover, at the eastern mints at least, the exact form of the Christogram could differ, being either a cross or staurogram.[741] These inconsistencies in type design undermine the idea that the Christogram's inclusion was centrally directed and intended to communicate the now Christian character of imperial victory. The Christograms were more likely logistical control marks, selected by local minting officials, rather than centrally selected for propagandistic purposes.[742]

The Christogram's recurrent presence at least on type **[100]** makes interpretation problematic. Its prevalent production means it is difficult to deny that type **[100]** would have played a major role in regularising the appearance of Christian symbology on imperial base-metal coinage. This would have been to a degree simply not achieved by the empresses' purposefully Christian coins. However, type **[100]** still prioritised the presentation of the emperor's victory above all else, so does not mark any real departure from the wider model of base-metal coinage that prevailed throughout Phase 2.

4.3.3.6. Forerunners and Exceptions 4: The Appearance of the Cross

In the early fifth century, base-metal iconographic types appeared which, for the first time, focused on presenting the empire's Christian identity above all other ideological aspects. The iconography used was a simple cross, initially issued between 404-406 on the CONCORDIA AVGGG and AVG Cross types **[105, 156, 157]**. These designs echoed the basic structure of the Magnentian SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types **[75, 202]**.[743] They evoked Christian faith through a symbol, not the anthropomorphised references to Christianity that typified

2018: 275-277). In Ambrose's funerary oration for Theodosius both Maximus and Eugenius are also referred to in passing as 'faithless tyrants' ('*perfidiam tyrannorum*') (Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii* 4). As noted above, Orosius would also lay emphasis on God's support of Theodosius I and abandonment of Maximus (Paulus Orosius, *History Against the Pagans* 7.34-35). By the sixth century Gregory of Tours would declare that Maximus was an 'impious king' ('*regi impio*') punished by 'the Eternal King' ('*regis aeterni*') (Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* 5.18). However, except for Pacatus, whose panegyric was performed to Theodosius I at Rome in the immediate aftermath to his victory, these other sources were composed in the decades following the war or even later. They reflect a successful narrative revision and damnation of Maximus over time, following the victorious establishment of the Theodosian dynasty as the lone rulers of the empire. I remain unconvinced that, even if condemnation of Maximus's faith had started to formulate within court literature, the innovative step to express clearly Christian victory on base-metal coinage would have been made, especially when Maximus's religious position was still so well known.

[741] As per LRBC II, the mints of *Rome*, *Aquileia*, *Thessalonica* and *Cyzicus* produced only the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram type **[100]** and the Christogram was always a staurogram (☧). *Constantinople* also produced only **[100]**, though these included either a cross or staurogram in left of field. Both **[100, 200]** (with and without Christogram) were produced at *Nicomedia*, *Antioch* and *Alexandria*, and the Christogram also varied within all these mints between a cross and staurogram. *Heraclea* produced only **[200]**.

[742] For further discussion of control-marks and their occasionally Christian character, particularly in the 380s, see Woods 2023. Woods interprets that some of these control marks, in addition to their purely logistical function, reflect attempts to participate in contemporary debates with pagans regarding divine favour for the Roman state (or lack thereof) in the wake of the Gothic incursions. However, Woods clearly ties such religious statements to the local minting officials, not as centrally directed political messages to promote imperial Christian.

[743] See **§4.3.3.3** above.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Pan-Imperial Average
11	388-408	Valentinian II	375-392	CONCORDIA AVGGG Cross **[105]**	1.9%
		Theodosius I	379-395		
		Arcadius	383-408	CONCORDIA AVG Cross **[156]**	1.3%
		Honorius	393-423	CONCORDIA AVG or AVGGG Cross - Uncertain **[157]**	0.8%

empresses' iconographic types. Types' **[105, 156, 157]** depiction of the cross rather than *Chi-Rho* also divested the expression of Christian faith from complicated affiliations with Constantinian military victory.[744] Yet the volume in which these types appear is not significant enough to suggest their overt expressions of Christian faith were prioritised over other pre-existing elements of base-metal propaganda. Within the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, these CONCORDIA AVG(GG) types constitute on average 6.4% of Period 11 site-finds at eastern sites, despite having been produced at all eastern mints. Types **[105, 156, 157]** were the iconographic prototypes for the straightforward espousal of Christianity, but not how the cross motif was pervasively imprinted on the Late Roman numismatic landscape.

4.3.3.7. The Cross-in-Wreath in Context

Only in Period 13 did the promotion of Christianity become the most recurrently prioritised element of propaganda on new base-metal coinage. As Figure 4.26 shows, it is in the eastern empire during Period 13, when the cross-in-wreath coins **[114]** were the most issued type, that the *fides* propaganda category attains its highest score by far. Moreover, the prominence of the cross-in-wreath type means that the *fides* category outscores the entire 'MR' theme at eastern sites (Fig.4.27). The 'MR' messages were declining in prominence, as the eastern state chose to instead focus on promoting the Christian identity of the Roman Empire to an incomparable degree.

The data comparisons just cited also demonstrate the contextualising power of this study's quantitative methodology. It has enabled the identification of Period 13 as the point that the eastern empire's propaganda policy shifted, when the prevailing emphasis on 'MR' messages was finally supplanted.[745] By contrast, the increasingly frequent depictions of Christian symbology from the mid-fourth century can be seen to have only achieved a minority presence on base-metal coinage relative to the 'MR' theme. As Figure 4.27 shows, the *fides* scorings did spike in Period 9 (363-378)[746] and 11 (388-408).[747] Yet in both periods, the insinuations of Christianity occupied a subservient position to prioritised depictions of *virtus* or *victoria*. The *fides* scores are consequently dwarfed by the 'MR' scores. Concerning base-metal coin propaganda, the fourth and early fifth centuries have been identified as a prolonged period of development and cursory forays into the promotion of Christian identity as a legitimising factor

[744] See **§4.3.3.1** and **§4.3.3.2** above.
[745] This shift in the political messages of the coinage was part of a broader policy of Theodosius II's emperorship, which focused on presenting imperial legitimacy through non-military means, like the Christian values of *fides*, *clementia* and *philanthropia* (Lee 2001: 36-37).
[746] This was due to the notable presence of the *labarum* on the GLORIA ROMANORVM Emperor and captive type **[82]** (see Appendix 6, Period 9).
[747] This was due to the Christogram on the SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory and captive w/Christogram type **[100]** (see Appendix 6, Period 11).

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
13	425-450	Theodosius II	402-450	Cross in wreath **[114]**	69.1%
				CONCORDIA AVG Victory **[113]**	10.6%
		Valentinian III	425-455	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.9%
				VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory w/ wreath and palm types **[167]**	4.4%

of imperial rule. The shift to prioritising the promotion of Christian faith occurred only during Period 13, the final period under analysis.

Yet Period 13's significant shift in base-metal coin propaganda did not constitute another change in the political function of base-metal coinage. The new coinage continued to exert the exclusionary political policy that had been in effect since Period 7 (340-348). The wider imperial populace continued to be exposed to coins making generic statements about the emperors' virtuous credentials and competence, ensuring their placid acceptance of imperial power. The simple cross made the most basic statement about Christian faith, just as the previously dominant and generalised 'MR' messages had promised the emperor was powerful and victorious. The Cross-in-wreath type **[114]** made no partisan theological statements in favour of one Christian doctrine over another, as had been done earlier on Magnentius's SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES types **[75, 202]**.[748] That the wide-scale Christianisation of base-metal coinage only occurred as late as Period 13 also points to the conservative nature of the 'politics of exclusion'. Only once the narrative of Christianity's victory over paganism had become firmly established, and imperial Christian faith was no longer controversial, was it cited as a legitimising factor.[749] Safe in the knowledge that they resided in a clearly Christian empire with a clearly Christian emperor, the silent majority could be confident that their security was assured. The pervading political messages of base-metal coinage may have substantially shifted, but the state still looked to use the base-metal coinage as a means of pacifying the wider populace.

A final point to return to is that the promotion of Christianity in Period 13 was of limited effect. The continued presence of Phase 2 coinage meant assertions of the Roman Empire's Christian identity arguably never attained prominence within the circulating pool of coinage during the fifth century. Beyond Period 13, post-450, the cross-in-wreath motif was soon replaced. Most base-metal coins bore only the emperor's monogram until the Anastasian reforms in 498, the start of the Byzantine numismatic period.[750] Only then, on the new

[748] Note also that the possible statements of religious orthodoxy on the earlier CONCORDIA AVG(GG) Cross types **[105, 156, 157]** (**§4.3.3.6**) sought to publicly plaster over a contemporary church-state conflict. Throughout the first decade of the fifth century a conflict played out between the empress Eudoxia and patriarch John Chrysostom, resulting in multiple episodes of public protest, violence, military suppression of the Johannite Constantinopolitans and a fire in the Hagia Sophia (Kelly 1995: 211-253; Blockley 1997: 117-118, 123). The message of religious concord (RIC X: 59) on types **[105, 156, 157]** appears as an attempt to obfuscate wider knowledge of these issues.
[749] See Lane Fox 1986: 663-681; Brown 1997a; Brown 1997b: 1-26; Grant 1998: 67-76 for overviews of the process of Christianisation of the Roman Empire during the fourth century, the establishment of a narrative of the empire's successful Christianisation by the early fifth century and consequent disappearance of paganism by beginning of the sixth century.
[750] On the prevalence of the monogram type between the reigns Marcian and Anastasius I's pre-reform types see LRBC II: 82, 85-86, 90-91, 95-96, 99, 103; RIC X: 60, 93, 99; Grierson and Mays 1992: 80-81. The move towards the Monogram type **[149]** appeared late in Theodosius II's reign, though only thirty-two examples are recorded in the site-finds database, which constitute on average just on 1.1% of Period 13 eastern site-finds. Note too under Leo I the issuing of an anepigraphic reverse depicting a lion (RIC X Leo I (East) 666-680) that again referenced the emperor's name, so functioned much like a monogram coinage.

Period(s)		Key Emperors		Key Iconographic Types	Eastern Average
13	425-450	Theodosius II	402-450	Cross in wreath **[114]**	69.1%
				CONCORDIA AVG Victory **[113]**	10.6%
		Valentinian III	425-455	VICT(ORIA) AVGG(G) Victory w/wreath and palm **[61]**	6.9%
				VICTORIA AVG(G(G)) Victory w/ wreath and palm types **[167]**	4.4%

Anastasian *follis* and its fractions, did the cross return to the base-metal coinage. It was almost continuously depicted above or adjacent to the coin's value mark – a design that remained unchanged for several centuries.[751] Despite a clear shift during Period 13 to promote Christianity, for the remainder of the Late Roman period earlier 'MR' messages continued to be the principal aspects of imperial rulership ideology encountered on a day-to-day basis by the wider imperial populace.

4.3.4. Phase 3 Overview

What has distinguished Periods 12 (408-425) and 13 (425-450) as their own phase, distinct from Phase 2, is their substantially lower quantities of site-finds. The shortage of coins for these two periods was caused by two distinct phenomena. First, there was an observable shift in imperial production policy, where a greater reliance was placed on using the older fourth-century coinage that continued to circulate while then only issuing new base-metal coinage on a more intermittent basis to supplement supply. Second, the reduction in actual production volumes of base-metal coins is exaggerated in the site-finds database by practical difficulties of accurately recording coin-level data for excavated fifth-century coinage. We should therefore remain wary that data quality issues may impact the results of quantitative analysis for Phase 3, but ultimately, we can only base analysis on the data that is available to us.

Furthermore, there is also a major discrepancy between eastern and western site-finds volumes for Phase 3. Supply and use of new imperial base-metal coinage continued across the eastern empire, even if at a diminished rate compared to Phase 2. Conversely, the retraction of the western empire's direct political control to the Italian peninsula, southern Gaul and north Africa led to a dramatic decline in the loss of contemporary coinage within these regions and the virtual secession of supply beyond them. Because of the generally low quantity of site-finds from western contexts and their restricted geographic coverage, analysis of Phase 3 was restricted to considering just the site-finds profile of the eastern empire.

As for the manner and degree to which 'MR' messages were manifested on Phase 3 base-metal coinage, a significant shift occurred *during* the phase, between Periods 12 and 13. Period 12 coinage saw broad continuity with Phase 2 in the prevalence given to the 'MR' theme. Somewhat different from the preceding Period 11 (388-408), though, was the sudden shift from *victoria* to *virtus*-focused coinage, namely in the form of the GLORIA ROMANORVM Two emperors types **[109, 110]**. Types **[109, 110]** are also of further interest because of their

[751] See Vrij 2018 on the base-metal coinage of the early to middle Byzantine period, whose reverse design recurrently consisted of mark of value (M for forty, K for twenty, I for ten and E for five), mint mark, often ANNO plus regnal year, and then a cross/*chrismon* elsewhere in the field.

unusual emphasis on *concordia* between the eastern and western empires alongside overt ‘MR’ messaging. Against the reality of increased political division between the eastern and western empires, the emphasis on concord shows another aspect of the ‘politics of exclusion’ in action, by which the coins were used to obscure the contemporary political situation.

Following Period 12’s relative continuity, Period 13 saw a profound change in the ideological priorities the state had for base-metal coinage. The long-standing focus on overt ‘MR’ messages was displaced by a new priority: promoting Christian faith. Some insinuation of the ‘MR’ theme did continue, usually in a supporting, background capacity, while the Latin cross, a powerful emblem of Christian identity, emerged as the central motif of the recurrently issued Cross-in-wreath type **[114]**. As has been shown in an extensive review of the Christianisation of base-metal coinage over the Late Roman period, type **[114]** was not the earliest expression of Christianity. Nevertheless, its widespread and frequent production relative to other contemporary types marks it as the first instance that the Late Roman state looked to prioritise the promotion of imperial Christian faith. Taking this further, it marks the first moment that the state publicly declared on the coinage that the emperor’s and empire’s Christianity was a fundamental element of Roman rulership ideology.

However, despite the shift in propaganda, the core political function of base-metal coinage remained unchanged. The coinage now sought to assure the populace of the empire's religious identity within territories where Christianity was widely practised. In Period 13, we encounter a further evolution of the exclusionary policy enacted through the base-metal coinage. The coins continued to shape the narrative of imperial power presented to a non-elite audience, and were adapted to the changing socio-political landscape of the Late Roman period.

Finally, I must emphasise one last time that changes in propaganda content on the Phase 3 coins are to be considered relative to the larger body of Phase 2 coins that continued to circulate. It is unlikely that attempts in Period 12 to nuance the pervading ‘MR’ narrative with the additional elements of imperial concord and pan-imperial unity cut through to the wider populace. Similarly, the promotion of Christian faith on Period 13 coinage would have been highly obscured by the continued predominance of earlier generic, often violent, depictions of imperial *virtus* and *victoria*.

5. Late Roman Base-Metal Coinage and the 'Politics of Exclusion' – Further Identification and Historical Contextualisation

In the preceding chronological analysis of Chapter 4, I concluded that, from the 340s, the core political function of the base-metal coinage was purposefully changed. I have argued that this change resulted from a new propaganda policy that I called the 'politics of exclusion', which is the focus of this final chapter. Briefly summarised,[752] under the 'politics of exclusion' policy, the state stopped using base-metal coinage to garner the wider populace's support in contemporary political events. Instead, the state perpetuated generic statements of imperial power through the base-metal coins to obscure the wider populace's awareness of contemporary struggles and deny their participation in imperial politics. At its core, the 'politics of exclusion' indicates how the Roman state was re-framing, within its own ideological landscape, the political authority of the wider populace in relation to imperial power.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, I shall further delineate the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy, and better elucidate exactly what it reveals about how the Late Roman state came to envision popular power. Secondly, I will contextualise the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal policy within the historical reality of actual relations between imperial authority and the wider populace in the fourth and fifth centuries. Consequently, Chapter 5 is structured as two distinct parts:

- **§5.1** will further evidence the existence of the 'politics of exclusion' on the base-metal coinage by moving beyond the limiting perspective of the 'Military Representation' theme analysis. I shall examine the state's portrayals of the Roman people as a collective entity on the base-metal coinage, across the Late Roman period. I will demonstrate that, in line with its adoption of the 'politics of exclusion' policy in the 340s, the state went from envisioning the wider populace as an active political entity to a passive body.
    - To better clarify the state's changing attitude towards the wider populace, **§5.1.1** will consider the representations of the public on tetrarchic coinage. Doing so will better define the mindset that the 'politics of exclusion' policy marked a shift away from. It will show that, at the beginning of the Late Roman period, the state willingly conceived the wider audience of the base-metal

[752] See **§5.1** for a more detailed definition of the 'politics of exclusion' and its main features, as outlined in Chapter 4.

coinage as a political entity whose actions affected imperial security. The intention here is to also provide greater context to the Constantinian coin propaganda of Period 6 (330-340), discussed at length in **§4.2.2**, which sought public support by advertising the emperor's specific successes.

- In **§5.1.2**, I will then explore how, into the late fourth century, the state only depicted the Roman collective as recipients of benefits, and never as actors. This will be demonstrated as a feature espoused by both the inscriptions and imagery of the base-metal coinage. In total, this first part of Chapter 5 will define a more nuanced manifestation of the 'politics of exclusion' policy on the base-metal coinage, in addition to the state's assiduous presentation of generic 'Military Representation' messages.

- Having defined further indicators of the 'politics of exclusion', in **§5.2** I will look to establish how the new propaganda policy related to the actual power dynamics between the emperor and populace over the Late Roman period. To provide this contextualising view, there will be some digression away from the numismatic evidence. How successful the 'politics of exclusion' policy was in realising its idealised role for the wider populace, and whether the base-metal coin propaganda reflected actual political relations, will then be assessed at regular intervals. The analysis will be subdivided into **§5.2.1** and **§5.2.2**, which address respectively the differing landscapes of political relations between the emperor and wider populace during the fourth and fifth centuries.

  - **§5.2.1** begins by defining the parameters of popular power that existed for much of the fourth century. I will first establish that the wider populace *was* an active political entity, who coalesced within urban contexts to promote or oppose local leadership. However, popular power will be shown to have been limited when directly confronted by itinerant emperors, whose regular movements ensured imperial political authority remained uninfringed by local representative bodies of the Roman people. The 'politics of exclusion' will consequently be contextualised as a reflection of these fourth-century emperor-populace relations. By comparison, we shall see that the same itinerant emperors remained beholden to another active political collective, their equally mobile armies. The base-metal coin propaganda will be identified as one of several strategies, alongside ritualising emperor-soldier interactions, that the state used to obtain their soldiers' support, while the wider populace's involvement in contemporary politics was simultaneously dismissed.

— **§5.2.2** considers one key change to the fourth-century model of Late Roman political relations posited in **§5.2.1**. Following the emperors' permanent settlement in Constantinople from the late fourth century, which brought them into constant proximity with a single urban population, the Constantinopolitans were increasingly able to pressurise imperial authority to conform to popular demands. I shall define the strategies the state formulated to control this new relationship, namely public ceremonies, and how the state came to recognise the non-elite people of Constantinople as a distinct 'corporate entity'. Notably, we will see that the state did not use base-metal coinage in this new political dialogue. Rather, the 'politics of exclusion' policy continued to be enacted throughout the fifth century. My final contention will be that, while the state was forced to make accommodations to the Constantinopolitan populace, it intentionally continued using the base-metal coinage to exclude the remainder of the wider imperial populace from interceding in imperial politics.

This final chapter ultimately will show that, during the highly discordant Late Roman period, the state came to permanently restrict its usage of base-metal coin propaganda to fulfil a narrow, specific purpose: perpetuating the wider populace's placid acceptance of imperial power.

5.1. The 'Politics of Exclusion' and the Roman Collective on Late Roman Base-Metal Coinage

Before continuing, I shall provide a more robust summary of the 'politics of exclusion' policy, by reviewing its dating and attributes detailed thus far.[753] I have argued that from the co-rule of Constantius II and Constans in 340, the Roman state ceased using the base-metal coinage as a medium for actively pursuing the Roman people's support. The base-metal coinage no longer promoted an emperor's stance in intra-imperial political or religious struggles, nor cited his specific successes against extra-imperial threats. This change disconnected the political contents of base-metal coinage from the highly personalised and reactive propaganda circulating concurrently within the imperial court and elite circles. Instead, a new policy, the 'politics of exclusion', was deployed. The defining feature of this exclusionary policy was that the base-metal coins only presented heavily formulaic, basic assurances that the emperors were competent rulers. Most of these assertions of imperial competence were formulated as 'Military Representation' messages, presenting the wider citizenry with endless guarantees of their emperor's military prowess and general victoriousness. By primarily focusing on

[753] This summary draws on the earlier analysis in **§4.2.3.4**; **§4.2.4.4**; **§4.3.2** and **§4.3.3.7**.

convincing the Roman people at large of their emperors' aptitude, and specifically military competence, the state endeavoured to construct a façade of stability over internal political and religious conflicts. The aim of the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy was therefore to obscure the wider populace's awareness of contemporary threats to the empire's continued security. The wider populace was subsequently *excluded* from contemporary intra-imperial politics rather than having their support sought. In the eyes of the state, the non-elite, civilian audience had come to be seen as an entity that just needed to stay quiet, whose political support was not desired or valuable.

I have also pointed to some evidence of deviation from the military messages between 340-450, whereby imperial longevity or basic statements of Christian faith were instead emphasised. Yet these alternative messages also conformed to the new trend of making only the most rudimentary statements of the emperor's suitability to rule. Once the 'politics of exclusion' became the ideological policy underpinning base-metal coin propaganda in the 340s, it remained a recurrent feature until at least the end of the Late Roman period.

5.1.1. Before Exclusion: Tetrarchic Coinage and its Acknowledgement of a Politically Influential Roman Collective

These are the basic elements of the 'politics of exclusion' policy, including the broad intentions of the state that underpinned its implementation, and its most obvious impacts on the contents of base-metal coin propaganda from the mid-fourth century. To provide greater context for the shift initiated by the 'politics of exclusion', I will now further clarify the ideological situation that preceded it. Simply put, at the beginning of the Late Roman period, the state envisioned its wider populace as an active political entity and sought its backing. This acknowledgement and accommodation of the non-elite Roman citizenry was nowhere better encapsulated on the base-metal coinage than under Diocletian's tetrarchy, on the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]**.

*5.1.1.1. The GENIO POPVLI ROMANI Type **[3]**: An Invitation for Popular Participation*

The GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]** bore one of the most overt representations of the wider populace on the Late Roman coinage. Depicted below the legend 'To the *Genius* of the Roman People' was an image of that *genius*, the embodiment of the *populus Romanus*. On earlier coinage, the '*genius* of the Roman People' had only been produced at *Rome*, to personify the

city's populace.[754] However, under the tetrarchy the *populus Romanus* moniker was expanded, referring to all the people of the Roman Empire. This was done through the pervasive issuing of type **[3]** at all base-metal mints across the empire throughout Period 2 (294-307), as the chief design of Diocletian's new *nummus* coinage.[755] Furthermore, the all-encompassing usage of the *genius* of the Roman people on type **[3]** was coordinated with Diocletian's ending of Egypt's separate, closed monetary system, the last form of 'provincial' coinage, which brought all official monetary production within the empire under state control.[756] On one of the first truly pan-imperial base-metal coin designs, Diocletian's government looked to portray the embodiment of all Roman citizens, asserting the 'unity, uniformity and 'Roman-ness' of…a vast and heterogenous Greco-Roman empire'.[757]

There was certainly an authoritarian undertone to the pervasive use of the *genius* of the Roman People in this expanded capacity. The universal application of the 'Roman people', which projected an artificially uniform empire, endeavoured to assert the omnipresence of imperial authority. Type **[3]** declared that if you resided in the Roman Empire you were a Roman, part of the collective whose *genius* stood so prevalently on the coinage, and by being a Roman you were a subject of the Roman emperors, who were displayed on the coin's obverse. Yet these assertions to the Roman citizens at large, that they were beholden to imperial authority, also betray another feature of all base-metal coinage that overtly referenced the Roman collective. The state was acknowledging the wider populace as a distinct and *potentially* politically influential entity, with whom relations had to be managed, whether through accommodation or exclusion.

In the case of the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]**, it was the *genius*'s action that indicated the state's acceptance of the wider populace as an *active* political force, whose support and obedience needed to be ensured for the sake of continued stability. The *genius* was always depicted performing libation – pouring liquid from a *patera* – which related to a broader contemporary religious policy. Diocletian's government emphasised the need to conduct traditional pagan practices, including the wider public's performance of sacrifices on their emperor's behalf, to appease the gods and ensure imperial security.[758] Other notable aspects

[754] See Melville Jones 1990: 125; Sutherland 1956: 178. The *genius* of the Roman People had first appeared on coinage during the Republican period, then re-emerged for the first time on imperial coinage during the civil wars of 68-69 (RIC I (second edition) Civil Wars 1, 16-22, 79) before making fleeting appearances on the coinage of Titus (RIC II, Part 1 (second edition) Titus 227-228) and Hadrian (RIC II, Part 3 (second edition) Hadrian 2207-2208).

[755] On the pervasive issuing of type **[3]** during Period 2 (294-307) see **§4.1.1** and Appendix 6, Period 2. Also see **§4.1.4.2**, which acknowledges that much higher quantities of Diocletian's reformed *nummi* were produced and available than is reflected in the site-finds database.

[756] RIC VI: 6, 66, 645; Metcalf 1987. On 'provincial' coinage see Butcher 2004: 18-21.

[757] Sutherland 1956: 179.

[758] Williams 1985: 161-162; Rees 2004: 57-71 and Fowden 2005: 554-560, which also discusses similar policies previously enacted by Caracalla and Decius. The imagery of sacrifice can notably be found on several other less well attested types issued under the dyarchy and first tetrarchy, which include **[147, 191, 195, 230].** The perspective

of this religious policy included Diocletian's persecution of Christianity. The Christians' refusal to perform public sacrifices was judged to make them threats to the divinely granted stability of the state, so multiple edicts were issued to enforce conformance or eradicate the problem individuals.[759] On type **[3]** the depiction of the personified wider Roman public sacrificing was an advert for the audience of the base-metal coinage to emulate their *genius*. It was an invitation by the state, for the public to perform specific acts to garner divine support, just as laws were used to forbid them from doing otherwise.

By attempting to regulate public behaviour over multiple media, the state admitted that its wider populace directly influenced the fortunes of the empire. What is even more striking in the case of type **[3]** though, was that it publicly promoted the notion that Roman citizens had similar responsibilities as their emperors. On the contemporary CONCORDIA MILITVM fraction (type **[1]**) we have already seen how the emperors were promoted as fulfilling their religious duty (*pietas*).[760] By fostering a personal relationship with Jupiter, the emperor received divinely granted victory, through which he could ensure the Roman polity's continuity. Likewise, the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]** informed the Roman people of the need to fulfil their religious duty too, by performing sacrifices for the benefit of the Roman polity. On state-issued coinage, the 'average', non-elite Roman citizen was conceived to be an actor in the provision of their wider society's continued security. Similarly, the apparent threat posed by Christians, which warranted their persecution and execution, highlights how the same 'average' Roman was perceived as able to undermine the *pax deorum*. Diocletian's religious policy and the type **[3]** coins indicate that the tetrarchic government was concerned with the behaviour of its wider populace, whose actions had broader implications. The state believed that the Roman people at large could impact imperial security, just like their emperors, so needed to be engaged with and placated or controlled.

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that the Roman people's correct religious practice was necessary to ensure the perpetuation of the Roman polity is encapsulated in an edict issued in 295 against incestuous marriage. It stated that 'the immortal Gods, on their part, will undoubtably continue to be, as they have always been, favourably and friendly to the Roman Power, only if *all who live under our rule shall be observed by us to lead pious and religious lives*, and to observe in all things quiet and absolute purity' (*Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* 6.4.1, trans Hyamson 1913, my italics). The connection drawn by Diocletian, between correct religious practice and state security, was again evident in his edict against the Manichaeans (302). The Manichaeans were distinguished as a threat not only because their creed opposed established Roman paganism but that it was specifically a religion from Persia, 'a nation hostile to us' (*Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* 15.3, trans Hyamson 1913).

[759] Doležal 2022: 211-215; Rees 2004: 58-71; Portmann 1990; Williams 1985: 171-185. Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 10, presents Diocletian's anger at the Christians for ruining his sacrifice. Also see Galerius's Edict of Tolerance (311) in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 8.17.6-10 and Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 34. It framed the Christian persecutions as specifically having been in the pursuit of benefit to the Roman polity (τοῖς δημοσίοις / *pro res publica*) by bringing all things into 'accordance with the ancient laws and public order'. The edict then ended with a request for the now accepted Christians 'to supplicate their God for our safety, and that of the people, and their own, that the public welfare may be preserved in every place'.

[760] See **§4.1.1**.

5.1.1.2. Appeals to a Public Audience Beyond the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI Type [3]

On the Late Roman base-metal coinage, type **[3]** provided the most overt appeal for popular action in favour of a specific imperial position. Nevertheless, the state's recognition of the wider Roman populace as a collective that required manipulation or mollification still underpinned many other tetrarchic base-metal coins. The GENIO AVGVSTI/CAESARIS/IMPERATORIS types **[212]**, issued at eastern mints between 307-314, still retained type **[3]**'s iconography and invitation for the Roman people to make sacrifices for the good of the empire. Though the **[212]** types' inscriptions emphasised individual rulers' personalities over earlier expressions of Roman unity, they still retained 'legitimacy of association' with the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI coins.[761] Furthermore, as the tetrarchic system began to fragment with the usurpations of Constantine and Maxentius (306), intra-imperial competition was displayed on the base-metal coinage, in the full view of the Roman people. I have already highlighted how the base-metal coins of Periods 3-4 (307-324) were dominated by imperial claimants looking to publicise their legitimacy based on affiliation with different divine companions.[762] The competing emperors also used the mints within their respective domains to only issue coins for certain colleagues or grant other emperors certain titles.[763] The base-metal coins were therefore used to publicise changing allegiances and each emperor's relative authority within them. This reactivity of the base-metal coinage to the fluctuating political landscape is striking. All emperors envisioned the base-metal coinage as a medium for inviting public backing and gaining endorsement over other imperial rivals. Again, we have already seen the perpetuation of similar anti-rival narratives on Constantine I's Period 6 (330-340) coinage.[764] Between at least 294-340, the base-metal coinage was consistently used by different imperial regimes to garner popular support. This goal was often pursued by explicitly referencing contemporary intra-imperial politics. The base-metal coin propaganda during this timeframe was recurrently underpinned by the state's belief that its wider audience, the Roman people at large, were a distinct and influential political body, whose support was desired.

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[761] *RIC* VI: 110.

[762] The eastern emperors notably claimed legitimacy by presenting continued affiliation to Jupiter, the supreme tetrarchic deity (see **§4.1.2.2** and **§4.1.3.2**) while Constantine and Maxentius deliberately connected themselves to non-tetrarchic deities, Sol and Mars (see **§4.1.2.1**).

[763] See RIC VI: 61-65 and 69-73 on the recurrent amendments to imperial titulature and the non-representation of some emperors on coin obverses, particularly at the eastern mints that similarly manifested into the public sphere the changing political relations of 306-313. The presentation of imperial alliances also manifested on the base-metal reverse-types too. See, for example, the brief replacement of the IOVI CONSERVATORI (AVG) type **[8]** by the IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG/CAESS type **[155]** between 317-320 at Licinius's eastern mints. The AVGG inscription of type **[155]** advertised the end of hostilities with Constantine, once again declaring him as an imperial colleague, while the CAESS variant acknowledged their sons as Caesars.

[764] See **§4.2.2**.

5.1.2. Exclusion in Progress: Passivising the Roman Collective (340-450)

However, with the adoption of the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy from 340, the state ceased using the base-metal coinage to seek the public's backing or regulate their behaviour. We have already seen how contemporary events were obscured by generic assertions of imperial competence. In addition, the way the wider populace was presented on the coinage changed. Direct references to the Roman collective presented it as an inactive body, whose assistance in ensuring the safety of the empire was not required. In effect, the state now purposefully denied the active political status they had previously envisioned the wider populace as holding. This revised, passive role was almost continuously inferred by the inscriptions of base-metal coins, and more intermittently reaffirmed by visual representations of the Roman people.

5.1.2.1. Inscription Evidence: The Roman People as Passive Recipients

After the overt visualisation of the Roman people on the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]**, references to the wider populace most often occurred in the reverse inscriptions. In total, there are 21,802 coins (37%) within the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset that primarily refer to the glory (*gloria*), salvation (*salus*), security (*securitas*) or hope (*spes*) 'of the Romans' (*Romanorum*) or 'of the Roman polity' (*Res Publicae*).[765] Of these, 21,409 (98.2%) date to Periods 7-13 (340-450), and these constitute 46.6% of site-finds from the same years. Hence, explicit citation of the people of the Roman Empire as a collective (*Romanorum/Res Publica*) was an unmissable element of the base-metal coinage during the timespan that the 'politics of exclusion' policy was being pursued.

Most coins with *Romanorum/Res Publica* inscriptions (98.4%) also depicted the emperor(s) or their Victory as the 'protagonist'.[766] The persistent association of these two figures with such inscriptions labels them as the subjects of the written declarations. That is to say, the emperor/Victory was 'X of the Romans/Roman polity'. This is obvious for inscriptions like RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE **[80]**, where the pictured emperor was clearly the stated restorer of the empire. Yet other frequently repeated inscriptions, such as GLORIA ROMANORVM,

[765] Also included in this coin total are the 281 GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]** coins, as well as 779 coins that make rarer references to the renown (*claritas*), freedom (*libertas*), peace (*pax*), happiness (*felicitas*), bravery (*virtus*), gladness (*gaudium*), restorer (*restitutor*) or restoration (*reparatio*) of the Romans/Roman polity, or the occasional refer to the Roman collective simply as the public (*publica*). On translation of *res publica* as 'Roman polity' see Kaldellis 2015: ix-xiv.

[766] Of the 21,409 coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset that date to between Periods 7-13 (340-450) and have reverse inscriptions referring to the Roman collective, the emperor is visually depicted as the protagonist on 10,079 (47.1%), and the figure of Victory, derived from the actions of the emperor (or sometimes the empress) on the obverse, on 10,990 (51.3%).

were not merely general attestations of Roman glory.[767] They were mottos that specified the emperor or his Victory as the subject 'glory' of the Romans. On the core two Valentinianic base-metal types of Period 9 (364-378), the military emperor, dragging his defeated enemy, was himself the 'Glory of the Romans' **[82]** and his imperial Victory, advancing to endow the obverse emperor with a wreath, was the source of the 'Security of the Roman Polity' **[81]**. Focus on the emperor/Victory when mentioning the Roman collective, instead of also visualising the Roman people (as on type **[3]**), demonstrates the general narrowing of the state's perspective to not recognise the *Romani* or *Res Publica* as actors. Rather, the wider populace was supplanted by near unending focus on the military emperors and their victories. The Roman people as an entity were placed in a literally peripheral position, around the edge of the coins, and limited to being the fortunate receivers of benefits derived from the emperors' activities.

5.1.2.2. Imagery Evidence: The Roman People's Recipient Role Writ Large

The state had revised its publicly presented relationship with its wider citizenry, who were now only envisioned as a passive entity. This reorientation to a more limited political role was reinforced on the infrequent occasions that the wider Roman populace was visualised on base-metal coinage. From the mid-fourth century, the seated figures of Roma and Constantinopolis were used as personifications of the Roman polity and its collective people.[768] Of particular interest here are the depictions of these figures holding the *victoriola* – the Victory-on-globe. The *victoriola*'s orientation, facing towards or away from Roma/Constantinopolis, indicates how the Roman state envisioned the role of the polity and its constituent citizens at different times. Victory facing towards the personification denoted the emperor's victory won for the personified polity, who *received* the victory. Victory facing away visualised the polity itself in an active role, the granter of imperial victory, *endowing* the emperor on that coin's obverse.[769] These images of a representative public as both giver and receiver of victory embodied the Roman understanding of the 'people' as a political actor

[767] In the site-finds database, the GLORIA ROMANORVM inscription appears in conjunction with images of the emperor, empress or victory on types **[72, 82, 94, 99, 102, 103, 106, 108, 109, 110, 139, 151, 188].** In total these types, all issued between Periods 9-12 (363-425), constitute 24.7% of coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset from the same time span (6,163 of 24,967 coins).

[768] See Betjes 2022: 218-221 on the establishment of these motifs as shorthand for the *res publica*. This includes coverage of the transformation of Constantinopolis from a city Tyche, depicted wearing a turreted crown, to the embodiment of the Roman polity, by adopting Roma's helmet and clothing.

[769] See Betjes 2022: 214-217. Betjes does accept the possibility of some aesthetic choice also being involved. Nevertheless, his wider analysis certainly advocates that, in most instances involving Roma, the *victoriola*'s orientation indicates careful design, aimed at communicating specific political messages. The deliberate orientating of the *victoriola* is supported by all iconographic types in the site-finds database that present the exchange scene of a deity granting the emperor victory. Types **[1, 122, 125, 140, 161, 186]** all consistently depict the *victoriola* facing towards the emperor, making clear that he was the recipient.

distinct from the emperor, senate/aristocratic elite or the army – a recognition of popular sovereignty.

Prior to the Late Roman period, Roma was depicted recurrently as both giver and receiver of the *victoriola*. Sven Betjes has demonstrated the motif's common usage in both capacities, alternating even within emperors' reigns, and that the *victoriola*'s orientation was a deliberate choice, dictated by the situational requirements of state propaganda.[770] The state's willingness to recurrently depict Roma as giver of victory reflects their recognition of the Roman citizenry as an active political entity able to legitimise emperors' reigns through validation of their victories. Moreover, it shows how coinage could act as a vehicle for seizing control of the voice of popular power, projecting back to wider society their apparent support for the current emperor. In these Roma-as-actor images, the governments of the Principate accommodated the notion that the emperor was somewhat beholden to popular authority, and that the wider audience of the coinage required engagement and placation.

On Late Roman base-metal coinage depictions of victory-granting Roma disappeared,[771] taking with them any visual suggestion that the state recognised the wider imperial populace as an active political entity.[772] Roma *receiving* the *victoriola* briefly appeared on the GLORIA ROMANORVM Roma type **[46]**, an early issue from *Constantinople* (327). Following this, Roma next received the *victoriola* on the VRBS ROMA type **[74]**, produced at *Rome* under usurpers Nepotian, Magnentius and Decentius (351), and later at *Nicomedia* and *Antioch* for Valentinian II.[773] Finally, between 401-403 a seated Constantinopolis receiving the *victoriola*

[770] See Betjes 2022: 215-218 for an overview and interpretation of these coin types during the Principate, though during this time the figure of Roma pertained specifically to the imperial capital and its people. Of particular note here are the discussed depictions of Roma as granter of victory on coin types of Vitellius and Vespasian (RIC I (second edition) Vitellius 119; RIC II, Part 1 (second edition) Vespasian 1359), both issued at *Rome* in the aftermath of their respective civil war victories.

[771] While only base-metal coinage is discussed here, the polity with *victoriola* motif also appeared with greater frequency on precious metal types during the Late Roman period. Unlike the base-metal coinage, some of these precious metal types did depict the *victoriola* turned away from Roma – of Roma granting the *victoriola*. Nevertheless, based on a visual survey of the *victoriola*-bearing coin types available via the OCRE database, the vast majority of precious metal types continued to show Roma/Constantinopolis receiving the *victoriola*. The only confirmed examples of Roma granting the *victoriola* are RIC VII Nicomedia 66-67, 133 and RIC VII Heraclea 99, which are gold solidi or solidi multiples. While these examples are seemingly exceptional, the state's willingness to produce a variation on precious metal coins and never to do so on base-metal coinage may reflect audience targeting. The state perhaps found it more acceptable to present the elite audience of gold coinage with Roma/Constantinopolis as granters of imperial victory, who may have represented those cities' respective senatorial aristocracies.

[772] The only possible exception of the base-metal coins was type **[187]**, issued at *Rome* during Maxentius's reign. Type **[187]** depicted Roma holding a globe, not *victoriola*, but she was clearly giving the globe to the emperor. It therefore did portray power granted *to* the emperor by a personification representing a wider collective. However, this type's inscription, CONSERV VRB SVAE, identified Roma as the representation of the city of Rome, Maxentius's capital. The revival of the Rome's collective populace as granter of imperial authority and legitimacy correlates with Maxentius's wider anti-tetrarchic propaganda programme, which sought to root his authority in the older civic institutions of the Principate (see Cullhed 1994: 45-67; Corcoran 2018: 64-71). These exceptional Roma-as-granter images and theirs associated propaganda programme were clearly unique products of Maxentius's reign.

[773] As per Caza 2021: 301-304, Valentinian II's type **[74]** coins were part of a 'differentiated' series issued 381-382, where each emperor had their own reverse base-metal design.

appeared on the CONCORDIA AVGG type **[196]**. These are all rare examples of the *victoriola*-carrying motif – only type **[196]** attained even a noticeable presence within its issue period.[774] Yet the consistency of depicting the Roman polity only as receiver is significant. Though fleeting, these visual depictions of the Roman collective demonstrate the same perspective towards the wider populace as contemporary coin inscriptions. The state consciously chose to inform this group that they now held an entirely passive role in their relationship with their rulers, as the recipients of benefits secured by their emperors' success.

5.1.2.3. Conclusion

By continually referring to the Roman collective and addressing it through a propagandistic medium like coinage, the state always recognised the wider populace as a *potentially* influential political entity. However, this analysis of representations of the wider populace on the base-metal coinage has identified two distinct approaches the state took to dealing with the prospective influence of popular power over the emperors. Before the 340s, the state recognised the Roman citizenry at large as an influential collective and looked to utilise popular power for the benefit of the incumbent imperial regime. Conversely, from 340 the state employed a new policy of denial and obfuscation, seeking to entirely refuse any possible imposition of popular sovereignty on imperial power.

On the base-metal coinage, the state's attempts to shut out the wider populace as an active political entity occurred alongside another broader change in propaganda. The base-metal coinage only presented wider society with deliberately generic presentations of imperial power, primarily involving overt reference to *virtus* or *victoria*, to construct a façade of imperial security and intra-imperial concord. The state intended to restrict the public's awareness of contemporary tensions and exclude them from the political process. These two features – the predominance of 'Military Representation' messages and the passivising of the Roman collective – were the principal manifestations and indicators of the 'politics of exclusion' policy on the Late Roman base-metal coinage.

[774] There are only five examples of the GLORIA ROMANORVM Roma type **[46]** in the site-finds database and none of these make it through the cleaning process. There are no examples of the VRBS ROMA type **[74]** dating to the Magnentian issue period, and just twenty type **[74]** coins issued for Valentinian II, though once again none make it through the cleaning process. The only notable iconographic type depicting a personification of the Roman polity holding a *victoriola* is the CONCORDIA AVGG Constantinopolis w/*victoriola* type **[196]**. Yet it was still far from common. Issued only at *Constantinople*, *Nicomedia*, *Cyzicus* and *Antioch*, no examples of type **[196]** are found at western sites, and it constituted on average just 2.2% of Period 11 coinage at eastern sites. Note too that the RENOBATIO VRBIS ROMAE base-metal type (RIC VII Rome 207-208), issued for Magnentius and Decentius at *Rome* in 351, also depicted Roma receiving the *victoriola*, though this type is again very rare and does not appear once in the site-finds database.

5.2. The 'Politics of Exclusion' in the Late Roman Political Landscape: Wishful Thinking or a Reflection of Reality?

Up to this point, this thesis has been concerned with identifying the political messages relayed by Late Roman base-metal coinage, and how best to record this information using a quantitative-based approach. With this information in hand, I have looked to present a basic history of publicly perpetuated imperial rulership ideology between 284-450. That is to say, I have used the base-metal coins to interpret what aspects of imperial power different emperors' regimes considered most important to present to their citizenry at large, and how these ideas may have shaped the wider populace's understanding of their emperors' authority. Delineating the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy has been a major product of this analysis. Its above-defined parameters have indicated not just changes in the contents of the base-metal coinage, but a vital shift in the phrasing and sentiment of these political messages. The move from an inclusive function that petitioned for support, to an exclusionary function, marks a profound change in the state's interpretation of its authority in relation to the wider public.

In the second part of Chapter 5 – this thesis's final part – I want to take a step back and consider the fundamental ideological shift of the 'politics of exclusion' policy within its broader historical circumstances. Attention will now turn to contextualising the intentions of the 'politics of exclusion' policy within the political landscape of the Late Roman world, relating it to the real authority practised by the emperors and other actors. In short, I am considering if the idealised state-public power dynamics expressed on the base-metal coinage from the 340s in any way resembled the actual interactions between the emperors and their civilian subjects. To do so, the following analysis often moves away from the coinage. Instead, I draw on contemporary literary narratives and secondary scholarship to formulate two general models of emperor-public relations, for the fourth and fifth centuries respectively. The place of the base-metal coins in these models, and the extent to which the ideology underpinning the 'politics of exclusion' correlated with these models, is then periodically assessed.

5.2.1. Fourth-Century Political Relations and the 'Politics of Exclusion'

First, let us consider the nature and parameters of popular power that persisted for most of the fourth century. Two factors constrain this analysis:

1. The wider populace of the empire remained a silent majority. To confront this issue, so far, I have used the base-metal coinage to identify what was being said *to* the Roman citizenry, recovering half of the dialogue between the state and its people. Here we must instead look at what was said *about* the wider populace. We are reliant on considering the

accounts and actions of the 'elite' literate minority to ascertain the political status they were willing to grant to the wider populace.

2. The interests of these 'elite' sources mean rural contexts are virtually ignored, and we are limited to considering activities in cities. As we shall see, urban populations were recurrently treated as distinct political entities, that acted independently of other local and state political authorities. Consequently, I have treated the activities of united urban populations as the chief examples of popular power in action. The urban populations represented the perceived coalescing of the *populus Romanus*, the same collective encapsulated by the GENIO POPVLI ROMANI type **[3]**.

5.2.1.1. The Urban Populace: Influential Voice of the Populus Romanus *in Local Politics*

Despite these limitations, the evidence of the prevailing, day-to-day urban power structures indicates that cities' residents at large were recognised as legitimisers of local leadership. Popular participation was a fundamental aspect of episcopal elections during Late Antiquity, as canon law necessitated that ordinations were confirmed by 'the people'.[775] Dedicatory inscriptions on statues of municipal benefactors and patrons also recurrently specified holding public office was contingent on the support of the *populus*.[776] Within urban contexts, the notion persisted that religious and civic officeholders were granted authority from the bottom up, as well as from the top down. They were beholden to the urban populace's approving acclamations, regardless of whether these candidates had been selected by more senior bodies like the imperial government or the episcopal hierarchy.

The extent of the *populus*'s political power, beyond acting as simple acclaimers, is then more clearly presented in reported instances of urban unrest. The moments that public order broke down give the clearest depictions of the wider populace as direct political actors, challenging fiscal, judicial, or religious decisions. The authority they wielded was not formal or constitutionally enshrined in contemporary law, but an 'informal' or 'extra-legal' power that was no less 'real' and effective in imposing the will of the *populus Romanus* in urban spaces.[777]

[775] Van Nuffelen 2021: 255; Magalhães de Oliveira 2021: 150-157; Magalhães de Oliveira 2020b; Norton 2007: 52-80, 244-245.
[776] See Magalhães de Oliveira 2021: 146-147 for examples from North Africa and Porena 2021: 174-179 on examples from Italy.
[777] On popular authority as a very real power which existed outside the bounds of legally defined day-to-day life and was recurrently practised by urban populations, see Kaldellis 2021; Magalhães de Oliveira 2021; Van Nuffelen 2021; Magalhães de Oliveira 2020b; Kaldellis 2015 (esp. 118-119); Hecketsweiler 2009 (esp.131-133, 255-266). These are examples of recent revisionist approaches to 'popular politics' in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. They have undermined the dominant 'constitutionalist' historiography, whose models of Late Antique political relations have been restricted to echoing the formally defined relations of legal evidence. For example, 'constitutionalist' interpretations have dismissed civic unrest in Late Antiquity as sporadic violence performed by increasingly powerless mobs, who lacked the formal political representation once available to citizens of the classical city (Pfeilschifter 2013: 30; Meyer-Zwiffelhoffer 2002: 298-306; Quass 1993: 415-416; MacMullen 1990;

Accounts of openly disruptive popular actions are admittedly limited, and only recorded as occurring at major provincial capitals.[778] However, this is a distortion borne from imperfect sources, which only discussed select urban conflicts when relevant to their wider narratives.[779] Moments of urban unrest as expressions of popular authority were common in Late Antiquity, as reflected by authors' numerous comments about city populations' general rowdiness and lack of shock when discussing public disturbances.[780] Consequently, the following conclusions, drawn from the limited instances of public unrest, may be extrapolated as general observations about the authority of urban populations during the fourth century.

In these reports of civic unrest, contemporary and near-contemporary writers consistently portrayed urban populations as coherent and rational entities. Even when Late Roman authors questioned the justness and morality of the revolting populace, these groups were not portrayed as mindless rabbles performing gratuitous violence.[781] Rather, assemblages of

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Cameron 1976: 285-296, 309-311; Petit 1955: 220-224; Declareuil 1911: esp.151-152, 158-164, 206-219). Furthermore, examples of popular approval through acclamation have been dismissed as entirely ritualised – as stage-managed popular acquiescence that in no way reflected genuine popular political autonomy and influence (Dagron 2011: 182-183; Jacques 1984: 400-401; Cameron 1976: 230-270; Dagron 1974: 297-347; MacMullen 1967: 171-172; Chastagnol 1960: 81-83). Despite the abundance of evidence to the contrary, including the recurrent accommodation of popular authority in contemporary literature (see below), the prevailing 'constitutionalist' scholarship has dismissed urban populations as mindless masses or puppets of imperial/civic leadership. The emergence of 'anti-constitutionalist' historiography, and the recognition of 'extra-legal' authority, has instead incorporated a much wider body of evidence, and subsequently accommodated popular power as a genuine feature of Late Antiquity.

[778] Examples of popular uprisings during the fourth and early fifth centuries were attested in Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Constantinople and Thessalonica in particular. For a full survey of these uprisings see Tinnefield 1977: 151-163, 176-204 and the appendix in Magalhães de Oliveira 2020a.

[779] The uprisings at Antioch in 354, 382, 384 and 387 are all particularly well documented because of their coverage in the orations of Libanius, who as a resident of the city showed particular interest in its history. Our knowledge of Antioch subsequently declines after his death at the end of the fourth century. Furthermore, as Stephen Mitchell (2007: 318) has noted, Alexandria remained virtually absent from the secular histories of the Late Roman period, though was the focus of numerous patristic texts, which unsurprisingly only provide accounts of urban unrest related to religious matters. Likewise, although an uprising at Thessalonica in 390 was addressed in numerous sources (see Doležal 2014: 90-91), these were notably all written by ecclesiasts or church historians. The events were only recounted because of Ambrose of Milan's reaction. The bishop forbade Theodosius I from receiving mass until the emperor performed penance for ordering the massacre of the Thessalonians, following their murder of Butheric, the *Magister Militum per Illyricum*. The massacre of Thessalonica was therefore only mentioned as an introduction to more detailed discussions of an important episode of church-state relations, which was of interest to writers' wider church histories.

[780] For examples of the wider non-elite populace as prone to unrest see Ammianus Marcellinus 30.8.9 on the 'rough spirit of the commons'; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.9 on the mutual inciting of violence 'as a crowd in revolt is wont to do'; or Socrates Scholasticus's references to 'the violence of the multitude' as a recurrently anticipated feature of urban gatherings (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.24., 2.16). Ammianus and Augustine both also notably characterised the populations of their own cities (Rome and Hippo) in a similar manner. See, for example, Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.13, which notes how Constantius II enjoyed acclamation from the *plebs* despite their 'freedom' (*libertas*), the mentioning of which also made implicit their ability to equally use said freedom to be antagonistic towards authority as they deemed fit. Also on the civilian population of Rome see Mitchell 2007: 308; Porena 2021: 168-169. On Augustine's depiction of the turbulent student population at Hippo see Mitchell 2007: 321.

[781] For value judgements that classify the actions of the people as 'unreasonable', 'misguided', 'stupid' or 'shameless' see for example Libanius, *Orations* 1.205, 19.14, 20.3; Ammianus Marcellinus 14.7.7-8; Zosimus, *New History* 4.42. The language used by their authors emphasised urban crowds' poor judgement and decision-making rather than the absence of rational choice. On the idea that 'justice' was the axis upon which the relationship between 'the people' and their leaders was defined and managed in the Late Roman period see Van Nuffelen 2021. Van Nuffelen 2021: 252-253 in particular provides an important interpretation of how the terminology used for wider society by ancient writers was 'relational'. He argues how different terms, like the 'people' (*populi*) or the 'mob'

dissidents, having gathered as collectives of the Roman public, were continuously acknowledged as having clear, intelligible grievances and as directing their disruptive behaviour towards those leaders deemed responsible. A prime example is the riot at Antioch in 387, a popular rising against a new tax levy.[782] In Libanius's multiple accounts of the riot, the Antiochenes were presented as taking several distinct steps to voice their discontent. They first sought out the bishop Flavian to petition the emperor for a tax exemption on their behalf.[783] Unable to find the bishop though, the Antiochenes turned to the usual focus of their discontent, the *comes Orientis*, the most senior imperial official present.[784] Only after the crowds failed to break into the governor's palace did they focus their anger on the emperor, desecrating the imperial statues and attempting to burn down the imperial palace on Orontes Island.[785] What becomes apparent from the narrative's structure is that popular action followed a specific policy and took sequential, escalating steps to voice discontent before openly challenging imperial authority.

Regardless of their judgments of popular uprisings and whether their accounts were accurate, contemporary writers accepted the wider public as a potent political entity. The *populus* was understood to emerge within urban environments and hold its leaders to account for perceived injustices. Furthermore, popular action was never presented as unprecedented, unacceptable or needing to be curtailed.[786] The wider populace was accepted as able to act upon their grievances with municipal and religious leadership. Within this intra-urban capacity, popular

(*populari seditione/turba*), were not descriptors to distinguish different entities but reflected whether a writer interpreted a populace's actions as just or not.

[782] For further examples, also see the accounts of unrest at Antioch in 354, 382 and 384, overviews of which can be found in Petit 1955: 118-121, 234-241; Downey 1961: 419-432 and Tinnefield 1977: 151-161. Of particular interest here is how each of these earlier riots were presented as popular action against specific grievances: food shortages. So too, the populace was shown as having accurately targeted their discontent towards those local authority figures they deemed responsible for or able to alleviate their suffering. In 354 the Antiochene *plebes* lynched the *consularis Syriae*, Theophilus and burned down the villa of a wealthy *curialis* named Eubolos (Ammianus Marcellinus 14.7.5-8; Libanius, *Orations* 1.103, 19.47). The emperor Gallus had already told the Antiochenes that he had made Theophilos responsible for resolving the food shortage. The attack on a senior *curialis*'s property also expressed public dissatisfaction with the municipal elite (Tinnefield 1977: 152-153). On the riots of 382 and 384, see n.784 below.

[783] Tinnefeld 1997: 157.

[784] Libanius, Orations 20.3. As the resident regional governor, the *comes Orientis* had already been the target of popular unrest in 382 and 384. In 382, the urban populace confronted the *comes Orientis* Philagrius, who then publicly flogged the bakers that the populace deemed responsible for price gouging (Libanius, *Orations* 1.205-209; 34.4). Similarly, in 384, public pressure prompted the *comes Orientis* Icarius reactively to fix the grain prices in a failed attempt to resolve the current famine (Libanius, *Orations* 1.226; 29.2-4; 27.6; Downey 1961: 421, n.46). During the 384 unrest, various *curiales* also fled the city and had their homes subject to arson when the public discovered they had exacerbated the famine by speculating on the grain (Libanius, *Orations* 29.6-7; Tinnefield 1977: 154).

[785] Libanius, Orations 20.4, 22.9.

[786] See Kaldellis 2021: 94, 102-103 on the absence of suggestions that action was needed to curb popular activity following urban unrest. Indeed, the recurrent point of condemnation in the coverage of the massacre of Thessalonica (390) was not that the Thessalonians killed Butheric (*Magister Militum per Illyricum*), but Theodosius I's 'unjust' command to indiscriminately kill the city's inhabitants in retaliation (as per Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.17; Sozomen *Ecclesiastical History* 7.25; Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History* 11.18).

sovereignty and collective action by city populations featured as aspects of the Late Roman political landscape.

5.2.1.2. Direct Imperial Authority and the Limits of Popular Power

However, the scope of popular power did have limits. While contemporary authors' presentations of fourth-century unrest accommodated opposition to local leadership, the direct intercession of imperial authority was portrayed very differently. When confronted by the emperor, urban populations showed fear, hesitancy and deference rather than pursuing clear grievances with well-directed and forthright action. This distinct attitude towards the emperor is well attested in accounts of a popular uprising at Constantinople in 342.[787] The unrest started when the *magister equitum* Hermogenes, enforcing an edict of Constantius II, sought to depose the Orthodox bishop Paulus by military force. The Constantinopolitans revolted in response, killing Hermogenes and forcing the city's prefect to flee to Heraclea. Again, a Roman collective was presented as openly and violently opposing civic and state authorities as they deemed necessary. But then Constantius II hurried to Constantinople. When facing the emperor himself, the populace immediately showed remorse and bowed before his authority. Constantius was appeased enough to only reduce the city's grain rations rather than enforce executions. Nevertheless, he exiled Paulus, showing an ability to enact his original edict and not acquiesce to public demand.

Similar relations are presented in Gregory of Nazianzus's account of his appointment as bishop of Constantinople in 380, by military force under Theodosius I's command.[788] Gregory clearly distinguished between how popular opposition targeted him with angry threats of violence while supplicating and praying to the emperor.[789] The hostile crowd struck a very different tone when opposing the emperor himself, more as petitioners pleading their case but ultimately beholden to imperial will. Moreover, in recounting the aforementioned 387 riot at Antioch, Libanius stated that the mood only changed after the imperial statues were assaulted. The Antiochenes then became fearful and repentant, with many people abandoning the city.[790] The populace was shown to recognise their protesting had gone too far when they insulted the emperor's person.[791] The emperor's retribution was expected and, whereas repeated

[787] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.7; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.12-13; Libanius, *Orations* 1.44.
[788] Gregory of Nazianzus, *De Vita Sua* 5.1315-1334 in *Patrologia Graeca* 37, 1119-1121.
[789] Gregory of Nazianzus, *De Vita Sua* 5.1330 in particular states how 'Ὀργῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς, πρὸς δὲ τὸ κράτος λιταῖς' ('they [the Constantinopolitans] were angry with me [Gregory], but prayed to/supplicated the emperor').
[790] Libanius, *Orations* 22.9-10.
[791] See Downey 1961: 249 on the destruction of the images as *laesa maiestas*, a crime against the emperor.

actions against local leaders were accepted, there was no sense that defacing imperial images was a legitimate form of protest.[792]

According to contemporary writers, fourth-century urban populations, acting as representatives of the wider imperial citizenry, were a political entity able to intercede in local political affairs. However, these sources also presented the same urban groups as acknowledging their power was limited and subservient to the emperor's personal authority. We cannot confirm from literature how the wider populace understood its own political authority. Yet it is incredibly significant that the literary elite, who comprised the imperial government's aristocratic core, willingly accommodated popular sovereignty in some capacity. Furthermore, citizens' expected passivity to the emperor's direct authority aligned with the power structure advocated by the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal propaganda policy. From at least the mid-fourth century, the base-metal coinage not only informed the wider populace of their limited influence over the emperor. The switch to the 'politics of exclusion' meant base-metal coinage also provided an accurate portrayal of actual contemporary emperor-populace relations projected in the textual evidence.

5.2.1.3. Proximity to the Populace: Local Constraint and Imperial Freedom from Popular Power

That fourth-century emperors were not subject to popular power in the same way as local leadership was due to two factors: their greater mobility and reduced proximity to urban populations. Local leadership and state-appointed regional governors were tied to their locality. Their political authority may have been bestowed by top-down mechanisms, such as imperial appointment (state office holder) or hereditary succession (*curiales*), but still involved maintaining control over their locality.[793] This included engaging with the populace that resided there, which created an ongoing dialogue between local leadership and the people.[794] The physical presence of these leaders, their property and their wealth within arm's reach of the population over whom they exercised formal, institutionalised authority, equally left them vulnerable to the very real power of mass action.

By contrast, throughout the fourth century, emperors remained separated from their wider citizenry. They were itinerant, travelling between imperial palaces with their entire court

[792] John Chrysostom, talking to the Christian congregation of Antioch within days of the statues' destruction, notably condemned the attack on the imperial statues as a 'calamity' and 'evil', going so far as to suggest some supernatural cause (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues* 2.1-2). This was also a theme taken up in Libanius, *Orations* 19.29, 19.34 and 22.10.
[793] Kelly 2004: 112-113, 145-152; Palme 1999: 98-100, 115.
[794] For examples of this dialogue, see **§5.2.1.1**, n.784 on the attempts of the *comes Orientis* to respond directly to complaints of the rioting Antiochene populace during times of famine.

structures and treasuries in tow.[795] Public appearances were also typically ritualised ceremonies that emphasised the emperor's distinction above and separation from his subjects.[796] Through imperial itinerancy and presentation of the emperor's isolation, ongoing dialogue between ruler and ruled did not develop as with localised leadership, nor was the emperor's authority so grounded in a specific location. In the rare instances during the fourth century that the emperor was within proximity of a potentially hostile crowd, any threat was circumvented by his ability to depart the city, permanently removing himself from the situation.[797] While the emperor just left, the *curiales* could only go to ground and wait for public unrest to diminish.[798] Separation afforded emperors freedom from the underlying pressures of local populations faced by the *curiales* and the emperors' representatives in the provinces. The emperors could exercise their autocratic authority, virtually uninhibited by the countermanding force of popular sovereignty.

This is the political landscape that the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal coin propaganda policy existed in and reflected. The use of coins to dissuade public participation in intra-imperial politics was a product of the emperor's separation from the wider imperial populace. The tetrarchic base-metal coinage, which accommodated the ability of popular power to infringe on imperial authority, echoed a perspective of the Principate, when the population of Rome

[795] Jones 1964: I, 366-370, 412-437 on the migratory nature of the emperor and his government (*comitatus*) during the majority of the fourth century, which included the chief financial ministers (*comes rei privatae, comes sacrarum largitionum*) with the respective treasuries for which they were responsible. This movement of the emperor with his own treasury is also reflected in Hendy's (1985: 386-394) discussion of the comitatensian precious metal mints that moved with the emperors. On itinerant movements of the emperors during the long fourth century see Barnes 1982: 47-87 (284-337); Barnes 1993: 218-228 (337-361) and RIC IX: xli-xliii (364-395).

[796] See MacCormack 1981 for the development of ceremony and the ritualisation of imperial public appearances during the Late Antique period. Also Icks 2020: 168-171 on the splendour and public enthusiasm at the emperor's appearance in cities across the empire. These reactions indicated the exceptionality of public imperial appearances for the local populaces. The example *par excellence* of ceremony emphasising imperial elevation and separation of the emperor from his citizens, dating from the fourth century, is Ammianus's description of a Constantius II's statuesque *adventus* into Rome in 357 (Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.4-12). In contrast, see Icks 2020: 171-172 for discussion of how Pacatus particularly praised Theodosius I for being so accessible to his subjects. However, accessibility was raised as a praiseworthy quality due to its uncommonality as a trait amongst Theodosius's recent predecessors.

[797] See, for example, Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 17.1-2, which reports how Diocletian hastily departed from Rome at the end of 303 rather than celebrate his *vicennalia* there because he was 'unable to bear the Roman freedom of speech'. Ammianus Marcellinus 14.1.9 and 14.7.5 discusses at length the diminishing popularity of Constantius Gallus in Antioch, who eventually only appeared in the city to attend to official matters, then abandoned the city when the people petitioned for his assistance with the food shortage in 353, instead deferring their complaints to the resident governor Theophilus. Despite his unpopularity and despotism it is also notable that only Constantius II as Augustus was in a position to divest Gallus of imperial authority and execute him (Ammianus Marcellinus 14.11; Philostorgius 3.28 and 4.1; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.34). Similarly, see Downey 1961: 380-396 on Julian in Antioch, his declining popularity and anger at the resident populace, with the tension ultimately resolved by his departure from the city to campaign against the Persians. The most overt display of an urban populace confronting an emperor was by the people of Constantinople in 378, who during games at the hippodrome jeered and mocked Valens for having not yet dealt with invasions of the Goths (Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.38; Ammianus Marcellinus 31.11.1). Valens is said to have threatened to punish the Constantinopolitans should he return (which he did not, being killed shortly after defeat at Adrianople). However, his rapid departure from the city again avoided any immediate threat to the emperor from popular unrest.

[798] See, for example, Libanius, *Orations* 19.32, which recounts the *curiales*' inability to control the popular unrest in 387 during the Riot of the Statues, their fear of being lynched and decision to hide in their homes until some form of order had been re-established.

(the city) had resided close to the emperor and been accommodated as an influential voice of popular power.[799] Yet this popular pressure on the emperor's direct political authority had become entirely anachronistic by the Late Roman period, as the emergence of roving military emperors during the third century had created separation from urban populations in general.[800] From the 340s, the shift of the base-metal coinage to the 'politics of exclusion' aligned publicly presented imperial attitudes towards popular sovereignty with the reality of the latter's diminished influence, the result of decades of imperial itinerancy.

5.2.1.4. Proximity to the Emperor: The Continued Political Authority of the Military

Yet just as the itinerant emperors restricted the influence of popular authority over the imperial office through a mixture of non-engagement and assertions of passivity, they simultaneously focused much attention on the military as another distinct political force.[801] The military has been widely recognised as the key political entity throughout the unrest of the third century, when numerous emperors were declared and deposed by the armies.[802] Into the Late Roman period, the military continued to wield very real power through its proximity to the emperors, who personally commanded field armies until the end of the fourth century.[803] Furthermore, following the Constantinian military reforms each itinerant imperial court was accompanied by one of the new and equally mobile *comitatenses* armies even when not on campaign.[804]

There were some attempts by the state to eliminate the military's political influence. Most notably, during the Late Roman period the state increasingly emphasised the emperor as a

[799] See Millar 1977: 368-375 and Flaig 1992: 38-93, 175-182 on the populace of the city of Rome (*plebs urbana*) as a 'maßgeblich Sektor'/authoritative sector (Flaig 1992: 175), whose close proximity to the emperor enabled them to compete for his attention and exert political influence.
[800] Hebblewhite 2017: 8-9; Manders 2012: 74, 143; Lee 2007b: 22-26; Jones 1964: I, 366-367; II, 687-688.
[801] It has been contested by Angela Pabst (1997, esp. 208) that throughout the fourth century the army acted as a committee that always stood as representatives of the *populus Romanus*. This interpretation has however been challenged by later scholarship, which has argued for the differentiation between the *populus* and military as separate bodies (see, for example, Van Nuffelen 2021: 262, n.55). The distinction between the wider populace and the soldiers is a conviction held to within this analysis too, and is further supported by Late Roman legal documentation. For example the *praefatio* of Diocletian's Maximum Prices Edict (trans. Frank 1940: 310-317, esp. 314) tellingly singled out the soldiers as a group who the state wished to protect from inflated prices. It presented the soldiers as separate from the wider mass of private citizens being addressed, who were to be subject to the edict's price constraints under threat of capital punishment. In the Theodosian Code the entirety of Book 7 was also dedicated to laws governing the military specifically. This included the outlining of military veterans (*CTh*.7.20) as a distinct social group with defined obligations and privileges (like tax exemptions) that differentiated them from other entities of the Theodosian Code, such as the *decuriones* (*CTh*.12.1) or *populus* (see **§5.2.2.1**, n.828 below for addresses to this group). Also see Claes 2023: 181; Fuhrmann 2012: 201-238; Pollard 2000: 85-110 and Shaw 1983, all of which push the clear social separation and distinction between soldiers and civilians even when these groups resided in close proximity. It was arguably not until the emergence of the thematic armies in the seventh century that the soldiers became integrated amongst the civilian population of their regions (see Haldon 2016: 148-151).
[802] For recent surveys of the third century and the advent of the 'soldier emperor' see Doležal 2022: 45-165; Hebblewhite 2017: 8-32; Manders 2012: 63-94.
[803] See **§4.3.2**, n.700.
[804] Elton 1996: 208; Jones 1964: I, 97-104 and 124-126 which includes discussion of the distinction between the regional *comitatenses* and the emperor's personal army, the *comitatus praesentalis* ('the army in imperial presence'). Note too however that the tetrarchs had also each possessed their own field armies prior to these reforms (Elton 2006: 325-332).

divinely-ordained ruler, whose authority was not contingent on any other mortal entity.[805] The promotion of imperial autocracy increased during the third century, although Late Roman writers cited Diocletian's reign as a watershed moment, when many despotic features of imperial rule were established.[806] His construction of the Jovian and Herculian tetrarchic households was a leading example of the efforts made by imperial regimes to institutionalise the notion that divine patrons bestowed emperors' authority, rather than the military.[807] Military-based usurpations did become less frequent during the fourth century, suggesting the advancement of imperial autocracy had some success in quelling the armies' disruptive legitimising authority. Nevertheless, imperial regimes continued to show anxiety over the military as an active political entity able to produce unapproved, rival imperial candidates or countermand imperial will.[808] Whereas the state could ignore the more distant imperial populace, it could not disregard the soldiers as a political collective.

The danger of armies' continued access to the emperors prompted the state to also construct mechanisms that regulated these interactions. Rather than deny its existence, the state aimed to harness the military's legitimising power, which posed an existential threat to emperors if left unaddressed. This was most visibly done through ceremonial, which created controlled environments where *consensus militum* in support of an emperor could be ascertained and periodically reaffirmed.[809] A primary example was the development of the *acclamatio* ceremony, the formalised acclamation and approval of new emperors by the soldiers, which

[805] State-produced media was so effective at presenting this image of imperial rule for most modern scholarship to have concluded that, during the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods, the emperor was established as a divinely-ordained (Christian) absolutist monarch. This interpretation of imperial autocracy can be found in most modern literature dealing with imperial power in the Late Antique period, though some prominent examples include Cameron 2006; Dagron 2003; MacCormack 1981; Cameron 1976; Jones 1964. For further helpful overviews of this predominating historiographical approach, what Anthony Kaldellis labels the 'imperial idea', see Diefenbach 2002: 41-42; Kaldellis 2015: xi-xii, 165-184; Magalhães de Oliveira 2021: 145. Note promoters of the 'imperial idea' narrative are what Peter Van Nuffelen (2021: 263) has alternatively identified the 'dominant constitutionalist…approaches', and which revisionist analyses of popular power have started to challenge, as discussed above in **§5.2.1.1**, n.777.

[806] On the growth of imperial autocracy under Diocletian see Eutropius, *Breviarum* 9.26; Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 15.5.18; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 39.1. These Roman writers generally cast Diocletian as the inventor of many features of imperial despotism. However, modern scholarship has identified a much longer history of increased imperial autocracy, and instead present Diocletian as a consolidator of despotic imperial rule. On this longer history, see, for example, Doležal 2022: 211-212; Hekster 2015: 238-275; Manders 2012: 95-154; Hannestad 1986: 285-338.

[807] Hekster 2015: 297-314.

[808] See, for example, Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 26.2.1. It covers the interregnum during Valentinian I's journey from Ancyra to the army at Nicaea, where he was to be made emperor. Ammianus outlined how the senior imperial officials, who had met in Nicaea and elected Valentinian, decided none of their number were to appear in public prior to the new emperor's arrive, just in case the gathered army chose to make that individual emperor instead. Also see, Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 16.7.9 and 16.11.13, which explains how Constantius II carefully plotted the deposition of Gallus through duplicitous means to avoid civil war, chief amongst which involved reducing Gallus's military retinue and removing all soldiers posted along Gallus's route to Noricum where the two emperors where due to meet. The intention was to ensure no mass of troops spontaneously joined Gallus and gave him their support before Constantius II could meet with and depose his Caesar.

[809] Hebblewhite 2017: 140-179.

was performed at nearly all imperial accessions between the fourth and mid-fifth centuries.[810] The near permanence of the *acclamatio* at imperial accessions throughout the period of study indicates how the army was recurrently recognised by the state as a key 'acceptance group' with whom imperial power was negotiated.[811] The army's support was seen as so important that emperors elevating their own colleagues and family members to the ranks of Caesar or Augustus still sought to obtain *consensus militum* at the moment of official accession.[812] The senior emperors may have possessed the authority to choose their colleagues, but presentation to and acclamation of their choices by the military remained a fundamental step in confirming acceptance and legitimacy.

5.2.1.5. The Late Roman Soldier: An Alternative Audience of Base-Metal Coin Propaganda

The state invested considerable effort into controlling the necessary dialogue between the emperors and the military, just as it endeavoured to promote the passivity and non-involvement of the wider non-elite populace. The active engagement with the army offers another context within which to read the base-metal coin propaganda of the Late Roman period. Although this thesis has focused on base-metal coinage in the hands of the non-elite civilian audience, I have necessarily acknowledged that a great proportion was initially distributed to pay soldiers' annual salaries (*stipendium*).[813] Donatives (*donativa*) of precious

[810] See Hebblewhite 2017: 142-150 on the development of the ritualised *acclamatio* by the military over the course of the fourth century. This includes discussion and analysis of accessions of Maximinus Daia and Severus II as Caesars; Constantine I; Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans to Augusti; Magnentius; Julian's rise to both Caesar and Augustus; Jovian; Valentinian I and Valens; Gratian and Valentinian II. For further examples of fourth century emperors raised to office via military support and acclamation see the accessions of Maxentius at Rome (Eutropius, *Brevarium* 10.2; Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors* 26; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40; Zosimus, *New History* 2.9.3); Domitius Alexander (Zosimus, *New History* 2.12.14); Vetranio (Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10.10; Zosimus, *New History* 43; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.25, 28; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.1); Procopius (Ammianus Marcellinus, *History* 26.6.12-14; Zosimus, *New History* 4.4-6) and Magnus Maximus (Zosimus, *New History* 4.35.3-4). Note too how, at the military summit between Constantius II and Vetranio in Illyricum that resulted in the latter's abdication, the Illyrian soldiers' acclamation of only Constantius II demonstrated their withdrawal of support for Vetranio and his effective declamation as a legitimate emperor (Julian, *Orations* 1.31A-32A, 2.76C-77C; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.28; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.4). Despite never being active campaigning emperors, both Arcadius (*Chronicon Paschale* 383; Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 383.2) and Honorius (Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 393; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.25; Claudian, *Panegyric on the Fourth Consulship of the Emperor Honorius* 170-180) were also made Augusti via military acclamation at the Hebdomon military camp near Constantinople, just like Valens. The same ceremonial military acclamation at the same army camp location was repeated for other resident emperors of Constantinople in the fifth century, including Theodosius II (*Chronicon Paschale* 402; Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle* 402.2); Marcian (Hydatius, *Chronicle* 307.27; *Chronicon Paschale* 450) and Leo I (*Chronicon Paschale* 457; Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 91). For further discussion of the Hebdomon emerging as the key ritual site in the eastern empire for imperial accession see Dagron 1974: 87-88 and 100-101. Note that the accounts of Theodosius I's elevation to Augustus by Gratian are the only major examples to lack any mention of acclamation by the military, instead seeming to hinge just on Gratian's own authority. However, Theodosius I's success again the Goths immediately prior to Gratian promoting him may suggest military support was within reach.

[811] On the concept of different *'akzeptanzgruppen'* during Roman imperial history, including the military and the people of Rome or Constantinople, see Flaig 1992, esp. 174-207; Pfeilschifter 2013: 28-38.

[812] This is well evidenced in Valentinian's elevation of both Valens and Gratian, as well as Theodosius I's elevation of Arcadius and Honorius, as per n.810 above.

[813] See **§1.3.1**, n.117.

metal coins were also distributed amongst the military at imperial accessions and quinquennial celebrations, which provided opportunities to present specific messages to the armies.[814] Yet the state would have considered the base-metal coinage as a vehicle for communicating with the military rank and file as well as with the wider imperial citizenry.

Recognising the military as an alternate audience of the base-metal coinage provides another perspective for interpreting the recurrent prioritisation of the 'Military Representation' theme c.340-425. While prioritisation of generic *virtus* and *victoria* messages were fundamental to the 'politics of exclusion' policy's obscuring of contemporary intra-imperial politics from the wider public, emphasis on the emperor's fundamentally military character also appealed to the armies. Soldiers receiving their state-issued pay were continuously assured that their emperors, the granters of their pay, were military men themselves, one of their number. The base-metal coinage was another mechanism the emperors used to maintain the *consensus militum* that underpinned their legitimate elevation to imperial office. On this basis, use of the 'Military Representation' theme saw the base-metal coinage work in a simultaneously exclusive and inclusive manner. Emperors were presented as distinct from their civilian population, who existed merely as the beneficiaries of their emperors' exceptional actions. Conversely, endless promotion of the emperor's military identity and general victoriousness insisted on commonality between emperor and army, between the ruler and the key legitimising authority which it openly acknowledged to be reliant on.

The base-metal coinage therefore projected the state's distinction between the civilian populace at large and the army. It was used to accommodate the military as an influential political authority and manage relations with the emperor, while concurrently dismissing popular sovereignty. Both these publicised relational frameworks (emperor-army and emperor-public) reflected the actual power structures within the Roman Empire that persisted for much of the fourth century. The military's continued proximity and access to the emperors certainly warranted an active response by the state. On the other hand, the separation between itinerant emperors and settled urban populations helped ensure the latter's lack of political influence over the former. Moreover, urban populations' recognition that their popular power only functioned locally, and did not extend over the emperors, suggests the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal propaganda policy made a successful contribution to ensuring the *populus Romanus*'s continued non-involvement in intra-imperial politics.

[814] On donatives, which were five *solidi* and a pound of silver at Julian's accession to Augustus (360) and then commuted entirely to gold, becoming nine *solidi* at Tiberius II's accession (578), see Jones 1964: II, 624; Hendy 1985: 177-178, 187-192.

5.2.2. Fifth Century Political Relations: Changing Proximities and the Empowerment of the Constantinopolitans

However, this political landscape changed, at least within the eastern Roman Empire, at the end of the fourth century. The emperors' settlement in Constantinople, for prolonged periods by Theodosius I and then permanently by Arcadius and his successors, was the catalyst.[815] The end of imperial itinerancy from the accession of Theodosius I's sons also coincided with the end of emperors themselves leading military campaigns.[816] The framework that had persisted throughout the previous century was flipped. The emperors were now in closer proximity to the Constantinopolitan populace who resided immediately beyond the walls of the imperial palace, and more detached from the armies, the closest of which resided seven miles beyond the city at the Hebdomon.[817] Moments of contact between the emperor and the wider populace remained heavily controlled ceremonies, but often involved processions through public spaces within reach of its residents.[818] These formalised outings beyond the security of the imperial palace only grew in number during the fifth century, subsequently increasing the emperor's visibility and the people of Constantinople's access to him.[819]

In the state's development of these ceremonies, they were deploying a strategy for regulating political relations that we have already discussed above. Once again interactions with a potentially influential political entity, this time the urban populace of Constantinople rather than the military, were being ritualised. And as with the military, the management of imperial relations with the people of Constantinople appears to have been warranted. What immediately differentiates the accounts of popular unrest in fifth-century Constantinople from the fourth-century examples was, firstly, the public's more frequent and deliberate confrontation of the emperor, and secondly that the emperors typically acquiesced to popular demands.[820] Power dynamics changed following increased access to and familiarity with the

[815] On Theodosius I's recurrent residence in Constantinople between 380-387 and 391-394, as well as both Arcadius's and Theodosius II's residence in the city except for very occasional and brief excursions to other cities in Anatolia see Croke 2010: 241-242; Dagron 1974: 84-86.
[816] See **§4.3.2**, n.700.
[817] Elton 1996: 208. Also see Zosimus, *New History* 5.18-19 on the *Magister Militum* Gainas's assault on Constantinople in 400. Though Gainas had apparently managed to establish some of his Gothic soldiers in Constantinople, his himself had to join up with most of his forces well beyond the city. It was then only when his army became visible from the city walls that the people of Constantinople sprang to the city's defence by mounting the walls, repelling the assaulting army and massacring all Gothic troops left in the city.
[818] See Brubaker and Wickham 2021: 136-153 (esp.143-146).
[819] See Croke 2010: 249-257 on the development of public ceremony and the focusing of secular and religious imperial activity on the city of Constantinople under Theodosius I. McEvoy 2020 has in turn demonstrated the continued development of public ceremony and increased imperial presence under the 'Constantinople-bound' rather than 'palace-bound' Arcadius. So too, as per Diefenbach (2002: 22-25), Theodosius II's long reign is noted for the development of a great number of religious processions into the city.
[820] For overviews and analysis of unrest within Constantinople over the course of the fifth century and beyond, involving a noticeably more influential populace than in the century prior, see Kaldellis 2021: 99-104; Kaldellis 2016: 119-125 and Tinnefield 1977: 179-204.

emperor. The Constantinopolitans came to perceive that they had the right to pressurise imperial rulership, and popular sovereignty now impacted the emperor's decisions as it had with local leaders in the century prior.

The evolving relationship between the emperor and the people of Constantinople, as well as the state-devised methods for attaining the latter's acceptance, have received a great deal of attention in German-language scholarship.[821] Of particular interest was the Constantinopolitan emperors' use of liturgical ceremonies to display their *humilitas* and subservience under God, in which they temporarily surrendered imperial status and shared a more intimate connection with the wider populace.[822] Again proximity, in this case social rather than physical, underpinned the state's strategy for managing relations with political entities.[823] In the fourth century, the emperors had looked to promote their military persona and insinuate themselves amongst the soldiers. Into the fifth century, a similar approach of promoting common identity was taken when the emperors faced a new group with whom they were negotiating authority. Now religious ceremonies were used to stress that the emperor was first and foremost a Constantinopolitan Christian.

Unlike with the military in the fourth century, the fifth-century state's attempts to control interaction and attain approval from the Constantinopolitans did not initially involve the *formal* acknowledgement of that urban grouping's political authority. Instead, the Constantinopolitans' increased political authority remained informal and 'extra-legal'. Only towards the end of the Late Roman period were the Constantinopolitan populace recognised as a constitutional authority. This new status was first evidenced by Peter the Patrician's account of Leo II's elevation from Caesar to Augustus in 474, which included two innovations upon earlier imperial accession ceremonies.[824] The location of acclamation had moved from the Hebdomon to inside Constantinople, at the Hippodrome, and those providing the acclamation were specified as the soldiers *and* the people. The incorporation of 'the people' (ὁ δῆμος) as a legitimising body of acclaimers was subsequently repeated at the accession of Anastasius I (491) and became the norm for all future imperial accessions.[825] The informal though realistically

[821] On '*Kaiserakzeptanztheorie*' that encapsulates the analysis of these topics see Flaig 1992 (esp.174-207); Diefenbach 1996 (esp.37-43); Pfeilschifter 2013 (esp.18-38, 307-340, 496).
[822] Diefenbach 2002: 31-44.
[823] Also see Diefenbach 1996: 49-61 and Meier 2003: 144-148, which explore how piety was used by the emperors to better construct relations between themselves and social groups within the Constantinopolitan populace that were unachievable through traditional urban communication contexts.
[824] Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 1.94.
[825] Zeno was made emperor between the accession of Leo II and Anastasius I, though no account of the actual ceremony exists. On the accession ceremony of Anastasius I see the account of Peter the Patrician in Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 91. Peter the Patrician also recounted the acclamation ceremonies of the next two emperors, Justin I (Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 93) and Justinian I (Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 95). Note that Justinian I's accession followed the same procedure and acclamation process as Justin I's accession, complete with popular participation, but took place in the Delphax (palace) instead. See also Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 38-42, which outlined model acclamation ceremonies for the emperor, empress and emperor's children (mid-ninth century), all

influential Constantinopolitan populace was finally granted some degree of official accommodation by being institutionalised as a legitimising authority of imperial rule alongside the military.

5.2.2.1. Base-Metal Coinage in the Fifth Century and Beyond: The Continued Exclusion of the Non-Constantinopolitan Wider Populace

The final point of analysis here is to consider the position and role of the base-metal coinage within the revised political landscape of the fifth century. We have seen that the state increasingly accepted and accommodated the people of Constantinople as an influential political entity, one that could exert real pressure on the emperor and which therefore needed to be controlled and placated as best as possible, much like the military had been in the fourth century and continued to be. Yet if we relate these observations to Chapter 4's analysis of coin propaganda up to the mid-fifth century, the significant shift in power dynamics, whereby the emperors came under the influence of the Constantinopolitan populace, remained virtually invisible on base-metal coinage.

As demonstrated in **§4.3**, the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal propaganda policy continued to be pursued until at least the death of Theodosius II. The only alteration that may reflect the Constantinopolitans' emergence as a distinct political authority was the decline of 'Military Representation' messages in favour of promoting the emperor's and empire's Christian identity. When witnessed alongside the emperor's self-abasement in public liturgical ceremonies within Constantinople, the Christian messages of the base-metal coinage may have been understood as further expressions of the emperor's and Constantinopolitans' common identity. However, for all other urban populations, the base-metal coin iconography continued to provide no accommodation of popular power. Moreover, since the Cross-in-wreath type **[114]** coins remained largely invisible amongst the continued circulation of fourth century coins that espoused 'Military Representation', any specific messaging to the Constantinopolitans was likely missed.

Furthermore, the contents of the base-metal coinage beyond the mid-fifth century only became more simplistic. The monogram iconographic type **[149]**, which did little more than validate the coinage with the emperor's name, constituted the prevailing reverse design on base-metal coinage between 450-498. It was then replaced by functional denomination marks on Byzantine coinage following Anastasius's monetary reforms. There was no apparent move

of which incorporated the people of Constantinople as a legitimising force. Finally, there is the account of the acclamation of Nikephoros II (Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies* 96), which stated how he was proclaimed emperor against his will by his troops while on campaign, but subsequently received legitimising acclamations from the people of Constantinople on his return to the city.

away from the 'politics of exclusion' policy on base-metal coinage in the subsequent centuries. The transition to the era of Byzantine coinage did see the obverses of base-metal types become the focus of propaganda instead.[826] However, the inscriptions of these obverses were limited to the same repeated imperial titulature of the Late Roman period. As for their iconography, the obverses depicted imperial busts that included generic assurances regarding the emperor's military prowess and Orthodox Christian faith, or occasionally presented multiple imperial figures side-by-side to visualise dynasty and continuity.[827]

In sum, from the 340s the political function of the base-metal coinage was forever changed. It was no longer used to present the wider populace as a political entity whose active support was desired to secure imperial authority. Instead, base-metal coins informed the non-elite civilian audience of little more than that their emperor was competent and therefore legitimate. At the same time, most coinage also focused on imperial *virtus* and *victoria*, promoting emperors' military identity amongst the soldiers, to whom imperial regimes remained very much beholden. By the mid-fifth century, the base-metal coinage had been permanently morphed into a medium that no longer engaged with the populace as a politically active entity. This was despite the change in the political landscape, whereby a section of the wider populace, the people of Constantinople, rose to become an influential political entity and legitimiser of imperial authority.

The lack of deviation from the 'politics of exclusion' policy was because the state sought to limit its accommodation of popular sovereignty to just the people of Constantinople. The state's conception and presentation of the Constantinopolitans as a separate 'corporate body' from the wider imperial populace is borne out in the mid-sixth century legal evidence. Justinianic legislation was recurrently addressed 'to the people of Constantinople' and made an overt distinction between 'the people of Constantinople and all the inhabitants of the provinces'.[828]

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[826] Hillen 2023: 74.

[827] Hillen 2023; Vrij 2018. Note that both tackle all metal types, from which it becomes apparent that the gold coin denominations remained more relevant as vehicles of propaganda than the base-metal coinage. Note that there was drastic reduction in issuing and consequent accessibility to new base-metal coinage across the Byzantine empire during the seventh and eighth centuries (Metcalf 2001; Haldon 2012: 108-112). This lack of access makes it questionable as to whether base-metal coinage even remained a viable vehicle for distributing propaganda to the wider populace.

[828] On the Constantinopolitans as a separate 'legally defined citizen-body' see Kaldellis 2021: 99. For the distinction between 'the people of Constantinople and all the inhabitants of the provinces' see *CJ*.4.29.25 and 5.13.1. For direct addresses to the Constantinopolitan populace see Justinian, *Novels* 8, 13, 14, 69, 77, 132 and 141. These show a more consistent address towards the Constantinopolitans than to the wider imperial populace, as there are just two edicts of Justinian I (*CJ*.1.17.3 and 1.17.4) that are addressed more generically 'to the people'. Though far more of an established convention under Justinian I, specific reference to citizens of Constantinople was not a Justinianic innovation. The address 'to the people of Constantinople and all the inhabitants of the provinces' first appeared in a single earlier edict of Theodosius II (*CTh*.4.4.5) from 416. This dates to the period in which Constantinople was already the permanent residence of the eastern emperor and when the emergence of the Constantinopolitans as a state-acknowledged political entity was underway. There are also other intermittent addresses to the Constantinopolitans that may suggest a more distinct status, in an edict of Constantine I from 335 (*CTh*.11.16.6), and then two others under Theodosius I from 380 (*CTh*.10.18.2 and 16.1.2), though these were notably issued during periods that the city was favoured by those emperors. However, in direct contrast to the

The Constantinopolitans alone, under the pressure of their 'extra-legal' political authority, were incorporated by the state as an 'acceptance group', joining the more institutionalised groups of the military and senate. Otherwise, beyond the imperial capital, the state avoided accommodating popular participation and influence over intra-imperial politics, just as it had in the fourth century. Continued lack of proximity similarly helped prevent the imposition from other urban populaces. The base-metal coinage and its propaganda continued to target the empire's broader citizenry, operating as a mechanism of basic assurance by confirming to this audience that their emperor met the key criteria for imperial rule (namely being a great Christian warrior), and thereby continued excluding them from intra-imperial politics. The populace of Constantinople, as a legitimising authority that required imperial engagement and placation, was communed with through other non-numismatic means, most notably court ceremonies and the urban topography of Constantinople itself.

5.3. Conclusion

During the Late Roman period, the urban populations periodically coalesced into 'extra-legal' political entities that embodied the *populus Romanus*. These political forces used their collective voice and actions to approve, disapprove, influence or exact retribution on their secular and religious leaders. The contemporary authors did not present the real power practised by urban populations as something that needed to be revoked. Roman citizens' right to collectively express their views, often through violence, was portrayed as a normal feature of urban life, even if contemporary authors did not always approve of these popular actions.

This model of political relations persisted on a local level, in interactions between the wider populace and their resident leaders or state-appointed regional officials. However, the political authority of urban crowds was not boundless. Fourth-century narratives of unrest, which correlated with the phase of ongoing imperial itinerancy, reveal that popular sovereignty was limited when directly confronted by the emperor. What favoured the Roman rulers in the emperor-populace power balance was their ongoing separation from their wider citizenry. The

above observation regarding the newer legislation of the Justinianic Code, the earlier legislation collated in the Theodosian Code referred far more frequently to the universal, non-specific 'people'. Dupont (1971: 593-597) has highlighted how these addresses 'to the people' were frequently referring to specific city populations. Yet the continued decision to keep the wording generic not only had the advantage of giving the law wider application, but also avoided alluding to any single segment of the wider populace as being institutionally recognised as a distinct political entity. For the thirty-five examples of address *ad populum* in the Theodosian Code see, from Constantine I = *CTh*.1.2.2, 2.16.1, 3.2.1, 3.17.2, 3.30.3, 4.12.3, 8.16.1, 9.9.1, 9.16.2, 9.24.1, 10.1.1, 10.10.1, 10.10.2, 11.7.3, 13.3.3, 13.10.1, 16.2.4; from Constantius II, with Constans, Julian or alone = *CTh*.9.7.3, 9.16.4, 9.16.5, 9.17.4, 9.34.6, 9.42.3, 11.16.7; from Julian = *CTh*.2.29.1, 9.17.5; from Jovian = 7.4.13; from Valentinian II and Valens = *CTh*.14.17.5; from Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I = *CTh*.11.1.18, 13.10.8; from Arcadius and Honorius = *CTh*.7.18.9, 14.10.2, 14.11.1, 15.12.3; from Honorius and Theodosius II = *CTh*.3.1.9. Note there are also two further pre-Justinianic addresses 'to the people' from Theodosius II and Valentinian III (*N.Val*.5.1), and Anastasius I (*CJ*.5.70.5).

mobility of travelling emperors allowed them to circumvent the threat of extra-legal violence and associated political pressure posed by static urban populations. Conversely, when confronted with the equally mobile military, a distinct political entity that could assert pressure on the emperors, the state openly acknowledged that influence and took pains to formalise communications for the emperors' benefit. These were the basic power dynamics between the emperors, the wider imperial populace and the armies, that persisted for most of the fourth century.

In terms of how the base-metal coinage reflected these political relations, we have seen two separate phases. From the start of the Late Roman period until 340, the base-metal coinage openly acknowledged the wider Roman populace as an active political entity. Base-metal coins were used as vehicles of propaganda by various imperial regimes, many of which competed with one another, to attain the support of the *populus Romanus*. Most striking is how that base-metal coin propaganda arguably envisioned the *populus Romanus* as holding an authority to influence the well-being of their emperors that did not exist in practice. The accommodation of the Roman civilian citizenry as an 'acceptance group' was an anachronistic continuation of popular power granted to the Roman people, particularly the people of the city of Rome, under the Principate. In reality, popular influence over the emperors had been undermined during the third century, with the emergence of the soldier emperors and their general dislocation from any specific urban populations.

However, from the 340s the base-metal coinage was used in a very different manner. Envisioning the wider populace with its own political authority, at least in relation to imperial power, was actively avoided. In this regard, the coinage became an accurate reflection of emperor-populace power relations. The only way we can tell that the state still acknowledged popular authority *could* exist as a counterbalance to its own, were these patent attempts to disabuse wider society of that notion. I have labelled these attempts the 'politics of exclusion' base-metal propaganda policy. The 'politics of exclusion' policy manifested most patently in the messages of base-metal coinage that focused on more allusive, generic statements of imperial competence. Furthermore, we have seen that under the 'politics of exclusion' policy, the Roman populace was explicitly presented as a passive body, just recipients of benefits from the emperors' virtuous actions.

Analysis of the 'Military Representation' theme (Chapter 4) showed that the messages of imperial competence primarily revolved around asserting the emperor's martial ability and victory. It has also been acknowledged here that these military messages simultaneously looked to engage with the soldiers. As a collective, the soldiers *were* an active political entity that the fourth-century itinerant emperors recognised and looked to manage relations with

accordingly, through a range of mechanisms and media. The prioritisation of the 'Military Representation' messages therefore fulfilled multiple objectives. From one perspective, the base-metal coins informed the wider populace, a *potentially* politically active audience, that emperors had already guaranteed the security of the empire. The promotion of particularly violent expressions of imperial *virtus* and *victoria* also emphasised to wider society that any uninvited political intervention and opposition to imperial authority would have dire consequences. The same messages concurrently worked to ingratiate the emperors with armies, an ongoing threat to imperial authority. Just as the base-metal coinage was used to entirely exclude one political entity, it continued to be used in an inclusive and placatory manner for another.

The permanent settlement of the emperors at the end of the fourth century then changed the power dynamics that had existed since the emergence of imperial itinerancy in the third century. Renewed connection to the emperor would see the population of Constantinople emerge as a corporate entity aware of its own political authority and with a will to use it. During the fifth century, this would manifest not only in an extra-legal capacity but would be more clearly institutionalised as the people of Constantinople were incorporated into the acclamation of emperors upon imperial accession. However, though open recognition of the Constantinopolitan citizenry as a political force would manifest in state ceremonies and in legal sources, the coinage still adhered to the 'politics of exclusion'. While the Constantinopolitans were incorporated as a new 'acceptance group', the state continued using the base-metal coinage to prevent the remainder of the wider populace ('all the inhabitants of the provinces') from impinging on imperial authority. For the remainder of the Late Roman period and much of the early Byzantine period at least, base-metal coinage persisted to publicise little more than the emperor's primary virtues of military prowess and Christian faith.

6. Concluding Remarks

This thesis has aimed to provide a quantitative analysis of base-metal coin propaganda between 284-450, thereby increasing the chronological scope of era-spanning, statistically supported studies of Roman imperial coin iconography. Base-metal coinage has been focused on as it provides vital evidence of audience targeting, having been the most pervasive form of communication between the imperial government and wider populace. Through a structured chronological analysis, I have sought to delineate which aspects of imperial rulership ideology contemporary governments most frequently presented to the wider populace, and how these political messages shaped non-elite citizens' experience of imperial power.

However, coin propaganda is not predisposed to quantification. Various inscriptions and imagery combine to present qualitative evidence, which requires translation into comparable metrics. Unfortunately, I have shown that no major existing quantitative approach to studying Roman coin propaganda is suited to encapsulating the unique features of Late Roman base-metal coinage and its multi-faceted political messages. Subsequently, I have had to devise a new quantitative methodology, and this process has formed the second major dimension of my research. This thesis has become as much a consideration of how to quantitatively analyse Roman imperial coin propaganda, as it is an investigation into the actual political messages of Late Roman base-metal coinage. In particular, my core analysis of the base-metal coin propaganda (Chapter 4) has been a trial run for my new quantitative methodology. On this basis, by reviewing the thesis's principal findings, I will also evaluate my quantitative approach and demonstrate how it has successfully facilitated insightful analysis of Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda.

6.1. Overview and Evaluation

Quantitative analysis is inherently reductive, as its purpose is to simplify complexity. Specific features of a large corpus of evidence are statistically interrogated to obtain a contextualised understanding that qualitative judgements cannot provide. Some detail must be sacrificed. The challenge for quantitative analyses of Roman imperial coin propaganda lies in ensuring a balance is met. Complex political messages must be captured in as much detail as possible, but the collated data must be simplified enough that latent features and ideological programmes are discernible. To prove the success of my new methodology, it must be shown to have better accommodated the intricacies of Roman imperial coinage as a source material, whilst still delineating clear propaganda patterns.

6.1.1. Capturing Complexity

My new methodology has accommodated the complexity of Roman imperial base-metal coinage in two main ways. First, as presented in Chapter 2, I have avoided homogenising the non-elite citizenry's experience of base-metal coinage by recognising regional variation between available base-metal iconographic types. I have achieved this by using gross coin analysis (basic quantification method) and site-finds (data source). Spatially-tied site-finds data from urban centres across the Late Roman Empire helped identify zones of common coin supply, circulation and use. On a macro scale, I have differentiated the western and eastern imperial territories, while the dioceses of *Britannia*, *Hispania*, *Moesia/Thracia*, *Asiana* and *Oriens* demonstrated further micro-regional distinction (Map 1). These were spaces where coins with the same designs and political messaging were available in comparable quantities. I have used them to recognise regionally distinct experiences of imperial rule amongst the local populations. Defining regional experiences based on accessible coin propaganda is simply not possible when using alternative quantification methods, like gross coin type analysis or die-studies, which only reveal variation between mints, at the point of production. Through careful selection of a spatially-tied data source, my methodology has captured further levels of detail, facilitating analysis to move beyond a simple pan-imperial chronological assessment.

Second, in Chapter 3, I have devised a categorisation framework more capable of recording the multi-faceted political messages of Late Roman base-metal coins. Some features of the framework were adopted from Erika Manders's approach. They include assigning multiple categories to a single coin, and using categories that summarise core ideological values communicated by the coins rather than describing common iconographic features. A key innovation has been my methodology's more sensitive categorising of reverse-types, ensuring detection of distinct propaganda categories espoused by the inscription *and* iconography. Moreover, introducing a fuzzy-logic scoring system has enabled the degree that each propaganda category was present on a coin to be measured. These mechanisms allow my categorisation framework to better reflect different propaganda categories' interconnection, as well as the hierarchy of political messages presented on individual coins. Consequently, an average coin from my 'cleaned' site-finds dataset refers to six of the fifteen propaganda categories and has a fuzzy-logic score of four out of fifteen. By contrast, in Manders's dataset just 2.1% of coin types were assigned to multiple propaganda categories.[829] My new

[829] Manders 2012: 49, n.163.

categorisation framework has enabled the creation of a complex dataset, that presents a more nuanced picture of the intertwined political messages present on individual coins.

6.1.2. Distinguishing Patterns

In making these accommodations, I have risked creating overly complicated data. However, my methods to effectively document regional variation in coin profiles and the complexity of individual iconographic types have not prevented several prevalent conceptual trends from being delineated. As detailed in Chapter 4, Late Roman base-metal coin propaganda can be divided into three chronological phases that were each underpinned by a distinct ideological programme.

During Phase 1 (284-324, Periods 1-4) most base-metal coins propagated one of two core messages. Principally, emperors were shown to foster relations with a divine companion, receiving military might and victory in return. The only notable absence of divine *comes* coins occurred in Constantine I's western empire during Period 4 (317-324), when tetrarchic ideological modes were rejected in favour of *vota* types that promoted imperial longevity. Otherwise, whilst iconographic variation occurred between emperors' domains throughout Phase 1, difference was largely limited to points of detail. Most often, it was simply the deity that changed,[830] whilst the divine companion narrative continued to be perpetuated. Alternatively, until 315-316, traditional religious practices were promoted to appease the gods and therefore secure the empire. Again, the core message persisted across the empire, though the *genius* depicted performing sacrifice could be affiliated with the *populus Romanus* (**[3]**) or emperor (**[212]**). The Phase 1 base-metal coins most visible across the empire therefore primarily promoted the emperors' and empire's 'religious *pietas*', whilst expressions of the emperors' *virtus* and *victoria* appeared in a subsidiary capacity.

Phase 2 (330-408, Periods 6-11) was defined by the Roman state's near-continuous promotion of victorious and brave military emperors. Again, the inscription/image combination that communicated these martial messages did vary. Particularly unusual were the Period 6 (330-340) coins, which included emphasising Constantine I's specific victories over Maxentius and Licinius (**[49, 50]**). From the 340s though, a more rigid iconographic pattern was adopted. Most coins either depicted the personified Victory, or emperor in military aspect. These designs also habitually foregrounded violence against captives, downplaying the concept of a beneficent and merciful emperor that counterbalanced images of imperial savagery on other media and on earlier coinage.

[830] For example, Jupiter, Sol or Mars. For more detailed discussion of the use of different divine companions see **§4.1.2**.

Some intervals in Phase 2's ongoing prioritisation of martial messages have also been identified. Most notable were the predominance of *vota* coins in Constantius II's eastern territories during Period 7 (340-348), and the empire-wide *vota* series issued between 381-384 (Period 10). With regard to propaganda patterns, it is striking that these main deviations from core military messages were also consistent, all being simplistic expressions of imperial continuity. Furthermore, these alternative narratives soon gave way to the more persistent concern with presenting a powerful, victorious and violent emperor.

Finally, although Phase 3 (408-450, Periods 12-13) was primarily defined by reduced data availability and analysis of just the eastern empire, I have still been able to identify two prevailing propaganda narratives. First, the Period 12 (408-425) coinage continued promoting overt martial messaging, and also incorporated expressions of concord between the now *de facto* independent western and eastern emperors. Period 13 (425-450) has then been identified as the watershed moment the Roman state finally made a concerted effort to promote the empire and emperor's Christian identity.

6.1.3. Defining Common Experience

My quantitative methodology has therefore effectively detailed the main base-metal coin propaganda programmes favoured by the Late Roman state in any one period. However, I have not only considered what the state wanted to show. The general availability of new coinage in relation to the older coinage still in circulation has also been assessed, to ascertain the visibility different ideological programmes achieved amongst the wider populace and how they altered public experience of imperial power. For this purpose, I have compared site-finds volumes between periods and used supplementary hoard data to determine the varying timespans that different iconographic types circulated for. The main observations are:

- Except for Constantine I's Period 4 (317-324) *vota* coins, most Phase 1 (284-324) coinage circulated for a limited time before being hoarded or demonetised.
- Phase 2 (330-408) coinage was produced in high volumes and, apart from some short-lived larger denominations, continued circulating throughout the fifth century.
- Phase 3 (408-450) coinage was produced intermittently and in much lower quantities because Phase 2 coinage remained available.

Phase 2 iconographic types therefore quickly became visible and continued to dominate the available coin supply until the end of the Late Roman period. Conversely, the distinct propaganda programmes of Phase 3 would have achieved little cut-through. Since most base-metal coins issued 340-408 expressed the same limited 'Military Representation' messages,

a consistent pan-imperial experience of imperial authority becomes definable. Through the base-metal coinage, the most proliferous form of public promotion available to the state, the wider populace of the Late Roman Empire was continuously confronted with the coercive image of a powerful, victorious and specifically violent military emperor. Promises that emperors would provide material benefits and beneficent rule disappeared, leaving behind only the guarantee of protection for the obedient and destruction for the rebellious.

6.1.4. Identifying Shifting Political Functions

Finally, my analysis has identified two distinct ways that the Late Roman state intended for base-metal coinage to function. Between 284-340, imperial regimes used base-metal coin propaganda to garner popular support, as they envisioned the wider populace as an active political entity that contributed to the empire's stability. In particular, these base-metal coins engaged with and reflected contemporary political circumstances, or cited emperors' specific successes as evidence for their right to rule. Conversely, from the 340s the state adopted a new propaganda policy: the 'politics of exclusion'. Base-metal coins were then used to obscure contemporary intra-imperial politics and deny the wider populace's involvement. Political messages were purposefully limited to generic and timeless statements about the emperors being long-lived, martially competent (and eventually Christian) rulers, whilst informing the wider populace they were a passive audience. A contextualising study of actual Late Roman power dynamics (**§5.2**) has revealed that only through the 'politics of exclusion' policy did base-metal coinage come to reflect actual emperor-populace political relations in the Late Roman Empire. Apart from the fifth-century Constantinopolitan populace, who had frequent access to the emperor, the remaining non-elite Roman majority were entirely subservient and subject their emperors' will.

Delineating the 'politics of exclusion' policy has produced a more nuanced perspective of Late Roman base-metal coinage. Given the persistent espousal of simplistic 'Military Representation' messages from the 340s, earlier assessments rightly described Late Roman base-metal coinage as 'banal', 'trite and monotonous'.[831] However, I have shown this monotony was entirely intentional. Centralised control carefully and deliberately maintained the conservative messaging of base-metal coinage for the remainder of the Late Roman period and beyond. My quantitative analysis has not only defined the broad propaganda patterns of base-metal coinage or reconstructed the common experience of imperial power it created amongst the wider populace. It has also established that the emergence of

[831] Burnett 1987: 79; Pearce 1933: xxxix. Also see Sutherland 1974: 275 on the 'inherent monotony (or near monotony' of Valentinian and Theodosian coins.

monotonous political messages marked a fundamental, permanent change in how the state used base-metal coinage as a medium of public communication.

6.2. Impact and Further Research

Ultimately, my new quantitative approach has met this thesis's aims. I have provided a core overview of the political messages of base-metal coinage issued between 284-450, covering the overarching propaganda programmes, and posited how this political medium created a general experience amongst the wider populace of imperial authority as violently militaristic and exclusionary. However, scope of analysis has been necessarily limited. Most obviously, I have restricted discussion of the results of my quantitative analysis primarily to the *virtus* and *victoria* propaganda categories ('Military Representation' theme). Assessing the impact and significance of the other thirteen propaganda categories/five thematic groupings has been more selective. Further research should involve undertaking similarly detailed analyses of these other thematic groupings. It would likely identify further moments of inter-regional variation and even define other features of the 'politics of exclusion' propaganda policy. Moreover, while it would necessitate using hoards rather than site-finds, similar quantitative analysis of Late Roman gold coin propaganda would enable an intriguing study of audience targeting over different metal types.

Nevertheless, this thesis has incorporated analysis of the most pertinent political messages of 118 iconographic types. This corresponds to 98.3% of the coins in the 'cleaned' site-finds dataset, which I have verified as representative of the wider corpus of extant Late Roman base-metal coinage. The statistically supported conclusions regarding the main public propaganda programmes and public experience will hold under further study, making this thesis a foundational quantitative analysis of Late Roman base-metal coinage.

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