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978-1-107-02012-2 - Under Divine Auspices: Divine Ideology and the Visualisation of Imperial Power in the Severan Period

Clare Rowan

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Under Divine Auspices

This book explores how deities were used to communicate and negotiate imperial power under the Severan dynasty (AD 193–235). Septimius Severus connected his reign to the divine support of Liber Pater and Hercules, while Caracalla placed a particular emphasis on the gods Apollo, Aesculapius and Sarapis. Elagabalus' reign was characterised by the worship of the Emesene deity Elagabal, which resulted in a renewed emphasis on the cult of Jupiter under Severus Alexander. Numismatic evidence is reintegrated into the wider material culture of the Severan period in order to bring new insights into the use of the divine in this period, as well as the rôle played by the provinces in the formation and reception of this ideology. By taking a dynastic approach, this book demonstrates the dynamic nature of the imperial public image and the complex dialogue that existed between Rome and the wider empire in this period.

CLARE ROWAN is Research Fellow in Numismatics in the Department of Classics and Ancient History, University of Warwick. She has been a junior fellow and research officer at the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, and she was the Macquarie Gale Fellow at the British School at Rome. She works on visual culture, Roman history and the Roman economy and was part of the student-mentoring group Telemachus, which was awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Award in 2010.

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To my fellow students of history, past and present

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Preface

When I began work on this project, it was not my intention to produce a book so heavily focused on numismatic evidence. At that time I was not trained as a numismatist and had little idea about the potential uses of this often neglected type of evidence. But the more I learnt about the Severans the more I became convinced of the importance of addressing the numismatic evidence and examining it in a proper manner. It was from coinage, I believed, that we could make great advances in our understanding of the public image of the Severan emperors and the image of the principate in general. I believe that the final result has more than justified the deviation from my intended course.

This book derives from my doctoral thesis *Under Divine Auspices: Patron Deities and the Visualisation of Imperial Power in the Severan Period*, completed at Macquarie University in 2009. The conversion of this work into a book took place under the kind advice of the anonymous readers from Cambridge University Press, and was assisted by the tireless efforts of Michael Sharp, Josephine Lane and Gillian Dadd. The adaptation of my raw doctoral work into publishable form was made possible by a postdoctoral grant to the British School at Rome. The school and its staff provided an ideal environment in which to write, and living in Italy informed my ideas about Severan Rome in a way I had hardly thought possible. Enormous thanks are due to the stimulating community housed in the British School, particularly the scholars and artists in residence. A debt is also owed to Mrs Janet Gale for her continued funding of the Macquarie Gale Scholarship.

The genesis of this study and its metamorphosis could occur only with the sage advice of my doctoral supervisors, Professor Samuel Lieu, Associate Professor Andrew Gillett and Dr Ken Sheedy, who each provided a complementary area of expertise and unflagging support. My research was funded by an Australian Postgraduate Award and supported by a generous travel allowance granted by Macquarie University. I got my first taste of numismatics as a fellow at the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies and this Centre went on to form a home for my research. Thanks are

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due here to Dr Bill Gale and Janet Gale, not only for establishing the Centre, but providing the monetary support for research and training.

In 2007 I participated in the American Numismatic Society Summer School, where I did much of my research on Severus Alexander. The seminar and its participants taught me more than I can express, and so a hearty thanks to the ANS staff, guest lecturers and my fellow students, particularly to Professor Dr Bernhard Weisser, Dr Andrew Meadows, Rick Witschonke, and Dr Peter van Alfen, who continued to encourage me well after the seminar was over.

Thanks are also due to my parents, who have provided emotional, economic and culinary support over the years. Finally, I acknowledge the enormous debt this work owes to my fellow students, both at Macquarie and abroad, who have continually engaged and challenged me, and have provided support and friendship. Much of this thesis has been shaped by their intelligent questioning, and by their patience in listening to various numismatic problems and topics. This book is dedicated to them.

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Abbreviations

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are those of the Loeb Classical Library. Ancient authors and their works are abbreviated according to the style laid out in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Journals are abbreviated according to *L'Année Philologique*.

Since it is anticipated this work will have an audience without specialist numismatic training, I have attempted to be as clear as possible in referencing ancient coins. References to the *Roman Imperial Coinage (RIC)* or *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum (BMCRE)* provide the relevant volume as well as the emperor concerned. References to the catalogue series *Greek Coins in the British Museum (BMC)* provide the standard name by which the volume is known, as well as the particular city concerned in parentheses. References to Gneecchi's *I Medaglioni Romani* (Gneecchi 1912) provide the volume number, followed by the page number and medal number. These conventions were deemed necessary since the work switches rapidly between emperors and cities, and it is hoped this system will keep confusion to a minimum.

Other abbreviations used frequently throughout are as follows:

ANS	American Numismatic Society.
ANSMN	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i> .
BMC	Poole, R. S. et al. (1873–1972). <i>A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum</i> (29 vols.). London.
<i>Bull. Épigr.</i>	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> .
BCTH	<i>Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques</i> .
CHRB	<i>Coin Hoards from Roman Britain</i> (1975–). London.
Cohen	Cohen, H. (1880–1892). <i>Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire romain communément appelées médailles impériales</i> (8 vols.). Paris.

- Crawford Crawford, M. H. (1974). *Roman Republican Coinage* (2 vols.). Cambridge.
- Emmett Emmett, K. (2001). *Alexandrian Coins*. Lodi.
- FMRD *Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland* (1970–). Berlin.
- FMRSlow *Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Slowenien* (1980–). Berlin.
- FMRÖ *Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Österreich* (1970–). Vienna.
- IRT Reynolds, J. M. & Ward Perkins, J. B. (eds.) (1952). *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. Rome.
- IvE Wankel, H., ed. (1979–1984). *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (8 vols.). Bonn.
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- Mionnet Mionnet, T. E. (1806–37). *Description de médailles antiques, grecques et romaines, avec leur degré de rareté et leur estimation* (16 vols.). Paris.
- Mouchmov Mouchmov, N. A. (1912). *Ancient Coins of the Balkan Peninsula and the Coins of the Russian Czars*. Sofia.
- PL *Patrologia Latina*.
- RIB Collingwood, R. G. and Wright, R. P. (1965–). *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*. Oxford.
- RIU Barkóczi, L. (ed.) *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns*. (1972–1991). Amsterdam and Budapest.
- RMRVe *Ritrovamenti Monetali di età Romana nel Veneto* (2006–). Padua.
- RPC *Roman Provincial Coinage* (1992–). London.
- SIRIS Vidmann, L. (1969). *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae*. Berlin.
- SNG *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (1931–).
- Strack Strack, P. L. (1931–1937). *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (3 vols.). Stuttgart.
- TM *Trésors Monétaires* (1979–). Paris.
- Varbanov Varbanov, I. (2005–2007). *Greek Imperial Coins and Their Values* (3 vols.). Bourgas.