

The Fall of Crispus from the Constantinian Dynasty



CRISPUS: the heir apparent 326 C.E..

AE gilded medallion 40.9g. Rome Mint. Obverse: Constantine Laureate, draped & cuirassed bust r.. CONSTANTI-NVSMAXAVG. Reverse: Constantine, laureate and draped about waist, std. left on cuirass, holding scepter and extending his r. hand to receive a phoenix on globe from Crispus standing r. in military garb; trophy behind, panther at his feet. GLORIASAE-CVLIVIR-TVS CAESS. PR in ex.



Crispus was born in 303 C.E., the only son of Constantine and Minervina, the first wife or concubine of Constantine. He was raised in Gaul by his father. Elevated to the rank of Caesar in 317 along with his younger half-brother Constantine II and his cousin Licinius II, Crispus was immediately given military responsibilities in which he excelled, achieving notable victories against the Franks, and the Alamanni in 318, 320 and 323. His HQ was in Trier, the capital of Germania. In 324, Crispus joined his father in the final battles with the Licinii. Crispus was given a naval command with a fleet of 200 ships. In a series of battles in the Sea of Marmara in July, the Licinian forces, though superior in numbers were routed and Crispus rendezvoused with his father near the future site of Constantinople.

Within two years Crispus was dead, executed at the order of his father at the age of 23. The story is that Crispus was accused of a rape attempt by Constantine's wife, the Augusta, Flavia Maxima Fausta, the mother of Constantine's other children. He was tried by a court at Pola, in Istria, and condemned. When the story was soon after uncovered as false, and was understood to be a ruse to secure the ascendancy of her sons, Fausta was steamed to death in an enclosed bath at the order of her husband. Orders of Damnatio Memoriae were invoked on both Fausta and Crispus. Significantly, the order on Fausta was never revoked by her sons, though they were the chief beneficiaries of her treachery.



VICTORY OVER THE ALAMANNI

Some bronze Coins of CRISPUS, HELENA and FAUSTA



FLIVLCRISPVSNOBCAES, Laureate head right;
ALAMANNI-ADEVICTA, Victory advancing right
holding trophy and palm, captive at her feet. SIRM



HELE-NANF, draped bust right, hair in bun.
(no legend) 8-pointed star within wreath.



CRISPVS-NOBCAES, helmeted and cuirassed
bust right; VIRTVS-EXERCIT, trophy with
bound captives below, T|F in fields, PTR in ex.



FLHELENA-AVGVSTA, diademed and
mantled bust r. SECVRITAS-REIPVBLICE,
Helena stg. left holding down turned branch.
ISIS crescent in exergue.



DNFLIVLCRISPVSNOBCAES, Crispus, Laur. dr.
& cuir bust r. (in page-boy haircut). PROVIDEN-
TIAECAESS, Jupiter, stg. l. holding victoriola,
palm at his feet. Pellet S in r. field, SMN in ex.



FAVS-TANF, draped bust right, waved hair
in bun. (no legend) 8-pointed star within
wreath.



CRISPVS-NOBCAES, Laur. dr. & cuir. bust r.
CAESARVMNOSTRORVM, VOT X between 2
palm branches, all within wreath. AQS in ex.



FLAVMAX-FAVSTA AVG, draped bust right,
waved hair in bun, wearing necklace. SALAS-
REI-PVBLICE, Fausta, stg. Facing holding ba-
bies, head l. HTSA in exergue.



FLAVMAX-FAVSTA AVG, draped bust
right, waved hair in bun, wearing necklace.
SPESREI-PVBLICE, Fausta, stg. Facing
holding babies, head l. HTSA in exergue.

Mint Cities of Crispus 316-324

LONDON
TRIER
LYONS
ARLES
TICINUM (to 321)
ROME
AQUILEIA
SISCIA
THESSALONICA
HERACLEA
NICOMEDIA
CYZICUS
ANTIOCH
ALEXANDRIA

Mint Cities of Crispus 324-326

LONDON
TRIER
LYONS
ARLES
TICINUM (re-opened 324)
ROME
SISCIA
SIRMIUM
THESSALONICA
HERACLEA
CONSTANTINOPLE
NICOMEDIA
CYZICUS
ANTIOCH
ALEXANDRIA



Constantine and his two eldest sons:
CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG, bare-headed bust right.
CRISPVS SET CONSTANTINVS SCC, confronted bare-headed busts of Crispus (on left) and Constantine II.
AR heavy miliarensis. Sirmium mint 320 A.D.

The Family of CRISPUS [FLAVIVS IVLIVS CRISPVS]

Described in the context of his place in the line of Constantine. It is traceable yet further back to Vespasian. This is why, I believe Constantine's family is sometimes referred to as the Neo-Flavian dynasty.

