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A GOOD PORTRAIT OF CONSTANTIUS II?

I've been googling online, and I have been unable to locate a good likeness of Constantius II, who succeeded his father Constantine, murdered all his cousins, then his brothers and left only a nephew, Julian the Apostate, to succeed him. His reign is described vividly by Ammianus Marcellinus, and the church remembered him as an Arian.

Long ago I placed online the Chronography of 354, a magnificent collection of documents illustrated by a famous artist and presented to a nobleman in that year. The original is lost, but copies have reached us. One of the illustrations is of "our emperors", Constantius and his nephew, the luckless Gallus.

Since then the Barberini manuscript (Vatican barberini latini 2154B) of the Chronography has come online. Here's the portrait of Constantius from it, online [here](#):



Constantius II in 354 AD. From Ms. Vatican Barb. lat. 2154 B, folio 13.

It is a splendid portrait, isn't it? What a face!

But I was surprised to discover that the illustrations were monochrome. The **printed**

[version](#) was monochrome but I had always assumed that was just to make it possible to print.

Another manuscript of the Chronography is also online, in Vienna, [here](#). But this does not include the portraits of the emperors, although it does include other illustrations.

I wanted to see if other representations matched the one above. The first item that I found was a bust of a young prince, almost 3 feet tall, and identified as either Constantius II or possibly his brother Constans. It's at the [Capitoline Museum in Rome](#), [inv. MC2882](#):



Colossal head of Constantius II or possibly Constans.
Musei Capitolini, Roma, inv. MC2882.

The [Last Statues database](#) catalogues this as LSA-561, and gives a reference to a catalogue, sadly offline.^[1] I must say the portrait is not obviously similar to that of the Chronography.

Another portrait [at Wikipedia](#) is this:



Presumed bust of emperor Constantius II (317 - 361), son and successor of Constantine the Great. Temporary exhibition in Colosseum (aug.2013), Rome, Italy.

I don't know anything else about this, but I can see that the nose seems to be restored, and much else; so I fear this is not a likeness. There is also a widely miscaptioned picture of Theodosius II under the name of Constantius.

The next item I found on [Tumblr](#):



Emperor Constantius II (?). Second third of IV century AD. Bust is modern. Marble.
Musée du Louvre, Paris. Inv. Cp 6399 / Ma 1021

The head is ancient but the darker bust material is modern. But again is this Constantius?

Also on Tumblr, was this silver bowl from the Bosphoran kingdom, i.e. the Crimea. I think that it is from Kerch, and is probably held in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia.^[2]



Bowl: the triumph of Constantius II. Place of origin: Eastern Mediterranean. Date: A.D. 4th century. Archaeological site: Bosphoran Necropolis, vault on the Gordikov estate.

The long face is very like that of the Chronography.

Here's another item, the Missorium of Kerch, preserved in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg in Russia. Wikipedia has a monochrome image [here](#).





The Misorium of Kerch is a ceremonial dish depicting the Emp. Constantius II on horseback, leading a soldier and being crowned by Victory.

This also depicts a long-faced Constantius. So I think we may treat the depiction in the Chronography as fairly accurate. Not bad for a renaissance copy of a Carolingian copy of an ancient book!

1. ^[1]Fittschen, K. and P. Zanker, *Katalog der Porträts in den Capitolischen Museen und den anderen kommunalen Sammlungen der Stadt Rom*, Band I, Mainz 1985, 156-7, no. 125, pl. 156 ↩

2. ^[2]This I infer from a snippet view of a book on Google Books: Bernard Samuel Myers, *Encyclopedia of world art*, - **Volume 9 - Page xcvi**: "Two dishes found at Kerch (Leningrad, The Hermitage) refer to an anniversary of Constantius in 343. The style of these dishes ... The third, and most splendid, piece of this type is the Misorium of Theodosius I (II, PL. 487), which celebrates ..." ↩
