

Honorina, Paulus Constantius and Constantius III: their family links

[Honorina, Paulo Constancio y Constancio III: sus vínculos familiares]

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse a series of late Roman inscriptions from Salona (modern Solin, Croatia) in order to establish possible links between the people mentioned in them and the imperial families of the 4th and 5th centuries. Special attention will be paid to two funerary epigraphs: one of them, a double inscription dedicated to a woman called Honorina and her husband, Paulus Constantius, the other one a funerary inscription mentioning a young woman who was a relative, probably a daughter, of an emperor described as *(di)vi Constanti*. The data from these epigraphs will be set against the broader historical context of their time, with the analysis of the relevant written sources.

Keywords

Salona, Honorina, Paulus Constantius, Constantius III, Theodosius I

Resumen

En este artículo se plantea el análisis de una serie de inscripciones tardorromanas procedentes de Salona (actualmente Solin, en Croacia) con el objetivo de establecer posibles vínculos de parentesco entre algunas personas mencionadas en ellas y las familias imperiales de los siglos IV y V. Se prestará especial atención a dos epígrafes funerarios: el primero de ellos, una inscripción doble dedicada a una mujer llamada Honorina y a su marido, Paulus Constantius; el segundo, una inscripción en la que se menciona a una mujer joven que era pariente, probablemente hija, de un emperador descrito como *(di)vi Constanti*. Los datos de estos epígrafes serán puestos en relación con el contexto histórico de su época, a través del análisis de las fuentes escritas relevantes.

Palabras clave

Salona, Honorina, Paulo Constancio, Constancio III, Teodosio I

1. Honoria and Paulus Constantius

A sarcophagus found in the late antique cemetery of Manastirine, outside the walls of Salona, bears two inscriptions: the earlier one dedicated to a woman called Honoria, the other one added later, in 375, in honour of her husband, Paulus Constantius, who had been *proconsul Africae*.¹ Both names seem to fit into the nomenclature of two of the most important imperial houses of the late Roman period: the Constantinian and the Theodosian. As I will try to argue in this research, these similarities in the names might be due to something more than mere coincidence.

The sarcophagus can still be seen on the spot, surrounded by other burials that were placed in what archaeologists usually call 'Chapel VII', a space that was subsequently buried under the 5th c. funerary basilica of Manastirine.² Honoria's inscription, written in five dactylic hexameters followed by an additional line with the date of the burial, occupies the central part of the sarcophagus. It provides basic information about her (marriage, children, age), and also a reference to the Christian context of her burial place, connected with the tombs of unspecified martyrs.³ Here is the complete text:⁴

*Constanti(i) coniux, parvorum
mater Honoria dulcibus
eximie carissima semper et una,
conples ter denos quae vitam*

¹ CIL III 950 = ILJug 23886 = Salona IV 159. For a complete analysis, see N. Duval - F. Prévot, «Épigraphes de l'ancien proconsul d'Afrique Constantius (mort en 375), de sa femme Honoria et de leur fille», in N. Gauthier - E. Marin - F. Prévot, (eds.), *Salona IV. Recherches archéologiques franco-croates à Salone: Inscriptions de Salone Chrétienne, Ixe-Viie Siècles*, 2 vols, (Rome: École Française de Rome/Split: Archaeological Museum of Split, 2010), pp. 401-404.

² About Manastirine, see N. Duval - E. Marin, (eds), *Salona III. Manastirine. Établissement préromain, nécropole et basilique paléochrétienne* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2000); A. M. Yasin, «Reassessing Salona Churches: Martyrium Evolution in Question», *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012), pp. 59-112, at pp. 104-111. About 'Chapel VII', see N. Duval - M. Jeremić - E. Marin - B. Pender, «L'architecture du complexe chrétien», in N. Duval - E. Marin (eds), *Salona III*, pp. 283-617.

³ For the problems involved in associating the various burial basilicas of Salona with specific martyrs, see Yasin, «Reassessing Salona's Churches».

⁴ For a complete analysis, including metrical scansion, and translation into French, see Duval - Prévot, «Épigraphes». For an overview of the metrical inscriptions found in late antique Salona, see F. Prévot, «Les inscriptions métriques de Salona dans l'antiquité tardive», in J. Desmulliez - C. Hoët-Van Cauwenberghe, (eds.), *Le monde romain à travers l'épigraphie: méthodes et pratiques* (Lille: Université Charles-de-Gaulle - Lille 3, 2005), pp. 355-382.

*vixerit annos, martyribus
adscita cluet · Cui parvula con-
tra rapta prius praestat tumu-
li consortia dulcis.
Deposita VII kal(endas) Apriles.*

All the information that is known about Honorio derives from this inscription. The first eight lines, written in verse, can be translated as follows: “Constantius’ wife, the mother of young children, Honorio, for the dear ones always the most beloved, like no other.⁵ She lived until the age of thirty and is reputed by being permitted to lie with the martyrs. Her little daughter, who died before her, gives her sweet company in the sepulchre”.⁶ In the last line, which seems to be engraved by a different hand, we are told that Honorio was buried on the 26 of March (*deposita VII kal Apriles*) of an unknown year.

Paulus Constantius’ inscription was added later, to the left of the original one. The engraver tried to maintain the same stylistic features, including a partial continuation of the rectangular frame that delimited Honorio’s inscription. It is not clear, however, whether the inscriptions were made by the same person. As I have mentioned above, the letter arrangement and size of the last line of Honorio’s inscription differs from the rest: the letters are bigger, and the spaces between them are irregular, compared to the previous lines. The nature of the text is also different: instead of literary language, the focus is now on career facts and precise data: *Depositus Constant/ius v(ir) c(larissimus) · ex proconsul/e Africae, die prid(ie) no/n(as) Iul(ias), post cons(ulatum) · d(omini) n(ostri) Gra/tiani Aug(usti) · et E/quiti u(iri) c(larissimi)*.⁷

In Constantius’ epitaph, as well as in the last line of Honorio’s inscription, we find an indication of the date of the burial (*deposita/depositus*), with the added information, in Constantius’ inscription, of the year: 6th of July, year 375: *die prid(ie) non(as) Iul(ias), post cons(ulatum) · d(omini) n(ostri) Gratiani Aug(usti) · et Equiti u(iri) c(larissimi)*. At the beginning of the text we have significant information about Constantius: he had the status of *vir clarissimus*, and he had been *proconsul Africae*.

According to T. Barnes, from the time of Constantine I to the end of the 4th c. the proconsuls of Africa held their position from April of one year to April of the next.⁸ In the case of Paulus Constantius, this means his tenure was from April 374

⁵ In my translation, I interpret the word *una* (line 3) in connection with *Honorio* and the superlative *carissima*; cf. Duval – Prévot’s translation: “tendrement chérie de ses proches et unique” (Duval – Prévot, «Épithèques», p. 402).

⁶ It has been argued that this might be a case of a stillborn baby, with her mother dying a little time afterwards. Duval – Prévot, «Épithèques», p. 404.

⁷ See Duval – Prévot, «Épithèques», for a complete analysis and translation into French.

⁸ T. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1982), p. 168, n. 75; T. Barnes «Proconsuls of Africa, 337-392», *Phoenix* 39 (1985), pp. 144-153. 144.

to April 375, a chronological framework that fits the data that we have about his career, including the two laws, recorded in the Theodosian Code, that were addressed to him. The first one, concerning the transport of clothing and the use of the public post,⁹ refers to him as Constantius (*ad Constantium*), with no indication of his office. In the second one, dealing with the distribution of tax revenues between the central and local governments,¹⁰ he is addressed *ad Constantium proconsulem Africae*. In the latter, the year that is given is 375, which is generally considered a mistake, and corrected to 374. The confusion may arise from the fact that there were no new consuls for this year, with the term of the previous ones (Gratianus and Equitius) extended to 375 with the indication *post consulatum Gratiani III et Equiti v. c.*¹¹

His time in Africa Proconsularis was recorded in a series of inscriptions. One of them, found at Ain Nechma (Algeria),¹² is rather fragmentary. The reference to Paulus Constantius can be reconstructed, with difficulties, as this: (...) *dedic(avit) [Paulus C]onstantius, (v)ir c(larissimus), [proco(n)s(ule) p(rovinciae) A(fricae)], iudex sacr(arum co)gnitionum*. Next to it, we find a reference to his son Antonius Paulus: *[cum A]ntonio Paulo, [fi]lio suo*, with the next word (*Numidi[ae]*) as a possible indication that he was a legate in Numidia. Another inscription, found in Castellum Biracsaccarensium (modern Sidi Bou Médiène, Tunisia),¹³ offers the full name of Paulus Constantius: *proconsulatu Pauli Constanti v(c)*, followed by a reference to a Paulinus: *et Paulini vc it legati almae Kartagh(inis)*. The fact that Paulinus was a legate, like Antonius Paulus, and that he was mentioned right after Paulus Constantius in this inscription, might point to the fact that he was also Paulus Constantius' son, as some modern historians have often assumed,¹⁴ or at least a relative of his. This analogy is reinforced by another inscription, found at the ancient site of Thuburbo Maius, in modern Tunisia,¹⁵ where we read the following: (...) *proco(nsulatu Pauli Co)nstanti v c / legatio(ne Paulini) ...ionis v c Kart*. In this case, Paulinus is mentioned with a second, incomplete name ending in -io.

Apart from these explicit references, there are other examples in the epigraphic record of people called 'Constantius/a' or 'Honorius/a' in Salona that could be put forward in the context of this research. Regarding 'Honorius/a', most

⁹ CTh 8.5.33, promulgated at Robor on 10-July-374.

¹⁰ CTh 4.13.7, promulgated at Mainz on 7-Sep-374.

¹¹ For an analysis of this unusual situation, see A. R. Birley, «AD 375: a Year with no Consuls», in E. Dabrowa, (ed.), *Studies on the Late Roman History* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2007), pp. 15-32.

¹² CIL VIII 17517 (only a fragment). See S. Gsell, *Inscriptions latines de l'Algerie* (Paris: Libraririe Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1922), pp. 51-52 (ILAlg I 472).

¹³ CIL VIII 23849.

¹⁴ PLRE I: Constantius 11, Paulus 8 (PLRE I = A. H. M. Jones - J. R. Martindale - J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire. Vol. I. A.D. 260-395* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971). See also Duval - Prévot, «Épigraphes», p. 403.

¹⁵ ILAfr 274b; AE 1914.58.

of the inscriptions belong to a later period, some of them connected with two bishops of Salona who were called 'Honorius': Honorius I (481-505?) and Honorius II (528-547?)¹⁶. In any case, it is impossible to determine whether there is any link between Honorio and the various people called 'Honorius' that can be traced in the epigraphic repertoire.¹⁷ The same could be argued for a 'Thaeodosius' mentioned in an inscription of the year 425, a name that might be a variant of 'Theodosius'.¹⁸ As for the names 'Constantius/a', there is a higher number of examples from Salona, many of which can be dated to the 4th c.¹⁹ Among them, the inscription concerning Honorio and Paulus Constantius clearly stands out, especially because it concerns someone whose career included the high honour of being a *proconsul Africae*. This detail brought it to the attention of F. Chausson, who included Paulus Constantius and his sons in his comprehensive study of the Constantinian family tree.²⁰ According to Chausson, Paulus Constantius might be related to the imperial dynasty via Anastasia, Constantine I's sister.²¹ His hypothesis is based on the possibility that *Paulinus ...io*, who, as we have seen previously, is usually considered a relative of Paulus Constantius, might have *Senecio* as the second part of his nomenclature, which could connect him with Anastasia's homonymous brother-in-law (the brother of her husband, Bassianus). According to Chausson, Paulus Constantius could be the son, or the grandson, of Anastasia and Bassianus, with *Paulinus -io* as his son. It seems that this hypothesis, which the author himself considers rather speculative, is not based on very solid grounds, just a remote possibility based on the ending of an incomplete name. Besides, the written and epigraphic sources do not offer any other evidence supporting it.

Chausson also mentions Honorio, when he states that Paulus Constantius was "significativement époux d'une *Honorio*", without trying to elucidate in what way her name might be relevant in terms of family relations.²² One of the aims of this article, precisely, is to try to establish such links. And the main candidates, as can be inferred from her name, are members of the Theodosian family.

¹⁶ Duval - Marin, (eds.) *Salona III*, p. 1.

¹⁷ Names on the inscriptions. - 1: *CIL III 13129 = ILJug 2411 = Salona IV 446. Honori presby[...]*. Inscription on a sarcophagus, from the 5th c. or 1st half of the 6th. - 2: *ILJug 2258D = Salona IV 51. Honorius (?)*. Monogram, probably connected with the bishops of the same name. - 3: *ILJug 2256 = Salona IV 22. Honorius*. A monogram. - 4: *ILJug 2701 = Salona IV 74. Hono[r]ius*, bishop. Found in a sepulchre in the Marusinac cemetery. Beginning of the 6th c. - 5: *ILJug 2949. [Hono]rius et Priv[ata]*. A funerary inscription. - 6: *ILJug 2697 = Salona IV 143. Ho[...]*. Epitaph (mosaic). Found at Marusinac. 5th c.? - 7: *Salona IV 52, 53, 54: monograms*.

¹⁸ *AE 1922.42 = ILJug 2789 = Salona IV 194 = EDH 25117*.

¹⁹ For a full list, see the Appendix at the end of the article.

²⁰ F. Chausson, *Stemmata Aurea: Constantin, Justine, Théodose: revendications généalogiques et idéologie impériale au IVe siècle ap. J.-C* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2007), pp. 97-187.

²¹ Chausson, *Stemmata Aurea*, pp. 136-137.

²² Chausson, *Stemmata Aurea*, p.136.

2. Honoria and the Theodosian family

The name 'Honorius' was common in the Theodosian family, with three known examples in the historical record: Theodosius I had a grandfather and a brother with that name, and his second son, who would eventually become emperor, was also called 'Honorius'. By contrast, no 'Honorio' is recorded in the sources as a member of the family. That does not mean that there were not any; it can be assumed that there were other members of the family, men or women, whose existence, or names, are unknown to us, due to the scarcity of the sources.²³ One source in particular, however, might shed some light on this connection. According to the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Theodosius I looked after the children of his deceased brother and sister, showing them great affection, as if he was their father: *fratris mortui sororisque liberos habere pro suis, cognatos affinesque parentis animo complecti (...)*.²⁴ There is no doubt that the brother referred to here is Honorius, whose daughter Serena was incorporated into Theodosius' family, where she was treated like a daughter.²⁵ Regarding his unnamed sister, the written sources offer no clue. As we have seen before, Honoria, Paulus Constantius' wife, died when her children were still infants. We do not know when Theodosius I took charge of his sister's children, as stated in the *Epitome*, but if these children had been born in Dalmatia, one possibility is that he met them no earlier than 378, when he was summoned by Valentinian I after the death of Valens. This chronological framework is compatible with what we know about Honoria. Her husband, Paulus Constantius, was buried in 375 in the same sarcophagus as hers, and some authors have suggested that the formal similarities between their inscriptions could be an indication that Honoria died not long before her husband.²⁶ Even though this criterion must be taken with caution,²⁷ Honoria's death could be placed in the period 370-375, which would be consistent with the possibility that her unnamed children were still very young when Theodosius I reached Illyricum, and that she could be identified with Theodosius I's anonymous sister, and therefore daughter of Theodosius the Elder.

²³ An analogous case, in the later stages of the dynasty, would be Justa Grata Honoria, daughter of Galla Placidia, who inherited the name 'Honoria' from her uncle, emperor Honorius.

²⁴ *Epit. de Caes.* 48.18. Latin text, ed. by F. Pichlmayr, *Sexti Aurelii Victoris. Praecedunt Origo Gentis Romanae et Liber de Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae. Subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus* (revised by R. Gruendel) (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970).

²⁵ A. Cameron, «The Status of Serena and the Stilicho Diptych», *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 29 (2016), pp. 509-516; J. Sanchis Calabuig, *Roma 410 A.D. Mujeres bajo el asedio* (Reus: Rhemata, 2024), p. 16.

²⁶ Duval - Jeremić - Marin - Pender, «L'architecture», p. 519.

²⁷ Duval - Prévot, «Épigraphes», p. 402.

We know from the inscription that she died when she was thirty years old. If we accept that her death occurred sometime between 370 and 375, as suggested above, her birth year would be c. 340-345, a temporal framework that would be compatible with the chronology of Theodosius I, who was born in 346/347.

As we saw in the previous section, Paulus Constantius had a son called Antonius Paulus, and perhaps another one called Paulinus, who were at an adult age in the year 374 when they were appointed as legates in Africa, at the same time as Paulus Constantius was proconsul. If we accept the possibility that Honorio died in 370-375, it would be very unlikely, in chronological terms, for Honorio to be their mother, which would suggest that Antonius Paulus, and any brothers or sisters of his, were born to an unknown previous wife of Paulus Constantius.²⁸ But the alternative hypothesis cannot be discarded: Honorio may have died earlier, perhaps at the beginning of the 360s, and the little children (*parvorum*) mentioned in the inscription would be Antonius Paulus and his siblings; this hypothesis would make the connections between Honorio and the Theodosians less likely.

These chronological considerations are not the only relevant evidence concerning Honorio and the Theodosian dynasty. When Paulus Constantius was appointed *proconsul Africae* in 374, that province was at the final stages of a military conflict: Firmus' rebellion. The general who had been sent to Africa the year before to quell the rebellion was no other than Theodosius the Elder, at that time *magister equitum* in the West.²⁹ It is remarkable that someone like Paulus Constantius, with no other known honours in his career, was chosen for such a high office as *proconsul Africae* precisely when Theodosius was the leading figure in Africa. If we follow the hypothesis expressed above, namely that Honorio was his daughter, we can infer that Paulus Constantius, who had become Theodosius the Elder's son-in-law some years earlier, was a likely candidate for such a promotion. Even though the *proconsul Africae* was chosen by the emperor, not by his *magister militum*, we must allow for the possibility that Theodosius the Elder, at that moment at the pinnacle of his career, could have exerted his influence in order to persuade emperor Gratian to make such an appointment.

As we have seen, the available data seem to fit the hypothesis, but these data, due to the paucity of the sources, are limited in their scope. It must be assumed that some other people belonging to Paulus Constantius' or Theodosius' families might have had a relevant role in this context. In fact, there are some names provided by the sources that could be added to the picture. One of them is Eucherius, who was Theodosius the Elder's brother, and therefore Theodosius I's

²⁸ Duval - Prévot, «Épigraphes», p. 404: "Honorio qui décède en effet quelque temps avant son époux, à l'âge de 30 ans, n'aurait pu mettre au monde les fils en question".

²⁹ *PLRE I: Theodosius 3*. For a summary of his career, see C. E. V. Nixon - B. Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini with Latin Text of R.A.B. Mynors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 517-519.

uncle.³⁰ He was *comes sacrarum largitionum* by the year 377, and in 381, with his nephew already as *augustus*, he was made consul. According to the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Theodosius had great affection for his uncle, which might explain his decision to grant him such an honour.³¹ Western sources place him second, after Syagrius, in the consulate, but in Eastern sources he was placed first (*consul prior*), which might very probably be an indication of Theodosius' favour.³² The *consul prior* for the next year (382) was Claudius Antonius.³³ According to J. R. Martindale, this would be an indication of a possible link with Theodosius I, in this case a relation by marriage. Claudius Antonius had a son, or nephew, called Marius, and this leads Martindale to establish a connection between Claudius Antonius and the name 'Maria', which is present in the Theodosian family tree.³⁴ It has often been argued that the wife of Honorius (Theodosius I's brother) was the Maria mentioned by Claudian,³⁵ and one of Honorius' granddaughters carried this name. As we have seen, Martindale's hypothesis is based solely on the assumption that Claudius Antonius was actually related by marriage to Theodosius I, which is not supported by direct evidence. In the context of my research, the fact that the second part of his name was 'Antonius' is potentially relevant, as this name is present in Paulus Constantius' family tree, but the available data do not offer any other corroboration of a possible kinship link between them.

3. *Divi Constanti pignus*

A fragment of a funerary inscription, found in 1896 near Salona, with only two lines of metrical text, provides relevant information for this research. It mentions two people: a dead *augustus* called Constantius and his daughter, who had the same name as him, presumably 'Constantia', and died in her infancy. This fragment was then joined to a previously found one, with the result that three more lines were added to the poem. Unfortunately, this second fragment is no longer extant, but it is generally assumed that both parts matched, with a line of the poem missing between them. This is how we find it in the main epigraphic works and databases.³⁶ Unfortunately, there is no known archaeological context

³⁰ PLRE I: Eucherius 2. See also J. R. Martindale, «Note on the Consuls of 381 and 382», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 16 (1967), pp. 254-256.

³¹ *Epit. de Caes.* 48.18: (...) *patruum colere tamquam genitorem* (...).

³² Martindale, «Note on the Consuls», p. 256.

³³ PLRE I: Antonius 5.

³⁴ Martindale, «Note on the Consuls», p. 256.

³⁵ Claud., *Laus Serenae* 69.

³⁶ CIL III 14685 = ILJug 2374 = Salona IV 432. For an edition of the text, with metrical analysis, comments and translation into French, see F. Prévot, «Építaphe métrique d'une parente du divin Constance (IVe siècle)», in Gauthier - Marin - Prévot, (eds.) *Salona IV*, pp. 777-780.

for either fragment, and no way of estimating the approximate date when the inscription was made. Here is the text, adapted from F. Prévot's edition:

[Di]vi Constanti pignus de nomine
[... di]u condita progenies
[.....]
aetatis victrix dulcis obit nimium
sede beatorum recipit te lacteus orbis
e gremio matris hoc tua digna fides.

The lines can be translated as follows:

Offspring of the divine Constantius, with the same name as him, [...] buried daughter [...] at too tender an age she departs, victorious. The Milky Way welcomes you in the home of the blessed, away from your mother's bosom, as your faith is worthy.

The reading *(di)vi*, or *divi*, of the first word is common in all the editions of the text, and is generally accepted. As for *pignus*, on the same line, the AE (1901: n.º 62) offers *genys*, following Bulić, who has *genus*.³⁷ F. Prévot considers this reading a mistake;³⁸ in fact, the upper part of the inscription is still extant, and there is no doubt about the reading *pignus*.

Some details of the opening two lines are difficult to interpret, due to the missing parts of the text and also to its ambiguous language. For example, it must be elucidated whether the person designated as *pignus/progenies* was exactly his daughter, or perhaps a relative of a different kind. Then we have the obvious question of who this Constantius was, with three possible identifications: Constantius I (aug. 305-306); Constantius II (aug. 337-361) and Constantius III (aug. 421).

F. Prévot suggests, following R. Egger, that *pignus* (line 1) and *progenies* (line 2) do not necessarily refer to a daughter: the young girl could be a relative of the augustus, maybe the daughter of someone who belonged to his family.³⁹ The word *pignus* has a variety of meanings, ranging from its basic meaning of 'pledge', 'surety', 'token', to more emotive ones, referring to relatives, especially in the context of poetic language. In a recent study of the word *pignus* in funerary metrical inscriptions, it has been shown that more than half (52%) of the

³⁷ F. Bulić, «Scavi delle basiliche urbane di Salona durante gli anni 1907, 1908, 1909», *BD* 35 (1912), pp. 12-14.

³⁸ Prévot, «Épitaphe métrique», p. 779.

³⁹ Prévot, «Épitaphe métrique», p. 779; R. Egger, *Der altchristliche Friedhof Manastirine nach dem Materiale Fr. Bulić, Forschungen in Salona 2* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1926).

instances of *pignus* refer metaphorically to a son or daughter.⁴⁰ One of these examples is actually from ‘Chapel VII’ of the Manastirine cemetery in Salona, the same place where the Paulus Constantius/Honorius inscription was found and can still be seen. It is the epitaph of Petronia, who died when she was still a child.⁴¹ The text describes her in this manner: (...) *nono vixdum / lacrimabilis anno nata / diu dulcis et longi pignus amoris* (...): the girl, barely nine years old (*nono vixdum* (...) *anno nata*), is worthy of tears (*lacrimabilis*), as she is the token of long, sweet love (*dulcis et longi pignus amoris*).⁴² The language is again ambiguous, as usually happens in poetry, but in this case at least we know that the dedicants of the inscription were Petronia’s parents, called Nereus and Sofronia. It seems therefore that the usage of the word *pignus*, sometimes as *pignus amoris*, as a reference to a son or daughter was not uncommon, with an example found in Salona itself. And this is not the only parallel that can be found between these inscriptions. We have in both cases the word *nomen* at the very beginning: *pignus de nomenomen* (Salona IV 432) - *Pro nefas, iste tuum loquitur Petronia nomen* (Salona IV 460), and, more interestingly a reference to some heavenly domain and to the deceased girl’s faith (*fides*) at the end of the poem: *sede beatorum recipit te lacteus orbis / e gremio matris hoc tua digna fides* (Salona IV 432) - *Tu tamen hinc spera caelum pia mente fidelis* (Salona IV 460). My conclusion, as regards the word *pignus* in the *Divi Constanti* inscription (Salona IV 432), is that its referent is a person who was most probably the daughter of the Constantius mentioned at the beginning, with *progenies* used as a poetic expression of the same concept.

Regarding the expression *divi Constanti*, placed at the beginning of the inscription, it indicates that the augustus’ death preceded his daughter’s, or, alternatively, that she died before, but her sarcophagus and funerary inscription were made after his death.⁴³ Given the available data, it is impossible to determine the exact sequence of events.

In order to establish the identity of *divus Constantius*, the first point to consider is whether the use of *divus*, which originally meant the divinization of a dead emperor, could be applied to all three candidates (Constantius I, II and III), who lived in very different times, ranging from a mostly pagan society (Constantius I) to a mostly Christian one (Constantius III). The evidence, from written and epigraphic sources, shows that the term *divus* continued to be used well into the 5th c., regardless of the religious affiliation of the emperor, as an

⁴⁰ A. Ortiz Gómez, «El significado de las palabras en los *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* funerarios: el caso de *pignus*», *Habis* 53 (2022), pp. 107-124. It must be noted that one of the inscriptions included in this percentage is Salona IV 432 (*Divi Constanti*).

⁴¹ *CIL* III 9610 = *ILJug* 2412 = Salona IV 460. For a full analysis of this inscription, see F. Prévot, «Épithaphes de Petronia, Nereus et Sofronia (avant 375)», in Gauthier - Marin - Prévot, (eds), *Salona IV*, pp. 826-829.

⁴² This expression could refer to the fact that the girl was long awaited by her parents. See Prévot, «Épithaphes de Petronia, Nereus et Sofronia», p. 829.

⁴³ Prévot, «Épithaphe métrique», p. 779.

expression of posthumous respect towards him.⁴⁴ Examples include Theodosius I, Valentinian III and other Christian emperors, up to Anastasius I (*aug.* 491-518). Constantius III, the latest emperor that is taken into consideration in this research, is also included in the list. A mosaic in the church of Saint John the Evangelist in Ravenna, sponsored by Galla Placidia, depicted a series of members of the Theodosian-Valentinian dynasty, the ruling ones preceded by *dn* (*dominus noster*), the dead ones by *d*, generally understood to mean *divus*, although it has also been interpreted as *dominus*.⁴⁵ The former possibility seems more coherent with the use of *divus* in other sources, and is therefore preferable.⁴⁶ The mosaic is now lost, but we have a register of the texts that accompanied the portraits of the emperors, among them Constantius III, who had been married to Galla Placidia. His name appears as *d Constantinus*, with the typical confusion between ‘Constantius’ and ‘Constantinus’, but it is always emended to *Constantius* by modern scholars, for reasons of historical context. In view of the above, it could be concluded that the use of *divus* in the *Divi Constanti* inscription (*Salona* IV 432) is not significant in chronological terms, and cannot be used as a distinctive element in an attempt to establish the identity of the *Constantius* mentioned in it. In her analysis of this inscription, F. Prévot leaves open all three options, as she finds no solid reasons to favour one over the others.⁴⁷

Constantius I had a daughter called Constantia, but she is known to have married Licinius, and was certainly not an infant when she died. It is true, however, that there are some uncertainties about the exact number and names of Constantius I’s children, as shown by F. Chausson and J. Hillner,⁴⁸ but there is no evidence of a younger Constantia as a daughter of his. A similar situation can be described for Constantius II, who also had a daughter called Constantia, but this Constantia died in 383, and was buried in Constantinople. Finally, there is no evidence concerning any children of Constantius III prior to his marriage to Galla Placidia in 417, but the possibility of his having had an earlier wife, and children, cannot be discarded. The chronology, in this case, seems to favour this

⁴⁴ For a list of recorded *divi*, see E. Beurlier, *Le culte impérial: Son histoire et son organisation depuis Auguste jusqu’à Justinien* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1891), pp. 325-331. For the evolution of the term *divus*, and the cult associated with it, in late Roman times, see D. Boin, «Late Antique *Divi* and Imperial Priests of the Late Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries», in M. R. Salzman - M. Sághy - R. Lizzi Testa, (eds.) *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome. Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 139-161.

⁴⁵ According to S. Rebenich, it is unclear whether a person of the 5th c. would read it as *divus* or as *dominus*. S. Rebenich, «Gratian, a Son of Theodosius, and the Birth of Galla Placidia», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 34 (1985), pp. 372-85, at pp. 375-376.

⁴⁶ A. Amici, «Imperatori “divi” nella decorazione musiva della chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista», *Ravenna Studi e Ricerche* 7 (2000), pp. 13-55, at pp. 40-47.

⁴⁷ Prévot, «Építaphe métrique», p. 779.

⁴⁸ Chausson, *Stemmata Aurea*, pp. 105-160; J. Hillner, *Helena Augusta. Mother of the Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pp. 41-43.

possibility: his presumed daughter called Constantia could have been born between 410 and 417, in which case she would still be very young by the year 421, when he died. One of the problems here, as with the other emperors involved in this research, is why this Constantia, being the daughter of an augustus, happened to live, and die, in Salona. In the next section, I will try to deal with this question in more detail. The conclusion, for the moment, is that, in chronological terms, there are no clear grounds to determine who the Constantius of *Salona* IV 432 actually was, with Constantius III as slightly, but not conclusively, more preferable.

Some authors, starting with Egger, suggested that the *divus Constantius* of the inscription could be Constantius I, on the grounds that this emperor had had some links with Dalmatia prior to his time as caesar and augustus, and that the inscription shows some elements that could be considered pagan, e. g. the reference to the Milky Way as the abode of the blessed.⁴⁹ However, it seems that there are also some Christian components. They are not stated explicitly, but the reference to the *sede beatorum* and the deceased girl's *fides* seem to point in that direction.⁵⁰ In any case, what we find here is a mixture of elements from different traditions, both pagan and Christian. The theme of the Milky Way as the place for the blessed dates back to a very old literary tradition, beginning in the 4th c. BCE, that was maintained and developed stylistically throughout the centuries. In a recent study about the *Divi Constanti* inscription, T. Bilić reaches the conclusion that the use of the Milky Way trope can be connected with late Roman antiquarianism, typical of the 5th c., which can be observed in authors such as Macrobius or Martianus Capella.⁵¹ Following this analysis, he concludes that the inscription could be placed in the first half of the 5th c., therefore matching Constantius III's chronology. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Petronia inscription (*Salona* IV 460) discussed above, dated to the 4th c., mentions *caelum*, with no reference to the Milky Way.⁵² The considerable time span between one inscription and the other might allow for the introduction of this renewed literary trope.

It seems, therefore, that there are reasons to prefer Constantius III over the other two emperors as the person mentioned in *Salona* IV 432. Now, the question still remains: what kind of connections, if any, did Constantius III have with Salona? The main hypothesis, to be explored in the next section, is that he was a descendant, either a son or a grandson, of Paulus Constantius.

⁴⁹ Egger, *Der altchristliche Friedhof Manastirine*, pp. 79-80; for a summary of the debate, see T. Bilić, «From Salona to the Milky Way - the Epitaph of Constantina (?) from Manastirine», *Camaz* 3 (2020), pp. 82-91, at p. 83.

⁵⁰ Prévot, «Épitaphe métrique», p. 779.

⁵¹ Bilić, «From Salona to the Milky Way», pp. 83-84.

⁵² According to Prévot, «Épitaphes de Petronia, Nereus et Sofronia», p. 829, the Petronia inscription should be dated before 375, as the last sarcophagus to be placed in 'Chapel VII' of the Manastirine complex, where it is found, was *Salona* IV 159 (Paulus Constantius and Honoria), which includes a precise date of the year 375.

4. Constantius III, Paulus Constantius and Honorio

We know very little about Constantius III until the year 409/410, when his career started to gain prominence. In 410 he was already *comes et magister utriusque militiae* in the West, and a few years later (414) he received his first consulship. By 415 he was already *patricius*, a term that was being used for the first time with its new meaning, as an attribute of the leading Roman general.⁵³ From then on, it would be carried by the most influential generals of the 5th c., such as Aetius or Ricimer. Constantius III married Galla Placidia (half sister of the emperor Honorius) on the first of January, 417, the same day he inaugurated his second consulship, an honour that was conceded to him again in 420. The following year, he was appointed co-augustus by Honorius, but he was only in office for some months, as he died later the same year.

According to Olympiodorus, Constantius took part in numerous military campaigns at the time of emperor Theodosius I.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, Olympiodorus is known to us mainly from the summary of his work provided by Photius. In this particular case, this means that we do not have any other details concerning Constantius' military activity at this time. Theodosius I was augustus from 379 to 395. If Constantius was born sometime in the period 365-370, he would have been in his early twenties at the time of Theodosius' major campaigns against the usurpers Magnus Maximus (388) and Eugenius (394), and in his early fifties when he married Galla Placidia in 417, when she was in her twenties. This chronology is coherent with what we know of Honorio, Paulus Constantius' wife: as we saw previously, she left an unspecified number of small children when she died. If we accept that Honorio died c. 360, then one of those children could be the father or the mother of Constantius III, who would then be the grandson of Paulus Constantius and Honorio. Alternatively, if we assume that she died in the 370s, the most likely scenario, as suggested in the previous sections, is that Paulus Constantius was married to another woman before marrying Honorio; a possible connection with Constantius III would be through one of their children, who could have been his father or mother. In this case, Constantius III would be Paulus Constantius' grandson, but not Honorio's. Another possibility is to consider Constantius III as one of Paulus Constantius and Honorio's children mentioned in inscription *Salona* IV 159.

⁵³ S. Mazzarino, *Stilicone. La crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio* (Rome: Angelo Signorelli, 1942), pp. 107-108; J. M. O'Flynn, *Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire* (Edmonton, 1983), pp. 23, 65-66.

⁵⁴ Olymp., fr. 37 (Blockley): (...) καὶ πολλὰς στρατείας ἀπὸ τῶν Θεοδοσίου χρόνων τοῦ μεγάλου διελθόν (...) . Greek text, with English translation: R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Greek Text with English Translation. Vol. 2* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983).

The same fragment of Olympiodorus' historical writings tells us that Constantius was an Illyrian, born in the city of Naissus.⁵⁵ Again, we do not have any further details, but at least this information places his birth in an area that is geographically close to Salona. A passage from Ammianus Marcellinus may shed some light on this.⁵⁶ A tribune called Antonius, otherwise unknown, is mentioned in this text as the person who conveyed to Equitius, then *comes rei militaris per Illyricum*, important information about Procopius' usurpation in the East, an event that had occurred in September 365. Additionally, we are told that Antonius was active in the province of Dacia Mediterranea at that time: *Aequitius enim, relatione Antoni tribuni accepta, agentis in Dacia mediterranea militem (...)*.⁵⁷ One important detail to consider is that one of the main cities in the province of Dacia Mediterranea was Naissus, the place where, according to Olympiodorus, Constantius III had been born. A possible hypothesis is that this Antonius was related to Paulus Constantius. We know that one of his sons was called Antonius Paulus, and in fact, following this hypothesis, he could be identified, rather tentatively, with the tribune Antonius mentioned by Ammianus. The problem, of course, is that 'Antonius' was a very common name, both in the Illyrian provinces and in the rest of the empire, with many epigraphic examples, including men in military service, found in Illyricum, but Ammianus' passage, though brief, provides information that is compatible with what is known about Antonius Paulus. Looking retrospectively from the year 374, when we know that he was a legate in Africa, it could be argued that, in the mid 360s, he was at the first steps of his career.

The sources tell us nothing about Constantius III in the period 395-409. We do not know his whereabouts, or even if he held any military posts. This period corresponds with Stilicho's regime during the first years of Honorius' reign in the West. At first sight, the silence about Constantius in the sources might be an indication that he was relegated to insignificant roles during this time. The first thing we hear about Constantius, when he reappears in the historical register, is his involvement in the death of Olympius, as a revengeful act against the person who had plotted against and killed Stilicho in 408.⁵⁸ In any case, the information is so scarce and fragmentary that it is not possible to reconstruct a coherent picture of Constantius III's life in that period.

⁵⁵ Olymp., fr. 37 (Blockley): "Ὅτι Κωνσταντίος Ἰλλυριὸς ἦν τὸ γένος, ἀπὸ Ναΐσσου πόλεως τῆς Δακίας (...).

⁵⁶ Amm. Marc., *Hist.* 26.5.10.

⁵⁷ *PLRE I: Antonius 3*. Latin text, from M. A. Marié - J. J. Fontaine, J. J. (1983) *Ammien Marcellin. Histoires. Tome V: Livres XXVI-XXXI* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1983). See also J. den Boeft - J. W. Drijvers - D. den Hengst - H. C. Teitler (2008) *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXVI* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 116-117.

⁵⁸ Olymp., fr. 8 (Blockley).

In an inscription from the year 420, Constantius III was styled as *parenti invictissimorum principum*.⁵⁹ The term *parens* comes from the vocabulary of kinship, and basically means ‘a parent’, but it was also used in other contexts, e. g. to honour important generals. The first known example comes from the *Historia Augusta*, and it was applied to Timesitheus, who was the father-in-law of emperor Gordian III.⁶⁰ Also Stilicho, who was Honorius’ father-in-law, was termed *parens* of the emperors, as we can see in Ambrose’s funeral oration for Theodosius I,⁶¹ or in an inscription from Carsoli.⁶² It seems, therefore, that this term was used preferably in cases when there was a family connection by marriage, and this is indeed what happened to Constantius, who started to be called *parens principum* after marrying Galla Placidia. The first instance can be found in a letter written by Honorius in 418, where Constantius is called *parentes (parentis) patricii nostri*.⁶³ The combination of *parens* and *patricius* was the clearest exponent of Constantius’ position of power in the years before he became an augustus. The use of *parens*, as we have seen, reinforces the idea that he had entered the imperial family by marrying into it, rather than being a Theodosian by birth.

5. Conclusion

As we have seen in the previous sections, this research is based on the analysis of a variety of sources, from both the epigraphic record and ancient writers. Two pieces of evidence stand out from the rest, as the most important elements in the structure of the whole research, and the ones that give it consistence: inscription *Salona* IV 159, mentioning Honorio and her husband Paulus Constantius, and inscription *Salona* IV 432, dedicated to a woman called Constantia who is described as the daughter of a homonymous emperor. Evidence from written sources has been added to this framework, in order to establish coherent connections in terms of genealogy, nomenclature, chronology, and the circumstances of each individual’s biography. The data provided by the sources have been shown to be consistent with some of the stages, and turning points, in the lives of Honorio, Paulus Constantius, Antonius Paulus and Constantius III. The correlations between these data can be used in

⁵⁹ *CIL* VI 1719 = *EDR* 130263 = *LSA* 1423.

⁶⁰ *Hist. Aug., Gd.* 27.10. See J. Straub, «Parens Principum. Stilichos Reichspolitik und das Testament des Kaisers Theodosius», in J. Straub, *Regeneratio Imperii. Aufsätze über Roms Kaisertum und Reich im Spiegel der heidnischen und christlichen Publizistik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 220-239, at p. 230.

⁶¹ Ambr., *De Ob. Theod.* 5.

⁶² *CIL* IX 4051.

⁶³ *Epistulae Areletenses genuinae*, 8. Edition: E. Dümmler, *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892). See O’Flynn, *Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire*, pp. 66-67.

order to clarify some specific developments, for example the appointment of Paulus Constantius as *proconsul Africae* in 374 or Constantius III's career during Theodosius I's reign and from 409 onwards. It is obvious, as usually happens in the study of ancient history, that the final results cannot be considered indisputable, or definitive, but they, at least, permit some degree of plausibility for the main hypotheses, as exemplified in Fig 1., where we can see a family tree based on the possibility that Honoria was Theodosius I's sister and that she died in the 370s, with the addition of Constantius III as a possible member of Paulus Constantius' family.

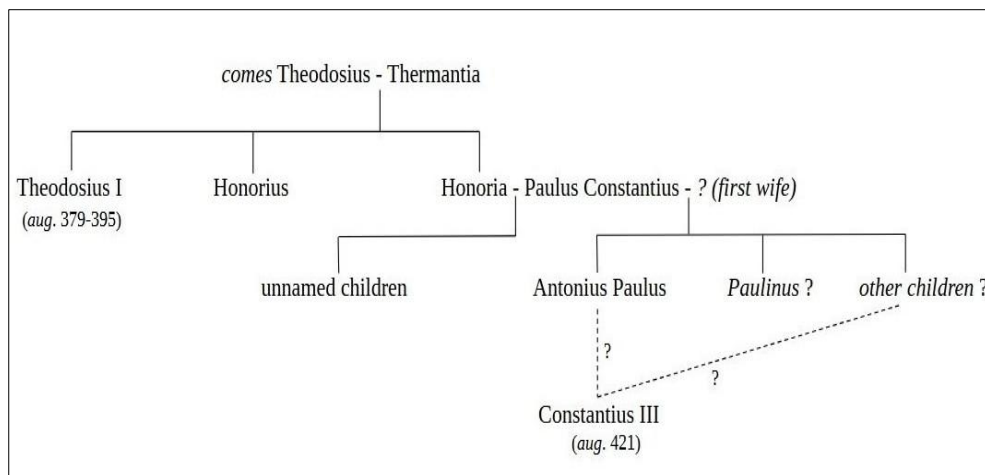


Fig. 1. Honoria's family tree. A proposal.

The hypothesis that Honoria was the daughter of Theodosius the Elder, and therefore the sister of Theodosius I, has been shown to cohere with the available data, starting with her nomenclature. The fact that these data are limited puts a logical constraint in the scope of the research, but the possibilities they allow for cross analysis work as an advantage. The same applies for the second hypothesis, namely that Constantius III was a descendant of Paulus Constantius, especially if he is identified with the *divus Constantius* of inscription *Salona* IV 432. The possibility that he was his grandson, rather than his (and Honoria's) son has been explored in the previous sections and shown to be consistent with the rest of the data, but it must be noted that these results do not necessarily invalidate other possibilities. Some further ideas developed in this research, for example the identification of Antonius, a tribune in Dacia Mediterranea, with Antonius Paulus (Paulus Constantius' son), are more difficult to substantiate, but cannot be excluded. The same could be said about possible links between Honoria and other members of the Theodosian family, apart from Theodosius I.

On the whole, the most significant result of this research is the possibility of identifying a late Roman woman who has so far remained anonymous (Theodosius I's sister, mentioned in the *Epitome de Caesaribus*), and also of

establishing a series of correlations, based on the available data, that can contribute to a better understanding of an emperor's early life, in this case Constantius III.

Appendix

Inscriptions from Salona and its surrounding area with the name *Constantius/Constantia*.

1. CIL III 9506 = *ILJug* 2388 = *Salona* IV 159 = *EDH* 34773. Honorina / Paulus Constantius. Double inscription on a sarcophagus, the second one dated 375. Found at Manastirine. A complete analysis of this inscription can be found in Section 1 of the article.
2. CIL III 14685 = *ILJug* 2374 = *Salona* IV 432 = *EDH* 32466. Divi Constanti. Two fragments (A 3 - lower- and A 2482 -upper-). A 3, found at Manastirine before 1880, now lost; A 2482, found in 1896, at Rupotina, now at the archaeological museum on Split (not on display). Sarcophagus. 4th c. A complete analysis of this inscription can be found in Section 3 the article.
3. *BD* 25 (1912) 12-14 (n° 714B) = *AE* 1914.74 = *ILJug* 2274 = *Salona* IV 43. Text: *Constant-*. Found in Salona, in the area of the 'Basilica Constantiniana' (in Bulić's terminology), a little before 1912. Column base. Between 2nd half of the 4th c. and first half of the 5th. The idea that this inscription could be connected with Paulus Constantius, suggested by *AE*, and followed by *PLRE I* (Constantius 11), was considered inconsistent by Bulić.⁶⁴
4. CIL III 2663 = *Salona* IV 431. Text: *Innocenti puero / Constantio qui / in ann(is) VIII caruit / minas saeculi, / Barbas et Haera- / clia parentes*. Found in Split. Sarcophagus. 4th c.
5. *ILJug* 704 = *Salona* IV 102 = *EDH* 34113. Text: *D M / Constantiae / quae vixit cum / marito annis XX. / Quiescet in pace die / IIII nonas Febrarias*. Discovered in 1949, in Manastirine. Epitaph. Possible date: end of the 4th c.
6. CIL III 2631 = *Salona* IV 489. Text: *[... Con]stantius [...]* / *[Si quis hoc sarcophagu/arca]m violare voluerit da- / [re debebit] fisco argenti p(ondo) · XXX*. Seen by Th. Mommsen at Vranjic. Fragment of an inscription (last three lines). 4th c.

⁶⁴ N. Gauthier, «Inscription mentionnant Constant..., sur une base de colonnette», in N. Gauthier - E. Marin - F. Prévot, (eds.), *Salona IV*, pp. 210-211.

7. *BD* 32 (1909) 61 = *ILJug* 2568 = *Salona* IV 656. Text: *D M / [...C]onsta[nt...]*.
Discovered in 1909 in Salona. Epitaph. 4th - 5th c.

Abbreviations

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année épigraphique.</i>
<i>BD</i>	<i>Bullettino di archeologia e storia dalmata.</i>