

# The Influence of Christian Military Saints on the Development of a Christian Soldier Ideal

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## Topic

The dissertation project investigates the process through which the **traditional cultic practices within the Roman army were replaced with Christian ones**. The investigated time frame is set in the time **between the Constantinian turn and the end of the sixth century**. Within this general topic, an often neglected aspect is **what influence the warrior saints had on this process**.



Labarum on a Follis of Constantius II., 337-361 RIC VIII 70

## Research questions

The three main questions of my dissertation are:

- What, when and how did the traditional cultic framework within the Roman army get Christianized?
- Did the *passiones*, *actae* and Cults of Warrior Saints have any influence in this process, maybe in propagating a Christian soldier ideal?
- Given the fact, that in history we can not attest personal experience, are the practices and set of beliefs interpretable with the framework of Rosas resonance theory?

## Sources / Material

My available data are for the most part short remarks in ancient writings and material objects from the following categories:

- *actae*, *miracula*, *passiones* and *vitae* (various types of hagiographical texts which tell about the Martyrdom, Life of a Saint and the Wonders they performed).
- Imperial and clerical Codices.
- Historiographers and Church fathers of the 4th-6th c. AD.
- Archaeological findings.
- Epigraphical and numismatic evidence.

## Aims

- The first aim is to open a window into this period of general cultural change and to show **what it means in detail when one says „The Roman Army got Christianized.“**
- The second aim is to investigate the **connection between the Christianisation of the Roman Army, the cult of the Military Saints and the propagation of the compatibility of martial virtues and personal faith** within their hagiographical texts.

## Methods

I intend to reach my research aims through a systematic combination of literary evidence (see Sources) with archaeological, epigraphical, and numismatic findings.

- **first step: phases of Christianisation of the cult** within the Roman army
- **second step: comparing the traditional and the Christian cult practices**, in order to show where **functional continuity was given**, and where **new practices were required**.
- **third step: what do the hagiographical texts reveal about the relationship between faith and military service**, and to what extend **influenced these texts the cult practice**.



Labarum on the Missorium of Valentinian II., 375-392 Ville de Genève, Musées d'art et d'histoire C1241

## Next steps

The main work done up to this point was to gather sources for the first and the third step. In the upcoming year I will

- finalize the phase scheme of the Christianisation process within the Roman army and compare the traditional and Christian cult practices towards their functional similarities,
- finish the interpretation of the hagiographical texts, compare them with each other systematical,
- and for the final conclusion bring together the literary and the archaeological evidence analytically.

## Sources

Left: Wildwinds [https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/constantius\\_II/t.html](https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/constantius_II/t.html)  
Right: Foto: Winfried Kumpitsch

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