



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 36, the Double-Headed Eagle

(Wikipedia)

In heraldry and vexillology (study of flags), the double-headed eagle (or double-eagle) is a charge associated with the concept of Empire in any emblem or device occupying the field of an escutcheon (shield)

Most modern uses of the symbol are directly or indirectly associated with its use by the Roman/Byzantine Empire, whose use of it represented the Empire's dominion over the Near East and the West. The symbol is much older, and its original meaning is debated among scholars. The eagle has long been a symbol of power and dominion.

The double-headed eagle or double-eagle is a motif that appears in Mycenaean Greece and in the Ancient Near East, especially in Hittite iconography. It re-appeared during the High Middle Ages, from circa the 10th or 11th century, and was notably used by the East Roman Empire, but 11th or 12th century representations have also been found originating from Islamic Spain, France and the Serbian principality of Raška.

From the 13th century onward, it became even more widespread, and was used by the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum and the Mamluk Sultanate within the Islamic world, and by the Holy Roman Empire, Serbia, several medieval Albanian noble families and Russia within the Christian world.

Used in the Eastern Roman Empire as a dynastic emblem of the Palaiologos, it was adopted during the Late Medieval to Early Modern period in the Holy Roman Empire on the one hand, and in Orthodox principalities (Serbia and Russia) on the other, representing an augmentation of the (single-headed) eagle or Aquila associated with the Roman Empire. In a few places, among them the Holy Roman Empire and Russia, the motif was further augmented to create the less prominent triple-headed eagle.

The early **East Roman Empire** continued to use the single-headed imperial eagle motif. As we have just learned, the double-headed eagle appears only in the medieval period, by about the 10th century in East Roman art, but as an imperial emblem only much later, during the final century of the Palaiologos dynasty. In Western European sources, it appears as an East Roman state emblem since at least the 15th century.

A modern theory, forwarded by Zapheiriou (1947), connected the introduction of the motif to Roman Emperor Isaac I Komnenos (1057–1059), whose family originated in Paphlagonia. Zapheiriou supposed that the Hittite motif of the double-headed bird, associated with the Paphlagonian city of Gangra (where it was known as Haga, Χάγκα) might have been brought to East Roman Empire by the Komnenoi.

The Late Roman army in the late 3rd century continued to use the insignia usual to the Roman legions: the eagle-tipped aquila, the square vexillum, and the imago (the bust of the emperor on a pole). In addition, the use of the draco, adopted from the Dacians, was widespread among cavalry and auxiliary units. Few of them seem to have survived beyond the 4th century, however. The aquila fell out of use with the

breaking up of the old legions, the imago was abandoned with the adoption of Christianity, and only the vexillum and the draco are still occasionally attested in the 5th century and beyond.

Constantine the Great (r. 306–337) inserted the Chi-Rho emblem in Roman military standards, resulting in the so-called labarum. In iconographical evidence, this commonly takes the form of the Chi-Rho embroidered on the field of a vexillum, but literary evidence suggests also its use as a symbol at the head of a staff.

The labarum, although common in the 4th and 5th centuries, vanishes entirely in the 6th, and reappears only much later in altered form as part of the imperial regalia.

