



This set highlights a pivotal moment in the history of Christianity: when the Virgin Mary is acknowledged not just as the mother of Jesus, but as the Mother of God.

Christianity did not wipe out pagan beliefs as much as it assimilated them into the new religion. Worship of various local gods and goddesses continued in modified form as veneration of the saints. And no saint was venerated more than Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ. She represented the Female in an otherwise male-dominated trinity.

Her cult was relatively small until the reign of the Emperor Arcadius (A.D. 395-408). His eldest daughter Pulcheria dedicated herself to Mary at a young age, inspiring her father to build a number of churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Their enthusiastic involvement with Marian veneration transformed what was a fledgling cult into arguably the most popular in Christendom.

Pulcheria spearheaded the movement to proclaim Mary as the Mother of God (as opposed to just the mother of the human Jesus), which was formally achieved at the Council of Ephesus. Arcadius, for his part, conceded to his daughter's every request, and was thus the earliest and most influential Marian benefactors. Without Arcadius, Mary may never have become the Madonna, and would not have the prominence she now enjoys.

This is a genuine ancient bronze coin from the reign of the Eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius (A.D. 395-408), son of Theodosius the Great, the last man to rule both the Eastern and Western halves of the empire. As such, Arcadius is considered by some to be the first Byzantine emperor. This duality is reflected in his coinage; some portraits are in profile, in the Roman style, while others feature the emperor's face to the front, a Byzantine innovation. Reverses vary, often depicting religious and military themes.

<p>Image shows typical coins for illustration</p> 	<p>Bronze coin of Roman Emperor Arcadius Weight: 0.7-2.5 g; Diameter: 11.5-18.5 mm. Obverse: Bust facing or sideways Reverse: Various Order code: HOLYMARY-CLRBOX Box measures: 4 5/8" x 3 1/2" x 1/2" <i>All coins in each set are protected in an archival capsule and beautifully displayed in a clear box. The box set is accompanied with a story card and certificate of authenticity.</i></p>
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