

Reviving a Roman Empress: Creating a Fictionalized Narrative around Galla Placidia

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During a Roman History course at Bowdoin, I discovered a young princess who was kidnapped by barbarians, exerted her influence on them and became their queen, returned to her family, was exiled to Constantinople, and finally returned to seize the throne for her son. Despite the fascinating details of her life story, Galla Placidia, the Empress Regent of the Western Roman Empire remains largely unknown. I felt that hers was a story that needed to be told, and resolved to do so myself. My goal was to write a historical fiction novel to entertain and inform people about her life. However, to attempt this, I needed to do a large amount of research on her and on fourth- and fifth-century Roman Empire, which was my focus for the summer.

I began my summer research by reading three biographies about Placidia's life, Oost's *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay*, Salisbury's *Rome's Christian Empress: Galla Placidia Rules at the Twilight of Empire*, and Sivan's *Galla Placidia: The Last Roman Empress*. These books gave me a

References

Graves, Robert. *I, Claudius: from the autobiography of Tiberius Claudius, born B.C. 10, murdered and deified A.D. 54*