

ANNIVERSARY PLATES OF THE
LATER ROMAN EMPIRE

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by

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ABSTRACT

Amongst the many pieces of silverware surviving from the later Roman Empire are the silver 'anniversary' plates commissioned by emperors and consuls in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., which were manufactured and given as gifts to celebrate imperial anniversaries or appointments to the consulship. The decoration and decorative techniques used on these plates vary widely, from simple punched inscriptions to elaborately cast figural scenes.

The presentation of these plates is closely related to other instances of largesse and the celebration of imperial anniversaries in the later empire, attested to both by the surviving literary sources and by the anniversary inscriptions found on other surviving artifacts of the period, such as coinage and statue bases. Unfortunately, some specific details concerning the production of these 'anniversary' plates are currently unknown.

Comparison of the many types of decoration used on these plates with other later Roman art indicates that they borrowed many of their motifs from a wide variety of both imperial and private art. There are also decorative

similarities between these 'anniversary' plates and other contemporary pieces of art done in less expensive materials like glass, which suggest that the silversmiths producing these plates were free enough from strict official supervision to draw on whatever other artwork they wished for inspiration.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Age of Spirituality - K. Weitzmann, ed. Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century (Princeton 1979).
- Argenterie - F. Baratte, ed. Argenterie Romaine et Byzantine (Paris 1988).
- Baratte - F. Baratte, "Les ateliers de l'argenterie au Bas-Empire," Journal des Savants 1975.
- Delbrueck (1929) - R. Delbrueck, Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler (Berlin and Leipzig 1929).
- Delbrueck (1933) - R. Delbrueck, Spätantike Kaiserporträts (Berlin 1933).
- Toynbee and Painter- J. M. C. Toynbee and K. S. Painter, "Silver Picture Plates of Late Antiquity: A.D. 300 to 700," Archaeologia 108 (1986) 15-65.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most active areas of classical scholarship in recent years has been research into various aspects of Roman silver plate and its production. Donald Strong's Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate has been the standard English language work on Roman silverware since its publication in 1966, but recently, several new books and articles dealing with this topic have appeared. Many of these works deal with well-known silver hoards of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., such as those from Kaiseraugst, Mildenhall, and Carthage.¹ These include such works as J.M.C. Toynbee and K.S. Painter's "Silver Picture Plates of Late Antiquity" and K. Shelton's The Esquiline Treasure.²

One of the more interesting categories of this late Roman silverware is that of the so-called 'anniversary plates', found throughout the territory once controlled by Rome, in

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¹ H.A. Cahn and A. Kaufmann-Heinemann, eds., Der spätromische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst, 2 Vols. (Derendingen 1984); J.P.C. Kent and K.S. Painter, eds., Wealth of the Roman World (London 1977); K.S. Painter, The Mildenhall Treasure (London 1977).

² D. Strong, Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate (London 1966); J.M.C. Toynbee and K.S. Painter, "Silver Picture Plates of Late Antiquity: A.D. 300 to 700," Archaeologia 108 (1986) 15-65; K.S. Shelton, The Esquiline Treasure (London 1981).

countries such as the former Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Spain, and Bulgaria. This category of silver plate was produced under the authority of Roman emperors or consuls, and given as gifts to other influential members of the Roman elite in order to celebrate the emperor or consul's reign or term of office.³ The dates of manufacture of the known examples of these plates range from 317 A.D. to c. 434 A.D. They vary widely in shape, from deep bowls of approximately 20 cm in diameter, such as those found in the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 13-17), to enormous flat plates of up to 74 cm in diameter, as in the case of the Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22). The plates from the Cervenbreg hoard in Bulgaria (C. 11-12) are also flat, but have vertical fluted rims. The twenty-three plates discussed in this thesis also vary widely in their decoration, from simple honorary inscriptions, as found on the Licinius I plates from Nis (C. 1-5), to full-figure scenes like those found upon the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23). References to plates such as these and information about their production can be found in such sources as the Notitia Dignitatum (e.g. Or. XIII.29, Qc. XI.95) and the Scriptores Historiae Augustae (e.g. Vita Claudii XIV.3, Vita Probi IV.5). These sources will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Although many of these plates bear control stamps indicating the location of the particular workshop at which they

³ Toynbee and Painter 15-16.

were manufactured (places like Antioch, Nicomedia, and Naissus) the circumstances of their production, ownership and final deposition in various locales throughout Europe is much more difficult to reconstruct. Several of them, such as the Missorium of Valentinian (C. 21), were discovered in isolation, while others, most notably those from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 13-17), were once part of larger hoards. The facts surrounding the deposition of the latter plates are even more difficult to reconstruct, since the original find-spot of the 'Munich' Treasure is unknown, but it is assumed that this treasure was hidden away amidst the chaos of civil war sometime in A.D. 324, in the eastern half of the former Roman empire.⁴ The single most important analysis of this treasure is Overbeck's Argentum Romanum.⁵

The anniversary plates discussed in this thesis bear a close relationship to other instances of imperial largesse in the later empire. Several contemporary literary sources attest to the giving of such largesse in various forms by the emperor at this time, including monetary donatives or luxury goods as well as silver plate. Much of this largesse, like the plates discussed in this thesis, appears to have been distributed on the occasion of imperial anniversaries. Several other objects and monuments with 'anniversary' inscriptions, besides silver

⁴ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20; B. Overbeck, Argentum Romanum (Munich 1973) 7.

⁵ B. Overbeck, Argentum Romanum (Munich 1973).

plate, survive from the later empire. Special coin types commemorating a particular emperor's reign were also a common feature of imperial anniversary celebrations in the later empire.

Despite the recent scholarly interest in Roman silver plates and *largesse* (typified by Delmaire's Largesses Sacrées et Res Privata)⁶, these anniversary plates, a part of both contemporary Roman silver plate production and *largesse* as a whole, have not been discussed thoroughly in every aspect by any single source. One of the most specific studies of anniversary plates is Baratte's article, "Les ateliers de l'argenterie au Bas-Empire", but it focuses on silver workshops and aspects of the plates' production rather than their decoration.⁷ On the other hand, Toynbee and Painter have also made mention of several of these plates, but mainly with regard to their decoration.⁸

The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to fill this gap in scholarship by examining these plates as a coherent group in the context of other known instances of official *largesse* in the later Roman empire, as well as their relationship to other contemporary art from various media. The actual appearance and decoration of the plates will be described in

⁶ R. Delmaire, Largesses Sacrées et Res Privata (Rome 1989).

⁷ F. Baratte, "Les ateliers de l'argenterie au Bas-Empire," Journal des Savants (1975) 193-212.

⁸ Toynbee and Painter 15-16, 24-29.

Chapter One, while the techniques used to manufacture them will be briefly discussed in Chapter Two. Chapters Three and Four will examine respectively questions concerning the historical circumstances surrounding the production of these plates, and their artistic relationship to other contemporary Roman art.

Another relevant question, which also pertains to late Roman silver-plate as a whole, involves whether or not 'private' silversmiths, temporarily working under an imperial commission, produced these anniversary plates, or whether silver workshops and their production, like the imperial mints, were always under the strict control of the imperial bureaucracy in the later empire. As stated previously, many of the plates discussed in this thesis bear stamps identifying the locations of the workshops at which they were manufactured, so we have some information with which to examine this problem. The conclusions reached in this examination may well have wider implications for other non-imperial silver plate, since both types of plate could have been manufactured by some of the same artisans and workshops. The same question concerning silver-plate in general has recently been debated by Painter and Cameron.

Painter sees a parallel in the great distance between late Roman silver workshops and their known products (such as the vessels from the Kaiseraugst Treasure

produced in Thessalonica, Naissus, and Mainz), and that of known contemporary aristocratic estates across the Roman empire, which, he contends, indicates that these workshops, like the families owning the estates, had wide-spread contacts, and did not produce silver plate for a local market.⁹ He also notes the high level of purity (96-98% on average) found in late Roman silver.¹⁰ Largely on the basis of this evidence, Painter suggests that the production of all late Roman silver plate was controlled by the central authority of the emperor and distributed from imperial workshops to the Roman elite throughout the empire as a means of social and political control.¹¹

In a subsequent article, Painter has defended his views in the face of Cameron's criticisms, stating that the surviving archaeological evidence for the ownership of known silver hoards (such as the third century hoards from the middle Rhine area) suggests that the owners of such silver plate were landed aristocracy who also held important local governmental offices.¹² Judging from the weight and silver purity of some of the surviving hoards of late Roman silver, such as the Mildenhall Treasure, he contends that the majority

⁹ K.S. Painter, "Roman Silver Hoards: Ownership and Status," Argentaria 98.

¹⁰ Painter (*supra* n. 9) 98-101.

¹¹ Painter (*supra* n. 9) 103-05.

¹² K.S. Painter, "Late Roman Silver Plate: a reply to Alan Cameron," JRA 6 (1993) 112.

of such silver could not have been involved in purely commercial exchanges. In addition, Painter suggests that the iconography found on most of the later Roman silver could only have been intelligible to an owner from the upper reaches of Roman society.¹³

Cameron contends that Painter's conclusions are not valid, on the evidence of the surviving silver from the period. Cameron argues that only a small amount of silver plate, clearly marked by its inscriptions (like the examples discussed in this thesis), was given as presents by the emperor to his various officials. In addition, these plates were only given to the emperor's court officials, and not to elite Romans throughout the empire, as Painter suggests.¹⁴ According to the available literary evidence, the gifts manufactured for such largesse were normally not nearly so elaborate or costly as many of the remaining examples of Roman silver plate.¹⁵ Therefore, these same plates, such as those from the Mildenhall and Kaiseraugst treasures, were likely privately commissioned by wealthy Romans who could afford them, and were in no way involved with largesse.¹⁶ This question concerning the

¹³ Painter (supra n. 12) 109-115.

¹⁴ A. Cameron, "Observations on the distribution and ownership of late Roman silver plate," *JRA* 5 (1992) 178-79.

¹⁵ Cameron (supra n. 14) 181-82.

¹⁶ J.W. Brailsford, *The Mildenhall Treasure: A Provisional Handbook* (London 1947) 5-6; Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinemann, Vol. 1 (supra n. 1) 225-315; Cameron (supra n. 14) 182-85; Painter (supra n. 9) 97.

amount of 'free enterprise' involved in the production of late Roman silver plate, as it pertains to anniversary plates, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER ONE

The anniversary plates to be described in this chapter vary widely in their decoration, from plates bearing only simple inscriptions, such as some of the Licinius II plates from the 'Munich' Treasure, to those decorated with elaborate figural scenes, such as the Missorium of Theodosius. There is a definite progression in the complexity of these plates' designs from simple to more complex, which appears to follow a chronological progression from the earlier to the later plates.

The first class of decorated anniversary plate to be discussed consists of those plates which are decorated primarily with a lone inscription, or an inscription with some additional minor decoration. The first example of this type of plate is one of the silver bowls in the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 13, Figure 1). The bowl is quite deep, like the other bowls from the 'Munich' Treasure, but is undecorated save for the circular inscription which runs around the inner side of the bowl, approximately halfway between its centre and rim. Several lathe marks are visible on the inner surface, and two lines have evidently been incised on the same surface to act as guidelines for the inscription. The inscription reads VOTIS X CAESS NN

("For the tenth anniversary of our [two] Caesars"). The exact meaning of this inscription, as well as the others found upon these anniversary plates, will be discussed in Chapter Three. A *hedera*, acting as a punctuation mark, is located between the first and last words of the inscription. A smaller punched inscription, NAIS, which indicates that the bowl was manufactured in Naissus, is located on the exterior of the bowl.¹⁷ The various workshops associated with the production of these plates will also be discussed in Chapter Three.

The second plate of this class (C. 14, Figure 2), also from the 'Munich' treasure, is similar to the first (C. 13), although due to its damaged condition when found, portions of it have had to be restored.¹⁸ Like the first example, it too consists of a deep bowl decorated solely by a circular inscription. It also has visible lathe marks on its inner surface. However, one of the main differences between the two bowls, apart from their differing inscriptions, is the lettering of the inscriptions, which is hollow on the second bowl and appears to be not as carefully done as on the first. Another difference lies in the fact that the second bowl has four, not two, etched circular guidelines for its inscription. The inscription on the second bowl reads VOTIS X CAESARIS NOSTRI ("For the tenth anniversary of our Caesar"). A *hedera* used as a punctuation

¹⁷ J. Garbsch and B. Overbeck, Spätantike zwischen Heidentum und Christentum (Munich 1989) 51.

¹⁸ Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 22.

mark is located between the first and last words of the inscription. A fragmentary punched inscription, ...XIAC ("From Antioch(?)"), is located on the exterior.¹⁹

Two other bowls in this class of decoration are those which were discovered in Esztergom, Hungary (C. 6-7). Both of these bowls are virtually identical in their decoration (Figure 3). Each has a circular inscription, LICINI AVGVSTE SEMPER VINCAS ("Licinius Augustus, may you always conquer"), with two incised guidelines, located approximately midway between the rim and the central roundel. The inscription appears to be punched rather than thoroughly incised. In the centre of each bowl is a roundel occupied by the inscription SIC X SIC XX ("As 10, so 20"). Three circular incised lines, surrounding the central inscription, are in turn, after a slight gap, surrounded by two additional incised lines. A punched 'ray' pattern fills the space between the two groups of incised lines. Several lathe marks are visible on the surfaces of the two bowls. One bowl also has a round stamp with the inscription NAISS ("Naissus"), while the second has an additional punched inscription, ERMES VAS/F ("[H]ermes, the metal-worker, made [this]") on its exterior surface.²⁰ Details of

¹⁹ Garbsch and Overbeck (supra n. 17) 57.

²⁰ E.B. Thomas, " Spätantike und frühbyzantinische Silbergegenstände im mittleren Donaugebiet, innerhalb und ausserhalb der Grenzen des Römerreiches," *Argenterie* 136-37.

the manufacture of these plates will be discussed in Chapter Three.

A similar group of plates to those found at Esztergom is the collection of three fragmentary anniversary dishes found near Svirkovo, Bulgaria, in 1942 (C. 8-10, Figure 4). The Svirkovo plates have vertical fluted rims, like the Cervenbreg examples (C. 11-12) to be discussed later, but have a simpler scheme of decoration. This consists of a circular inscription running near the rim, as well as the inscription SIC X SIC XX ("As 10, so 20") within the central roundel of each plate. Comparison of the remaining plate fragments suggests that the outer inscription on all of the plates was LICINIVS INVICTVS AVGVSTVS OB DIEM DECENNALIVM SVORVM ("Licinius, invincible Augustus, on account of the *decennalia* of his reign"). These inscriptions, as well as the SIC X SIC XX inscriptions, were punched rather than incised upon the plates. A punched *hedera* is placed as a punctuation mark between the first and last words of the outer inscription. Two circular guidelines have been incised for this same inscription. The SIC X SIC XX inscription in the central roundel of each plate is surrounded by a punched 'scroll' pattern. Two guidelines surround this pattern as well. Lathe marks are visible upon all of the plate fragments.²¹

²¹ R. Delmaire, "Les largesses impériales et l'émission d'argenterie du IV^e au VI^e siècle," *Argenterie* 114; K.S. Painter, "A Late-Roman Silver Ingot from Kent," *AntJ* 52 (1972) 89; Thomas (*supra* n. 20) 137.

The third kind of bowl from this 'simpler' class of anniversary plate is somewhat more elaborate than the first four examples discussed. The bowls of this type from Nis (C. 1-5, Figure 5), of which there are five identical remaining examples, consist of a shallow silver bowl decorated with several inscriptions and a laurel wreath. In the centre of these bowls, the inscription SIC X SIC XX ("As 10, so 20") is surrounded by an engraved laurel wreath with trailing ribbons. Midway between the rim and centre of the bowls, on their inner surfaces, runs the inscription LICINI AVGVSTE SEMPER VINCAS ("Licinius Augustus, may you always conquer"), which like the SIC X SIC XX inscription, is done in very elegant hollow lettering. Two incised guidelines are present for the latter inscription. Within these two guidelines, between the words "VINCAS" and "LICINI" is located a stamp which reads NAISS ("Naissus"). The N of this stamp appears to be backwards. There are also visible lathe marks on the inner surfaces.²²

The next class of silver anniversary plates consists of those which feature central medallion depictions of particular emperors as the main part of their decoration, although other decoration may also be present on particular plates. The first example of this class consists of two virtually identical plates from Cervenbreg, Bulgaria (C. 11-12, Figure 6). Each has a vertical fluted rim, and has a portrait of Licinius I

²² Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 24; Toynbee and Painter 24-25.

contained in its beaded central medallion. Several concentric lathe marks are visible around the medallions on both plates. The medallion itself, in both cases, depicts a bearded Licinius I from the shoulders up, with his head in profile, and wearing a wreath on his head and a cloak (*paludamentum*) around his shoulders (Figure 7). The circular inscription just within the edge of the medallions reads LICINIVS INVICT AVG OB DIEM X SVORVM ("Licinius, invincible Augustus, on account of the tenth anniversary of his reign"). An additional inscription, O FLAV NICANI M B N, which will be discussed on pages 49-50, is located on the back of each plate.²³ The only appreciable difference between the two plates is in the differing graffiti found on their backs; one plate has the graffito PRO GERONTVS, and the other has the graffito R.²⁴

The third plate with this style of decoration is another one of the plates from the 'Munich' treasure (C. 15). This plate, a shallow bowl in form, also has a beaded central medallion depicting Licinius I (Figure 8). Several concentric lathe marks are visible in addition to two inscribed circles near the medallion. This depicts a bearded Licinius I in a frontal pose from the shoulders up, wearing armour under a *paludamentum* attached by a brooch on his right shoulder (Figure 9). The brooch appears to have three pendants or pins

²³ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51-52.

²⁴ Strong (supra n. 2) 200; Toynbee and Painter 25.

dangling from it. The inscription on the medallion reads LICINIVS AVG OB D V LICINI FILI SVI ("Licinius Augustus, on the fifth anniversary of his son, Licinius"). A small round stamp, NIKO/ AIA/ A ("Workshop number one of the Nicomedia mint, under the jurisdiction of Aid[esios]"), is located near the rim of the bowl on its exterior.²⁵

A fourth bowl from this class of anniversary plates is also part of the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 16). It is quite similar in form to the previously discussed bowl (C. 15), except that it depicts Licinius II, and not Licinius I, in its beaded central medallion (Figure 10). Several concentric lathe-cut circles are visible on the inner surface, as well as several inscribed circles near the central medallion. This depicts frontally a young and beardless Licinius II from the shoulders up, with curly sideburns, wearing a *paludamentum* over his ornate armour (Figure 11). The cloak is fastened by a brooch on Licinius II's right shoulder which appears to be quite similar to the brooch worn by Licinius I on the previous bowl (C. 15). The inscription within the edge of the medallion reads LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM ("Licinius Caesar, on the fifth anniversary of his reign"). A stamp, NIKO/ EYT/ NEB ("Coin Workshop number two of the Nicomedia mint, under the jurisdiction of Eut-") is located on the exterior.²⁶

²⁵ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23; Toynbee and Painter 24.

²⁶ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23-29; Toynbee and Painter 24.

Yet another bowl from the 'Munich' Treasure belongs to this class of anniversary plate (C. 17). Several lathe marks are visible on this bowl, and two concentric circles have been incised near the beaded central medallion (Figure 12). The medallion itself depicts Licinius II in a frontal pose from the shoulders up, with a rather puffy face and no sideburns (Figure 13), unlike on the medallion of the previous bowl. He is portrayed wearing a cloak over rather lavishly decorated armour. An elaborate round brooch with four knobs and two pendants attached to its edge holds up his *paludamentum* over his right shoulder. The inscription within the medallion reads (as on the previous bowl [C. 16]) LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM ("Licinius Caesar, on the fifth anniversary of his reign"). A round stamp on the outside of the bowl reads ANT/EYCTO/ A ("Workshop number one of the Antioch mint, under the jurisdiction of Eustochios").²⁷

Other examples of this type of anniversary plate, with central roundels of particular emperors, have been found at Kerch, in the Ukraine. The first of these dishes, in addition to its inscription, is decorated with niello and gilding, and features several bands of decoration (C. 19, Figure 14). A gilded roll-moulding is also located on the inner face of the plate. Each of the circular bands of decoration is separated by incised lines. The first band, starting from the outside of the dish, consists of

²⁷ Overbeck (*supra* n. 4) 29.

a vertical 'fluting' pattern with some traces of niello remaining. Some gilding is still visible within this band. The second band consists of the inscription proper, which still shows some traces of gilding: VOTIS (hedera) XX (hedera) D N CONSTANTI AVGVSTI (hedera) ("For vows undertaken on the twentieth anniversary of our lord Constantius Augustus"). The letters in this inscription are hollow and somewhat irregular in size and shape. The third band has a foliate pattern, with a series of leaves connected by a single vine. Finally, the central roundel depicts a portrait of the emperor Constantius II. He is depicted from the shoulders up, with his head facing right, wearing a *chlamys* fastened by a brooch with three dangling pendants. He also wears a diadem inset with a central jewel or precious stone on his forehead. Two ribbons trailing from the diadem are visible behind his head. His hair, done in niello, is also fairly long in this depiction, which may indicate his relative youth at the time of this plate's manufacture. Traces of gilding remain on his diadem and cloak. The inscription ΕΥC ΛΙΤΡΑΣ ΑΟΥΚΙΑΣ(sic) ΑΙ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ ΙΗ ("Eus-, one pound, eleven ounces, eighteen scruples") is also found on the underside of this plate.²⁸ The nature of this inscription will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The second dish found at Kerch is similar to the first; it is decorated with gilding and niello and has a gilded

²⁸ Delbrueck (1933) 146-47; Toynbee and Painter 26.

roll-moulding on its inner face. However, it also has an additional band of decoration (C. 18, Figure 15). As on the first dish, the bands of decoration on the second plate are each separated by circular incised lines. The first band, starting from the outside of the plate, is decorated with an arcade supported on columns. The arches are adorned with various 'vegetal' patterns, while different leaf garlands hang between the columns. Traces of gilding remain in this zone. The second band consists of a vertical 'fluted' pattern, with some gilding remaining, similar to that found on the first Kerch dish (C. 19). The third band consists of the inscription proper: VOTIS (hedera) XX (hedera) D N CONSTANTII AVGVSTI (hedera) ("For vows undertaken on the twentieth anniversary of our lord Constantius Augustus"). The letters of the inscription, which are somewhat irregular in size, have been filled in with niello. The fourth band consists of leaf and tendril decoration, similar to that found on the first Kerch dish. The central roundel, surrounded by a band of gilding and two lathe-cut circles, is decorated with a portrait of Constantius II. It depicts Constantius from the shoulders up, with his head turned to the right, wearing a cloak fastened by a brooch on his right shoulder. He is also wearing what appears to be a diadem inset with a central jewel or precious stone on his head. Strands of ribbons trail from the diadem. The hair of Constantius is done in a pointillé technique with niello, while his face, neck,

diadem, and clothing are gilded. A notable feature of this portrait is the fact that Constantius' head is much too large for what is visible of his body. Two additional inscriptions, λιτρας α ουγκιας αι ("One pound, eleven ounces"), and ANT, followed by what appears to be θAI, are located on the bottom of the dish.²⁹ The significance of these inscriptions will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The final category of anniversary plates to be discussed in this chapter consists of those which are decorated with full figural scenes. The first example of these plates is yet another plate from Kerch which has a raised moulding along its inner rim (C. 20, Figure 16). This plate has no inscription, but is decorated solely with a figural scene. It depicts a figure on horseback (commonly assumed to be Constantius II) in its centre, with two secondary figures, a soldier and the goddess Victory, flanking him on either side. The basis for the identification of this figure as Constantius II will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. Several areas of the plate show traces of gilding, including the edges of Constantius' figure and the shield of the soldier beside him. Several traces of niello remain on the plate as well, such as in the pupils of the goddess' eyes, and on Constantius' tunic. The drawing on the plate was done with a point over a previously pricked-out guideline.

²⁹ Delbrueck (1933) 146-47; Toynbee and Painter 26.

The emperor on horseback, with his head and body turned towards the viewer, wears an elaborate beaded tunic, as well as an elaborate belt and shoulder strap. The strap, belt, and tunic all appear to be decorated with inset beads or jewels. He also wears trousers, and jewelled shoes. He carries a spear in his right hand, and is presumably holding the reins of his horse with his hidden left hand. The hilt of his sword is just visible under his left arm. His head is surrounded by a *nimbus* (Figure 17). He wears a diadem with an inset jewel in its centre on his forehead. The horse, galloping towards the right of the plate, wears an elaborate bridle not unlike Constantius' belt. The musculature of the horse has been clearly delineated by the artist. Below the horse's hooves lies a shield decorated with ovals and circles, as well as what appear to be rocks.

The soldier on the left of the plate wears a tunic and leggings which are quite similar to those worn by the emperor. He carries a spear in his right hand, and a large shield decorated with the Chi-Rho monogram in his left. The rim of the shield is further decorated with circles divided by double lines. He has long hair, and wears what appears to be a torque with a central jewel around his neck (Figure 18). His one visible hand appears to be far too large for his body. Although his lower body is depicted from the side, his upper body is depicted in a much more frontal manner.

The figure of Victory on the right-hand side of the plate wears a long flowing gown, although her feet are bare. The gown is fastened by a brooch on her right shoulder, as well as by the girdle which she wears around her waist (Figure 19). An armband surrounds her bare right forearm, while her left arm is covered by a mantle. She holds what appears to be a palm branch in her left hand, and extends a laurel(?) wreath inset with a central jewel towards the emperor with her right hand. Her hair is braided, and is held back by a decorated ribbon or diadem. Parts of her feathered wings are visible behind her head. She has adopted a more or less frontal stance in respect to the viewer.³⁰

The second plate of this class to be discussed was discovered in Geneva in 1721 (C. 21). A plain roll-moulding runs around its rim. The decoration on the plate consists of a single inscription, *LARGITAS D N VALENTINIANI AVGVSTI* ("The bounty of our lord Valentinian Augustus"), running just within its upper rim, with a figural scene underneath (Figure 20). Unfortunately, the plate was discovered in a badly worn condition, so that it is virtually impossible to discern many details of decoration. It was originally gilded, but only slight traces of this gilding now remain. It is unclear on behalf of which Valentinian it was manufactured, as will be discussed in

³⁰ Delbrueck (1933) 147-51; L. Matzulewitsch, *Byzantinische Antike* Volume II (Berlin-Leipzig 1929) 95-100; Toynbee and Painter 27.

Chapter Three. The scene consists of a central figure (presumably Valentinian I or II) standing on a pedestal, flanked by three soldiers on either side. The figures are all depicted frontally, although the soldiers' heads are turned towards the central figure. Valentinian holds a staff with a standard on top in his left hand, and a globe topped by a figurine of a winged goddess in his right hand. The winged goddess on the globe carries a laurel wreath in her outstretched right hand. Valentinian is dressed in a cuirass and *chlamys*, and has a *nimbus*, containing the Chi-Rho monogram and the letters α and ω , surrounding his head. The six soldiers all wear elaborate plumed helmets and carry large oval shields with differing designs upon them. At the bottom of the scene lie assorted pieces of equipment: a shield, sword, and plumed helmet.³¹

The third plate in this category is the famous Missorium of Theodosius from Almandralejo, Spain (C. 22). A large crack running through the plate unfortunately makes some details of its decoration difficult to decipher. The circular inscription D N THEODOSIVS PERPET AVG OB DIEM FELICISSIMVM X ("Our lord Theodosius, eternal Augustus, on his most joyful tenth anniversary") runs within the moulded rim, while the weight inscription ΠΟC ΑΙ Ν ΜΕΤ, indicating that the plate originally weighed fifty Roman pounds, is located on

³¹ Delbrueck (1933) 179-182; Toynbee and Painter 27.

the inside of its footring. The decoration consists of a scene divided into two registers. In the upper register, the central figure of the emperor Theodosius sits on a throne backed by an architectural facade, flanked by a younger emperor and soldiers on either side, and an official on his immediate right. Two Erotes are depicted in the gables of the architectural facade. In the lower register, a reclining female figure holding a *cornucopia* looks up towards Theodosius, while three more Erotes fly around her (Figure 21). The figures of the emperors and the soldiers are depicted frontally, those of the female figure and the Erotes in three-quarter view, and the figure directly to Theodosius' right from the side.

The figure of Theodosius, which is much larger than the other figures in the scene, is depicted as wearing a long *chlamys* fastened by an ornate beaded brooch on his right shoulder (Figure 22). The right sleeve of his tunic is decorated with intricate diagonal patterning. His shoes, as well as the throne upon which he sits, also exhibit some patterned decoration. An elaborately patterned square, forming part of the *chlamys*, covers his lap and lower right leg. On his head sits a diadem decorated with a central jewel as well as two parallel rows of other precious stones. His head is also surrounded by a *nimbus*. Theodosius appears to be handing some sort of book or *codices* to the figure beside him, but it is difficult to tell precisely what this object may be. This figure is dressed in

much the same way as the emperor, wearing a long decorated *chlamys* fastened by a beaded *fibula* on his right shoulder.

The figures of the two younger emperors are quite similar to that of Theodosius, except for their smaller size (Figures 23, 24). Each sits on an ornate throne similar to that used by Theodosius, and each wears a similar long *chlamys* and jewelled diadem. Both of them have *nimbi* surrounding their heads. Each of their cloaks also has an elaborately patterned square over their laps and lower right legs. However, since both of the younger emperors have pulled their cloaks aside to make room for their outstretched left arms, more of their patterned tunics and belts are visible from underneath them. The poses of the two younger emperors are also quite similar; both hold what appear to be patterned globes in their left hands, although the figure on the left of the plate is also holding a staff in his right hand (Figure 23), while the other figure's empty right hand is held across his chest (Figure 24).

Two young soldiers flank each of these emperors. Each of the soldiers has long straight hair, and wears a torque with a central jewel around his neck. They also wear patterned tunics, leggings, and footwear not unlike that worn by the emperors. They carry long spears and large oval shields. The shields carried by two of the soldiers (one on each side) are decorated with a triangle pattern, while the other two shields are decorated with a 'ray' pattern.

The architectural facade behind these figures consists of four Corinthian columns topped by a pediment with a central arch over the figure of Theodosius. The pediment has elaborate *akroteria* as well (Figure 25). The winged Erotes in the gables of the pediment are almost identical in form, although the one on the left of the plate carries flowers (Figure 25), while his counterpart on the other side carries fruit.

The lower register of the plate is dominated by the large figure of Tellus reclining on her elbow and looking up towards Theodosius. This figure is the only one in the scene comparable in size to Theodosius. The upper part of her body is nude, although the lower half is wrapped in a robe. She wears a crown of leaves on her head, while she holds the *cornucopia* cradled in her arms. Representations of stalks of grain have been interspersed around her body throughout this lower register. Three winged Erotes similar in form to those above fly from the lower register towards Theodosius. They carry what appears to be more fruit and grain.³²

The final plate of this type of decoration to be discussed is the Ardabur Aspar dish (C. 23). It appears that the plate was originally worked with a burin, and that the letters of the plate's inscriptions were originally filled with enamel or gold. Traces of gilding remain in the contours of the plate. The outside rim of the dish is taken up by the inscription FL

³² Toynbee and Painter 27-28.

ARDABVR ASPAR VIR INLVSTRIS COM ET MAG MILITVM ET
 CONSVL ORDINARIVS ("Flavius Ardabur Aspar, a distinguished
 man, companion and master of the soldiers and regular consul")
 which is preceded by a symbol of the cross. The rest of the
 plate is filled with a figural scene, in which all of the figures
 are depicted in a frontal fashion (Figure 26). In the centre, an
 elderly bearded man (presumably Ardabur Aspar himself) sits
 on a raised throne, flanked by a young standing child. The child
 is identified by the inscription above him as ARDABVR IVNIOR
 PRETOR. Both figures are dressed in heavy togas and carry
 what appears to be the *mappa*, the man in his outstretched
 right hand, and the boy in his left hand. The bearded man
 carries a staff topped by two small portrait busts in his left
 hand, while the boy's empty right hand is held up with its palm
 open. The legs of the elder man's throne are topped by sculpted
 lion heads.

Flanking these two central figures are two standing
 female figures. The identity of these figures will be discussed
 in Chapter Four. The figure on the far left wears a short tunic
 hitched up around her waist, as well as sandals on her feet and
 an elaborate plumed helmet on her head. Her right breast is
 left bare, and the strap of what apparently is a sword-belt is
 slung across her right shoulder. In her left hand she carries a
 globe, and a tall staff with an attached axe blade (perhaps a
 form of *fascis*) in her right hand. The figure on the far right

wears a long dress bound up at the waist, as well as an elaborate floral crown. Two pearl(?) necklaces are visible around her neck. In her left hand she carries a couple of flowers, while she holds a staff similar to that held by her counterpart in her right hand.

Above the central figures are two roundels depicting two different men. Inscriptions beside the roundels identify these men as ARDABVR and PLINTA. Both men are shown from the waist up, wearing togas like those worn by the figures beneath them. Each man holds his right hand over his heart, and holds a staff similar to that held by the elderly man beneath them. A draped cloth hangs between the two roundels. The precise identity of these figures, as well as the two below them, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

At the bottom of the scene lie various objects: three stylized palm leaves, one large oval and one large square platter, and three smaller oval dishes in a pile. The palm leaves are all shaped and marked identically.³³

³³ Delbrueck (1929) 154-56; Toynbee and Painter 28-29.

CHAPTER TWO

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main techniques used in the manufacture and decoration of the silver plates examined in this thesis. The chapter will therefore not discuss techniques like *repoussé*, which appears to have mainly been used by silversmiths in the early empire.³⁴ Roman silversmiths evidently used many tools and techniques employed by modern silversmiths: for example, the circular marks left on many Roman plates, such as those of Licinius I and II from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 13-17) suggest that Roman silversmiths, like their modern counterparts, used some sort of lathe to put the finishing touches on their work, although the exact form of the Roman lathe cannot be deduced from the surviving evidence.³⁵

The simplest technique of silver decoration employed by Roman silversmiths was flat chasing, which involved the use of punches to create grooves or lines in silver without actually removing any of it in the process. The type of decoration achieved by this method could vary from being

³⁴ Strong (supra n. 2) 139-40.

³⁵ Strong (supra n. 2) 8; Brailsford (supra n. 16) 18.

quite simple to quite complex, as seen by the intricate chased designs on many examples of later Roman silver, including the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23).³⁶ By using a special punch called a beader, a Roman silversmith could also produce *pointillé* designs and inscriptions like those found on the Svirkovo and Esztergom plates (C. 6-10).³⁷ Other special 'letter' punches were used to produce the inscriptions found on several of these anniversary plates, such as those from Nis (C. 1-5). Many silversmiths may have had a complete set of these punches representing every letter of the alphabet.³⁸

Although flat chasing was not normally used to create relief decoration, the same technique, employing hammers and punches, could also be used to compress and lower the background level slightly below that of the decoration on a particular piece of silver, as, for instance, on the Oceanus dish from the Mildenhall Treasure and the aforementioned Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23).³⁹ Punches were also used to work up and shape beading on both central medallions and the rims of several pieces of late Roman silver.⁴⁰

³⁶ Strong (supra n. 2) 9.

³⁷ D. Sherlock, "Silver and Silversmithing," Roman Crafts (London 1976) 19.

³⁸ Sherlock (supra n. 37) 21.

³⁹ Strong (supra n. 2) 9; F. Volbach, Early Christian Art (New York 1961) 332.

⁴⁰ Brailsford (supra n. 16) 17-20.

A second related technique is that of engraving. Like flat chasing, engraving largely consists of creating lines and other patterns in silver vessels, but engraving makes use of much more precise tools than merely hammers and punches. Another difference between the two methods is that the use of engraving, unlike flat chasing, does involve the removal of silver from the particular piece being decorated.⁴¹ Examples of such engraving can be seen on both the patterned and figural decoration of the Kerch plates discussed in this thesis (C. 18-20). In many instances, the grooves created by engraving could then be filled with gold inlay, leaving the surface of the inlay flush with that of the surrounding silver.⁴²

A third decorative technique used on many pieces of Roman silver is known as casting. Molten silver was first of all poured into plaster casts of the desired vessel or decorative object. After the silver had cooled and hardened, the casts were broken open to expose the item within. In the case of cast plates, they would often have to be worked on the lathe to remove rough edges left over from the casting process. In the empire, Roman silversmiths often used this technique to fashion entire vessels.⁴³ The Missorium of Theodosius (C. 23) was originally cast in this manner, although a great deal of

⁴¹ Strong (supra n. 2) 9-10.

⁴² W.A. Oddy, "The Gilding of Roman Silver Plate," *Argentaria* 9.

⁴³ Strong (supra n. 2) 8-11.

engraving and chasing must have been done subsequently to produce the finished piece.⁴⁴

There is also some evidence from the Mildenhall Treasure to suggest that silver casting of smaller objects, like bronze casting, often involved the 'lost wax' process. This technique is similar to that outlined above, except that a wax model was first made of the desired object, around which the mold was formed and hardened. When the mold was heated, the wax would drain out of it through a small hole left in its side, into which the molten silver would be poured and left to cool. The mold would then be cracked open to expose the finished piece within.⁴⁵

Once the silver vessel had been formed using any of these prior techniques, it could be further decorated with niello or gilding. Niello itself, which takes its name from *opus nigellum*, was a black powdered compound of silver and copper sulphide, which could be inserted as a powder into the grooves created by chasing or engraving silver, as seen on the previously mentioned Kerch plates (C. 18-20).⁴⁶ The silver would then be put into the furnace at low temperature, which would result in the niello melting in place. After the silver had cooled, the excess niello was removed and the remainder

⁴⁴ Volbach (supra n. 39) 322.

⁴⁵ Brailsford (supra n. 16) 16; D. Brown, "Bronze and Pewter," *Roman Crafts* (London 1976) 27.

⁴⁶ A.O. Curle, *The Treasure of Traprain* (Glasgow 1923) 97-98; Strong (supra n. 2) 12; Toynbee and Painter 26-27.

polished, leaving a smooth black enamel-like surface.⁴⁷ The earliest use of niello by Roman silversmiths is to be found on vessels from the first century A.D. Hildesheim Treasure, but it became particularly popular in the later empire, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries A.D. Niello used in combination with gilding also became popular during these last two centuries, as can be seen by the last of the Kerch plates (C. 20), which uses both materials in its decoration.⁴⁸

Gilding on Roman silver was primarily achieved through two different methods. Leaf gilding involved the hammering of gold leaf, sometimes as thin as 1/900 of a millimetre, into grooves in the silver. No adhesives were necessary for the gold used in this process, although gesso was sometimes used.⁴⁹ This type of gilding appears to have been more popular in the early empire, prior to the third century A.D.⁵⁰

The second type of gilding involved the use of mercury, which could be used either with or without heating the silver to be gilded.⁵¹ Mercury gilding only appears to have become popular with silversmiths from the second century A.D. on.⁵² Cold gilding with mercury involved applying a thin layer

⁴⁷ Curle (*supra* n. 46) 97-98.

⁴⁸ Strong (*supra* n. 2) 12.

⁴⁹ Strong (*supra* n. 2) 11; Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 10

⁵⁰ Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 14-16.

⁵¹ Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 10-11.

⁵² Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 15.

of mercury onto the surface to be gilded. Gold leaf would then be placed on top of the mercury to amalgamate with it. The mercury would then evaporate naturally, leaving the gold leaf bonded to the silver.⁵³

Fire gilding with mercury involved the mixture of liquid gold and mercury together, which produced a compound able to be painted upon the surface of the silver. The mercury was then evaporated by being heated along with the rest of the silver vessel.⁵⁴ Evidence from various gilded silver vessels suggests that mercury fire-gilding became much more popular in the later empire as opposed to cold-gilding, particularly from the third century A.D. on.⁵⁵ This would suggest that all of the gilded anniversary plates discussed in this thesis were fire-rather than cold-gilded.

⁵³ Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 10.

⁵⁴ Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 10-11.

⁵⁵ Oddy (*supra* n. 42) 14-16.

CHAPTER THREE

The presentation of largesse in the Roman empire is a practice which is known through many different pieces of evidence remaining from that era. Gifts of gold and silver objects are depicted both on the remaining illustrations of the Notitia Dignitatum and on various surviving consular diptychs. Silver vessels filled with coins are depicted in the Notitia Dignitatum as part of the emblem of both the *comes sacrarum largitionum* and the *comes rerum privatarum*.⁵⁶ The presentation of valuables such as expensive clothing and *fibulae* is attested in many literary sources including the Historia Augusta (e.g. Vita Claudii XIV.3-15, Vita Probi IV.5).⁵⁷ Similar gifts are mentioned in such sources as the orations of the emperor Julian.⁵⁸

The giving of such valuables is indicative of the Roman custom of gift-giving, which existed long before the later empire. Such gifts were meant as a display of affection

⁵⁶ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 54; Delbrueck (1933) 69.

⁵⁷ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 113-14.

⁵⁸ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 113-14. For instance, in his Panegyric on Constantius II (43A-B), Julian praises Constantius' gifts of money to his subjects, although he does not specify exactly what amount of money was involved in this generosity.

and generosity, or of charity, from the giver to the receiver, depending upon the relative social status of the individuals involved in the exchange.⁵⁹ Gift-giving between patrons and their clients, particularly emperors and their troops, appears to have become even more popular in the later empire.⁶⁰ The giving of *largitio* by an emperor, in the form of both valuables and privileges, was thought to be particularly praiseworthy, symbolizing as it did his ambition and wealth.⁶¹

In the later empire, soldiers were given both accession donatives at the beginning of a particular emperor's reign, and anniversary donatives every further five years of the reign. In one instance, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, when Julian the Apostate was proclaimed Augustus by his troops in 360 A.D., he promised each of his soldiers five gold pieces and a pound of silver (XX.4.18). The gift of one pound of silver to each soldier upon the accession of a new emperor is related to the more valuable gifts of silver plate given by emperors to their important officials on occasions such as these.⁶² Officials could also be given gifts by the emperor upon their promotion to a new position, or as rewards for specific acts of bravery and the like.⁶³

⁵⁹ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 113.

⁶⁰ P. Brown, "Art and Society in Late Antiquity," in *Age of Spirituality: A Symposium* (Princeton 1980) 24.

⁶¹ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 531.

⁶² Painter (supra n. 21) 85.

⁶³ R. MacMullen, "The Emperor's Largesses," *Latomus* 21 (1962) 159.

Valuables such as silver plate, which often reflected the pomp and ceremony of the imperial court in their subject matter, were normally given by emperors to their subjects for propaganda purposes or as a means to ensure their loyalty.⁶⁴ These same types of valuables could also be given to foreign ambassadors and rulers, on occasion, for much the same purpose. Accessions to the imperial throne, imperial victories or triumphs, consular appointments, and imperial anniversaries were all suitable occasions on which this largesse could be given.⁶⁵

Imperial anniversaries had been celebrated sporadically every ten (or five) years since the reign of Augustus, but such *decennalia* (and *quinquennalia*) began to be celebrated regularly (judging by the numismatic evidence) during the lifetime of Cassius Dio (LIII.16.2-3), in the second century A.D. They came to achieve more and more importance over time, especially after the emperor Valerian was captured by the Persians in 260 A.D.⁶⁶ The first known special issue of coinage for such anniversaries dates to the first *decennalia* of Antoninus Pius, in 147 A.D. Coinage minted for Pius' second *decennalia*, in 157 A.D. has inscriptions recording both *vota soluta* (fulfilled vows for the previous ten years) and *vota*

⁶⁴ Baratte 204; Brown (supra n. 60) 21.

⁶⁵ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 114; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 54.

⁶⁶ A. Chastagnol, "Les jubilés impériaux de 260 à 337," *Crise et redressement dans les provinces européennes de l'Empire* (Strasbourg 1981) 11-12.

suscepta (vows taken in expectation of the next ten years). This trend towards including 'hopeful' *vota suscepta* inscriptions on anniversary coinage became even more pronounced in the third century, reflecting the many short imperial reigns and general uncertainty of the period.⁶⁷

Imperial anniversaries were commemorated, not only on contemporary coinage, but on a wide variety of different monuments and objects as well. The earliest inscription in stone mentioning such an anniversary dates to the reign of Commodus, likely referring to the *vota suscepta* in 186 or 189 A.D. for his future *decennalia*.⁶⁸ The latest of the preserved 'anniversary monuments' dates to the fourth century A.D.⁶⁹ Many of the anniversary vows on these monuments are similar to those found upon contemporary anniversary issues of coinage, such as the SIC X SIC XX inscription found upon the Arch of Constantine.⁷⁰ These inscriptions could not only appear on triumphal arches, as in the previous example, but on other 'honorific' monuments as well, such as the base of the Decennalia Monument in Rome, and a Severan statue base dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus in Volubilis.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Chastagnol (supra n. 66) 12-13.

⁶⁸ A. Chastagnol, "Les inscriptions des monuments inaugurés lors des fêtes impériales," *MEFRA* 100 (1988) 13, 19; no. 1.

⁶⁹ Chastagnol (supra n. 68) 23-4; nos. 28, 29, 31.

⁷⁰ Chastagnol (supra n. 68) 17, 22; no. 26(d).

⁷¹ Chastagnol (supra n. 68) 16, 21-22; nos. 20, 24.

Anniversary inscriptions are also found on numerous other contemporary objects. A glass cup found in Rome, and dating to approximately 325 A.D., bears the inscription VOTA XX MVLTa XXX. A Diocletianic *fibula* of 303 A.D., discovered in Dumfriesshire, bears the inscription IOVI AVG VOT XX. Even a terra-cotta cake mold from Poetovio, dating to 315 A.D., bears such an inscription; VOTIS X ET XX FEL.⁷² A silver ingot from Leiden bearing an anniversary inscription is also preserved; like the previously mentioned *fibula*, it dates to 303 A.D., and bears the inscription VOTIS XX AVGG NN.⁷³ The inscriptions on these objects are also very similar to those found on contemporary coinage: for instance, the VOTA XX MVLTa XXX inscription found on the cup from Rome is also found on coins of Constantine I minted in Thessalonica between 319 and 324 A.D.⁷⁴

However, the largest category of objects manufactured for imperial anniversaries, apart from anniversary coinage, appears to be silver plate. Silver bowls filled with coins, like those depicted in the emblem of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, were apparently often given as gifts to celebrate these occasions.⁷⁵ The earliest remaining

⁷² Chastagnol (supra n. 68) 24-25; nos. 2,3,11.

⁷³ Chastagnol (supra n. 68) 24; no. 1.

⁷⁴ A. Robertson, Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet: Volume V (Oxford 1982) 197; no. 277.

⁷⁵ Delbrueck (1933) 68.

examples of silver plate created for these anniversaries are those manufactured for Licinius I's *decennalia* in 317 A.D.⁷⁶ Both *vota suscepta* and *vota soluta* inscriptions are to be found on these and other silver plate involved in such exchanges.⁷⁷

Many questions remain about which specific officials and artisans were responsible for the production of the silver plate involved in this largesse. The various offices and responsibilities attached to the later empire's bureaucracy are a source of much confusion. According to Jones, there were three independent financial departments in the later empire: the departments of the praetorian prefects, of the *res privata*, and of the *sacrae largitiones*. The *magister rei privatae* was in charge of all imperial property, as well as of the remaining Roman public lands, while the praetorian prefects, from the reign of Diocletian on, were responsible for collecting the annual interdictum (levy in kind) throughout the empire.⁷⁸

The department of the *sacrae largitiones* itself originated from the second century financial department of the *summae rationes*, which was originally in charge of all sources of revenue save those controlled by the praetorian prefects. Consequently, the *sacrae largitiones* came to possess a wide

⁷⁶ Chastagnol (supra n. 66) 19.

⁷⁷ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 56.

⁷⁸ A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* 3rd ed. (Baltimore 1992) 411-12, 427.

variety of responsibilities and sources of income.⁷⁹ The adjective "*sacrae*" used in reference to this department alluded to the supposed divinity of the emperor, while the term "*largitiones*" implied that any payments it made to individuals were all dependent upon the emperor's generosity.⁸⁰ The many duties of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* included control of the mints, mines, and state factories throughout the empire, as well as the periodic collection of levies of gold and silver and the payment of donatives and *stipendia* to court officials and soldiers.⁸¹ .

Ten departments under the jurisdiction of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* are listed in the Notitia Dignitatum, including the *scrinium aureae massae* and the *scrinium auri ad responsum*, who were collectively in charge of administering and making use of the empire's supply of gold stocks and bullion, as well as the *sculptores et ceteri artifices*, a department which included engravers and other artisans.

⁷⁹ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 36-38, 68-75; J.P.C. Kent, "The *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum*," in E.C. Dodd, Byzantine Silver Stamps (Washington 1961) 35.

⁸⁰ MacMullen (supra n. 63) 159.

⁸¹ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 68-75; Jones (supra n. 78) 411-12, 427. During the period covered by this thesis (c. 315-c. 450 A.D.), attested imperial mints were located in London, Trier, Lyons, Carthage, Rome, Aquileia, Ticinum, Siscia, Serdica, Thessalonica, Heraclea (in Thrace), Cyzicus, Nicomedia, Antioch, Alexandria, Arelate, Sirmium, and Constantinople; see Delmaire (supra n. 6), 504-10; Jones (supra n. 78) 437. There also quite likely was a mint in Naissus, as well as an arms factory (Jones [supra n. 78] 834), as will be discussed later in this chapter. For a listing of *comites sacrarum largitionum* in the later empire, see R. Delmaire, Les responsables des finances impériales au Bas-Empire romain (Brussels 1989).

King holds that the production of anniversary plates may have been under the jurisdiction of the *aurifices specierum*, a department of the *scrinium aureae massae*, but this is uncertain.⁸² Other offices attached to the bureau of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* included the *scrinia a miliarensibus*, which were responsible for the minting of silver coin, and the *scrinia argenti*, which were responsible for the empire's stocks of silver bullion.⁸³

Another department attached to the office of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* was the *scrinium ab argento*, which may have been the same as, or subordinate to, the *scrinia argenti*.⁸⁴ It is unclear whether or not the *argentarii comitatenses* (court silversmiths) and *barbaricarii* (ornamenters of armour) were under the jurisdiction of the *scrinium ab argento* or were themselves independent departments under the jurisdiction of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*.⁸⁵ The known organization of the *scrinium ab argento* in the fourth century A.D. included one *primicerius scrinii ab argento* (attested in the *Notitia Dignitatum*), two *formae primae*, two *formae secundae*, and five *formae*

⁸² C.E. King, "The *Sacrae Largitiones*: revenues, expenditure, and the production of coin," in C.E. King, ed. *Imperial Revenue, Expenditure and Monetary Policy in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Oxford 1980) 159.

⁸³ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 146-155; Jones (supra n. 78) 427-8.

⁸⁴ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 152; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51.

⁸⁵ King (supra n. 82) 145; Jones (supra n. 78) 427-8.

tertia.⁸⁶ These *formae* appear to have been ranked according to the relative status and skill of both the bureaucrats in charge of their administration and the craftsmen working in them.⁸⁷

The *comes sacrarum largitionum* was evidently the main official responsible for the production of these plates, but it is unclear how much direct jurisdiction he exercised over the silversmiths who actually manufactured them. It is also unclear whether or not these plates were made by imperial silversmiths, or were simply manufactured by private silversmiths working in imperial mints at the behest of the emperor.⁸⁸ The ingots found with many of these plates, as well as some of the plates themselves, from the fourth century A.D. onwards bear control stamps naming the official in charge of their production, but since these stamps do not name the actual silversmiths involved, they do not prove for certain that these silversmiths were employed in the imperial workforce. The earliest date we know of for silversmiths definitely being put under official jurisdiction is in the sixth century A.D.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ The *primicerius scrinii ab argento* is listed under the *comes sacrarum largitionum* of the West (Occ. XI, line 95) and (presumably) the same official is listed as the *primicerius scrinii argenti* under the *comes sacrarum largitionum* of the East (Or. XIII, line 29) in the Notitia Dignitatum; see O. Seeck, Notitia Dignitatum, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt 1962) 36, 153; King (supra n. 82) 145.

⁸⁷ Delmaire (supra n. 6) 151.

⁸⁸ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 116-7.

⁸⁹ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 116-8; Baratte 208.

However, there does appear to have been a clear connection between imperial moneyers and the manufacturers of some of these plates, such as those from the 'Munich' treasure. For instance, Flavius Nicanus, who we know from inscriptional evidence was in charge of the imperial mint at Heraclea, is also mentioned as being a *vascularius* on the inscription of a plate found at Srem.⁹⁰ The inscription on the Cervenbreg plates (C. 11-12) mentioning this same individual will be discussed later in this chapter. Regardless of whether or not the silversmiths who made the anniversary plates were full-time employees of the state, the weight of these plates appears to have been carefully monitored by the officials in charge of their manufacture, and may even have been adjusted according to the relative rank of the official who was to receive the plate.⁹¹

Baratte suggests that these anniversary plates may indeed have been manufactured in imperial workshops, while other contemporary silver plate may have been produced in other 'non-imperial' workshops for private clients.⁹² The case for imperially-controlled production of anniversary plates, amongst other evidence, is supported by the stamps found upon three plates from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 15-17). The stamp on the middle bowl (C. 16) states that it was manufactured in the second coin workshop of the Nicomedia

⁹⁰ Baratte 209-10; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51-52; Painter (supra n. 21) 90.

⁹¹ King (supra n. 82) 159.

⁹² Baratte 200, 207.

mint, while the stamps on the other two bowls (C. 15, 17) only state that they were manufactured at workshops of the Nicomedia and Antioch mints respectively.⁹³ If the interpretation of these stamps is correct, it implies that the coin workshops and other workshops producing these anniversary plates were virtually indistinguishable in terms of the control exercised upon them through the imperial mints.

If the production and export of most silver plate at this time was under the control of the imperial bureaucracy, it would perhaps explain the slightly larger number of Breton tin and African ware vessels manufactured in the later empire, if these were used as a substitute for silver by many Romans.⁹⁴ Several materials such as these were used in the later empire to produce dedicatory objects for 'lesser' officials similar to the silver plates discussed in this thesis. Examples of these include a terracotta fragment depicting an arena tribunal from the early fifth century, as well as a now-destroyed engraved glass dish from the fourth century depicting an official and his 'entourage'.⁹⁵

⁹³ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20.

⁹⁴ Baratte 194.

⁹⁵ *Age of Spirituality* 92-93; J.W. Salomonson, "Kunstgeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchung zu einem Tonfragment der Sammlung Benaki in Athen," *Bulletin antieke Beschaving* 48 (1973) 11, fig. 8; B. Caron, "Note sur deux dessins représentant un verre gravé," *Echos du Monde Classique/ Classical Views* 37 (1993) 358-59.

However, the later anniversary picture plates, namely the missoria of Constantius II (?), Valentinian, Theodosius, and Ardabur Aspar (C. 20-23), are much more 'freely' decorated than the earlier anniversary plates, such as those from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 13-17), and do not bear official mint stamps like the latter examples. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, these plates borrow their iconography and style from non-imperial, as well as imperial, monuments and objects. For example, it appears that these later anniversary plates all possessed full-figure decoration because it was the trend in contemporary non-imperial silver plate, such as the Great Dish from the Mildenhall Treasure.⁹⁶ This suggests that these later anniversary plates may have been manufactured by private silversmiths, in private workshops, working at the emperor's behest, and only taking their products to be inspected and/or stamped by imperial officials when they were finished.⁹⁷ It has even been suggested that the Kerch plates (C. 18-20) may have been manufactured in a 'local' silver workshop, due to their different style of decoration as compared to the other anniversary plates discussed in this thesis.⁹⁸

Yet another question involves whether or not the silver bowls pictured on the emblem of the *comes rerum*

⁹⁶ Strong (supra n. 2) 197-99.

⁹⁷ Strong (supra n. 2) 183.

⁹⁸ Baratte 206-07.

privatarum in the Notitia Dignitatum were actually manufactured under his auspices, or were manufactured by the staff of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* and given to the *comes rerum privatarum* to distribute as he saw fit.⁹⁹ Indeed, the whole organization of the imperial bureaucracy related to such activities as minting coinage and manufacturing silver plate is not clear in all its aspects.

As stated previously, the first set of remaining silver plates associated with a particular imperial anniversary are those which were manufactured for Licinius I's *decennalia* in 317 A.D (C. 1-12). Since Licinius I was made Augustus by Galerius in 307 A.D., this anniversary must have fallen officially in 317 A.D.¹⁰⁰ Due to the similarity between the medallion depictions of Licinius I found on some of these plates and the depictions of Licinius found on his *decennalia* coinage of 315-6 A.D., the plates may have been manufactured at this earlier date as well, but this is uncertain.¹⁰¹

They total twelve in number, and were discovered in Nis (Serbia), Esztergom (Hungary), Svirkovo, and Cervenbreg (Bulgaria). The plates from Nis and Esztergom (C. 1-7) both bear the inscriptions LICINI AVGVSTE SEMPER VINCAS ("Licinius Augustus, may you always conquer") and SIC X SIC XX ("As 10, so 20"), expressing the (as it turned out) vain hope

⁹⁹ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 113; Delbrueck (1933) 69.

¹⁰⁰ Jones (supra n. 78) 78-9.

¹⁰¹ J.D. Breckenridge, in Age of Spirituality 15.

that Licinius I would be able to celebrate yet another *decennalia* ten years hence. The three surviving fragmentary plates from Svirkovo (C. 8-10) suggest that they were inscribed with SIC X SIC XX as well, but the other inscription found on the plates differs somewhat from the Nis and Esztergom examples: LICINIVS INVICTVS AVGVSTVS OB DIEM DECENNALIVM SVORVM ("Licinius, invincible Augustus, on account of the *decennalia* of his reign"). The plates from Cervenbreg (C. 11-12) bear a similar inscription on their central medallions: LICINIVS INVICT AVG OB DIEM X SVORVM.

Some information about the place of manufacture of these plates can be deduced from additional inscriptions found on a number of them, as well as the stamped silver ingots found with several of them. An ingot inscribed OF MAXIMV FA SIRMIS ("From the workshop of the silversmith Maximus in Sirmium"), which was discovered along with the Svirkovo bowls (C. 8-10), indicates that they very likely were also manufactured at the imperial mint located in that city.¹⁰² The stamp NA/ISS found on the bowls from Nis (C. 1-5), which was known by the name of Naissus in antiquity, indicates that they were manufactured in Naissus, although it is not certain that a contemporary imperial mint was located there in addition to

¹⁰² T. Ivanov, "Handelbeziehungen Sirmiums mit Thrakien zur Zeit des *Decennalia* des Kaisers Licinius," Bulletin de l'Institut d'Archeologie bulgare 33 (1972) 236-37.

the known arms factory.¹⁰³ The NAISS stamp found on the Esztergom bowls (C. 6-7) indicates that they were manufactured at the same workshop.¹⁰⁴ A *vascularius* named Hermes(?), who presumably worked at the Naissus workshop, is identified by an inscription on a goblet ([H]ERMES VAS F) found with these bowls.¹⁰⁵

It is unclear whether these plates from Naissus were produced under the auspices of Licinius or of Constantine.¹⁰⁶ Both emperors had met at Milan in 313 A.D. to sort out their differences, but the understanding reached at that meeting did not last long. In 314, Constantine sent his army into Illyricum, which, after a period of protracted fighting, led to a temporary treaty and the acquisition of the previously Licinian dioceses of Pannonia and Moesia (including the city of Naissus) by Constantine in 317.¹⁰⁷ The fact that the known sites of manufacture (Sirmium and Naissus) of these plates were in areas of the empire which Constantine controlled by the time of Licinius' *decennalia* suggests that the former may have commissioned them as 'peace offerings' for his rival after the recent fighting. Chastagnol even contends that the plates may have been the first items produced at the workshop

¹⁰³ Baratte 202; Jones (supra n. 78) 834; Garbsch and Overbeck (supra n. 17) 64.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas (supra n. 20) 136-7.

¹⁰⁵ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 114.

¹⁰⁶ Baratte 202; Chastagnol (supra n. 66) 19-20.

¹⁰⁷ Jones (supra n. 78) 80-83; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 13-15.

set up at Constantine's command in Naissus, after he gained control of the city.¹⁰⁸

The place of origin of the Cervenbreg (C. 11-12) plates is more difficult to determine. Although the inscriptions found on them do not mention a specific workshop, Ivanov has contended, through a difficult chain of reasoning, that these plates were manufactured at the imperial workshop in Sirmium. The name Flavius Nicanus, which appears on the Cervenbreg plates (O FLAV NICANI M B N), also appears on a silver ingot found in Sabac, Serbia. Another ingot discovered in association with the previous one at Sabac has an inscription mentioning Sirmium (ADI MVS P SIRM). From this tenuous evidence Ivanov has concluded that the Cervenbreg plates were produced in Sirmium.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Overbeck holds that these plates were produced at the imperial mint at Heraclea in Thrace, since the central medallions of the Cervenbreg plates are quite similar to contemporary medallions of Licinius I produced at that mint.¹¹⁰

Yet another problem is raised by the Flavius Nicanus inscription found on the Cervenbreg plates. The initial section of the inscription reads O FLAV NICANI ("From the workshop of Flavius Nicanus"), but the meaning of the last part

¹⁰⁸ Chastagnol (*supra* n. 66) 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Ivanov (*supra* n. 102) 236-37; Baratte 195, 198. For a full discussion of the ingots mentioned in this paragraph, see Painter (*supra* n. 21) 90-1.

¹¹⁰ Overbeck (*supra* n. 4) 51-2.

of the inscription, M B N, is unclear. Overbeck, among others, has translated M B N as "magister bisellarius nummulariorum", which means something like 'honorary master of the moneyers'. Such a *nummularius* is mentioned in Petronius (56.2) as being a man who "per argentum aes videt". However, there exists no other evidence to substantiate the existence of a *magister bisellarius nummulariorum* in the later Roman empire, and, as Baratte states, it is not valid to suppose the existence of this office on the basis of a first century A.D. satirical novel and an unknown abbreviation in a much later inscription. A further piece of evidence against identifying Flavius Nicanus as a *magister bisellarius nummulariorum* is the fact that on one of the aforementioned Sabac ingots, (presumably) the same Flavius Nicanus is designated merely as a *vascularius*.¹¹¹ On the other hand, no alternative explanation for the meaning of M B N has been offered as yet by other scholars.¹¹²

The next set of anniversary plates consists of those five which were manufactured in approximately 321-22 A.D. (C. 13-17). All of these plates, whose exact findspot is unknown, make up the so-called 'Munich' Treasure. Of the three Caesars mentioned on these plates (Constantine II, Crispus, and Licinius II) neither Crispus nor Licinius II

¹¹¹ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51; Baratte 210; Painter (supra n. 21) 90.

¹¹² E.g. Baratte 210; CIL III 6331(b).

survived as Caesars to celebrate their *decennalia* in 327 A.D., which indicates that the most likely date for their manufacture is 321-22, when all three Caesars celebrated their *quinquennalia*.¹¹³ Analysis of them indicates that they were once part of a single hoard, which must have come from the eastern empire, since the known sites of manufacture of the plates, as will be discussed, are all in eastern Europe or Asia Minor.¹¹⁴ The first of these bowls (C. 13) was manufactured in honour of the *decennalia* of Constantine's sons, Crispus and Constantine II, as Caesars, even though they were apparently only made Caesars by their father in 317 A.D.¹¹⁵ The *vota suscepta* inscription on the bowl reads VOTIS X CAESS NN ("For the tenth anniversary of our [two] Caesars"). The punched inscription on the bowl, NAISS, indicates that this bowl was manufactured at the imperial workshop in Naissus.¹¹⁶

A second bowl manufactured at roughly the same time is an example from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 14) which is decorated with the inscription VOTIS X CAESARIS NOSTRI ("For the tenth anniversary of our Caesar"). The single Caesar referred to in this inscription must be Licinius II, who was made Caesar by his father, Licinius I, at the same time as

¹¹³ Jones (supra n. 78) 83, 85; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 63.

¹¹⁴ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20.

¹¹⁵ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22; Jones (supra n. 78) 84.

¹¹⁶ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22.

Crispus and Constantine II.¹¹⁷ The additional fragmentary inscription ...XIAC ("From Antioch(?)") on the bowl may indicate it was manufactured in that city.¹¹⁸ Like the bowl from Naissus, this bowl's inscription records *vota suscepta* rather than *vota soluta*.¹¹⁹

These two bowls closely correspond to the historical circumstances present at the time of their manufacture. The existence of these two plates, one dedicated to the sons of Constantine, the other to the son of Licinius, reflects the rift that had developed between the two Augusti by 321 A.D., which culminated in Constantine's successful campaign against Licinius in 324 A.D.¹²⁰ These plates suggest that two anniversaries were being celebrated in the empire at this time, that of Crispus and Constantine II in the half of the empire controlled by Constantine I, and that of Licinius II in the half of the empire controlled by Licinius I: the mints controlled by Constantine I and Licinius I, Naissus and Antioch respectively, produced these plates on their particular ruler's behalf. Since these plates came to be owned by one individual, they probably could only have been collected together after Licinius' defeat in 324 A.D., as Chastagnol suggests.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22; Jones (supra n. 78) 84.

¹¹⁸ Garbsch and Overbeck (supra n. 17) 57.

¹¹⁹ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22.

¹²⁰ Jones (supra n. 78) 82-3.

¹²¹ Chastagnol (supra n. 66) 20-2.

Three other bowls from the 'Munich' Treasure were also manufactured on behalf of Licinius II in 321-22 A.D. The first of these bowls (C. 15), which bears a central medallion of Licinius I, is inscribed with a *vota soluta* formula celebrating Licinius II's fifth anniversary as Caesar: LICINIVS AVG OB D V LICINI FILI SVI ("Licinius [I] Augustus, on the fifth anniversary of his son, Licinius [II]"). A stamp on the outside of the plate specifies that it was manufactured at one of the imperial workshops in Nicomedia: NIKO/AIΔ/A ("Workshop number one(?) of the Nicomedia mint, under the jurisdiction of Aid[esios]"). This Aid[esios] (a relatively frequent name in the later empire) was likely the imperial official in charge of the entire workshop, and not just of the production of this particular plate.¹²²

A similar contemporary bowl from Nicomedia (c. 16) features a central medallion depicting the young Licinius II. Surrounding this medallion is an inscription which, like that of C. 15, also celebrates Licinius II's *quinquennalia*: LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM ("Licinius Caesar, on the fifth anniversary of his reign"). The control stamp on the outside of the bowl may indicate that this bowl was manufactured in the second 'coin-workshop' of the Nicomedia mint (NIKO[μηδία]/EYT/N[ομισματων] E[ργαστηριον] B). The "EYT" referred to in the stamp (Eutolmios?) likely held a position of

¹²² Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23.

authority similar to that held by the Aidesios mentioned on the previous bowl's stamp (C. 15).¹²³

The last of the bowls celebrating Licinius II's *quinquennalia* (C. 17) is quite similar to the previous two examples (C. 15, 16). The inscription on this bowl (C. 17) is identical to that found on the previous one (C. 16) [LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM], but the central medallion depicts an even younger Licinius II than on the second Nicomedia bowl (C. 16). Since Licinius II was only about six years of age when these plates were manufactured, his depiction on the former bowl (C. 17) appears to be more realistic than that on the latter (C. 16), which depicts him with sideburns! Evidently, the makers of the Nicomedia bowl supposed that it would be better for propaganda purposes to depict Licinius II as being far older than he actually was. The control stamp on the bowl (C. 17) states that it was manufactured at the imperial mint in Antioch: ANT/EYCT/A ("Workshop number one(?), under the jurisdiction of Eust[ochios]"). This Eustochios appears to have held the same relative rank at the Antioch mint as Aidesios and Eutolmios held at the Nicomedia mint.¹²⁴

The next set of anniversary plates to be discussed are those which were all (likely) manufactured during the reign of Constantius II, who was made Caesar by his father

¹²³ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23, 29.

¹²⁴ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 29.

Constantine I in 324 A.D., and became Augustus, initially of Thrace, Pontica, Asiana, and Oriens (but after 353 A.D. of the whole empire), with the death of his father in 337 A.D. (C. 18-20).¹²⁵ Two of these plates (C. 18-19) were produced for Constantius' *vicennalia* celebrations in 343 A.D., but Gruenhagen has suggested that the picture plate depicting the triumphant *adventus* of Constantius (?) (C. 20) may have been manufactured to celebrate his *tricennalia* in 353 A.D., with an allusion to his recent victory over Magnentius.¹²⁶ Other scholars, including Kent and Painter, contend that this plate was manufactured for Constantius' thirty-fifth anniversary in 357 A.D.¹²⁷ Two of the three (C. 18-19) plates have inscriptions referring to Constantius' *vicennalia* (VOTIS XX D N CONSTANTII AVGVSTI ["For vows undertaken on the twentieth anniversary of our lord Constantius Augustus"]), but the third plate (C. 20) has no inscription. The common view among scholars is that it also represents Constantius II, based largely upon the similarity of its depiction of the emperor to that found on a fragment of a glass vessel in Rome, which Salomonson believes was manufactured on the occasion of Constantius' visit to Rome in 357 A.D. However, the identification of the emperor depicted on this glass fragment, and consequently of the emperor on the

¹²⁵ Jones (supra n. 78) 85, 112-3.

¹²⁶ W. Gruenhagen, *Der Schatzfund von Gross Bodungen* (Berlin 1954) 18.

¹²⁷ Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 25; Jones (supra n. 78) 113.

third Kerch plate, is not absolutely certain, as will be discussed in the next chapter.¹²⁸ Additional support in favour of this identification may lie in the fact that the three plates were discovered in graves close to one another, and therefore possibly contemporary in date, although this does not rule out the possibility that the third plate was produced for a later anniversary than the other two.¹²⁹

Since all three of these plates were discovered at the site of Panticapaeum, which was the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom in Constantius' time, they may have been presented to the ruler of this kingdom as a gift by Constantius upon his anniversary.¹³⁰ Coin finds associated with one of the plates (C. 19) indicate that it was deposited at some time in the later fourth century A.D.¹³¹

One problem with the study of these particular plates is the fact that only one of them has a control stamp, which makes it difficult to state with absolute certainty where the other two were manufactured. The plate (C. 18) which has a control stamp (ANT) appears to have been manufactured in Antioch. Both this plate and the second plate from this series (C. 19) have weight inscriptions in Greek, which suggests that

¹²⁸ See Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 25; Baratte 206-7; Salomonson (*supra* n. 95) 52-6; G.N. Brands, "Ein Glasschalenfragment im Antiquarium Comunale in Rom," *JAC* 26 (1983) 107-27.

¹²⁹ Toynbee and Painter 25-6.

¹³⁰ Toynbee and Painter 25-6; Strong (*supra* n. 2) 200.

¹³¹ Toynbee and Painter 25.

they were produced under the official supervision found at such a place as an eastern imperial mint. The latter plate also has the Greek inscription EVC (perhaps standing for a name like Eusebios), which may represent the name of the official in charge of the workshop where they were produced. It is possible that all three plates, two of which have Greek inscriptions, were produced at a single workshop of the Antioch mint, or at different workshops within this mint, but this is impossible to prove at present.¹³² However, as Painter states, the fact that their style is quite different from that of other anniversary plates (such as those of Licinius I and II discussed above [C. 15-17]) does not mean that they were produced by a 'provincial' workshop, and could not have been produced at an imperial mint like the former plates.¹³³

The next plate to be discussed is the Missorium of Valentinian I or II (C. 21). The faces of the figures depicted on the plate have all been worn off over time, so that it is impossible to determine which emperor the central figure represents by comparison with known portraits of either of the two Valentinians. The inscription found on the plate, LARGITAS D N VALENTINIANI AVGVSTI ("The bounty of our lord Valentinian Augustus") does not specify under which Valentinian this plate was produced.

¹³² Toynbee and Painter 26.

¹³³ Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 25.

Painter suggests that this plate may have been produced for the *quinquennalia* or *decennalia* of Valentinian I (in 369 or 374 A.D. respectively), while Delbrueck contends that at least one feature of this plate's decoration, to be discussed in the next chapter, is similar to that found on depictions of Valentinian II.¹³⁴ Gruenhagen suggests that the *missorium*, with its depiction of the emperor holding the *labarum*, may have been produced to celebrate Valentinian I's victory at Solicinium in 368 A.D., or his restoration of the Rhine frontier in general.¹³⁵ Although this plate has no control stamp to indicate where it was manufactured, it might have been produced in one of the mints of the western empire, since the sphere of influence of both Valentinians was centred largely in this area.¹³⁶

One interesting feature of this plate is the fact that several of the shield devices depicted upon it are similar to illustrated shield devices of western military units in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. In particular, two of the shields on the plate (the far left shield and the second shield from the right) resemble shields depicted in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as part of the insignia of the *magistri officiorum* of the western empire. In addition, the helmet depicted at the bottom of the plate is similar to the ones illustrated in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as part

¹³⁴ Toynbee and Painter 27; Delbrueck (1933) 180.

¹³⁵ Gruenhagen (supra n. 126) 18.

¹³⁶ Jones (supra n. 78) 139-40, 158-59.

of the same insignia. The whole scene on the plate, with its helmet, sword, and shields, is reminiscent of the scattered weapons depicted in the latter scene.¹³⁷ It could perhaps be suggested that this plate was manufactured as a gift for one of the contemporary *magistri officiorum* of the western half of the empire, but there is no way to prove this hypothesis for certain.

Another dish belonging to this series of anniversary plates is the famous Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22). The inscription on the plate, D N THEODOSIVS PERPET AVG OB DIEM FELICISSIMVM X ("Our lord Theodosius, eternal Augustus, on his most joyful tenth anniversary"), refers to Theodosius' *decennalia*, which occurred in 388 A.D.¹³⁸ Delbrueck has suggested that the five Erotes depicted on the plate may represent either the previous five years since Theodosius' *quinquennalia*, or the five years yet to pass before his *quindecennalia*, but this may perhaps be attaching too much symbolic importance to these figures.¹³⁹ The Greek weight stamp on the back of the missorium (ΠΟC ΑΙ Ν ΜΕΤ) suggests that it may have been manufactured in one of the mints of the eastern empire. Some scholars suppose that the plate was produced in Thessalonica, since Theodosius celebrated his *decennalia* there, but, as Baratte states, this is a very tenuous

¹³⁷ Delbrueck (1933) 180-81; Seeck (supra n. 86) 116-19, 128-29, 144.

¹³⁸ R. Brilliant, in *Age of Spirituality* 75.

¹³⁹ Delbrueck (1929) 237.

argument. The plate could have just as easily have been produced in another eastern mint like that at Constantinople.¹⁴⁰

Although the central seated figure on the plate is clearly meant to represent Theodosius himself, the identity of the two seated figures flanking him is not absolutely certain, even though most scholars assume they represent Valentinian II and Arcadius (Valentinian II being on Theodosius' right). The most doubt appears to exist about the identification of Valentinian II.¹⁴¹ While Theodosius and his son Arcadius (an Augustus since the age of six, in 383 A.D.) were members of the new Theodosian dynasty, and consequently could be expected to be represented together in contemporary imperial art, it might seem unusual to associate them with the ineffectual Valentinian II, who, at the time of this plate's manufacture, was the sole surviving member of the previous dynasty of Valentinian I. He had been a nominal Augustus of the western empire since the death of his father in 375 A.D., but he appears to have exercised little real power; prior to 387 his mother Justina ruled in his name, and in the following year Theodosius had to march west to rescue Valentinian's domains from the invasion of Magnus Maximus.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Brilliant (supra n. 138) 76; Baratte 194-95.

¹⁴¹ Brilliant (supra n. 138) 75; Toynbee and Painter 27-8.

¹⁴² Jones (supra n. 78) 158-59.

Some scholars like Hübner (as cited by Arce), have identified the figure on Theodosius' right as his younger son Honorius, who was a four year old Caesar in 388, but this identification is subject to criticism.¹⁴³ First of all, the supposed figure of Honorius is larger than that of Arcadius, even though the latter was in reality seven years older than the former. Valentinian II was six years older than Arcadius, which appears to correspond more closely to the relative sizes of the two figures on the plate. Secondly, it would not be appropriate for Honorius, a Caesar, to hold a sceptre and globe while his elder brother Arcadius, an Augustus, merely holds a globe, but it would perhaps be appropriate for Valentinian II, an Augustus of longer standing than Arcadius, to do so.¹⁴⁴

Even if Arcadius were to be identified as the emperor holding the sceptre and globe, and Honorius as his counterpart on the other side of Theodosius, this solution would still present problems. The exclusion altogether of the 'senior' Augustus Valentinian from the scene on the plate would be in conflict with the hierarchical depictions of emperors, according to relative rank, seen in most later imperial art.¹⁴⁵ If the figure to the right of Theodosius were Valentinian II, the central position occupied by Theodosius on the plate might reflect the

¹⁴³ J. Arce, "El Missorium de Teodosio I: Precisiones y Observaciones," *AEspArq* 49 (1976) 123.

¹⁴⁴ A.García y Bellido, *Esculturas Romanas de España y Portugal: Texto* (Madrid 1949) 472-73; Toynbee and Painter 27-8.

¹⁴⁵ Arce (supra n. 143) 127.

dominant influence which the latter emperor had on the former, even though Valentinian had technically held the rank of Augustus longer than Theodosius.¹⁴⁶

The small official beside Theodosius appears to be receiving a codicil from the emperor, which would symbolize the attainment of a new position or social rank by him within the imperial bureaucracy. These imperial codicils were granted by the emperor to admit selected individuals to the equestrian order, senatorial order, or to honorary offices within either order.¹⁴⁷ There is no way to ascertain what particular commission the official is receiving in this scene.

The final dish to be discussed is the plate of Ardabur Aspar, which illustrates the fact that anniversary dishes, like other items such as consular diptychs, were not only manufactured on behalf of emperors, but could also be produced for imperial officials to celebrate their own anniversaries in office.¹⁴⁸ In this instance, the plate in question was produced to celebrate Aspar's consulship in the western empire, which occurred in 434 A.D.¹⁴⁹

The main inscription on the plate names Aspar and his various offices: FL. ARDABVR ASPAR VIR INLVSTRIS COM.

¹⁴⁶ Arce (supra n. 143) 124-25.

¹⁴⁷ Brilliant (supra n. 138) 75; Jones (supra n. 78) 530-32, 547.

¹⁴⁸ Delmaire (supra n. 21) 113. For details of Aspar's long career as an imperial official, see J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* Vol. 2 (Cambridge 1980) 164-69.

¹⁴⁹ Delbrueck (1929) 154; Martindale (supra n. 148) 164-69, 1243.

ET MAG. MILITVM ET CONSVL ORDINARIVS ("Flavius Ardabur Aspar, a distinguished man, companion and master of the soldiers and regular consul"). Aspar was *magister militum* of the eastern empire from as early as 424 A.D. to 471 A.D. Shorter inscriptions on the plate name other figures in the scene; Aspar's son Ardabur (ARDABVR IVNIOR PRETOR) who was praetor (probably at Constantinople) in the same year as his father's consulship, Aspar's father, Ardabur Aspar, who was consul in 427 A.D., and Aspar's probable father-in-law Plinta, who was consul in 419 A.D.¹⁵⁰

The main scene on the plate depicts the giving of games by Aspar the consul and his son Ardabur the praetor, although the games are only suggested by the prizes underneath the two central figures, and not actually depicted. The scene may well allude to the actual games put on by the younger Ardabur as part of his duties as praetor in 434 A.D. Under Constantine I and his son, Constantius II, games for the populace of both Rome and Constantinople began to be regularly funded by the praetors in office.¹⁵¹ Both Ardabur and Aspar hold the *mappa* in their hands, and an assortment of prizes for the competitors in the games is located at the bottom of the scene. As the senior (in more ways than one) official in the scene, Aspar is seated upon the *sella curulis*. Although

¹⁵⁰ Martindale (supra n. 148) 135-38, 164-69, 892-93.

¹⁵¹ Jones (supra n. 78) 537.

Ardabur, as the praetor giving the games, is allowed to have full triumphal regalia, his father Aspar carries the sceptre associated with these games.

An interesting feature of the plate's decoration, to be discussed further in the next chapter, is these sceptres carried by Aspar, Plinta, and the elder Ardabur Aspar. According to Delbrueck, the two busts surmounting each of these sceptres represent the respective emperors in power when each of these men held their consulships; Honorius and Theodosius II in the case of Plinta (419 A.D.), and Theodosius II and Valentinian III in the case of Ardabur Aspar (427 A.D.), and his son Aspar (434 A.D.).¹⁵²

¹⁵² Delbrueck (1929) 154-56.

CHAPTER FOUR

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss selected aspects of the decoration found upon most of the anniversary plates examined in this thesis. Comparison of this decoration with that found upon different pieces of contemporary art and coinage will show how these plates fit into the 'decorative patterns' of later Roman art as a whole. Such a comparison will also illustrate (and perhaps clarify) some of the more controversial aspects of the various depictions found on these plates.

The first set of plates to be discussed consists of the five matching bowls with identical decoration found in Nis, Serbia (C. 1-5). These bowls, as we know from the inscriptions found upon them, were all manufactured to celebrate the *decennalia* of Licinius I, which occurred in 317 A.D.¹⁵³ Their decoration, namely a SIC X SIC XX inscription surrounded by a laurel wreath, is almost exactly the same as that found upon the reverse of *aurei* manufactured at the Heraclea mint and issued by Licinius I and Constantine I in 315-16 A.D to celebrate the latter's *decennalia*. Like the bowls, this coin type

¹⁵³ Toynbee and Painter 24-25.

displays the SIC X SIC XX inscription encircled by a laurel wreath, although an additional inscription, SMHB, is also included on this coin type (Figure 27). The coins' quadruple wreath, with an eagle medallion on top, is also more elaborate than the wreath found on the plates.¹⁵⁴ This type of design, a central medallion surrounded by a wreath and little or no other decoration, was a common feature in late antique silverware, and can also be seen on such examples as one of the dishes from the fourth century Esquiline treasure (Figure 28).¹⁵⁵ The SIC X SIC XX inscription on Roman coinage itself dates back to the early fourth century A.D., during the reign of Diocletian.¹⁵⁶

Another set of plates decorated with the SIC X SIC XX inscription consists of the anniversary bowls of Licinius I discovered in Esztergom, Hungary (C. 6-7), and in Svirkovo, Bulgaria (C. 8-10), although their design is 'cruder' than that found upon the Nis plates (C. 1-5). The punched 'ray' and 'scroll' patterns found respectively upon the Esztergom and Svirkovo plates are indicative of the formal ornament found on many pieces of late Roman silver, although they in no way compare to the intricate engraved patterns found on many

¹⁵⁴ R.A.G. Carson, Coins of the Roman Empire (London 1990) 166; Age of Spirituality 15; Robertson (supra n. 74) 199-200: the Latin inscription SMHB stands for "*sacra moneta* of Heraclea Workshop B"; see RIC VII 532-35; Garbsch and Overbeck (supra n. 17) 229.

¹⁵⁵ G.L. Brett, "Formal elements on late Roman and early Byzantine silver," BSR XV (1939) 38; Shelton (supra n. 2) 43, 54.

¹⁵⁶ Baratte 202.

other examples, such as silver fragments from the early fifth century Coleraine Hoard.¹⁵⁷ These plates, like the Nis examples, are also characterized by a central inscription surrounded by circular ornament. The raised rims found on the Svirkovo plates are similar to those found on the contemporary Cervenbreg examples (C. 11-12).

The next set of plates to be discussed are the two matching plates discovered in Cervenbreg, Bulgaria (C. 11-12). The depiction of Licinius I on the medallions of these plates is almost exactly similar to that found on contemporary coinage minted at Heraclea, such as the obverse of the previously mentioned *aurei* minted for Licinius I in 315-16 A.D. (Figure 29).¹⁵⁸ Contemporary coin-portraits produced at other mints, such as Serdica (313-14 A.D.) and Thessalonica (313-17 A.D.), also bear a striking resemblance to the portrait on the Cervenbreg plates (Figure 30).¹⁵⁹ All of these portraits depict a bearded Licinius facing to the right and wearing a laurel wreath. This similarity is not at all surprising, since it appears that the medallions used on the Cervenbreg and 'Munich' Treasure may have been manufactured with the same coin dies used for the obverses of such contemporary coinage.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Brett (supra n. 155) 33; H. Mattingly and J.W.E. Pearce, "The Coleraine Hoard," *Antiquity* XI (1937) 42, pl. I.

¹⁵⁸ Baratte 19; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51-52; Carson (supra n. 154) 166, 340.

¹⁵⁹ Robertson (supra n. 74) 128-29.

¹⁶⁰ Strong (supra n. 2) 200; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 49-50; Baratte 209-10.

The fluted rim found on the Cervenbreg plates is characteristic of other contemporary Roman silverware. The Ariadne platter in the Kaiseraugst treasure, plates from the Soissons, Sisale, and Svirkovo treasures, as well as the Cervenbreg plates, are all characterized by sloping, convex sides, with relatively high edges.¹⁶¹ Fourth century bowls from the 'Munich' and Mildenhall treasures also possess fluted edges.¹⁶² Another feature of the Cervenbreg plates, which is characteristic of late Roman silver, is the use of a medallion surrounded by a wreath in the centre of the plate, with little or no decoration elsewhere.¹⁶³ Other dishes similar in this respect are the Licinius I and II bowls from the 'Munich' treasure, as well as two of the Constantius II plates from Kerch (to be discussed further on in this chapter). Plates such as the Achilles and 'Sea City' dishes from the Kaiseraugst treasure, the sixth century Hippolytus plates from Egypt, the Cesena plate, and the Sevso plate, also feature central roundels as the most prominent aspect of their decoration.¹⁶⁴

The third set of plates to be discussed in this chapter are those of Licinius I and Licinius II from the so-called 'Munich' treasure (C. 15-17). The first of these bowls (C. 15) is quite similar to the Cervenbreg bowl, since it features a

¹⁶¹ Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann (supra n. 1) 200.

¹⁶² Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22-23, 36-37.

¹⁶³ Brett (supra n. 155) 38.

¹⁶⁴ Toynbee and Painter 30-32, 35-36, 44-45, pls. XII (b), XV (c),(d), XXII; M.M. Mango, "The Sevso Treasure Hunting Plate," *Apollo* 132 (1990) 2-4.

central medallion within two lathe-cut circles as its decoration. The medallion of Licinius I found on this plate is quite similar to contemporary Roman coinage, in particular *aurei* of Licinius I minted at Nicomedia in 321 (Figure 31). Both coin and medallion present a frontal view of the bearded Licinius wearing a cloak and *fibula* with armour underneath.¹⁶⁵ This coin type may even have been issued in conjunction with the anniversary plate, since the obverse of the coin and the plate bear virtually identical inscriptions (LICINIVS AVG OB D V FILII SVI). Other contemporary issues of this coin type from Nicomedia have the same obverse inscription, but depict Licinius as being clean-shaven.¹⁶⁶

Two other bowls from the 'Munich' treasure are dedicated to Licinius II. The first of these bowls (C. 16), like the Licinius I bowl from the 'Munich' treasure, has a central medallion surrounded by two lathe-cut circles. As with the other medallions from the bowls of the 'Munich' treasure, this medallion is quite similar to contemporary Roman coinage, in particular *aurei* of Licinius II minted at Nicomedia between 321 and 324 A.D. This coin type also depicts Licinius II in a frontal pose wearing military dress, though without sideburns (Figure 32). It appears to have been minted for Licinius II's *quinquennalia* in conjunction with the anniversary plate

¹⁶⁵ Overbeck (supra n. 4) 54; J.P.C. Kent, *Roman Coins* (London 1986) 328, pl. 159, n. 622.

¹⁶⁶ Carson (supra n. 154) 340, pl. 44, fig. 658; *RIC* VII 606, pl. 20, n. 41.

produced at the same mint in Nicomedia: the reverse of the coin bears the inscription SIC V SIC X.¹⁶⁷

The other bowl of Licinius II from the 'Munich' treasure (C. 17) is virtually identical to the previous one (C. 16) from the same hoard, except that the portraits found on the medallions of the two bowls are slightly different. The medallion portrait of the former bowl (Figure 13) depicts a much younger Licinius II than that found on the latter (Figure 11), even though both bowls were manufactured to celebrate the same anniversary. This portrait is very similar to that found on the obverse of contemporary *aurei* minted at Antioch for the same anniversary (Figure 33): both depict a very youthful Licinius II from the front, wearing a cloak with armour underneath.¹⁶⁸ As in the case of the Licinius I bowl produced in Nicomedia (C. 15), this example appears to have been produced in conjunction with the aforementioned Antioch *aurei*: both bowl and coins were produced at the same mint at approximately the same time.¹⁶⁹

The next bowl to be discussed is the first of the Constantius II bowls from Kerch (C. 18). Like much other contemporary Roman silverware, this example makes use of

¹⁶⁷ Robertson (supra n. 74) 154, no. 33; *RIC* VII 607, pl. 20, n. 42..

¹⁶⁸ Kent (supra n. 165) 328.

¹⁶⁹ Contemporary coinage also depicts Licinius II in a variety of appearances (such as with and without a helmet and weapons); see Robertson (supra n. 74) 148-57, pl. 41-42.

both gilding and niello.¹⁷⁰ The portrait of Constantius II found in the centre of it is similar, though not identical, to contemporary portraits of him found on coins and medallions, such as the obverses of *solidi* minted in Constantinople in approximately 338 A.D. (Figure 34).¹⁷¹ Both portraits depict Constantius facing to the right, wearing a diadem with ribbons at the back. They both also depict him as having a rather long and slender nose. The main difference between the two portraits is that the coin does not show the cloak and brooch worn by Constantius on the plate. The plate portrait has also been thought to be more 'provincial' than the coin portrait in its style, due to its comparative lack of detail, but this may be primarily a matter of taste, and caused more by the difference in artistic media between the engraving used on the plate and the coin die than anything else.¹⁷²

The next zone of decoration on the plate consists of a circular 'scroll' pattern. The use of leaves such as these in varying patterns for ornament on later Roman silver is a common phenomenon, and can be witnessed on other contemporary silver.¹⁷³ The edge of the Corbridge Lanx (later fourth century A.D.) has a scroll pattern quite similar to that found upon the Kerch plate, although the Corbridge decoration

¹⁷⁰ Delbrueck (1933) 146-47; Strong (supra n. 2) 194.

¹⁷¹ Kent (supra n. 165) 333.

¹⁷² Delbrueck (1933) 146.

¹⁷³ Brett (supra n. 155) 33.

includes grapes as well as leaves (Figure 55). An even more similar 'scroll' pattern is found on the outer section of a dish from Augst (Figure 35).

The next zone of decoration, apart from the inscription, consists of a 'wave' pattern. This wave or strigillated pattern, which is one of the characteristic schemes of decoration found on late Roman silver, as well as being found on one of the other Kerch plates (C. 19), is also found on other contemporary Roman silverware, such as one of the plates from the ca. 400 A.D. Carthage Treasure (Figure 36).¹⁷⁴ Traces of gilding remain on the furrows of each of these plates.¹⁷⁵ A similar strigillated pattern is also found on several Roman sarcophagi, as typified by one example from Rome (Figure 37).¹⁷⁶

The next zone of decoration consists of a 'garlanded arcade' pattern. A fragment of a bronze relief from Augst or Kaiseraugst depicts the same style of garlanded arcade over the figure of Mercury (Figure 38).¹⁷⁷ Amongst contemporary Roman silverware, a similar use of arcading, though without the garlanding, is found on the Casket of Projecta from the Esquiline Treasure (Figure 39) and similar columns can be seen on the Achilles Plate from the Treasure of Kaiseraugst (Figure

¹⁷⁴ Strong (supra n. 2) 196; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 51.

¹⁷⁵ Delbrueck (1933) 146-47; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 51.

¹⁷⁶ G. Koch and H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage* (Munich 1982) 105.

¹⁷⁷ Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinemann, Vol. II (supra n. 1) 15.

40).¹⁷⁸ All of these silver objects depict spirally fluted columns. A similar use of decorative arcading can be seen on many later Roman sarcophagi, including a sarcophagus from the Campo Santo in Pisa, dating to 270-80 A.D., which also has spiraled columns as part of its design (Figure 41).¹⁷⁹ This use of columns originally appeared on third century A.D. Roman sarcophagi as a means of separating one or more figures in the scene depicted on the sarcophagus.¹⁸⁰ The use of arcading on all of these objects also reflects the use of such architectural depictions for the creation of "imposing setting[s]" on various pieces of art, which appears to have become particularly popular in the later empire.¹⁸¹ Garlands such as those found on the Kerch dish arcade can also be found on numerous Roman sarcophagi, although usually not associated with columns as on the plate.¹⁸²

The second bowl found in Kerch (C. 19) is virtually identical to the one just discussed, except that it does not have a ring of garlanded arches as part of its decoration. Like the previous bowl (C. 18), it has circular zones of both vine-scroll

¹⁷⁸ Shelton (supra n. 2) 54-55; Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann, Vol. I (supra n. 1) 284.

¹⁷⁹ P. Arias et al., Camposanto Monumentale di Pisa: Le Antichità. Vol. I (Roma 1977) 143; N. Himmelmann, Typologische Untersuchungen an Römischen Sarkophagreliefs des 3 und 4 Jahrhunderts n. Chr. (Mainz 1973) pl. 9.

¹⁸⁰ Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann, Vol. I (supra n. 1) 284.

¹⁸¹ D. Strong, Roman Art (London 1988) 222.

¹⁸² See Koch and Sichtermann (supra n. 176) pls. 513-17.

and 'wave' decoration similar to those found upon previously mentioned works of Roman art. The depiction of Constantius II in the centre of the bowl is similar, though not identical, to that found upon the first Kerch dish. This portrait also depicts Constantius facing to the right, wearing a diadem, brooch and cloak, but the depiction is somewhat more simplified than that found upon the previous bowl (C. 18), using fewer lines to illustrate the folds of Constantius' cloak or the strands of his hair. However, this portrait, like the previous one, does appear to have been closely based upon contemporary coinage.¹⁸³

The final plate discovered in Kerch (C. 20) has the most elaborate (and controversial) decoration of the three. The scene on the plate depicts the triumphant *adventus* of an emperor, who is followed by one of his soldiers and preceded by the figure of Victory. These *adventus* scenes, which typically depicted at the least a single horse and rider, became particularly popular on coinage from the reign of Septimius Severus onwards. Such scenes, depicting the triumphant return of the emperor from battle, were meant to symbolize his power and courage, as well as the 'innate' invincibility which belonged to him as emperor.¹⁸⁴ Beginning in the third century A.D., they usually included at least one of the emperor's followers or

¹⁸³ Delbrueck (1933) 146.

¹⁸⁴ R. Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art* (New Haven 1963) 173-75; S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1981) 41-42.

soldiers, as well as the figure of Victory in front of him, as on the Kerch example. A figure of a kneeling barbarian in front of the emperor's horse is quite often included to symbolize the defeated enemy, but in the Kerch example this figure's function appears to have been replaced by the single shield lying under the horse.¹⁸⁵

If the plate was meant to represent Constantius II, as will be argued shortly, it may well have been produced either to celebrate Constantius' thirtieth anniversary as Caesar and defeat of Magnentius in 353 A.D., or his thirty-fifth anniversary and entry into Rome in 357 A.D., as suggested in Chapter Three.¹⁸⁶ Both dates appear equally plausible: Constantius' entry into Rome would be a suitable occasion on which to produce an *adventus* plate, but the occasion of Magnentius' defeat would also be suitable, due to the previously discussed connotations of imperial victory implicit in the *adventus* motif.

A similar scene to that depicted on the plate is found on a gold 'Adventus' medallion of Constantine I issued in 313 A.D. to celebrate his recent victory over Maxentius (Figure 42).¹⁸⁷ Both depict Victory, holding a laurel wreath and palm branch, preceding the spear-bearing emperor on horseback. A

¹⁸⁵ Brilliant (supra n. 184) 175-76; Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 97.

¹⁸⁶ Gruenhagen (supra n. 126) 18; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 25; Jones (supra n. 78) 113.

¹⁸⁷ Kent (supra n. 165) 328-29.

spear-bearing soldier follows the emperor in both scenes, although on the medallion he is also holding a standard, and not a shield. In addition, no shield is found under the emperor's horse in the medallion scene.

Matzulewitsch contends that the last Kerch plate is similar to the other two both in its use of niello and gilding and in its artistic style, particularly in the depiction of head adornment, but this similarity does not appear close enough to suggest that the decoration on all three plates was produced by the same artist.¹⁸⁸ However, the 'mannered' style used on the third Kerch plate has parallels in other pieces of Roman silverware. Baratte argues that this method of depiction, with its somewhat stylized treatment of the human figure, is also to be seen in the figures on the Ariadne tablet from the Treasure of Kaiseraugst (Figure 43). Both pieces are characterized by attention to detail in some respects (such as the depiction of Constantius' chin), but a lack of 'realism' overall.¹⁸⁹ An even closer similarity in style to the Kerch dish can be seen in the depiction of a nude male (or possibly hermaphrodite) on a mid-fourth century A.D. silver spoon from Syria (Figure 44).¹⁹⁰ All of these depictions are seen by Ross as being part of the "animated pictorial style" which flourished in the empire

¹⁸⁸ Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 95.

¹⁸⁹ Baratte, in Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann, Vol. I (supra n. 1) 203-4.

¹⁹⁰ Ross, in *Age of Spirituality* 336-37.

during the reign of Constantius II, and which can also be seen in the drawings of the Calendar Codex of 354 A.D. (Figure 45)¹⁹¹

The figure of the soldier on the plate is quite similar to that found on numerous other pieces of contemporary Roman art. He carries a large round shield and spear, just like the soldiers depicted on the Missoria of Valentinian and Theodosius. A similar pair of soldiers, carrying large circular shields and spears, can be seen on the fragmentary remains of one of the plates from the Gross Bodungen Treasure (Figure 46). The soldier on the Kerch plate is even more similar to the soldiers on the Missorium of Theodosius in that, like them, he wears a torque and has long hair, a possible indication of German origin.¹⁹² His head (as well as his round shield and spear) has also been thought to resemble the head of the bodyguard in one of the secondary scenes on the Achilles plate from Kaiseraugst (Figure 47), although this resemblance may be nothing more than superficial.¹⁹³ The attendants from the Great Hunt Mosaic from Piazza Armerina, with their large round shields and similar dress, also resemble the soldier from the Kerch plate (Figure 48). Each one of these examples wears a similar long tunic with

¹⁹¹ Ross, in *Age of Spirituality* 337; Brilliant (supra n. 138) 78-9.

¹⁹² Delbrueck (1929) 239.

¹⁹³ Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann, Vol. I (supra n. 1) 292.

decorated patches on the sleeves and shoulders, as well as similar trousers and short sandals.

The Chi-Rho device on the Kerch soldier's shield is virtually identical to those once depicted upon the column base of Arcadius, as well as that found upon the shield of one of the soldiers depicted in the later San Vitale mosaics of the sixth century A.D. (Figure 49).¹⁹⁴ It should be noted that both of these scenes, like the Kerch example, depict soldiers in attendance upon an emperor, and the Chi-Rho shield device in all three cases likely serves to emphasize "...the emperor's relation to the divine...".¹⁹⁵

The figure of Victory on the plate also has several parallels in contemporary Roman art. Several parallels are found in earlier coinage, including the aforementioned medallion of Constantine I, medallions of Carus and Numerian, and the reverses of *solidi* issued by Constantius II in 338 A.D. (Figure 50).¹⁹⁶ In these depictions, Victory appears just as she does on the plate, wearing a chiton and holding a laurel wreath and palm branch. A similar Victory, though on a much smaller scale, is seen to the left of the central figure on the Missorium of Valentinian. Another winged Victory, holding a palm branch and what appears to be a laurel wreath, can be seen on the

¹⁹⁴ For the column base of Arcadius, see Freshfield's drawing in MacCormack, (supra n. 184) pl. 21.

¹⁹⁵ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 39.

¹⁹⁶ Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 96; Kent (supra n. 165) 333.

base of the Decennalia monument in the Forum Romanum.¹⁹⁷ Later depictions of Victory are much the same as in the Kerch example, as can be seen, for example, on the sixth century A.D. Barberini diptych, where one winged Victory holds a palm branch and the other holds a laurel wreath.¹⁹⁸

The most controversial aspect of this plate is the identification of the figure on horseback. He is clearly an emperor, since he wears a diadem and nimbus, and is emphasized by being placed in a hierarchical position above and between the other figures on the plate, but since there is no inscription on it (unlike the previous two examples from Kerch) the identity of the figure cannot be absolutely certain.¹⁹⁹ The consensus among scholars, however, appears to be that the emperor is Constantius II.²⁰⁰ Salomonson has identified the emperor on the plate as Constantius II on the basis of the similarity he sees between this figure's facial details and those of an emperor depicted on a glass fragment with a *vicennalia* inscription found in Rome, which he believes was manufactured for Constantius' visit to Rome in 357 A.D.²⁰¹ However, Brands has recently suggested that this glass

¹⁹⁷ H.P. L'Orange and R. Unger, Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu den Konstantin-Söhnen (Berlin 1984) 111.

¹⁹⁸ Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 97; Age of Spirituality 33-35.

¹⁹⁹ Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 95-96.

²⁰⁰ Delbrueck (1933) 147; For the identification of the central figure as Constantius II, see, for example, Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 95, Toynbee and Painter 27, and Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 25.

²⁰¹ Salomonson (supra n. 95) 52-55.

fragment may in fact date to the first quarter of the fourth century A.D., and represent Constantine I or Licinius I instead of Constantius, which indicates that it cannot safely be used to identify the figure on the Kerch plate, since its own identification is uncertain.²⁰²

However, there are other reasons for assuming that the emperor on the Kerch plate is likely Constantius II. First of all, although Ammianus Marcellinus does not go into much detail in describing the personal appearance of Constantius II, his description of Constantius as being "...rather dark, with bulging eyes..." (21.16.19), despite being descriptive of many late antique portraits, does correspond to the appearance of the figure on this plate.²⁰³ On many of his coin portraits, including those minted in Rome between 352 and 355 A.D. (Figure 51), Constantius is depicted as having what appears to be a rather long and slender nose.²⁰⁴ Although the depiction on the Kerch plate is somewhat stylized, this emperor is presented as having just such a nose (Figure 17). Another reason for identifying him as Constantius might be the length of his hair and the way it is worn. On coin portraits of Constantius II, including the ones already cited, he is normally depicted as having long, almost shoulder-length hair, which is combed forward from the crown of the head and curled under the ears at the nape of the neck,

²⁰² Brands (supra n. 128) 123-27.

²⁰³ J. C. Rolfe, trans., *Ammianus Marcellinus* Vol. II (London 1986) 185.

²⁰⁴ *RIC* VIII 269-71, no. 244.

just like that possessed by the emperor on the Kerch plate. This long hair was a distinguishing attribute of Constantius throughout his reign.²⁰⁵ The hairstyle, heavy eyebrows, and aquiline nose depicted on the Kerch plate is also not unlike a sculpture in the round from Rome commonly assumed to represent Constantius II (Figure 52).²⁰⁶ A final reason for identifying the figure as Constantius might simply be that, based upon our present information, he was the only emperor so far as we know who had anniversary plates sent to individual(s) in the Crimea, and this plate may conceivably at one time have been sent there just as the two previously discussed examples.

The next plate to be discussed is the Missorium of Valentinian from Geneva (C. 21). The central scene depicted on the plate is that of the nimbate emperor holding aloft the labarum and a statuette of Victory on a globe, flanked on either side by several of his soldiers. The Chi-Rho monogram contained within the emperor's nimbus likely serves to associate him closely with Christ, as the Chi-Rho monogram did with Constantius II on the Kerch plate (C. 20). As in this example, the emperor on the Valentinian plate is depicted hierarchically (on an elevated platform in the middle of his followers), which was a common artistic device in later Roman

²⁰⁵ Delbrueck (1933) 151.

²⁰⁶ For, example, the statue is identified as Constantius II by L'Orange and Unger (*supra* n. 197) 135 as well as Delbrueck (1933) 139-144.

art.²⁰⁷ On the ground beneath the emperor lies assorted weaponry, which, just like the statuette of Victory, symbolizes his 'perpetual' triumph over his enemies.²⁰⁸ The soldiers flanking him do not represent his bodyguard, but rather "...the representatives of the army which elected him, the army by whose vote he is now nimbate and crowned by Victoria...".²⁰⁹ Therefore, the scene on the plate implies the approval of both God and the army for the reign of Valentinian.²¹⁰ The careful rendering of the figures is characteristic of the 'Theodosian renaissance', a classicizing style which can be seen in other contemporary art such as the Missorium of Theodosius.²¹¹

This scene is somewhat similar to that found upon contemporary coinage, in particular *solidi* of Valentinian I from 364-67 A.D. which also depict the emperor in military dress holding the labarum and a statuette of Victory in either hand (Figure 53). The major difference between the two scenes is that the soldiers are missing from the coin-type, and the emperor holds the labarum and statuette on opposite sides of his body in the two scenes. Similar coin-types were minted under the emperors Jovian and Valens.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Delbrueck, (1933) 180; Strong (supra n. 181) 255.

²⁰⁸ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 205.

²⁰⁹ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 205.

²¹⁰ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 204.

²¹¹ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 205.

²¹² Kent (supra n. 165) 336-37; Robertson (supra n. 74) 373, pl. 79, no. 48.

As stated previously, the Victory statuette and soldiers depicted on the plate have numerous parallels in contemporary art, both in silverware and in other media. It was also mentioned in the previous chapter that the shield devices found on the Missorium of Valentinian are quite similar to those illustrated in the Notitia Dignitatum.²¹³ Another feature of decoration is seen on shields from the Missorium of Valentinian, the previously mentioned fragmentary plate from Gross Bodungen, and the Missorium of Theodosius. A similar spiral ornament on the edge of the shield is found on these plates; it is located on the far right shields of the Valentinian and Gross Bodungen plates, as well as on the shields of the soldiers standing directly beside Valentinian II(?) and Arcadius(?) on the Missorium of Theodosius (Figure 54). As with the other previously discussed types of shield ornament, it is unclear in this case whether or not the spiral ornament actually represents decoration used on contemporary Roman military equipment, or is merely an artistic convention shared by several contemporary artists.²¹⁴

The next plate to be discussed is the famous Missorium of Theodosius from Spain (C. 22), which, as stated in the previous chapter, depicts in its upper zone the distribution of *codicilli* by Theodosius to one of his officials, flanked by two

²¹³ Delbrueck, (1933) 181.

²¹⁴ Gruenhagen (*supra* n. 126) 16.

junior emperors, Erotes, and soldiers. A reclining figure of Tellus and Erotes are located in the lower zone. In terms of its general style, the plate is characterized by relatively slim figures and the meticulous use of line, which is characteristic of the 'Theodosian renaissance' cited above. Parallels can be drawn between the high quality of workmanship displayed on this plate, and that found on the contemporary Corbridge Lanx, Casket of Projecta, and Parabiago plate (Figures 55, 56, and 57). All of these plates display a 'calligraphic' style common to such elaborate contemporary silverware.²¹⁵

The architectural facade behind the enthroned central figures on the missorium, consisting of a pediment with an 'arcuated lintel' and four supporting Corinthian columns centred on Theodosius, is symbolic of the 'hypothetical' palace in which all three emperors, and the latter in particular, have gained the legitimate right to rule.²¹⁶ This use of architectural setting, as discussed earlier in the chapter, was a popular motif in many examples of late Roman art: many parallels for this particular scene can also be found. An almost identical architectural arrangement is found on the previously cited 'Vicennalia' glass fragment from the Roman forum depicting an emperor and attendants in front of an architectural facade (Figure 58), as well as on several of the early seventh century

²¹⁵ A. Rumpf, *Stilphasen der spätantiken Kunst* (Köln and Opladen 1957) 20-22.

²¹⁶ MacCormack (*supra* n. 184) 216.

A.D. 'David' plates from Cyprus (Figure 59).²¹⁷ A similar scene, which also depicts a central group of figures in an architectural setting, flanked by soldiers, is also found on the base of the Obelisk of Theodosius, erected in 390 A.D. (Figure 60)²¹⁸ The portrayed architecture is more elaborate on the Missorium of Theodosius than on the base of his obelisk, but both examples serve to "...stress the solemn formality..." of the occasions they represent.²¹⁹ However, it should be pointed out that, whereas the architecture portrayed on the missorium, glass fragment, and 'David' plates is imaginary and does not represent any actual building, Theodosius is portrayed on the obelisk as sitting in the actual Hippodrome in Constantinople.²²⁰

As stated in the previous chapter, the identification of the two junior emperors on the plate is uncertain, but the scene is thought by many scholars to represent the emperors (from left to right) Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius.²²¹ A similar use of frontality, though without the emphasis on architectural setting, is also to be seen on the earlier Arch of Constantine (Figure 61).²²² This use of hierarchical presentation integrated with an architectural

²¹⁷ Toynbee and Painter 51-57; Arce (supra n. 143) 132.

²¹⁸ Strong (supra n. 181) 317-19.

²¹⁹ Strong (supra n. 181) 315.

²²⁰ M. Henig, ed., *A Handbook of Roman Art* (Ithaca 1983) 234.

²²¹ These scholars include Toynbee and Painter 27-28, and Delbrueck (1929) 239.

²²² Strong (supra n. 181) 277.

setting was also popular in contemporary diptychs; a good example of this is the diptych of Stilicho, where he is presented frontally in front of an architectural facade (Figure 62).²²³ Several other diptychs depict enthroned emperors and consuls, such as the c. 400 A.D. diptych of Probianus (Figure 63).²²⁴ From 366 until 394 A.D., the standard reverse type of Roman *solidi* also depicted enthroned emperors; in this case two seated emperors with a standing Victory between them (Figure 64).²²⁵ A striking parallel to the Missorium of Theodosius is also found in the aforementioned fragmentary plate from the Treasure of Gross Bodungen (Figure 46). The scene presented on this plate is that of a seated emperor(?) (whose upper body is unfortunately missing) flanked by soldiers on at least one side. Gruenhagen has conjectured that the central figure may even have held a *codicillus* like Theodosius in his left hand, and made a gesture with his empty right hand similar to that made by the presumed figure of Arcadius on the Missorium, although this can in no way be proven.²²⁶

This gesture, a symbol of power and eloquence, has several parallels in contemporary Roman art. The consular diptych of Probianus, from about 400 A.D., depicts the consul making almost exactly the same gesture with his right hand.

²²³ Strong (supra n. 181) 315.

²²⁴ Delbrueck (1929) 11-12.

²²⁵ Kent (supra n. 165) 338.

²²⁶ Gruenhagen (supra n. 126) 16, 21.

The same gesture is also made by the seated Christ on a contemporary reliquary casket from Milan (Figure 65).²²⁷ The globes held by the two junior emperors (as symbols of supreme rule) are also quite commonly seen in other contemporary imperial representations, such as those found on coinage.²²⁸

Many parallels also exist for the dress of the three emperors depicted on the missorium. Similar *chlamydes* to those worn by the emperors on this plate, with their large square patches of decoration, are also worn by the central figure on the Gross Bodungen plate, as well as the emperor Justinian and his retinue in the San Vitale mosaic from Ravenna (Figure 49). The style of dress seen on the missorium also appears on the Obelisk of Theodosius and other contemporary monuments (Figure 60).²²⁹ According to Delbrueck, the more elaborate costume worn by Theodosius is also quite similar to later medieval liturgical dress.²³⁰

The assumption that the junior emperors represented (from left to right) are Valentinian II and Arcadius is not inconsistent with the surviving artistic evidence. The depiction of Theodosius in the centre of the scene appears to have few, if any, contemporary parallels with which to compare it. Delbrueck contends that there is a strong family

²²⁷ Brilliant (supra n. 184) 206-07.

²²⁸ Brilliant (supra n. 184) 204.

²²⁹ Rumpf (supra n. 215) 23.

²³⁰ Delbrueck (1929) 238.

resemblance between Theodosius and the right figure, which would support its identification as Arcadius, Theodosius' son, but the depictions of all three emperors are so 'standardized' that this argument does not appear to be valid.²³¹ A major problem in identifying the seated figure on the left side of the plate is the fact that a large portion of his face has been obliterated.

However, there is some artistic evidence, though tenuous, for identifying this figure as Valentinian II. First of all, the figure on the missorium in his facial details is similar to a bronze portrait bust from Budapest of a young emperor dated to c. 388 A.D. (Figure 66).²³² Both figures have slender faces and relatively long noses, besides also wearing *chlamydes* and similar *fibulae*. The figure portrayed by the bust, in turn, has been identified as Valentinian II because of its similarity to contemporary coin portraits of that same emperor (Figure 67).²³³ The emperor on the right side of the plate, commonly assumed to be Arcadius, bears a strong resemblance in its facial details to a marble portrait bust of Arcadius from Berlin dated to c. 400 A.D. (Figure 68). Delbrueck contends that this portrait represents Arcadius because of its similarity to contemporary coin portraits of that emperor. Both of the faces on the missorium and portrait bust are rather fleshy, and have

²³¹ Delbrueck (1933) 200.

²³² Delbrueck (1933) 198-99.

²³³ Delbrueck (1933) 198-99; *Age of Spirituality* 25-26.

long slender noses. In addition, the right eyebrow on both faces appears to be raised slightly higher than the left. In any case, the figure's face on the missorium appears unlike the longer and slimmer face of Honorius seen on such objects as the Probus diptych.²³⁴

The secondary figures on the plate are much easier to identify and find parallels for. As has already been discussed extensively in this chapter, the figures of the soldiers flanking both of the junior emperors on the plate are quite similar to contemporary depictions of 'Germanic' soldiers found on several other objects of Roman art.²³⁵ These soldiers do not appear to represent the barbarians brought under Theodosius' control during his reign, but rather may symbolize the alleged affection for all mankind which he possessed.²³⁶

The figure of Tellus lying at the bottom of the scene represents a 'golden age' and abundance under Theodosius, as well as being symbolic of his rule over the entire earth. A similar use of Tellus on coinage dates back as far as the reign of Hadrian.²³⁷ The depiction on the plate is quite similar in its outline and posture to the figure of Tellus found on the Parabiago plate, which is also commonly dated to the late

²³⁴ Delbrueck (1933) 204-06.

²³⁵ Delbrueck (1929) 239.

²³⁶ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 217.

²³⁷ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 219.

fourth century A.D. (Figure 57).²³⁸ A figure of Tellus, nude except for the robe wrapped around her lower body, is also to be found on the much earlier (first century A.D.) *Aquileia patera* (Figure 69).²³⁹ In both of these cases the figure of Tellus appears to stand merely for the abundance of the earth, and does not have the political overtones found on the *Missorium of Theodosius*.

The Erotes found on both registers of the *missorium* also have special significance. Those found on the architectural facade are located in a position normally reserved for wreath-bearing Victories on other depictions of such facades in contemporary coinage. This positioning would seem to suggest that these figures might be 'playful' allusions to victory within the context of the Theodosian 'golden age' discussed above.²⁴⁰ The three Erotes in the lower zone, in their association with Tellus, might well represent the seasons of fall, spring, and summer. An Eros representing winter would perhaps have been deemed inappropriate for a plate symbolizing the prosperity and abundance of Theodosius' reign. Many earlier coin types, beginning in the second century A.D., also depicted Erotes as the seasons.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Rumpf (supra n. 215) 20; Toynbee and Painter, 29.

²³⁹ Strong (supra n. 2) 150.

²⁴⁰ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 217.

²⁴¹ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 218-19.

The closest parallels for the Erotes shown on the Missorium of Theodosius are found on the Casket of Projecta from the Esquiline Treasure (Figure 56), although the childlike Seasons on the Parabiago plate, despite being wingless, are also quite similar (Figure 57).²⁴² Similar, though somewhat stockier Erotes are also found on the Paris Patera from the Esquiline Treasure (Figure 70).

The final plate to be discussed in this chapter is the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23). Unlike the previous plates discussed, this one is a consular, not an imperial, anniversary plate. As will be discussed shortly, the missorium borrows its imagery largely from a single class of contemporary art; that of the consular diptychs. It is interesting to note how, whereas the imperial anniversary plates largely borrow their iconography from other contemporary 'imperial' art, the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar borrows its iconography almost exclusively from the small group of diptychs commissioned by other consuls. This use of 'limited' iconography amongst various 'consular' works of art, as well as amongst the anniversary plates discussed previously, supports the contention that they all were intended to be given to, and viewed by, a small but select audience.²⁴³

²⁴² Rumpf (supra n. 215) 22; *Age of Spirituality* 185.

²⁴³ Baratte 194.

The main scene depicted on the Aspar plate, as discussed in the previous chapter, is the giving of games by Ardabur the consul and his son the praetor. Many similar depictions of officials presiding over games survive from late antique art, including a scene of magistrates presiding over a beast hunt in the arena on an ivory plaque from Rome dating to the first half of the fifth century A.D. (Figure 71).²⁴⁴ The pose of the left-hand magistrate on this plaque is also similar to that of the figures of Ardabur and Plinta in the medallions at the top of the Aspar plate. The outstretched right hand of the young praetor Ardabur, a symbol of "...power and majesty...", was a popular motif throughout later Roman art.²⁴⁵ Medallions used in the upper register of scenes, though not representing deceased relatives as in the case of the Aspar plate, are also to be found on various consular diptychs such as that of Clementinus from Constantinople (Figure 72): on this diptych they represent the reigning emperor Anastasius and his wife Ariadne.²⁴⁶

Many other consular diptychs also depict the enthroned consul on his *sella curulis* as the Aspar plate does. Examples of these diptychs include the diptych of Clementinus

²⁴⁴ Brilliant (supra n. 184) 206-07; Age of Spirituality 93-94.

²⁴⁵ Brilliant (supra n. 184) 208-11.

²⁴⁶ Age of Spirituality 48-50: another consular diptych using three similar medallions, which represent the reigning emperor, empress, and (possibly) co-consul, is that of Anastasius, dating to 517 A.D. (Figure 73); see Age of Spirituality 97-98.

cited above, and, more particularly, the diptych of the consul Anastasius, which dates to 517 A.D. (Figure 73).²⁴⁷ The depiction of Anastasius is especially like that of Ardabur: both men hold the *mappa* in their raised right hand and a sceptre in their left. In addition, each is seated upon a throne which has carved lions' heads for decoration. Other figures portrayed on contemporary diptychs are similar to Ardabur and his son the praetor in dress and hairstyle. The diptych of Felix, which was manufactured only six years before the supposed date of the Aspar plate (434 A.D.), portrays the consul Felix as wearing a toga draped in the same fashion as the male figures on the Aspar dish (Figure 74). The 'bowl cut' worn by Ardabur and his son is also quite similar to that worn by Felix on the diptych.²⁴⁸

The most interesting figures on the plate, however, are the two city personifications flanking Ardabur and his son. The depiction of such personifications was a common feature in classical art, although the grouping of other personifications with Rome, as on this dish, did not appear in Roman art prior to the third century A.D.²⁴⁹ The right-hand figure, wearing a 'floral' crown and carrying flowers, although commonly identified as Constantinople, might be more accurately

²⁴⁷ Age of Spirituality 97-98: yet another similar diptych is that of the consul Magnus, dating to 518 A.D.; see Age of Spirituality 50.

²⁴⁸ Delbrueck (1929) 156.

²⁴⁹ M.R. Salzman, On Roman Time (Berkeley 1990) 27.

identified as Carthage.²⁵⁰ The personification of Carthage carries flowers in several different portrayals, such as a late fifth century A.D. mosaic from Carthage (Figure 75), while Constantinople does not. The figure of Carthage on the Aspar plate likely alludes to Ardabur's presence in Carthage to resist the Vandal threat at the start of his consulship in 434 A.D.²⁵¹

The figure on the left side of the plate can be more confidently identified as a personification of Rome, dressed as an Amazon and wearing an Attic helmet. Although Rome was portrayed as a goddess in other ways than that used on the Aspar plate, several other depictions of Rome as an Amazon survive from late antiquity.²⁵² These include a medallion of Constantius II depicting Rome and Constantinople (Figure 76) as well as a diptych of 480 A.D. portraying the consul Basilius with Rome beside him (Figure 77).²⁵³ In both of these depictions Rome is helmeted and has a bare right breast, just as on the Aspar dish. In addition, on the Basilius diptych Rome holds the consular *fascēs*, as Carthage and Rome do on the plate. The figure of Rome was presumably depicted in this case

²⁵⁰ The figure has been identified as Constantinople by such scholars as Delbrueck (1933) 155-56, and Toynbee and Painter 28-29.

²⁵¹ Delbrueck (1929) 154; *LIMC* III.1 (1986), s.v. "Carthago" (R. Vollkommer) 183-84, no. 7.

²⁵² C. Vermeule *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. 1959) 29-30, 101-03.

²⁵³ *LIMC* III.1 (1986), s.v. "Constantinopolis" (M. Vickers) 303, no. 24; *Age of Spirituality* 47-48.

because Ardabur Aspar was consul of the western empire in 434 A.D.²⁵⁴

A final interesting feature of this plate's decoration is the sceptres carried by three of the figures: namely the elder Ardabur Aspar, Plinta and Aspar himself. As stated in the previous chapter, Delbrueck contends that the two heads at the end of each of these sceptres represent the two ruling emperors at the time of each of these individuals' consulships: Honorius and Theodosius II in the case of Plinta, and Theodosius II and Valentinian III in the case of the elder Ardabur Aspar and his son Aspar.²⁵⁵ The facial details of the sceptre heads are quite difficult to discern, due to their small size, but Delbreuck's theory does at least seem plausible. In the case of the central Ardabur's sceptre, one of the heads it carries appears to be bearded, while the other is apparently clean-shaven (Figure 78). The bearded head corresponds with other bearded portraits of Theodosius II, such as an example from Paris dated to c. 440 A.D. (Figure 79), while the smaller clean-shaven head could indeed represent Valentinian III, who was thirteen years old at the time of Ardabur's consulship in 434 A.D. The long nose and flat brow of this head does correspond to coin portraits as well as a contemporary cameo depicting Valentinian III (Figure 80).²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Martindale (*supra* n. 148) 164-69.

²⁵⁵ Delbrueck (1929) 154-56.

²⁵⁶ Delbrueck (1933) 33, 216-17.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, it has been the intention to examine different aspects of late Roman anniversary plates, in particular the circumstances surrounding their production and their relationship to other late Roman art from various media. It was thought this examination would help, not only to clarify some aspects of these particular plates' production and distribution, but also to shed light on these same issues in regard to late Roman silverware as a whole. As the Painter-Cameron debate shows, the whole topic of late Roman silverware has recently been an area of much interest amongst scholars.

The evidence shows that the production of the earlier anniversary plates, such as those from the 'Munich' Treasure (C. 15-17), with their medallion portraits of individual emperors, was closely related to the production of similar imperial coinage. In some cases, as in that of the Nis plates (C. 1-5), contemporary coinage and anniversary plates were even given the same inscriptions. Some of the same craftsmen may even have worked upon both the coinage produced at imperial mints and these plates produced at nearby silver workshops,

although there is no way to verify this theory. The obvious relationship between these plates and contemporary coinage fits in well with Painter's idea that silver workshops were under tight imperial control, just like the mints.²⁵⁷

However, the picture plates discussed in this thesis, such as the Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22) clearly do not appear to have been produced under the same strict central control as the earlier plates appear to have been. These four plates (C. 20-23), unlike their earlier counterparts, vary substantially in style and subject matter, and do not borrow nearly so much from contemporary numismatic iconography, which suggests that the craftsmen who manufactured these plates were given at least some leeway to design the plates as they wished. This may mean that the emperor or consul who commissioned these plates was a customer, and not a controlling interest, of the workshops which produced them, which would support Cameron's views concerning Roman silver plate and the 'free market' in the later empire.²⁵⁸ The similarity between these picture plates and other artwork manufactured from 'cheaper' materials, such as the fourth century glass dish discussed in Chapter Three, and the fragment of the glass 'Vicennalia' dish discussed in Chapter Four, also suggests that craftsmen working in different media

²⁵⁷ Painter (*supra* n. 9) 101-05.

²⁵⁸ Cameron (*supra* n. 14) 182-85.

were not all under tight imperial control, and were able to stay in contact with one another and borrow freely from each other's artistic designs.

The use of full-figure scenes on the later plates, such as the Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22), seems to reflect the growing popularity of picture plates, such as those found at Kaiseraugst and Mildenhall, in late Roman silverware as a whole.²⁵⁹ The earliest of these anniversary picture plates is the Missorium of Constantius II(?) from Kerch (C. 20), which was likely manufactured at approximately the same time, in the mid-fourth century A.D., as the plates found in the Kaiseraugst Treasure. However, this fashion for full figure scenes in late Roman art was not only limited to silver plate, as can be seen by the evidence of the two glass dishes discussed above.

It is unclear whether or not the silver picture plates discussed in this thesis led to the introduction of full-figure scenes in similar pieces of art from other media, such as those cited above, or were themselves influenced by these same objects. Unfortunately, the precise date of manufacture of the two glass bowls cited above is not known. If Brands' hypothesis that the glass 'Vicennalia' dish dates to the first quarter of the fourth century is correct, and the dish discussed by Caron dated closer to the *terminus post quem* of 331 A.D. he suggests for it, dishes such as these may have influenced the later

²⁵⁹ Strong (supra n. 2) 197.

inclusion of full-figure scenes on silver anniversary plates such as the Missorium of Theodosius. If, on the other hand, the dishes date to the later fourth century, they themselves may have been influenced by earlier anniversary plates such as the Missorium of Constantius II(?) from Kerch (C. 20).

As far as the specific decoration of the anniversary plates is concerned, all of them share similar sources of imagery and iconography, though to varying extents. Throughout this thesis, it has been noted that, although ornament on plates like those found at Kerch (C. 18-20) might be borrowed from 'non-imperial' art, including other contemporary silverware and sarcophagi, the majority of specific images found on these plates have parallels in other imperially-commissioned art such as the coinage mentioned above, and relief sculpture like that found upon the Obelisk of Theodosius. In some cases, the plates' similarity to such art can be used as an aid for the identification of certain figures found on them, such as the young emperors on the Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22). In a similar fashion, the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23) borrows its iconography almost exclusively from the group of diptychs commissioned by other consuls.

The Missorium of Theodosius (C. 22) sums up the extent to which imperial anniversary plates developed, both in iconography and content, within a century. The earliest of these

anniversary plates are either decorated with simple inccriptions, as in the case of the Licinius I plates from Nis (C. 1-5), or, as in the case of the Licinius I and II plates from the Munich Treasure (C. 15-17), are decorated with medallions depicting the emperor in full military regalia. Although the medallions of the first two Kerch plates (C. 18-19) portray Constantius II wearing a *chlamys*, the last of these (C. 20), as well as the Missorium of Valentinian (C. 21), also depict the emperor in a military setting. The latter two plates also initiate the trend of decorating these anniversary plates with full-figure scenes, which carries through to the Missorium of Ardabur Aspar (C. 23).

The Missorium of Theodosius, however, breaks the 'military' pattern of the Kerch and Valentinian plates (C. 18-21). The emperors on this plate do not wear armour, and are involved in a state, not a military function. This might be thought of as the 'civilian' counterpart to the near-contemporary Missorium of Valentinian.²⁶⁰ The military motif in state art was apparently not as popular in the reign of Theodosius as it had been under earlier emperors like Valentinian I. As might be expected, Christian iconography, as shown by the final Kerch example (C. 20), also tends to appear in the post-Constantinian plates, although it only amounts to common Christian symbols like the Chi-Rho. However, the

²⁶⁰ MacCormack (supra n. 184) 220.

depiction of Tellus and Erotes on the Missorium indicates some 'standardized' pagan iconography survived in state art at this time, even under a fervent Christian emperor like Theodosius. The use of pagan motifs on the Missorium of Theodosius again might indicate that the silversmith responsible for this plate, and others like him, were given substantial freedom of choice in their work, even when working for an important client like the emperor.

Although these plates were an integral part of the institutionalized largesse practised by emperors and officials in the late empire, and largely borrowed from iconography found on other works of 'imperial' art, the foregoing discussion indicates that they were also open to influences from, and followed trends in other contemporary Roman silver plate and art in other media. This would again seem to suggest that the imperial bureaucracy which undertook the production of these anniversary plates, especially in the case of the latter examples, was not so strict as to forbid the silversmiths manufacturing them some freedom of choice in their design.

All of this accumulated evidence suggests that emperors did indeed have silversmiths or moneyers, who could produce plates similar to those found in the Munich Treasure (C. 15-17), working under their direct control in workshops closely associated with imperial mints. However, it appears that when these same emperors wanted full-figure designs for their

anniversary plates, their own workshop artisans were unable to create them, and imperial officials were forced to commission these plates from craftsmen over whom they had no similar degree of control, beyond telling them what their basic requirements for the particular plate were. Presumably, if this theory is true, many, if not all, of these silversmiths manufactured their products in silver workshops other than those controlled by the imperial bureaucracy, and were free to sell their products to wealthy private citizens, as Cameron has suggested. The fact that some silver plate was produced for 'non-economic' distribution by emperors or other high officials, as in the case of the anniversary plates discussed in this thesis, does not mean that the rest was not or could not be produced and sold in a more conventional manner to those private Romans who could afford it.

CATALOGUE

This catalogue lists all of the imperial 'anniversary plates' discussed in this thesis. The plates are listed in their approximate chronological order.

Legend

Catalogue number

Name of plate, Figure number

A. Date of manufacture of plate

B. Provenance of plate

C. Dimensions of plate

D. Description of plate

E. Present location of plate

F. Date of discovery of plate

G. Principal modern literature

All of the sites mentioned in the catalogue will be found on a map at the end of the catalogue. The modern names of each site are given, as well as the Roman names where known, which are placed in brackets.

C. 1-5

Anniversary bowls of Licinius I, Fig. 5

- A. c. 317 A.D.
- B. Nis (Naissus), Serbia
- C. Diameters range between 16.5 and 17.7 cm; the heights range between 3.8 and 4.5 cm.
- D. The decoration of these five bowls consists of a laurel wreath with ribbons engraved in the centre of each bowl. Within each laurel wreath is the punched inscription SIC X SIC XX. A punched inscription which reads LICINI AVGVSTE SEMPER VINCAS runs around the rim of each bowl. The stamp "NA/ISS", with a reversed N, is located between the words "VINCAS" and "LICINI" on the bowls.
- E. Belgrade National Museum, Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, British Museum, Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
- F. 1901.
- G. Baratte, 200-2; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 24, no 10; Strong (supra n. 2) 199-200; Toynbee and Painter 24-25, nos. 5-9, Plate VIII (b); Age of Spirituality 15, no. 8.

C. 6-7

Anniversary bowls of Licinius I, Fig. 3

- A. c. 317 A.D.
- B. Esztergom (Solva), Hungary
- C. Diameter and weight of the bowls are not available.
- D. Each of these two bowls has a circular inscription, LICINI AVGVSTE SEMPER VINCAS, with two incised guidelines, located midway between its rim and central roundel. These roundels are each occupied by the inscription SIC X SIC XX. Two groups of incised lines surround the central inscription. A punched 'ray' pattern fills the space between them. One bowl has a round stamp on its back with the inscription NAISS, while the second bowl has the inscription [H]ERMES VAS F.
- E. Belgrade National Museum, Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.
- F. 1901.
- G. Delmaire (supra n. 21) 114; Z. Kadar, Folia Archaeologica 12 (1960) 135; Thomas (supra n. 20) 136-37.

C. 8-10

Anniversary plates of Licinius I, Fig. 4

- A. c. 317 A.D.
- B. Svirkovo, Bulgaria
- C. Size and weight of plate fragments are not available.
- D. Fragments of three plates from Svirkovo have survived to the present day. From the fragments, it is clear that the plates had vertical fluted rims, and were decorated with two separate inscriptions. The first of these inscriptions, which ran around the inside of the plates near their rims, read LICINIVS INVICTVS AVGVSTVS OB DIEM DECENNALIUM SVORVM. These inscriptions were punched rather than incised. A punched *hedera* is located between the words SVORVM and LICINIVS on the preserved fragments of this section of the plates. Within the central roundel of each plate was the further punched inscription SIC X SIC XX. A circular punched 'scroll' pattern ran around each of these inscriptions. Two further incised guidelines enclosed these patterns.
- E. Bezirksmuseum in Haskovo, Bulgaria.
- F. 1942.
- G. Delmaire (supra n. 21) 114; Painter (supra n. 21) 89, Plates XXIII-XXIV; Thomas (supra n. 20) 137.

C. 11-12

Anniversary plates of Licinius I, Figs. 6-7.

- A. c. 317 A.D.
- B. Cervenbreg, Bulgaria.
- C. Diameter of the first plate is 27.7 cm, while that of the second is 26.5 cm. The diameter of the central medallions found on both plates is 3.8 cm. The weight of the two plates is 620 and 635 g respectively.
- D. Each of these two plates is flat, with a vertical fluted rim. A stamped medallion bearing the profile of Licinius I is located in the centre of each. The medallions are surrounded by several concentric inscribed circles on each plate. The medallions depict Licinius facing to the right, wearing a wreath and *paludamentum*. Within the beaded edge of the medallions is the inscription LICINIVS INVICT AVG OB DIEM X SVORUM. Each plate also bears the dotted inscription, O FLAV NICANI M B N on its back. Both plates also have graffitos on their backs; one has the graffito PRO GERONTVS, while the other has the graffito R.
- E. Archaeological Museum in Sofia.
- F. 1952.
- G. Baratte 198, Figs. 2,3; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 51-2; Strong (supra n. 2) 200; Toynbee and Painter 25, Plate VIII (c).

C. 13

Anniversary bowl of two Caesars from the 'Munich' Treasure,
Fig. 1.

- A. c. 321-22 A.D.
- B. Unknown: likely in the eastern Roman Empire
- C. Diameter is 22.5 cm and weight is 470.3 g.
- D. This deep bowl is undecorated except for the single inscription which encircles its inner surface, approximately halfway between the bowl's centre and rim. Two incised guidelines for the inscription and several lathe marks are also visible on its inner surface. A *hedera* used as a punctuation mark is located between the first and last words of the inscription, which reads VOTIS X CAESS NN. A further punched inscription, NAIS, is on the outside of the bowl.
- E. Bayerische Hypotheken- und - Wechselbank in Munich.
- F. Date of discovery is unknown.
- G. Garbsch and Overbeck (*supra* n. 17) 51; Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 22, no. 4.

C. 14

Anniversary bowl of a Caesar from the 'Munich' Treasure, Fig. 2.

- A. c. 321-22 A.D.
- B. Unknown: likely in the eastern Roman Empire
- C. Diameter of the bowl is 24.4 cm; weight of its remaining metal is 421.09 g.
- D. Like C. 13, this bowl is only decorated with a circular inscription halfway between its centre and rim. Four incised guidelines for the inscription, as well as several lathe marks, are visible on the bowl's surface. A *hedera*, used as a punctuation mark, is located between the first and last words of the inscription. The actual inscription reads VOTIS X CAESARIS NOSTRI. An additional fragmentary inscription, ...XIAC, is punched on the exterior of the bowl.
- E. Bayerische Hypotheken- und - Wechselbank in Munich.
- F. Date of discovery is unknown
- G. Garbsch and Overbeck (supra n. 17) 57; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 22, no. 5.

C.15

Bowl of Licinius I from the 'Munich' Treasure, Figs. 8-9.

- A. c. 321-322 A.D.
- B. Unknown: likely in the eastern Roman Empire.
- C. Diameter is 17.9 cm; weight is 323.3 g.
- D. In the centre of the bowl, within two lathe-cut circles, is a medallion bearing the portrait of Licinius I. Licinius is depicted in a frontal pose, wearing a *paludamentum* and armour. The *paludamentum* is fastened around Licinius' neck by a round brooch with three pendants. Around the bust is the inscription LICINIUS AVG OB D V LICINI FILI SVI. A round stamp, NIKO/ΑΙΔ/Α, is located near the outside rim of the bowl.
- E. Bayerische Hypotheken- und - Wechselbank in Munich.
- F. Date of discovery unknown.
- G. Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann (supra n. 1) 156, 386; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20, no.1; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23; Toynbee and Painter 24, Plate VII (b).

C.16

Bowl of Licinius II from the 'Munich' Treasure, Figs. 10-11.

- A. c. 321-322 A.D.
- B. Unknown: likely in the eastern Roman Empire
- C. Diameter is 17.9 cm; Weight is 321.74 g.
- D. This bowl, like the Licinius I bowl from the 'Munich' treasure (C. 15), has a central medallion surrounded by two lathe-cut circles. This bowl's medallion depicts Licinius II in a frontal pose, wearing a *paludamentum*, brooch, and armour. The inscription encircling the medallion reads: LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM. A stamp on the outside of the bowl reads: NIKO/EYT/NEB.
- E. Bayerische Hypotheken- und - Wechselbank in Munich.
- F. Date of discovery is unknown.
- G. Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann (supra n. 1) 156, 386; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20, no. 2; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 23, 29; Toynbee and Painter 24, Plate VII (c).

C.17

Bowl of Licinius II from the 'Munich' treasure, Figs. 12-13

- A. c. 321-322 A.D.
- B. Unknown: likely in the eastern Roman Empire.
- C. Diameter is 18.7 cm; Weight is 315.11 g.
- D. The centre of this bowl contains a stamped medallion of Licinius II, which is similar to the medallion on the first bowl (C.16), except that on this medallion (C. 17), Licinius appears more youthful, and is wearing a more ornate brooch with four knobs on its rim. The inscription encircling the medallion reads: LICINIVS CAES OB D V SVORVM. The stamp on the outside of the bowl reads ANT/EYCTO/A.
- E. Bayerische Hypotheken- und - Wechselbank in Munich.
- F. The date of discovery is unknown.
- G. Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann (supra n. 1) 156, 386; Kent and Painter (supra n. 1) 20-2, no. 3; Overbeck (supra n. 4) 29; Toynbee and Painter 24, Plate VIII (a).

C. 18

Plate with portrait of Constantius II, Fig. 15

- A. c. 343 A.D.
- B. Kerch (Panticapaeum), Ukraine
- C. Diameter is 23.2 cm, height is 3.5 cm, and weight is 634.7 g.
- D. This plate is decorated with engraving, niello, and gilding. The centre bears an engraved medallion with a profile portrait of Constantius II facing to the right. The emperor is depicted wearing a diadem inset with a precious stone, as well as a *chlamys* fastened by a brooch on his right shoulder. Four different zones of decoration, divided by further lathe-cut circles, take up the rest of the plate. The zone next to the medallion is filled with a decoration of vine leaves. The next zone has an inscription which reads: (hedera) VOTIS (hedera) XX (hedera) DN CONSTANTI AVGVSTI. The third zone of the plate contains engraved wave ornament. Finally, the last zone of the plate is decorated by a string of arches with garlands hanging between their columns. A dotted Greek inscription is on the bottom of the dish; λιτρας α ουγκιας αι, while another inscription in Greek, ANT [ΘΑΙ?], is located near the weight inscription.
- E. Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.
- F. 1904.
- G. Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 107, Plate 24; Toynbee and Painter 26, Plate VIII (d).

C. 19

Plate with portrait of Constantius II, Fig. 14

- A. c. 343 A.D.
- B. Kerch (Panticapaeum), Ukraine
- C. Diameter is 24.5 cm, height is 2.4 cm, and weight is 634.7 g.
- D. This shallow dish is decorated with engraving, gilding, and niello. The centre of the plate bears an engraved medallion with a profile portrait of Constantius II facing to the right. The emperor is depicted wearing a diadem inset with a precious stone, as well as a *chlamys* fastened by a brooch on his right shoulder. The medallion is surrounded by a band defined by two lathe-cut circles. The rest of the plate consists of three zones of decoration. The zone next to the medallion is made up of a frieze of vine-leaves. The next zone has an inscription which reads VOTIS (hedera) XX (hedera) D N CONSTANTI AVGVSTI (hedera). The third zone of the plate contains engraved wave ornament. A dotted Greek inscription, λιτρας α ουκιας(sic) αι γραμματα ιη , indicates the weight of the plate, while three further letters, EVC, are located in front of the weight inscription.
- E. Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg
- F. 1904.
- G. Matzulewitsch (supra n. 30) 107, Plate 25; Strong (supra n. 2) 200, Fig. 38; Toynbee and Painter 26, Plate IX (a).

C. 20

Plate with portrait of Constantius II, Figs. 16-19

- A. c. 353-57 A.D..
- B. Kerch (Panticapaeum), Ukraine
- C. Diameter is 24.9 cm; height is 3.9 cm; diameter of the base is 5.5 cm, and its weight is 599 g.
- D. There is a large handle attached to the outside of this plate, although it also possessed a footring at some time as well. The plate depicts the entry of an emperor on horseback, followed by one of his soldiers. In front of his horse stands a figure of Victory. Underneath it lies a shield. The emperor is wearing his field uniform, which consists of a short tunic decorated with various embroidered patterns and oval medallions. The weapons carried by him are a sword, whose hilt can be seen under his left arm, and lance. The soldier behind him carries a lance in his right hand, and a shield with a Chi-Rho monogram in his left hand. The figure of Victory carries a wreath and palm branch. The only areas where the plate is ungilded are the soldier's face, the edge of his shield and the monogram it displays, the shield on the ground, and the arms and face of Victory.
- E. Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg
- F. 1891.
- G. Kent and Painter (*supra* n. 1) 25, no. 11; Matzulewitsch (*supra* n. 30) 26, 95-100, 107, 109, 123, 136; Toynbee and Painter 27, Plate IX (b).

C. 21

Plate of Valentinian I or II, Fig. 20

- A. 364-392 A.D.
- B. Geneva, Switzerland.
- C. Diameter is 27 cm, and weight is 1050 g.
- D. This plate has plain roll-moulding on the rim. The emperor in the centre wears a cuirass and *chlamys*. His head is encircled by a nimbus containing a Chi-Rho monogram as well as an alpha and omega. He holds a *labarum* in his left hand, while his right hand holds a globe surmounted by a Victory extending a crown to him. The emperor is flanked by six soldiers wearing plumed helmets and carrying shields and spears. Various weapons lie at the feet of the emperor. The inscription above the scene reads: LARGITAS DN VALENTINIANI AUGUSTI.
- E. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva.
- F. 1721.
- G. Delbrueck (1933) 179; J.M.C. Toynbee, "A new Roman mosaic pavement found in Dorset," Journal of Roman Studies 54 (1964) 11-12; Toynbee and Painter 27, Plate IX (c).

C. 22

Missorium of Theodosius, Figs. 21-25

- A. c. 388 A.D.
- B. Almandralejo, Spain.
- C. Diameter of the plate is 74 cm, and its weight is 1535 g. Diameter of the plate's footring is 26 cm, and the height of the footring is 3 cm.
- D. This dish was originally found folded in half, so the dish is now divided into two halves along the line of the fold. The dish has a moulded rim, next to which is a gilded inscription: DN THEODOSIUS PERPET AVG OB DIEM FELICISSIMUM X. Another inscription, ΠΟC ΑΙ Ν ΜΕΤ, is located on the inside of its footring. The decoration on the plate is divided into upper and lower zones. In the upper zone, three emperors sit in front of a four-columned facade with a pediment on top. The columns are Corinthian in style. The pediment possesses ornate *akroteria*, as well as winged Erotes in its gables carrying fruit and flowers towards the central emperor. In front of the arch between the two middle columns sits Theodosius himself, depicted on a larger scale than any other figures on the plate. A small figure to the left of Theodosius, who wears an elaborate cloak like the emperor, receives what appear to be books or *codices* from him. On the left side of the facade sits a younger emperor (Valentinian II?), who, like Theodosius, also has a nimbus around his head. On the right side of the facade sits another young emperor with a nimbus (Arcadius?). Both of these emperors are flanked by long-haired soldiers carrying spears and oval decorated shields. In the lower zone of the plate, Tellus reclines on the ground, while three more Erotes fly up to Theodosius with gifts of fruit and grain. The figure of Tellus is almost the same size as that of Theodosius, and looks up towards him. Around her are interspersed stalks of grain.

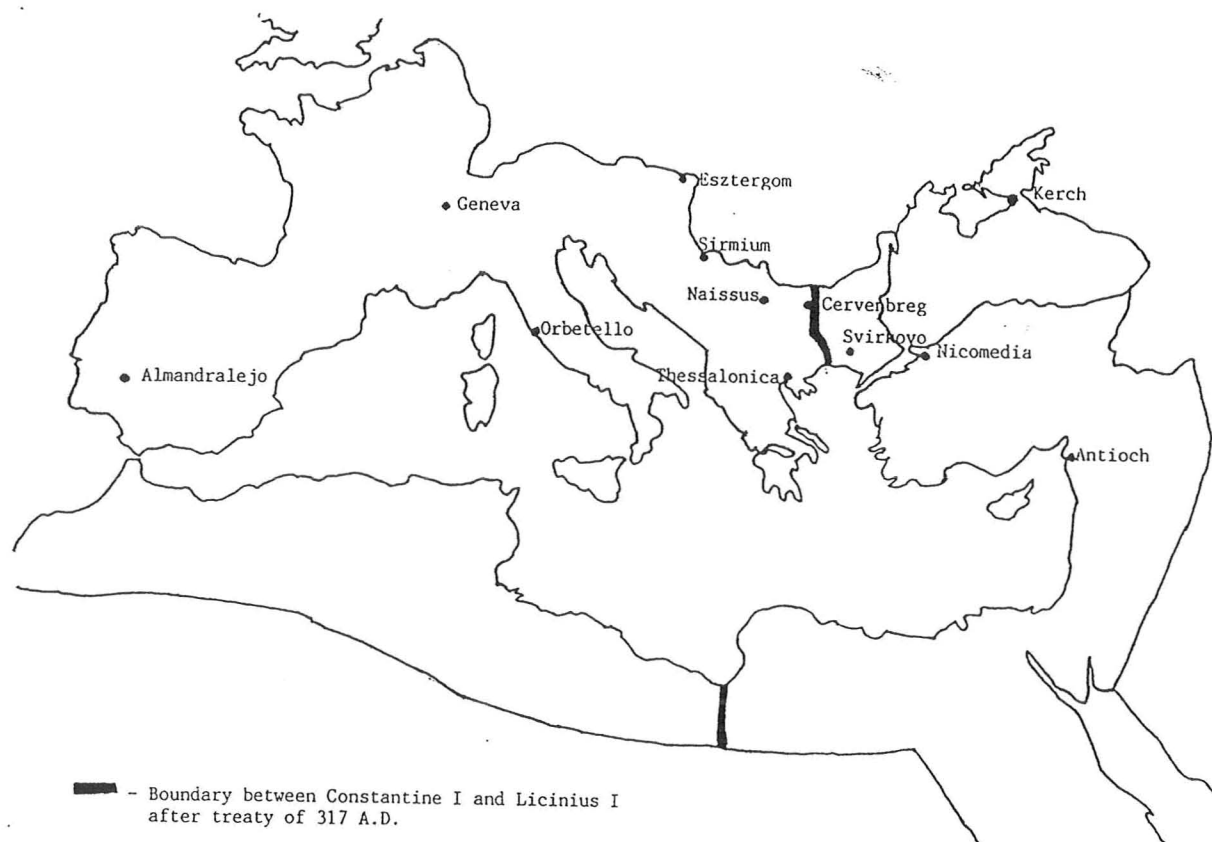
- E. Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid.
- F. 1847.
- G. Arce (supra n. 143); Delbrueck (1929) 235-42, no. 62; Gruenhagen (supra n. 126) 15-34; Toynbee and Painter 28, Plate X (a); Volbach (supra n. 39) 55-6, no. 53; Age of Spirituality 74-6, no. 64.

C. 23

Plate of Ardabur Aspar, Fig. 26

- A. c. 434 A.D.
- B. Orbetello, Italy
- C. Diameter is 42 cm
- D. This dish originally had a flat rim with a raised edge, but this has not been preserved up until the present day. A wooden rim now replaces the original. At one time, the plate also had a footring, which was approximately 3 cm high and 15 cm in diameter. The decoration on this plate is divided into three zones. In the top zone are two male medallion busts with a draped curtain between them. The figures in the medallions are identified by inscriptions on the plate as Ardabur and Plinta. Each of the figures wears a toga and carries a sceptre with two busts on top representing the reigning emperors during their particular consulship. In the centre of the plate, Ardabur Aspar and his son are depicted, flanked by female personifications. Ardabur Aspar sits on a chair with lion legs, holding a *mappa* in his left hand and a sceptre similar to that held by his father and father-in-law in his right hand. The boy beside Ardabur Aspar is identified by the inscription above him as ARDABUR IVNIOR PRETOR. He wears a tunic and toga like his father. The personification on the left is depicted as an Amazon, wearing an Attic helmet and short *chiton*. She carries a globe and *fascies*. The personification on the right wears a crown of roses, leaves, and fruit, as well as a long robe and necklace. She also carries *fascies* like the other personification. In the lowest zone of the plate, the prizes for victorious competitors are depicted, consisting of plates, dishes, and palm-leaves. The inscription running around the edge of the plate reads: FL. ARDABUR ASPAR VIR INLVSTRIS COM. ET MAG. MILITVM ET CONSVL ORDINARIVS.

- E. Museo del Bargello in Florence.
- F. 1769.
- G. Delbrueck (1929) 154-6, no. 35; L. Musso, Manifattura
suntuaria e committenza pagana nella Roma del IV secolo:
indagine sulla Lanx di Parabiago (Rome 1983) 19-20;
Toynbee and Painter 28-9, Plate XI (a); Volbach (supra n.
39) 332, no. 109.



MAP OF FIND-SPOTS AND MINTS DISCUSSED IN THE THESIS
 (from B. Overbeck, Spätantike zwischen Heidentum und Christentum, Frontspiece)

ILLUSTRATIONS

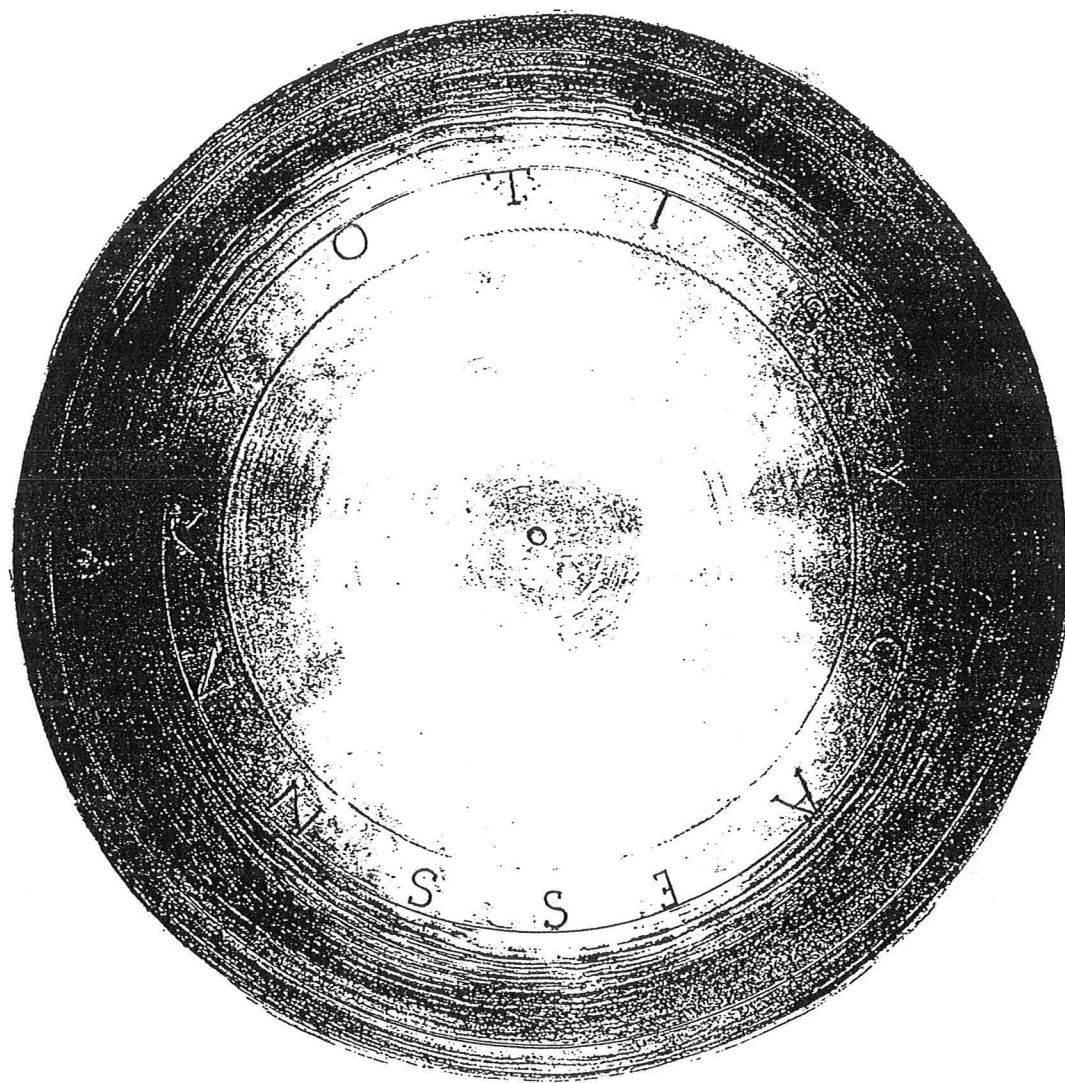


Figure 1

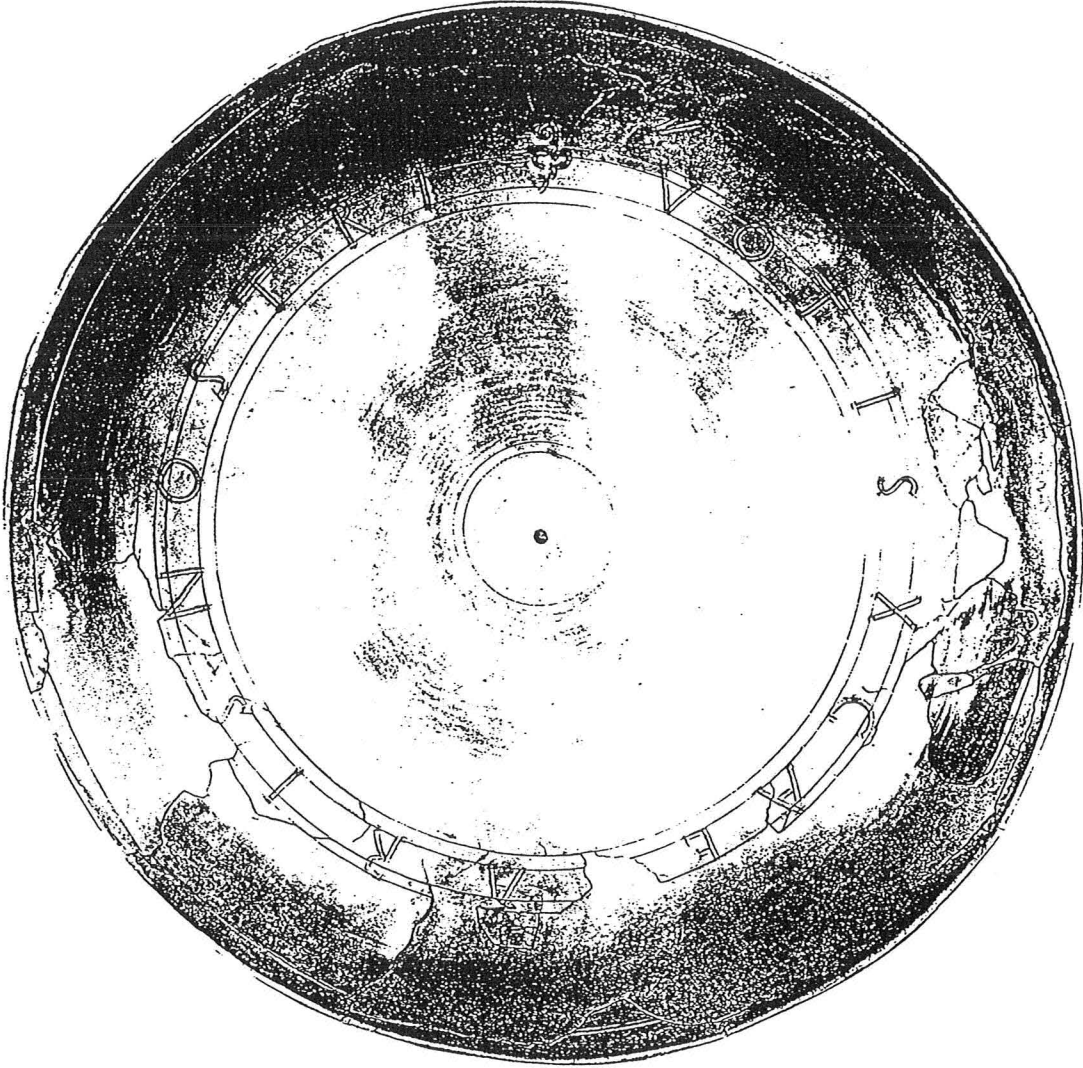


Figure 2

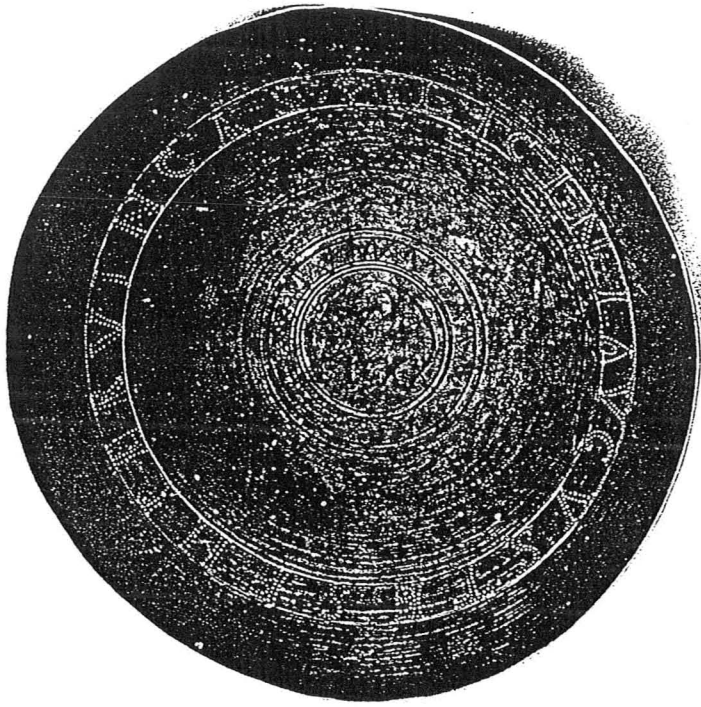


Figure 3

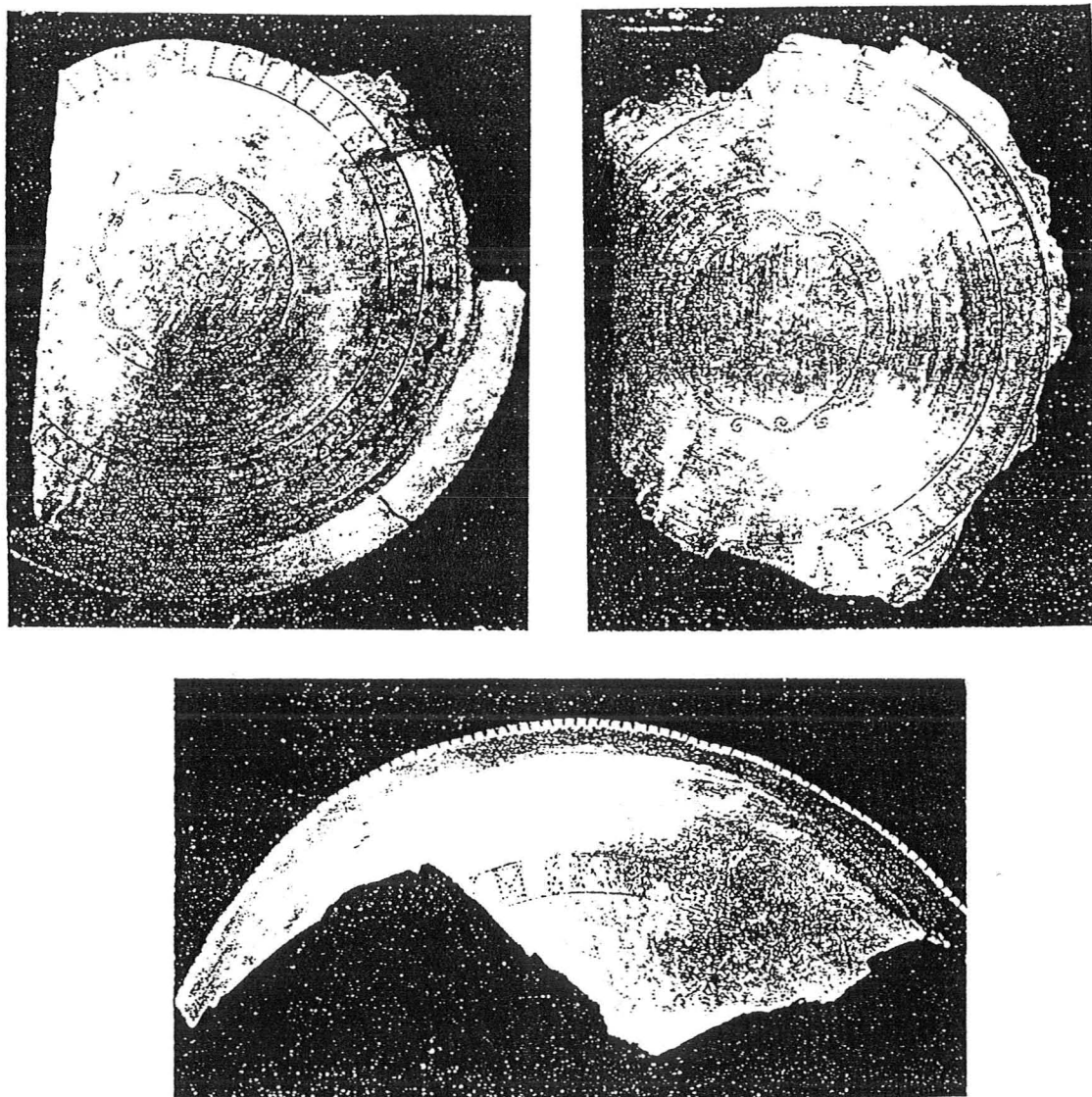


Figure 4

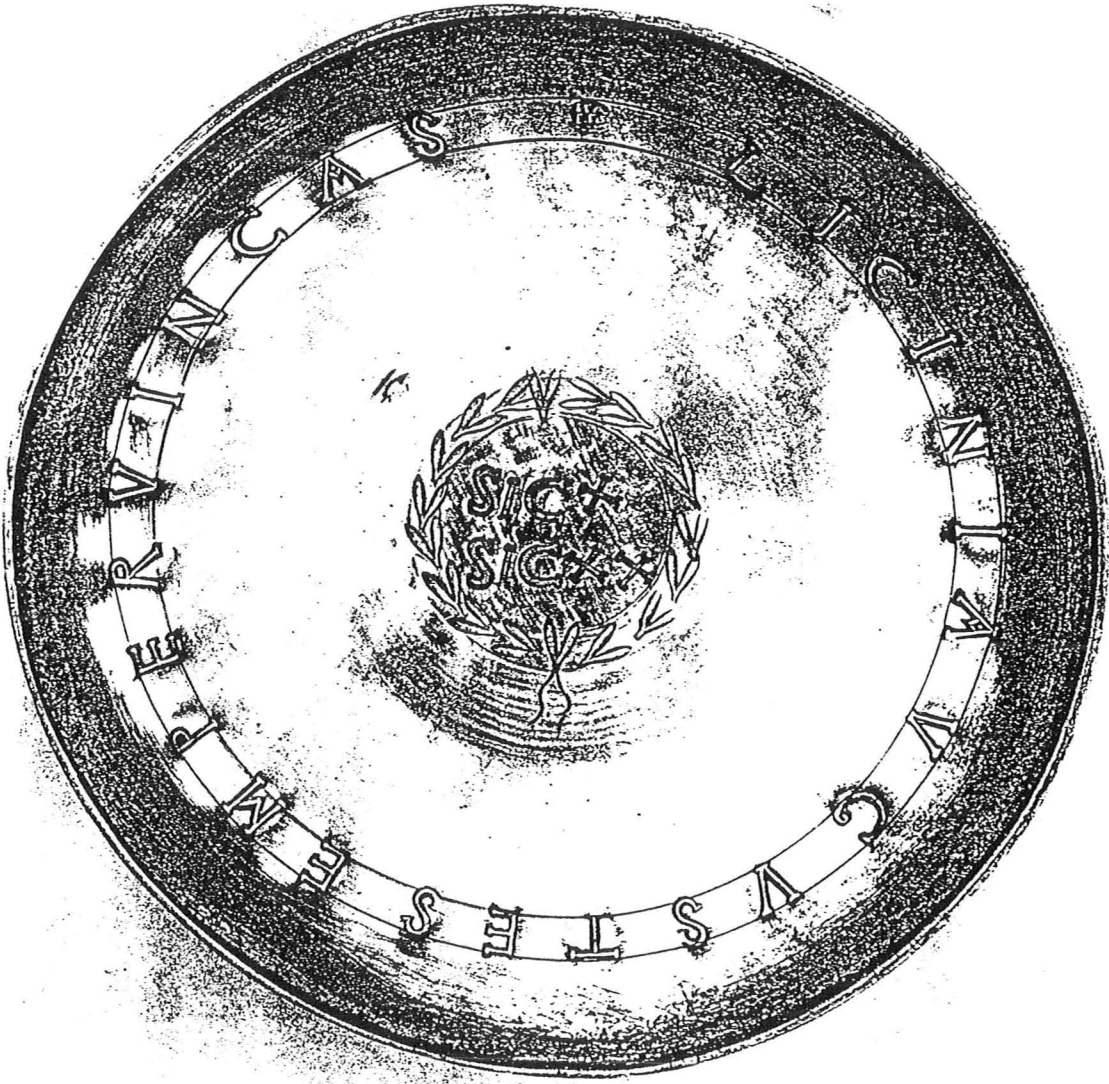


Figure 5

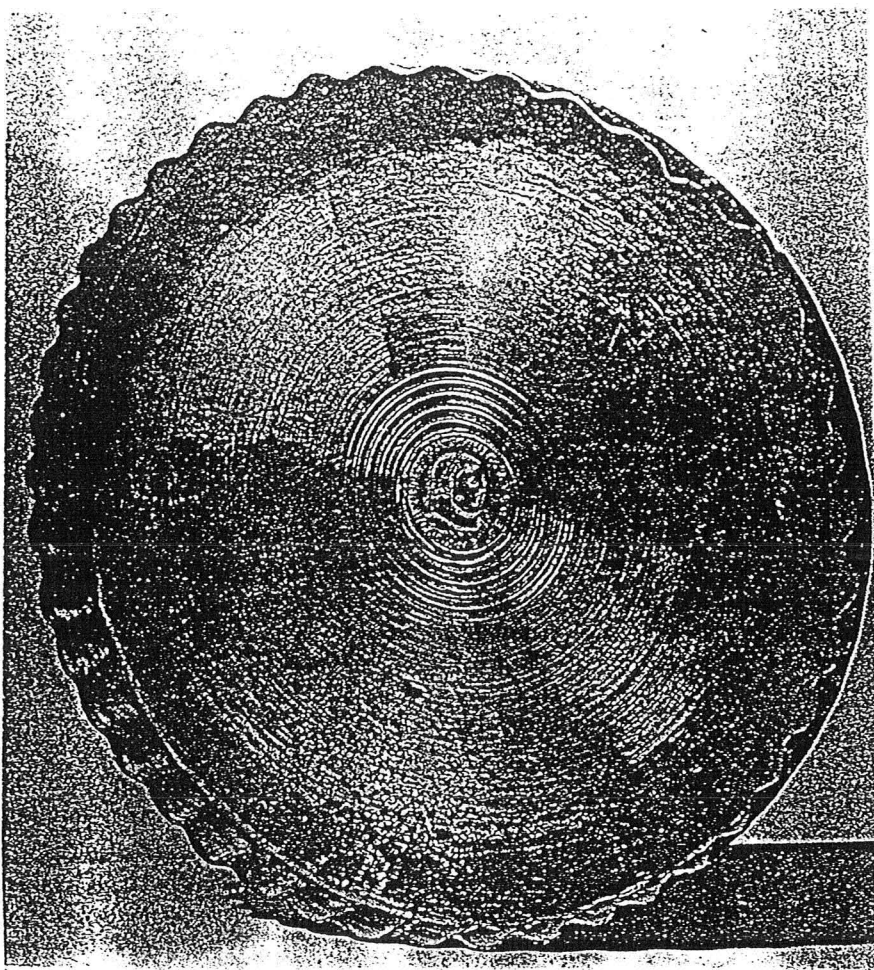


Figure 6



Figure 7

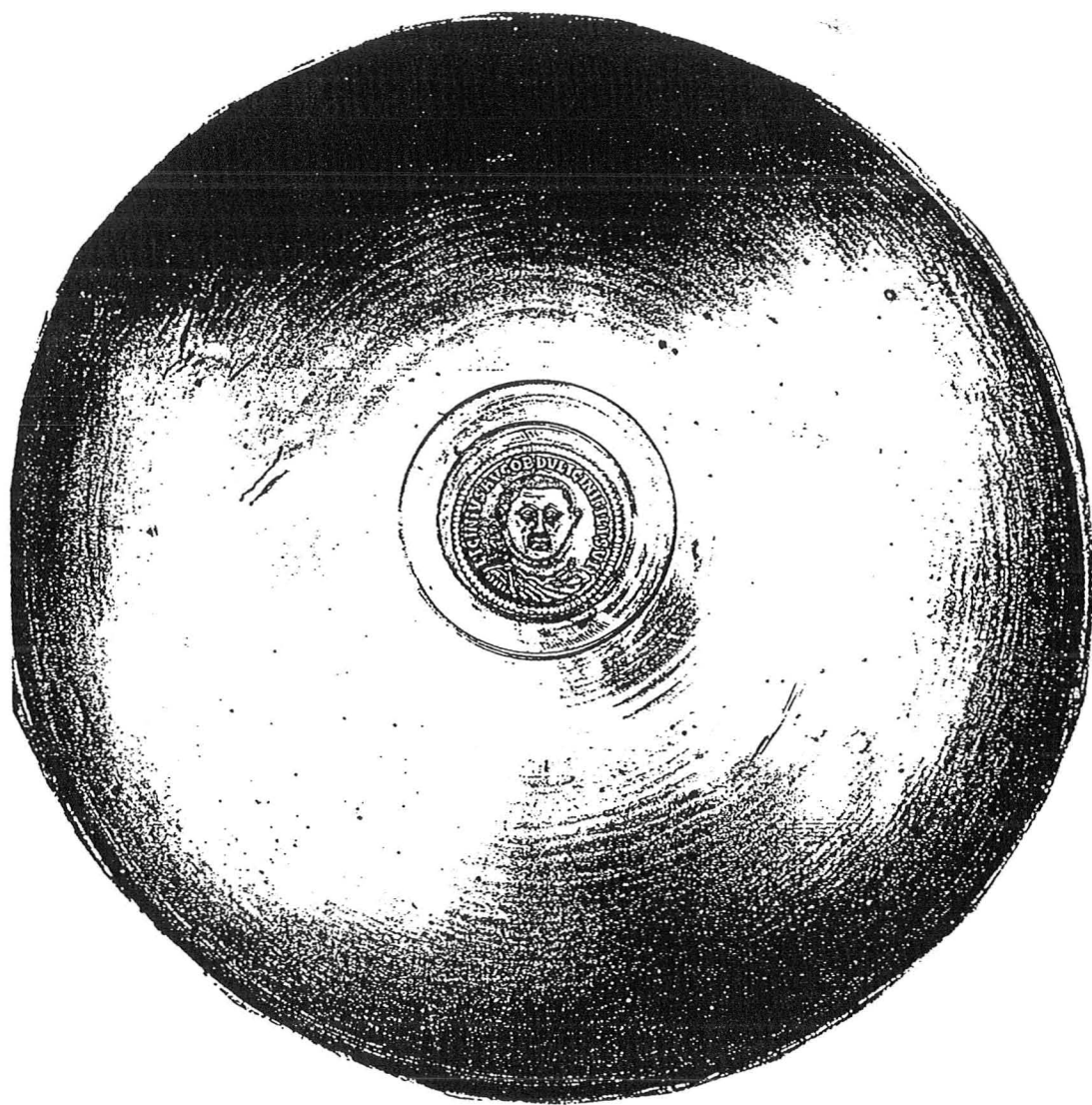


Figure 8



Figure 9

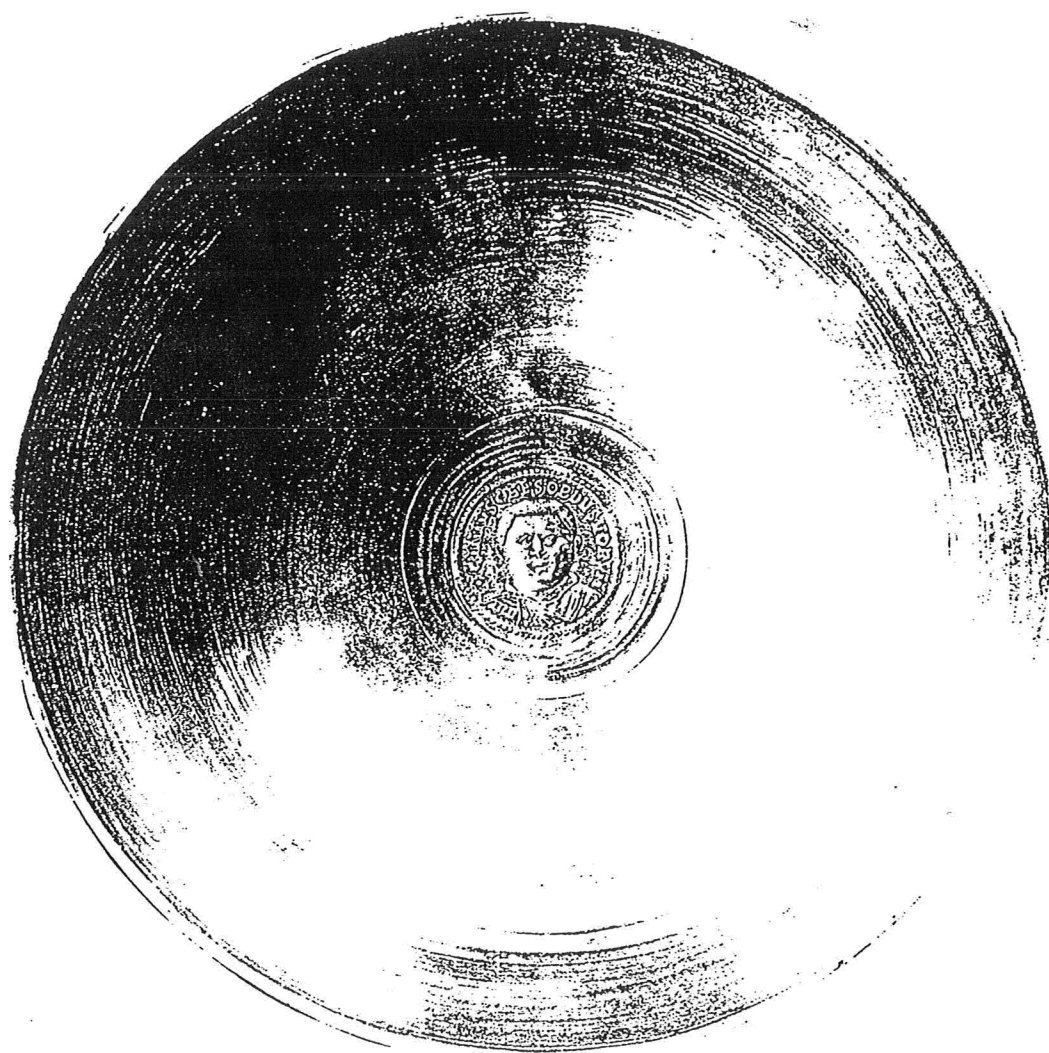


Figure 10



Figure 11

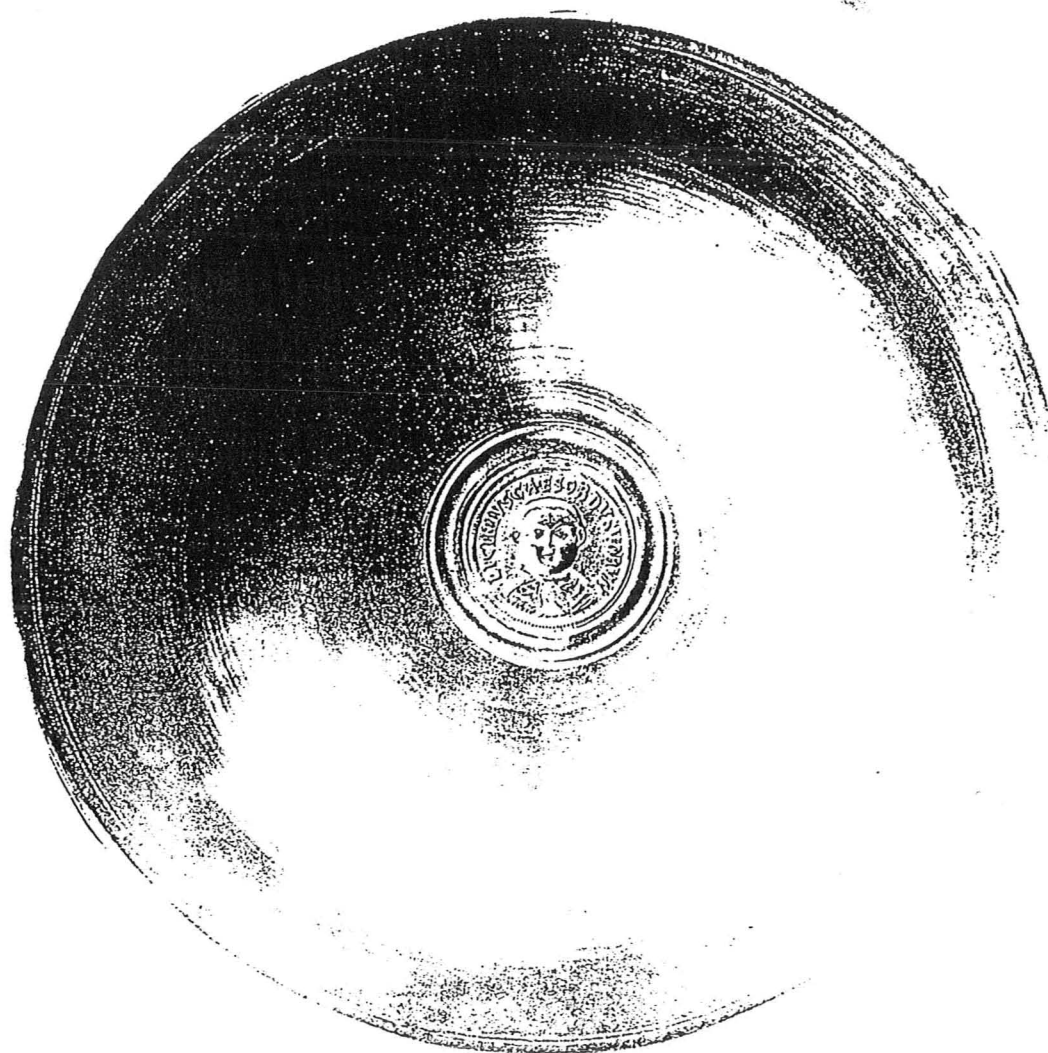


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

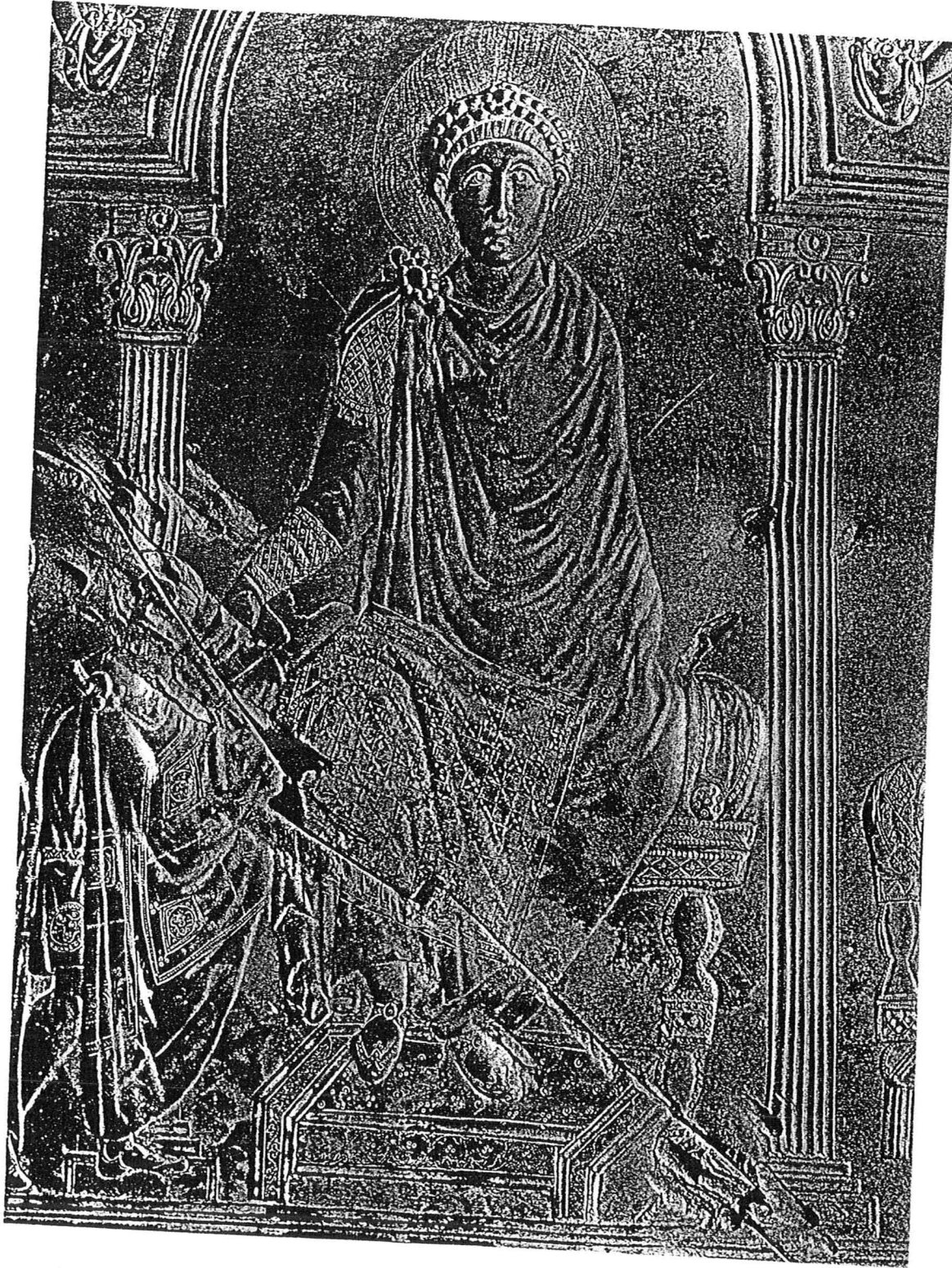


Figure 22

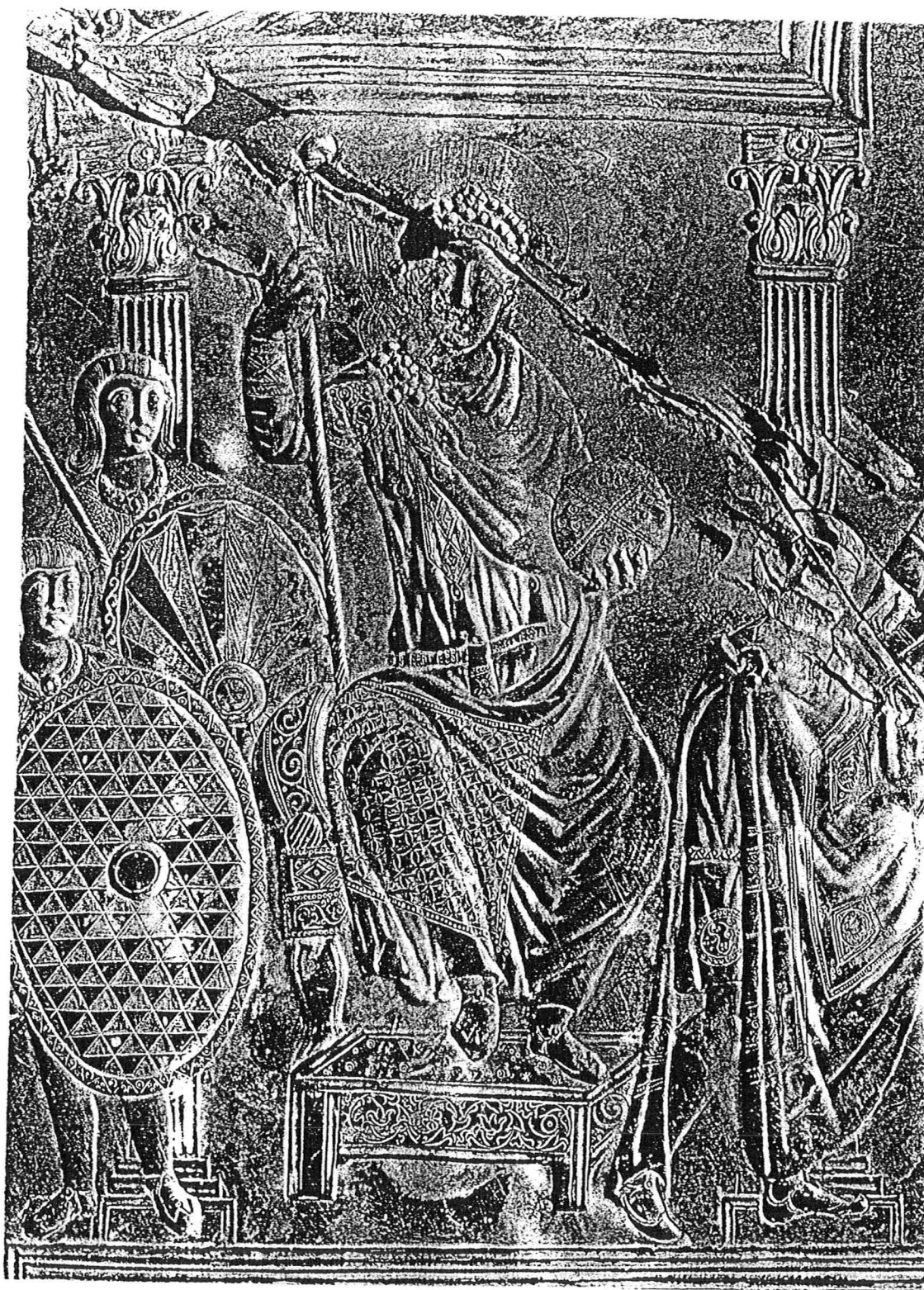


Figure 23

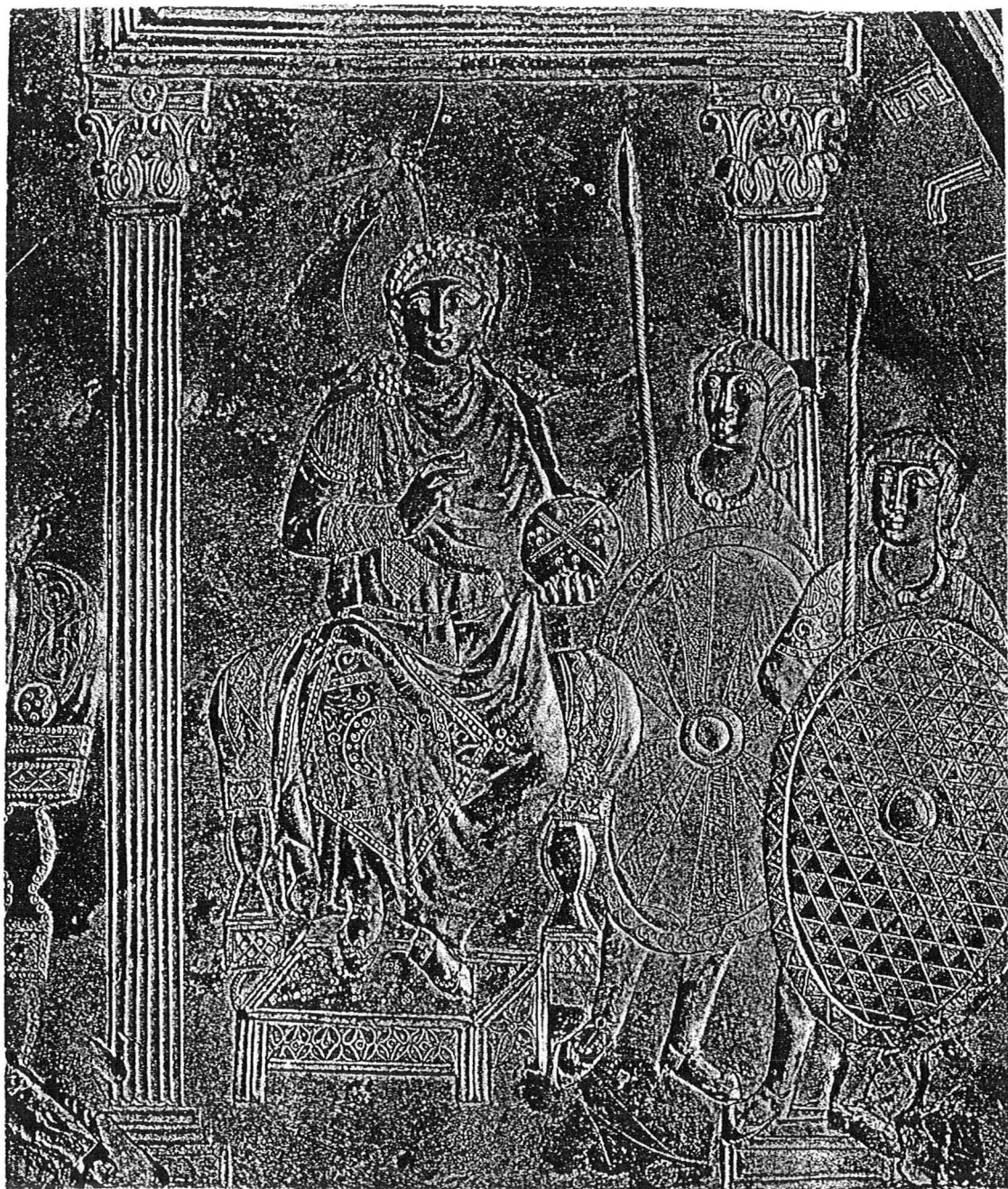


Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 32



Figure 31



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36

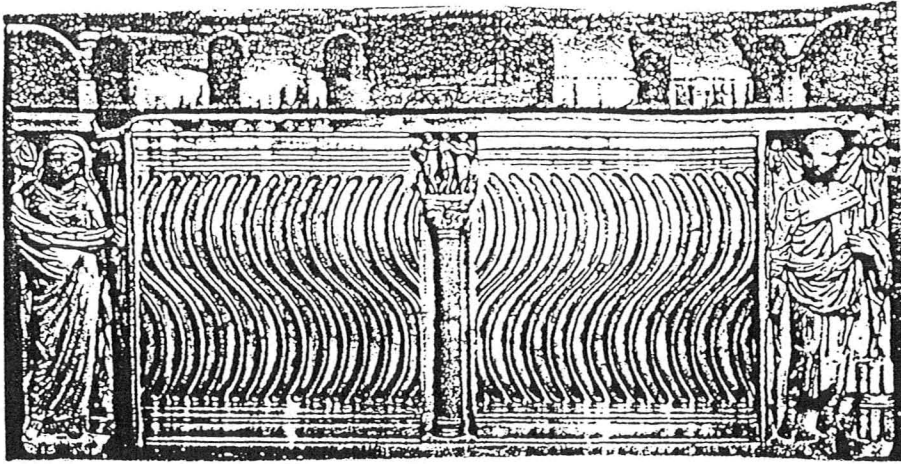


Figure 37

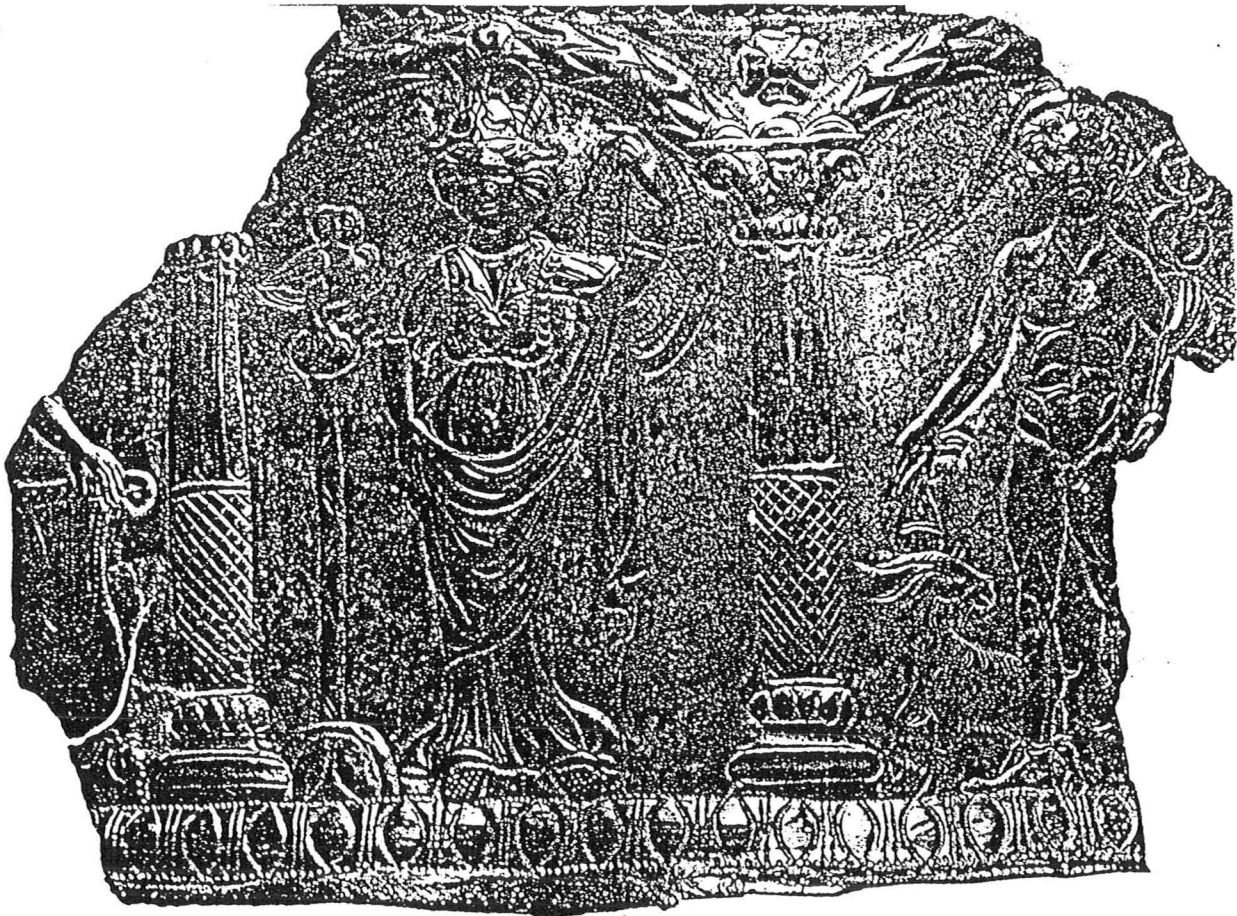


Figure 38



Figure 39

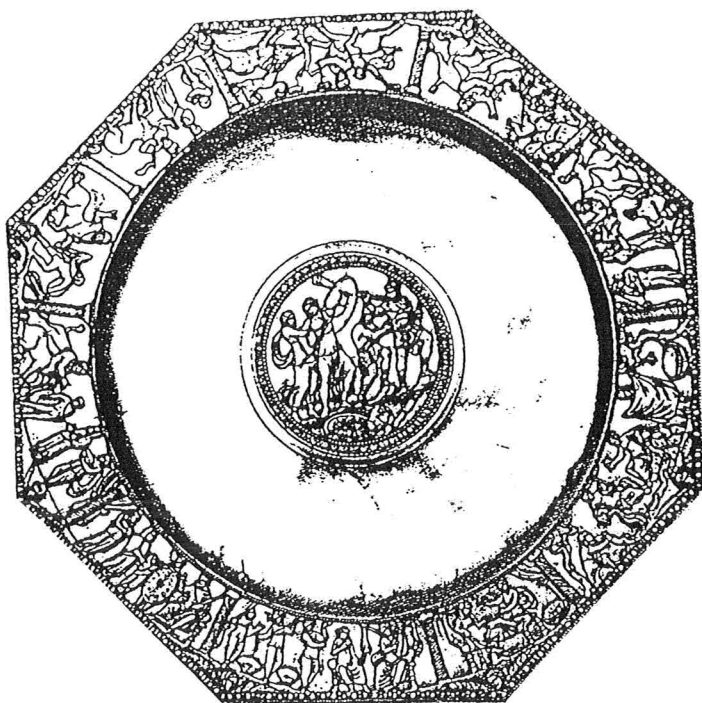


Figure 40

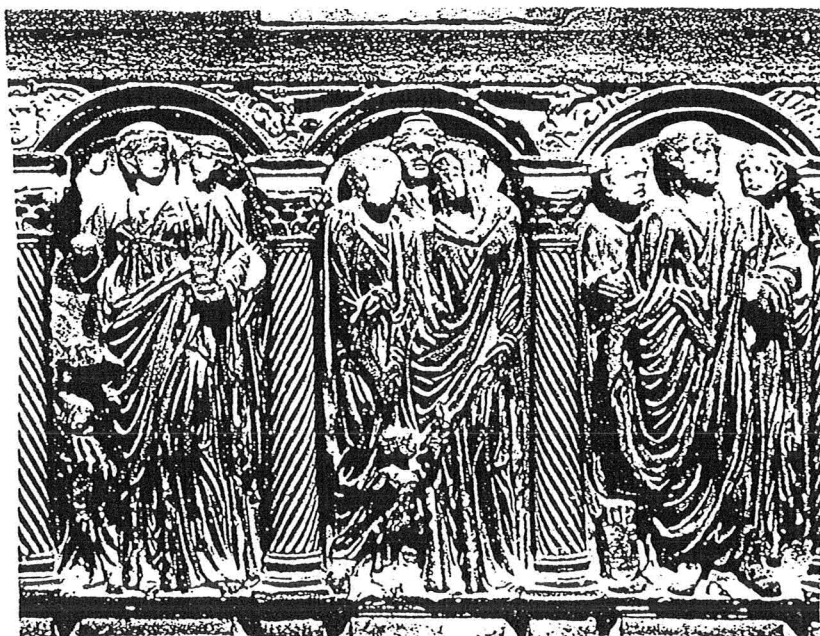


Figure 41



Figure 42

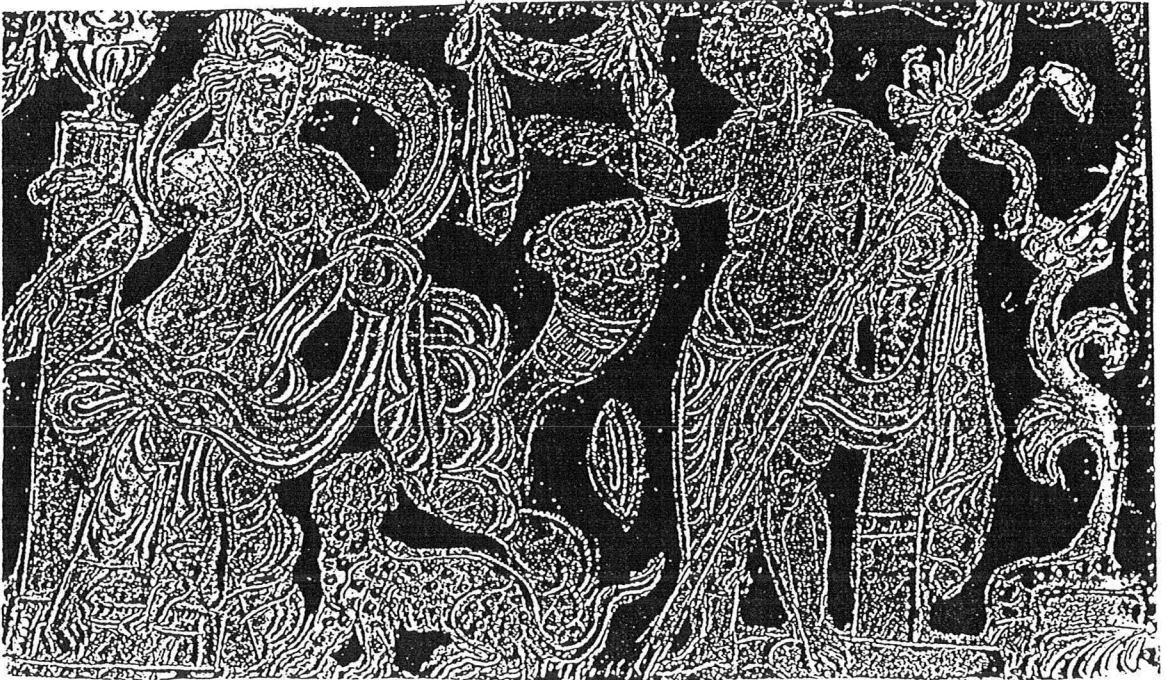


Figure 43

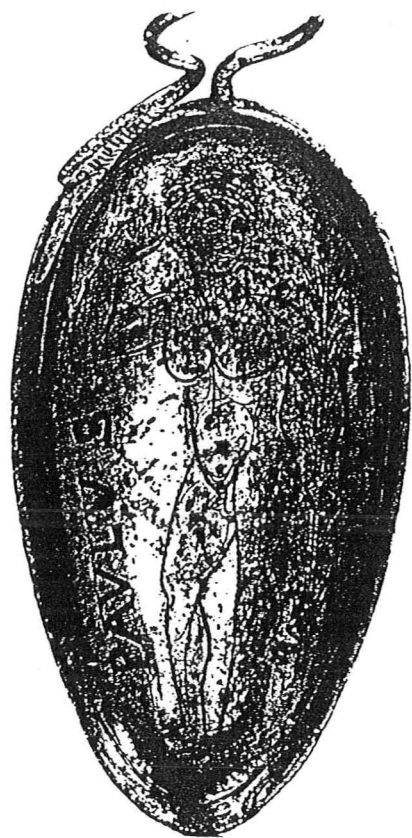


Figure 44



Figure 45

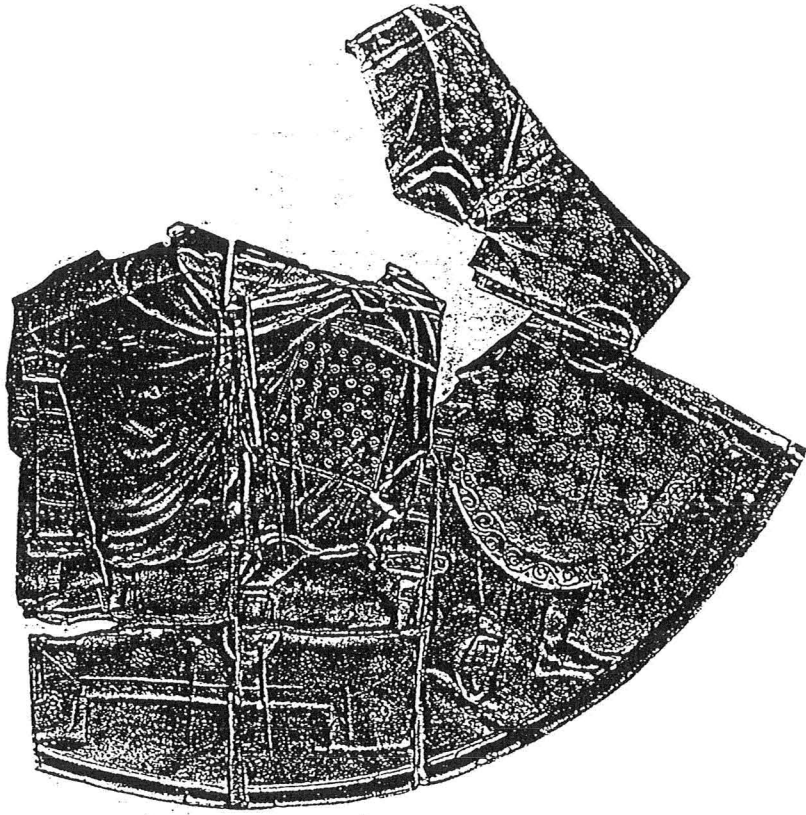


Figure 46

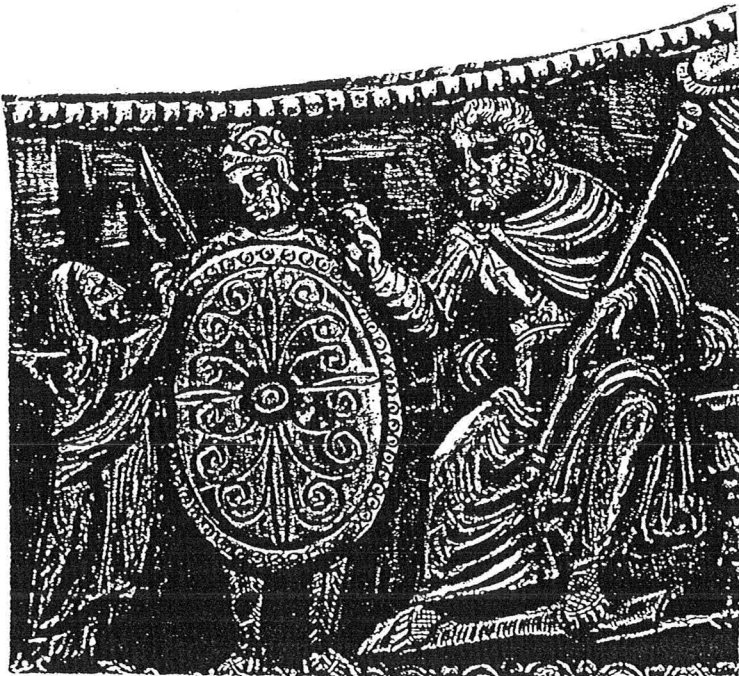


Figure 47



Figure 48

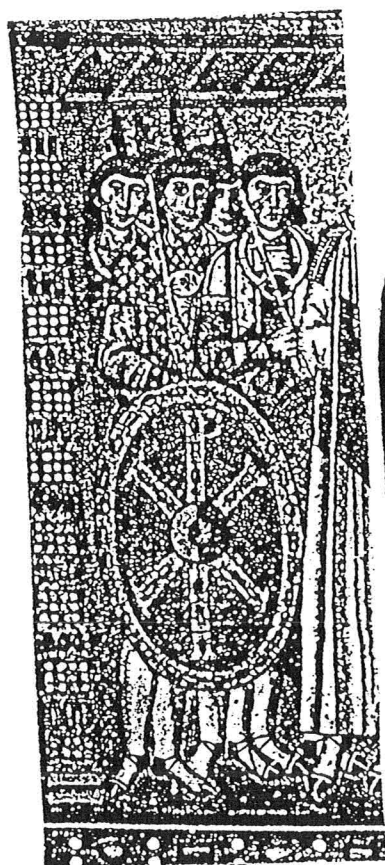


Figure 49



Figure 52



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 53

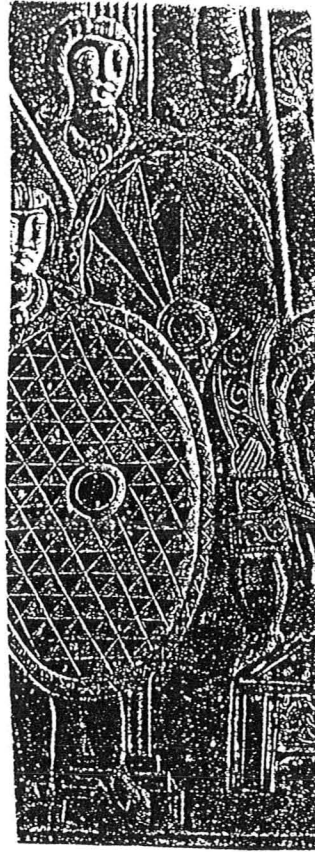


Figure 54

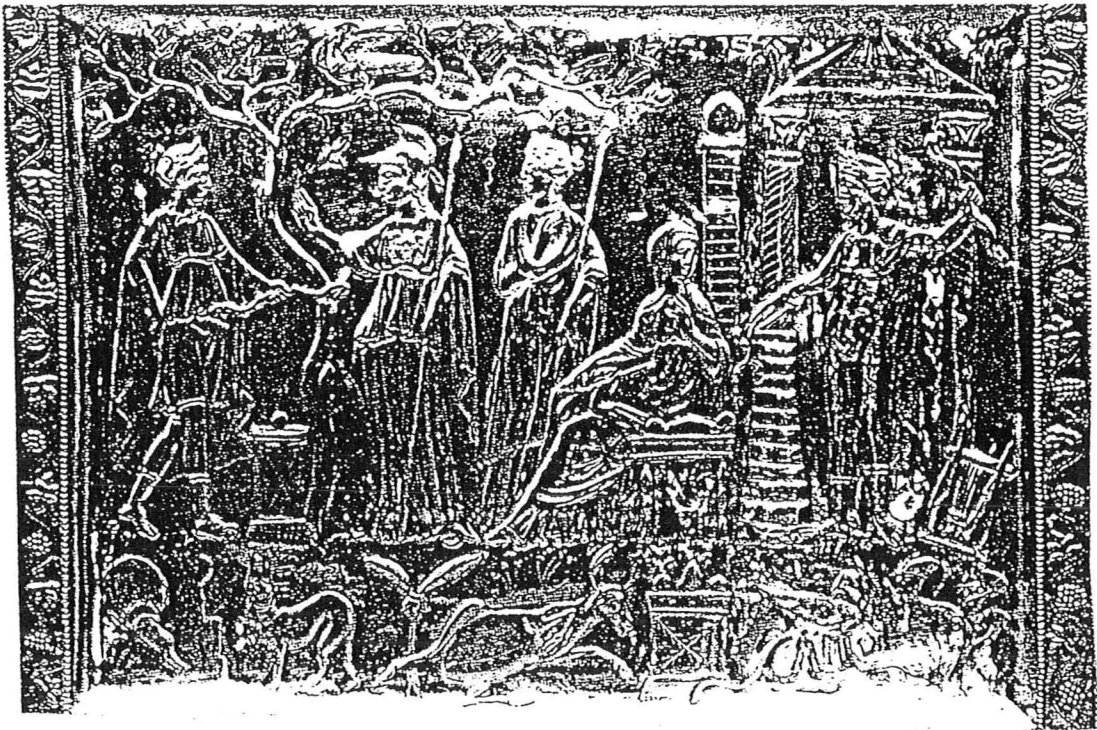


Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59

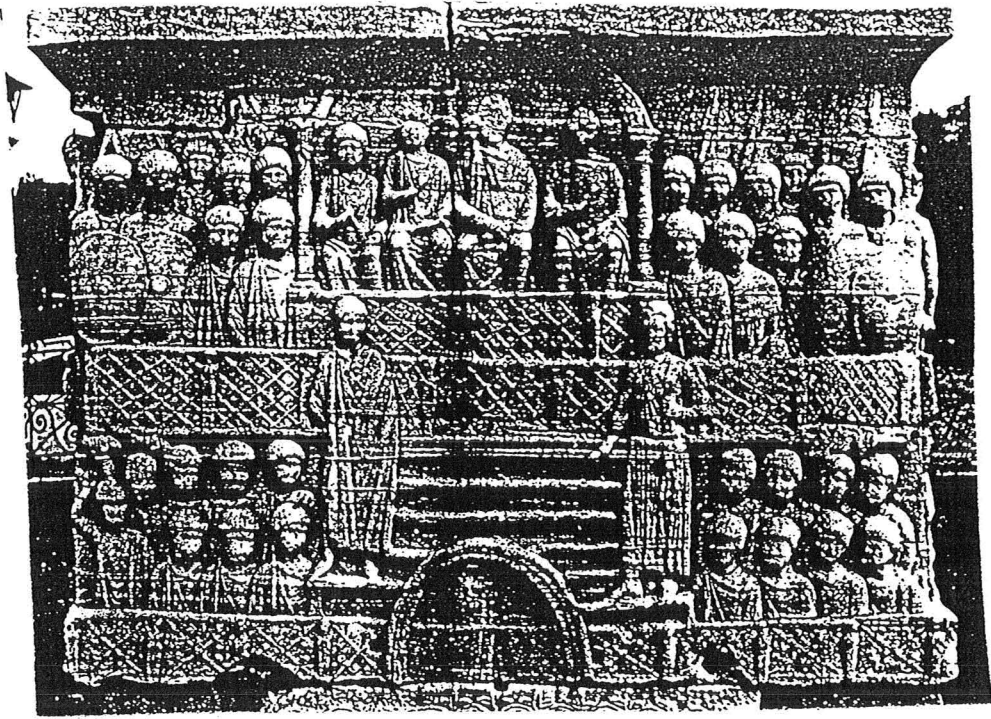


Figure 60

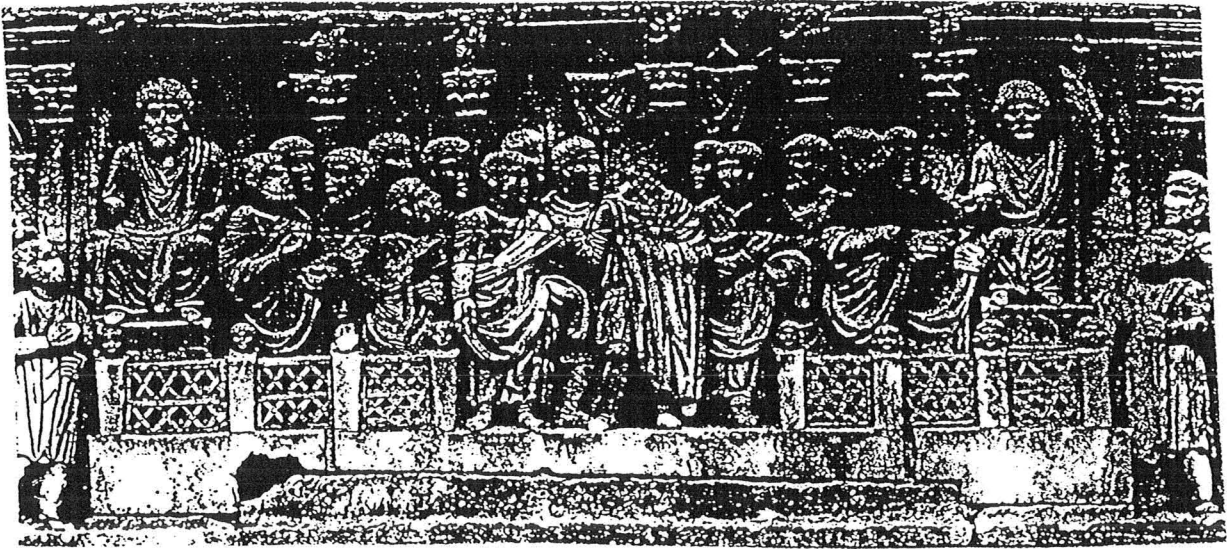


Figure 61



Figure 62

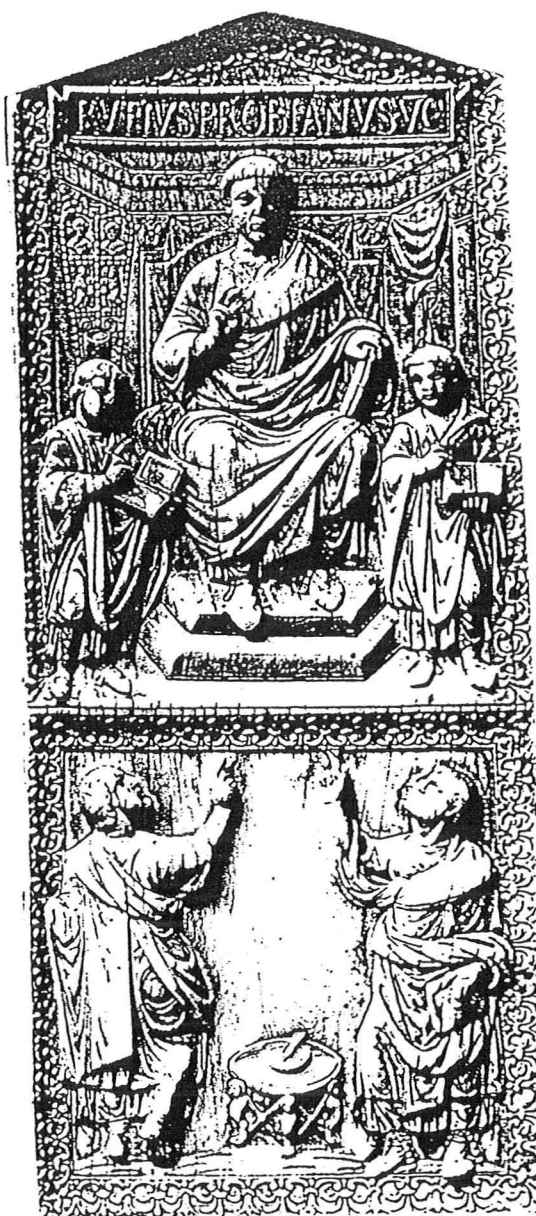


Figure 63



Figure 64



Figure 65



Figure 66



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77

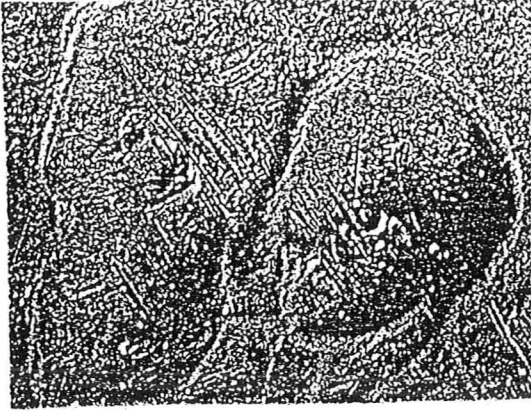


Figure 78



Figure 80



Figure 79

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