
Allusions to Imperial Rituals in Fourth-Century Christian Art

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Historians of early Christianity often assert that imperial court ceremonies were heavily influential on the development of Christian liturgy during the fourth and fifth centuries. For example, in his expansive history of Christian worship, Frank Senn asserts that one should seek the origins of the entrance rite, with its solemn procession of richly vested clergy, candle bearers, and acolytes wafting incense and singing psalms in the rituals of an imperial *adventus*.¹ The bishop's chair at the back of the apse has been

1. See, for example, Frank Senn, *Introduction to Christian Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 31–32; Justo González, *The Story of Christianity*, 2nd edition vol. 1 (New York:

compared to the *sella curulis* of a presiding magistrate or governor, the church building named for what it was perceived to be: the replication of a king's audience hall (basilica). Historians of liturgy and art alike often simply presume that once Christianity became the dominant religion of the imperial house, Christian worship and ecclesiastical organization became little more than a wholesale transplantation of the trappings and symbols of secular kingship.² In such constructions, images and activities alike served to equate God (or Christ) with the enthroned ruler and to view the local bishop as his earthly vicar.

While the fourth-century church undoubtedly adapted practices and artistic motifs that had imperial associations, this chapter argues that it simultaneously infused those actions and images with a new significance and, in doing so, might even have undermined their previous meanings and purposes. Among the most commonly cited examples of these ceremonies are the presentation of tribute, the imperial *adventus*, and the apotheosis or consecration of an emperor after his death. Art historians have linked these three particular ceremonies with three parallel events in the life of Christ, all of them depicted in fourth- and fifth-century Christian art: the adoration of the magi, the entrance into Jerusalem, and the ascension. Moreover, these parallels are often cited as prime examples of the imperializing of Christianity.³ The following discussion will consider each of these exemplary scenes and argue not only that the influence and

HarperOne, 2010), 143–44; and Per Beskow, *Rex Gloriar: The Kingship of Christ in the Early Church* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), 15–16; 4.

2. Including Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 34; and Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 38.

3. Most notably, Johannes Deckers, in his essay “Göttlicher Kaiser und kaiserlicher Gott: Die Imperialisierung des Christentums im Spiegel der Kunst,” in *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. F. A. Bauer and N. Zimmerman (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001), 3–16.

adaptation of imperial ceremonies is more complex than it appears, but that the message may even be counter-imperial in certain instances.

1. The Adoration of the Magi and the *Aurum Coronarium*

The earliest surviving visual representations of Jesus' nativity do not show a baby lying in a straw-filled manger surrounded by adoring parents, shepherds, angels, and regally attired kings; instead they depict a somewhat older child sitting on his mother's lap and eagerly accepting gifts from a queue of three nearly identical young men dressed in trousers, short tunics, flying capes, and little peaked caps (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Adoration of the Magi, lower left register, early Christian sarcophagus, Arles (Trinity sarcophagus), ca. 320–35. Now in the Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence antiques. Photo: Author.

Although these gift-bearers—the adventurous magi of Matthew's Gospel (2:1–12)—approach the mother and child on foot, their camels often accompany them. Their leader points to a star that hovers just above Mary's head, and each presents his offering, usually

distinguished by shape or type of container (e.g., a wreath, box, or bowl). Versions of this basic composition, dated from the late third to the middle of the fifth century, decorated the walls of Christian burial chambers or sarcophagi. They also appear on engraved gems, silver caskets, and ivory panels. The only significant variant appears on the triumphal arch mosaic of Rome's Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (c. 435). Here, they are no longer in a single file, other characters join them, their gifts are identical and presented as small objects in shallow oval vessels, and the baby sits on an elaborate, wide, jeweled throne rather than on his mother's lap (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Adoration of the magi, from the triumphal arch (center left), Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome, ca. 435. Photo: Author.

Scholars have contended that a consistent compositional detail in these scenes seems to reflect aspects of a Roman imperial court ritual, the *aurum coronarium*, in which representatives of provincial cities, members of the Senate, or foreign ambassadors presented golden crowns to an enthroned ruler or conquering general. This ritualized giving of tribute, sometimes part of a triumphal procession or in honor of an imperial anniversary, symbolized the donors' fealty to an acknowledged sovereign.⁴ Because the adoration of the magi

4. On the *aurum coronarium* ceremony, see Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); and Theodor Klauser, "Aurum Coronarium," in

iconography emerged and soon became particularly popular in the early years of the Emperor Constantine's reign, such scholars have argued that the appropriation of this imperial motif is intentional and calculated to imply more than a parallel between the adoration of the magi and ambassadors presenting gifts to a regnant emperor. Beyond merely illustrating the Gospel narrative, it visually proclaims the sovereignty of the child and, to some, even affirms the divinely granted authority of a God-favored earthly ruler.⁵

For example, in the catalog of the 2008 exhibition, *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, Johannes Deckers considers a particular fourth-century Christian sarcophagus that displays one of these adoration images and poses the question, "What would have prompted an early Christian to have his or her tomb adorned with this particular theme?" He answers that such an individual could not have been a mere, private citizen. Commenting that it is "remarkable" that one of the depicted gifts is a gold wreath rather than some other form of gold, such as a bag of coins, he concludes that its imperial associations are unambiguous: "The unusual appearance of an emperor's gold wreath in the depiction of the Adoration of the Magi becomes more comprehensible if one hypothesizes that it was suggested by someone from Constantine's own circle. . . . The depiction of the gift of gold as a wreath thus draws an explicit parallel between the divine power of Christ and the emperor."⁶ Deckers further claims that contemporary viewers would

Gesammelte Arbeiten zur Liturgiegeschichte Kirchengeschichte und christlichen Archaeologie, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband 3 (1974): 292–309.

5. Here see Richard C. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17–18; Otto Simpson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 90, 94; and Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 1, trans. J. Seligman (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 100.
6. Johannes Deckers, "Constantine the Great and Early Christian Art," in *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, ed. Jeffrey Spier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 105. See also Deckers, "Die Huldigung der Magier in der Kunst der Spätantike," in *Die Heiligen Drei*

have immediately recognized the connection between an imperial wreath and this gift.

Another art historian, Beat Brenk, makes a similar assertion, maintaining that the artisans of the Constantinian era “did not hesitate to equip the Magi with laurel wreaths” instead of the gifts specified in Matthew’s Gospel. He continues, “These were motives stemming from imperial iconography (i.e., the *aurum coronarium*), which were chosen because they called special attention to the divine character of Jesus Christ and with the resulting adoration.”⁷ Brenk goes on to say that it was easier for Christians to adopt these imperial motifs because the imperial cult had “lost its negative connotation” and yet stresses that it still would be a “simplification to speak of the ‘imperialization’ of Christian art.”⁸

A few ancient literary sources mention this ritual of giving golden crowns to an emperor. The Roman historian Livy reports that the deputations of cities and nations west of the Taurus presented Gnaeus Manlius with golden crowns on account of his conquest of the Gauls in Asia circa 189 BCE (*Hist.* 38.37), and that crowns were carried in Manlius’s triumph procession (*Hist.* 39.7). References also appear in some Christian documents; Gregory of Nazianzus’ *First Oration against Julian* reports that reigning Roman emperors were showered with various kinds of gifts, including crowns, diadems, and purple robes (*Or. con. Jul.* 4.80). Synesius, bishop of Cyrene, also mentions offering a crown to Arcadius on behalf of his city (*Reg.* 2).

Könige—Darstellung und Verehrung, ed. F. Günter Zehnder (Köln: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1982), 20–32; A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 44–45; Franz Cumont, *L’adoration de mages et l’art triomphal de Rome* (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1932), 81–105; and Klauser, “Aurum Coronarium,” 293–13.

7. Beat Brenk, *The Apse, the Image, and the Icon* (Wiesbaden: Richert, 2010), 62.

8. *Ibid.*, 63, and see fn. 205, where he says that he disagrees with the works of Johannes Deckers, in “Göttlicher Kaiser und kaiserlicher Gott. Die Imperialisierung der christlichen Kunst,” and Thomas Mathews, in *The Clash of Gods* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

Visual depictions of this ceremony of presenting golden crowns are scarcer than the documentary evidence. The most frequently cited example appears on the east face of the base of the column honoring the emperor Arcadius in Constantinople (dated to around 400). Although the column was destroyed around 1700, the image is known from sixteenth-century drawings, which show the upper register of the column's east side depicting two groups of senators, each headed by a representative carrying a golden crown; an adjacent side apparently showed representatives of provinces bringing gifts. The late fourth-century base of the column (obelisk) of Theodosius I displays a similar scene on its northwest face (Fig. 3). Here, however, the gifts are not crowns but rather other objects of tribute, presented in large vessels. This Theodosian relief appears similar to an image on the older Arch of Galerius in Thessalonica (c. 300), which shows a group of Persians bearing gifts (including elephants) to a victorious emperor.

Furthermore, literary evidence suggests that the usual tribute was not an offering of crowns, but something more practical: a gift of coins. According to Cicero, the *aurum coronarium* was a way of speaking about a gift of gold, not necessarily an actual crown (Cicero, *Aul. Gel.* 5.6). Romans also referred to the mandatory yearly tribute paid by the Jews of Rome for the maintenance of the patriarchate as *aurum coronarium*. Thus, even if it had once been a contribution to a golden crown offered to a victorious general, by the early imperial period, the *aurum coronarium* had become a straightforward tax, paid in cash.⁹ The Theodosian code records a law, promulgated in 416 by Honorius and Theodosius II, that payments of “crown gold” should be made by a municipal council and collected by authorized (and honest) agents (*Cod. theod.* 12.12.15).

9. “Aurum Coronarium,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 3, 854.



Fig. 3. Northwest face of the base of the Theodosian obelisk (column), ca. Constantinople. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Thus, the evidence of an ongoing practice of a procession of foreign dignitaries presenting golden crowns to a reigning Roman emperor is so slim that it seems unlikely that fourth-century viewers would perceive a direct allusion in images of the adoration of the magi with a specific Roman imperial ritual. Even if that ritual were implied, they would not have seen the magi as imposing dignitaries bringing tribute to an enthroned ruler. Rather, they would have seen three exotically dressed and relatively small young men offering gifts to an infant on his mother's lap, not to a king on a throne.¹⁰ Only the

10. The magi became visiting kings only in later Christian art, based on an interpretation of Ps. 72:10.

first of the three ever carries a crown (and even he does not always do so).

In fact, one finds the closest iconographic parallel to the *aurum coronarium* elsewhere in early Christian iconography, in the depictions of processing saints bearing crowns, as in Ravenna's Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo. Even here it is unclear whether the saints are offering their crowns to Christ or simply displaying them as emblems of their martyrdom. In fact, it is more likely that they are the recipients, rather than the givers, of these trophies.¹¹ Representations of saints with their crowns are based on Rev. 4:4, which describes twenty-four elders clad in white and wearing golden crowns. In addition to saints, ordinary people received crowns for a variety of reasons. Secular and Christian iconography alike show crowns awarded as prizes to poets, athletes, married couples, and the newly baptized. Perhaps significantly, crowns and garlands also adorned animals being led to sacrifice.

However, even if we allow that a procession of gift-bearing magi might allude to some ritual of giving tribute to a ruler, one must remember that only the first of the three magi is ever depicted offering an actual crown (and, again, not always). Moreover, this gift specifically illustrates the offering of gold. Vessels (boxes or dishes) contain the gifts of frankincense and myrrh. The substance of all three gifts was highly symbolic to early Christian exegetes, who interpreted each as signifying an aspect of the child's identity and destiny. As gold indicated the sovereignty of the divine child, its representation as a crown makes perfect sense.

Irenaeus (c. 175) was among the earliest Christian writers to contend that each offering foretold something about the divine child's nature or future. He explained that the myrrh indicated that he

11. On saints' crowns, see Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 18.138, and Prudentius, *Peristeph.* 1.80, 4.21–22.

would die as a mortal, but also for the sake of the whole human race. The frankincense signified that he was also God. The gold was given to indicate that he was a king whose realm was eternal (*Haer.* 3.9.2). Similarly, Clement of Alexandria claimed that the magi brought the Christ child a gift of gold as symbol of his royalty (*Paed.* 2.8).

These interpretive motifs became standard in later centuries, often appearing in sermons preached on the Feast of Epiphany. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna in the early fifth century, explained that the magi's choice of gifts showed divinely granted awareness that this child was a human who was also God, a king who was to die. Thus they chose the three suitable gifts: incense, gold, and myrrh (*Serm.* 157.4, 159.10, 160.2).

Leo the Great's sermons on Epiphany, preached sometime in the 440s, simply declared that the gifts reflected Christ's threefold function: gold showed him as king, myrrh as human, and frankincense as God (*Serm.* 31.1, 33.2).¹² In one of these sermons, he elaborates:

But if we give attentive consideration to how that same threefold gift is offered by all who come to Christ in faith, will we not recognize the same offering repeated in the hearts of true believers? For the one who acknowledges Christ as ruler of the universe brings gold from the treasure of her heart: the one who believes the Only-begotten of God to have united humanity's true nature to himself, offers myrrh; and the one who confesses his majesty to be in no way inferior to the Father's, venerates him with incense.¹³

Given that early Christians understood that the gift of gold was intended to reveal Christ's kingship, one may ask how an artist, working in Rome at this time, would have depicted such a gift in some way that would clearly convey that sense other than as

12. See also Prudentius, *Carm.* 12.28; Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 44.2; and Fulgentius, *Ep.* 14.20.

13. Leo, *Serm.* 36.1, trans. author (CCL 138:196).

a crown. A bag of coins—Deckers’s proposed alternative—would not have conveyed this idea. Of course, this gift of gold actually forges an explicit parallel between Jesus and a human ruler. Yet the contrast between the child on his mother’s lap and an emperor on a royal throne is striking, and one could interpret it as an intentional, visual repudiation of the trappings of earthly dominion. Tertullian expressed this eloquently in a treatise against the heretic Marcion, saying that his antagonist misunderstood the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Isa. 8:4) to say that the Messiah would come as a victorious warrior. Rather, he says, his call to arms is made with a rattle, not with a trumpet, and not from a parapet, but from his nursemaid’s arms. Then, he adds, “Let those eastern magi attend the infant Christ, presenting to the new-born their gold and frankincense; and surely an infant will have received the spoils of Damascus without either a battle or weapons.”¹⁴

More than a century later, Leo the Great articulated the same idea in one of his epiphany sermons. He accounted for Herod’s actions against Jesus on the basis of the Jewish expectation that their messiah would come as a rival earthly monarch:

You are being overly fearful, Herod, and you futilely try to take revenge on the infant you suspect. Your rule cannot contain Christ; the Lord of the world is not content with the constrictions of your power. The one, whom you do not wish to rule Judea, reigns everywhere: and you would rule more contentedly yourself, if you were to submit to his authority. Why not do with sincerity what you promise in treacherous deception? Come with the wise men, and in prayerful adoration worship the true king.¹⁵

Thus, the image of at least one of the magi presenting a gold crown to the baby Jesus may well have been meant to suggest his rulership,

14. Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.13.6, trans. author (CCL 1:525).

15. Leo I, *Serm.* 34.2, trans. author (CCL 138:180–81).

and to do so in such a way as to have intentional resonance with imperial iconography while also confounding and contradicting those imperial allusions.

2. Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem and the *Adventus Regis*

Early depictions of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem occur primarily in sculpted reliefs on fourth-century Christian sarcophagi. Based on the biblical narrative (Matt. 21:1-11 and parallels), the composition typically presents Jesus in profile, mounted on a colt or donkey, wearing a tunic and *pallium*, and holding the reins of the animal in his left hand while raising his right in a gesture of blessing. One or more apostles follow him, often including an individual with Paul's distinctive facial features. In some instances the foal of the donkey also appears beneath the legs of its mother. Often a single youth is shown placing a garment under the feet of the prancing animal, although other figures may be included, some waving palm branches in fairly close parallel to the textual narrative. Some of the scenes include representations of city gates. Most of the compositions also include the figure of a man in a tree, presumably Zacchaeus, who climbed up to get a better view of Jesus as he passed by (Fig. 4).¹⁶

This image appears with slight variations on dozens of early Christian sarcophagi and on some fifth- and sixth-century ivories: a Gospel cover from Milan, a diptych known as the Etchmiadzin Gospel, and one of the panels from the sixth-century ivory cathedra of Maximian in Ravenna. Additional early examples occur on a Coptic relief now in Berlin and a relief from the Monastery of St. John Studios in Constantinople. It also appears on one of the leaves of the Rossano Gospels, dated also to the sixth century. This last example is perhaps the most elaborate, as it depicts Jesus riding side-saddle, the

16. Not actually part of the Entry to Jerusalem narrative—but rather from Jesus' passing through Jericho in Luke 19:1-6.

crowd holding palm branches and throwing down cloaks, spectators climbing a tree or leaning out of windows, and a small group of children in short tunics running out of the city gate. Behind the city walls, one can glimpse some of Jerusalem's buildings.



Fig. 4. Jesus' entry to Jerusalem, early Christian sarcophagus, Pio Cristiano Museum, Vatican (inv. no. 31549), mid fourth century. Photo: Author.

Many art historians identify the prototype for this iconography in depictions of the imperial *adventus*, the ceremonial entrance of an emperor to a city. For example, Ernst Kantorowicz asserts, "The influence of the imperial *Adventus* imagery [on the scene of Christ's entry] cannot be mistaken. . . . The borrowing from imperial images here is quite manifest."¹⁷ Some even judge that the image was designed to echo the triumphant entry of Constantine into the city

of Rome following his defeat of his rival Maximian at the Milvian Bridge in 312.¹⁸ As Eusebius of Caesarea described that event, it undeniably had religious overtones. According to him, when Constantine formally entered Rome, all the senators and other important dignitaries, along with women and children, greeted him with hymns and shouts of praise. They expressed their insatiable joy, receiving him as their deliverer, savior, and benefactor with shining eyes and beaming faces (*Hist. eccl.* 9.9.9–10).

In his critical analysis of this longstanding perception, Thomas Mathews identifies an impressive list of art historians who took for granted that the Entry motif was derived from iconography of the emperor's *adventus*. Mathews even argues that this analysis caused the very word "*adventus*" to become the common way of labeling the iconography of Jesus' entry.¹⁹ Mathews, conversely, concludes that the image is modeled on that of a Roman nobleman returning home from the hunt, found on pagan sarcophagi.²⁰

The *adventus regis* ceremony was the traditional Roman way to welcome an arriving emperor and has its origins in the ancient Hellenistic ruler-cult.²¹ Typically, the welcoming committee consisting of important dignitaries of the city, priests, and other

17. Ernst Kantorowicz, "The 'King's Advent': And the Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina," *Art Bulletin* 4 (1944): 207–31, here 216.

18. See for example Erich Dinkler, *Der Einzug in Jerusalem: Ikonographische Untersuchungen im Anschluss an ein bisher unbekanntes Sarkophragment* (Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1970). André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936), 234–36; and Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, 18–23. Most of these are noted in Mathews, *Clash*, 24, fn. 4.

19. Mathews, *Clash*, 24.

20. Mathews, *Clash*, 33–37, an argument that makes some sense on the basis of iconographic parallels, but overlooks the nature of Jesus' entry as described in the New Testament Gospels or the possibility that the hunt imagery might, itself, be based on scenes of imperial *adventus*.

21. On the ceremony of *adventus*, see Sabine G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 17–61; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 84–100; and an old, but much-cited study of the "reception of royalty" by Erik Peterson, "Die Einholung des Kyrios," *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 7 (1930): 682–702. The ritual departure was known as *profectio*.

principal citizens would line the road for a certain distance in order to meet and accompany their arriving ruler through the gates and into the center of the town, where they would officially receive him with specially crafted speeches of praise (*panegyrics*) and sacrifices offered at the city's sanctuaries. As he passed, the spectators would chant acclamations that hailed the guest as savior or liberator. They would offer gifts or garlands, scatter flowers, wave banners and palm branches, waft incense, and hold up torches or tapers. This was the imperial epiphany (or *parousia*) of a semi-sacred ruler.

Depictions of these ceremonies appear on coins and commemorative medals. The earliest known were those struck in Corinth to commemorate Nero's arrival and bore the legend "*ADVEN(tus) AUG(usti)*."²² However, Nero's coins did not display an image of the emperor himself but rather a Roman galley. Trajan also issued *adventus* coins, as did his successor Hadrian, whose design included a female figure pouring a libation upon an altar to personify the welcoming city or nation. Other mints of Trajan, along with some of Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Commodus, and Gordianus, show the emperor mounted, often with the accompanying legend *Adventus Augusti*. Perhaps the closest parallel to the iconography of Jesus' entry appears on the so-called Arras medallion, minted in Trier to commemorate Constantius I's arrival in Britain in 296 (Fig. 5). The obverse shows Constantius mounted on a horse and carrying a spear.²³ The personification of London kneels before her city gate to receive him. Below the emperor is a ship, perhaps meant to be the one in which he arrived across the Channel. The legend "*Redditor lucis aeternae*" ("the restorer of eternal light") may indicate his liberation of Britain from the usurper Carausius.

22. See Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 213–14.



Fig. 5. Copy of the Arras Medal of ca. 296, showing the adventus of Constantius I into London. Part of the Beaurains Treasure, now in the British Museum. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Adventus scenes also appear on monumental arches, where the size of the relief allows far more detail. For example, one of the sculpted friezes on Thessalonica's Arch of Galerius (c. 300) shows the emperor surrounded by mounted troops but enthroned in a carriage rather than on horseback himself. He appears to be departing from one city (represented by the gate on the left) and entering another, presumably Thessalonica, his home base. He is celebrating his victory over the Persians and their king Narses in 298. A group of citizens

waving banners bid him welcome (including the statue of a local god enshrined in a small temple).

The Galerius *adventus* frieze has a striking parallel on two separate reliefs of the Arch of Constantine, commissioned by the Senate and erected to celebrate Constantine I's victory over Maxentius (312) and to frame his ceremonial entry into the city of Rome. The arch's western and eastern faces each include a frieze that shows the emperor in transit. The shorter western frieze shows the emperor departing from Milan, riding in a chariot behind his advancing army. Around the corner, the wider, southern side shows the events that followed: the siege of Verona and the battle of the Milvian Bridge. The eastern frieze depicts Constantine's official entry to Rome. Here the emperor sits, enthroned, in a chariot drawn by four horses (Fig. 6). The goddess Victory, carrying the ceremonial wreath, guides the team as they pass through an arch (or perhaps a city gate). His troops, carrying standards, spears, and shields, head up the parade. Above this scene is a tondo showing Helios, the sun god, riding upwards.



Fig. 6. East face of the Arch of Constantine, Rome, ca. 312-14. Photo: Author.