



OBJECT ID	F2012.12
OBJECT NAME	Flabellum
DATE CREATED	1900 – 2012
MATERIAL	Aluminum; Tin
OBJECT ENTITIES	Asclipadis, Basil (created by) Asclipiadis, Basil (is related to)
ACCESS POINTS	church liturgical Orthodox Seraph

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This is the complete top of a flabellum. It does not have the pole, on which it would sit. Some of the outer rays are slightly bent. On both the the obverse and reverse, the metal is bent where the tail meets the body of the two-headed eagle. There are also small holes in the chin and nose of the top right angel on the reverse, where the metal is missing. There are multiple pieces which make up the object.

The bottom sheath for the pole which is silver at the bottom and brass at the top in color. There are striations of the brass color throughout the silver bottom of the sheath. There is a ridge of decoration halfway up. At the top is a bulb with a ridge halfway up the bulb. The upper portion screws into the bottom sheath and is made up of five hammered pieces of metal and pins to hold them together.

The interior piece, silver in color, is the largest and creates a ray pattern. The rays length vary regularly around the rippling pattern, which bends the metal back and forth. At the bottom on each of the two sides of the rays is attached a two-headed eagle with semicircular wings, which disappear between the rays and the outer-most central pieces. There are small holes 1/3 of the way up the wings which have pins through them to hold the pieces together.

The central pieces on each side are the same on both sides. The outer band is made up of angular pedals. Those in the foreground have three-leaved rosettes in the center, while those in the background lack decoration. The second band of decoration in from the edge has a series of small circular shields flanked by stylized fleur-de-lis which fold back to the central shield. There are eight of these separated into groups of two by four angels. All four of the angels are oriented upright to the viewer. These angels interrupt the outermost and second bands of decoration. They feature bilateral symmetry except for a band at their waists which slope down to the left. Their arms are clasped across their chest and have shoulder-length hair. They have feathered wings on both sides and a pedaled halo. Pins also interrupt the second band of decoration in the center of each group of two shields. These are used to hold the three pieces of metal together. On top of the pins are hemispherical, silver-colored covers. The third band of decoration is a hexagonal chain with a line in the center of each link. The center features a seraph, made up of a frontal child's face surrounded by two bird-like wings on the top and two on the bottom. Each

set overlaps in a clockwise direction. Between the two sets coming out of each side is a single arrow-like feather to complete the necessary six wings.

ORIGIN

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06089a.htm>), the flabellum or liturgical fans, were used to keep away pests from priests and the sacred wine and bread. Deacons carried these in processions and used them during the mass. Flabella are often stood upright when not in use as decoration. The Catholic church abandoned their use in the 14th century, whereas the Orthodox church continues to use them up to the present. They are also known as *hagion ripidion* in the Greek.

This flabellum was found in the collection on 9/18/2012. There is no maker's mark but is an exact match to F2012.11, which has the maker's mark, "FACTORY "BAS. ASCLIPIADIS" 7. AG. PHILOTHESES STR. ATHENS 117 - GREECE." This suggests that this comes from the workshop of Basil Asclpiadis located at 7 Agios Philothesis Street in Athens, Greece.

CITATION

Flabellum, 1900 – 2012, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://hellenic.whirlihost.com/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/15/24.
