



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 68, Laurel Wreath

(Wikipedia)

A laurel wreath is a round wreath made of connected branches and leaves of the bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), an aromatic broadleaf evergreen, or later from spineless butcher's broom (*Ruscus hypoglossum*) or cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*).

It is a symbol of triumph and is worn as a chaplet around the head, or as a garland around the neck. The symbol of the laurel wreath traces back to Greek mythology. Apollo is represented wearing a laurel wreath on his head, and wreaths were awarded to victors in athletic competitions, including the ancient Olympics, for which they were made of wild olive-tree known as "kotinos" (κότινος) and in poetic meets.

In Rome they were symbols of martial victory, crowning a successful commander during his triumph. Whereas ancient laurel wreaths are most often depicted as a horseshoe shape, modern versions are usually complete rings.

In common modern idiomatic usage, it refers to a victory. The expression "resting on one's laurels" refers to someone relying entirely on long-past successes for continued fame or recognition, where to "look to one's laurels" means to be careful of losing rank to competition.

Background

Apollo, the patron of sport, is associated with the wearing of a laurel wreath. This association arose from the ancient Greek mythology story of Apollo and Daphne. Apollo mocked the god of love, Eros (Cupid), for his use of bow and arrow, since Apollo is also patron of archery.

The insulted Eros then prepared two arrows, one of gold and one of lead. He shot Apollo with the gold arrow, instilling in the god a passionate love for the river nymph Daphne. He shot Daphne with the lead arrow, instilling in her a hatred of Apollo. Apollo pursued Daphne until she begged to be free of him and was turned into a laurel tree.

Apollo vowed to honour Daphne forever and used his powers of eternal youth and immortality to render the laurel tree evergreen. Apollo then crafted himself a wreath out of the laurel branches and turned Daphne into a cultural symbol for him and other poets and musicians.

Did any of the Roman emperors wear an actual crown? Yes, but only in the later years of the Empire. The wreath or crown made from leaves and worn around the head was an important part of Ancient Greek religion, which was also adopted by the Romans during the Republic era.

Just as the ancient Greeks and the Etruscans before them, the ancient Romans associated the laurel wreath with victory and success. They saw it as a badge of honour and was only given to a select few who had achieved something extraordinary. The Etruscans gave their kings thin gold wreaths.

Julius Caesar

The Roman general Julius Caesar wore a wreath of laurel on the head to show that he was a powerful and strong leader.

He received the wreath for his many victories on the battlefield. It was awarded to him at his triumphal procession through Rome in April, 46 BCE. A Roman triumph (triumphus) famous for its extravagance, hailing the commander for his victories in four wars: the war in Gaul, the war in Egypt, the war against Pharnaces of Pontus and the war against King Juba of Numidia.

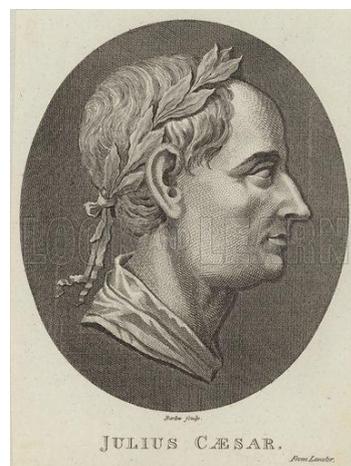
The laurel wreath was normally worn only on the day of the triumph, but when Caesar was appointed dictator in 44 BCE, he was wearing the wreath again.

According to the Roman author Suetonius, the wreath suited Caesar especially well with the green leaves hiding his balding head.

The laurel wreath was not the Romans only badge of honour. They used many types of wreaths produced by different plants to reward their heroes.



Constantine the Great



Julius Caesar