

Book XII.
Title XLVIII (XLIX).

Concerning the offering of gifts.
(De oblatione votorum.)

12.48.1. Emperors Arcadius and Honorius to Basilius, Prefect of the City.

When the happy new year opens with common vows, we gladly receive the devotion (of our subjects) by an offering made to the emperors of a pound of gold, consisting of solidi of pure gold, and we direct that in subsequent years, each person zealously bring and offer that amount to his emperor.

Given at Milan March 5 (395).

C. Th. 7.24.1.

Note.

New Year's gifts had long been offered to the emperors, and that the custom had continued down to Justinian's time is evidenced by the instant law. The law reads as though the emperor expected a New Year's gift of one pound of gold, consisting of gold pieces of pure gold, and that from every one of his subjects. But that cannot, of course, have been the import. Only the nobility were expected to make him a New Year's gift. Holmes, 1 The Age of Justinian and Theodora 157. And it is hardly to be thought that everyone of the nobility, some of whom must have been poor, were expected to give any such amount as here indicated. Some exemptions must have existed. See 1 Karlowa 894. These gifts were similar to the coronary gold offerings of the decurions, mentioned in C. 10.76, and since they were in a sense compulsory, must have been a great burden. See Gothofredus on C. Th. 7.24.1; see also note C. 12.10.2.