

4th century pilgrim amulet

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The present paper aims at studying an eulogia-amulet cast from lead; it was found in Northern Bulgaria and is currently kept in a private collection. The amulet is rectangular in shape and its dimensions are 1,69 x 1,38 x 2,1 cm.

A short version of the scene „Christ Entering Jerusalem“ is depicted on the avers of the amulet (Fig. 1). There is a great similarity between the Adventus scene on Roman coins (Fig. 2) and Christ in „Christ Entering Jerusalem“ as well as between the kneeling figures on the coins of the Restitutor orbis/provinciae type (Fig. 4) and the one on the amulet. This gives us a reason to suppose that the scene on the amulet probably represents one of the earliest (if not even the earliest

one) depictions of this gospel scene that has survived until the present. There is also a semantical difference between the scene on the amulet, expressing the humbleness and gratefulness to Jesus Christ and the later versions of the scene that are focused on the festiveness related to the triumphant entering Jerusalem.

There is a three line Greek inscription on the reverse: ΦΥΛΑΚ/ΤΟΝ ΑΓ/ΑΘΟΝ (amulet for luck). The paleographic characteristics of the inscription are typical for the 3rd - 5th centuries.

The newly found amulet is dated to about the 4th century and an assumption is made that the probable place of its production was the very town of Jerusalem.