

FOUR MAGICAL AND CHRISTIAN AMULETS*

H. Gitler

Man has always searched for a medium to resolve phenomena which he did not understand. His fear of the unknown was so strong that there was no formal objection to the use of deities of other religions (syncretism)¹ when they offered hope in solving his problems. These ideas became universally popular after the campaigns of Alexander the Great to the East which acquainted the Greek world with the principal religions of the conquered area.

The first impact of this new situation was a noted change in the realm of more sophisticated ideas. Thoughtful men began to hope that by a union of Greek philosophy, especially Platonism, with the outstanding elements of Oriental beliefs, the problem of man's place in the universe and his destiny might be solved.

What had started as intellectual movements in early Roman times, transformed into religious sects. The credo of these sects was based on the assumption that man could attain the supreme aim of spiritual accomplishment only by "gnosis" – a deep knowledge of the "hidden mysteries of existence". Gnostic belief incorporate various elements among which the main components were mysticism, Platonic philosophy, and the three religions (Judaism, Christianity, and those practiced in Egypt).

While at the intellectual level gnostic belief allowed philosophers to search for new conjunctions of ideas; at the level of the common man it solved the intricacy of daily life by using a mixture of philosophical thoughts and religions to form a fantastic combination of deities. A glimpse

* I would like to thank Prof. Hans Dieter Betz, The Divinity School, University of Chicago, for his valuable comments, corrections and additions. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Prof. John Gager, Department of Religion, Princeton University, to Prof. Ya'akov Meshorer and to Yael Israeli, the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, for their guidance and encouragement. Finally, I am indebted to the Israel Museum, for the permission to publish these amulets.

1. The existence of syncretism makes it almost impossible to relate a magical amulet to a certain religion since the same deity was commonly used in different connotations and various elements from several religions were merged and influenced each other; see C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, Ann Arbor 1950, p. 18. For an important work on syncretism; see M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion II*, 3rd edition, München 1974, pp. 581-701.

of this fantastic group is apparent to us usually through amulets but also from magical papyri.² We define amulets mainly as those objects that could be comfortably worn as pendants, ring stones, or beads,³ whose contact or close proximity to the person was believed to exert magical powers.⁴ The first step in the making of an amulet was to choose a specific stone⁵ and engrave on it a certain deity. To secure and strengthen the magical potency of the amulet, a careful preparation known as consecration was essential in giving the stone its full efficacy.⁶ Some of the preliminaries included: sacrifices, libations, censuring, recitation of special formulas, and previous purification and continence.

In the first century A.D., in marked distinction to what we find before, gems with a distinct magical engraving began to appear. This phenomenon is first noticed in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, from which it later spread throughout the Roman Empire.⁷

In the making of magical amulets many kinds of materials were used (stones, metals and papyrus as well as parts from animals and plants), since they were supposed to possess or be imbued with supernatural or magical virtues. Even parts of the body had peculiar efficacy, thus the snout of a wolf fixed upon the door protected the inhabitants against evil influences (Plinius, *Historia Naturalis*: 28.157).⁸ The engravings which were usually intaglios⁹ depict a single figure surrounded by a long inscription and many signs, all of them adding to the potency of the amulet.

2. The amulets are considered the main source in this aspect since the active magical agent in them is a picture or a symbol, whereas the magic in the papyri is mainly verbal; see M. Smith, "Relations between Magical Papyri and Magical Gems," *Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 18, Brussels 1979, p. 135. (*Actes du XV^e Congrès Int. de Papyrologie, III^e Partie*).

3. Amulets corresponds to περίαπτα, περιάμματα: "Things tied around the neck".

4. C. Bonner, (above n. 1), p. 2. In Jewish-Christian contexts this phenomenon is represented by the tefillin or "phylacteries": see *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, X, 1907, p. 27.

5. Plinius, in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh books of the *Historia Naturalis*, gives a long account of the prophylactic, therapeutic and magical qualities of stones. For some examples see: 36, 37. 20; 37, 15. 4; 37, 40; 37, 54. 10; 37, 60.

6. For the numerous descriptions of preparations in the making of magical amulets in the Greek Magical Papyri see H. D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, Chicago 1986, PGM IV. 1596-1715, PGM IV. 2179, PGM V. 447-458, PGM XII. 270-350 etc.; and C. Bonner, (above n. 1), pp. 4-13. For further relations between magical papyri and amulets see M. Smith, (above n. 2), pp. 130-134 and n. 1 on page 135.

7. C. Bonner, (above n. 1), p. 5.

8. A similar phenomenon is found in the Jewish religion in the form of the Mezuzah. See E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period*, Toronto 1953, Vol. II, p. 210.

The first three objects discussed in this article have been categorized by their magical character (the catalogue numbers of these objects refer to their registration No. in the Israel Museum collection). The fourth one is a Christian amulet which was previously in the Clark collection.

1. Syncretistic Amulet

3rd-4th century A.D., provenance unknown. Lapis lazuli; No. 70.14.615 (width 3.8 cm., length 5 cm.).

Fig. 1 Obv.: Eagle-headed¹⁰ anguipede (snake-footed creature) carries shield and magic whip; facing left. Above his head stands a jackdaw¹¹ on a globe. To his right a scorpion. Above the figure the word: ABPAXAΣ¹² and: Φ(ω̄ς) Θ(εο̄υ) (?) (the light of the God?) in the exergue beside his head. Between his snake legs, two stars and the word: IAΩ.

Fig. 1a Rev.: Six-line inscription beginning with IAΩ, inside tabula ansata bounded by two stars, the rest are magical characters (*Nomina Sacra*)¹³:

IAΩ
PKΔACAΞI
. AXΘZZ
. ΩΔAZΩ
. AI.CΘHI
HKΦONΠ

Below the inscription are three stars.

9. It is important to note that the designs in these stones or metals were meant to be looked at as represented and not to be used as seals.

10. The anguipede is usually depicted with a head of a cock and its representation with a head of an eagle is quite rare; see C. Bonner, (above n. 1), fig. 172.

11. According to the body shape this small bird is probably a jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) which is a type of crow. I am grateful to Reuben Inbar from the Institute of Evolution of the University of Haifa for making this identification and also for ascertaining that the anguiped's head is indeed that of an eagle. The crow had a symbolic significance as navigating bird which ancient seamen took to their voyages; see the story of Noah in Genesis 8: 6-7.

12. H. D. Betz, (above n. 6), Glossary, p. 331.

13. P. C. Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense", apud A. H. Armstrong, *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, New York 1986, pp. 481-505. See also: R. T. Wallis, "The Spiritual Importance of Not Knowing", *Ibid.*, pp. 460-480.

The Anguipede,¹⁴ an animal-headed snake-footed creature, has a Roman military dress of the third to fourth century A.D. Its usual common depiction is with a cock-head. It holds the whip of Helios in one hand and a shield in the other.¹⁵ The name ΙΑΩ¹⁶ is the widely used Greek transcription of the Hebrew “YHWH”.¹⁷

A unique distinction of this specimen is the use of Lapis lazuli instead of more common stones, e.g., steatite, haematite, or green jasper.

The word Abrasax or Abraxas requires further comment. Abrasax or Abraxas was used both as a name and as a word of power whose letters were read as numerals (the sum of the numerical values of the Greek letters Abraxas = 365). Abrasax, with his isopsephic significance, corresponding to the number of days in the year (which indicates the solar character of his image), may have been invented by an astrologer as a mystic reminder of the period of the sacred sun.

The identification of Abrasax with the magic number 365 is attested to in magical papyri¹⁸; PGM VIII 48-49 “... with the exact number 365 corre-

14. The Anguipede is the most important single figure on the amulets of the Late Roman period. For attempts to interpret the origin and meaning of the figure: see M. P. Nilsson, “The Anguipede of the Magical Amulets”, *Harvard Theological Review*, 44: 2 (1951), pp. 61-64 and A. A. Barb, “Abraxas-studien”, in *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna*, Collection Latomus 28, Brussels 1957, pp. 67-86. Another interpretation is that of M. Philonenko who suggested that the Anguipede is actually the god Iaô: “L’Anguipède Alectorocéphale et le Dieu Iaô,” *Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l’année 1979*, pp. 297-303. A. A. Barb on the other hand has pointed out that “The fact that this name very often occurs inscribed on the shield held by the ‘Anguipede’ obviously does not mean the anguipede equals Iaô, but rather that the shield equals Iaô” (cf. Genesis 15, 1 where God calls himself a “shield” for Abraham): “Diva Matrix”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. XVI (1953), p. 227 n. 154. This figure continued to play an important role in Jewish magic, this is evident from its depiction on Jewish charms of the eighteenth century: see E. R. Goodenough, (above n. 8), Vol. III figs. 1005, 1006.

15. Cf. F. M. Schwartz and J. H. Schwartz, “Engraved gems in the collection of The American Numismatic Society. 1. Ancient Magical Amulets”, *The American Numismatic Society: Museum Notes* 24, New York 1979, pp. 155-161; A. Delatte et Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques Gréco-Égyptiennes*, Paris 1964, pp. 23-42; H. Philipp, *Mira et Magia*, Main am Rhein 1986, cat. nos. 158-169; C. Bonner, (above n. 1), pp. 123-139 and an interesting study from the seventeenth century: Macarii Ioannis, *Abraxas sev Apistopistus*, Antverpiae: Ex Officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1657.

16. H. D. Betz, (above n. 6), Glossary p. 335. The name of the Jewish god (Iaô) is used in the magical papyri chiefly as a magical word, only once is he said to be the creator of the world: cf. PGM VII 759-760.

17. See Diodorus Siculus, *Histories*, 1: 94, who identifies ΙΑΩ as the name of the God of the Jews. See also: A. A. Barb, (above n. 14 “Diva Matrix”), p. 216 n. 44.

18. H. D. Betz, (above n. 6).

sponding to the days of the year. Truly Abrasax.” PGM XIII 155-156 “You are the number of (the days of) the year, Abrasax.”

In the Gnostic world, Abrasax was believed to be the ruler (princeps, μέγας ἄρχων) of the 365 heavens.¹⁹ The total of the numerical values of the letters in the name of Mithras (another solar figure), spelled μείθρας, is also 365 and according to some, Abrasax and Mithras were one and the same person.²⁰

It is interesting to point out that in Jewish tradition the number 365, the gematric value for שש"ה, also had special meanings.²¹ In Talmud and Midrashic commentaries, 365 was the number of the solar days שש"ה (החמה) but since the targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Genesis 1: 27, which describes the creation of man, a new meaning is attached to this number. It is said that man has 248 limbs (רמ"ח אברים) and 365 tendons (שש"ה גידים). In another context the numbers 248 and 365 appear as the two groups of deeds. There are 248 “do’s” and 365 “don’ts” the total sum of which equals the 613 deeds (תר"ג מצוות).

2. A Christian Gnostic Amulet

5th-6th century A.D., provenance unknown. Black slade, pierced; No. 70.42.617 (height 4.7 cm. width 3.5 cm.).

More often than any other miracle, the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11: 1-45)²² has been represented in all periods from the early third century onwards and never lost its flavor in Christian art. It was even regarded in the early Christian period as a prefiguration of the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead at the last judgement.²³

Fig. 2 Obv.: Christ resurrecting Lazarus who is shown as a mummy on the left; above, the word ΒΟΗΘΙ (“Help!”); above the nimbus on

19. H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston 1963, pp. 43-44 and 52.

20. Goodenough brings an example of an amulet which shows on the obverse the anguipede, ΙΑΩ on the shield, ΑΒΡΑΧΑΣ in the field and the name ΜΙΘΡΑΣ on the reverse: (above n. 8), Vol. III, Fig. 1088.

21. T. Weksler, *Zephunot Bemasoret Yisrael*, Jerusalem 1968, pp. 75-78 (Hebrew).

22. D. E. Aune points out that the healing command of Jesus: “Lazarus, come out!” (Jn. 11: 43) and other similar commands in Mk. 5: 41 and Lk. 7:14, must be regarded as magical formulas of adjuration: “Magic in Early Christianity”, *ANRW*, II, 23.2, Berlin 1980, p. 1534.

23. H. Leclercq, “Lazare”, *DACL*, 8/2 (1929), 2009-2086; and G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol. I, London 1971, pp. 181-183 and figs. 424, 433, 562.

Christ's head Ⲛ ²⁴ and a star to the right; to his right another cross; he holds in raised right hand the magic wand and on lowered left hand, a scroll.

Fig. 2a Rev.: Two inscriptions divided by a line. The upper inscription in five lines is formed of *Voces Magicae* in Hebrew. The letters may suggest a permutation of the word "צבאות" since there appears to be a repeated use of part of the word in these lines²⁵; the lower lines read: ΟΥΡΗΛ ΒΟΗΘΗ meaning "Uriel Help."

We may describe this amulet as a "cry for help" or a "plea for resuscitation" to be granted by Christ and the angel Uriel to the wearer of the amulet. In order to achieve this goal, three cultural levels of magic were used: Christian (scene of the resurrection of Lazarus), Greek (the Greek inscription) and Jewish (*Voces Magicae* in Hebrew), magic at it's highest level.²⁶

An amulet with very close affinity to our Christian gnostic amulet was published by Bonner and later again by Goodenough.²⁷ Both scholars suggested that the upper inscription on the reverse of this amulet is in "non-Greek characters, perhaps a degraded form of a Semitic alphabet". The close similarity between this inscription and the one on the upper section of our amulet may tentatively suggest that the permutation of the word "צבאות" was also used in this amulet. Furthermore it is important to point out a striking formal and stylistic resemblance of the human figures depicted on the obverse of both amulets (long robe with similar folds, identical standing postures including arms and legs position, etc.).

24. The monogram Ⲛ (X P abbreviated for ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) is one of several monograms used for Christ's name: cf. E. Testa, *Il Simbolismo dei Giudeo-Cristiani*, Jerusalem 1962, p. 25 and fig. 1. Similar chrisms appear in mosaics in the church of the Annunciation at Nazareth: see B. Bagatti, *Excavations in Nazareth*, Vol. I, Jerusalem 1969, figs. 51 and 55. This monogram was represented above a human figure's head in order to identify him as Christ: cf. E. Testa, *op. cit.*, p. 390 fig. 143 especially squares Nos. 4 and 10. For another scene of the resurrection of Lazarus where this monogram was used in the same manner: cf. H. Leclercq, (above n. 23), No. 77, p. 2027.

25. I would like to thank Prof. Joseph Naveh for suggesting this idea.

26. Cf. Magical papyri which contain a few directions for resurrections: PGM XIII 277-282 and XIXb 4-18.

27. Cf. C. Bonner, (above n. 1), fig. 339, pp. 225, 310 and E. R. Goodenough, (above n. 8), fig. 1057, p. 232. Compare also with the amulets published by A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain, (above n. 15), fig. 454, pp. 311-312; and L. A. Wolfe & F. Sternberg, *Objects with Semitic Inscriptions 1100 B. C. - A. D.*, *Jewish, Early Christian and Byzantine Antiquities*, Auction XXIII, Zürich November 20th 1989, Lot 300, especially 300b and 300c which depict the resurrection of Lazarus.

3. Amulet with suspension loop

4th century A.D.²⁸, provenance unknown. Bronze; No. 70.40.616. (height 5.9 cm. width 3 cm.).

Fig. 3 Obv.: Solomon the horseman²⁹ spearing the devil-woman of the evil eye who is lying on the ground.³⁰ Around, the inscription: ΕΙC ΘΕΟC Ο ΝΙΚΩΝ ΤΑ ΚΑΚΑ “God is one who overcomes the evils”. This inscription is probably based on an earlier tradition found in Mark: “John said to him ‘Master, we saw a man driving out devils in your name and he was not one of us, ...’” (Mk 9:38) and in Acts: “But some strolling Jewish exorcists tried their hand at using the name of the Lord Jesus on those possessed by evil spirits ...” (Acts 19:13)³¹ which refers to Jewish magicians who believed that the name of Jesus had special power against the evil spirits.³²

Fig. 3a Rev.: Roaring lion walking right; above five-line inscription which begins with the word ΙΑΩ. The rest are magical characters.

Solomon was known to have had exceptional wisdom and ability to exercise control over spirits and demons.³³ For these reasons he played an

28. A similar amulet was found in a Christian tomb dated to the first half of the fourth century A.D. (Galilee): cf. B. Bagatti, *The Church from the Circumcision*, reprint Jerusalem 1984, fig. 108 (first from right) p. 223 and pp. 261-262.

29. P. Perdrizet wrote on the sources of the idea of the depiction of Solomon as a rider: “... l'idée de figurer Salomon à cheval n'est ni juive, ni chrétienne, mais païenne. Peut-être même doit-on préciser davantage. Ce sont les peuples thraco-anatoliens qui ont particulièrement affectionné le type du cavalier pour la représentation de leurs divinités protectrices, Mén, le Θεός σωζών, le Θεός Ἡρώς ou Ἡρών. En fin de compte, ce doit être aux Anatoliens et aux Thraces que les Égyptiens, comme les Syriens ..., ont pris l'idée de figurer à cheval leurs dieux et leurs saints nationaux.”: “ΣΦΡΑΓΙΣ ΣΟΛΟΜΩΝΟΣ”, *Revue des Études Grecques*, 16 (1903), pp. 50-51. The image of the rider is later identified as St. Sisinnios and, as early as the sixth-seventh century, as St. George: see L. Y. Rahmani, “On Some Byzantine Brass Rings in the State Collections”, *Atiqot*, XVII (1985), pp. 177-179.

30. This amulet is a variant of a common type: cf. C. Bonner, (above n. 1), similar to fig. 311.

31. The use of Jesus' name was believed to have special power for exorcising demons: see M. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, London 1978, p. 35 and relevant n. on p. 175 and pp. 197-198 (notes to p. 114).

32. Jesus' exorcistic skills are discussed by M. Smith, *Ibid*, pp. 32-33, 109-114, 126-130, 152 and 195 (n. to p. 107).

33. See Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, VIII. 45-49 (cf. D. C. Duling's review: “The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8. 42-49”, *Harvard Theological Review*, 78:1-2 (1985), especially pp. 14-17 and for further bibliography see n. 1). See also “*Testamentum Salomonis*”, especially chapters 3-18. The most important pa-

important role in Jewish and later Christian magic.³⁴ Solomons' control of the demons was due to his possession of an amulet, the famous seal engraved with the secret name of Yahweh. In a time when common man feared the special powers attributed to demons³⁵, it is not surprising, that amulets depicting Solomon and believed to exorcise demons became extremely popular as is evident from their numerous exemplars.³⁶ There is a close relation between these amulets and the contemporary³⁷ ideas contained in the Testament of Solomon.³⁸

Even more striking is the affiliation between the amulets and Psalm 91.³⁹ Some of these bracelets and pendants bear the first six words of Psalm 91: ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν βοθείᾳ τοῦ ὑψίστου and others longer citations.⁴⁰ In the Psalms scroll of Qumrân cave 11, appears a curious recension of

per on this text is that by D. C. Duling, "Testament of Solomon, A New Translation and Introduction", apud J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume I Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York 1983, pp. 935-987. See also C. C. McCown, "The Christian Tradition as to the Magical Wisdom of Solomon", *The Journal of the Palestinian Oriental Society*, II (1922), pp. 1-24.

34. The figure of Solomon, with all his magical connotations, found in Jewish amulets, (for examples of these gems: see C. Bonner, [above n. 1], figs. 294-297), was later used in Christian amulets, (for examples of these bronze pendants, medals, rings and bracelets: see, *Ibid*, figs. 298-306; 309-327). This is in accord with the current idea that Jewish magic certainly became part of the Christian heritage during the first centuries of the Christian era: see R. Kraft, "The Multifarious Jewish Heritage of Early Christianity", apud J. Neusner, *Christianity, Judaism and Other Graeco-Roman Cults*, Part III, Leiden 1975, pp. 196-199.

35. Spells and amulets for exorcism are frequent in the papyri and in literary collections of magical material: see M. Smith, (above n. 31), pp. 195-196 (notes to p. 107). For the special powers attributed to demons: see, *Ibid*, pp. 126-127 and 202 (notes to p. 126).

36. This type of amulets have received important attention after G. Schlumberger published his article: "Amulettes byzantines anciennes destinées à combattre les maléfices et maladies", *Revue des Études Grecques*, 5 (1892), pp. 73-93.

37. For the different opinions on the date of the Testament of Solomon see D. C. Duling, (above n. 33 "Testament of Solomon"), pp. 940-943.

38. Cf. B. Bagatti, "Altre medaglie di Salomone cavaliere e loro origine", *Riv. Arch. Crist.*, XLVII (1971), pp. 331-342 and B. Bagatti, "I Giudeo-Cristiani e l'anello di Salomone", *Rech. Sc. Rel.*, 60 (1972), pp. 151-160.

39. Psalm 91 (LXX, 90) was known among the Rabbis as an exorcistic psalm: see D. C. Duling, (above n. 33 "Testament of Solomon"), p. 945. For the magical use of this psalm: see M. Smith, (above n. 31), p. 194 (note to p. 105).

40. M. Piccirillo, "Un braccialetto cristiano della regione di Betlemme", *Liber Annuus*, XXIX (1979), pp. 244-252; R. Mouterde, "Objets Magiques", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, Beyrouth (1942-1943), nos. 50-52 and 54. See also C. Bonner who published a mould for casting two rectangular amulets of an unusual type; the text in both is the first six words of Psalm 91: (above n. 1), fig. 328.

Psalm 91. It contains, in column I, Solomons' name (שלֹמֹה) and on the two following lines twice the term (הַשְׂדִּיִּם) the demons.⁴¹ This recension of Psalm 91 brings to light the local trend of believes in the exorcistic psalm and emphasizes even further the linkage between it and the amulets of Solomon vanquisher of demons.

4. Christian Amulet

3rd-4th century A.D.?,⁴² provenance unknown. Red jasper.
(width 1.8 cm. height 1.4 cm.).

Fig. 4⁴³ : Ship with mast and cross emblem on sail, sailing to left; on the right side a person lying on the deck. Below the ship, the word: IXΘΥC.⁴⁴ (Note that the shape of the ship is that of a fish).

Through a number of different associations, the ship evolved into a symbol of the Church and Christ.⁴⁵ The miracle of the Sea of Galilee,⁴⁶ when Christ calmed the waves and saved the vessel of the apostles from disaster, attached a symbolic meaning to the ship.

Although our gem has an unique depiction, it seems that there may be a connection between this gem and two close types: 1) A onyx gem depicting

41. The first mention of this scroll is by J. P. M. van der Ploeg, "Un petit rouleau de psaumes apocryphes (11QPsAp^a)", *Tradition und Glaube, Festgabe für K. G. Kuhn*, Göttingen 1971, pp. 130-131 and pl. III. For later articles which refer to the scroll see: E. Lövestam, "Jésus Fils de David chez les synoptiques", *Studia Theologica*, 28 (1974), pp. 100-101; J. P. M. van der Ploeg, "Les manuscrits de la Grotte XI de Qumrân", *Revue de Qumrân*, XII (1985), p. 12, but the latest and most updated research is that by É. Puech, "11QPsAp^a: un rituel d'exorcismes. Essai de reconstruction," *Revue de Qumrân*, XIV Vol. II (1990), pp. 386-392.

42. I can only assume an approximate dating of this red jasper gem since no exact parallels are known to me.

43. Fig. 4 is a photograph of a cast impression of this gem.

44. The classic study on this theme is that by F. J. Dölger, *Der heilige Fisch in den antiken Religionem und im Christentum*, Vols. I-V, Münster in Westf, 1922, 1927, 1928, and 1938. See also J. Engeman, "Fisch, Fischer, Fischfang", *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 7 (1969), 959-1097, especially 1046-7.

45. In early literature the ship appears as a symbol of the cross: cf. St. Justin, *Patrologia Graeca* 6, 411, and Tertullian, *Patrologia Latina* 2, 374, but very quickly it also became a symbol of the Church: see. St. Justin, *Patrologia Graeca* 6, 793-4. See also G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, New York 1954, p. 322.

46. For a gem depicting this miracle cf. F. J. Dölger, (above n. 44), Vol. V, pp. 286-287, pl. 303, fig. 3.

a ship with fish swimming under it,⁴⁷ and 2) gems depicting an anchor⁴⁸ with one or two fish together with the word ΙΧΘΥC,⁴⁹ ΙΗCOYC,⁵⁰ or ΙΗCOYC ΧΡΙCTOC.⁵¹

The fish became a very popular design in amulets when the letters of the word ΙΧΘΥC were taken as the initials of the phrase “Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ”, (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour).

Haim Gitler
Israel Museum, Jerusalem

47. Cf. H. B. Walters, *Catalogue of Engraved Gems and Cameos Greek Etruscan and Roman in the British Museum*, London 1926, p. 223, No. 2153, pl. XXVII.

48. For the symbolic meaning of the anchor in early Christianity see C. A. Kennedy, “Early Christians and the Anchor”, *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 38: 3 & 4 (1975), pp. 115-124. This symbolism explains its common appearance with fish in Christian context, and their connection with Christ’s name. For an anchor which looks like a cross, cf. F. J. Dölger, (above n. 44), Vol. III, pl. XCVII, fig. 8, and for the appearance of a cross with fish cf. Vol. V, pl. 302, fig. 7.

49. *Ibid*, Vol. IV, pl. 208, figs. 4, 5 and pl. 209, fig. 4.

50. *Ibid*, Vol. III, pl. XCVII, fig. 13.

51. *Ibid*, Vol. V, pl. 303, fig. 7.