

Rural Court Judge (Volostnoy Sudya), breast badge, 1912-1917.

In solid bronze; measures 48.9 mm tall, 50.2 mm wide, 2.8 mm thick; weighs 32.3 grams. The obverse shows inscription in stylized Old Slavonic script "Волостной Судья" (Volostnoy Sudya or Rural District Judge) and the Russian state emblem of double-headed eagle. The reverse shows the Pillar of Law and 15 June 1912, the date of the last Russian judicial reform prior to the revolution of 1917.

The medallion is in very fine to excellent condition. There is only very mild wear to the most raised portion of the obverse, whereas all other details are essentially pristine on both sides. Very attractive dark patina to bronze, with traces of the original fire gilt finish still clearly visible in recessed areas. Minor edge knocks, not very detractive.

The lowest level, Volostnoy or rural court would usually decide minor civil cases as well as misdemeanor and petty criminal cases involving farmers. Unlike the prior history of the Russian Empire (and also in contrast with the Communist period), the judge of the court was democratically elected from local population, not appointed by the administration. This official badge was supposed to be worn on a chain suspension with horizontal bar - both of which are now missing - but according to the available period photos, most owners actually wore them on a neck ribbon or leather lanyard.

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