

# Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic

*Edited by*

David Frankfurter



**BRILL**

LEIDEN | BOSTON

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# Gems

*Véronique Dasen and Árpád M. Nagy*

## 1 What is a Magical Gem?

Magical gems belong to the general class of amulets made of various materials, durable (gold and silver tablets), or perishable (leather, papyrus, leaves ...) that were ubiquitous in ancient daily life for different reasons, mainly medical, social, and religious.<sup>1</sup> They were made by ritual experts who selected the components of different cultural traditions, both ancient and of their own time, that they deemed to be effective.

### 1.1 Definition

'Magical gem' is not an ancient, but an etic category constructed by modern archaeology.<sup>2</sup> The expression designates a specific type of engraved stones of the Roman Imperial period that forms a subset of the larger class of ancient glyptic. The group is characterized by a series of common features. Magical gems were made of semi-precious stones of different colours, such as jasper and haematite, 10 to 40 millimeters in size, usually set in rings or in pendants as pieces of jewellery. Their shapes follow the traditional ones of Greco-Roman glyptics, with a few Mesopotamian and Egyptian variants. They can be regarded as a highly specialised type of ancient talisman. They concentrate in a single object all the active ingredients of ancient magical technology, the powers of the stone, of colour, of jewellery, and of performative words, images, and signs. They are engraved with condensed and elliptic motifs of different origins, chiefly Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish, reflecting the transculturality of magical knowledge in the Roman imperial period.<sup>3</sup> The producers were also inventors, re-interpreting traditional myths and creating new figures, such as the Anguipede. These talismans thus represent at the same time repositories

1 On amulets, V. Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale. Maternité et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015) and V. Dasen, "Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic*, ed. D. Boschung and J.N. Bremmer (Paderborn: Verlag Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 177–203.

2 The group was for long designated as 'gnostic': see below.

3 This was the subtitle of Campbell Bonner's fundamental work (C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1950).

of very old traditions, and the result from the newest developments of magical knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 *Main Characteristics*

The identification of magical gems relies on three formal characteristics (text, images, signs), and on three structural elements (engraving, material, shape), that are combined or isolated.

### 1.2.1 Text

Like other amulets made by ritual experts, magical gems are mostly inscribed with letters and words that empower the stone.<sup>5</sup> Three types of text are found. The first one consists of divine names. Most of them belong to the Jewish tradition: divine or angelic names (*Iaô*, *Sabaôth*, *Michaël*), and a few Biblical protagonists (*Solomôn*). These names are also used as magical words independent of their original meaning.<sup>6</sup> The names of Greek and Egyptian deities are seldom.<sup>7</sup> The second type of text consists of a word or a sequence of letters written in Greek,<sup>8</sup> strange-sounding names and *formulae* (*vox magica*, or *barbaron onoma*, *logos*) summoning the hidden name of a deity or demon.<sup>9</sup>

4 S. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln auf geschnittenen Steinen der Antike und Neuzeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004) published a catalogue of 2800 pieces. The total estimated number of magical gems is about 4000.

5 D. Frankfurter, below, Chapter 23; D. Frankfurter, "Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond: Towards a New Taxonomy of 'Magicians'," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, RGRW 141, ed. P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), 159–78.

6 E.g. R. Mouterde, "Le glaive de Dardanos, objets et inscriptions magiques de Syrie," *Mélanges de l'université Saint-Joseph Beyrouth* 15 (1930–1931): 51–139 (= CBd-1555): [Αχχαπα]χ[α] (?) Ἀδωνάϊε βασμ[α] χα[ρρακ]ω Ἰακώβ Ἰσαάκ ω (?). For an overview, G. Bohak, "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere? Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*," in *Prayer, Magic and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. S. Noegel, J. Walker, and B. Wheeler, Magic in History (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2003), 69–82, esp. 71–74.

7 E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum* (London: British Museum, 2001), no 3 (= CBd-382, Artemis), no 61 (= CBd-440, Thoth), no 5 (= CBd-384, Osiris).

8 Latin letters are seldom found: e.g. E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), 103–104, no 31 (= CBd-1961); S. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 123 (= CBd-1733); no 281 (= CBd-667). On Hebrew letters, pseudo-Hebrew inscriptions and Jewish magical gems, see J. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), 112–114, esp. 163–167.

9 The authoritative analysis of magical names is H.S. Versnel, "The Poetics of the Magical Charm. An Essay on the Power of Words," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 105–158, especially 144–47. In the wider context of Greco-Roman literature see M. Martin, *Magie et magiciens dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris: Errance, 2005), 215–21. For a glossary of *voces magicae*, W. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)," *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995): 3576–603.

These served as an important tool for the ritual specialist: each *vox magica* or *logos* represents the most suitable formula for invoking a divine power and add a performative value to the stone. Some names occur also on magical papyri, such as *Abrasax* (see above, Chapter 13), others seem to be specific to gems, such as *Orôriouth* (Illustration 17.11; see below, p. 430). Because of the small size of the stone, spells or *logoi* are usually abridged, such as the *iarbatha*<sup>10</sup> or the *chabrach-logos*.<sup>11</sup> Letter games often suggest an auditory or visual effect, such as the repetition of the seven vowels<sup>12</sup> or palindromes that can be read backward or forward, such as *ablanathanalba*<sup>13</sup> or the *iaeô-logos*.<sup>14</sup> Words can be arranged in geometric forms, such as triangle or wing-shaped *pterygôma*, also found in *lamellae* and magical papyri.<sup>15</sup> Most *barbara onomata* elude the clear identification of cultural tradition. They are primarily exotic elements that illustrate the expertise of the specialist in the eyes of his clients.<sup>16</sup> The third type of text is a meaningful inscription, the acclamation of a god or a prayer asking for help and protection, the granting of charm or favor (*charis*), health (*hygieia*), and luck (*tychê*). The inscription can also indicate the healing purpose of the gem, such as *stomachou*, “for the stomach”, *skiôn*, “for the hips” (see below, p. 438). More rarely, the name of the wearer is added, to individualize the wish.<sup>17</sup>

10 Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey,” 3587; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 484.

11 Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey,” 3601; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 483.

12 E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 125 (= CBd-525). On the various meanings of vowels, including a reference to planets, F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* (Leipzig; Berlin: Teubner, 1925); Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 186–187.

13 Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 202–204; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 232 (= CBd-630), no 243 (CBd-641).

14 Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey,” 3587, 3594, 3596; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 484.

15 See below, Frankfurter, Chapter 23; cf. A. Mastrocinque, “Les formations géométriques de mots dans la magie ancienne,” *Kernos*, 21 (2008): 97–108; C.A. Faraone, *Vanishing Acts on Ancient Greek Amulets: From Oral Performance to Visual Design* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2012).

16 On attempts to explain the origins of magical names, see the critical remarks of Bohak, “Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere?” (Israel), and H.-J. Thissen, “Etymogeleien,” *ZPE* 73 (1988): 303–305; J.F. Quack, “From Egyptian Traditions to Magical Gems. Possibilities and Pitfalls in Scholarly Analysis,” in *Magical Gems in their Context*, ed. K. Endreffy, Á.M. Nagy, and J. Spier (forthcoming) (Egypt).

17 E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 134 (= CBd-534).

### 1.2.2 Images

Two main types of images are found on magical gems. The first one features traditional, mainly Greek or Egyptian iconographical schemes (e.g. Aphrodite *anadyomenê*, Harpocrates sitting on the lotus flower). The second one uses new schemes, sometimes exclusively created for this genre. The most frequent among these are the representations of the cock-headed, snake-legged figure referred to in contemporary scholarship as the Anguipede, and the lion-headed Chnoubis (see below, p. 418). The iconography of magical gems witnesses the creativity of a new visual idiom translating the religious and spiritual developments of the late Hellenistic and Roman Imperial period. Conventional mythical figures are endowed with new competences, such as Omphale, taking the place of Heracles as patron of women's health, and traditional stories are enriched with new variants associating, for example, Ares with the story of Tantalus (see below, pp. 420–421).

### 1.2.3 Magical Signs

Magical signs or *charaktēres* are the third distinctive formal element. Letter-like symbols, made of lines, circles or loops ('ring signs') are absent from regular glyptic but quite common on other *magica* devices, such as *defixiones*.<sup>18</sup> Like *voces magicae*, the *charaktēres* were believed to summon as well as evidence direct contact with divine powers. The origin of these signs is still seldom identifiable.<sup>19</sup> Many of them seem to derive from modified Greek letters. A few *charaktēres* are regularly associated with specific deities, like the triple *kappas* with Heracles (Illustration 17.7), and crossed triple S with the lion-headed Chnoubis snake<sup>20</sup> (Illustrations 17.4, 17.5 and 17.12).

18 As a starting point, D. Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 73–78; R. Gordon, "Signa nova et inaudita: The Theory and Practice of Invented Signs (*charaktēres*) in Greco-Egyptian Magical Texts," *MHNH* 11 (2011): 15–44; K. Dzwiza, *Schriftverwendung in antiker Ritualpraxis I–IV* (PhD diss., Universität Heidelberg, 2013).

19 See the various attempts of Frankfurter, below, Chapter 23; A. Mastrocinque, ed., *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum* 1 (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004), 90–98; Dzwiza, *Schriftverwendung in antiker Ritualpraxis*; R. Gordon, "Charaktēres between Antiquity and Renaissance: Transmission and Reinvention," in *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, ed. V. Dasen and J.-M. Spieser (Florence: SISMEL, 2014), 350–90.

20 A. von Lieven, "Die dritte Reihe der Dekane oder Tradition und Innovation in der spätägyptischen Religion," *ARG* 2 (2000): 21–36; V. Dasen and Á.M. Nagy, "Le serpent léontocéphale Chnoubis et la magie de l'époque romaine impériale," *Anthropozoologica* 47 (2012): 291–314.



#### 1.2.4 The Engraving

The first structural characteristic is that most stones are engraved on both sides, and sometimes even on the edge. Moreover, the inscription is not engraved in mirror writing, as for seals, but it can be read directly on the stone, as opposed to 'regular' gems that could be used as signet-rings to identify their owners legally, much like today's numeric signatures.<sup>21</sup> However, neither of these features is unique to magical gems.<sup>22</sup> For example, on gems expressing wishes and on votive gemstones, the inscription is also to be read directly.<sup>23</sup>

#### 1.2.5 The Material

The second structural element is the combination of performative texts, images, and signs with the power of the stone, which is usually of an opaque type. The favorite minerals are, in the order of frequency: jasper (red, green, brown, yellow) including plasma (dark green jasper) and heliotrope (green jasper with red spots); carnelian (from yellowish to red) and chalcedony (from grey to whitish blue); bloodstone or haematite (black, silver-coloured); lapis lazuli (blue).<sup>24</sup> Several correspondences with the prescriptions of ancient lapidaries have been noted. Red jasper is prescribed by Dioscorides as an *okytokion* to ease delivery and is often carved with depictions relating to the birthing process (see below, p. 429, illustration 17.6),<sup>25</sup> yellow jasper often bears the image of a scorpion, according to the notion that "the same heals the same," and milky stones should favour breastfeeding.<sup>26</sup> Other symbolic references are

21 Cf. the two identical signet-rings of Augustus depicting a sphinx: Pliny, *Natural History*, 37.4.10.

22 Á.M. Nagy, "Daktylios pharmakites. Magical Healing Gems and Rings in the Graeco-Roman World," in *Ritual Healing. Magic, Ritual and Medical Therapy from Antiquity until the Early Modern Period*, ed. I. Csepregi and C. Burnett (Florence: SISMEI, 2012), 73, n. 5, with examples.

23 On votive gems, G. Bevilacqua, *Scrittura e magia. Un repertorio di oggetti iscritti della magia greco-romana* (Rome: Quasar, 2010). On gems expressing wishes, A. van den Hoek, D. Feissel and J.J. Herrmann, "More Lucky Wearers: the Magic of Portable Inscriptions," in *The Materiality of Magic*, 309–357.

24 Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 41–49.

25 Dioscorides, *On Medical Material*, 5.160.

26 On scorpions, S. Eitrem, "Der Skorpion in Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte," *Symbolae Osloenses* 7 (1928): 53–82; W. Deonna, *Mercure et le Scorpion* (Brussels: Latomus, 1959). On milky stones, cf. the milky chalcedony with a triple-headed Chnoubis in Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, no 18; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 11.10–5 (= CBD-1892); V. Dasen, "Chnoubis et le lait," in *Allaiter. Histoire(s) et cultures d'une pratique*, ed. Y. Foehr-Janssen, V. Dasen, I. Maffi, and D. Solfaroli Camillocci (Turnhout, in press).

at work too (see below, p. 439).<sup>27</sup> A few stones are ancient and were recut in the Roman period, and old figures are reinterpreted in a magical context. A fabulous two horse-headed, four-winged figure, grasping snakes on a Greek late archaic chalcedony was transformed into magical gem by an inscription of unidentified *vores*.<sup>28</sup> Christian types too can reuse magical schemes, revealing the religious flexibility of the genres. A Roman heliotrope depicting Isis on one side, Sarapis on the other, was recut in the Byzantine period, transforming Isis into Mary and Sarapis into Christ.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.2.6 The Shape

A third structural feature is the shape of the stone. Most magical gems are oval with a trapezoid section and two flat faces.<sup>30</sup> Some figures are associated with specific shapes. The heart-shaped type may be of Egyptian origin,<sup>31</sup> whereas the cylindrical types derive from Mesopotamian tradition.<sup>32</sup>

### 1.3 Series

Magical gems can be categorized into series defined by the material, colour, shape and size of the stone on the one hand, and by the relationship of the

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- 27 On the correspondences between colors and bodily fluids, A. Mastrocinque, "The Colours of Magical Gems," in *Gems of Heaven: Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity, c. AD 200–600*, ed. C. Entwistle and N. Adams (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 2011), 62–68.
- 28 M. Henig, D. Scarisbrick, and M. Whiting, *Classical Gems: Ancient and Modern Intaglios and Cameos in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), no 518 (= CBd-132). See also Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 579 (CBd-938), late Minoan; no 574 (CBd-933), 5th cent. CE. Further examples, Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 139, no 225. Stone age thunderstones were also transformed through the addition of images, voces and characteres typical of magical gems; D. Quast, "Ein Steinbeil mit magischer Inschrift aus der Sammlung des Prinzen Christian August von Waldeck," *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 41 (2011): 249–261; C.A. Faraone, "Inscribed Greek Thunderstones as House- and Body-Amulets in Roman Imperial Times," *Kernos* 27 (2014): 257–284.
- 29 M. Martiniani-Reber, *Antiquités paléochrétiennes et byzantines, III<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles, Collections du Musée d'art et d'histoire* (Genève: Musées d'art et d'histoire: Ville de Genève, 2011), 34, no 9.
- 30 For the most recent version of the list of shapes of gems developed by E. Zwierlein-Diehl, see P. Vitellozzi, *Gemme e cammei della collezione Guardabassi nel Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria a Perugia* (Perugia: Volumnia, 2010), 31.
- 31 E.g. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, D. 80 (= CBd-1040); S. Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder: "Magische Gemmen"* (Munich: Biering u. Brinkmann, 2001), no 407–408 (= CBd-778, -779).
- 32 See e.g. Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*, no 81 (= CBd-1701); no 125 (= CBd-1735); no 126 (= CBd-1736); no 585 (= CBd-944).

formal elements mentioned above: text, images and signs. Generally speaking, the magical *praxis* informed the selection of the gem's components. The ritual specialist chose the elements he deemed the most efficient. Although they can be grouped in series, magical gems were never mass-produced, as the number of variants and of possible workshops suggest. Some pieces are unique and were probably made on demand.

## 2 General Functions

### 2.1 *As Amulets*

Since the Classical Greek period, amulet rings and gems were regularly used for personal protection. Written sources (e.g. Eupolis, Aristophanes, Ameipsias) mention “magical rings”, *daktylios pharmakitês*, as early as 420 BCE.<sup>33</sup> Their images and inscriptions, however, do not seem to have differed from those of ‘ordinary’ jewellery. Their efficacy was hidden for the non-initiated, like Aladdin’s lamp. Such gem amulets were empowered through an oral ritual that left no material trace. This tradition continues into the Roman Imperial period. The opposite practice characterizes inscribed metal sheets (*lamellae*) whose ‘magical’ powers could be immediately read from the text written on them, though they were not exposed but folded as soon as they were inscribed (see below, Kotansky, Chapter 19). ‘Magical’ gems thus form a special class, because they are pieces of jewellery that exhibit ‘magical’ powers, displayed by specific images, texts and signs.

### 2.2 *As Gems*

In the Roman Imperial period, ordinary gems too could have a protective value secured by their material and by divine or auspicious images and inscriptions without characteristic ‘magical’ components.<sup>34</sup> The amuletic function of regular glyptic is attested by written sources.<sup>35</sup> These uncertainties, however, do not render the category ‘magical gems’ useless: there is no doubt that they formed a genre of their own in Roman glyptic. The public display of their performative value as costly pieces of jewellery means a significant shift in the social

33 For an overview of ancient sources, Nagy, “Daktylios pharmakites.”

34 Two critical analyses on the definition of magical gems: R. Gordon, “Archaeologies of Magical Gems,” in *Gems of Heaven*, 44–45; Nagy, “Daktylios pharmakites,” 82–88 (with a list of healing amuletic gems known from written sources, and not belonging to magical gems).

35 The best overview is Lucian, *The Ship, or the Wishes*, 42–44.

history of magical practices. It demonstrates that ‘magic’ was an integral part of Roman Imperial religion.

### 2.3 *As Jewels*

Magical gems were not amulets for the poor, because they were also part of jewellery and usually mounted in rings and necklaces. Precious metal mounts have survived in some cases, other stones show shell-like chippings on their edges, which suggests that they were once forced out of their mounts. As for regular glyptic, reuses in mounts of later periods are frequent.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.4 *As Seals*

A magical gem is not meant to be used as a seal: it is a *sphragis*, ‘seal’ in itself, bearing a print read directly on the stone, as though imprinted by a god, ‘sealing’ its efficacy.<sup>37</sup> The term *sphragis* alludes also to the therapeutic value of stones as *physika*, natural remedies, as *sphragis* also designates a medical pill carrying a stamp with an image. The most famous example is haematite, deemed to be a powerful medicine as a blood-stauncher, a cure for eye diseases, and venomous bites, according to the Orphic Lapidary.<sup>38</sup> A series of magical gems depicts on one side Solomon as a rider, spearing a prostrate female figure personifying Evil, called Gillô, Gulou, Abyzou or Obuzouth in literary sources (Illustration 17.1a).<sup>39</sup> The reverse bears the inscription *sphragis Theou*,<sup>40</sup> “seal of God.”<sup>41</sup> The double meaning of *sphragis* could explain why Solomon’s gems were always carved in haematite, and often found broken in half.<sup>42</sup> *Sphragis Theou* could mean “the medicine of God”, because the missing

36 See e.g. the 5th c. CE gold necklace from Rome, Piazza della Consolazione; K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), no 281 (= CBd-1253).

37 V. Dasen, “Magic and medicine: the power of seals,” in *Gems of Heaven*, 69–74.

38 *Lapidaire orphique*, 21.

39 CBd-805; On Solomon’s gems, Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 268–270; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zaubersformeln*, 323–324.

40 The capital is conventional, as the identity of the god invoked is unknown; it could equally be ‘one’ from the many or ‘the One’.

41 E.g. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, no D 297 (= CBd-1476); Henig, Scarisbrick, and Whiting, *Classical Gems: Ancient and Modern Intaglios and Cameos*, 233–34, no 511 (= CBd-121); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 430 (= CBd-788).

42 E.g. H. Philipp, *Mira et Magica. Gemmen im Ägyptischen Museum der Staatlichen Museen. Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Charlottenburg* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1986), no 189 (= CBd-2142); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 433 (= CBd-791) and no 443 (= CBd-801).

part of the gem was pulverized and drunk mixed with a liquid, like a pill.<sup>43</sup> The reverse of a haematite in the British Museum is carved with the inscription *stomachou* designating its power over belly's pains (Illustration 17.1b), which fits well with the haematite's potency over digestion and internal bleeding (cf. Illustration 17.12).<sup>44</sup>

However, the boundary between regular gems used as seals and magical gems was fluid. Between 1998 and 2000, excavations unearthed the remains of the archives of Zeugma (Commagene province, Asia Minor) that had burnt down. The rolled papyrus documents were destroyed, but 102,500 clay seals survived, baked hard in the fire. Two Anguipede-impressions have appeared among the published material.<sup>45</sup> Thus in Zeugma this design decorated signet-rings, but this proposition does not rule out that these rings had a talismanic function as well.

### 3 Two Historical Perspectives: Tradition and Innovation

Magical gems come from living ritual practice. Their makers aimed at having appealing products by combining two contradictory statements: they claimed that their products represented a repository of ancient, often exotic knowledge and that they represented cutting-edge magical technology, designed to fit the personal needs of the customer.<sup>46</sup>

#### 3.1 Tradition

As seen above, the creators of magical gems sometimes transformed gems and stones produced centuries or millennia earlier into amulets, thus using material itself already infused with tradition.<sup>47</sup> On the level of iconography, beside

43 On Lemnian earth ingested as pill, Dasen, "Magic and Medicine: The Power of Seals." E.g. *PGM* III 188: "Grind up a magnet". On ingesting magical powers, *PGM* I, 231–248: "Wash the papyrus and drink the water."

44 Inscriptions relating to belly or stomach occur chiefly on haematite gems. See also CBd-789 and CBd-2586, combining *sphragis Theou* and the Chnoubis-sign.

45 M. Ónal, "Deities and Cultures Meet on the Seal Impressions in Zeugma," *Bolletino di Archeologia on line* 1 (2010): 42, no 50 (= CBd-1573); 43, no 51 (= CBd-1574), with further literature.

46 As a starting point: M.W. Dickie, "The Learned Magician and the Collection and Transmission of Magical Lore," in *The World of Ancient Magic*, ed. D.R. Jordan *et al.* (Bergen: Paul Astroms, 1999), 163–193, especially 184; Versnel, "The Poetics of the Magical Charm," esp. 154–56. See also V. Dasen, "The Fabric of Myth in Ancient Glyptic," in *Images at the Crossroads: Meanings, Media, Methods*, ed. J.M. Barringer, F. Lissarrague, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, in press).

47 See above, note 28.

the frequent appearance of Osiris, Harpocrates and the so-called Pantheos figures on the gems, the priority of Greco-Egyptian tradition in so many gems is best exemplified by a series of digestive amulets that scholars designate as the “Phoenix class,” after the main iconographical motif. Today twenty-eight gems belonging to this class are recorded.<sup>48</sup> Twenty-seven are made of haematite, and all are oblong oval in shape with a trapezoidal cross-section, except three. Twenty-three are engraved on the reverse with the designation of their function (*pepte*, “digest,” or *stomachou*, “for the stomach!”). On the obverse, the structure of the composition is identical on all stones (Illustration 17.2). The longitudinal axis features three motifs: below, a crocodile, in the middle, a deity, on top, a scarab with outstretched wings. Pairs of animals are arranged vertically on each side: swallows facing inwards, scorpions crawling to top, and snakes with ‘hands’ raised in protection. The main image in the centre may vary: usually a phoenix stands on an ovoid object on a column, but an ibis-headed figure,<sup>49</sup> Harpocrates, a crab, or a lion-headed figure are found too.<sup>50</sup> One can make a sound guess for its date of production. The basic type cannot predate the second quarter of the second century CE, since the iconographic syntagma ‘phoenix standing on a globe’ first appears in ancient art in 121–22.<sup>51</sup> All pieces with known provenance come from Syria-Palestine.<sup>52</sup>

The iconographic composition of the main type follows an Egyptian tradition reported by Herodotus in the 5th century BCE, that is, about half a

48 *Studies in Magical Amulets*, “The Phoenix Class, Comm. ad Bonner,” by Á.M. Nagy, accessed June, 19, 2018, <http://www2.szepmuveszeti.hu/talismans/pandecta/1105> with a list of twenty-five amulets. Addenda: C. Dauphin, “A Graeco-Egyptian Magical Amulet from Mazzuvah,” *Atiqot* 22 (1993): 145–47; M. Schuler, “North-East Church Complex (NEC),” in *Hippos—Sussita. Sixth Season of Excavations (July 2005)*, ed. A. Segal et al. (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2005), 69–71 (reworked haematite gem fitted into a gold Byzantine setting from the 6th or early 7th centuries); G. Mazor, “A Graeco-Egyptian Amulet from Nysa-Scythopolis (Bet She’an),” *Atiqot* 71 (2012): 89–92. (made of cobalt glass).

49 Identified by A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1964), no 192, as Thoth. See A. Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles, et Antiques* (Paris: Éditions de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2014), no 101 = CBD-1243. See also Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 483–484 (= CBD-841, -842).

50 Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles, et Antiques*, no 184; M. Maaskant-Kleibrink, *Catalogue of the engraved gems in the Royal Coin Cabinet the Hague: the Greek, Etruscan and Roman collections* (The Hague; Wiesbaden: Government Publishing Office, 1978), 357, no 1125 (Harpocrates); Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles, et Antiques*, no 551 (crab). Lion-headed figure: Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, no D 102 (= CBD-1098).

51 The syntagma is first found in the imperial coinage; A.M. Nagy, “Magical Gems and Classical Archaeology,” in *Gems of Heaven*, 79.

52 Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 60. The three gems cited in note 48 confirm this hypothesis, as they come from the territory of Israel-Palestine too.

millennium before the appearance of the Phoenix class gems, and with no representations known so far.<sup>53</sup> The phoenix buries his father's body in an egg kneaded from myrrh, then takes it to Heliopolis, where he places it in the sanctuary of the sun god. The animals engraved along the central axis of the gems (crocodile, phoenix, scarab) represent the sun god both on a natural level, in different phases of his celestial journey, as well as on a mythological one (Horus burying Osiris). The pairs of animals on the two sides represent Isis and Nephthys. The gem indicates where the story takes place: the Egyptian name of Heliopolis is *'Iunu'* — 'City of Columns'.<sup>54</sup> A single piece shows two phoenixes on a column.<sup>55</sup> The description of Horapollon (5th–6th cent. CE) provides the key for its interpretation:

When the Phoenix is about to die, he casts himself vehemently upon the ground, and is wounded by the blow, and from the ichor, which flows from the wound, another phoenix is produced; which as soon as it is fledged, goes with his father to the city of the sun in Egypt; who when he is come thither, dies in that place at the rising of the sun. And after the death of his father, the young one departs again to his own country; and the priests of Egypt bury the phoenix that is dead.<sup>56</sup>

The phoenix gems of the Roman Imperial period thus unite in a single tradition sources spanning a millennium or more, from Herodotus to Horapollon. In doing so, they neatly exemplify the cross-cultural nature of the gems. The function of these gems, however, is very pragmatic and personal: they aim at controlling the stomach with the help of the deity, as the inscription commands: *pepte*, "digest."

### 3.2 *Innovation*

#### 3.2.1 New Schemes

##### 3.2.1.1 *The Anquipedes*

Some iconographic schemes are found exclusively on magical gems and related amulets. They were most likely created by experts using specific elements of ritual practice from different cultural traditions in order to construct new,

53 Herodotus, 2.73.

54 Á.M. Nagy, "Le phénix et l'oiseau-benu sur les gemmes magiques. Trois notes sur le phénix gréco-égyptien," in *Phénix: Mythe(s) et Signe(s)*, *Actes du colloque international de Caen (12–14 octobre 2000)*, ed. S. Fabrizio-Costa (Bern; Berlin; Brussels: P. Lang, 2001), 73.

55 Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, no D 104 (= CBD-198).

56 *Hieroglyphica*, 2.57, trans. A.T. Cory, *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollon Nilous* (London: Chthonios, 1987).



powerful images. The most frequent is the scheme called Anguipede, made of a cock-headed and snake-legged human figure in armour, holding a whip in one hand, a round shield in the other (Illustration 17.3).<sup>57</sup> Even though most iconographical motifs in the visual language of the Roman Imperial period are well-known, this particular figure does not derive from either the Egyptian or from the Greco-Roman tradition. Instead, it is a new construction related to the God of Israel. The heterogeneous elements of the scheme can only be viewed as a unity by arranging the material around the Hebrew root *GBR*. While both the cock's head and the male body can be read as "*gever*," the latter word is represented in the form of a warrior in a cuirass (*gibbor*). The double snake's legs also relate to the same stem. This iconographic motif is a general symbol of the *gigantes* (*gibbor*) in Greco-Roman art, and, in this case connotes "gigantic" valour.<sup>58</sup> All these elements constitute the image of a mighty (*gvurah*) God—in short, the Mighty One (*ha-Gvurah*). The elements that combine to form the figure of the Anguipede serve, if translated into Hebrew, to define a mighty name of power, the name of the Almighty. The ritual specialist could call upon *Deus Israel* through the image. According to E. Zwierlein-Diehl, the shield designates God as *hyperaspistês*, "who protects with his shield," well-known in the Septuagint.<sup>59</sup> The image thus does not represent God, only one of his names, and hence does not contravene Jewish Law. It is an invention that should be understood as an intellectual attempt to incorporate the God of Israel into the broader magical *koinê* of the Roman Imperial period—and not solely through his names, but also through a unique image.<sup>60</sup>

57 Á.M. Nagy, "Figuring out the Anquipede: Magical Gems and their Relation to Judaism," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 15 (2002): 159–72. More than 670 ancient and post-antique gems are today recorded with the Anguipede; Á.M. Nagy, "Figuring out the Anquipedebis. A Statistical Overview," in *Magical Gems in Their Context*.

58 In this scheme, the motif of the double snake's legs is not connected to the biblical giants (e.g. Gen 6.4). In the Bible, '*gibbor*' can also serve as a name of God; for an overview of the sources, see Á.M. Nagy, "Figuring out the Anguipede and his relation to Judaism", 166, n. 42.

59 Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 30–31.

60 *Contra* G. Bohak, *Early Jewish Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 197, see also 198, 279 (without counter-arguments regarding the iconography). The gem Bohak gives as an example (CBD-451) is post-antique, and is thus irrelevant for the ancient meaning of the Anguipede. The statistical analysis of the more than six hundred Anguipede-gems has justified the hypothesis that the ancient use of the scheme cannot be separated from *Deus Israel*; Á.M. Nagy, "Figuring out the Anquipedebis."



### 3.2.1.2 *Chnoubis*

A second familiar figure on magical gems is the lion-headed and radiate snake, Chnoubis (Illustrations 17.4, 17.5, and 17.12). Both his name (Chnoubis, Chnoumis) and sign, a triple crossed S, are regularly found engraved on the gems. The 'Chnoubis' gems transformed a minor figure of Egyptian astrology, belonging to one of the 36 Egyptian decans, into an important solar deity understood in different cultures of the Roman period.<sup>61</sup> His power is chiefly used for digestive problems (see below, pp. 441–42).<sup>62</sup> Chnoubis appears on three classes of gems, which differ in their material, colour, shape, and size. The first class associates the image of the radiate lion-headed serpent, the name Chnoubis, at times spelled as Chnoumis, and the Chnoubis-sign made of a crossed triple S. These gems were made of transparent green stones, such as chrysoprase, lentoid ovals with two convex faces, approximately 20 mm in length (Illustration 17.4). The chief constituent of the second class is simply the Chnoubis sign, sometimes complemented with the name. These are engraved on stones of a similar shape, also transparent, but smaller (ca. 10 mm) and white in colour, such as chalcedony (Illustration 17.5). In the third class, Chnoubis appears on uterus gems as one of the deities protecting the womb. These stones are black (haematite), flat on both faces, between 15–25 mm, and are inscribed with a *vox* (*orôriouth*) and *logos* (*soroor-*) characteristic of uterus-gems (Illustrations 17.11 and 17.12).

Ritual experts thus incorporated the newest religious concepts on gems, a medium that favored the invention of iconographic schemes. The earliest pictorial representations of the Crucifixion appear on magical gems too.<sup>63</sup>

61 For an overview of Rabbinic sources mentioning the Chnoubis-scheme, M. Schlüter, *Derâqôn und Götzendienst. Studien, ausgehend von mAZ II 3* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1982).

62 With earlier bibliography, Dasen and Nagy, "Le serpent léontocéphale Chnoubis." The most detailed analysis: J.F. Quack, *Beiträge zu den ägyptischen Dekanen und ihrer Rezeption in der griechisch-römischen Welt*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, in press. We would hereby like to thank the author for providing us with access to the relevant parts of his manuscript. Ca. 400 gems are today recorded with the Chnoubis snake.

63 Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 283–284, no 457; J. Spier, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), 73, no 443 (= CBd-815). On this piece and the issue in general, see J. Engemann, "The Argument from Silence. Iconographic Statements of 1981 on Faked Gems Reconsidered," in *Gems of Heaven*, 208–213. On gems depicting Jesus's crucifixion see F. Harley-McGowan, "The Constanza Carnelian and the Development of Crucifixion Iconography in Late Antiquity," in *Gems of Heaven*, 214–20, and Roy D. Kotansky, "The Magic 'Crucifixion Gem' in the British Museum," *GRBS* 57 (2017): 631–659.

### 3.2.2 New Mythical Variants

#### 3.2.2.1 *Heracles*

The function of Heracles on magical gems also refers to new developments of his story in the Roman Imperial period. His main role is to control the belly, as suggested by the 3 *kappas* engraved that are usually interpreted either as the first letter of the word *kolike* repeated three times (Illustration 17.7), or as the abbreviated form of a magical formula like *Kok Kouk Koul*, found on a magical papyrus against fever.<sup>64</sup>

His proverbial reputation of heavy eater, stuffing on everything without being sick, could explain the efficacy of his image. The depiction of the god was good for digestion, because it implied that as Heracles binges on food, the owner wishes to be free from intestinal distress too. But the power of Heracles is not restricted to the stomach.<sup>65</sup> Heracles' gluttony is also sexual. He is an insatiable lover, engendering an impressive number of children. His intimacy with women's bellies and procreation may have qualified him as the guardian of women on magical gems, controlling a belly, *koilia*, *gastêr*, that comprises the uterus and all related disorders and events, including delivery.<sup>66</sup>

#### 3.2.2.2 *Omphale*

A striking new mythical form was used in Greco-Roman antiquity for ensuring a safe pregnancy. It is found on a series of chiefly red jasper gems depicting a naked woman whom an inscription and attributes identify as Omphale engaged in unexpected activities (Illustration 17.6).<sup>67</sup> The woman is in a frontal position, squatting with spread legs, with a distended belly that may allude to pregnancy and hence to a delivery posture. Her right hand is raised, and she waves a club, the left hand on the knees.

This magical Omphale substitutes for Heracles, who was known as her lover. Whereas the hero throttles a lion, Omphale fights against a donkey that embodies in Egyptian tradition the action of demons menacing feminine health and health in general. In the Late Period, the god Seth usually personifies these dangers in the form of a malevolent donkey sexually threatening

64 *PGM* XXXIII.19. Interpreted as an abbreviation for the *Trishagion*: A.A. Barb, "Review of Delatte, Derchain *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*," *Gnomon* 41 (1969): 302, n. 1.

65 The physician Alexander of Tralles (6th c. CE), *Twelve Books on Medicine*, 2.377, recommends in case of colics: "On a median stone, engrave Heracles standing upright and throttling a lion; set it in gold ring and give it to the patient to wear" (trans. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 63).

66 V. Dasen, "Le secret d'Omphale," *Revue archéologique* (2008): 265–281 and Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 94–97.

67 Dasen, "Le secret d'Omphale," and Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 87–108, fig. 3.4.

women as well as men. In spells, the sperm of the god is compared with the poison of a scorpion, capable of provoking an abortion, as he tried to do to Isis when she was pregnant with Horus.<sup>68</sup> On the gems, the donkey thus embodies the hostile side of Seth, the incubus that causes miscarriage or harms the process of delivery, as the squatting pose of the woman depicts. However, this threatening power is under control, as Omphale's defensive gestures suggests. It contains a visual play upon words, as Greek *skutalē*, the club, metaphorically means "phallus." Omphale and the donkey thus use the same weapon. The club held by the woman identifies both the threat and its domination.

These gems thus provide the unexpected model of a woman, often pregnant, always combative, mastering her body, and warding off malevolent influences from herself. The ritual specialists might inform their clients that Omphale is not just the queen of Lydia, the lover of Heracles, and the mother of his son, but she is also a *magos*, a wizard, who actively controls her body, knows how to expel malevolent entities, and watches over the health, sexuality and fecundity of women. This prophylactic function could explain the fashion of the club in ancient female jewellery.<sup>69</sup> Another word-play arises with the double-meaning of her name, Omphale, designating the navel as well as (metaphorically) the genitals.<sup>70</sup> The figure of Omphale is also found in other media, such as gold pendants and even in the terracotta figurines from Roman Egypt that depict a squatting woman who protects the household—called 'Baubo' figurines.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.2.2.3 *Other Myths*

The stories of other Greco-Roman deities and heroes undergo new developments. They now serve personal needs, securing health, love, and success. The image of Mars Ultor is thus involved with Tantalos in order to control flows of blood. This Greek hero was tormented by unquenchable thirst in the

68 On the demonic character of Seth from the late Period through Roman Egypt, D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt. Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 112–15. On his association with a donkey, Dasen, "Le secret d'Omphale," and Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 87–108, with earlier bibliography.

69 Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 107–108, fig.3.17. On the club/*skutalē* as jewellery, Dasen, "Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic*, 177–203, 185–189.

70 Fulgentius, *Mythologies*, 2.2: "[Heracles] is conquered by lust, for *onfalón* in Greek means the navel, for lust is ruled in the navel by women, as says the Holy Scripture" (trans. L.G. Whitbread).

71 Dasen, "Le secret d'Omphale"; V. Dasen, "Une 'Baubô' sur une gemme magique," in *Chemin faisant. Mythes, cultes et société en Grèce ancienne. Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre Brulé*, ed. L. Bodiou et al. (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 271–284.; Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 102–7, fig. 3.12.

underworld: the gods punished him by making the water withdraw from him whenever he wanted to drink. He is found on a series of haematite stones bearing an inscription in *pterygôma*: “You are thirsty, Tantalos, drink blood.”<sup>72</sup> A blue onyx or *nicolo* gem depicts on one side Perseus flying away holding the head of Medusa and a *harpê*; the inscription on the back names the opponent of the hero, a disease and no more a monster: *fu[ge] podagra [P]erseus se diôki* “Flee away, Podagra, Perseus pursues you” (Illustration 17.9).<sup>73</sup> This gem, however, is unique rather than part of a series.

New mythical competences characterize some Egyptian deities too. A series of gems depict the fetus in the form of Harpocrates. A red jasper with a standard uterine scene on the obverse (see below, pp. 439–40) bears on the back the inscription *epi podia*, “Onto your little feet!” commanding the child to come out.<sup>74</sup> Other gems show the young god on the shoulders of Bes, the protector of forthcoming and newborn babies, standing before Chnoum who makes children on his potter’s wheel.<sup>75</sup> A cloudy carnelian in the Michigan collection shows the divine child sitting on the uterus and holding the handle of the key, controlling the time of his birth (Illustration 17.8).<sup>76</sup>

## 4 How, Where and When Were They Made?

### 4.1 *Who Made Them?*

Greco-Roman and Egyptian traditions mingle on magical gems in order that the specialist and the client can visualise metaphorically the magical action and ensure its performative efficacy. Debates about the identities and locations of the purveyors of magical gems have been inconclusive. The production of

72 A.A. Barb, “Bois du sang, Tantale,” *Syria* 29 (1952): 271–284; Faraone, *Vanishing Acts*, ch. 3 (with a different interpretation of the inscription).

73 Á.M. Nagy, “Engineering Ancient Amulets: Magical Gems of the Roman Imperial Period,” in *The Materiality of Magic*, 220–233. Cf. *fuge, fuge, Podagra* in Marcellus Empiricus, *De medicamentis*, 36.70.

74 A.E. Hanson, “A long-lived ‘quick-birther’ (okytokion),” in *Naissance et petite enfance dans l’Antiquité*, ed. V. Dasen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004), 265–80.

75 V. Dasen, “Représenter l’invisible: la vie utérine sur les gemmes magiques,” in *L’embryon humain à travers l’histoire. Images, savoirs et rites*, ed. V. Dasen (Gollion: Infolio, 2007), 41–64; Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 129–36.

76 Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, D 141 (= CBd-1055); Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 136–137, fig. 4.15. See also Athena fighting a gigantic snake on a red jasper: C. Wagner and J. Boardman, *A Collection of Classical and Eastern Itaglios, Rings and Cameos* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003), no 576 (= CBd-1187); V. Dasen, “One God May Hide Another. Magical Gems in a Cross-Cultural Context,” in *Magical Gems in their Context*.

magical gems required two distinct kinds of expertise: first, the knowledge of a ritual expert who designed a gem associated with some magical *praxis*, and who performed a rite, *teletê*,<sup>77</sup> when the object was finished; second, the practical skills and tools of an engraver, *daktyliographos*,<sup>78</sup> who carved the gem following the instructions of the ritual expert. A single person may have combined both skills.

That models were used is confirmed by inscriptions. At times we find descriptions of the process in literary sources;<sup>79</sup> at times we see that the prescriptions for creating the gem were simply misunderstood. On a black stone in Budapest, for example, the engraver copied the indication of a manual: "... as is prescribed," instead of the magical formula itself.<sup>80</sup> Magical gems were also produced in antiquity by simply copying extant pieces that were not related to some *praxis*. In such cases, the engraver was able to produce the gem by himself.

#### 4.2 *Production Centers*

The existence of large groups of gems with the same iconography attests to a production with a consistent and broadly distributed style; but we are unable to ascertain what could have been the structure of this production in terms of workshops and engravers. It is generally held that magical gems were made and used predominantly in the eastern part of the Mediterranean.<sup>81</sup> It is almost certain that the gems were not created in a single center.<sup>82</sup> In general, the

77 The fundamental study on *teletê* is still S. Eitrem, "Die magischen Gemmen und ihre Weihe," *Symbolae Osloenses* 19 (1939): 57–85.

78 On engraving technique, see E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen und ihr Nachleben* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).

79 For the list, Á.M. Nagy, "Engineering Ancient Amulets," 213, n. 33.

80 CBd-4. See also L. Delaporte, *Catalogue des cylindres, cachet et pierres gravées de style orientales* 11 (Paris: Hachette, 1923), 218–219, no A 1259; C.A. Faraone, "Scribal Mistakes, Handbook Abbreviations and Other Peculiarities on Some Ancient Greek Amulets," *MHNH* 12 (2012): 64–66.

81 The first list of pieces with known provenance: Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, 8, n. 18. Supplements: R. Kotansky, "The Chnoubis Gem from Tel Dor," *The Israel Exploration Journal* 47 (1997): 257–60; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 2, n. 7. An important new find is the piece discovered in Augsburg, since it was recovered from a dated stratum (turn of 1st/2nd c. CE); G. Platz-Horster, *Kleine Bilder grosse Mythen. Antike Gemmen aus Augsburg* (Augsburg: Friedberg Likias, 2012), 40–41, no. 13 (= CBd-1151). See also the three gems cited in note 48, above.

82 For an overview, Gordon, "Archaeologies of Magical Gems," in 'Gems of Heaven,' 40–41. For provincial workshops, see e.g. the group of Chnoubis-gems belonging to the so-called "Kerbenstil-group"; Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 261–264, nos. 417–273 (= CBd-109–113; CBd-122, CBd-153).

search for origins is of uncertain value, since an engraver can work anywhere, following the instructions of a written recipe or simply copying another gem. Moreover, a talisman can travel with its owner and end up anywhere. Recent work on the findspots of the Anguipede gems reveals that these amulets were widespread throughout the Roman Empire.<sup>83</sup>

### 4.3 *Chronology*

Determining the chronology of production has long been regarded as impossible. Most gems are deprived of archaeological contexts. Moreover, distinguishing between ancient and post-antique pieces is still an extremely difficult task.<sup>84</sup>

In the 17th century, Jean l'Heureux and Jean Chifflet first attributed the production of magical gems to the Roman Imperial period. Further progress was made only recently. E. Zwierlein-Diehl developed a chronological framework demonstrating that the production perhaps began already in the late Hellenistic period, its heyday falling in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, followed by a slow decline.<sup>85</sup> Research carried out in recent years has demonstrated that the post-antique history of these objects is also important to consider (see below, pp. 444–45).

The invention of magical gems fits into a wider religious process in antiquity, an epigraphic ‘turn’ from the beginning of the 1st century CE, as can be observed in many Mediterranean cultures.<sup>86</sup> Before this period, ritual traditions of a marginal sort were primarily transmitted through oral tradition. Then written records became increasingly widespread, and different traditions of ‘magic’—broadly defined—merged into a cross-cultural science of sorts.<sup>87</sup> The most spectacular sign of the change is the spread of esoteric names and

83 Nagy, “Figuring out the Anquiped-bis.”

84 It is becoming more and more evident that one of the most important steps in coming research will be to distinguish ancient and post-antique gems, as was pointed out by Joachim F. Quack (J.F. Quack, “review of Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*,” *Gnomon* 76 [2004]: 262). The identification of ancient specimens may be difficult as some ancient pieces were produced by experts, others not, and the production was continued in the post-antique period. Modern imitations were often patterned upon the engravings published in 17th and 18th c. catalogues. See e.g. Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, no 206 (= CBd-2157); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 622 (= CBd-981) with a list of similar pieces.

85 Zwierlein-Diehl, “Dating Magical Gems,” in *Magical Gems in Context*.

86 See below, Kotansky, Chapter 19, and Frankfurter, Chapter 23.

87 Most recently: Bohak, *Early Jewish Magic*, 143–44, 189; Gordon, “Archaeologies of Magical Gems,” in ‘*Gems of Heaven*’, 43–44; Faraone, “Text, Image and Medium: The Evolution of Greco-Roman Magical Gemstones,” in ‘*Gems of Heaven*’, 50–61.

signs in new media like curse tablets, papyri and amulets made of precious metal. Most likely the invention of magical gems was also part of this change.

## 5 Who Used Them, and How?

### 5.1 *Who?*

The use and function of the gems during the lifetime of their owners are very difficult to reconstruct. Very few gems come from archaeological contexts.

A number of questions relate to the social, gendered, ethnic and religious status of the clientele. Magical gems cannot be regarded as products of inferior quality, the preserve of lower classes.<sup>88</sup> Their range of quality does not differ from that of ordinary gems similarly made of semi-precious stones. They are generally carved on both sides with special motifs and inscriptions instructed by experts, and hence they were quite expensive to acquire.<sup>89</sup> Examples mounted in gold jewels surely belonged to the social élite.<sup>90</sup> Inscriptions and literary sources confirm that both women and men wore them as well.<sup>91</sup>

### 5.2 *How?*

Literary and archaeological sources provide glimpses of a performative context. Gemstones could be used in various ways that are described in magical papyri and illustrated archaeologically. Magical prescriptions suggest that the stones were probably consecrated before being used.<sup>92</sup> In the Greek Magical Papyri a stone engraved with Sarapis “seated holding a scepter on top of which an ibis stands” must be inserted into a ring: “In case of need, the spell must be said holding the ring in the left hand and waving a spray of olive and laurel twigs toward a lamp. The ring is then put on the index of the left hand,

88 This was the traditional view: “while [magic papyri] were the property of specialists, magical technicians, the amulets teach us what was current among the people.” (M.P. Nilsson, “The Anguipede of the Magical Amulets,” *HTR* 44 (1951): 61). See also Delatte and Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, 18; Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, 15.

89 Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 16–17.

90 See e.g. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, D. 1 (= CBd-452); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 219 (= CBd-617); Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*, no. 124 (= CBd-1734), and the gold necklace CBd-1253 (cited, above, note 36).

91 E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 120 (= CBd-520); Zyroura; Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*, no. 133 (= CBd-1741: Alexandra/-os; CBd-2765 (Amphiklés).

92 *PGM* XII. 201–209; Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 14–15. See also, above, note 77.



going to sleep holding the stone to the left ear.”<sup>93</sup> *Voces magicae* and *logoi* were probably pronounced loudly, like the seven vowels, which had to be sung, “with an open mouth, undulating like a wave.”<sup>94</sup> In the *Sword of Dardanos* (see below, p. 443) the gem is put under the tongue and turned while reciting a spell.<sup>95</sup> In another set of instructions a stone is fastened to a vessel and then a spell pronounced;<sup>96</sup> in another, a food offering is made.<sup>97</sup>

Like all amulets, magical gems in principle had to be in contact with the body of the patient. A number of gems were thus set in rings,<sup>98</sup> or worn as pendants. The suspension loop may be cut in the stone, as in digestive gems, or set in metal, and then made to hang near the place to cure. Galen thus advised to hang green stones engraved with the image of Chnoubis at precisely the length that would allow the stone to touch the chest above the stomach.<sup>99</sup> The gem should be tied near the ailment: around the neck, the arm or the thigh, or on the back. Its efficacy varies according to the place; the stone *aetites* impedes miscarriage when it is attached to the left arm, but it provokes delivery when it is attached to the back.<sup>100</sup>

Some stones were too large, soft, or fragile to be worn as rings, and these were instead made to be held, such as the haematite stones with the reaper’s motif, which were most likely carried in a pouch or leather case, and attached to the body.<sup>101</sup> Many stones were intentionally broken. No text describes the whole procedure involved, but some mention grinding up a stone. Here one may guess that part of the stone was pulverized and drunk in water.

Medical texts and archaeological finds confirm that gems and other amulets were included in medical practice. Soranos of Ephesus alludes to their use during delivery: “Some people say that some things are effective by antipathy, such as the magnet and the Assian stone and hare’s renet and certain other amulets

93 *PGM* v. 447–448. On the association of magic and divination, M. Monaca, “Gemme magiche e divinazione,” in *Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica*, 135–52; and *Atti dell’incontro di studio “Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica”, Verona, 22–23 ottobre 1999*, ed. A. Mastrocinque (Bologna: Pátron, 2002), 135–52.

94 *PGM* v. 24; Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, 22.

95 *PGM* IV. 1741–1746.

96 *PGM* LXII. 40–45.

97 *PGM* IV. 2878–2890.

98 Cf. the gold ring in Marcellus Empiricus, *De medicamentis* 39, 23.

99 On Galen, see below note 130. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 49.

100 E.g. Damigeron-Evax, 1 (R. Halleux and J. Schamp, *Les lapidaires grecs* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985), 235.

101 F.M. Schwartz and J.H. Schwartz, “Engraved Gems in the Collection of the American Numismatic Society: 1. Ancient Magical Amulets,” *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 24 (1979): 188–90. Cf. the stomachic stone in illustration 17.12.



to which we on our own part pay no attention. Yet one should not forbid their use; for even if the amulet has no direct effect, still through hope it will be possibly make the patient more cheerful.”<sup>102</sup>

### 5.2.1 Religious/Ritual Contexts

A number of magical gems, we have seen, were produced following the prescriptions of Greco-Egyptian magical papyri. We know about fifteen recipes that prescribe the use of gems and rings,<sup>103</sup> and more or less corresponding gems can be found for each of them. The best example of connection between papyri and magical gems is a love charm called the *Sword of Dardanos* (see below, pp. 443–44). But this praxis is found only on two examples of inscribed gems, whereas another love charm, the *Aphrodite anadyomenê* or *arrôriphrasis*-type is attested by almost fifty examples. Thus the *Sword of Dardanos* appears less significant as an historical context for gem production. A survey of other gem types recommended by the magical papyri gives a similar picture. The gem-types demanded in the recipes are attested only in a few *exempla*,<sup>104</sup> or the instructions themselves are simply too general for us to decide whether any given gem really belongs to the *praxis* or not (see below, pp. 442–44).

The reverse is also true. The two most significant deities on the gems, Chnoubis and the Anguipede, are depicted on over a thousand pieces (more than 25 percent of all magical gems) but are not attested in any extant magical papyri. These gems are certainly ‘chiefly Graeco-Egyptian’—as Campbell Bonner once wrote—but *not in the same way* as the papyri.<sup>105</sup> The two sources—the magical gems and the papyri—overlap, but not completely: they represent two related ‘dialects of magic’ in the Roman imperial period. The pictorial motifs that are most important on the gems are not present in the papyri, while the gem-motifs that are mentioned in the papyri are underrepresented on the gems.

102 Soranus, *Gynecology* 3.42.

103 See the list, note 79 and now Paolo Vitellozzi, “Relations Between Magical Texts and Magical Gems. Recent Perspectives”, in S. Kiyanrad *et al.*, eds., *Bild und Schrift auf ‘magischen’ Artefakten*, (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 181–253.

104 E.g. *PGM* I 144–149 and the five related “Héliôros”-gems. As a starting point see Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 265 (= CBd-159).

105 It is important to note that the majority of magical papyri come from a single context, although the precise identification of the find has not been possible. See above, Dieleman, Chap. 13, and K. Dosoo, “A History of the Theban Magical Library,” *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 53 (2016): 251–74, for the most recent overview of the so-called Theban library, also known as the Anastasi-papyri.

## 6 To What Purpose?

The function of the majority of magical gems is not known. It can only be deduced from the overall visual system: that is, the combination of pictures, text and signs engraved upon them, as well as from the nature of the stone. As far as we can tell, most magical gemstones had a positive value. In a number of cases, the inscriptions (such as *diaphylasse*, ‘protect’, *sôzon*, ‘save me’) suggest that they had a function of general protection, irrespective of the material, shape and iconography of the gemstones.<sup>106</sup> They usually bear the image of a deity that secures protection. Examples of aggressive or black magic are very rare. A curse engraved on a rectangular haematite is directed against thieves and appeals to justice (see above, Chapter 15).<sup>107</sup> The two main functions concern health (6.1) and love (6.2), very few were used for harmful magic.

### 6.1 Health

Many of the larger gems were used to repel or heal various diseases. Their symbolic efficacy relates to popular representations of disease expressed by metaphors in medical texts. A recurring theme is that of conflict, which corresponds to a very ancient and widespread notion of sickness as an active agent entering the body. In magical texts, diseases are not caused by heat or cold, or by the unbalance of humours, but by a *daemon* that must be expelled. The disease is personified, and is asked to flee, like the *podagra* (gout), pursued by Perseus as seen above (Illustration 17.9).<sup>108</sup>

Medical vocabulary also expresses agonistic notions. The latin term *morbus*, transliterated in Greek letters, is engraved on a hematite gem from Aquileia.<sup>109</sup> The word has an active connotation expressed by accompanying verbs and adjectives: *morbus* assaults; it wants; it is ferocious (*saevus*); it attacks from

106 See e.g. *diaphylasse*: Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, D 257 (= CBd-1435), ‘Pantheos’ (polymorphic deity); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 28 (= CBd-407), bust of Sarapis. *Sôze*: Wagner and Boardman, *A Collection of Classical and Eastern Itaglios, Rings and Cameos*, no. 263 (= CBd-1256), Zeus holding Nike.

107 A. Mastrocinque, “Studi sulle gemme gnostiche XI. Amuleto per il respiro; attributi di Persephone; gemma contro i ladri,” *Thetis* 10 (2003): 91–92; G. Nachtergaele, “Quelques inscriptions grecques sur des intailles magiques,” *Aegyptus* 83 (2003): 186–87.

108 On these formulae, R. Heim, “Incantamenta magica Graeca et Latina,” *Jahrbücher für klassische Philologie, Supplementband XIX* (1892): 465–576; C.A. Faraone, “A Greek magical gemstone from the Black Sea: amulet or miniature handbook?,” *Kernos* 23 (2010): 79–102.

109 A. Mastrocinque (ed.), *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum* II (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2008), Aquileia no. 6 (= CBd-2903).

inside; it must be expelled. On the Aquileia gem, the word is written in reverse, visualising the (anticipated) retreat of the disease.<sup>110</sup>

The agonistic dimension of disease and cure explains many iconographic choices, such as the frequency of warlike figures, like Mars-Ares, always in military equipment, or Solomon the rider, brandishing a spear. The disease may also be visualised as a bound or defeated enemy, as on the Solomon gems (Illustration 17.1).<sup>111</sup> The figure of Heracles on medical gems also refers to Hippocrates. Some believed that Hippocrates descended not only from Asclepios, through his father, but from Heracles through his mother. An apocryphal letter to Artaxerxes compares Hippocrates, who defeats “wild” and “bestial” diseases, with Heracles, the champion of dangerous animals. Divinised, he was supposed to have received in Greece the same honours as Heracles and Asclepios. Roman period coins from Cos depict on the obverse a seated Hippocrates, inscribed with his name, on the reverse the bust of Heracles holding a club.<sup>112</sup>

### 6.1.1 Which Disease?

On gems, very common ailments such as toothaches or fractures are absent. Whereas anatomical votive offerings of arms, hands, legs, and feet abound in sanctuaries of healing deities, no gem alludes to the care of limbs—apart from the series “for the hips,” depicting a bent reaper on a large, oval, haematite, using a sickle to harvest and symbolically cutting the pain.<sup>113</sup> One would also expect to find personifications of fever, epilepsy, or rabies, diseases which doctors were powerless to cure, but these disorders were treated with other means, such as *phylacteria*.<sup>114</sup> Eye diseases form another specific group.<sup>115</sup>

110 See also H. Harrauer, “SOUBROM, Abrasax, Jahwe u.a. aus Syrien,” *Tyche* 7 (1992): 39–44, esp. 40–41, pl. 8.1. On the procedure, Faraone, *Vanishing Acts*, 51–67.

111 E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no 179 (= CBD-577), with two enemies bound, the hands in the back, dancing or agitated, behind a pantheistic figure holding a cartouche with Iaô, and no 382 with a bound ‘Sethian’ creature (= CBD-753).

112 Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 96.

113 C. Bonner, “Amulets Chiefly in the British Museum, A Supplementary Article,” *Hesperia* 20 (1951): 301–45; e.g. CBD-7, -783, -787. The *harpē* of Perseus has a similar function (Illustration 17.9).

114 See below, Kotansky, Chapter 19. For a typology of diseases, A. Mastrocinque, “Medicina e magia. Su alcune tipologie di gemme propiziatorie,” in *Medicina e società nel mondo antico. Atti del convegno di Udine (4–5 ottobre 2005)*, ed. A. Marcone (Florence: Le Monnier Università, 2006), 91–100.

115 P. Gaillard-Seux, “Les maladies des yeux et le lézard vert,” in *Nommer la maladie. Recherches sur le lexique gréco-latin de la pathologie*, ed. A. Debru and G. Sabbah (Saint-Etienne: Université de Saint-Etienne, 1998), 93–105.; C.A. Faraone, “A Case of Cultural (Mis)translation?; Egyptian Eyes on Two Greek Amulets for Ophthalmia,” in *The Frontiers*

Most visual and textual components of the gems relate to an internal and hence mysterious process (gout, bites or stings, bleeding). The largest series of medical gems relate to diseases involving the belly, and more specifically the uterus and the stomach, which have common characteristics. Both are credited with unusual capacities, such as an independent will and uncontrolled movements, usually dangerous ones. Both are located in the abdomen, a mysterious area producing noises. No demon enters the body, but the organ itself is active; it must be mastered, which implies different types of magical power.

### 6.1.2 Uterine Gems

By far the largest series of magical gems concerns the protection of the uterus.<sup>116</sup> This type is usually engraved on haematite or “bloodstone,” an iron oxide that was believed to control flows of blood according to ancient notions of natural sympathies, warding off the frightening risks of hemorrhage by its staunching power.<sup>117</sup> (Red jasper was also used for similar reasons). Haematite stone was also empowered by a male generative potency, as this mineral was believed to be the petrified blood of Ouranos castrated by Chronos.<sup>118</sup>

The iconography itself mingles elements from Greek medicine and Egyptian ritual traditions. A number of metaphorical representations of uterine life, for example, correspond to those developed in Greek medical texts.<sup>119</sup> In its simplest form, the gem features a pot upside down which represents the womb as a medical cupping-vessel (Illustration 17.11). Wavy lines seem to depict the ligaments and the uterine tubes discovered by Herophilos at Alexandria, though they may also derive from the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for uterus. Variants have the shape of the ram’s horns of the god Chnum who protects the development of the embryo.<sup>120</sup> The scene is encircled by the *ouroboros*, creating a ‘magical space’ protecting the uterus and the embryo against malevolent forces. The shape of the cupping-vessel makes visible the demonic autonomy of the organ, with an independent attractive capacity, underscored by the use of haematite and magnetite.<sup>121</sup>

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*of Ancient Science: Essays in Honor of Heinrich von Staden*, ed. K.-D. Fischer et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 93–110.

116 Over 200 gems.

117 First pointed out by Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen*, 41–42.

118 *Orphic Lapidary* 652–663 (ed. Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires grecs*, 117–18).

119 R.K. Ritner, “A Uterine Amulet in the Oriental Institute Collection,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 (1984): 209–21; A.E. Hanson, “Uterine Amulets and Greek Uterine Medicine,” *Medicina nei Secoli* 7 (1995): 281–99; Dasen, “Représenter l’invisible”; Dasen, “Le secret d’Omphale”; Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*.

120 CBD-1957; Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 64, fig. 2.6.

121 On magnetite and the attractive power of the uterus, Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 37–41, 60–62. On the comparison of the uterus with a cupping vessel, e.g. Hippocrates,

Other iconographic elements refer to medical concerns. At the mouth of the cupping-vessel, a key with three, five, six or seven teeth symbolizes the opening and closing mechanism of the womb, so central in ancient gynecology. Different movements must happen at the proper time. The womb must open periodically to release menses, attract male seed, then close to retain it; and it must prevent miscarriage or loss of nourishment for the fetus. At the time of delivery, it opens again to release the child. Variants depict Horus the child seated on the uterus, holding the key, as if he controlled the moment of his birth (Illustration 17.8). This notion appears in the Hippocratic treatises explaining that the child actively participates in the delivery. Like a chick emerging from its shell, he breaks the membranes when he starts lacking food in the womb.<sup>122</sup>

Different deities appear on the uterine gems. Most of them are Egyptian, all endowed with special powers related to regeneration (Osiris with Isis and Nephtys), pregnancy and childbirth (the ram-headed god Chnum; Chnoubis; Horus the child; and the dwarf-god Bes). On the reverse, spells aim at controlling the movements of the womb inside the female body: "Stop (or contract) womb, lest Typhon overcomes you", "Fasten the womb in the right place."<sup>123</sup> Inscriptions refer to the demonic power of Orôriouth (Illustration 17.11)<sup>124</sup> or to the control of pains in the belly (three *kappas*).<sup>125</sup> Some formulae are abridged versions of longer spells found in magical papyri, such as the *soroor* formula for delivery that refers to an entity that opens doors and releases binding.<sup>126</sup>

Iconographic variants stress the animal nature of the uterus. On some gems, the cupping-vessel is transformed into an octopus, as if the teeth of the key had become arms.<sup>127</sup> References to the octopus (*polypodos*) are found in medical texts. Galen calls the ligaments of the womb tentacle, *plektanê*. Like tentacles, the womb itself is described as covered with small suckers, *kotulêdona*, which are believed to keep the chorion in place. The cotyledons

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*On Ancient Medicine*, 22 (Littré I, 626–628). The male sex is attracted by the uterus as if by a cupping-vessel, Oribasius (4th c. CE), *Medical Collections*, 22.3.

122 Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 136–38. Hippocrates, *Nature of the Child* 30.1, 30.8 (Littré 7.530–532, 536).

123 On similar spells in magical amulets, C.A. Faraone, "New Light on Ancient Exorcisms of the Wandering Womb," *ZPE* 144 (2003): 189–98.

124 Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey," 3595 (after the Egyptian *w'rt, w'r.tj*, for uterus); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zaubersformeln*, 486 (with earlier bibliography).

125 E.g. Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 95–96, fig. 3.9, with Heracles (= CBd-1631).

126 Ritner, "A Uterine Amulet in the Oriental Institute Collection," 218–19; Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey," 3599.

127 V. Dasen, "Métamorphoses de l'utérus, d'Hippocrate à Ambroise Paré," *Gesnerus* 59 (2002): 167–186; Dasen, *Le sourire d'Omphale*, 72–77.

or suckers are in the cavity of the uterus and train the embryo to suckle the nipples of the breast.<sup>128</sup> Soranos mentions another comparison attributed to Herophilus. He notes that in women who had children, the *stoma* of the womb becomes callous, “as Herophilus says, similar to the head of an octopus or to the larynx.”<sup>129</sup> The image of the octopus suggests the peculiar ability of the womb to move in all directions, its marine associations evoke the fluids, which fill the womb: seed, blood, and *amnios*.

### 6.1.3 The Stomach

Similar observations can be made about the stomach, another organ credited with independent will and strong needs. The stomach is hungry or lazy, enjoys or loathes food. It is also the seat of uncontrolled, usually negative, emotions. In Latin literature, the adjective *stomachosus* denotes a bad tempered person, or one who suffers from unpleasant feelings, anger, irritation, or anxiety. A discontented stomach can complain and even speak. Its language is made of rumbling noises, expressed by a number of verbs, *crepare*, *crepitare*, *murmurare*, *latrare*.

The so-called digestive amulets are numerous, with many variants. Beside Heracles throttling the lion, the main figure ruling over the belly is the lion-headed snake Chnoubis (Illustration 17.4).<sup>130</sup> The inscription on the reverse of a black stone depicting Chnoubis specifies: “Keep Proclus’s stomach healthy.”<sup>131</sup> Galen recommends to use green jasper, set it in a ring:

The testimony of some authorities attributes to certain stones a peculiar quality which is actually possessed by the green jasper, worn as an amulet, it benefits the stomach and esophagus. Some also set it in a ring and engrave on it the radiate serpent, just as King Nechepsos prescribed in his fourteenth book, I myself have made a satisfactory test of this stone. I made a necklace of small stones of that variety and hung it from my neck at just such a length that the stones touched the position of the cardiac orifice. They seemed just as beneficial even though they had not the design that Nechepsos prescribed.<sup>132</sup>

128 Soranus, *Gynaecology* 1.14.

129 Soranus, *Gynaecology* 1.10.

130 Dasen and Nagy, “Le serpent léontocéphale Chnoubis.”

131 Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles, et Antiques*, no. 259. See also Dasen and Nagy “Le serpent léontocéphale Chnoubis,” 310, no 8a with a list of similar texts engraved on gems.

132 Galen, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis et facultatibus*, 9.19 (Kühn XII, 207); trans. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 54. Cf. *Lithika*,



The iconography has multiple meanings and indeed governs other organs in the body, such as the heart and the uterus. On a haematite in the Skoluda collection (Illustration 17.12), the radiate snake stands upright beside the womb, whereas the inscription advertises that it will appease pains in the stomach.<sup>133</sup> This large range of functions is reflected in Greek and Latin vocabulary. The terms denoting the belly are often vague and can designate different regions of the abdomen, including the womb. *Stomachos*, for example, can designate other organs with an opening, *stoma*, such as the uterus, the bladder, the esophagus, the larynx. The range of ‘stomachic’ diseases is hence very wide and applies to women as well as to men.<sup>134</sup>

Another variant of so-called ‘digestive’ gems depicts an ibis, either tied to an altar, with clumps of papyrus on top, or devouring a snake or scorpion, with inscriptions commanding *pesse* or *pepte* “digest!”<sup>135</sup> The inscription, as on uterine gems, addresses the organ itself, as if the stomach was an autonomous being. The symbolic efficacy of the birds is based on analogy: as the ibis devours venomous animals, the stomach should harmlessly digest. Another type of ‘digestive gem’ depicts the phoenix (see above, pp. 424–26). The insistence on diseases originating in the belly may be partly due to the frequency of food poisoning and intestinal parasites. These diseases grew to societal concerns.<sup>136</sup>

## 6.2 Love

Erotic magic is well represented by engraved stones, lapis lazuli, magnetites, haematites and jaspers.<sup>137</sup> It is important to note that the category also includes sexually aggressive magic.<sup>138</sup> The most frequent variant is composed of lapis

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35 (Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires grecs*, 170). Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 55, notes that in the sacred book of Hermes, the third decan of cancer has a similar name, Chnoumis, used “as a *phylacterion tou stomachou*”. On the use of stones and amulets by Galen, J. Jouanna, “Médecine rationnelle et magie: le statut des amulettes et des incantations chez Galien,” *Revue des études grecques* 124 (2011): 44–77.

133 Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*, no. 145 (= CBD-1752).

134 On stones and gender, Dasen, “Sexe et sexualité des pierres,” in *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l’Antiquité à la Renaissance*, 195–220, Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 25–51.

135 H. Seyrig, “*Invidiae medicis*,” *Berytus* 1 (1934): 1–5; Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 51–53.

136 V. Dasen, “Healing Images. Gems and Medicine,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 33 (2014): 177–91.

137 Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, 115–122.

138 J.J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990). E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 497 (= CBD-855); D. Jordan, “Il testo greco di una gemma magica dall’Afghanistan (?) nel museo Pushkin, Mosca,” in *Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica*, 61–69: “Separate Hierakion ... son of Serenilla, from Serenilla, daughter of Didyme.”

lazuli gems depicting Aphrodite alone, holding up her hair in a seductive gesture (Aphrodite *anadyomenê*), associated with the *vox magica arrôriphrasis* (which is only featured on this type of gem).<sup>139</sup>

A minor series of gems depicts the pair Ares/Mars and Aphrodite, with Ares binding Aphrodite or the opposite.<sup>140</sup> Eros may also torture Psyche, bound to a pillar, with a torch. R. Mouterde has shown that some depictions conform to prescriptions found in the *Sword of Dardanos*, preserved in the Paris Magical Papyrus.<sup>141</sup> The ritual expert prescribes to take a magnetic stone and to engrave it on one side with the figure of Aphrodite holding her hair and riding on Psyche, burnt by Eros holding a torch, on the other side, with Psyche and Eros embracing each other, with *vocals* below their feet.<sup>142</sup> This prescription corresponds with unusual precision to the scene depicted on a magnetite gem in Perugia (Illustration 17.10).<sup>143</sup>

The image of Harpocrates could also serve erotic magic. A heliotrope in Vienna depicts the young god seated on the lotus flower, surrounded with rows of vowels on the obverse; on the back, a prayer asks the civic spirit Agathos Daimon to make Didyme love Sarapion.<sup>144</sup> A magical papyrus prescribes a similar scene: “and whenever you perform this spell, have an iron ring with yourself on which has been engraved Harpocrates sitting on a lotus, and his name is Abrasax.”<sup>145</sup> This recipe is frequently substituted for others on the

139 Ca. 50 items. E.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 78 (= CBd-478); Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*, no. 110 (= CBd-1724). G. Ficheux, “La chevelure d’Aphrodite et la magie amoureuse,” in *L’expression des corps. Gestes, attitudes, regards dans l’iconographie antique* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 181–94. *Arrôriphrasis* occurs also in love-charms, e.g. *PGM* IV. 2234, 2928.

140 G. Bevilacqua, “Ares e Afrodite sulle gemme magiche,” in *Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica*, 13–25; Dasen, *Le sourire d’Omphale*, 48, fig. 1.7.

141 *PGM* IV. 1716–1870.

142 *PGM* IV. 1722–1743.

143 Vitellozzi, *Gemme e cammei della collezione Guardabassi*, 419–420, no. 518. See a similar jasper gem once in Beirut: R. Mouterde, “Le glaive de Dardanos, objets et inscriptions magiques de Syrie,” *Mélanges de l’université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth* 15 (1930–1931): 51–139. For the detailed analysis of the *praxis*, see P. Vitellozzi, “The Sword of Dardanos: New Thoughts on a Magical Gem in Perugia,” in *Magical Gems in their Context*.

144 E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien, III, Die Gemmen der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit, II, Masken, Masken-Kombinationen, Phantasie- und Märchentiere Gemmen mit Inschriften* (München: Prestel Verlag GmbH & Co., 1991), no. 2195 (= CBd-2438). Similar amulets: Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, no. D 190 (= CBd-1386); Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, no. D 206 (= CBd-1065); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 134 (= CBd-534).

145 *PGM* LXI. 31–32, trans. *GMPT*. See e.g. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln*, 19.1.a\_9 (= CBd-95).



gems. A heliotrope in the British Museum is carved on one side with the young god in the solar bark; on the other side a love spell asks to give Theanous grace (*charis*) in order to seduce Serapammon.<sup>146</sup> Some gems combine on one side Aphrodite, on the other Harpocrates.<sup>147</sup>

## 7 After Antiquity

From the end of the 4th century until the 6th and 7th centuries, a dual process can be observed. Ancient gems continue to be reused in new mounts, and schemes previously used on magical gems were adapted to other devices, such as metal rings, medals and pendants made of bronze and soft stone. In the middle ages no distinction was made between magical gems and the rest of this ancient amulet production; they were all held in high esteem.<sup>148</sup> They were used to decorate reliquaries and mounted in signet rings worn by the elite.<sup>149</sup> Many types were described in medieval books on stones (*Lapidaria*) and in encyclopaedias, continuing into the Renaissance.<sup>150</sup>

The earliest scholarly work on magical gems was published in 1657 by Jean l'Heureux (Johannes Macarius, c. 1551–1614) and Jean Chifflet (Johannes Chiffletius, 1588–1660). They were the first scholars who identified the type and coined them “Gnostic”<sup>151</sup> It was they who compiled the first catalogue of the gems, which proved to be definitive for knowledge of the genre for centuries to come.<sup>152</sup> At the same time scholars began to disregard magical gems as bizarre and crude. Magical gems went out of fashion in the 18th century with the revival of classicism. They were neglected by scholars, who denied them any

146 Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 134 (= CBD-534).

147 Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 133 (= CBD-533).

148 As a starting point: E. Zwierlein-Diehl, “Magical Gems in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods: Tradition, Transformation, Innovation,” in *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, 87–130; Á.M. Nagy, “Étude sur la transmission du savoir magique. L'histoire post-antique du schéma anguipède (V<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles),” in *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, 131–55.

149 See the Anguipede gems mentioned in Nagy, “Étude sur la transmission du savoir magique,” 138–44, e.g. the reliquary of Saint Blaise (c. 1040/1050), or the authenticating seal of French king Louis VII (1174). On the seal of Hubert Walter, the Archbishop of Canterbury, see M. Henig, “Archbishop Hubert Walter's gems,” *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 136 (1983): 56–61. (Chnoubis).

150 Zwierlein-Diehl, “Magical Gems in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods.”

151 J. Chifflet and J. Macarius, *Abraxas seu Apistopistus, quae est antiquaria de gemmis basilidianis ...* (Antwerp: 1657).

152 Modern imitations were often patterned upon the engravings published in 17th and 18th c. catalogues. See e.g. Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, no. 206 (= CBD-2157); Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, no. 622 (= CBD-981) with a list of similar pieces.

artistic value. Their interest was also marginalized through the learned opposition of religion and magic.<sup>153</sup> At the same time, magical gems were excluded from collections of classical gems because they were regarded as belonging to Egyptian, Early Christian, or Medieval collections.<sup>154</sup>

Research on magical gems received new momentum in the early 20th century, simultaneously with the rediscovery of Greek magical papyri. A pioneer study by Armand Delatte appeared in 1914,<sup>155</sup> followed in 1950 by the monumental analytic survey by Campbell Bonner, and the innovative researches of Alphonse Barb. Still, research on magical gems remained on the periphery of classical studies until the end of the 20th century. The change came with the turn of the millennium, when that great dichotomy between religion and magic in ancient cultures became invalid.<sup>156</sup>

### Suggested Readings

Magical gems are scattered in many museums. The catalogues of most major collections are now published. The most important ones are those in the British Museum in London,<sup>157</sup> the Cabinet des médailles in Paris,<sup>158</sup> the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin,<sup>159</sup> and the Vienna, Cologne,<sup>160</sup> and Hamburg collections.<sup>161</sup> Italian collections are catalogued by A. Mastrocinque, who also undertook to collect ancient and often lost pieces known from early modern publications.<sup>162</sup> Several collections are still unpublished or are in course of publication, such

153 The main 19th c. discussions: J.J. Bellermann, *Drei Programmen über die Abraxas-gemmen* (Berlin: In der Fr. Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1820); C.W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains, Ancient and Medieval* (London: Bell and Dalby, 1864).

154 E.g. Philipp, *Mira et Magica*, 2–3, R. Gordon, “Magical Amulets in the British Museum,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 15 (2002): 666–67.

155 A. Delatte, “Études sur la magie grecque. III–IV,” *Mémoires du Musée royal d'histoire naturelle de Belgique* (1914): 5–96.

156 Most recently, e.g. J. Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); H. Wendt, *At the Temple Gates. The Religion of Freelance Experts in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

157 Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*.

158 Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles, et Antiques*.

159 Philipp, *Mira et Magica*.

160 Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen (AGD)* (Vienna), and Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen* (Cologne).

161 Michel, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder*.

162 A. Mastrocinque, ed., *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum* I (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004) and Mastrocinque, ed., *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum* II (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2008).

as the collection kept in Saint-Petersburg, Hermitage.<sup>163</sup> A new turn is now offered by the expanding research possibilities of *The Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database (CBD)*, edited by the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest in cooperation with the University of Fribourg, and realized through international collaborations. Over 2700 objects are now catalogued, with growing detailed commentaries that serve as a reference for scholars.<sup>164</sup>

For further reading see:

- Dasen, Véronique, *Le sourire d'Omphale: Maternité et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).
- Dasen, Véronique, "Amulets, the Body and Personal Agency," in *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*, ed. Stuart McKie, Adam Parker (Oxford: Oxbow, 2018), 127–35.
- Dasen, Véronique, "Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic*, ed. J. Bremmer and D. Boschung, (Paderborn: Verlag Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 177–203.
- Dasen, Véronique, "Healing Images. Gems and Medicine," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 33.2 (2014): 177–91.
- Dasen, Véronique, "Magic and Medicine: The Power of Seals," in '*Gems of Heaven: Recent Research on Engraved Gemstones in Late Antiquity c. AD 200–600*, ed. C. Entwistle and N. Adams (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 2011), 69–74.
- Dasen, Véronique and Jean Michel Spieser, eds., *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Florence: SISMEL, 2014).
- Faraone, Christopher A., *Vanishing Acts on Ancient Greek Amulets: From Oral Performance to Visual Design* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2012).
- Faraone, Christopher A., *The Transformation of Greek Amulets in Roman Imperial Times* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).
- Michel, Simone, *Bunte Steine—dunkle Bilder: "Magische Gemmen"* (Munich: Biering u. Brinkmann, 2001).
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163 O. Ya. Neverov, "Les amulettes magiques de l'Ermitage. Essai d'une classification," in *Gemme gnostique e cultura ellenistica*, 195–205.

164 See <http://classics.mfab.hu/talismans>. Á.M. Nagy is grateful for the support of NKFI grant K 119979.

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- Vitelozzi, Paolo, “Relations Between Magical Texts and Magical Gems. Recent Perspectives”, in S. Kianrad *et al.*, eds., *Bild und Schrift auf 'magischen' Artefakten*, (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 181–253.
- Zwierlein-Diehl, Erika, *Antike Gemmen und ihr Nachleben* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).
- Zwierlein-Diehl, Erika, “Dating Magical Gems,” in *Magical Gems in their Context*, ed. K. Endreffy, Á.M. Nagy, and J. Spier (forthcoming).
- Zwierlein-Diehl, Erika, “Magical Gems in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods: Tradition, Transformation, Innovation,” in *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, ed. V. Dasen and J.-M. Spieser (Florence: SISMEL, 2014), 87–130.



ILLUSTRATION 17.1 Haematite. 20 × 12 × 2 mm. Solomon. London, British Museum, G439, EA 56439 (CBd-805)  
 a (obverse): Rider on horseback trampling over a female figure lying on the ground.  
 b (reverse): Inscription in four lines: στ|ομ|αχ|ου → στομάχου. ‘For the stomach!’

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ILLUSTRATION 17.2 Haematite. Phoenix. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, Classical Collection, 55.154 (CBd-2)  
 a (obverse): Phoenix standing on a globe placed upon a column. Below, a crocodile, to right; above, a scarab with outstretched wings. On the two sides, pairs of animals: swallows facing inwards, scorpions crawling to top, and snakes  
 b (reverse): Inscription in three lines:  $\pi\epsilon|\pi\tau|\epsilon \rightarrow \pi\acute{\epsilon}\pi\tau\epsilon$ . 'Digest!'. Beneath: Chnoubis-sign  
 © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS. PHOTO: LÁSZLÓ MÁTYUS





ILLUSTRATION 17.3 Heliotrope. 12 × 8 × 2 mm. Anguipede. London, British Museum (CBd-603)  
 a (obverse): Frontal view of cock-headed Anguipede in armour. Head to left. Whip held in the right hand, round shield in the left hand.  
 Inscription in the shield:  $\iota\alpha|\omega \rightarrow 'I\acute{\alpha}\omega$   
 b (reverse): Inscription:  $\phi\upsilon\lambda \rightarrow \phi\upsilon\lambda<\alpha\sigma\sigma\epsilon>$ . 'Protect me!'  
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ILLUSTRATION 17.4 Chrysoptase. 13.2 × 9.6 × 5.2 mm. Chnoubis. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, Classical Collection, 53.155 (CBd-6)  
 a (obverse): Lion-headed Chnoubis, with seven rays  
 b (reverse): Chnoubis-sign. Around:  $\chi\nu\upsilon\beta\iota\sigma \rightarrow \chi\nu\upsilon\beta\acute{\iota}\varsigma$   
 © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS. PHOTO: LÁSZLÓ MÁTYUS



ILLUSTRATION 17.5 Chalcedony.  $10.1 \times 8.6 \times 4.9$  mm. Chnoubis. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, Classical Collection, 62.21.A (CBd-152)

a (obverse): Variant of Chnoubis-sign: three S-shaped lines, below: a horizontal line framed by short notches at the ends

b (reverse): Plain

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ILLUSTRATION 17.6 Red jasper. 12 × 16 mm. Omphale. The J. Paul Getty Museum 82.AN.162.80a (CBd-2338)  
 a (obverse): Frontal view of Omphale represented as a nude squatting pregnant woman, facing right, right hand raised high and holding a club, left hand resting on the knee. On her head: the *leontê*?  
 b (reverse): Ithyphallic donkey facing left. Inscription below the animal: triad of vocales YYY  
 © THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, VILLA COLLECTION, MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, GIFT OF STANLEY UNGAR



ILLUSTRATION 17.7 Red jasper. 15 × 11 × 3.5 mm. Heracles, London British Museum G 224(CBd-762)  
 a (obverse): Horizontal inscription in one line: KKK  
 b (reverse): Heracles throttling the Nemean lion which stands on its hindlegs. His club rests in the free field behind him, on the right  
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ILLUSTRATION 17.8 Carnelian. 29 × 23 × 4 mm. Harpocrates. University of Michigan, Special Collections Library SCL-Bonner 19 (CBD-1055)

a (obverse): Ouroboros enclosing Harpocrates sitting on top of a uterus in the shape of cupping-vessel, closed by a seven-bitted key. His head is crowned with the solar disk, right hand raised to mouth, left hand resting on the knobbed handle of the key. Inscription inside the Ouroboros: ακτιωφιρεσχιγαλνεβουτοσουαληθιααηριουω → vocales, incipit of ακτιωφι-logos

b (reverse): Inscription in eight lines: ορωριο|υθαεμει|ναεβαρωθ|ε  
ρρεθωρα|βεανιεμ||εα, five characteres|ιαηιεη|ουωηιη → ορωριουθ,  
αεμειναεβαρωθερ-palindrome

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ILLUSTRATION 17.9 Nicolo. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, Ж.1517 (GR-21714).

a (obverse): Flying Perseus holding the head of Medusa and a *harpé*.  
ΦΥ[- -] / ΠΟΔΑΓΡΑ / [-] ΕΡΣΕΥΣΣ / ΕΔΙΩΧΙ  
Φύ[γε] ποδάγρα, [Π]ερσεύς σε διώχι i. e. διώκει.

b (reverse): Greek inscription: *fu[ge] podagra [P]erseus se diōki* “Flee away, Podagra, Perseus pursues you”.

© THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM. PHOTO: SVETLANA SVETOVA, KONSTANTIN SINYAVSKI



ILLUSTRATION 17.10 Magnetite. 21,8 × 16,2 × 3,3 mm. Aphrodite, Eros and Psyche. Sword of Dardanos. Perugia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 1526  
 a (obverse): Aphrodite sits astride the winged Psyche, who is flying with outstretched arms. Below them, the winged Eros standing upon a globe, lifting a burning torch with both hands up towards Psyche. Inscription behind Aphrodite: *αχμα[γεραρ]φερμει*. Around Eros, on both sides: *π|ακαπααα|αδων αιε|βαρμαχαρ|ακωιακ||ωβιαω* → *πακαπααα Ἄδωναιε βαρμα χαρακω Ἰακῶβ, Ἰάω*  
 b (reverse): Naked Eros (on the left) embracing Psyche wearing a long robe (on the right). Inscription below them: *ηηηησσσσσσ|ηηηησσσσσσ*  
 © PERUGIA, MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE. PHOTO: PAOLO VITELLOZZI



ILLUSTRATION 17.11 Haematite.  $20 \times 15 \times 3$  mm. Uterus with deities (Anubis, Chnoubis, Isis)  
 a (obverse): uroboros encircling a cupping-device symbolising the uterus closed with a seven-bitted key. On top a group of deities. From left to right: the mummy of Anubis, the lion-headed Chnoubis, Isis-Tyche, right hand raised, left hand lowered beside the body and holding a cornucopia. Inscription in the free field:  $\alpha\eta\eta\iota\sigma\omega$ . Outside the Ouroboros:  $\sigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\mu\epsilon\rho\phi\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha\rho\beta\alpha\rho\mu\alpha\phi\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\eta\rho\iota\gamma\zeta\iota \rightarrow \sigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\text{-logos}$   
 b (reverse): Inscription in two lines:  $\omicron\rho\omega\rho|\iota\omicron\upsilon\theta \rightarrow \omicron\rho\omega\rho\iota\upsilon\theta$   
 LONDON, THE BRITISH MUSEUM G 546 (CBD-176). PHOTO CHR. A. FARAONE



ILLUSTRATION 17.12 Haematite. 46.2 × 24.9 × 5.8 mm. Chnoubis. Skoluda Collection Mo85 (CBd-1752)

Scene enclosed by an Ouroboros

a: At the top, a cock-headed Anguipede in armour and mantle, head to right, right hand raised high and holding a whip, left hand holding a round shield. Below, a scarab with outstretched wings, both wings topped by a uraeus. Below, a lion walking to left, trampling a body lying on the ground and approaching a female figure standing to right in a long robe, hand raised to mouth. Below the lying figure, a crocodile, head to left. Inscribed on the two sides of the scarab:  $\iota\alpha\omega \rightarrow \text{'}\iota\acute{\alpha}\omega$ . Inscription outside the Ouroboros, partly illegible  $\rightarrow \text{'}\iota\alpha\epsilon\omega$ -palindrome,  $\text{'}\Lambda\beta\rho\alpha\sigma\acute{\alpha}\xi$

b: The lion-headed Chnoubis-snake upright, without coils. Beside Chnoubis, on the left, a uterus in the shape of a cupping vessel, with a key. To the right of Chnoubis, a further key (bottom) and a Chnoubis-sign (top). Inscription around:  $\chi\eta\nu\upsilon\beta\iota\varsigma\ \pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\omicron\nu\ \pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\chi\omicron\upsilon\ \text{'}\Lambda\beta\rho\alpha\sigma\acute{\alpha}\xi$   $\rightarrow$   $\chi\eta\nu\upsilon\beta\iota\varsigma$ ,  $\pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\omicron\nu\ \pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}\chi\omicron\upsilon$ ,  $\text{'}\Lambda\beta\rho\alpha\sigma\acute{\alpha}\xi$ , Chnoubis, stop the pain of the stomach, Abrasax

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