



Herausgegeben von:

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TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte
Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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DAN DEAC — RADU PETCU

A Magical Amulet from *Durostorum* (Moesia Inferior)

Plates 3–4

Introduction*

During the course of field-walking in 2007 some way to the east of the legionary fortress of *Durostorum* (Ostrov village, Constanța County, Romania), in Farm 4 ('Ferma 4' in Romanian), Radu Petcu came across the lapis lazuli ring-stone amulet depicting the so-called Pantheos which we publish here (for the location see pl. 3 fig. 1–2).¹ It has suffered some abrasions and chips on both sides but is otherwise in a satisfactory state of preservation.² Although Pantheos amulets are frequently made of mottled and dark varieties of jasper, lapis lazuli was clearly also considered an appropriate material base.³ Given the absence of a specific find-context, we can only assign the intaglio roughly to the period 2nd–3th c. AD, although the attention to detail suggests a date in the earlier part of that range. It is currently held by the National Museum of Constanța, Constanța County, Romania (inv. no. 50612). Both design and inscription

Abbreviations:

CBd = The Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database; open access online database available at: http://classics.mfab.hu/talismans/visitatori_salutem [last accessed on 23.11.2016].

PGM = K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, vol. I–II, edited by A. Henrichs, Stuttgart²1972–1974. PGM III = unpublished index volume, manuscript.

Suppl. Mag. = R. W. Daniel, F. Maltomini (eds.), *Supplementum Magicum 1–2* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 16), Opladen 1990–1992.

* We would like to express our gratitude to R. Gordon, Max-Weber-Kolleg, University of Erfurt, and J. F. Quack, Institut für Ägyptologie, University of Heidelberg, for precious advice and bibliographical help.

¹ For the area and the archaeological investigation carried out here see: P. Damian, A. Băltăc, *The Civil Roman Settlement at Ostrov-Durostorum*, *Istros* 14 (2007) 62–63.

² Dimensions: 1.77 cm. × 1.41 cm. × 0.276 cm.; weight: 1.30 grams. The profile is Type F2 Henig-Whiting; M. Henig, M. Whiting, *Engraved Gems from Gadara in Jordan. The Sa'd Collection of Intaglios and Cameos*, Oxford 1987, 6.

³ S. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen. Zu Bildern und Zaubersformeln auf geschnittenen Steinen der Antike und Neuzeit*, Berlin 2004, 83; eadem, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, London 2001, 100.

render it an important addition to the slim catalogue of gems already known from the settlement.⁴

The image on the obverse (pl. 4 figs. 3b and 4b)

The obverse shows a fairly detailed image of the deity now generally known as ‘Pantheos’ or the ‘Polymorphic Deity’, standing to the right, with the face and trunk facing front.⁵ As usual, the face is that of the dwarf protective god Bes. The head is surmounted by four pairs of ram’s horns (of *ovis palaeoegyptica*) on each side, one on top of another, the uppermost of which ends in snakes’ heads. Between the horns and the crown are two lance-heads, a very unusual addition to the head-dress.⁶ The crown itself is flanked by blobs that allude to the animals (usually bull, lion, ram and ibis), which are most often located lower down, on either side of the head. In his lower left hand, the god holds a long *was* sceptre and, in the lower right, a flail in horizontal position. As usual, he has two pairs of wings on each side and an additional pair of arms represented schematically above them. Each of the hands of these schematic arms hold two further lances (or knives), which allude to the elaborate ensemble found at this point on the fullest versions, namely a pair of double-pointed lances, a double axe and two snakes. The figure has a bird like tail with a crocodile’s tail below it. There are tufts (*protomai*) on the knee-caps, which on clearer depictions are usually lions’ heads. The erect phallus also ends in a lion’s head, but in this case no pair of scales is suspended from it. The god is wearing ‘snake-shoes’ (ending in rearing snake-heads). Although the ‘Pantheos’ often stands on a lion or on an *ouroboros*-cartouche containing harmful animals, this is not the case here. The significance of the absence of this symbol will become apparent later on.

⁴ For the gems from Durostorum, see C. Mușețeanu, D. Elefterescu, *Notă asupra unor gemme de la Durostorum*, *Pontica* 9 (1976) 199–201; I. Popović, P. Donevski, *Gold and silver jewelry from Durostorum*, *Svistov* 1999, 29–30 (gem found in a tomb dated in the 2nd half of the 3rd century AD); R. Ivanov, G. Atanasov, P. Donevski, *History of Silistra. Volume I. The Ancient Durostorum*, Silistra, Sofia 2006, tab. VIII/5 and D. Elefterescu, *Two Gnostic Pieces from Durostorum*, in: *Orient și Occident. Cultură și civilizație la Dunărea de Jos XXVIII* (East and West. Culture and Civilisation at the Lower Danube), Călărași 2011, 153–157.

⁵ The best recent survey of ‘Pantheos’-amulets, taking full account of the variations in the iconography and the *voces*, is S. Michel, *Seele der Finsternis, Schutzgottheit und Schicksalsmacht: der Pantheos auf magischen Gemmen*, in: W. Kemp et al. (eds.), *Vorträge aus dem Warburg-Haus* 6, Berlin 2002, 1–40. It thus replaces Bonner’s chapter *Pantheistic and Monstrous Forms* in: C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Roman*, Ann Arbor, London, 1950, 156–166. The best descriptions of individual objects are Bonner, *ibid.* 158 (on his D. 254); H. Philipp, *Mira et Magica: Gemmen im Ägyptischen Museum der staatlichen Museen (Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Schloß Charlottenburg)*, Mainz 1986, 109f. no. 176; Michel, *Gemmen im Britischen Museum* (see n. 3 above), 181–186 on nos. 289–295 (the examples in the BM are not of top quality however). The most elaborate and detailed ‘Pantheos’ image known to us is on a lapis lazuli in Paris: A. Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques du département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques*, Paris 2014, 69f. no. 162.

⁶ The ‘Pantheos’ is often shown wearing an *atef*-crown but this is clearly something different, and most resembles the *šwtj*-crown (double plume) of Amun, albeit in simplified form.

To the left of the head there is what seems to be a representation (damaged on the left) of a *charakter* in the form of an off-set Λ in a circle (*ouroboros?*).⁷ Below it is a scorpion (also damaged). The clearest parallel is a heliotrope in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, in which the ‘Pantheos’ holds a scorpion by the tail in his left hand.⁸

The scientific literature has struggled for more than a century to identify or at any rate interpret this intriguing deity. Since the matter is fairly complicated, we present a brief overall view. In one of the earliest scientific discussions of magical amulets, A. Delatte identified the deity on a ‘blue jasper’ in Athens as Bes.⁹ In the 1930s, F. W. von Bissing drew attention to two late-Egyptian images of ‘pantheistic Bes’ identifying him as the Egyptian *Hormerty* in Pharaonic texts, i.e. ‘Horus of the two eyes’, a deity worshipped at the city of Pharbaithos in the Eastern Delta, whose main mythic function was to prevent the serpent Apophis from waylaying the Sun on its daily journey.¹⁰ A series of papers mainly by the Dutch Egyptologist B. M. Stricker during World War II continued this focus on polymorphic Bes.¹¹ In 1960 the Egyptologist Serge Sauneron enlarged this discussion by pointing out the similarities between Bes and Tutu/Tithoes.¹² In their catalogue of the magical gems in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale in

⁷ A. Mastrocinque, *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum I*, Rome 2003, 97 observes that Λ is one of the three *charaktères* representing Scorpius at PGM VII 817. However, in view of the links between ‘pantheistic Bes’ and the Metternich stele, we might perhaps identify this detail as a misunderstood or abbreviated *wedjat* eye (the uninjured eye of Horus). The poor-quality Pantheos-haematite in the Egyptian Museum in Florence has four sigla in the field, including $\Theta\Lambda$: A. Mastrocinque, *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum II*, Rome 2007, 79 FiE 1D with tav. XXII.

⁸ A. Mastrocinque, *Sylloge I* (see n. 7) 238 no. 144 = E. Zwieler-Diehl, *Die Antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien, 3: Die Gemmen der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit, Teil 2*, Munich 1991, 165 no. 2217 with Taf. 99 = eadem, *Antike Gemmen und ihr Nachleben*, Berlin 2007, 220f. with Taf. 175, Abb. 787. A similar gem, whose present whereabouts is unknown, was published by Maffei in 1707; see A. Mastrocinque, *Sylloge I* (see n. 7) 235 no. 138. For another possible example see Bonner, *Magical Amulets* (see n. 5) 295 no. 253 (interpreted as a protective hieroglyph). A broken lapis lazuli gem from Aquileia shows the Pantheos with the scorpion on the breast: G. Sena Chiesa, *Gemme del Museo Nazionale di Aquileia*, Padua 1966, no. 1551a = Mastrocinque, *Sylloge II* (see preceding n.) 14 Aq 7 with tav. II. Since the scorpion sometimes appears among the (usually) dangerous animals in the *ouroboros* on which the Pantheos often stands, we may interpret it that the motif was taken over from the tradition of Egyptian protective magic.

⁹ A. Delatte, *Études sur la magie grecque, 4: Amulettes inédites des Musées d'Athènes*, Le Musée Belge 18 (1914) 33 no. 4.

¹⁰ F. W. von Bissing, *Zur Deutung der „panteistischen Besfiguren“*, ZÄS 75 (1939) 130–132. Horus’ two eyes are the sun and moon. The Egyptological discussion up to 1960 is summarized by A. Delatte, Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, Paris 1964, 126–130.

¹¹ W. D. van Wijngaarden, B. H. Stricker, *Magische stèles*, OMRO 22 (1941) 6–38; B. H. Stricker, *Nieuwe magische stèles*, OMRO 23 (1943) 13–14; idem, *Magische Gemmen*, OMRO 24 (1944) 82–90.

¹² “Cette aptitude commune à Toutou et à Bes [...] laisse supposer que ces deux divinités doivent posséder quelque rôle commun [...]”: S. Sauneron, *Le nouveau sphinx composite du Brooklyn Museum et le rôle du dieu Toutou-Tithoès*, JNES 19.4 (1960) 277–278; Michel, *Seele*

Paris, Delatte and Derchain, under the titles ‘Le dieu à tête de Bes’, argued that although von Bissing may have been right about pantheistic Bes standing on a lion, the ‘Pantheos’ of the magical amulets was something different, assimilating aspects of ‘aggressive-defensive’ Tutu, and used in the Delta to represent any of a series of war-like protective deities, some of whose characteristic features were fed into the (fairly unstable) iconography.¹³ We should therefore distinguish between the various amuletic images and the theological pantheistic divinities known from the magical papyri and ‘Gnostic’ texts, and allow that we simply do not dispose of a name for this figure.

The great majority of catalogues now follow Campbell Bonner in calling our deity ‘Pantheos’, ‘Pantheus’, ‘Panteo’, ‘dio panteistico’ etc.¹⁴ However, although Bonner considered that the name of the Pantheos is unknown, he did point out that in an inscription on the reverse of a very unusual graphite Pantheos-amulet from Byblos in Phoenicia, illustrated but not properly published by Maurice Dunand in 1939, he seems to be named as *Ortineus of the nine forms*.¹⁵ In his corpus of gems supposedly depicting *Abrasax*, Reinhold Merkelbach picked up the adjective ἐννέαμορφος here, concluding that this god could be any of a number of gods, such as Sarapis or Amun-Re.¹⁶ In the last two decades or so, the question of how best to label the deity has become topical again. In 2004, again citing the Byblos amulet, Mastrocinque proposed that the Pantheos was a basically an Egyptian deity (Bes/Horus), possibly inspired by Phoenician mythology and Greek cosmogonia, and, if we have to give him a name, we should choose *Ortineus*.¹⁷ A year or two later, the Egyptologist J. F. Quack emphasized the

(see n. 5) 22–23. For the god *Tutu-Tithoes* as dream-god in the magical papyri see: M. Totti, *Der griechisch-ägyptische Traumgott Apollon-Helios-Harpokrates-Tithoes in zwei Gebeten der griechischen magischen Papyri*, ZPE 73 (1988) 287–296, especially 291–292. The best recent discussion of polymorphism in this context is O. E. Kaper, *The Egyptian God Tutu. A Study of the Sphinx God and Master of Demons with a Corpus of Monuments*, Leuven 2003, 91–104, especially 97–99. He concludes that the Pantheistic God can be identified with any god whose face it bears (p. 104).

¹³ Delatte, Derchain, *Les intailles magiques* (see n. 10) 130–131.

¹⁴ Bonner, *Magical Amulets* (see n. 5) 39, 143, 159 (still in inverted commas); Philipp, *Mira et Magica* (see n. 5) 109–111, nos. 176–189; Michel, *Gemmen im Britischen Museum I* (see n. 3) 100; *Magische Gemmen* (see n. 3) 316 §41; Mastrocinque, *Sylloge I* (see n. 7) 74; *Sylloge II* (see n. 7) 79 FiE 1; p. 106 Pe 7; p. 134 Ro 13; P. Vitellozzi, *Gemme e magia dalle collezioni del Museo Archaeologico Nazionale dell’Umbria*, Perugia 2010, 42 no. A14, entitled ‘anima dell’oscurità’ but Pantheos in the text. In her recent compendium, however, Zwierlein-Diehl reverts to so-called Bes Pantheos: *Antike Gemmen* (see n. 8) 226f., 460 s.v. Abb.787.

¹⁵ Nameless: Bonner, *Magical Amulets* (see n. 5) 25 and also 156–160 for a detailed discussion. *Ortineus*: *ibid.* 182–183. Interestingly enough, Delatte and Derchain, *Les intailles magiques* (see n. 10) 126 n. 3, while commenting critically on Dunand’s poor publication, did not pick up the name *Ortineus* at all.

¹⁶ R. Merkelbach, *Abrasax. Ausgewählte Papyri religiösen und magischen Inhalts, 3: Zwei griechisch-ägyptische Weihezeremonien (Die Leidener Weltschöpfung. Die Pschai-Aion-Liturgie)* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 17.3), Opladen 1992, 62–65; Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 14–15. See also Bonner, *Magical Amulets* (see n. 5) 183, citing older bibliography according to which the God of the Nine Forms is the Sun God or “the Ennead of the great gods who meet the Sun”.

¹⁷ Mastrocinque, *Sylloge I* (see n. 7) 74–78.

“bewildering variety of different images [in Egypt], many of which have only one preserved example”, and urged that we should abandon the term ‘pantheistic’ in favour of the vaguer term ‘polymorphic’.¹⁸ Indeed, the Byblos amulet, despite being quite unparalleled, has now come to dominate the discussion: following a suggestion by Simone Michel, Paolo Vitellozzi views ‘Pantheos’ as a deity who in Phoenicia was assimilated to El-Kronos, citing the inscription from Byblos, and this idea has now been adopted by Mastrocinque in his latest discussion.¹⁹

All this however does not really help in comprehending the precise nature of this deity, if indeed we believe that it is actually meaningful to speak of a precise identity in this context of competing conceptions and imagery.²⁰ There seems however to be a consensus that the polymorphism of the ‘Pantheos’ represents a solar divinity,²¹ and that the overall aim is protective or apotropaic.²² On our gem the solar association is underlined by the text MOYN // TOY engraved beside the figure. The first element of this *vox magica* is the Egyptian word μου(t), lion, i.e. the name of the Sun at Mid-day.²³ Thus we could roughly translate the name of the ‘Pantheos’ here as ‘Lion God’, which

¹⁸ J. F. Quack, *The So-called Pantheos. On Polymorphic Deities in Late Egyptian Religion*, in: H. Györy (ed.), *Aegyptus et Pannonia III. Acta Symposii anno 2004*, Budapest 2006, 175–190, quotation at 177. The merits of ‘pantheistic’ versus ‘polymorphic’ in the Egyptian context have now been discussed in an important article by G. First, *Polycephaly — Some Remarks on Multiheaded Nature [sic] of Late-Egyptian Polymorphic Deities*, *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* (Cracow) 18 (2014) 205–221.

¹⁹ Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 24–25; Vitellozzi, *Gemme* (see n. 14) 42; Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques* (see n. 5) 65–67. The similarity between the image of El-Kronos on the coins of Phoenician Byblos and the ‘Pantheos’ were noted already by Charles King in the mid-nineteenth century. See also a latest analysis: R. K. Ritner, *Pantheistic Figures in Ancient Egypt*, in: R. Jasnow, Gh. Widmer (eds.), *Illuminating Osiris. Egyptological Studies in Honor of Mark Smith*, Atlanta 2017, 319–324.

²⁰ First, *Polycephaly* (see n. 18) 206; Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 16–23 on different Pantheos iconographies that seem to be indicative of different conceptions. Note also First, *Polymorphic or pantheistic deities? — Some problems with identification and interpretation. Contribution to the manifestation of God in Late Egyptian religion and magic*, in: J. Popielska-Grzybowska, J. Iwaszczuk (eds.), *Studies on Religion. Seeking Origins and Manifestations of Religion* (Acta Archaeologica Pultuskiensia 3), Pułtusk 2011, 53–63.

²¹ For more details see: M. Malaise, *Bes et les croyances solaire*, in: S. Israelit-Groll (ed.) *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, Jerusalem 1990, vol. 2, 680–729.

²² First, *Polycephaly* (see n.18) 212 n. 15.

²³ *PGM* VII 500 (μουϊσρω) as name of the god and XII 80 (μουι) a magical formula. H. D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation. Including the Demotic Spells*, Chicago, London 1986, 6, 126, 131 especially n. 74, 156. Other examples are to be found in *Suppl.Mag.* 42.27 (μου) and 44.7–9 (μουί). The form Mouv occurs in the following *vores magicae* in *PGM*: I 134 f. (μουναχαναπτα) as part of a spell to *Helios*; *PGM* VII 342–343 (μουνεσωχ) as part of a formula of a charm. It cannot however be quite excluded that the model offered was αμουντρου, which was misread by the cutter.

is not of course the same as claiming that this must be his ‘true’ name, the search for which in our view is chimerical.²⁴

The text on the reverse (pl. 4 figs. 3a and 4a)

On the reverse, which is to be read at right angles to the obverse, the amulet carries a slightly damaged two-line text in Greek letters, followed by a line of pseudo-hieroglyphs treated as *charaktères*.²⁵ There is also a damaged line of four pseudo-hieroglyphs on the lower level, and apparently a similar line on the upper. The text in Greek letters reads:

AMOYN
XENTE ΙΕΥΕΙ
Ἄμοῦν / χεντε ιευει.

According to Simone Michel, the divine name Amon occurs only twice on Pantheos-gems,²⁶ and in complex sequences of *voces* on only two others, whose iconography is quite disparate.²⁷ The ram’s horns, as well as the tall plume, on the head of our ‘Pantheos’ do however evoke Amon who in Pharaonic Egypt bears a ram’s head.²⁸ By contrast, the name Ἄμοῦν occurs in direct addresses, *logoi* and in sequences of *voces*. The most relevant here are his enrolment among the Eight ‘Guardians’ of Hermoupolis at *PGM XIII* 787–89 and XXI 20–21; the *voces* αμουν ηει²⁹ in *PGM IV* 929, XII 341; αμουν ω ηι, ‘Amun the Great’ in I 139; αμουν ιαααω in XIII 993; and

²⁴ The allusion might thus be to the motif of the ‘Pantheos’ standing on the lion, which is specifically protective, cf. Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 16–18.

²⁵ The *epsilon* in the Greek text is lunar.

²⁶ See Michel, *Magische Gemmen* (see n. 3) 317 §41.1.b. One of them is in Paris = Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques* (see n. 5) 69 no. 161, using the alternative form AMMΩΝ (see also the following note).

²⁷ The spelling αμουν is found as part of a mass invocation on a haematite in Berlin (lion-biga driven by a skeleton): Philipp, *Mira et magica* (see n. 5) 115 no. 188; as AMOY, it occurs as the first element of a longer series on a brown sardonyx in Vienna, placed beneath Horus on the barque: Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen 3* (see n. 8) 158 no. 2194. Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 39, reports a gem in the Skoluda Collection that features AMOYN in a series of *voces*, but it is not included in her *Bunte Steine — Dunkle Bilder: “Magische Gemmen”. Ein Katalog*, Munich 2001.

²⁸ Cf. Bonner, *Magical Amulets* (see n. 5) D.202 with p. 143 (Amun paddling Harpocrates’ barque).

²⁹ Initially translated as “Amoun comes”(?) by R. K. Ritner in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri* (see n. 23) 56, note 124 where ηει is the Egyptian *iy*. Furthermore R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini in *Suppl. Mag.* Vol. I 19, n. 3 prefer the Coptic form αμου ηει as “come to me”. A critical appraisal and a reconsideration of these translation approaches see in J. F. Quack, *Kontinuität und Wandel in der spätägyptischen Magie*, SEL 15 (1998) 77–94, note 79 where he concludes: “Die sich daraus ergebende notwendige Korrektur der antik überlieferten Worttrennung illustriert übrigens ein Hauptproblem der Forschung, nämlich die Textkorruption solcher Formeln, die den Abschreibern meist nicht mehr verständlich waren”.

the long sequence beginning $\alpha\mu\omicron\nu\nu\ \alpha\omega\nu\tau\alpha\nu\dots$ in IV 234–36.³⁰ Michel has pointed out that $\beta\alpha\nu\nu\chi\omega\omega(\omega)\chi$ (*b3 n kkw*), which means something like ‘ram/soul or primeval god of darkness’, is the *vox* most commonly used on the Pantheos amulets, alluding simultaneously to Amun in the form of a ram (*rhnj*) and the form of the Sun-god, with a ram’s head (*sr*).³¹

In the second line, $\chi\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon$ is a transliteration of the Egyptian *hntj*, meaning ‘the first; chief; etc.’³² while the second element $\iota\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota$ is simply a series of vowels, of magical character, although the particular sequence here seems new, at any rate in this spelling.³³ Thus the *vox* is to be understood as meaning ‘Amun the Chief of...’.³⁴ It is perhaps conceivable, though surely unlikely given the frequency of vowel-sequences in amuletic texts, that the vowel-sequence conceals an encoded place-name. The solar emblem among the pseudo-hieroglyphs in l.3 seems to support the idea of an intended solar connection.³⁵ The entire text on the reverse is encircled by an elliptical *ouroboros*.³⁶

Final remarks

This is the first ‘Pantheos’-amulet to have been found in the Roman settlement of *Durostorum, Moesia Inferior*.³⁷ We assume it was produced in Roman Egypt, where

³⁰ Cf. W. Brashear, *The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994)*, ANRW II.18.5, 3380–3684 at 3579. We refrain from citing the texts invoking Ἄμμων, though PGM XII 106 at least addresses him on his flight through the air as ‘great’, so the identification with Ἄμοῦν is secure.

³¹ Michel, *Seele* (see n. 5) 12f., citing i.a. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen* (see n. 8) 154 no. 2186 with further references. *b3* means both ‘soul/spirit’ and ‘ram’.

³² R. Hannig, *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch*, Mainz 2006, 653–656.

³³ PGM 3 Index XIV 283, however, lists several examples of the sequence $\iota\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ (to which add *Suppl. Mag.* no. 42.41). PGM VII 476 reads $\iota\epsilon\upsilon\omega\ \iota\omega\ \iota\omega\ \omicron\iota\ \eta\ \epsilon\iota\ \alpha\iota\ \epsilon\iota\ \alpha\omega$.

³⁴ $\iota\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota$ could be however a misspelled Egyptian word *xntj jAb.tt* “first one of the east”, see Hannig, *Handwörterbuch* (n. 32) 72–75.

³⁵ It is clear that they are not true hieroglyphs, since there is no hieroglyphic sign ☀; the two reeds (i = M17 Gardiner) face the wrong way, and are anyway fused with M23 (*šwt*); and the hieroglyphic sign *rmi* (weep) has a circular iris not a dash. Michel, *Magische Gemmen* (see n. 3) 296 §28.14 lists four amulets bearing pseudo-hieroglyphs.

³⁶ The *ouroboros* is a common enclosing device on magical amulets, cf. M. G. Lancellotti, *Il serpente ouroboros nelle gemme magiche*, in: A. Mastrocinque (ed.), *Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica*, Bologna 2002, 71–85, esp. 72f. and 84. However, it is far from common for an *ouroboros* to appear on the reverse: for some analogies, see however Michel, *Gemmen im Britischen Museum* (see n. 3) 188 no. 297; 326 no. 562 = CBd-921 (3rd–4th c. AD); Mastrocinque, *Les intailles magiques* (see n. 5) 29 no. 40 and 122 no. 323 (enclosing a cock-headed anguipede); 37 no. 72 (enclosing a scarab); 84f. nos. 199, 201 and 203 (enclosing the $\omicron\omega\tau\omega$ -*logos*); Mastrocinque, *Sylloge II* (see n. 7) 91 Na 18 (enclosing a scarab with *charaktères*); 121 Ra 6 (enclosing the name *Abrasax*); 202 GM 8 (enclosing Bes, Chnum and Isis). The only parallel known to us of a ‘Pantheos’-gem with an *ouroboros* on the reverse is the haematite example in the Museo Civico in Verona: see Mastrocinque, *Sylloge II* (see n. 7) 177 Vr 8 (where the snake encloses seven *charaktères* in two lines).

³⁷ In the Romanian area of Dobruđja one other gem with a depiction of the ‘Polymorphic’ deity was discovered in *Tomis* (Constanța), in a burial, see: Z. Covacef, C. Chera-Mărgineanu,

lapis lazuli was imported in quantities from the Shortugai mines in Afghanistan³⁸, and ended up, for unknown reasons, on the banks of the Danube. The obverse shows what we define as a solar polymorphic deity, whose role was to protect the wearer/owner against any of a range of dangers.³⁹ The text on that face gives us a new *vox magica* referring to a Lion God, to which there are just some rough analogies in the magical papyri. As J. F. Quack pointed out, the polymorphic deity possesses the totality of protective powers exercised by the deities and animals invoked in the image; in the case of the lion, which seems to be specifically named on the obverse, its well-known ferocity and strength.⁴⁰ If we are correct to see an appeal to a Lion God, the designer of the amulet evidently interpreted it as a helper of the deity.⁴¹ We might extend that insight to the iconography of the polymorphic deity standing on the back of a lion. The invocation of *Amoun* on the reverse seems to evoke yet another partial identity for the image of the deity.

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Geme din muzeul de istorie națională și arheologie Constanța, Pontica 10 (1977) 195, no. 13, note 22, who erroneously identified the deity as the god *Sol*. See the correct identification in N. Vlăssă, *Interpretarea unei geme magice greco-egiptene*, Acta Musei Napocensis XVII (1980) 483–493; See also: S. Nemeti, *Magical Practices in Dacia and Moesia Inferior*, in: C. G. Alexandrescu (ed.), *Jupiter on Your Side. Gods and Humans in Antiquity in the Lower Danube Area*, Bucarest 2013, 143–156, especially 155 no. 29, fig. 135, for the earlier mentioned gem from *Tomis*.

³⁸ For further details see: W. Z. Wendrich, R. S. Tomber, S. E. Sidebotham, J. A. Harrell, R. T. J. Cappers, R. S. Bagnall, *Berenike Crossroads: The Integration of Information*, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 46.1 (2003) 46–87.

³⁹ For a recent discussion of the practice of wearing amulets, see G. Bohak, *Amulets*, in: R. Raja, J. Rüpke (eds.), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, Chichester 2015, 82–95. It is beyond the scope of this brief contribution to discuss the theoretical concepts of the *Lived Ancient Religion* project at Erfurt or what is now called the ‘*materiality of magic*’ (see D. Boschung, J. Bremmer [eds.], *The Materiality of Magic*, Paderborn 2015).

⁴⁰ Quack, *The So-called Pantheos* (see n. 18) 177.

⁴¹ Quack, *The So-called Pantheos* (see n. 18) 177–178.

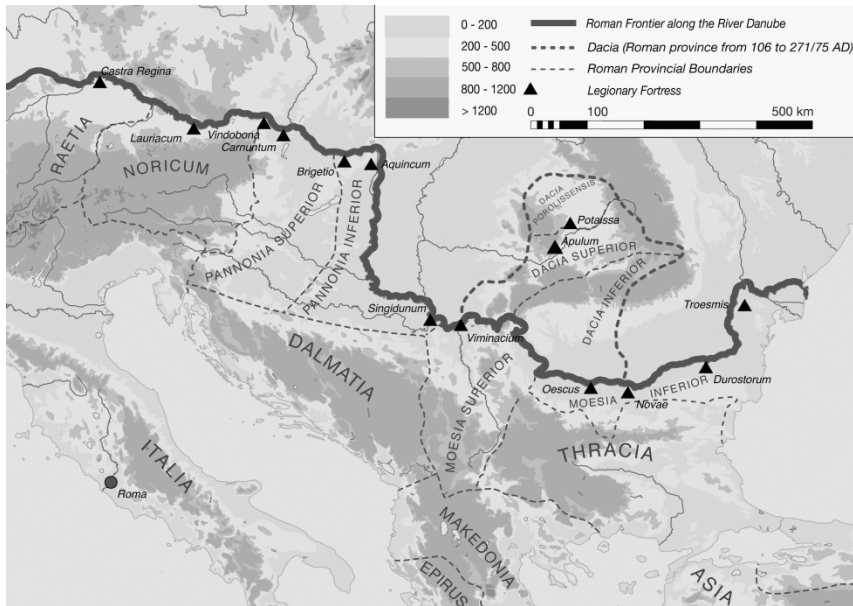


Fig. 1: The Danubian Frontier with the location of *Durostorum*. Courtesy of: The Danube Limes (Roman Provinces) Physical Map. Limes – UNESCO World Heritage Project / Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Danube Limes – UNESCO World Heritage / Pen&Sword / CHC-University of Salzburg, authors: David Breeze and Kurt Schaller).

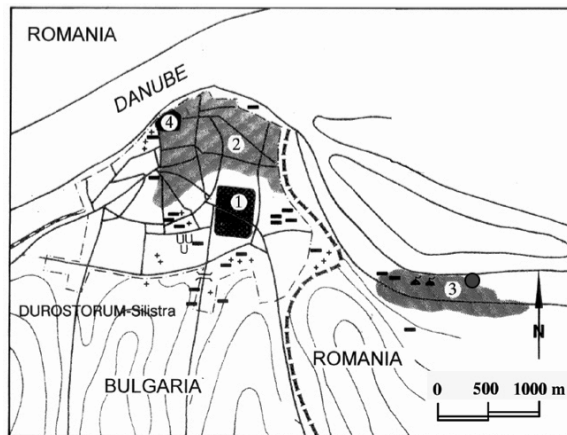


Fig. 2: *Durostorum* site map: 1. Roman *Castra*; 2. *Canabae* area; 3. *Vicus* and *municipium* with the approximate location where the amulet was found; 4. Late antique fort. Redrawn after P. Donevski, *Archeological Investigations in Silistra (Durostorum)*, *BMJT* 1 (2009) 109–110.



Fig. 3a-b: Photos of the gem by R. Petcu. Obverse on the right, reverse on the left

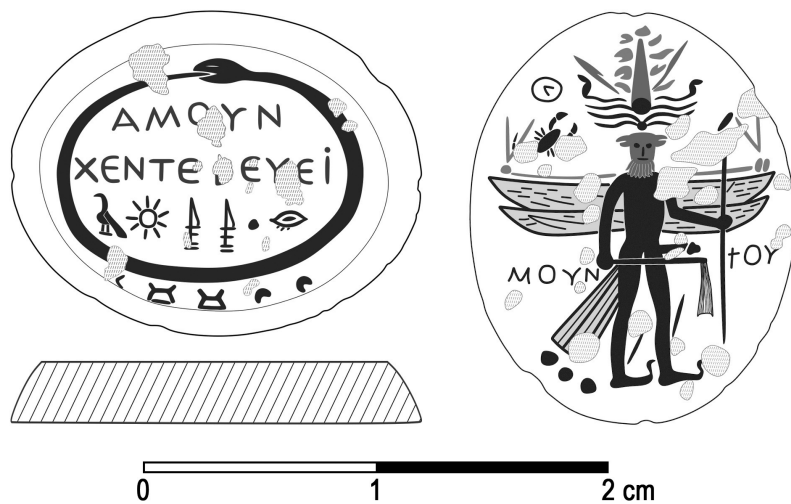


Fig. 4a-b: Drawing of the gem by R. Petcu. Obverse on the right, reverse on the left.