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MEDIEVAL BYZANTINE MAGICAL AMULETS AND THEIR TRADITION*

Jeffrey Spier

A diverse yet distinctive group of magical amulets has periodically attracted the attention of scholars from Renaissance times to the present. The amulets take many forms, including engraved gems and cameos, enamel pendants, die-struck bronze tokens, cast or engraved pendants of gold, silver, bronze, and lead, and rings of silver and bronze. All share a common motif—an enigmatic representation of a face from which radiates a varying number of serpents—and this device is usually accompanied by a Greek inscription, often abbreviated or blundered, beginning ὕστερα μελάνη μελανωμένη... ('womb, black, blackening...'). The formula makes explicit that the amulets were meant to aid the 'hystera' (womb) in some way, but what is meant by hystera and what sort of aid is intended are in need of clarification. The identification of the image itself, the date and place of origin of the amulets, and the magical tradition to which they belong, are all controversial.

Renaissance scholars correctly viewed the gems of this group as belonging to the Graeco-Roman magical tradition. They associated them with the many gems erroneously termed 'Basilidian' or 'Gnostic', now viewed as products primarily of the second and third centuries AD, deriving from the syncretistic magical tradition that emerged from Hellenistic Egypt.¹ Pirro Ligorio (1513/14–1583), in his unpublished essay on such gems,² made a drawing of one which was later to enter the ducal collection in Gotha (no. 54,³ Pl. 4g-h, now lost?). Although Ligorio understood only a small part of the inscription, he was able to recognise its magical character. In the seventeenth century, a similar example (no. 52, Pl. 4i) belonged to the painter Peter Paul Rubens, who was an avid collector with a keen interest in magic gems.⁴ The Rubens amulet was published in 1657 in the first specialised work on magic gems,⁵ but no commentary on the possible interpretations of the motif or

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¹ The literature is vast, but C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, Ann Arbor 1950, remains a primary source; also important are the

catalogues of the Paris and Berlin collections: A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes*, Paris 1964; and H. Philipp, *Mira et magica*, Mainz 1986.

² Turin, Archivio di Stato, MS Ja.II.17 bis, fol. 11; for the manuscript see G. Vagenheim, 'Some Newly-Discovered Works by Pirro Ligorio', this *Journal*, li, 1988, pp. 242–45.

³ Numbers refer to Appendix I: see below, pp. 51–59.

⁴ H. M. van der Meulen-Schregardus, *Petrus Paulus Rubens Antiquarius, Collector and Copyist of Antique Gems*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1975, p. 167, G94, fig. 16, G; A. A. Barb, 'Diva Matrix', this *Journal*, xvi, 1953, pp. 194–97; for Rubens's interest in magic gems depicting the womb see also Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 80–82; this gem, however, is not cited in his correspondence.

⁵ I. Macarius and I. Chifflet, *Abraxas seu Apistopistus*, Antwerp 1657, pl. 17, no. 70; subsequently reproduced in A. Gorlaeus, *Dactyliothecae seu annulorum sigillarum*, ii,

text is known to survive.

There appears to be little interest again in the group of medieval amulets until the 1800s. Comments on them appear sporadically until the end of the century,⁶ when several learned articles were written independently in both western Europe and Russia. The Russian articles derive both from an intense interest in Byzantine texts, including magical tracts,⁷ and from the use of similar amulets in medieval Russia.⁸ In the West a parallel interest in magical gems and amulets led to a brief article by Wilhelm Froehner,⁹ a study of a number of bronze and lead amulets by Gustave Schlumberger,¹⁰ and an important article by Wilhelm Drexler on a variety of magical amulets, gems, and texts and their survival in later European culture.¹¹ A further gem, found in Poland in 1897, was published by the Byzantinist Vitalien Laurent, who expanded on Drexler's article, adding several unpublished lead examples.¹²

The early twentieth century saw the careful study of both Byzantine and western medieval magical texts, and the rediscovery of the Roman magical papyri in Egypt.¹³ Amulets were occasionally included in these discussions,¹⁴ but the primary interest was in literary texts. Post World War II scholarship concentrated on the earlier Graeco-Roman magical tradition, and although gems and amulets attracted more attention than previously, the group of *hystera* amulets (casually but correctly considered as somewhat later in date) was neglected.¹⁵

The corpus of material was enlarged in recent years by finds of lead pendants and rings at Corinth (nos 10–11, 40, Pl. 4d, nos 41–45) and a fine bloodstone cameo at Ephesus (no. 55, Pl. 5b), but only recently have the amulets as a group been reconsidered. Vera Zaleskaia recalled the earlier Russian scholarship, which was generally neglected in the West, and again addressed the problems of meaning and chronology, particularly of the lead amulets.¹⁶ André Grabar cited some of the same material, including Russian examples, in a brief essay on medieval Byzantine amulets.¹⁷ Gary Vikan attempted to show that at least some of this group derived

Leiden 1695, nos 418f; and B. de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée en figures*, ii.2, Paris 1719, pl. 169.

⁶ F. Münter, *Sinnbilder und Kunstvorstellungen der alten Christen*, i, Altona 1825, p. 103; A. Bube, *Das herzogliche Kunstkabinet zu Gotha*, Gotha 1846, pp. 7f, nos 119f; C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*, London 1887, pp. 20, 57, 432; idem, *Antique Gems and Rings*, ii, London 1872, p. 47, pl. 9.3; G. B. De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1891, p. 137.

⁷ For the earlier literature see V. N. Zaleskaia, 'Amulettes byzantines magiques et leurs liens avec la littérature apocryphe', *Actes du XIV^e congrès international des études byzantines*, Bucarest, 1971, iii, Bucharest 1976, pp. 243–47. Especially important are I. I. Tolstoi, *Zapiski Imperatorskogo Russkogo arheologicheskogo obshchestva*, iii, 1888, pp. 363–413; M. I. Sokolov, *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya*, cclxiii, 1889, pp. 339–68; idem, *Drevnosti, Trudy Slavjanskoi komissii Imperatorskogo Moskovskogo arheologicheskogo obshchestva*, i, 1895, pp. 134–202; and A. Orlov, *Otchet gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo muzeia za 1916–1925 gg.*, Moscow 1926, v, pp. 1–55.

⁸ Tolstoi, loc. cit.

⁹ W. Froehner, 'Kritische Analekten', *Philologus* (Supplementband), v, 1889, pp. 42–44.

¹⁰ G. Schlumberger, 'Amulettes byzantines anciens', *Revue des études grecques*, v, 1892, pp. 73–93.

¹¹ W. Drexler, 'Alte Beschwörungsformeln', *Philologus*, lviii, 1899, pp. 594–616.

¹² V. Laurent, 'Amulettes byzantines et formulaires magiques', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xxxvi, 1936, pp. 300–15.

¹³ See K. Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae* (hereafter *PGM*), 2nd edn, ed. A. Henrichs, Stuttgart 1973/74, i, pp. v–xii.

¹⁴ E.g. A. Delatte, 'Études sur la magie grecque. IV. Amulettes inédites des musées d'Athènes', *Musée Belge*, xviii, 1914, pp. 21–96; and P. Perdrizet, *Negotium perambulans in tenebris*, Strasbourg 1922.

¹⁵ See the literature cited at n. 1; on the *hystera* amulets cf. Bonner, p. 90: 'All the known specimens seem to be of medieval Byzantine workmanship.'

¹⁶ Zaleskaia (as in n. 7).

¹⁷ A. Grabar, 'Amulettes byzantines du moyen âge', *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech*, Paris 1974, pp. 531–41.

from a broad variety of late Roman and early Byzantine 'medico-magical' amulets.¹⁸ Subsequently, amulets have appeared in several exhibitions.¹⁹

Yet to date there has been no comprehensive survey of the amulets. Many of them have remained unpublished, a number of others are now lost, and no doubt more remain unnoticed in public and private collections. A catalogue of all the pieces that have so far come to light is therefore included below, as Appendix I.

I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE AMULETS

More than two dozen of the lead pendants survive, all of which are cast from moulds (nos 1–11, Pl. 1a–d, nos 15–32, Pl. 2a–e). Although some examples can be distinguished as coming from recognisable workshops, there are a variety of different types, and some are quite crudely manufactured. Nevertheless, all are closely related stylistically, iconographically and epigraphically. All the recorded examples depict the motif of a face surrounded by serpents, and most are inscribed with the same *hystera* formula in various degrees of abbreviation, although some have additional inscriptions. The other side of the pendants may show either the *hystera* formula divided into horizontal lines, or introduce another iconographical device, most frequently a 'rider saint' vanquishing a female demon. Other reverse devices include a bust of Christ, the Virgin, and a standing figure in imperial dress.

Several bronze pendants (no. 12, Pl. 1e, nos 13–14) exactly parallel in design the lead examples but are engraved rather than cast. A small group of engraved bronze and silver amulets (nos 33–36, Pl. 3a–c), although clearly related to the lead ones, differ from them in many details of inscription and iconography. One remarkable pendant now in Paris is composed of multi-coloured enamel decoration on copper (no. 37, Pl. 3e).²⁰ Like some of the lead amulets, the enamel depicts the face surrounded by serpents and the Trisagion inscription,²¹ with the *hystera* inscription in seven lines on the reverse. The style and technique of the enamel associate it with several other examples that are thought to derive from a provincial Byzantine workshop of the twelfth century.

An extensive series of amulets in bronze, silver, and gold can be distinguished by their style, provenance, and details of design and inscription, as a distinct group originating at an entirely different source. Called *zmeeviki*, or 'serpent-amulets', by Russian scholars, they have long been thought to be of Russian manufacture, and a careful review of the evidence strongly supports this belief. The first list of these amulets was compiled by Ivan Tolstoi,²² whose study has now been supplemented by the recent work of Tatiana Nikolaeva and Aleksei Chernetsov.²³ The amulets are

¹⁸ G. Vikan, 'Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, xxxviii, 1984, pp. 65–86.

¹⁹ See M. M. Mango, *Silver from Byzantium. The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures*, Baltimore 1986, pp. 265f, nos 92f; L. Bouras, *Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, ed. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou and T. Liva-Xanthaki, Athens 1985, p. 193, no. 208; A. R. Bromberg, *Gold of Greece: Jewelry and Ornaments from the Benaki Museum*, Dallas 1990, p. 83, pls 63f; *Survival of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Medieval Art*, exhib. cat., Brown University, Providence 1987, pp. 171f, no. 54; and E. D. Maguire, H. P. Maguire and M. J. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy*

Powers in the Early Christian House (Illinois Byzantine Studies, ii), Urbana 1989, pp. 212f, no. 133.

²⁰ A forgery of a gold and enamel pendant based on the lead pendant illustrated by Schlumberger (as in n. 10), p. 79, no. 5, but with the legend $\text{C}\Phi\text{P}\text{A}\text{P}\text{I}\text{C}\ \Theta\text{E}\text{O}\text{Y}$, is in the British Museum (M. and L.A. 1911, 5–12, 2).

²¹ Isaiah 6.3; cf. Revelations 4.8.

²² Reference at n. 7.

²³ T. V. Nikolaeva and A. V. Chernetsov, *Drevnerusskie amulety-zmeeviki*, Moscow 1991. See also Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), for further literature; J. Blankoff, 'A propos de la *Griwna-Zmëevik* de Černigov', *Studia slavico-byzantina et*

large and carefully made, with devices and inscriptions cast in high relief and sometimes embellished with additional engraved details and inscriptions. They differ somewhat from the lead pendants in style and epigraphy, although the inscriptions and iconography are similar. The representation of the head with serpents is depicted in a series of unusual variants, with the head often surrounded by six or seven double-headed or elaborately entwined serpents. This device is paired with the *hystera* formula or the addition of conventional iconographical types, usually the archangel Michael or the Virgin. Although some of these pendants have good quality Greek inscriptions, others bear Church Slavonic inscriptions, and one especially significant example, in gold, bears a bilingual inscription in both languages.

A large number of imitations of these amulets were produced in Russia, of which some are crude imitations of the Byzantine prototypes while others add distinctively Russian iconographical types to the reverse, such as the eleventh-century saints Boris and Gleb, and Niketas beating a devil. The Russian copies appear to have lost much of the meaning of the prototypes, never translating the *hystera* formula into Slavonic and transforming the head and serpents into increasingly stylised motifs. Nearly all the examples of both the finely crafted *zmeeviki* and the cruder copies have been found in Russia or eastern Europe; none is known to have come from Asia Minor, suggesting that even those with good quality Greek inscriptions are either Byzantine works made exclusively for export or, more likely, products of a Byzantine workshop in Russia.

Other objects related to the pendant-amulets were also produced. Two bronze tokens, struck from engraved dies, like coins, are similar to the amulets. One, now lost, displayed the head with serpents on the obverse and the *hystera* inscription on the reverse (no. 39). The second example also shows the head with serpents, but the reverse portrays Christ healing the Woman with the Issue of Blood (the Haemorrhissa), who is labelled ἑμоруς (no. 38, Pl. 3d). In addition a number of silver and bronze rings bear a similar engraved image of the face surrounded by serpents and occasionally more complex imagery. Most have octagonal hoops and large circular bezels. One (no. 40, Pl. 4d) is inscribed ὠσθήρεκων φυλακτήριον ('womb amulet'), explicitly naming its function and linking it to the pendants. Another (no. 46, Pl. 4e) has a vaguer inscription—'Lord, help the wearer', while a third (no. 47, Pl. 4a) bears the first words of Psalm 90 (91); and others have magical symbols (nos 45, 47–50, Pl. 4a-c, e).

A series of large engraved intaglios and cameos in agate and jasper display iconography and inscriptions very similar to those of the lead amulets (nos 52–59, Pls 4f-i, 5a-e). Some depict the face with serpents while others combine this image

mediaevalia europensia, i, 1989, pp. 123–31; Grabar (as in n. 17), pp. 538f; *1000 Jahre russische Kunst: Zur Erinnerung an die Taufe der Rus in Jahr 988*, exhib. cat., Schlessing, Wiesbaden and Moscow 1988, p. 390, nos 269f. For a bronze amulet found in Hungary see Z. Kádár, 'Bemerkungen über byzantinische Amulette und magische Formeln', *Acta antiqua Academiae scientiarum hungaricae*, x, 1962, pp. 403–11; for a fine silver example in the Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. 11436, see Bouras (as in n. 19), p. 193, no. 208. Other examples include E. de Savitsch, 'Religious Amulets of Early Russian

Christendom', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, lxxxv, 1943, pp. 111–16; and for a bronze plaque described as Byzantine, 12th-century, but surely Russian, M. Ross, 'Byzantine Bronzes', *Arts in Virginia*, x.2, 1970, p. 42, no. 19. The example from the Dalleggio collection described by Laurent (as in n. 12), pp. 309f, fig. 3, must be one of several copies of the gold pendant once in the collection of Kazan University, cited by Tolstoi (as in n. 7), p. 377, and Nikolaeva and Chernetsov (as above), pp. 54f, no. 6.

with conventional Christian iconographical motifs such as the archangel Michael, the Virgin, St Anne, and the bust of an anonymous saint. These works also usually bear the *hystera* formula, sometimes with variant readings. A final and most remarkable example combines the head and serpents motif with a representation of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (no. 59, Pl. 5e); it is in fine Byzantine style, but the inscriptions are in Church Slavonic rather than Greek.

II. INSCRIPTIONS

The most significant inscription appearing on the medieval amulets is the formula that in its clearest form reads:

Ὑστέρα μελάνη μελανομένη ὡς ὄφις εἰλύεσαι καὶ ὡς δράκον συρίζησε καὶ ὡς λέων βρυχᾶσαι καὶ ὡς ἄρνιον κοιμοῦ

(Womb, black, blackening, as a snake you coil and as a serpent you hiss and as a lion you roar, and as a lamb, lie down!)

The formula is often abbreviated or corrupt, and alternative readings survive. One amulet (no. 15, Pl. 2a), for example, begins each phrase with the interrogative τί ('Why do you coil like a snake? Why do you...' etc.), and substitutes ταῦρος (bull) for λέων (lion). The final phrase may read προβάτον (sheep) for ἄρνιον (lamb), and κοιμήθητι (you lie down) for κοιμοῦ (lie down!). One gem (no. 57, Pl. 5c) reads κέλεσσε (calm) instead of εἰλύεσαι (coil)—perhaps a misunderstanding anticipating the final phrase,²⁴ but more likely a scribal error. Two of the engraved gems (nos 56–57, Pl. 5a, c) add a further phrase: ὡς θάλασσα γαλήνεσον (in two variations), with the latter adding: ὡς προβάτον πραῦνον καὶ ὡς κάτ[v]ος [κοιμοῦ] ('as the sea be calm, be gentle as a lamb, and as a cat [lie down?]').²⁵

Several examples supply important additional inscriptions. A lead amulet (no. 10) and a silver ring (no. 40, Pl. 4d), both found at Corinth, read: ὑστέρηκον φυλακτήριον (in two variations), identifying these pieces as amulets for the womb. An amulet in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 15, Pl. 2a) adds βοέθη ὑστέρα ('help the womb'), to a central tondo within the *hystera* formula. Similarly, an amulet in the Numismatic Museum in Athens (no. 8, Pl. 1c) adds: πρὸς ὀφέλιον ὑστέρας ('for the benefit of the womb'), again making its function explicit. Another example (no. 6, Pl. 1b) begins ὑστέρα μελάνι μελανομένη ('Womb, black, blackening'), but continues δεδεμένοι ἕμα φα[γ]ε πίε ('having been bound, eat [and] drink blood'). Similarly, the Menil Collection silver pendant (no. 34, Pl. 3b), begins in the same manner and goes on ἕμαν τρό[γ]ε ἕμαν π[ί]ε ('eat blood, drink blood'), before continuing in the conventional manner ('as a snake...lion...lamb'), although it ends with ὡς γυνή ('as a woman').²⁶ Sometimes letters appear between the serpents' heads, but they are only occasionally legible. A lead pendant (no. 4) reads ἅγιος (holy), and the Menil Collection example (no. 34, Pl. 3b) appears to have the (blundered) divine name *Iao* and χάρις Θεοῦ ('grace of God'). On other examples

²⁴ Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 304.

²⁵ The reading was suggested by Laurent, *ibid.*, although the final κάτνος may merely be a corruption. The added phrase 'as the sea be calm' may derive from

the accounts of Jesus's calming of the storm; cf. Matthew 8.26, Mark 4.39, Luke 8.24.

²⁶ One pendant of Russian manufacture also preserves 'like a woman...': see Kádár (as in n. 23).

symbols of uncertain significance take the place of letters. The Russian amulets continue the tradition, using Slavonic letters.²⁷

Other phrases occurring on the amulets are familiar from a variety of Byzantine contexts. Psalm 90 (91) appears several times (see nos 21–22, 47, Pls 2b, 4a), no doubt because of its amuletic sentiment; it had often appeared on earlier amulets.²⁸ The Trisagion occurs frequently (nos 4–5, 7–8, 12, Pl. 1c, e, no. 15, Pl. 2a, nos 34, 37, Pl. 3b, e, no. 56, Pl. 5a) and also appears on earlier amulets; however, this had long been commonplace as a regular phrase in the liturgy.²⁹ There are also standard invocations of Christ, the Virgin, or various saints for assistance, as there are on a wide range of objects of the early Byzantine period (including personal seals, stone inscriptions, and imperial coins): Κύριε βοήθε τὸν φορο[ύ]ντα, or some variant (nos 46, 57, Pls 4e, 5c); Θεοτόκε βοήθε σε τὸν φο[ροῦ]ντα] (no. 9, Pl. 1d, no. 13); and similar invocations but with personal names, for example Θεοτόκε βοήθει τὲ σε δοῦλε Μαρεααμ (no. 54, Pl. 4g-h), and Παναγία Θεοτόκος ἁγιοσέον (no. 28, Pl. 2d). The bilingual gold pendant from Chernigov (Pl. 6a) utilises the Greek Trisagion and *hystera* formula and adds the Slavonic inscription, ‘Lord, help your servant, Basil’.

Other inscriptions include the labelling of the figure or scene: IC–XC (nos 25–26, Pl. 2c); MHP–ΘΥ (nos 27, 29, 56, Pl. 5a); St Anne (no. 56, Pl. 5a); Michael (no. 55, Pl. 5b); ‘saint’ (no. 58, Pl. 5d); the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (no. 59, Pl. 5e; in Church Slavonic); and the Haemorrhoida (no. 38, Pl. 3d).

The variant group of engraved pendants in silver and bronze (nos 33–36, Pl. 3 a-c) present iconographical motifs and inscriptions that while distinct are none the less related to those of the main series of silver, bronze, and lead amulets discussed above. The most significant example is a silver pendant in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 33, Pl. 3a), displaying a complex mixture of motifs and somewhat corrupt inscriptions. One side depicts the nimbate rider holding a cross-shaped spear and impaling a prostrate female figure in a long robe, while an angel with one raised wing stands before them. In the field are symbols, and the legend around reads ‘Flee, Abizou Anabardalea, Sisinis pursues you, the Angel Araph...’. On the other side the face surrounded by seven serpents appears in the lower right field, in a much reduced size and with symbols between the serpents’ heads. Another serpent approaches the head from the lower left. Above, centre, is a bust surmounted by a cross, and to the left is a nimbate, standing figure holding a long staff and a long, thin, uncertain object in the other hand. In the field are palm branches, symbols (a pentagram and ring-signs), and blundered inscriptions some of which may be resolved as σφραγὶς Σολομῶνος (‘Seal of Solomon’), ἄριστος, and πίνω (‘I drink’). The inscription around is also garbled, and partly incomprehensible, but it preserves the correct ending of the *hystera* formula: ... ὡς δράκον [ε]ἰλή[εσαι] ὡς λέων βρού[χησε] ὡς προβάτον... (‘As a serpent you coil, as a lion you roar, as a lamb...’)

²⁷ See Sokolov, 1895 (as in n. 7), p. 176. Sokolov notes that some amulets label the image as *dna*, the Slavonic equivalent to *hystera*: see below, p. 49.

²⁸ For Psalm 90 (91) on other amulets see *PGM* (as in n. 13), ii, P5b; *Supplementum Magicum*, i, ed. R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini (Papyrologica coloniensi, xvi.1), Opladen 1990, p. 73, with further literature; L. H. Schiffman and M. D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah*, Sheffield 1992,

pp. 39, 78; and cf. also the Gnostic interpretation of the Psalm in *Pistis Sophia*, ed. C. Schmidt, tr. V. MacDermot (Nag Hammadi Studies, ix), Leiden 1978, ii, chap. 67, pp. 142–46.

²⁹ For the Trisagion on amulets see F. Maltomini, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, xlviii, 1982, p. 158; and E. Peterson, *Heis Theos. Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Göttingen 1926, pp. 234, 325.

A second engraved silver pendant (no. 34, Pl. 3b) more closely resembles the lead examples on one side, showing the face surrounded by seven serpents and a somewhat corrupt Trisagion. The reverse, however, recalls the Ashmolean pendant in depicting the standing figure holding a staff and surrounded by symbols (star, crescent, pentagram and ring-signs). As noted above, a variant of the *hystera* formula, including 'eat blood, drink blood', is written around and below the figure. A similar example in bronze (no. 35, Pl. 3c) shows the face surrounded by serpents on one side and the standing figure with staff on the other. The inscription preserves the name of the archangel Michael, but the rest is hopelessly corrupt.

III. CHRONOLOGY

Many of the amulets must date from the tenth to twelfth centuries in view of their style, archaeological context, and continued use in Russia, but some scholars have suggested an earlier date for at least some examples.³⁰ Especially important is the question of the relationship between the medieval amulets and a large group of engraved bronze amulets found in Syria and Palestine, which are firmly datable to the sixth/seventh century. A brief description of these earlier amulets is provided here in Appendix II. It is notable that they share with the medieval series some inscriptions and iconographical features, such as the appearance of a 'rider saint'. However, they never depict the motif of the face with serpents, and there seem to be no examples of individual amulets which might serve to link the two groups.

At Corinth, several rings and lead amulets were found in excavations, and although only one provides a *terminus post quem non* in the tenth century,³¹ the consistent finds in tenth- and eleventh-century levels argue that this is the correct date of use. The motif of the face with serpents is not independently datable, since it appears only on these objects, but it is often paired with Christian iconographical types that are stylistically post-Iconoclastic ('middle Byzantine') in date, most notably the representations of the Virgin, St Anne, the standing figure in imperial dress, and the archangel Michael wearing a *loros*.

The Russian versions, which presumably are not much later than the Byzantine prototypes, cannot be earlier than the eleventh century and are generally dated by Russian scholars to the eleventh or twelfth century; some pendants could be slightly later. The gold bilingual pendant (Pl. 6a), if its presumed historical associations are correct, would provide a firm chronological point for this group. Found in Chernigov in 1821, it is thought to have belonged to Vladimir Monomachos (1053–1125), the powerful Prince of Kiev from 1113 to 1125.³² The evidence is circumstantial, however, consisting of Vladimir's baptismal name Basil on the pendant, the findsite in Chernigov where Vladimir was resident from 1078 to 1094, and the presumed value and importance of the large, gold object. Similarly, the gem depicting the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus with Church Slavonic inscriptions (no. 59, Pl. 5e) preserves the personal names Georgi and Maria, who have been plausibly identified

³⁰ Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 306, inexplicably dates the amulets far too early, ranging from the 4th to 7th centuries, with only some as 'very late'.

³¹ G. R. Davidson, *Corinth, XII: The Minor Objects*, Princeton 1952, no. 1947, 'not later than the tenth century'.

³² See esp. D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1988, pp. 111–13, with further literature; and Nikolaeva and Chernetsov (as in n. 23), pp. 49–51, no. 1, pl. 1, 1.

as Prince Mstislav I of Novgorod (ruled 1125–1132) and his daughter Maria.³³ The motif and style of the Seven Sleepers support the twelfth-century date, or at least do not allow a date much earlier. In any event, the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century dates must be approximately correct, and the use of the Greek formulae and the similarity to purely Byzantine examples demonstrate an immediate link to contemporary Byzantium.

A further chronological clue for the main series of amulets is provided by the use of two distinctive types of materials, enamel (no. 37, Pl. 3e) and engraved bloodstone (nos 55–59, Pl. 5a–e), both of which suggest a date no earlier than the tenth century and more likely in the eleventh or twelfth century. The use of enamel on copper finds its closest parallels in the twelfth century,³⁴ and the use of bloodstone (green and red jasper) is best attested by the cameos produced in the imperial workshops beginning in the tenth century.³⁵ The large bloodstone cameo from Ephesus (no. 55, Pl. 5b) firmly links the amulets with the broader group of Byzantine cameos by its material and iconography: the style of the representation of the archangel Michael, who wears the *loros* and holds the *labarum* and globe decorated with a patriarchal cross, is clearly middle Byzantine in date.³⁶

Zaleskaia too has suggested a tenth/eleventh-century date for most of the amulets. She noted the tenth-century context at Corinth, cited the similarities of the gems to cameos of the eleventh century, and saw that the unique enamel amulet (no. 37, Pl. 3e) was close in style to others of the tenth/eleventh century. In addition, she followed Sokolov in placing the forms of the letters *alpha* and *beta* (often with open bottom, like the Latin 'R') in the tenth century.³⁷ Vikan, however, has suggested an earlier date for some of the amulets: a ring (no. 47, Pl. 4a) is given a seventh- or eighth-century date, and a slightly later ('perhaps ninth-century') date is proposed for the St Petersburg amulet (no. 9, Pl. 1d), which for an unspecified reason is considered early in the series.³⁸ The only epigraphical feature cited is the form of *beta* found on the ring (with a straight line at the bottom), which is said to be characteristic of the seventh and eighth centuries. Although this form of *beta* may be rare in the middle Byzantine period, it does occur,³⁹ and it must be noted

³³ V. Zaleskaia, *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, xxxvi, 1974, pp. 184–89; A. A. Medyntseva, 'Suzdal'skii zmeevik', *Materialy po srednevekovoi arkhologii severo-vostochnoi Rusi*, Moscow 1991.

³⁴ See J. Durand, *Byzance: l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises*, Paris 1992, pp. 330f, no. 244; Zaleskaia (as in n. 7), p. 246, suggests a 10th/11th-century date.

³⁵ The best studies on Byzantine cameos to date are the numerous articles by H. Wentzel, notably 'Datierete und datierbare byzantinische Kameen', *Festschrift Friedrich Winkler*, Berlin 1959, pp. 9–21; and 'Die byzantinischen Kameen in Kassel. Zur Problematik der Datierung byzantinischer Kameen', *Museum. Studien aus Kunst und Geschichte für Otto H. Förster*, Cologne 1960, pp. 88–97. See also A. V. Bank, *Prikladnoe iskusstvo Vizantii IX–XII vv.*, Moscow 1978, pp. 115–46, 198–200.

³⁶ G. Langemann, 'Ein Zauberamulett aus Ephesos', *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, xxii, 1973, p. 282, argues that the best parallels are c. 1200 AD. In fact most cameos of this period depict the archangel Michael holding a sword: cf. Wentzel, 1960 (as in n. 35),

p. 93 and n. 96; nevertheless, the date must be similar. It should also be noted that the pose of the archangel Michael on the Ephesus cameo is the one most often found on the Russian magical amulets.

³⁷ Zaleskaia (as in n. 7), pp. 246f.

³⁸ Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 78. Mango (as in n. 19), pp. 265f, dates both the ring and the amulet no. 34 (see Appendix I and Pl. 3b) to the 6th/7th century.

³⁹ Cf. the *beta* with flat bottom on a lamp in San Marco dedicated by Archbishop Zacharia the Iberian in the 11th century: W. F. Volbach, et al., *Il Tesoro di San Marco. 2. Il tesoro e il museo*, Florence 1971, pp. 75f, no. 78, pl. 63. Also the inscription on an enamel set in the votive crown of Leo VI (886–912): *ibid.*, pp. 81f, no. 92, pl. 75. Similar letter forms appear on a silver stamp seal in Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum (inv. 986.181.65), dated as 'eighth to tenth century' by Maguire et al. (as in n. 19), p. 97, no. 33; and on a gold ring bezel dated as 'eleventh century?' by M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, ii, Washington 1965, no. 126. Neither is closely datable, but both are surely middle Byzantine.

that a variety of letter forms and vowel usages appear on amulets that in all other ways seem to be contemporary. The epigraphical variations cannot be dated with precision, and all indications suggest that most of the amulets and rings should be placed in the tenth to twelfth centuries, with a few perhaps later. There thus appears to be no compelling reason to date any surviving example before the tenth century.⁴⁰

The findspots too may give some indication of date. Nearly all of the lead and some of the silver pendants are said to have come from Asia Minor, with a few from Corinth. Significantly, none is from Palestine, Syria, or Egypt, where most bronze amulets of the sixth/seventh century have been found. The rings have a similar distribution, primarily coming from Asia Minor and Corinth, with a few from Sicily. As noted above, the ornate group of pendants in gold, silver and bronze have been found only in Russia and eastern Europe. One gem was found at Ephesus, but others appear to have travelled westwards (to Poland, Spain and Maastricht), perhaps brought from the east by Crusaders or sent as gifts from the Byzantine court; there is also an example from Russia, preserved at Suzdal cathedral. Although firm conclusions are difficult to establish, the distribution suggests that the amulets were not used in Syria/Palestine but rather in Greece and Asia Minor, and that they were available in Russia and the West. This pattern best supports a middle Byzantine date, reflecting the loss to the Arabs of Syria and Palestine, renewed contacts between Byzantium and the West, and the new relations with Russia. The implications of the chronology and distribution are significant, for they separate the medieval amulets from the well documented group originating in sixth/seventh-century Syria and Palestine.

IV. ICONOGRAPHY

In depicting a 'holy rider' who subdues a prostrate female figure, some of the amulets reflect a long and complex tradition that combines a variety of ancient demonological beliefs and folk legends, the central element being the existence of a female demon who harms children and pregnant women. She is well attested in a variety of late antique magical sources and survives into post-Byzantine Greek folklore as well.⁴¹ In Byzantine texts she is usually named as Abyzou or Gylou, but like many demons she has other, secret names, the knowledge of which protects the threatened victim from her.

The Byzantine Abyzou derives directly from much earlier beliefs, and several conflated traditions can be distinguished, some of which can be traced back to early Near Eastern mythology. An important article by A. A. Barb discussed the demon's

Cf. also C. Foss in H. Buchwald, *The Church of the Archangels in Sige*, Vienna 1969, p. 67, who notes late 8th- and 9th-century occurrences; and W. H. Buckler and D. M. Robinson, *Sardis*, viii, Leiden 1932, p. 141, no. 176, for an inscription thought to be as late as the 10th or 11th century.

⁴⁰ See also Bonner's observations cited at n. 15 above.

⁴¹ See H. A. Winkler, *Salomo und die Karina*, Stuttgart 1931; R. P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*, Amsterdam 1988, pp. 187 nn. 565f, and 190 n. 576; idem, 'Saint Sisinnios, the Archangel

Michael and the Female Demon Gylou: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories', *Byzantina*, xv, 1989, pp. 83-142; D. B. Oikonomides, *Laographia*, xxii, 1965, pp. 328-34, and xxx, 1975-76, pp. 246-78; I. Sorlin, 'Striges et Géloudes. Histoire d'une croyance et d'une tradition', *Travaux et mémoires*, xi, 1991, pp. 411-36; J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, Cambridge 1910, pp. 173-84; C. Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture*, Princeton 1991, pp. 99-102, 229; and see n. 43 below.

many manifestations from Near Eastern mythology to Jewish, classical Greek and modern European folklore and myth.⁴² Barb noted that already in early Mesopotamian belief *Lilitu* and *Lamashtu*, the harmful female demons of folklore, were incorporated into the mythological tradition of the primeval Sea of Chaos (Assyrian *apsu*, or Sumerian *abzu*, from which the Greek ἄβυσσος and English *abyss* derive). From this sea comes the Babylonian *Tiamat*, known from the Babylonian creation epic as the mother of demons. In Jewish tradition the child-harming female demon is named Lilith; she often appears in legends even in modern times and is named on prophylactic charms for childbirth.⁴³ As Barb noted, in classical Greece the various water deities (nymphs and nereids) and many monsters (sirens, harpies, gorgons and so on) are to a large degree derived from these Near Eastern sources.

An early reference in Greek literature appears in a fragment of Sappho (early sixth century BC), which preserves the name *Gello* as a child-harming creature;⁴⁴ the name and belief are probably of Babylonian derivation.⁴⁵ Female demons who harm men and women were probably common in Greek folk beliefs, but the evidence seldom survives.⁴⁶ A magical silver tablet (lamella) from a third-century Roman grave at Carnuntum in Austria, however, preserves such a story.⁴⁷ *Antaura* ('evil wind') comes out from the sea (as did her Babylonian ancestors) bringing migraine to a human victim. She then meets with Artemis of Ephesus, a popular cult deity often associated with magic, who presumably sends her back whence she came—the exorcism to repel the demon is lost but can be reconstructed, as Barb demonstrates, from similar medieval versions in which Christ takes the place of the Ephesian Artemis.

In the Byzantine period the textual evidence for the child-harming demon is usually found incorporated into exorcisms or broader demonological texts.⁴⁸ Especially explicit is the *Testament of Solomon*, an uncanonical religious text that incorporates early demonological beliefs and Jewish legends into the framework of a folktale.⁴⁹ In this work Solomon, in his legendary role as master of all demons, through the agency of a magic seal ring presented to him by the archangel Michael

⁴² A. A. Barb, 'Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil's Grandmother', this *Journal*, xxix, 1966, pp. 1–23.

⁴³ M. Gaster, '2000 Years of a Charm against the Child-Stealing Witch', *Folklore*, xi, 1900, pp. 129–62 (republished in idem, *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology*, ii, London 1928, pp. 1005–38); Barb, op. cit., p. 4; G. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, New York 1965, pp. 72–74, 134; J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem 1985, pp. 111–22.

⁴⁴ E. Lobel and D. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1955, pp. 101, 178 (61): Γέλλως παιδοφιλωτέρα.

⁴⁵ C. Frank, 'Zu babylonischen Beschwörungstexten', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, xxiv, 1910, pp. 161–65.

⁴⁶ Demons known as *lamia* and *empousa* were known to Aristophanes in 5th-century-BC Athens: cf. *Wasps* 1177, and *Frogs* 293; and a tale of a female demon (called both *lamia* and *empousa*) pursuing a youth at Corinth was recorded by Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius*, iv. 25. See also *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, vi, p. 189, s.v. *Lamia* (J. Boardman).

⁴⁷ A. A. Barb, *Der römische Limes in österreich*, xvi, 1926, pp. 53–67; idem (as in n. 42), pp. 2–4; R. Kotansky, 'Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Amulets', *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink, New York 1991, pp. 112f; idem, *Greek Magical Amulets*, (Papyrologica coloniensia, xxi.1), Opladen 1993, no. 13.

⁴⁸ See Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), pp. 184 n. 558, and 186 n. 562; he notes that Gylou was known to John Damaskenos and Michael Psellos as well.

⁴⁹ See C. C. McCown, *The Testament of Solomon*, Leipzig 1922, for the two major recensions of the *Testament* reconstructed from the various manuscripts of the work. Most are 15th- or 16th-century in date but one papyrus fragment of the 5th or 6th century survives: see R. Daniel, *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer Cent.*, Vienna 1983, pp. 294–304, no. 39. For a recent translation and commentary see D. C. Duling, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, London 1983, i, pp. 935–87; and further Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), pp. 158f, nn. 494f. Part of the folklore entered the Babylonian Talmud: see *Gittin*, vii, 68a–68b. And see n. 55 below.

compels various demons to assist him in building the Temple in Jerusalem. In its final chapters the *Testament* changes to a moral tale, telling of Solomon's fall through idolatry. Various Solomonic legends deriving from Jewish sources, as well as some Christian interpolations, are combined with a detailed discourse on demons and the specific angels who control them. Also incorporated are the proper magical formulae for controlling the decans that cause various medical ailments, as developed from magical-astrological traditions. The original version is thought to date from the first to third centuries AD, but parts, notably the Solomonic legends and the material on the decans, depend on even earlier sources.

Among the demons encountered in the *Testament of Solomon* is one of female form who kills children:

There came before me [Solomon] one who had the shape of a woman but she possessed as one of her traits the form of one with disheveled hair. I said to her, 'Who are you?' ... She replied, 'Obyzouth. I do not rest at night, but travel around all the world visiting women and, divining the hour [when they give birth], I search [for them] and strangle their newborn infants' ... When I, Solomon, heard these things, I was amazed. I did not look at her shape, for her body was darkness and her hair savage. I, Solomon, said to her, 'Tell me, evil spirit, by what angel are you thwarted?' She said to me, 'By the angel Raphael; and when women give birth, write my name on a piece of papyrus and I shall flee from them to the other world.'⁵⁰

Similarly, in the *peri daimonon*, a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century text formerly attributed to Michael Psellos,⁵¹ one of the characters in the dialogue tells of the apparition of an unnamed demon, 'shadowy and with windswept hair', who threatened his sister-in-law during childbirth. The demon is named Gylou in a fifteenth-century manuscript in Paris,⁵² where a meeting with the archangel Michael is described thus:⁵³

The archangel Michael said to her, 'Where have you come from and where are you going?' The abominable one answered and said, 'I am going off to a house and, entering it like a snake, like a dragon, or like some reptile, I will destroy the animals. I am going to strike down women; I will make their hearts ache, I will dry up their milk ... I will strangle [their] children, or I will let them live for a while and then kill them ...'⁵⁴

The legendary adversary (or adversaries) of the demon are variously portrayed in literary texts and on the amulets as Solomon, saints, or angels, reflecting a conflation of parallel Jewish, Christian and syncretistic traditions. Solomon, the master of demons, had long been invoked by Jewish magicians.⁵⁵ His earliest appearances on surviving amulets occur on an extensive series of haematite gems engraved with

⁵⁰ Translation by Duling, op. cit., pp. 973f, chap. 13; McCown, op. cit., pp. 43f. See also Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), p. 183.

⁵¹ Greenfield, op. cit., pp. x, 155f; P. Gautier, 'Le *De daemonibus* du Pseudo-Psellus', *Revue des études byzantines*, xxxviii, 1980, pp. 105–94.

⁵² Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Parisinus Gr. 2316, fols 432^r–433^r.

⁵³ For meetings of this sort in historiolae see Barb (as in n. 42), p. 4; Greenfield, 1989 (as in n. 41), p. 106; such a meeting occurs also on the Antaura lamella (see above, p. 34). In Jewish folklore the female demon

Lilith is met by Elijah: see Gaster (as in n. 43), pp. 1024f; Scholem (as in n. 43), pp. 72–74. What appears to be a parody of such a meeting is found in Euphrosyne: J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae graecae*, xli, 353f.

⁵⁴ Translation by Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), p. 184 and n. 558 (with further literature).

⁵⁵ Certainly long before the detailed description of an exorcism related by Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* viii. 42–49: see D. C. Duling, *Harvard Theological Review*, lxxviii, 1985, pp. 1–25; and idem, *ibid.*, lxxviii, 1975, pp. 235–52; S. T. Carroll, 'The *Apocalypse of Adam* and Pre-Christian Gnosticism', *Vigiliae christianae*, xlv, 1990, pp.

a depiction of a rider, often labelled 'Solomon', spearing a second figure; the reverse inscription usually reads σφραγὶς Θεοῦ ('seal of God').⁵⁶ The date of the gems has not been fixed securely, but they may belong to the fifth century.⁵⁷ Solomon or the 'Seal of Solomon' continued to be invoked in magical papyri⁵⁸ and on bronze amulets during the sixth and seventh centuries.

A parallel and probably more ancient tradition regarding the female demon is preserved as a historiola, or folktale, in numerous medieval manuscripts written in Greek, Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Rumanian, Slavonic, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew.⁵⁹ Recently the earliest preserved versions have come to light on an Aramaic silver lamella and two incantation bowls, all probably of fifth- or sixth-century date.⁶⁰ The story tells of 'helpers', usually two or three in number, who aid a woman whose children have been taken by the child-killing demon. The helpers pursue the demon, finally defeat her, and make her promise not to harm the woman again. The demon then reveals her secret names, which when recited or written on an amulet will protect the woman—as will the names of the helpers. There are often 'twelve and a half' names and sometimes as many as seventy-two.⁶¹ In some versions the evil demon is banished to the sea, recalling her ancient origins in Mesopotamian mythology. In the Aramaic versions the woman is *smamit*,⁶² and the demon is called *sideros* (Greek for 'iron'); on the silver lamella the helpers are *swny*, *suswny*, and *snygly*.⁶³ In Greek tradition the woman is usually called Melitene, the helpers are the saints Sisinnios, Sines and Senodoros (with variants),⁶⁴ and the demon is usually named as Gylou.

263–79; also n. 49 above. Aramaic incantation bowls often invoke the 'Seal of Solomon': see J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur*, Philadelphia 1913; and M. J. Geller, 'Eight Incantation Bowls', *Orientalia Lovanensia Periodica*, xvii, 1986, pp. 108–10. Origen too was aware of such magical practices among the Jews and spoke out against Christians emulating them: see Migne (as in n. 53), xiii, 1757; *Origenes Werke*, ed. E. Klostermann, xi, Berlin 1976, p. 230; also C. Walter, 'The Intaglio of Solomon in the Benaki Museum and the Origins of the Iconography of Warrior Saints', *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἐταιρείας*, xvi, 1989/90, pp. 35f.

⁵⁶ Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 208–10; Walter (as in n. 55), p. 33. There are many others, including one found at Tyre, for which see M. H. Chéhab, 'Fouilles de Tyr. Nécropole de Tyr, IV', *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth*, xxxvi, 1986, p. 160, pl. 17, 3–4. For a standing figure labelled as Solomon and now in Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, see A. de Ridder, *Collection de Clercq*, vii.2, Paris 1911, no. 3490; and Bonner, op. cit., p. 209. For a gem in Istanbul, inscribed ΣΟΛΩΜΟΝ ΕΙΠΕ ΦΥ[Λ]ΑΞΕ ('Solomon said, "Protect!"), see P. Perdrizet, *Revue des études grecques*, xvi, 1903, p. 42.

⁵⁷ They are usually associated with the main series of magic gems of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, but are likely to be somewhat later in date. Those depicting Solomon as a rider differ from the 2nd- and 3rd-century gems in several regards: they are crudely engraved and without the modelling found on the earlier series, and the shapes—long ovals with carelessly finished sides—are distinctive. They are comparable in shape and style to

some other haematite gems depicting Christian saints, which probably belong to the late 5th century; see Bonner, op. cit., p. 223. Philipp (as in n. 1), no. 189, also observes that the Solomon gems are later than most other magic gems and suggests a 3rd/4th-century date.

⁵⁸ For Solomon on a magical papyrus (5th century?) see *Supplementum Magicum* (as in n. 28), no. 24, rejecting any close association with the text of the *Testament of Solomon*.

⁵⁹ Winkler (as in n. 41); Peterson (as in n. 29), pp. 109–30; Perdrizet (as in n. 14); and Naveh and Shaked (as in n. 43), pp. 111–22, 188–97, with further literature.

⁶⁰ Naveh and Shaked, loc. cit.

⁶¹ Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), p. 186, n. 561; idem, 1989 (as in n. 41), pp. 121–38; C. D. G. Müller, 'Von Teufel, Mittagsdämon und Amuletten', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, xvii, 1974, pp. 91–102; Winkler (as in n. 41); Perdrizet (as in n. 14), pp. 16–27.

⁶² See Naveh and Shaked (as in n. 43), p. 107.

⁶³ Medieval Jewish amulets identify the three helpers as assisting angels with similar names: see Naveh and Shaked, op. cit., pp. 118f, with literature; Gaster (as in n. 43); and add Sokolov, 1895 (as in n. 7), p. 181, and Simon Maiolus, *Colloquiorum sive dierum canicularium continuatio & supplementum*, Mainz 1608, p. 276; see also A. A. Barb, 'Three Elusive Amulets', this *Journal*, xxvii, 1964, pp. 14f.

⁶⁴ See Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), p. 274, n. 938; and idem, 1989 (as in n. 41), discussing fully the surviving Greek manuscripts.

The same Sisinnios, a saint only superficially equated with a historical figure and derived primarily from the earlier tradition of the historiolae, is invoked on many of the sixth/seventh-century Byzantine bronze amulets described in Appendix II, although some continue to name him as Solomon or invoke the 'Seal of Solomon'. A haematite gem in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, of the type normally inscribed 'Solomon', bears the inscription 'Sisinis' and may be the earliest example of such an amulet naming that saint (Pl. 6e).⁶⁵ The most elaborate pictorial representation of St Sisinnios appears on a remarkable fresco at Bawit in Egypt, where he subdues a female demon labelled 'Alabasdria'—one of the names of the demon Gylou attested in manuscripts.⁶⁶

The early Byzantine bronze amulets additionally often invoke various angels, especially the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Ouriel.⁶⁷ In some instances the rider saint attacking the female demon is joined or even replaced by an angel, who in these cases is most often named as Arlaph. The name is not found in conventional angelologies and seems most likely to derive from a 'helper' of the folkloric tradition, assimilated to angelic status.⁶⁸ Paul Perdrizet ingeniously noted that amongst the tales in the *Arabian Nights* collection (in 'The Story of the Fisherman and the Efrit'), a *djin* named Araaf is identified as having once been the chamberlain of Solomon; the story evidently preserves an otherwise lost tradition.⁶⁹

No surviving amulet specifically names Gylou,⁷⁰ but several of the early Byzantine bronze examples address Abyzou.⁷¹ These amulets show a standing figure of

⁶⁵ Inv. 1941.26, said to be from Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ J. Clédat, *Le Monastère et la nécropole de Baouït* (Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale), Cairo 1906, xii.2, pp. 79–81, pls 55f; Perdrizet (as in n. 14) pp. 13–15.

⁶⁷ Names of the archangels along with divine names such as Iao and Sabaoth often appear on the bronze amulets: see Appendix II. In many Byzantine demonological texts, which are largely derived from the syncretistic magical-astrological tradition rather than from the historiolae of folklore, a myriad of specific angels, rather than saints, is invoked to oppose specific demons: see Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), pp. 222–25, 271–77; and the *Testament of Solomon*, where specific angels are invoked to restrain the various demons and astrological decans, who have become equated with demons. In medieval Byzantine texts the archangel Michael is the most frequent adversary of the demon Gylou: see Greenfield, 1989 (as in n. 41).

⁶⁸ See I. Levy, 'ARDAPH', *Byzantion*, vi, 1931, pp. 477–79; V. N. Zaleskaia, 'Amulets with the Angel Arlaf', *Soobshcheniia Ermitazha*, xxxvi, 1973, pp. 54–58, 86; and next note. Arlaph may also be equated with (or derive from?) the archangel Raphael: see Winkler (as in n. 41), p. 163; Peterson (as in n. 29), p. 107; and J. Russell, 'The Evil Eye in Early Byzantine Society. Archaeological Evidence from Anemurium in Isauria', *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, xxxii, 1982, p. 543. An identification with Raphael finds some support from the *Testament of Solomon*, where the demon Obyzouth reveals that Raphael is the correct angel to oppose her.

⁶⁹ Perdrizet (as in n. 56), pp. 51f. The name 'Arsaph' on a silver lamella is illusory: the reading was proposed by S. Pétridès, 'Amulette judéo-grecque', *Echos d'Orient*,

viii, 1905, pp. 88–90, followed by Walter (as in n. 55), pp. 37f; the actual name, *Alarphoth*, which has no relation to the angelic name *Arlaph*, was correctly read by Kotansky, 1993 (as in n. 47), no. 36.

⁷⁰ Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 79 n. 89, suggests that two Byzantine objects may bear inscriptions referring to Gylou. The first is a crudely engraved rock crystal stamp seal in Toronto, depicting a rider saint spearing a serpent (see now A. Krug, *The Malcove Collection*, ed. S. D. Campbell, Toronto 1985, pp. 76f, no. 99; however, Krug suggests a 5th-century date whereas it is probably middle Byzantine). Three very crude letters appear in the field, which Vikan has read as Γ-Ι-Α (for Gilou); but they are more likely to be read Α-Γ-Ι-[ΟΣ] and label the saint as such. The motif of St Theodore or George spearing a serpent is quite common, whereas Gylou shown as a serpent is unattested. On a comparable seal in Naples, probably of 11th/12th-century date, the rider is labelled Theodore: see H. Wentzel, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, vii, 1956, pp. 242, 268 fig. 44. The second item discussed by Vikan is a gold clasp decorated with a niello monogram, in the Benaki Museum (see B. Segall, *Museum Benaki. Katalog der Goldschmiede-Arbeiten*, Athens 1938, no. 267). The cruciform monogram, containing the letters Ε, Γ, Α, Ο, and Υ, has been read by Vikan as 'Gelou', but there is no reason whatever to suppose a demon's name. Although not a common monogram, it differs in no significant way from the multitude of personal monograms surviving on lead seals of the 6th and 7th centuries and should be resolved as the name of a mere human—perhaps 'Eulogiou'.

⁷¹ A. A. Barb, 'Magica varia', *Syria*, xlix, 1972, pp. 344–57; H. Seyrig, 'Invidiae medici', *Berytus*, i, 1934, pp. 5f;

the type variously identified as Solomon or Arlaph, brandishing a whip and subduing a demon, who kneels with hands tied behind its back (Pl. 6c, d).⁷² A bronze amulet in a private collection names the standing figure as Arlaph, written in a cruciform manner in the lower right; below is a lion and in the field are ring signs (Pl. 6c). The inscriptions on this pendant read σφραγίς Σολομ[ών]ος μετὰ τοῦ φοροῦ[v]το ('[the] Seal of Solomon [is] with the bearer [of the amulet]') and, invoking an enigmatic magical name, ἐγὼ εἰμι Νοσκαμ ('I am Noskam').⁷³ The reverse inscription, all within an *ouroboros* (a snake biting its tail), reads: φεύγε, φεύγε, Αβιζου, Σισίνης καὶ Σισιννία ἔνθαδε κατυκί καὶ [λ]άβραξ ὁ κύον ('flee, flee, Abyzou, Sisini[o]s and Sisinnia [pursue you]).⁷⁴ The voracious[?] dog dwells here';⁷⁵ this phrase is followed by a serpent, the personal name 'Marathba, daughter of Porphyria', and ring signs. The female demon Abyzou is specifically addressed on these amulets, but the particular ailment that the amulet is meant to prevent is not made explicit. She is usually identified as a demon harmful to women, but two of the four preserved personal names on these amulets are male, suggesting that Abyzou was thought to cause harm to men as well.

In the case of the medieval amulets, only one names the female demon. The silver pendant in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 33, Pl. 3a, and see above p. 30) utilises both the magical formula (in a variant form) and the motif found on the earlier circular bronze amulets. A rider saint spears a prostrate female figure, while an angel raising one wing stands before him. The legend reads [φε]ύγε, Ἀβιζου Ἀναβαρδαλεα Σισίνης σε διόκι [ὁ] ἄγ[γ]ελος Αραφ... ('Flee, Abizou Anabardalea, Sisini pursues you, the angel Araph...'). Thus the rider is identified as Sisinnios, the angel is Arlaph, and the demon is named as Abizou (Abyzou) along with another name, Anabardalea,⁷⁶ attested in medieval texts as one of Gylou's 'twelve and a half names'.

The scene of the rider subduing the female often appears on the medieval lead amulets, but it is not the primary motif. Rather, the enigmatic face with serpents is the one constant feature. What does this image signify? Early scholars, beginning with Ligorio in the sixteenth century, naturally associated the distinctive head from which serpents radiate with the gorgon Medusa; but this connection is now generally considered to be incorrect. The image is quite unlike any classical representation of the gorgon head and, more importantly, the identification does not explain sufficiently the explicit function of the amulets, and has only superficial

Chéhab (as in n. 56) p. 183, pl. 47, 1–2, from Tyre; for another, L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 197.

⁷² A similar standing figure holding a scroll is labelled 'Solomon' on a gem in Paris: see n. 56 above.

⁷³ For *Noskam* see Barb (as in n. 71), pp. 350f, 355–57; and L. Robert, *Journal des savants*, 1981, pp. 30–34.

⁷⁴ Magical formulae of similar structure beginning 'Flee...' have a long history dating back at least to the 4th century BC; see n. 163 below. An example of an early Christianised version of the φεύγε formula is given below at p. 45; cf. also *Supplementum Magicum* (as in n. 28), no. 25. Gregory Nazianzus appears to have known of similar spells and adapted them to a poem, beginning φεύγε... δολομήχανε: see p. 45 below. A post-Byzantine manuscript in Athens preserves a lengthy

exorcism of the demon Gylou followed by this formula: φεύγε, δαιμόνιον πονηρὸν καὶ ἀκαθάρτον, Ῥακβесаλεα σε διόκει λόγος καὶ Σολομῶν ὀρκίζω σε εἰς τὸν λόγον ὃν ἔδωκεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Πέτρῳ ('Flee, wicked and unclean demon, Rakbesalea, the Word and Solomon pursue you. I adjure you by the Word that the Lord gave to Peter...'); tr. R. D. Kotansky; see A. Delatte, *Anecdota atheniensia*, i, Liège and Paris 1927, p. 249.

⁷⁵ For ὁ λάβραξ κύον see Barb (as in n. 71), p. 348; L. Robert, *Hellenica*, xiii, 1965, 267 n. 1; idem (as in 73), p. 33; the meaning of the phrase remains uncertain.

⁷⁶ For Anabardalea see Greenfield, 1989 (as in n. 41), p. 125 and n. 76; idem, 1988 (as in n. 41), esp. p. 186 n. 561 and p. 335; also Perdrizet (as in n. 14), p. 20. This spelling of the name occurs only in an 18th-century manuscript in Athens: see Delatte (as in n. 74), p. 117.

support from textual sources.⁷⁷ Zalesskaia, following earlier Russian scholarship, has suggested that the image represents a demon of the sort described in the *Testament of Solomon* and other demonological texts.⁷⁸ This proposal is supported by the stated function of the amulets, namely to protect the womb—presumably from demonic harm. Literary descriptions of the female demon correspond to some degree with the image found on the amulets. The texts, most notably the *Testament of Solomon*, often emphasise that the body of the female demon is not visible and that her hair is windswept or disheveled. In one recension, for example, ‘...all of her body appeared dark but her face shone translucent green, her hair was wild like a dragon and all her limbs were invisible...’.⁷⁹ Such descriptions may have been influenced by classical representations of the gorgon Medusa, and if the image on the amulets was indeed meant to represent a demon, an artistic dependence on the gorgon head would be plausible.⁸⁰ It has also been seen as significant that a passage in the *Testament of Solomon* (xiii.7) speaks of Solomon hanging the demon by her hair before the Temple, perhaps alluding to the frequent appearance of Medusa heads on classical temples.⁸¹ However, Richard Greenfield has noted another tradition, in which the Sibyl (who in some later Byzantine texts reappears as a demonic ruler) was hung in a jar before the temple of Apollo at Cumae or the temple of Herakles at Argyrus.⁸²

Despite the literary descriptions of the demon, the identification of the image on the amulets as Abyzou is unsatisfactory. In the certain representation of this demon found on many of the amulets, namely the figure impaled by the rider, she is shown as having female form with long hair, although her body may sometimes be serpentine or animal-like. Even more significantly, the Medusa-like head on the amulets is never accompanied by a victorious rider saint, nor by an inscription in any way alluding to Abyzou or Gylou. Rather, in nearly all cases it is the *hystera* formula that accompanies the head.

An alternative identification has been proposed by Vikan, who also noted the iconographical problems.⁸³ Detecting a similarity in appearance and presumed function, he suggested that the Medusa-like device derives from the Chnoubis figure commonly found on magical gems of the Roman period.⁸⁴ The identity of Chnoubis has recently been discussed by Howard M. Jackson, who recognised him as a decan derived from earlier Egyptian tradition, via the Hellenistic astrologers.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Some explanations for the device are fanciful and can be easily dismissed, eg. the identification of the device as the ‘Gnostic Gorgon’ by King, 1887 (as in n. 6), p. 432. Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 243, cites a variety of other views.

⁷⁸ Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 245, with further literature; followed by Grabar (as in n. 17), p. 535. Some support for this identification is given by a recently published Hebrew amulet also protecting from demons: ‘specifically, you seven spirits about which Ashmedai, king of the demons, taught King Solomon, who enter the wombs of women and deform their offspring’. See Schiffman and Swartz (as in n. 28), pp. 73f.

⁷⁹ Translation by Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), pp. 182f, n. 554 (McCown’s ‘Recension B’: see above, n. 49).

⁸⁰ Barb (as in n. 4), pp. 208–12, and idem (as in n. 42), pp. 9f.

⁸¹ Barb (as in n. 42), p. 9.

⁸² Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41), pp. 183, 189 n. 572.

⁸³ Vikan (as in n. 18), pp. 75–79; see also his entry in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, s.v. *Amulet*. His suggestions have been followed uncritically by F. R. Trombley in *ibid.*, s.v. *Chnoubis*; Mango (as in n. 19); Maguire et al. (as in n. 19); Bouras (as in n. 19); and Obolensky (as in n. 32), p. 112.

⁸⁴ For the gems see Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 25, 53–60.

⁸⁵ H. M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man. The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition*, Atlanta 1985, pp. 74–108, esp. 81–84; see also the important article by W. Drexler, in Roscher, *Lexikon der Mythologie*, ii, cols 1250–64, s.v. *Knuphis*; and W. Gundel, *Dekane und Dekansternbilde* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, xix), Glückstadt and Hamburg 1936, pp. 48, 98–100.

On the gems, Chnoubis nearly always takes the form of a serpent with the radiate head of a lion, and indeed several literary texts describe him as such.⁸⁶ The various parts of the human body were thought to be controlled by the thirty-six astrological decans, and Chnoubis was associated with the area including both the stomach and the womb. He was invoked on amulets primarily in connection with digestive problems, but also appears above the bell-shaped representation of the womb frequently found on magic gems.⁸⁷ Vikan pointed out that late representations of Chnoubis appear along with Christological scenes on some early Byzantine silver armbands from Egypt, which were probably made for amuletic use, perhaps for stomach or uterine problems (although the function is never made explicit: there are no appropriate inscriptions, or symbols for the womb).⁸⁸ He proposed that the manner of representing Chnoubis underwent a transformation over time, adopting a human face, sprouting serpents from the rays, and finally losing the serpent coil entirely. A depiction on a silver ring (no. 47, Pl. 4a) is cited as an intermediate phase in the development of the decan from lion-headed serpent to human head surrounded by serpents.

However, the relationship between the two images is far from clear. A human head on the serpent coil occurs only very rarely on the earlier gems and with uncertain purpose.⁸⁹ Vikan is incorrect in suggesting that a detached ray ‘... may well be an echo of the ... lost serpent’s tail’:⁹⁰ in fact, this is a distinct serpent approaching the creature, as appears also on the silver amulet in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 33, Pl. 3a). It is also difficult to understand why the rays of Chnoubis should be transformed into serpents. Finally, Vikan’s observation that similar symbols (a pentagram and ring-signs) appear on both the Chnoubis panel of the armband and the silver ring (no. 47, Pl. 5a) is also of doubtful significance.⁹¹ Pentagrams and ring-signs are common in most magical texts and have no special connection with Chnoubis (and pentagrams in any event are very rare on gems). The particular symbols discussed by Vikan—the Z- and N-shaped ring-signs, the star-shaped ring-sign, and the pentagram—are among the most common of all magic symbols in a variety of texts produced over many centuries. They can be found on the Egyptian magical papyri, in post-Byzantine and Western magical handbooks, and on amulets.⁹² Ring-signs very similar to those found on the silver ring cited by

⁸⁶ Especially notable is the *peri lithon* of Socrates and Dionysius, which contains instructions for engraving an onyx gem with ‘a serpent coil with the upper part or head of a lion, with rays’, as an aid to digestion. See F. de Mély and C. E. Ruelle, *Les lapidaires de l’antiquité et du moyen âge*, ii, Paris 1898, p. 177; and J. Mesk, ‘Ein unedierter Tractat *peri lithon*’, *Wiener Studien*, xx, 1898, pp. 320f; also Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 55; Vikan (as in n. 18), pp. 75f; Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 78 n. 49; for other descriptions see n. 93 below, and also Kotansky and Spier, forthcoming, for a gem that preserves the instruction ‘...let the serpent be lion-headed...’, taken from a handbook.

⁸⁷ See Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 79–92; Jackson (as in n. 85), pp. 76 n. 47, 78 n. 49; and n. 109 below.

⁸⁸ Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 75, figs 8f; idem, ‘Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands and the Group to which they Belong’, *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, xlix/1, 1991/92, pp. 37f, figs 9f (noting the Egyptian manufacture of

the silver armbands depicting Chnoubis). A. A. Barb, ‘Abraxas-Studien’, *Hommages Deonna* (Collection Latomus, xxviii), 1975, p. 75, suggested a syncretism of Chnum with the Jewish Yahweh at Elephantine in Egypt to explain the presence of Chnoubis on the armbands; but this is unlikely: see Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 104.

⁸⁹ See Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 25; Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 79 n. 50. Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 76, suggests that the head of the Chnoubis on the Byzantine armbands ‘seems almost more human than leonine’, but this observation is unconvincing.

⁹⁰ Vikan, *op. cit.*, p. 76 n. 65; and see below, p. 47 and n. 127.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁹² *PGM* (as in n. 13), vii, which includes many formulae for amulets, preserves these symbols. For the same symbols on post-Byzantine amulets see W. Déonna, *Revue des études grecques*, xx, 1907, pp. 364–82. For the Z-shaped ring-sign as a symbol for Jupiter, see Barb (as in

Vikan (no. 47, Pl. 5a) also appear on the bronze amulet discussed above, depicting the subjugation of the demon Abyzou by the Solomon-like figure named as Arlaph (Pl. 6c, see above p. 38), which is perhaps a more relevant parallel.

In order to accept Vikan's contention that the face surrounded by serpents derives from representations of Chnoubis, one would have to presume that the amulet-makers entirely misunderstood or intentionally disregarded all traditional pictorial representations of Chnoubis and all textual instructions on how Chnoubis was to be drawn.⁹³ Such a situation is implausible for several reasons. Although amulet-makers often misunderstood the texts they copied, it is highly unlikely that a pictorial representation became separated from its textual sources and developed on its own.⁹⁴ The detailed instructions for making amulets, which were preserved in magical handbooks and other literary texts, usually included drawings or descriptions, and these were to be followed carefully. The overwhelming evidence for a continuing magical tradition in medieval Byzantium is not in doubt,⁹⁵ and this tradition was primarily textual rather than iconographic. Moreover, the function of Chnoubis as specifically uterine is rare; here again a misunderstanding of the textual tradition would be required for the decan to appear alone on an amulet for the womb.⁹⁶ On the magic gems, Chnoubis controls the stomach and becomes relevant to the womb only when accompanied by the uterine symbol and other deities. Control of the womb is peripheral to his complex astrological and magical role and is not compatible with the 'master of the womb' identity that Vikan has proposed. Even if such a role existed, how could the Byzantine amulet-makers have interpreted the image? In order to be transformed into the symbol found on the later Byzantine amulets, a meaningful explanation for the figure would be required: the identification of the image as a demon is possible, but an astrological decan in place of a controlling saint or angel is highly implausible and without textual or iconographic parallel.

Chnoubis belongs within a body of beliefs derived from the syncretistic magical-astrological practices developed in Egypt. The medieval Byzantine amulets derive

n. 4), p. 216 n. 48; W. Brashear, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, lvi, 1984, p. 65 n. 11; and *Supplementum magicum* (as in n. 28), p. 28. For its survival in the *Picatrix* see D. Pingree, *Picatrix: the Latin Version*, London 1986, p. 65 (ii.10.9). Pentagrams are often associated with the 'Seal of Solomon': see Perdrizet (as in n. 14), p. 33. The meaning of 'pentagons' in Julius Africanus, the 3rd-century Christian writer, is unclear, although they are probably pentagrams drawn on amulets of various functions: see F. C. R. Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic*, Tübingen 1984, pp. 199–203. For the Egyptian origin of the triple-S symbol usually appearing with Chnoubis on gems (but never on Byzantine amulets) see Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 86 n. 59.

⁹³ In addition to Socrates and Dionysius (see above n. 86), the following sources know of Chnoubis. Galen, *De simplicium medicamentorum facultatibus* x.19, believed the stone, not the engraving (described as a radiate serpent), was effective: see Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 54. For Marcellus (following Galen) see Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 78 n. 49; Gundel (as in n. 85), p. 269. For several Hermetic texts see Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 82. For the 13th-century Byzantine scholar Michael Italikos, who equates

Chnoubis with Agathos Daimōn, see Jackson (as in n. 85), p. 80 n. 50; and P. Gautier, *Michel Italikos. Lettres et discours*, Paris 1972, p. 162 n. 8.

⁹⁴ A separation of iconographical motif and textual tradition appears to have happened in the case of the Russian amulets, where the face and serpents image became increasingly corrupted and stylised; it is notable that the Greek *hystera* formula is not translated into Slavonic on these amulets. However, this case is one of cross-cultural transference: it is likely that the Byzantine amulets were never fully understood in Russia. Such a misunderstanding is unlikely to have occurred in Byzantium, where the textual tradition was strong.

⁹⁵ See the outstanding study by Greenfield, 1988 (as in n. 41).

⁹⁶ As Jackson notes (as in n. 85, p. 78 n. 49), the tract by Socrates and Dionysius gives instructions for a stone to be engraved with a 'Chnoubis with three heads' that would be beneficial to pregnant and nursing women; for a possible candidate for such a gem see E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Magische Amulette un andere Gemmen des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln* (Papyrologica coloniensa, xx) Opladen 1992, p. 79, no. 18.

from a parallel but distinct magical tradition, based more on medical than magical folklore, which viewed the womb (ὄστέρα or μήτρα) as an independent creature living in the human body. The belief is no doubt very ancient, perhaps appearing in old Egyptian magic.⁹⁷ The earliest description in Greek sources appears in a much-cited passage of Plato (*Timaeus* 91b-d), describing the womb as an animate creature roaming through the human body and desiring childbirth; if remaining barren too long, it causes illness.⁹⁸ The Hippocratic writers frequently discussed the womb in similar terms,⁹⁹ and a wide range of popular traditions shared the belief that the womb caused harm to the person when not in its proper place. Stomach pains, colic and digestive problems were thought to be closely related to movements of the womb, and even disorders such as migraine and fever were often seen as deriving from the same source. Such beliefs persisted in spite of other currents of Greek medicine that specifically rejected the idea. Soranus, for example, in his treatise *Gynaecology* (around 100 AD), discussed the displacement of the uterus but clearly understood that it was not a separate being and did not roam freely;¹⁰⁰ this work was widely used (there are many medieval Latin versions) but did not restrain the earlier popular beliefs. The tradition of the roaming womb, which was often thought to exist in men as well as women, lasted well into modern times, lending its name for example to the feeling of suffocation when excited (the *hysterica passio* of King Lear), and to female 'hysteria'.¹⁰¹ Remarkable folk beliefs based on the tradition of the ill effects of the wandering womb have survived in Germany and eastern Europe until the twentieth century.¹⁰²

A substantial magical tradition developed in response to the many problems perceived as relating to the womb.¹⁰³ Spells and charms were created to deal with conception, contraception, childbirth, bleeding, and a great variety of ailments thought to be caused by roaming of the womb. A series of spells and formulae specifically addresses the problem, commanding the womb to be calm or to return to its proper place. Among the group of magic gems of the Roman period depicting

⁹⁷ See Barb (as in n. 4), p. 214 n. 23; see esp. H. Joachim, *Papyrus Ebers*, Berlin 1890, pp. 170–75; J.-J. Aubert, 'Threatened Wombs: Aspects of Ancient Uterine Magic', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, xxx, 1989, 423 n. 3.

⁹⁸ Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 91; Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 598f; Aubert (as in n. 97), p. 423 and n. 2.

⁹⁹ See Aubert, loc. cit.; and G. E. R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 83f, n. 100.

¹⁰⁰ Soranus. *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, ed. J. Ilberg, iv, Leipzig 1927, iii.50, chap. xv, discusses displacement. *Gynaecology* i.8, denies that the womb has a life of its own; see also Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 91; and Lloyd (as in n. 99), pp. 171f. Soranus's views on amulets are also notable: 'Some people say that some things are effective by antipathy, such as the magnet and the Assian stone and hare's rennet and certain other amulets 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 possibly make the patient more cheerful.' (iii.42, chap. 10; tr. O. Temkin, *Soranus' Gynecology*, Baltimore 1956.)

¹⁰¹ *King Lear*, ii.4.54–56: 'O! how this mother swells up toward my heart; / *Hysterica passio!* down, thou climbing

sorrow! / thy element's below'. Shakespeare refers to the disease *hysterica passio*, also known as the 'Suffocation of the Mother', caused by the displacement of the womb. For his sources see K. Muir, *Review of English Studies*, 1951, pp. 11–21. Another contemporary source, Edward Jorden, *A Brief Discourse of a Disease called the Suffocation of the Mother*, London 1603, is notable for rejecting demonic possession as the cause of hysteria: see M. MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London. Edward Jorden and the Mary Glover Case*, London 1991. In addition, Aubert (as in n. 97), p. 424 n. 4, cites knowledge of the belief in the 'roaming womb' in the works of Montaigne and Rabelais. See the excellent study by I. Veith, *Hysteria. The History of a Disease*, Chicago 1965, pp. 20–30, for hysteria in the Graeco-Roman period.

¹⁰² Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 599–608; Barb (as in n. 4), p. 214 n. 23, with further literature. See esp. A. Berg, *Der Krankheitskomplex der Kolik- u. Gebärmutterleiden in Volksmedizin und Medizingeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Volksmedizin in Ostpreussen*, Berlin 1935.

¹⁰³ See esp. Berg, op. cit., pp. 126–37; and Aubert (as in n. 97).

the bell-shaped womb, a number add the inscription *στάλητι μήτρα* ('contract, womb') or some variant.¹⁰⁴ A similar gem preserves a longer formula: 'Set the womb of so-and-so in its proper place, thou who [liftest up] the disk of the sun'.¹⁰⁵ One third/fourth-century magical papyrus uses the same medical phrase found in Soranus—*πρὸς μήτρας ἀναδρομήν* ('for ascent of the uterus')—and provides a complicated invocation and formula:

I conjure you, O Womb, [by the] one established over the Abyss, before heaven, earth, sea, light, or darkness came to be; [you?] who created the angels, being foremost, AMICHAM-CHOU and CHOUCHAO CHEROEI OUEIACHO ODOU PROSEIOGGES, and who sit over the cherubim, who bear / your[?] own throne, that you return again to your seat, and that you do not turn [to one side] into the right part of the ribs, or into the left part of the ribs, and that you do not gnaw into the heart like a dog, but remain indeed in your own intended and proper place, not chewing [as long as] I conjure by the one who, / in the beginning, made the heaven and earth and all that is therein. Hallelujah! Amen!¹⁰⁶

A gold lamella also commands the womb to stay in its proper place:

I am adjuring you, O womb of Ipsa whom Ipsa bore, so that you may never abandon your spot: In the name of the unconquerable, living Lord God to remain at your spot, [that] of Ipsa whom Ipsa bore!¹⁰⁷

Similarly, a sixth-century (?) Coptic papyrus contains a charm for the womb that includes the phrase

make the womb of so-and-so, whom so-and-so bore, relax into the natural position and be uninfamed.¹⁰⁸

The lengthy *hystera* formula found on the medieval Byzantine amulets belongs to a similar tradition. It intends to exorcise the womb: to command it through the magic of the spell to be calm and to return to its proper place. In this context, the clearest explanation for the face and serpents device is as an illustration of the womb itself, as explicitly named in the formula that nearly always accompanies it. As Barb comments:

It is obvious that here the animal-like, 'roaming' uterus is being exorcised... These amulets now show the Gorgon's head surrounded by fearful serpents, not, I think, to frighten the 'Hystera' away but as illustration, as her portrait. Just as knowledge of his or her real name gives the exorcist power over the demon, so does possession of the image.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ See n. 87 above; for the inscription see Delatte (as in n. 14), pp. 75–88; Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 84; Delatte and Derchain (as in n. 1), pp. 245f; Philipp (as in n. 1), p. 112, no. 184; and Aubert, op. cit., p. 425.

¹⁰⁵ *τάσσον τὴν μήτραν τῆς δεινά εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον, ὃ τὸν κύκλον τοῦ ἡλίου*: see Bonner, op. cit., pp. 81–83, who notes the earlier literature. The gem was first published by C. Du Molinet, *Le Cabinet de la Bibliothèque de Sainte Geneviève*, Paris 1692, p. 126, pl. 29, 1, where the meaning is correctly interpreted; see also Drexler (as in n. 11), p. 599; Delatte, op. cit., p. 81; and Aubert, loc. cit.

¹⁰⁶ *PGM* (as in n. 13), vii, 260–71, tr. J. Scarborough, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, ed. H. D. Betz, Chicago 1986, pp. 123f; see also Aubert, op. cit., p. 424.

¹⁰⁷ Translation by R. D. Kotansky; Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Froehner, no. 286; Kotansky, 1993 (as in n.

47), no. 51; *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum*, iv, Berlin 1877, no. 9064; Aubert, op. cit., p. 424 n. 5.

¹⁰⁸ University of Michigan, MS 136; W. H. Worrell, 'Coptic Magical and Medical Texts', *Orientalia*, n.s. iv, 1935, p. 29, ll. 27–30; see also Kotansky (as in n. 47), p. 135 n. 85.

¹⁰⁹ Barb (as in n. 4), p. 211. Drexler (as in n. 11), p. 598, also implied that the image represents the womb. Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 90f, in discussing the medieval amulets, related the image on them to depictions of the bell-shaped or 'octopus-shaped' wombs found on some earlier gems (see n. 87 above): 'The effect is that of a crudely executed Medusa; but it is almost certainly derived from the 'octopus' version of the uterine symbol.' Barb, however, disagreed with this derivation (op. cit., p. 217 n. 55).

The medieval amulets can then be placed firmly in the long tradition of belief in an animalistic womb in need of calming. According to these beliefs the womb displays some demon-like behaviour, but it cannot be equated with the Abyzou-Gylou demon.¹¹⁰ This entirely separate belief, derived from demonological folklore, is none the less combined on some of the amulets with the spell for calming the womb (nos. 15–24, 33, Pls 2a-b, 3a). Conflations of this sort were already being made in the early Byzantine period if not earlier, in part so that the amulets would be as efficacious as possible. The combination of the tradition of the ‘roaming womb’ with belief in the female demon Abyzou-Gylou suggests that at least some of the amulets with the *hystera* spell were used to protect women in childbirth or small children, as is specified in some late magical texts. The bronze token depicting Christ healing the Haemorrhoid (no. 38, Pl. 3d) also suggests that the function of this amulet was to aid women in some way.¹¹¹

However, the ‘roaming womb’ was also thought to cause a wide variety of ailments, such as migraine and fever, and to afflict men as well as women. As already noted, even in the early Byzantine period some bronze amulets to protect against the demon Abyzou were used by men. Much later the Russian gold bilingual amulet mentioned above (Pl. 6a), bearing the *hystera* spell, was specifically made for a certain ‘Basil’,¹¹² and medieval (and more recent) texts often speak of the ‘womb’ afflicting men.

V. THE TEXTUAL TRANSMISSION OF THE *HYSTERA* FORMULA

The *hystera* formula found on the medieval Byzantine amulets does not occur in full on any of the surviving magical gems, amulets, lamellae, or papyri of the late Roman and early Byzantine period. However, elements of the formula can be traced back at least to the early Byzantine period, suggesting that a lost prototype did in fact exist by the fifth century and probably earlier. The spell begins, as noted above (p. 29), by invoking the womb, with the epithet μελάνη μελανωμένη (‘black, blackening’). Although unattested at an early date, the assonance recalls the similar demonic epithets μεμισημένη (‘detested one’) and δολομήχανη (‘deceitful one’). The first, μεμισημένη, occurs as an epithet for the female demon on the sixth/seventh-

¹¹⁰ See below, nn. 116, 117, 121, for details of demonic traits. Barb (as in n. 42), pp. 9f, in a later and less clear discussion than that cited above (n. 109), equates the womb with both a gorgon-like demon and the primeval symbol of Chaos akin to the Mesopotamian *Abzu*. See also idem (as in n. 4), pp. 197–204; Aubert (as in n. 97), p. 424 n. 5; and *PGM* (as in n. 13), iii, 602, for connections between the womb and cosmology. The sources for such beliefs are complex and often conflated, yet any cosmological origins would surely have been lost to the Byzantine amulet makers. Similarly complex symbolism regarding the womb appears in the psychoanalytical work of Freud and Ferenczi, as noted by Barb (as in n. 4), p. 209, nn. 262f.

¹¹¹ Also notable in this context is the large (5 cm) bloodstone intaglio mounted as a pendant (Pl. 6b), now in New York, Metropolitan Museum, inv. 17.190.491 (see L. Kötzsche, *Age of Spirituality*, ed. K. Weitzmann, New York 1979, p. 440, no. 398; *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, exhib. cat. [Liebieghaus], Frankfurt am

Main 1983, pp. 560f, no. 165), depicting Jesus and the Haemorrhoid on one side and a standing Virgin as orant on the other. Divided between the two sides is the text of Mark, v, 25–34 (abbreviated and with some errors), relating the story of the Haemorrhoid. The material and style of the gem associate it with middle Byzantine cameos and especially with the gems under consideration; the 6th/7th-century date given in the earlier publications is less likely. The motif of the Haemorrhoid, found also on the bronze token, suggests that this gem too is an amulet to aid women. A green chalcidony gem in the Benaki Museum in Athens (inv. 13527) also shows Christ and Haemorrhoid on one side and the Crucifixion on the other; however, it bears no inscription and its date and function remain uncertain, although the style of the depiction of the Crucifixion must be middle Byzantine or later.

¹¹² Perhaps Prince Vladimir Monomachos. See above, p. 31 and n. 32.

century Byzantine bronze amulets.¹¹³ Similarly, a fifth-century papyrus amulet from Oxyrhynchos, against fever, begins: φεύγε, πνεῦμα μεμισημένον. Χ[ριστός] σε διώκει ('flee, detested spirit, Christ pursues you').¹¹⁴ At an earlier date the δολομήχανε ('deceitful one') epithet was known to Gregory Nazianzus, who based one of his poems on a magical charm of similar structure: φεύγ' ἄπ' ἐμέξ κραδῆς, δολομήχανε... ('Flee from my heart, deceitful one...').¹¹⁵

The most distinctive structural element of the *hystera* formula is the use of repetitive comparisons (ὡς...ὡς) between the womb's undesired traits and the activities of various animals. Such animalistic behaviour is often typical of demons, as in the case of the migraine-bearing Antaura, who 'shouted aloud like a hind, she cried out like a cow'.¹¹⁶ The Thessalian witch Erictho described in Lucan's *Civil War* (first century AD) makes noises that are compared to those of animals, the similar structure suggesting a knowledge of some sort of common source.¹¹⁷ There are echoes of the ὡς... formula in the spell preserved in the Greek magical papyrus noted above (p. 43), which like the medieval amulets invokes the womb and commands it to return to its proper place. Most of the magical words and descriptions do not match the later amulets, but one phrase reads: '...do not gnaw into the heart like a dog...'. This comparison to animal activity also must derive from a common prototype.

A strikingly similar formula is preserved on several of the sixth/seventh-century bronze amulets. The most complete version is found on a pendant in the British Museum (Pl. 6f), discussed in detail by Campbell Bonner,¹¹⁸ who reads and translates the ten-line inscription as follows:

λιμός σε ἔσπιρεν. ἄηρ ἐθέρισεν. φλέψ <σ>ε κατέφαγεν. τί ὡς λύκος μασῶσε; τί ὡς κορκόδυλλος καταπνῆνις; τί ὡς λέων βρωχίς; τί ὡς ταῦρος κερατιζίς; τί ὡς δράκων εἰλισσι; τί ὡς παρῶος κυμάσε;

Hunger sowed you, air harvested you, vein devoured you. Why do you munch like a wolf, why do you devour like a crocodile, why do you bite (or 'roar'?) like a lion, why do you gore like a bull, why do you coil like a serpent, why do you lie down like a tame creature?

Several other closely-related pendants, probably from the same workshop, preserve elements of the same formula,¹¹⁹ in some cases combining elements of it with the motif of the Solomon-like figure subduing a female demon (Pl. 6d).¹²⁰ The

¹¹³ See Appendix II. E.g. Schlumberger (as in n. 10), pp. 74–77. Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 246 (following Sokolov), also notes the μελανομένη...μεμισημένη similarity.

¹¹⁴ *PGM* (as in n. 13), ii, P5b. For the φεύγε formula see n. 74 above and n. 163 below.

¹¹⁵ Migne (as in n. 53), xxxvii, 1399–1401. Interestingly, the poem's amuletic quality was recognised in medieval Constantinople: it appears on the back of a very fine gold and niello cross decorated with a depiction of the Crucifixion, probably of the same date as the medieval amulets under consideration; it was once in the treasury of the Monza Cathedral, but may now be lost(?). R. Garrucci, *Storia della arte cristiana*, vi, Prato 1880, pp. 44–46, pl. 433, 4 and 6, was the first to identify the inscription on the Monza encolpion; see also Heim, 'Incantamenta Magica Graeca Latina', *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, supp., xix, 1892/93, p. 521,

no. 163; H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, i.2, cols 1743–45, s.v. *ampoules (à eulogies)*; and Barb (as in n. 42), p. 18 n. 55.

¹¹⁶ Barb, op. cit., pp. 2, 16 n. 14, citing other examples; see also the description of the demon Gylou in a 15th-century manuscript as entering a house 'like a snake... like a dragon... or like a reptile', above p. 35.

¹¹⁷ Lucan, *Pharsalia* 688–93; also noted by Barb (as in n. 42), p. 16 n. 14.

¹¹⁸ British Museum, M. and L.A. 56324 (G324); Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 217; idem, 'Amulets Chiefly in the British Museum', *Hesperia*, xx, 1951, pp. 334f, no. 51; see also Barb (as in n. 71), p. 350.

¹¹⁹ Discussed by Barb, op. cit., pp. 343–57; at least two of these examples preserve parts of the formula (λιμός σε ἔσπιρεν...ἐθέρισεν), but not the animal similes.

¹²⁰ O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of the Early Christian Antiquities in the British Museum*, London 1901, p. 112, no. 555;

characteristic interrogative form of the spell (τί... τί), however, recurs only once on the later amulets, on a lead pendant in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 15, Pl. 2a) which also preserves the infrequently used comparison to a bull (ταύρος).

Occasionally the phrase 'eat and drink blood', or some variant, follows the *hystera* formula. Its meaning becomes explicable in the context of uterine magic: bleeding must stop to cure illness or, more likely, to promote or protect pregnancy.¹²¹ This phrase too has earlier parallels. A group of Roman period haematite magic gems, usually depicting a standing warrior, all preserve a formula that reads: διψῶς, Τάνταλε; αἷμα πίε ('Are you thirsty, Tantalus? Drink blood!').¹²² A unique early Byzantine bronze amulet shows a crudely engraved figure with the head of a cock and snakes for legs, a type common on the magic gems of the second/third century, with the inscription [σ]τόμαχε, ἀντιστόμαχε, ὡς αἷμα ἔφαγε[ς], ὡς αἷμα ἐπίωκες, οὗτο καταδῶ σε (in André-Jean Festugière's translation, 'Estomac, estomac, comme tu as mangé le sang, comme tu as bu le sang, ainsi je te lie [par mon incantation]').¹²³ A comparable phrase occurs on two of the medieval amulets: the silver example in the Menil Collection in Houston (no. 34, Pl. 3b); and a lead pendant in a private collection (no. 6, Pl. 1b), which reads, 'hystera, black, blackening, having been bound, eat [and] drink blood', preserving as well the common magical concept of 'binding' by an incantation.¹²⁴ Several late versions of the *hystera* formula preserved in manuscripts make the connection with blood, including an astrological text in Erlangen, beginning ἀστέρα μελανέ, μελανόμενε αἵματος ('womb, black, blackening, bloody...').¹²⁵

Less clearly related to the theme is a motif commonly found on the early Byzantine bronze amulets: an ibis attacking a serpent, accompanied by the word πίνω ('I drink').¹²⁶ Whether the word applies to the serpent or the ibis is disputed,

Barb (as in n. 71), pp. 346–48. A second example is L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 197.

¹²¹ Barb (as in n. 4), p. 213 n. 23, notes that the wish to 'stop blood' was probably to promote childbirth. Other amulets for stopping simple haemorrhaging, such as a nosebleed, often cite St Zacharias, but these are derived from an entirely different tradition: see idem, 'St Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr. A Study in Charms and Incantations', this *Journal*, xi, 1948, pp. 35–67. Demons may 'drink blood' as well: see A. J. Festugière, *Classical Philology*, xlvii, 1951, p. 86. For Ps-Gregory Thaumaturgos, 'Aura ["wind demon"] ... eat bones and drink blood', see O. Janiewitsch, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xiii, 1910, pp. 627–30; Greenfield, 1989 (as in n. 41), pp. 117 and 120; Peterson (as in n. 29), pp. 110f; and Barb (as in n. 42), p. 3 n. 21. Cf. also *PGM* (as in n. 13), iv, 2865, where Selene, as a goddess of the underworld, is called αἱμοπότι ('blood-drinking'). Souls of the dead traditionally are attracted to blood: cf. *Odyssey* x.517–37, xi.23–50; see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, Oxford 1985, p. 60.

¹²² Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 88f; the phrase is correctly read by Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 86, in his review of Bonner; see also A. A. Barb, 'Bois du sang, Tantale', *Syria*, xxix, 1952, pp. 271–84. At least four further examples have since appeared: for one in Lucerne, Kofler Collection, see A. J. Festugière, *Mélanges de*

l'Université Saint Joseph, xxxvii, 1960–61, pp. 287f; one is at the British Museum, M. and L. A. 1986, 5–1, 84; another at Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 83.AN.437.50 (from Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction x, 1980, lot 768); the fourth was auctioned by Frank Sternberg, Auction xxiv, 1990, lot 459.

¹²³ Once in the Ayyaz collection. See Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 88; R. Mouterde, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, xxv, 1942/43, pp. 124f, no. 58; Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiv, 1990, lot 456. A. A. Barb, 'Seth or Anubis, II', this *Journal*, xxii, 1959, p. 368 n. 14, notes that στόμαχος can mean the mouth of the womb.

¹²⁴ For binding spells in general see S. Eitrem and H. Herter, 'Bindezauber', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ii, 1954, pp. 380–85; and J. G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, New York 1992.

¹²⁵ *Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum*, vii, Brussels 1908, p. 245; Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 87, no. 3. See p. 48 below.

¹²⁶ See Barb (as in n. 71), pp. 357–62; Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 88, suggests that the word πίνω refers to the demonic serpent. See Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 212–14, and also pp. 216f, no. 315, where he discusses a bronze amulet noteworthy for preserving a difficult historiola utilising many of the same words, and suggests the following translation: 'A wolf, hungry, was fed. I drink water, I am thirsty; I eat bread.' In some medieval Greek

but Barb has cited some noteworthy parallels in Aelian and Plutarch, evidently derived from Egyptian sources, that attest to the belief that the ibis never drinks from contaminated water. Thus the symbol of the ibis may have had a prophylactic function, and the amulets may have been intended to guard against disease, as symbolised by the serpent. However, the word also appears on one medieval amulet, the silver pendant in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (no. 33, Pl. 3a), written below the enigmatic scene of a serpent approaching the *hystera*.¹²⁷ This may indicate that πίνω could be used in a uterine context, again meaning 'I drink blood'.

The occurrence of some elements of the *hystera* formula in earlier texts and on early amulets argues for a common prototype in the Graeco-Roman period. Indeed, the coherent structure of the lengthy formula found on the medieval amulets is apparently free from medieval, or even Christian, additions or corruption. It appears to reflect a recension of a magical handbook of relatively early date (very likely including the gorgon-like illustration of the womb). The Greek magical papyri from Egypt amply demonstrate how handbooks contained 'recipes' for making amulets, including engraved gems and metal lamellae, and the survival of such handbooks into modern times attests to a remarkable degree of continuity.¹²⁸ Unfortunately, such texts seldom survive (thus the Greek papyri are of fundamental importance), and textual transmission can only be reconstructed through stray phrases preserved in literary or religious texts or through surviving amulets. Enormous gaps in our knowledge are apparent; for example, when the body of surviving magic gems of the Roman period is compared to the material in contemporary papyri, it becomes clear that although similar in content, the gems do derive from somewhat different sets of handbooks.¹²⁹ Similarly, the *hystera* formula appears to derive from an early magic text not preserved in surviving papyri, which for some reason was not utilised for the making of metal amulets or gems until the tenth century.

In the medieval period, the variations in the texts found on the amulets themselves, and the widespread survival of the *hystera* formula in its various manifestations in manuscripts, strongly suggest that it was transmitted textually, either through handbooks of magic spells or incorporated into exorcisms or euchologia. Evidence for copying directly from handbooks is found on two of the lead amulets, both of which contain errors in transcription. The one in the Numismatic Museum in Athens (no. 8, Pl. 1c) is inscribed with the Trisagion but also with the phrase πρὸς ὀφέλιαν ὑστέρας ('for the benefit of the *hystera*'); such headings (beginning with πρὸς) commonly appear in the magical papyri as titles of spells and are not meant to be part of the spell itself, although they often are copied none the less.¹³⁰ Similarly,

versions of the story of Gylou and the saints, the demon is given the mother's milk to drink, and the word πίνω is sometimes used: Greenfield, 1989 (as in n. 41), p. 112.

¹²⁷ See above, p. 30. Serpents on amulets usually symbolise evil or a demonic presence, and this image may represent the threatening approach of a harmful spirit to possess the womb.

¹²⁸ The best study of post-Byzantine magical handbooks remains the pioneering work of Delatte (as in n. 74); see also the late Syriac book of spells, H. Gollancz, *The Book of Protection, being a Collection of Charms*, London 1912.

¹²⁹ M. Smith, 'Relations between Magical Papyri and Magical Gems', *Papyrologica Bruxellensia*, xviii, 1979, pp. 129–36.

¹³⁰ Similar copying of titles is found occasionally on gems and lamellae. The title 'For migraine' (using πρὸς) appears on the silver lamella from Carnuntum (see p. 34 above), and a gem from Anapa (Gorgippia) preserves πρὸς φαρμάκων ἀποπομπάς ('a charm for averting evil'): see O. Neverov, 'Gemmes, bagues et amulettes magiques du sud de l'URSS', *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren*, ii, ed. M. B. de Boer and T. A. Edridge, Leiden 1978, p. 848, no. 50.

the centre of the St Petersburg lead amulet (no. 9, Pl. 1d) reads γράφι ὑστέρα... ('write hystera...'), probably reflecting an error by the copyist who, misunderstanding the handbook, copied the instructions as well as the formula ('Write [the following]: Holy Mary, help the *hystera*').¹³¹ Similar errors in copying are found on several magic gems and lamellae.¹³²

A number of post-Byzantine Greek magical handbooks survive, ranging in date from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, several of which preserve varieties of the *hystera* charm and instructions for writing them on amulets.¹³³ These late versions continue the invocation of the womb as 'black, blackening' and combine this element with the 'drink blood' formula. On all the preserved texts, ὑστέρα ('hystera') is corrupted to ἄστέρα ('astera');¹³⁴ a similar corruption (ἡστέρα) occurs already on the Przemysl gem (no. 57, Pl. 5c). The function of the spell is made explicit only in one case, as a charm against fever. A nineteenth-century manuscript in Athens gives instructions for a charm with the title Πῶς νὰ γράφης ἄστέρα διὰ μικρὰ παιδιά ('how to write [the amulet called] "astera" for small children'): within an *ouroboros* is to be written, 'ἄστέρα, black, blackening...you eat blood, you drink blood...flee, fever, from your servant, so-and-so...'.¹³⁵ A manuscript in Paris lists instructions for an amulet entitled Περὶ τῆς ἄστέρας ('for the *hystera*'), which begins in a similar way, invoking the ἄστέρα (i.e. *hystera*) that drinks and eats blood.¹³⁶ A third text, after a similar beginning, conjures a long list of angels and saints, and ends, 'bind and restrain the ἄστέρα from the servant of God, so-and-so...'.¹³⁷ In all three examples the *hystera* is exorcised, in the first case explicitly as a cure for fever.¹³⁸

The *hystera* formula enjoyed a remarkably widespread usage in medieval Europe, in Greece, Russia and other Slavic areas, Poland, Germany, Italy, and also in Jewish magic. Gershom Scholem discussed a fourteenth-century Hekhaloth manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, that preserves a Hebrew translation of a version of the Greek *hystera* charm.¹³⁹ He translates it as follows:

¹³¹ Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 308 n. 3, was puzzled by the inscription and proposed various readings (opting for 'write backwards').

¹³² I am grateful to R. D. Kotansky for bringing these occurrences to my attention. No specific study of scribal errors on magical amulets has been attempted, but editors often cite their existence: see e.g. R. Kotansky, J. Naveh and S. Shaked, 'A Greek-Aramaic Silver Amulet from Egypt in the Ashmolean Museum', *Le muséeon*, cv, 1992, pp. 7, 18, 20f; P. J. Sijpesteijn, 'A Syrian Phylactery on a Silver Plate', *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, lix/lx, 1978/79, p. 192; F. Maltomini, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, lxxvi, 1986, pp. 159f; *Supplementum Magicum* (as in n. 28), p. 92. The instructions for engraving a gem are mistakenly written on the gem itself on a noteworthy example in Paris: Delatte and Derchain (as in n. 1), no. 122; see also n. 86 above.

¹³³ See Festugière (as in n. 121), pp. 87f. A similar formula substituting 'Aura' ('wind demon') for *hystera* was adopted by 'St Gregory the Wonderworker' and other late texts as charms for fever: see Janiewitsch (as in n. 121); and Sokolov, 1895 (as in n. 7), p. 155.

¹³⁴ The corruption is noted by Barb (as in n. 4), p. 237 n. 301, who corrects Festugière's suggested emendation γαστέρα ('colique'); see also n. 138 below.

¹³⁵ Delatte (as in n. 74), p. 141; Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 87, no. 1, and p. 91 n. 24.

¹³⁶ Delatte (as in n. 74), p. 553; Festugière (as in n. 121), p. 87, no. 2; I. Oikonomou-Agorastu, *Kritische Erstausgabe des Rezeptbuchs des Cod. Par. gr. 2316*, ff. 348^v-374^v, Thessalonika 1982, pp. 93f, 164f. See also n. 52 above.

¹³⁷ Cited above, n. 125.

¹³⁸ The interpretation of 'astera' as 'colic' suggested by Delatte and Festugière (see notes above) appears to be incorrect, although not entirely unrelated. For amulets addressed explicitly to colic see Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 62-66; Delatte and Derchain (as in n. 1), no. 280. For an early Christian papyrus amulet against fever see above, p. 45. Gem no. 59 (Pl. 5e), with Church Slavonic inscriptions, depicting the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, may be for fever as well; the Seven Sleepers are often invoked on Western magical amulets for fever (see V. I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, Princeton 1991, pp. 315f).

Black Striga [*sic*], black and black,
 Blood shalt eat and blood shalt drink;
 Like an ox she shall bellow
 Like a bear she shall growl
 Like a wolf she shall crush!

Scholem appears to have emended unnecessarily the Hebrew word *'stryvo* to *'stryg'* (the Greek demonic name 'Striga'); the word is more likely copied from the Greek *hystera*, or its corruption *astera*.¹³⁹

A remarkable illustration of the proliferation of the *hystera* formula is the Italian version in a fourteenth-century Florentine manuscript cited by Drexler, labelled 'Questa orazione e buona al male del fianco e di matrone'.¹⁴¹ 'Matrone' appears to be the equivalent of *hystera*, and the 'male del fianco' refers to the various ailments associated with the womb. The *matrone* is said to 'low like a cow, spring like a deer, bite like a wolf, bark like a dog, roar like a lion, swim like a fish, writhe like a serpent'; a long invocation follows, primarily in Italian and Latin, but transliterations of some Greek words, including the Trisagion, are also included. Although the formula appears to have been freely adapted, it clearly derives from the Greek *hystera* spell.

In medieval Slavonic texts, the Greek *hystera* is equated with the Slavonic *dna*, which displays some of the characteristics of the 'roaming womb' but appears to be even more harmful and sinister: it is sometimes described as 'evil most evil', and *dna* can mean 'death' itself.¹⁴² Parts of the *hystera* formula are incorporated into prayers and exorcisms found in various euchologia. In one prayer, the *dna* is said to 'roar like a lion, bellow like a bull, and skip like a goat'; it is commanded to 'lie in its own place' and 'sleep like a lamb'. The Russian tradition describes the *dna* as having 130 or more 'talons', as being 'coiled up', or 'spreading out through all the limbs of man'; the *dna* 'strikes the whole body of a man, his hands, his legs, all his limbs'. Clearly the *dna* is perceived as a harmful creature that wanders through bodies of both men and women, and it is in this form that the 'roaming womb' is most commonly encountered in medieval European folklore. Later Russian versions of the *hystera* formula contain similar elements, adjuring the womb to sleep 'like a kitten' or 'like a mouse', and many Polish and German spells have been recorded that command the womb to return to its proper place, sometimes in language derived from Greek amulets although generally not preserving portions of the *hystera* formula.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ MS Ns. Mich. 9 (Neubauer 1531), fol. 79r; Scholem (as in n. 43), pp. 72f, n. 27.

¹⁴⁰ Scholem notes the derivation from *hystera* in an addendum at p. 134, but does not explain sufficiently the presumed transition to 'Striga'.

¹⁴¹ Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 605–07, citing G. Amati, *Ubbie ciancioni e ciarpe del secolo XIV* (Scelta di curiosità letterarie inedite o rare dal secolo XIII al XVII. Dispensa, lxxiii), Bologna 1866, pp. 20–23; and G. Giannini, *Una curiosa raccolta di segreti e di pratiche superstiziose fatta da un popolano fiorentino del secolo XIV*, (Rara, Biblioteca dei bibliofili, ii), Città di Castello 1898, pp. 92f; the exorcism reads in part, 'E nel nome di Francesco, il quale sia liberato da ogni male di madrone e di

fianco, il qual male ha molte radici di malizie: principalmente muggia come bue, salta come cerbio, morde come lupo, abbaia come cane, ruggia come liono, nuota come pesce, torcesi come serpio, piange nel corpo'.

¹⁴² Sokolov, 1895 (as in n. 7), pp. 135–46, provides the texts cited here, as well as noting medical texts regarding the womb in Latvian, Bosnian, and Serbian; see also Nikolaeva and Chernetsov (as in n. 23), p. 17. On some Russian amulets, the *hystera* image is labelled 'dna': see above, n. 27.

¹⁴³ Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 603–05. Traces of earlier Greek spells, including the use of the name 'Sabaoth', are found in the north Prussian spell cited by Berg (as

The widespread use of the *hystera* amulets in the Byzantine empire, and the proliferation of the *hystera* spell in Europe as attested by the numerous manuscripts, cannot be understood solely in terms of the survival of a long magical tradition. In need of explanation is the discontinuity in the use of metal amulets, for which there is no evidence between the seventh and tenth centuries, and the sudden appearance of a formula which, although apparently of early date, is not attested in full before the tenth century. A number of factors suggest that there was a revival of amulet usage beginning in the tenth century among the wealthier classes or even imperial circles in Constantinople itself. The fine quality of many of the objects, most notably the gems and the unique enamel (no. 37, Pl. 3e), point to an origin in important workshops in the capital. Related luxury amulets include a gold and niello cross, surely from the best Byzantine workshop.¹⁴⁴ The spread of the amulets to Russia may have begun as aristocratic commissions or imperial gifts, as is suggested by the impressive gold amulet with bilingual inscriptions which may have belonged to Prince Vladimir Monomachos (Pl. 6a), and by the large bloodstone gem in the finest Byzantine style but bearing inscriptions in Church Slavonic (no. 59, Pl. 5e). The gems survived primarily in Western churches, in Maastricht, Spain, Poland and possibly Italy, perhaps having arrived as imperial gifts or as booty brought back from Constantinople by the Crusaders.

The style and content of the amulets themselves point to an origin in tenth-century Constantinople, but no evidence survives for the specific source of the revival in amulet-making. It must have been textual, since the *hystera* formula is complex, relatively uncorrupt (although with variant readings), and partially attested in much earlier sources but seemingly not copied from earlier metal or stone amulets. In addition to euchologia and exorcistic texts, which often incorporated older magical elements, magical handbooks preserving traditional formulae akin to the Graeco-Roman magical papyri surely existed in the tenth century. This is suggested by the survival of Greek magical handbooks in post-Byzantine times, but there is little evidence about how they were used. Byzantine historians occasionally cite the existence of magical or 'Solomonic' books, but they are usually in the hands of politically ambitious individuals, who use demonic powers to further their own aims (and are suitably punished for doing so).¹⁴⁵ Accusations of magical practices against political enemies are common occurrences throughout history and do not prove that they actually took place, but numerous texts do show that demonological beliefs were widespread in Byzantium. Scholars such as Michael Psellos and John Italos also display some knowledge of demonological texts, magical traditions and the use of prophylactic amulets; but apparently not of the particular handbooks that were the source of the amulets under consideration.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps the texts were

in n. 102), pp. 108f, no. 25: 'Krampffkolke [the equivalent of *hystera*], ich breche dich und bespreche dich im Namen des Herrn Zebaoth! Gott dem Ort, da dich Gott gesetzt hat, sollst du ruhen und nicht weiter gehen'.

¹⁴⁴ See above, n. 115.

¹⁴⁵ For example, Niketas Choniates (d. c. 1215/6 AD), iv.146 (Alexios Porphyrogenitos), notes that a certain Aaron (*akolouthos*, commander of the Varangian Guard) possessed a 'book of Solomon' for summoning demons to do his bidding; he was caught and blinded. Dositheos (in 1189 AD) is also said to have used the books of

Solomon: iv.408 (Isaakios Angelos). See H. J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*, Detroit 1984; and on magic *ibid.*, pp. xxi-xxii. On magic in late Byzantium see D. M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*, Cambridge 1979, pp. 100-03; and D. de F. Abrahamse, 'Magic and Sorcery in the Hagiography of the Middle Byzantine Period', *Byzantinische Forschungen*, viii, 1982, pp. 3-17.

¹⁴⁶ For an amulet described by John Italos see Grabar (as in n. 17), p. 531; see also n. 48 above, and for Michael Italikos n. 93 above. J. G. Gager (as in n. 124),

rediscovered in the flurry of antiquarian activity during the late ninth and tenth centuries under the aegis of the revived imperial university. In any event, instructions for the making of the *hystera* amulets, surely derived from an early text, somehow came to the attention of amulet makers in Constantinople and achieved an immediate vogue. Certainly the amulets were widely used, despite the inevitable official condemnation of magic; but the texts themselves may well have been suppressed, as they had been throughout antiquity, and so do not survive.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

APPENDIX I

CATALOGUE OF MEDIEVAL BYZANTINE AMULETS

A. LEAD AND BRONZE PENDANT AMULETS

The following (nos 1–14) all bear the motif of the head surrounded by serpents (the ‘hystera’) and various inscriptions but no additional iconographical type.

- (Pl. 1a) 1. St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, ω-198. Lead. From the collection of O. Noury-Bey, thus probably from Asia Minor.
See Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 244, fig. 1.
Side a: ‘Hystera’ with seven serpents. Dotted border within concentric circles.
Side b: YCTE.. MEΛANH MEΛANOMENH OC OΦHC HAHECE KE OC ΔPAKON CYPIZI
2. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 4.35 cm; loop missing.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, crude, with seven serpents. Cross below. Dotted border.
Side b: Within dotted border: YCTE.. MEΛANH MEΛANOMENH OC OΦHC HAHC.E KE OC Δ..KON C...
3. Private collection. Lead, 4.7 cm; loop missing, but traces of a bronze peg remain. Said to be from Asia Minor.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, crude, with seven serpents.
Side b: YCTEPA MEΛANH MEΛANOMNH OC I OΦIC IAIE K OC ΛEON B...

p. 264, notes that Eustathios, the Metropolitan of Thessalonike in the 12th century, in his commentary on *Odyssey* xix.455–58, ‘makes the following comment in a

remarkably offhanded manner, almost as if such things were common knowledge: “For (the use of) of binding spells (κατάδεσμοι) requires skill”.

4. Private collection. Lead, 4·7 cm; fragmentary.
Side a: 'Hystera' with seven(?) serpents. Letters between serpents:
 ...Ι Ο C. Cross above. Hatched border.
Side b: Within circular border: CPA Μ..Ν ΟC ΟΦΙC...ΛΕCΕ ΟC
 ΠΡΟΡΑΤΟ ΚΗΜ ΙΑ Λ. Around: ...ΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟC Κ. CΑΡΑΟΘ
 Π..ΠΙC...
5. Private collection. Lead, 4 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven(?) serpents. Hatched border.
Side b: Within circular border (retrograde):
ΤΕ.Α ΜΕΛΑ...C Ο.Ο ΙΛΗΕC. ΠΡΟΡ ΑΤ...ΗΜC
 Around (retrograde): ...C CΑΒΑΟΘ ΠΑΙΡC ΟΡΑΝΟC...ΓΑ...
- (Pl. 1b) 6. Private collection. Lead, 3·6 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents. Zig-zag border.
Side b: Within border: ΥCΤ.ΡΑ ΜΕ..ΝΙ ΜΕΑΝΟΜΕΝΙ ΔΕΔΕΜΕΝΙ
 ΕΜΑ ΦΑΕ ΠΙΕ
7. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 4·8 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', six(?) serpents. Cross above. Zig-zag border.
Side b: Within zig-zag border (retrograde): ΑΓΗΟC ΑΓΗΟC ΑΓΗΟC
 ΚΥΡΗΟC
- (Pl. 1c) 8. Athens, Numismatic Museum 1207. Lead, 4·1 cm.
 See K. Konstantopoulos, *Byzantiaka molybdoboulla tou en Athenais Ethnikou
 Mouseiou*, Athens 1917, p. 275, no. 1177 (but should read 1207); Laurent (as
 in n. 12), p. 309, no. 5.
Side a: 'Hystera'. Boss-like face against cross-shaped, hatched pattern,
 between which are four serpents.
Side b: In central tondo in four lines: ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟC ΚC
 Around (retrograde): ΠΡΟC ΟΦΕΛΙΑΝ ΥCΤΕΡΑC
- (Pl. 1d) 9. St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, ω-1159. Lead, 4·3 cm. From the
 collection of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople and P.
 Khirlanghidj, thus probably from Asia Minor.
 See Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 244, fig. 3; Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 308; P.
 Khirlanghidj in *Echos d'Orient*, ix, 1906, p. 77.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven 'arms' (no serpent heads); cross on head (cf. ring
 no. 46). Around (retrograde): ΗCΟ ΒΟΕ ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟ ΚΥ ΒΚ
Side b: In centre (retrograde): ΓΡΑΦΙ ΥCΤΕΡΑ Ι ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΒΟΙΘΙ
 Around (retrograde): ΘΕΟΤΟΚΗ ΒΟΗΘΗ CΕ ΤΟΝ ΦΟ
10. Corinth Museum. Lead, about 2 cm.
 See Davidson (as in n. 31), pp. 231, 260, no. 2102, pl. 111.
Side a: 'Hystera', very crude. Cross above.
Side b: ΗCΤΕΡΙΚΟ ΦΙΛΑ (cross) ΚΤΥΡΙΟ
11. Corinth Museum.
 See Davidson, op. cit., p. 260, no. 2106, fig. 60 ('octopus'). The identification
 is uncertain.

- (Pl. 1e) 12. St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, ω-634. Bronze pendant, engraved. From the collection of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, thus probably from Asia Minor.
See Zalesskaia (as in n. 7), p. 244, fig. 2.
Side a: 'Hystera', five serpents. Around:
ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΚΥΡΗΟΣ ΚΑΡΑΘΘ ΠΛΗC
Side b: In linear border: ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΗ ΟC ΦΗC
ΗΑΗΕ ΚΕ ΟC ΛΕΟ ΡΙΥΧΙ
13. Houston, Menil Collection, no. X490.823. Bronze pendant, with loop, 6.4 cm; engraved device and inscriptions.
See *Survival of the Gods* (as in n. 19), pp. 171f, no. 54.
Side a: 'Hystera', five serpents. Around:
ΘΚΕ ΚΟΗΘΗ ΤΗC ΦΟΡΟΥCΑC ΑΜΗ[N] ΓΕΝΗ ΤΟ ΚΥΡΗΕ
Side b: ΥCΤΕΡΑ...
14. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Schlumberger 193? (does not match inventory description). Bronze pendant, 6.55 cm; pierced; engraved; very worn.
Side a: 'Hystera' with seven serpents. Border of dots: ΦΟ ΟC ΗΛ Ο
Side b: ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΗ ΟC ΟΦΗC ..ΜΕ.ΗΤΗ. ΟC
ΔΡΑΚΟΝ CΟΥΡΗΖΗC Κ. ΟC ΛΕΟΝ ΒΡΥΧΑCΕ Κ. ΟC ΚΑΠΙ ΟC
Α..ΗC.ΗΤΗ

The following (nos 15–24) combine the 'hystera' with the 'rider saint' motif (cf. Addendum, p. 62)

- (Pl. 2a) 15. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 6 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven(?) serpents. Fine style. Letters between serpents:
X T P S. Around: ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙ... ΚΥΡΙΟC ΒΟΗΘΗ ΤΗ ΦΟΡΟΥCΕ
Side b: In centre tondo, a rider spears prostrate figure, above:
ΒΟ.ΘΗ .CΤΕΡΑ. In two concentric borders:
ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜ...ΤΙ ΟC ΟΦΗC ΙΑΙΕΕ ΤΙ ΟC...ΤΙ
C ΜΕΤΑΚΠ ΤΙ ΟC ΤΑΥΡΟC ΟΡΥΑCΕ ΩC ΠΡΟ..ΤΟΝ ΚΥΜ
16. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Schlumberger 63. Lead. From Constantinople.
See Schlumberger (as in n. 10), p. 79, no. 5; Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 597f.
Side a: 'Hystera', crude, six(?) serpents. Around, blundered, 'hystera'
formula.
Side b: Rider left, spears prostrate figure; illegible inscription.
17. St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, ω-1161. Lead; nearly identical to no. 16. From the collection of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, thus probably from Asia Minor.
18. Once in Constantinople, property of P. Khirlanghidj. Lead, 4.5 cm; similar to nos 16–17.
See S. Pétridès in *Echos d'Orient*, ix, 1906, pp. 214f.
19. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Schlumberger 19. Lead. From Constantinople.
See Schlumberger (as in n. 10), p. 84, no. 14.
Side a: 'Hystera', very crude.
Side b: Rider spears prostrate figure. Stars above?

The following (nos 20–23) are all very similar in style, most notably in the form of the ‘hystera’, which is composed of four pairs of serpents in a cross-like pattern.

20. Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, no. 986.181.74. Lead, about 7 cm with loop. Said to be from Asia Minor.
See Maguire et al. (as in n. 19), pp. 212f, no. 133.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, against hatched cross, eight serpents (four pairs of confronted serpents). Letters between: H Y C. Inscription around in border illegible and apparently blundered.
Side b: Rider, cross on head, spearing serpent; prostrate figure below; to right, angel, right wing raised, cross on head; inscription around largely illegible and blundered: BOHΘI (?)
- (Pl. 2b) 21. Zurich market, L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 258. Lead, 5.25 cm. From Asia Minor.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, similar type to no. 20; nothing between serpents. Inscription around, Psalm 90 (91): O KAT.KON O EN BOHΘH TOY YΨICTOY
Side b: Rider, nimbate and cross on head, right, spearing prostrate figure; star(?) above; to right angel (wing not raised); inscription around, largely illegible: ...OYPANOY...
22. Private collection. Lead, 7.5 cm with loop. From Asia Minor.
Side a: ‘Hystera’ as nos 20–21 but stars between pairs of serpents. Hatched border, no inscription.
Side b: Rider, nimbate with cross above, right spearing prostrate figure; to right, angel, nimbate with cross above; two stars above; inscription around: abbreviated Psalm 90 (91)?
23. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Br. Inv. 3266. Lead, 5 cm; worn and illegible. From Ephesus.
See H. Möbius, *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1941, pp. 26f, figs 12f.

The following (no. 24) is related to nos 20–23 in the shape of the ‘hystera’.

24. Private collection. Lead, 3.5 cm.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, crude; 8 serpents (four pairs); illegible inscription (or pseudo-inscription).
Side b: Rider left, head frontal, spears prostrate figure; pseudo-inscription?

The following (nos 25–32) combine the ‘hystera’ motif with various Christian iconographical types.

- (Pl. 2c) 25. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 4 cm; pierced twice.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, seven serpents.
Side b: Frontal bust of Christ, holding gospels; IC–XC
26. Paris, once in Chandon de Briailles collection. Lead; nearly identical to no. 25. From Istanbul.
See Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 307, no. 3, fig. 4.

27. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 3.6 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents, similar to nos 25–26.
Side b: Frontal bust of the Virgin orans; MHP-ΘΥ
- (Pl. 2d) 28. Private collection. Lead, about 4.5 cm; with loop.
Side a: 'Hystera', very crude, nine 'arms', no face. Around (retrograde):
 ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΑΑΝΗ ΜΕΑΑΝΟΜΕΝΗ
Side b: Frontal half-length figure of a saint(?), holding cross. Around
 (retrograde): ΠΑΝΑΓΗΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟC ΑΓΙΟΧΩΝ
29. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Lead, 3.85 cm; missing the loop.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents; cross below. Hatched border.
Side b: Frontal bust of Virgin and Child; ΜΡ-ΘΥ
- (Pl. 2e) 30. Private collection. Lead, 4.7 cm.
Side a: 'Hystera', similar to no. 29.
Side b: Standing figure in imperial garb (wearing loros and crown):
 Ω Ν C (?)
31. Vatican, Museo Sacro, no. 146. Cited by Laurent (as in n. 12), p. 307, no. 2.
32. Vatican, Museo Sacro, no. 150. Cited by Laurent, loc. cit.

B. ENGRAVED SILVER AND BRONZE PENDANT AMULETS

These amulets are related to those in Group A, but have variant iconography and inscriptions.

- (Pl. 3a) 33. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. 1980.5. Silver; 5 cm. From Asia Minor.
Side a: Figure with staff; bust (of Christ?); lower right, 'hystera' with seven serpents, another serpent approaches; branches; pentagram; ring symbols. Blundered legends:
 ΠΑΥΜ ΑΤΟΥ, ΡΦ ΑΓC, ΕΩ ΔΟΜΟΗΟC, ΠΙΝΩ.
 Around: ...ΟΝΟΜΑ ΤΙ ΧΜΙΑC ΔΡ.ΚΟΝ ΙΛΙΟΥ..ΟC ΛΕΟΝ
 ΟΡΥΟΥΑΛΑ ΟC ΠΡΟΒΑΤΟΝ Ε...
Side b: Rider, nimbate, right, spears prostrate female figure. Angel, one wing raised, to right. Symbols above. Around: ...ΥΓΕ ΑΒΙΖΟΥ
 ΑΝΑΒΑΡΔΑΛΕΑ CΙCΙΝΙC CE ΔΙΟΚΙ C ΑΓΕΛΟC ΑΡΑΦ...
- (Pl. 3b) 34. Houston, Menil Collection, no. 490.824. Silver, 4.5 cm. From Asia Minor (G. Zacos).
 See Mango (as in n. 19), pp. 265f, no. 93; Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 78, fig. 18.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents. Between: ΙΑ Ω Θ Ε ΟΥ Α ΡΙ C.
 Around: Ι ΑΓΙC ΑΓΙΟC ΓΙΟC ΚΥΡΗΟC CΑΚΟΘ ΠΑΗC Ο ΟΥΡΑΝΟC...
Side b: Around: ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΑΑΝΗ ΜΕΑΑΝΟΜΕΝΗ ΕΜΑΝ ΤΡΟΗ ΕΜΑΝ ΠΗ
 and figure, star, crescent, pentagram; ΟC ΟΦΗC ΗΛΗCCE ΟC ΛΕΟΝ
 ΟΡΥΑCΕ ΟC ΠΡΟΡΑΤΟΝ ΚΥΜΟΥ ΟC ΓΥΝΗ with symbols and ring-sign.

- (Pl. 3c) 35. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Bronze, 4.1 cm; pierced.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents. Letters between: E I T A Z
Side b: Around top: ΜΙΧ..ΧΑΗΛ.ΙΔΙΑ ΕΙΩΦ. In three registers: figure standing and ... ΔΗΔΩCΩΔCΖΔO OCE.CINICΩC ΖΙIC ΧΥΑ... CCCCX; symbols.
36. St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, ω-155. Bronze (perhaps a cast copy?); similar to no. 35.
 See Orlov (as in n. 7), p. 19 n. 1.
- 36 *bis*. Athens, Benaki Museum. A very worn bronze example cited by Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 78 n. 80.

C. ENAMELLED PENDANT

- (Pl. 3e) 37. Paris, Louvre, inv. OA 6276; formerly in Victor Gay collection; from the Castellani sale, Hotel Drouot, Paris 12–16 May 1884, lot 218. Copper with coloured enamel decoration on both sides, 6.8 cm. Acquired in Italy, 1874. See J. Durand (as in n. 34), pp. 330f, no. 244; Froehner (as in n. 9), pp. 42f; V. Gay, *Glossaire archéologique du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance*, i, Paris 1887, p. 615, with figure, s.v. *Emaïle*; F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, xi.1, Paris 1933, cols 196–98, fig. 7891, s.v. *Méduse*.
- Side a:* 'Hystera', seven serpents. Around:
 ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟC ΑΓΙΟC ΚC CΑΒΑΩΘ ΠΛΗΡΗC Ο ΟΥΡΑΝΟC
Side b: Seven-line inscription: ΥCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΗ ΩC
 ΟΦΗC ΗΛΗΕCΕ ΚΑΙ ΩC ΔΡΑΚΟΝ CΥΡΙΖΗC ΟC ΚΗΟΒ ΟΩΟΖΡ
 ΠΡΟΒΑΤΟΝ(?)

D. BRONZE TOKENS (DIE-STRUCK)

- (Pl. 3d) 38. Private collection. From Asia Minor.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents.
Side b: Christ healing the Haemorrhissa. Inscription (retrograde):
 ΕΜΟΡΟΥC.
39. Once in Venice, Weber collection.
 See F. Münter, *Sinnbilder und Kunstvorstellungen der alten Christen*, i, Altona, 1825, p. 103; Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 596f.
 (For David Weber see M. Zorzi, *Collezioni di antichità a Venezia nei secoli della Repubblica*, Rome 1988, pp. 162f.)
Side a: 'Hystera'.
Side b: YO... ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΙΝΟΜΕΝΗ ΟC ΟΦΗC ΗΛΗΕCΕ ΚΕ ΟC ΛΕΟΝ
 ΒΡΥΧΕΙCΕ ΚΕ ΟC ΑΡΝΟC ΚΥΜΕΙCΕ

E. BRONZE AND SILVER RINGS

- (Pl. 4d) 40. Corinth Museum. Silver.
See Davidson (as in n. 31), pp. 231, 244, fig. 59, no. 1947; Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 77 n. 71, fig. 15.
On bezel: 'Hystera', thin arms, cross above(?)
On hoop: [Y]CTEPHKΩN ΦΥΛAKTHPION
41. Corinth Museum. Bronze bezel, hoop missing.
See Davidson, *ibid.*, p. 244, no. 1948 ('10th or 11th c.').
On bezel: 'Hystera', six serpents.
42. Corinth Museum. Bronze, very worn.
See Davidson, *loc. cit.*, no. 1949 ('10th-11th c.').
43. Corinth Museum. Bronze, hoop missing.
See Davidson, *loc. cit.*, no. 1950 ('10th c.').
On bezel: 'Hystera', five(?) serpents, cross below.
44. Corinth Museum. Bronze, bezel missing.
See Davidson, *ibid.*, p. 245, no. 1951, fig. 51 ('10th or 11th c.').
On hoop: ...TEPH...EONΦY [YCTEPHKEON ΦYΛAKTEPION?]
45. Corinth Museum. Bronze, much of the hoop missing.
See Davidson, *loc. cit.*, no. 1953.
On bezel: Serpent(?) and symbols; IC NIKON TA K
- (Pl. 4e) 46. London, British Museum. Silver, circular bezel with octagonal hoop.
See O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities*, London 1901, p. 24, no. 142.
On bezel: 'Hystera', seven serpents, cross above.
On hoop: KE ΡΩΗΘΙ ΤΙ ΦΟΡΟΥCΙ
- (Pl. 4a) 47. Houston, Menil Collection, no. 490.740. Silver, with circular bezel and octagonal hoop. From Asia Minor (G. Zacos).
See Mango (as in n. 19), p. 265, no. 92; Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 77, fig. 13.
On bezel: 'Hystera' with six serpents; hatched rectangle below; serpent below.
Around: ring-signs, pentagram, N.
On hoop: Psalm 90 (91).
- (Pl. 4b) 48. Syracuse, Sicily. Bronze(?) Circular bezel, octagonal(?) hoop.
See P. Orsi, *Sicilia Bizantina*, Rome 1942, p. 152, fig. 68.
On bezel: bust between two stars; hatched exergue; below, small 'hystera', pentagram, symbols.

- (Pl. 4c) 49. Syracuse, Sicily. Bronze(?); similar to last.
See Orsi, loc. cit.
On bezel: bust with three rays between star and pentagram; hatched exergue; below, triple-z, small 'hystera'.
50. Cologne, Kunstgewerbemuseum, inv. H937 Cl. Wilhelm Clemens collection, 1919/20. Bronze, with circular bezel and octagonal hoop. From Sicily.
See A. B. Chadour and R. Jopien, *Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Köln: Schmuck II, Fingerringe*, Cologne 1985, p. 111, no. 164; Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 77 n. 71.
On bezel: bust, symbols, pentagrams, 'hystera' below (similar to no. 49).
51. Cologne, Kunstgewerbemuseum, inv. G848 Cl. Silver, with circular bezel and octagonal hoop. From Sicily.
See Chadour and Jopien, op. cit., p. 112, no. 165.
On bezel: bust with rays(?); NIK AIPAN
On hoop: ΜΗ ΧΑ ΗΛ ΓΑΒ ΗΛ ΟΥΡ ΗΗ [ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ ΟΥΡΗΛΑ]

F. ENGRAVED GEMS AND CAMEOS

- (Pl. 4i) 52. Once in Peter Paul Rubens's collection; subsequently that of Albert Rubens (his son). Onyx.
See Macarius and Chifflet (as in n. 5), pl. 17, no. 70; van der Meulen-Schregardus (as in n. 4), p. 167, G94, fig. 16, G; Barb (as in n. 42), p. 9, pl. 6d.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpents.
Side b: ΥΓΤΕΡΑ .ΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΙ.ΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΙ Ο. ΟΦΗC ΗΛΗΕCΕ Κ ΟC ΑΕΟΝ
ΒΡΥΧΑCΕ ΚΕ ΟC ΑΡΝΙΟΝ ΚΥΜΟΥ
- (Pl. 4f) 53. Once in Gotha, ducal collection. Banded agate.
See Bube (as in n. 6), p. 7, no. 119; Drexler (as in n. 11), p. 596, no. 6; Möbius, op. cit. (no. 23), p. 28, fig. 15; Barb, loc. cit., pl. 6e.
'Hystera', eight serpents. Around: ΥΓΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΙ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΙ
ΟC ΟΦ ΗΛΙΕ Κ ΟC ΔΡΑΚΟΙ CΥΡΠΙΖ Κ ΟCΑΕΟ...
- (Pl. 4g-h) 54. Once in Gotha, ducal collection; drawn by Pirro Ligorio (see Pl. 4g and n. 2 above). Banded agate.
See Bube, *ibid.*, pp. 7f, no. 120; Drexler, loc. cit., no. 7; Möbius, loc. cit.; Barb, loc. cit.
Side a: 'Hystera', seven serpent heads. Around bevelled edge:
ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΤΗ CΕ ΔΟΥΛΗ ΜΑΡΦΑΑΜ
Side b: (After Ligorio's drawing) ΥΓΤΕΡ ΜΕΛΑΝΙ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΛΙ Η ΜΕΛΑΗ.
ΟC ΟΦΗC ΗΛΗΕC ΚΕ ΟC ΔΑΡΚΟΝ CΥΡΧΗΖΗC ΚΕ ΟC ΛΕΟ
ΒΡΥΧΑCΕ Κ ΟC ΑΡΝΗΟΝ ΚΥΜΗΘΗΤ

- (Pl. 5b) 55. Selçuk Museum, inv. 2105. Bloodstone cameo. Found 1960 in the Church of St John, Ephesus.
See Langemann (as in n. 36), pp. 281–84.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, seven serpents. Around: <Y>CTEPA MEΛANH KAI MEΛANOMENH
Side b: Archangel Michael, wearing loros and holding labarum and globe.
O APX-MIX
- (Pl. 5a) 56. Once in collection of W. T. Ready. Green jasper intaglio. Said to be from Spain.
See King, *Gnostics* (as in n. 6), pp. 20, 432; idem, *Gems and Rings* (as in n. 6), p. 47, pl. 9.3; De Rossi (as in n. 6), p. 137; Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 596f.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, twelve serpents. Around: ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΣ ΚΟΑΚΦΑΩΩ [ΚC CABAΩΩ] ΩCANACTΦC YXICTOIC [ΩCANA EN TOIC YΨICTOIC] EYΛOΓIMENOC
Side b: St Anne holding the child Mary. In field: Η ΑΓΙΑ ANNA, ΜΗΡ ΘΥ
Around (after C. W. King): YCTEPA MEΛAINH MEΛAINOMENH ΩC ΘAAATTAN ΓAΛHNHCΑINEI
- (Pl. 5c) 57. Przemyśl, Poland, Muzeum Narodowe Ziemi Przemyskiej, inv. MP-H-1865; found in Przemyśl 1897. Bloodstone, 5.2 cm.
See Laurent (as in n. 12), pl. 5, fig. 1.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, eight serpents. Around: ΚE ΒΟΘΗ ΤΟΝ ΦΟΡΟΝΤΑ
Side b: Standing Virgin orans, ΜΡ-ΘΥ. Around (two lines):
ΗCΤΕΡΑ ΜΕΛΑΝΗ ΜΕΛΑΝΟΜΕΝΙ ΟC ΦΟΗC ΚΗΛΗCΕ ΟC
ΘΑΛΑCΑ ΓΑΛΗΝΗCΟΝ ΟC ΠΡΟΒΑΤΟΝ ΠΡΑΗΝ ΚΕ ΟC ΚΑΤΝΟC
- (Pl. 5d) 58. Maastricht Cathedral, called the ‘Seal of St Servatius’. Bloodstone, 5.4 cm.
See King, *Gnostics* (as in n. 6), p. 57, fig. 3, and p. 432; Froehner (as in n. 9), p. 42; Drexler (as in n. 11), pp. 594f; H. Wentzel, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*, viii, 1941, p. 65 n. 52, fig. 84; J. M. B. Tagage, ‘De griekse inscriptie op het zgn. Zegel van St Servatius’, *Jaarboek van Limburgs geschieden oudheidkundig genootschap*, xcii/xciii, 1956/57, pp. 115–23.
Side a: ‘Hystera’, seven serpents. Around: CTEPA MEΛANHOC OC OΦH
Side b: Facing bust of saint holding cross; O ΗΓΓ [O ΑΓΙΟC]
Around: ΗCΤΗC ΑΓΙΟC ΚC OCA
- (Pl. 5e) 59. Moscow, Historical Museum, inv. 19726; from the Cathedral at Suzdal. Green jasper, 5.9 cm.
See Tolstoi (as in n. 7), pp. 386–88, no. 22; Zalesskaia, *Vizantiisky* (as in n. 33), pp. 184–89; Grabar (as in n. 17), p. 537, pl. 7; Nikolaeva and Chernetsov (as in n. 23), pp. 82f, no. 42; Medyntseva (as in n. 33).
Side a: ‘Hystera’, six serpents, stars around; Church Slavonic inscription around.
Side b: Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; Church Slavonic inscriptions.

APPENDIX II

EARLY BYZANTINE AMULETS

A large number of extant bronze pendant-amulets are attributable to the early Byzantine period (sixth/seventh century), and a brief survey of these may be helpful in understanding their relation to the later *hystera* amulets. Two basic types can be distinguished, each of which has several varieties.

The first type of pendant, which survives in large numbers, is usually of broad oval shape, sometimes rather elongated and pointed, with a loop for suspension; these pendants are engraved on both sides as are nearly all amulets of this period.¹⁴⁷ In addition to the pendants there are bronze rings with engraved bezels, and bracelets with engraved circular medallions, which are evidently products of the same workshops.¹⁴⁸ All these objects share the same style of engraved decoration and inscriptions. By far the most common motif, found on nearly all the amulets and bracelets and on many of the rings, is a nimbate 'rider saint' spearing a female demon, usually accompanied by the inscription εἰς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά ('[there is] one God who conquers evil'). The reverse of the amulets depict several scenes, the most common being the 'all suffering eye' attacked by animals.¹⁴⁹ Other reverse types include a lion (sometimes accompanied by a serpent or female demon), an ibis and serpent, and, rarely, Christological scenes (such as the bust of Christ above a cross).¹⁵⁰ The accompanying inscriptions may include the beginning of Psalm 90 (91), names of angels, *Iao*, *Sabaoth*, and other magical names. Magical formulae also occur, such as one beginning ἵππος, μούλος... ('horse, mule...'),¹⁵¹ the enigmatic magical name ἐγὼ εἰμι Νοσκαμ ('I am Noskam'),¹⁵² and the single word πίνω ('I drink'), the meaning of which has been much debated.¹⁵³ On rare examples the iconographical types are reduced or omitted to make room for longer formulae, which preserve parts of *historiolae*, or folk tales.¹⁵⁴ On an apparently unique variant, the rider is invoked as St Sisinnios, with the reverse inscription a somewhat blundered Lord's Prayer.¹⁵⁵

A small group of amulets, stylistically close to the main series and of identical shape, depict a standing figure identified as Solomon or the angel 'Arlaph', holding a whip over a bound, kneeling female demon.¹⁵⁶ The familiar εἰς θεὸς... ('[there is] one God...') sometimes occurs, but usually the formulae are more complex, including the phrases σφραγὶς Σολομῶνος ('Seal of Solomon') and ἐγὼ εἰμι Νοσκαμ ('I am Noskam'), portions of *historiolae*, and an exorcism of the demon *Abyzou*.¹⁵⁷ These pendants are also notable for bearing the specific personal names of their owners, who were both men and women.

¹⁴⁷ Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 211–20, lists numerous examples; a further large selection of such items appears in L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lots 176–97; see also B. Bagatti, 'Altre medaglie di Salomone cavaliere e loro origine', *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, xlvii, 1971, pp. 331–42; and Walter (as in n. 55), pp. 33–42.

¹⁴⁸ The rings have not been studied in detail, but see Bonner (as in n. 1), no. 320; Maguire et al. (as in n. 19), p. 162, no. 84; and L. Y. Rahmani, 'On Some Byzantine Brass Rings in the State Collections', *Atiqot* (English series), xvii, 1985, pp. 168–81. (Many of the rings bear scenes from the life of Christ, rather than the 'rider saint' discussed below.) For the bracelets see Vikan (as in n. 88), pp. 33–51; M. Piccirillo, 'Un braccialetto cristiano della regione de Betlem', *Liber annuus*, xxix, 1979, pp. 244–52; Bonner (as in n. 1), nos 321f.

¹⁴⁹ See Bonner, op. cit., p. 211, with literature; also Russell (as in n. 68), pp. 539–48.

¹⁵⁰ Bonner, op. cit., no. 318; L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 187.

¹⁵¹ See Barb (as in n. 71), pp. 351f; Bonner, op. cit., p. 215; idem (as in n. 118), p. 335.

¹⁵² See above n. 73.

¹⁵³ For πίνω see the discussion at n. 126 above.

¹⁵⁴ See Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 216 and no. 317; further above nn. 118, 123.

¹⁵⁵ L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 186.

¹⁵⁶ Discussed above, *passim*: see esp. p. 37 with n. 71, p. 45; and Pl. 6c, e. Also note that *Arlaph* occurs on the second group of this series of amulets: see below, n. 164.

¹⁵⁷ For *Abyzou* see above, *passim*, esp. p. 37f.

Finally one group of pendants and rings are identical in shape to the 'rider saint' amulets but have Samaritan inscriptions.¹⁵⁸ They are clearly contemporary with the main series of amulets and derive from a Samaritan workshop in the same area as those which produced the 'rider saint' variety.

There is a great deal of repetition of iconography and inscriptions among the surviving amulets and a remarkably consistent style, suggesting that most of the extant objects were mass produced in only a few workshops. The findsites are almost exclusively in Palestine and Syria, and only some of the rings and bracelets appear to be from other workshops, most notably some silver bracelets probably of Egyptian manufacture.¹⁵⁹ The style and the use of Christian iconography, as well as the few archaeological contexts, suggest an early Byzantine date (not before the sixth century) for the entire group. A number of examples were found in tombs at Gush Halav (El-Jish), leading to Na'im Makhoul's erroneous dating, based on finds of fourth-century bronze coins there, which has often been repeated in subsequent literature.¹⁶⁰ However, a more careful consideration of the tomb finds, particularly the glass vessels, confirms the sixth/seventh-century date that the iconography and style of the amulets suggest.¹⁶¹

The second group of amulets, of which there are far fewer surviving examples, is iconographically closely related to the first group and no doubt contemporary with it. These amulets are somewhat larger, circular in shape, and usually pierced for suspension; some are made of copper rather than bronze. There are several varieties. The most common type shows on one side the nimbate 'rider saint' spearing the female demon, and on most examples he is accompanied by an angel who raises one wing.¹⁶² The accompanying inscriptions include Psalm 90 (91), the Trisagion, an invocation of the 'Seal of Solomon' or the 'Seal of the Living God' to protect the bearer of the amulet, the formula '[there is] one God who conquers evil' (sometimes substituting the synonymous *πονηρόν* for *κακά* (evil), and elaborate ring-signs. Especially characteristic of the group is the use of the formula (in several variations): 'Flee, detested one, Solomon [or Sisinnios and Sisinnarios, or a similar phrase] pursues you...'¹⁶³ Some examples replace the 'rider saint' with a standing angel who spears the female demon; the inscription then reads 'Flee, detested one, the angel

¹⁵⁸ R. Pummer, 'Samaritan Amulets from the Roman-Byzantine Period and their Wearers', *Revue Biblique*, xciv, 1987, pp. 251–63, with further literature. For a similar amulet with Hebrew or Aramaic inscription see L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 46.

¹⁵⁹ See Vikan (as in n. 88), p. 37f.

¹⁶⁰ N. Makhoul, 'Rock-Cut Tombs of El-Jish', *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, viii, 1939, pp. 45–50. The dating has been followed by H. Menzel, 'Ein christliches Amulett mit Reiterdarstellung', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, ii, 1955, pp. 258f; Bonner (as in n. 1), p. 211, somewhat casually suggests that the pendants began 'probably as early as the third century' and continued into Byzantine times; M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, i, Washington 1962, p. 54, also cites the 'not later than 325' date; and see also Walter (as in n. 55), p. 36. Further finds of amulets and rings in tombs at Tyre again give ambiguous datings: see Chéhab (as in n. 56) p. 164, pl. 22, 1 (a ring), and pp. 180–87, pls 46–48 (bronze pendants); the confusion probably stems from the continued circulation of 4th-century bronze coins well into the 6th century.

¹⁶¹ Rahmani (as in n. 148), p. 168 n. 4, corrects the dating.

¹⁶² See Mouterde (as in n. 123), pp. 122f, no. 55 (from Hama, now in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan); for this example see also Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 219f, no. 324; Maguire et al. (as in n. 19), pp. 214f, no. 134. Mouterde, loc. cit., no. 57 (from Aleppo, now in a private collection). Ross (as in n. 160), pp. 53f, no. 60. Menzel (as in n. 160), pp. 253–61 (private collection, Mainz). Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Schlumberger 67: see G. Millet, *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, xvii, 1893, p. 638 (from Koula, near Smyrna). A. Sorlin-Dorigny, 'Phylactère Alexandrin', *Revue des études grecques*, iv, 1891, pp. 287–96 (from Cyzicus). R. P. Delattre, *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France*, 1897, pp. 190–92 (from Carthage); for this see also P. Monceaux, 'Enquête sur l'épigraphie chrétienne d'Afrique', *Revue archéologique*, 1903, pp. 83f, no. 44. L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Zurich, Auction xxiii, 1989, lot 196. On another example the rider is not accompanied by the angel: see Schlumberger (as in n. 10), p. 74, no. 1 (from Smyrna, now in Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, Schlumberger 68).

¹⁶³ Magic charms often begin with *φεύγε* ('flee') and are attested as early as the 4th century BC: on a tablet from Crete see Kotansky (as in n. 47), pp. 111f, and D. Jordan, 'The Inscribed Lead Tablet from Phalasarina', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, xciv, 1992, pp. 191–94; also Robert (as in n. 75), p. 267f, citing an

Arlaph [or Arlaph and Ouriel] pursues you'.¹⁶⁴ The reverses depict complex scenes mixing magical images of the Evil Eye (once labelled ΦΘΟΝΟΣ, 'envy'),¹⁶⁵ serpents, lions, and the female demon, with Christological scenes including the Adoration, Christ and the Four Beasts surrounding the Throne of Heaven (from Revelations 4.6–8), and depictions of Golgotha.

These amulets share much of the iconography and some of the formulaic inscriptions of the first group, and there should be little doubt that they are of the same date. However, the iconographic, epigraphic and stylistic differences are significant enough to suggest a distinct workshop. The recorded findsites also indicate a different and wider distribution for the second group. Although some are said to be from Syria, others are recorded from western Asia Minor (Cyzicus and the Smyrna market), and one from Carthage. Nevertheless, the similarity to the Syrian-Palestinian group and the fact that some have been found in Syria point to an origin there.

ADDENDUM

I overlooked another lead pendant-amulet recently discovered in the excavation of the ruined church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople: see R. M. Harrison, *Excavations at Sarachane in Istanbul*, Princeton 1986, p. 268, no. 621. The amulet is similar to nos 15–24 above, pairing the *hystera* image with the 'rider saint' motif. An abbreviated *hystera* formula accompanies the depiction of the *hystera*, and the Trisagion appears on the other side with the 'rider saint'. The pendant was found in a layer of fill beneath a level dated c. 1200, providing further support for the middle Byzantine date ascribed to such objects (see above, pp. 31–33). The findsite in Constantinople itself is entirely consistent with the other examples noted above.

epigram of Leonidas of Tarentum (3rd century BC) at *Anthologia Palatina* vi.302; Barb (as in n. 71), pp. 348f; and on a gem against fever cf. also *PGM* (as in n. 13), xx, 13–19, and Bonner (as in n. 1), pp. 67f, D.111. The Byzantine amulets utilise a form of the charm with the structure 'Flee (so-and-so), (so-and-so) pursues you!': see Kotansky, op. cit., pp. 113 n. 40, 119 n. 86; *Supplementum Magicum* (as in n. 28), no. 25; F. Maltomini, *Papyri graecae Wessely praegenses*, i, Florence 1988, pp. 45–47, no. 6; and Heim (as in n. 115), pp. 477 no. 42, 480f nos 56–65, and 486 no. 80. This structure too has early prototypes, including Pliny, *Historia naturalis* xxvii.100, citing a spell for eczema: φεύγετε κονθορίδες, λύκος ἄγριος ὑμπε διώκει ('Flee, beetles, a savage wolf pursues you!'). The formulae also occur on magic gems. For a gem depicting Perseus with the head of Medusa and the inscription φύ[γε] ποδόγρα, Περσεύς σε διώχι ('Flee, gout, Perseus pursues you!') see O. Neverov, *Antique Intaglios in the Hermitage Collection*, Leningrad 1976, no. 143. For a gem with Herakles strangling the Nemean lion, bearing the inscription ἀναχώρι [rather than φεύγε] κόλε,

τὸ θίον σε διώκει ('Depart, colic, the Divine pursues you!'), see Delatte and Derchain (as in n. 1), no. 280. The 6th-century physician Alexander of Tralles, *De medicamentis* ('On Colic', viii.2), records that this specific motif engraved on a stone serves as a cure for colic; see T. Puschmann, *Alexander von Tralles*, ii, Vienna 1879, p. 377; the text was already noted by Chifflet (as in n. 5), p. 127; and again cited by Schlumberger (as in n. 10), p. 86. In the same chapter, Alexander preserves the following formula, to be engraved on an octagonal iron ring: φεύγε, φεύγε, ἰοῦ χολή ἢ κορυδαλος σε ζητεί ('Flee, flee, oh colic, the lark seeks you!'). See Puschmann, p. 377; Chifflet, p. 106; Schlumberger, pp. 86f; Vikan (as in n. 18), p. 76.

¹⁶⁴ Schlumberger (as in n. 10), pp. 75–77, no. 2 (from Smyrna).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74, no. 1; see also J. Engemann, 'Zur Verbreitung magischer Übelabwehr in der nichtchristlichen und christlichen Spätantike', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, xviii, 1975, pp. 22–48.



a—No. 1 (*pp.* 27, 51)



b—No. 6 (*pp.* 27, 29, 46, 52)



c—No. 8 (*pp.* 27, 29, 30, 47, 52)



d—No. 9 (*pp.* 27, 30, 32, 48, 52)

Medieval Byzantine amulets bearing the 'hystera' motif and various inscriptions but with no additional iconographical type. See Appendix I, Section A.

- a—Lead. St Petersburg, State Hermitage.
- b—Lead. Private collection.
- c—Lead. Athens, Numismatic Museum.
- d—Lead. St Petersburg, State Hermitage.
- e—Bronze. St Petersburg, State Hermitage.



e—No. 12 (*pp.* 27, 53)



a—No. 15 (*pp.* 27, 29, 30, 44, 46, 53)



b—No. 21 (*pp.* 27, 30, 44, 54)



Nos 15, 21: amulets combining the 'hystera' motif with the 'rider saint' motif.
See Appendix I, Section A.

a—Lead. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
b—Lead. Zurich, L. Alexander Wolfe and Frank Sternberg, Auction xxiii.



c—No. 25 (*pp.* 27, 30, 54)



Nos 25–30: amulets combining the 'hystera' motif with Christian iconography.
See Appendix I, Section A.

c—Lead. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
d—Lead. Private collection.
e—Lead. Private collection.



d—No. 28 (*pp.* 27, 30, 55)



e—No. 30 (*pp.* 27, 55)





a—No. 33 (pp. 27, 30, 38, 44, 47, 55)



b—No. 34 (pp. 27, 29, 30, 31, 32n, 46, 55)



Nos 33–35: amulets showing variant iconography and inscriptions. See Appendix I, Section B.

- a—Silver. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
- b—Silver. Houston, The Menil Collection.
- c—Bronze. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.



c—No. 35 (pp. 27, 30, 31, 56)

No. 38: die-struck token combining the 'hystera' motif with Christian iconography. See Appendix I, Section D.

- d—Bronze. Private collection.



d—No. 38 (pp. 28, 30, 44, 56)

No. 37: enamelled copper pendant bearing the 'hystera' motif. See Appendix I, Section C.

- d—Drawing from V. Gay, *Glossaire*, Paris 1887



e—No. 37 (pp. 27, 32, 50, 56)



a—No. 47.
(pp. 28, 30,
32, 40, 57)



b—No. 48.
(pp. 28, 57)



c—No. 49.
(pp. 28, 58)



d—No. 40.
(pp. 26, 28, 29, 57)



e—No. 46.
(pp. 28, 30, 57)

ΣΤΕΡΗΚΩΝΦΥΛΑΚΤΗΡΙΟΝ

ΚΕΒΩΗΘΙΤΙΦΟΡΥΣ

Rings bearing the 'hystera' motif and various inscriptions. See Appendix I, Section E.

a—Silver. Houston, *The Menil Collection*. b, c—Drawings from P. Orsi, *Sicilia Bizantina*, Rome 1942.
d—Drawing from G. R. Davidson, *Corinth, XII*, Princeton 1952.
e—Drawing from O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue*, London 1901.



f—No. 53
(pp. 28f, 58)



g, h—No. 54 (pp. 25,
28f, 30, 58)



Engraved gems and cameos.
See Appendix I, Section F.



i—No. 52
(pp. 25, 28f, 58)

f—Cast. g—Drawing by Pirro Ligorio.
Turin, Archivio di Stato,
MS J.a.II.17 bis, fol. 11.
h—Cast. i—Drawing from
I. Macarius and I. Chifflet,
Abraxas seu Apistopistus,
Antwerp 1657.



a—No. 56 (pp. 28f, 30, 32, 40f, 59)



b—No. 55 (pp. 26, 28f, 30, 32, 59)



c—No. 57 (pp. 28f, 30, 32, 48, 59)



d—No. 58 (pp. 28f, 30, 32, 59)



Engraved gems and cameos.
See Appendix A, section F.

- a—Drawing from C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*, London 1887
- b—Bloodstone. Ephesus, Selçuk Museum.
- c—Bloodstone. Przemysl, Muzeum Narodowe.
- d—Bloodstone. Maastricht, Cathedral.
- e—Green jasper. Moscow, Historical Museum.



e—No. 59 (pp. 28f, 30, 31, 32, 48n, 50, 59)





a—Gold bilingual pendant found in Chernigov. St Petersburg, State Russian Museum, photographs courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London (pp. 30, 31, 44, 50)



b—Bloodstone intaglio mounted as a pendant. New York, Metropolitan Museum (p. 44n)



c—Bronze pendant amulet. Private collection (pp. 38, 41, 60n)



d—Bronze pendant amulet. British Museum (pp. 38, 45)



e—Haematite gem. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (pp. 36, 60n)



f—Bronze pendant amulet. British Museum (p. 45)

Amulets not included in Appendix I