CHAPTER XII

PANTHEISTIC AND MONSTROUS FORMS

NOTHING impresses the casual observer of magical amulets more strongly than the partly human, partly animal figures that are carved on them. Many of them, deities with animal heads on human bodies, were familiar to the Egyptians but monstrous in the eyes of a Greek or a Roman. On magical objects made in Egypt or from Egyptian models, such figures are to be expected and need no explanation. A more complex form, of obscure derivation, the cock-headed god with snake legs, has been discussed already (p. 123ff.). There are still others of undoubted Egyptian origin which are products of a tendency, very ancient in Egypt, to combine two deities in one form. This tendency may have had a political or a theological motive, and often both were at work; but it was taken up and given additional force by the practitioners of that magic which was inextricably interwoven with the religious life of the country. Theological syncretism may account for such a form as that which Budge calls “The god comprehending all gods,” in which the basic figure seems to be that of the young Horus with the addition of attributes borrowed from Re, Amon, and various other gods.¹ A hideous compound statuette in Berlin, with characteristics of Horus, Bes, Bastet, and others, is almost certainly magical in intention.² Just as the adept sought to make his spells powerful by invoking many gods and demons with their manifold names and epithets, so it became natural to an artist in the service of magic to combine in one figure the marks and attributes of all the gods whose aid was invoked, or at least as many as his skill could blend together; and no aesthetic consideration deterred him from fashioning what we should call a monstrosity.

The precursors of the compound figure that appears most frequently on gem amulets have been recognized in a class of objects known as magical stelae, which have been discovered in great numbers; they date from the late dynastic period, but continue into Ptolemaic and even Roman times. They are small stelae with rounded tops, the largest running to about twenty to twenty-four inches in height, the smallest only two or three inches, and so, small enough to be carried on the person (cf. D. 252); but they seem usually to have been placed in houses and gardens, or buried in them, to protect

¹ Budge, Gods, I, 492.
² No. 5677; Erman, p. 310, fig. 125.
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them from snakes, scorpions, and other noxious creatures. The front of these objects regularly represented Horus standing on two crocodiles and usually grasping snakes, scorpions, or dangerous quadrupeds. The reverse and, sometimes, other vacant parts of the stones were covered with magical inscriptions and often other magical figures (Pl. XXIV, Fig. 5). In many examples a mask of Bes is placed just over the head of the young Horus.

Graeco-Egyptian amulets that use this type of Horus seem to be rare, but there is an extraordinary example in the Walters Art Gallery, a large oval haematite. On the reverse is Horus as a very chubby, dwarfish infant standing on the heads of two crocodiles. In each hand he grasps a snake, and on each shoulder there is an indistinct object, perhaps a tiny hawk, with the disk on its head. This heavy, dwarfish type seems to have been influenced by representations of Ptah-Sokar-Aaar, who is sometimes represented as a fat, large-headed child holding two serpents and standing on a crocodile; but something approaching it is to be seen on inferior, carelessly executed Horus stelae. At each side stands a goddess, one hand raised towards Horus as in adoration, the other holding the ankhs. Above is a mask of Mut with long thin arms supporting vulture wings which droop downwards over Horus; there is a disk between these wings, and again over the head of Mut: ram, lion, snake, baboon, and uncertain objects below the crocodiles. This design is linked with the solar religion not only by the figure of the young Horus, but also by the obverse design of a scarab surrounded by a long inscription, some parts of which recur often on solar amulets.

A simpler design, published by Delatte, represents Horus as a young man, standing on two crocodiles and holding in each hand two cobras and a quadruped (jackal?) grasped by the tail. Its relation to the magical stelae is obvious.

A stone in the Michigan collection seems to be of a transitional type. Here a youthful god stands facing front, dressed only in a kilt, and standing on the ground, not on the two crocodiles. Wings extend outwards from his shoulders, the left hand holds a tall staff, the right, hanging at his side, holds an

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2 Budde, Gods, II, 267; Darcey, Texts, Pls. 1-8. These stelae are discussed by K. C. Seele in connection with two specimens in the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago (Journ. Near Eastern Stud., 6 [1947], 43-52). An earlier treatment of the subject with more examples is that of Wijngaarden and Stricker, Oudheidkund. Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum 22, 6-38 (Leiden, 1941). The magical texts are treated at length by A. Moret, Rev. de l'hist. des religions, 72 (1915), 213-287.

4 A small bronze stela of this type (14.5 x 8.5 cm.), which belongs to the Geneva Museum (Reg. No. D. 1329), is particularly noteworthy because of several magical types which are cut on its reverse side—cynocephal, ourouros in a naiskos, panther, 2anguispede, Osis. Harpocrates, sacred animals (Pl. XXIV, Fig. 5). In this accumulation of magical subjects it resembles the bronze heart published by Petrie (Musul Belge 18, 59, Pl. 7, 7; Achen). In the Geneva Museum there is a small bronze plaque (Reg. No. D. 1328) on which the place of Horus is taken by a young goddess, apparently a female counterpart of Bes, but not grotesque like him. There is a slight resemblance between this object and the Horus amulet published by Delatte. See Deonna, Rev. Arch., 18 (1925), 132-135.

5 D. 251.

6 D. 251.

7 Darcey, Texts, 9418.

8 Musul Belge 18, 59, Pl. 7, 7 (Achen). In the Geneva Museum there is a small bronze plaque (Reg. No. D. 1328) on which the place of Horus is taken by a young goddess, apparently a female counterpart of Bes, but not grotesque like him. There is a slight resemblance between this object and the Horus amulet published by Delatte. See Deonna, Rev. Arch., 18 (1925), 132-135.

9 D. 253.
indistinct object which may be a scorpion. The headdress has been damaged, and its exact form cannot be made out. This god seems to stand midway between the young Horus of the magical stelae and another and much stranger figure represented on the reverse of the largest and most important monument of this class, the so-called Metternich stele.19

The Horus on the face of that stone calls for no comment, as it conforms to the type previously described as characteristic of these objects. But the reverse is dominated by a very different figure (Pl. XXIV, Fig. 6). It stands facing front; the face is that of a bearded old man much like the less grotesque types of Bes. From his back project the rear parts and tail of a bird. There are four arms; the upper pair grasps in each hand two serpents, two knives, two arrows (?), and several symbols such as the ankh and the crutch scepter. The lower left arm holds out a crutch scepter, the right holds the ankh. A pair of wings is attached to the upper pair of arms, and another pair, parallel with the first, extends outwards from the middle of his back. The heads and necks of cobras project from his knees, and the feet are in the shape of jackal's heads, like those of the gods belonging to the primitive Eight.11 Under the feet is an elliptical cartouche formed by a serpent with his tail in his mouth, interpreted by Egyptologists as a symbol of the abyss; it contains several quadrupeds and reptiles.12 The complicated headdress cannot be described in detail. A fairly constant feature of the varieties of it that appear on gem amulets is an upright, from each side of which the heads of certain animals project, especially rams and crocodiles; but sometimes they project from the sides of the head itself. This figure occasionally takes the place of the young Horus on the obverse of small magical stelae. Two good examples were published by Daressy.10

So complex a figure could be accurately represented only on a surface of some size; hence it is not surprising that the pendants and ring stones that served as amulets omit many of the details described above, and in general give only a crude and sketchy version of the type shown on the Metternich stele. The head sometimes becomes a mere blur, and sometimes it is nothing but a support for the projecting animal heads. In place of the objects grasped by the upper pair of hands we often see only tall staves (two or more) upheld by the wings. Other details are best learned from the illustrations.

Budge, following Golenishechv, calls the personage under discussion the aged sun-god;14 is it merely because he seems to correspond to the young Horus of the obverse? Others call it the pantheistic Bes; but if the head resembles that of Bes, the body, which is upright and normal, differs greatly from the dwarfish, misshapen torso and legs of Bes. Moret (see n. 3) thinks it is Shu wearing the mask of Bes. Zoega called such figures Horus, apparently simply because he recognized some kinship between them and the sun-god.

11 Müller, pp. 48, 213.
13 *Teuts*, 9428, 9429, Pl. 10.
Lanzone gives a pantheistic figure which has several animal heads and nothing human but the arms; it is actually accompanied by the inscription “Horus the great god, son of Osiris, son of Isis”; yet the somewhat similar “god comprehending all gods” (as Budge calls him), who has a human head and beetle body, is identified by Lanzone as Amon. For convenience I refer to these compound types as “pantheos,” disregarding variations in details. Some solar connections are indicated by inscriptions such as Iao, sem-secilam, bainchooch, and by the fact that pantheos sometimes, like Helios-Harpocrates, stands on the back of a lion.

The solar relations of a peculiar compound figure are particularly noticeable in a remarkable haematite fragment in the Newell collection. The lower half of the stone has been broken off, also a splinter at one side representing about one fourth of the width. The work is good, and when whole the stone was a fine specimen of its kind. The obverse represents Harpocrates seated on the lotus, with the adoring baboon in front of him and triads of animals grouped round him, including three lions, which do not as a rule enter into this design. The only other noteworthy detail of the obverse is the word Ζαγούμι, which is engraved round the seven-rayed nimbus that encircles the head of the young god. The central part of the reverse is occupied by a single figure with the arms, trunk, and legs of a man. He wears the loincloth and a cord or band across his chest — unless, as is possible, the engraver simply overemphasized the lines of the clavicles. The right hand holds a tall scepter, the hanging left holds the ankh. The place of the head is taken by an upright post supporting the atef crown; two animal heads project from each side. Those on the left seem to be rams, those on the right are indistinct but look more like hippopotamus heads than anything else. This design is completely encircled (with a short overlap) by a long palindrome, the Ιαεο formula, which is usually associated with solar deities; it is followed by a prayer, of which only the first two words remain, δός ρωσ; it probably continued χρω τό φορούντι. On the bevel is the first syllable of another solar formula, σθομβολος κτλ., and the seven vowels, each tripled.

Pantheistic forms were sometimes developed from the type of Osiris in mummy form, which this deity usually takes on Graeco-Egyptian amulets. Thus a stone, apparently obsidian, in the British Museum shows the mummy with a disk on its head, the head of a hawk at each side of the face, and two wings attached to each shoulder. Harpocrates crouches below at the left. On the reverse an ouroboros encloses a scarab and permutations of the vowels. Still stranger is another amulet in the same collection. A figure with the head of Osiris has the body and legs of some insect, and holds out a cobra in each hand.

A beetle-bodied demon with the head of a jackal and the legs of a bird is
cut on the reverse of a Michigan haematite which has the triple Hecate on the obverse; it resembles the common pantheos type in having a bird's tail and two wings on each side, and in standing on the elliptical cartouche formed by an ouroboros.\(^21\)

**Snake-headed Demons**

Like other fathers of the Church, Athanasius denounced with particular bitterness the Egyptian gods of partly human, partly animal form. Among them he mentions ὄρεικαλοι, "snake heads," a group about which we should like to know more;\(^22\) but for the moment it is enough to note that he is speaking of the gods of pagan Egypt, not alluding to Gnostic mythology. Origen found in the διάγραμμα of the Ophianic Gnostics an account of seven archons in the form of animals; the fourth of these, called Raphael, had the form of a dreadful hissing serpent.\(^23\) So far as we can judge, the serpent-headed deities or demons that are represented on amulets have nothing to connect them with Gnosticism. It is scarcely possible to give names to these strange monstruosities; in particular, it is uncertain whether any given human body with serpentine head is a special manifestation of a great divinity or, perhaps, is merely the god of a zodiacal decan. In the Hermetic Sacred Book of the Decans it is said that the third decan of Libra has the name of Φοί, μορφήν δὲ τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον ὄψεις, τὸ δὲ σῶμα ἀνθρώπου, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς κεφαλῆς βασίλειον ἔχων, ἐπὶ δὲ περικώματι: "In form he has the head of a snake and the body of a man; he has a crown on his head, and stands clad in a loincloth."\(^24\)

This description applies to a group of three amulets of which the best is a haematite published by Barry.\(^25\) Here, as in dynastic reliefs, the human trunk is shown facing, but the serpent head and neck and the feet are turned to the left. The snake is bearded and has a prominent crest, which Barry takes to be the skhen or double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. The extended right hand holds the was scepter, the left holds the ankh. The demon wears only a kilt or apron. The points of resemblance are striking, but scarcely enough to identify him with the decan described in the Hermetic treatise. Some magical words which encircle this figure do not seem to occur elsewhere. On the reverse, however, is a well-known palindrome (αβεραμεννω κτ.), with two other magical words. There is nothing to identify this demon; the palindrome on the reverse has been found in connection with Harpocrates, but nothing can be safely inferred from that.

A very similar design is engraved on a stone in the Metropolitan Museum;\(^26\) the only difference is that the object carried in the left hand, Δ, is not the ankh, unless we have a simplified form of it. It may be a variant of the sign for protection, οὰφ or Π.\(^7\) The reverse bears the name Μεχανλ, which reminds

\(^{21}\) D. 66. \(^{22}\) *Contra Graecos* 9 (PG 25, 20 B).
\(^{23}\) *Contra Celsum* 6, 30 (100, 10-12, ed. Koestelau).
\(^{24}\) Ruele, *Rev. de philol.* 32 (1908), 266.
\(^{25}\) Ruele, *Rev. de philol.* 32 (1908), 266.
one immediately of the serpent-formed archon Raphael in the Ophianic system; yet it does not mark the amulet as Gnostic, since this and other angel names occur in association with various other types.28 A stone in the British Museum differs from the two just described only in that the figure has a situla in the left hand; 29 it is inscribed with magic names which I did not copy, probably because of the indistinct cutting.

A haematite in the Newell collection 30 represents a female figure with hand to mouth (gesture of adoration, μνησόμενος) between two serpent-headed male figures, clad only in the kilt, each holding a whip and a tall staff. The reverse has an inscription, which consists of letters (some reversed) strung together with no intent to make sense; there is nothing to identify the demons.

A female demon with serpent head, holding whip and tall scepter, appears on a rather unusual specimen at the University of Michigan. 31 This is a large, fusiform haematite, beaklike but unperforated, slightly flattened on two sides. The serpent-headed goddess accompanied by the inscription σερεπαρ is opposite a triple Hecate; on the narrow side between them is a female worshiper in the attitude of proskynesis towards Hecate. On the other narrow edge is what seems to be a wasted corpse (σκελετός). 32

Thus far we are unable to name these partly serpentine demons. The elementary water divinities, Nun and Nunt, are too remote to be remembered at this late period, 33 and Nehekia and Nehir, who appear among the personages of the world of the dead, are scarcely more likely to have played a part in the popular religion of the late Roman Empire. 34 On the whole, it seems most likely that for some special reason various ones of the greater gods were now and then depicted in this serpentine aspect; but we can scarcely say which deities are thus disguised. 35

The case is different with a curious stone that formerly belonged to King’s collection. 36 It is a green jasper, representing a serpent-headed deity enthroned at the left, holding a tall scepter in the right hand, a globe in the extended left. At the right a kneeling cynocephalus raises his paws in adoration before the god. King interprets this divinity as “Serapis and Agathodaimon combined in one body” and infers from the adoration of the cynocephalus that “Serapis is to be understood now in the more restricted sense

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28 E.g. D. 41, with an Anubis type.
29 B. M. 55494.
30 D. 265.
31 D. 367.
32 In PGM IV, 66f, the instructor promises the operator that, after a prayer to the sun and other ritual acts, he will see rising from the deep seven maidens with the faces of sphinxes, dressed in linen garments. They are called Θαυματινοι of heaven, and they carry golden scepters.
33 Eman, 61; Lanzoni, pp. 424-435, Pl. 170, 17; 171, 3; 171, 6.
34 Lan zone, p. 434, Pl. 173, 2; p. 435, Pl. 173, 1. A. W. Shorter (JEA 21 [1935], 42) says that Nehekia is frequently represented in statuettes of the Late Period. Some of the serpent-headed gods on gems amulets might therefore be meant for him.
35 In PGM XII, 159, “the god” is expected to appear “with serpent face” after the proper invocation; but he is identified only by his “great name,” a formula which contains the names of four gods, Phthia, Ra, Thoth, and Hekata (Horus), besides a number of unknown magical names.
36 In a note on this stone King marks it: “New York,” apparently meaning that it was transferred, along with the bulk of his collection, to the Metropolitan Museum; but the gem is not to be found there and it seems never to have been incorporated into the collections. See his Gnostics, p. 338, fig. 16; p. 434.
of the Solar Power.” That may well be right, for the enthroned position is common in representations of Sarapis, and the orb is held by other solar deities. It may be that other serpent-headed deities are to be regarded as fusions of Agathodaimon with Horus, Isis, Thoth, and others. Representations of serpents with the heads of Sarapis and Isis are common on coins, gems, and minor works of art; King’s jasper seems to show that the other combination, human body with serpent head and neck, is to be explained in the same way, namely, as a divinity conceived as Agathodaimon.

Here belongs also a curious haematite in the Museum of the University of Michigan (D. 264). The obverse shows a male figure wearing the apron, standing to left, though the torso is shown in front view. The right hand holds the was scepter, the left the ankh. In place of a human head the figure has rising from its right shoulder a bearded serpent apparently crowned with the skhent, from its left the head and neck of an ibis with the atef crown. In the exergue is a globe above the back of a crocodile (head to left). The design is encircled with the inscription ἀρπούχιονοφι βαρ[ισα]τηροφι ερμιονο.

Some years ago Perdrizet showed that βρυτατηροφι was applied to the god Chnum (Greek Chnoumis or Chnoubis), especially when conceived as a solar deity. In later times the older ram-headed form of this god was replaced by the serpentine Chnoubis, who is usually shown with a lion’s head, though sometimes with a human one. Remembering that Agathodaimon is sometimes equivalent to Chnoubis, and that a human god with a snake’s head may perhaps take the place of the more common Agathodaimon serpent with human head, we may recognize in the figure on the Michigan stone a type of Chnoubis fused with Thoth. According to Perdrizet, ἀρπούχιονοφι contains in its first syllable the Egyptian name Ha (Horus) and in its last two the name Chnoubis.

The reverse side of this stone is completely covered with an inscription consisting of three parts: (1) the long Iaeo palindrome, often associated with solar types, with one mistake in the order of letters in the second part; (2) seven letters of the palindrome repeated (including those in which the first and second parts differ); (3) the words πέθε πέθε (read πέτθε), the sign usually inscribed on Chnoubis amulets, and last of all the name Χνούβις. Thus the reverse inscription shows that the stone was used as a digestive amulet.

Another example of an Agathodaimon-Chnoubis with snake’s head on a human body is a circular haematite, of which Raspe gives an illustration. On the obverse Harpocrates, seated on the lotus, is adored by a cynocephalus crowned with the disk, and an ibis-headed deity, apparently Thoth, wearing

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97 Perdrizet, Milange Marperr, II, 1, 137–144 (Mém. Inst. franç. du Caire, 67).
98 The other part of the name on the gem, Emnithou, looks like a combination of the names Hermes and Thoth. It is probably a coincidence that it is also an anagram of Thermouthi, voc. of Themouthis, the snake-goddess, later identified with Isis.
the atef crown. In the field are heads of Helios and Selene, two scarabs (one directly over the head of Harpocrates), a scorpion, and a small quadruped in a sitting position. On the reverse is a figure closely resembling that on the Cairo stone published by Barry, a serpent-headed god, in this case wearing the atef crown, not the skhent, carrying was and ankh. The encircling inscription, partly indistinct, certainly included the name ἀρπονχανουφι or some slight corruption of it. The bevel was inscribed δόρας (l. δότε) χάριν ποιος φορούσι πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, "Give the wearers favor in the eyes of all men."

Uncouth monstrosity reaches its high point in an amulet which must be described in detail by way of introduction to the comments that are to follow (D. 267). This is a lapis lazuli, in shape a horizontal oval of larger size than is usual with such objects, but unfortunately broken, almost half being lost. It belongs to the collection in the British Museum. Its edge is beveled, and the larger face calls for little remark. It is encircled with an ouroboros from the body of which, at intervals, narrow, finlike triangles project. Within is an inscription in five lines, broken away at the left side, with four ring signs below. This inscription is of the "unpronounceable" or, perhaps, more accurately, "unpronounced" kind, to be discussed later on (p. 194f.), which in my judgment had no meaning, but were believed to operate by the mere virtue of the writing. I set it down as a specimen of its kind:

[\[\nuχιδιασημι\n\[\thetaιφανηνε\n\[\lambdaησηξοικρ\n\[\thetaηκρηχοριαε\n\[\thetaυσωδη\]. . . β

Under this inscription are four large characters.

The center of the reverse is occupied by a figure that can be called human only because it has arms and legs. Its trunk is a square with two lines slanting downwards across it from right to left. The bottom of the square is closed by a knot of the figure-of-eight type, which is formed by a snake, the head at the left, tail at right. The right hand holds a garland with ties, enclosing the letters EA. There is no human head. Projecting from the shoulders and neck there are seven lines, broken at an angle, which serve as supports for three animal heads, ibis, ox(?), and lion. At the left of this figure there is a seven-line inscription consisting almost entirely of vowels. Under its feet a tabula ansata bears the inscription:

\[\alpha\betaλαμ\mu\thetaα\n\[\betaηωπακερ\n\[\omegaβολχσ

The word in the first line is unfamiliar, though it may occur among the unintelligible words in the magical papyri. The remainder should be filled out to read [ωεφ] βη ωπακερ[βη] ωβολχ(ος)κεθ; the commoner reading is
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ερβηθ, παλερβηθ. These words seem to belong particularly to invocations of Set or Typhon, although they are sometimes, as in the Oslo magical papyrus, associated with images that cannot be identified with Set unless, as has been suggested before, this association marks the very extreme of late syncretism, fusing together demons of darkness and evil with divinities of light. It is natural to assume that the inscription of this face is addressed to the figure above it, and to consider the monster a grotesque and unusual representation of Set. Yet we have elsewhere, in an undoubtedly Typhonic context, a very different representation of this god which agrees closely, as we should expect, with the type of Set shown in late dynastic art, a normal human body with the head and neck of an ass, wearing the usual Egyptian apron. On the whole, the reasonable conclusion is that on the British Museum amulet, as in certain passages of the Oslo papyrus, epithets belonging to Set have been applied, merely as words of power, to figures which do not represent the god, but have other origins.

The Michigan amulet (haematite) last discussed (D. 264) represented a human body with two animal heads, those of an ibis and a serpent. The three-headed demon on the lapis lazuli of the British Museum might be regarded as a step farther in the same tendency to combine parts or symbols of various gods in one body. Yet there is an important difference. The supporting body in the compound figures previously described has at least maintained a reasonable semblance of humanity; but what we see on the London stone is a mere schematic suggestion of the human trunk and limbs. In this respect the figure somewhat resembles the so-called Akephalos of the second Berlin magical papyrus. In neither instance is the square, blocky drawing merely the result of childish awkwardness, for a glance through the plates in Preisendanz’s volumes shows equally awkward drawings that lack this characteristic. Another point should be noted, namely, that the word Akephalos is not strictly appropriate for the drawing in the Berlin papyrus, unless it is understood to mean that the figure lacks a human head, for the five small半岛-like projections from the shoulders resemble the heads of snakes. The design on the London amulet, with its three small animal heads, may also be related to the Akephalos type; at any rate its style seems to mark its kinship to the drawing on the papyrus.

* P. Oslo I, 5, with Pl. 11, 85, with Pl. 31; see Preisendanz, _Ptbl. Woch._, 46 (1926), 402–403, and especially Procopé-Walter, _ARQ_ 30, 34–39.

* _PGM_ XII, 451, Pl. 2, fig. 11.

* A passage in the Paris magical papyrus (PGM IV, 312 ff.) tells how to make a charm to bring good luck to any place. It is a wax figure with three heads, hawk, baboon, and ibis, and with four extended wings. The type is evidently related to the pantheon of the late dynastic stele and the Graeco-Egyptian gem amulets.

* _PGM_, Vol. I, Pt. 1, 2.

* Preisendanz recognizes the resemblance, but thinks that the projections are jets of blood represented in a conventional manner; cf. Akephalos, pp. 61–62; _PGM_ II, note on l. 166. In Musso Borgian, p. 454, 10, there is a description of a monster with human torso and arms, but with scorpion pincers in place of legs. In place of the head, seven snakes. Symbols and inscriptions in the field indicate that the monster is the Ram-monster god; see Dem. Mag. _Pep._, I, 12, and note.
The foregoing discussion of a single curious specimen scarcely justifies a digression, which would necessarily be long, on the origin and interpretation of all objects that have been connected with the headless demon; yet the topic cannot be passed over without notice. The material has been well assembled by Delatte and Preisendanz. The former writer held that the headless demon was Set-Typhon, beheaded as he had beheaded his brother Osiris. This view was controverted by Preisendanz, who showed that Delatte's interpretation of certain headless figures as Set could not be sustained; he himself thought that the headless god of the papyri was Osiris conceived as a solar deity. The arguments brought forward by the parties to this discussion cannot be analyzed here, and I incline to the belief that another interpretation is more promising; to put it briefly, I suggest that the Headless One is essentially a product of popular superstition and bogydom rather than a disguised form of one of the great gods of Egypt. Neither Delatte nor Preisendanz overlooked the part played by headless figures in vulgar superstition, but neither, in my opinion, has attached as much importance to it as it deserves.

Beheading is a mutilation that is particularly horrifying because it deprives the body of that which gives it its individuality and significance as a human being. A picture of a decapitated body becomes a symbol of utter defeat and destruction, as when the fate of captured enemies is so indicated in Egyptian art; it may also be, in a wider sense, a sign of frustration or hopeless effort. To represent a person as beheaded is a way of encompassing his death by black magic, just as representation of a different mutilation may be a charm to nullify sexual activity. In an earlier section of this work a noteworthy amulet in the Metropolitan Museum, showing a man with head and hands cut off, was treated as a monument of some sort of antisocial magic; and it is even possible that the beheaded figure on the Athenian gem, from which Delatte drew such far-reaching conclusions, is to be interpreted in like manner. The horror that attaches to beheading naturally leads to a belief in headless ghosts, dangerous because they are ready to wreak vengeance for their wrong upon others; and even down to the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow modern folklore abounds with such ghastly apparitions.

That curious work, the Testament of Solomon, shows that the Headless Demon was a well-known terror in Egypt or the Levant, and probably in both. In the main part of the book Solomon compels all the evil demons to appear before him, tell their names and mischievous habits, and the power by which they can be overcome. Among them comes one who is "a man in all his limbs, but headless." He gives his name as "Phonos (Slaughter); for I devour heads, wishing to get a head for myself, and am never sated." In answer to further questions the demon says that he sees through his

46 Delatte, BCH 38 (1914), 189–210; Preisendanz, Archäol., 1926.
47 Preisendanz, op. cit., p. 48, fig. 5.
49 Herapoll 1, 58.
50 BCH 38 (1914), 189, fig. 1.
51 Testament of Solomon 9, 1 (ed. McCown).
nipples, and that he consumes the heads that he takes “through my neck, by the fire that is in me.” 61 This last phrase suggests that the projections from the neck of the Akephalos in the Berlin papyrus may actually represent flames, to which they have been casually compared.

It makes little difference whether the Testament was written in Egypt or in Asia, as McCown thinks slightly more likely. This demon bears every mark of a genuine and well-known bogey, and since nothing is more contagious than superstition, he was probably feared by the ignorant in all the eastern Mediterranean countries. The Testament seems to have been written not later than the fourth century of our era, perhaps even in the third; and the beliefs that it records are older. Hence there is good reason to treat the Headless Demon of the Testament as closely related to the figure that appears in the papyri and the somewhat different one on the British Museum gem. Furthermore, the idea of headless demons is not closely confined to the period of our amulets and papyri, a proof that it is not a mere sporadic phenomenon. Astrologers of the first and second centuries describe the third decan of Capricorn as a headless demon, 62 and in the sixth century the head of Justinian, whom his enemies accused of being a demon, was said sometimes to become invisible. 63 In Recension C of the Testament of Solomon (10, 3) a certain demon is said to make men appear without heads, which probably means that he turns them into demons. The evil spirits that caused the plague at Constantinople were seen in the forms of headless men; 64 the time may have been that of the great plague in Justinian’s reign, or of some later outbreak, such as that of 749. 65

When a ghastly figure of this kind was taken up by professional magicians and used for their purposes, it would be exploited, like other divine and demonic personages, in their usual manner — it would be invoked in elaborate prayers and addressed by the usual medley of secret names, some belonging properly to beings of very different origin. Some confusion with Osiris would take place almost inevitably, because of the myth relating the mutilation of Osiris by Set; and the headless body of Osiris is shown on Egyptian monuments. Further, the ἄκεφαλος δαίμων invoked in the “Stele of Iše” (PGM V, 96 ff.) is certainly Osiris, as Preisendanz maintains; this is definitely proved by the phrase σῶν Ἡσυχορροφής (101). 66 On the other hand, the matter is much more complicated in the second Berlin papyrus (PGM II), where Apollo and his Egyptian equivalent, the Sun, are invoked; and neither Apollo, nor Osiris identified with the sun, can in my judgment be found in the uncouth figure that accompanies the text. It is easier to accept Hopfen’s suggestion that the figure is a headless demon of the dead (νεκροδαίμων) evoked to serve as the medium of a prophecy. 67

61 Preisendanz, Akephalos, p. 15, is wrong in saying that the Akephalos of the Testament has a mouth; nor do the words διά τῶν μαυτῶν βέλτων make the demon streichocephale.
62 Boll, Sphaira, p. 221.
64 Gibbon, Decline and Fall (ed. Bury), IV, 436-440; V, 187, n. 20.
65 See Preisendanz’s note on this line.
66 See Hopfen’s note on this line.
67 Hopfen, Osterreichs Palästina, II, 97, §100.