CHAPTER IV

MEDICAL MAGIC I

THE belief that ills of the body may be visited upon man by other than physical causes is older than the science of medicine, and has continued to exist side by side with it. All peoples of whom we have ancient records have looked upon diseases, and even casual pains whose causes have escaped their observation, as the work of demons. The sufferer sought relief, often with the aid of a wizard of his tribe, by taking means to drive away the demon and prevent his return. Hence it is a common function of amulets to guard the wearer against illness or to cure it if it is already established. A very large number of Graeco-Egyptian and Graeco-Syrian amulets are certainly medicomagical, and it is possible that others whose types and inscriptions are obscure would fall into that category if we could be sure of their meaning. The following pages deal with several kinds that are definitely known to be designed for the cure of one ailment or another.

DIGESTIVE AMULETS

The commonest of all healing amulets are those intended for ailments of the stomach. This was to be expected, in view of man's proneness to excess in eating; but other causes contributed to the frequency of indigestion, especially the want of scientific dietetics and the difficulty of keeping food free from contamination in warm climates. We shall see later that amulets intended for a wider range of uses might be worn at need to cure indigestion; but first we should examine three types that seem to have been specialized for this purpose. They are not completely distinct from one another in all details, though they evidently have separate origins.

1. About twenty stones have come to my attention, most of them unpublished, which have this as their principal design: at the right an altar upon which stands a vessel shaped like an ordinary flowerpot holding three plant stalks or flowers. At the left, facing away from the altar, there is a long-billed bird which most writers who describe the design call an ibis, correctly in my opinion. Most of the specimens indicate that the ibis is tied by the neck to one of the plants on the altar, or at least to some part of the altar; the sketchy execution of the design sometimes leaves this detail uncertain. The cord, or rather the loop which ties the bird, misled Petrie, who thought the two sides of the loop were two plumes projecting backward from its head, and in consequence he called the bird the benw, the soul of Osiris.¹

¹ Petrie, Amulets, No. 135 p-r, p. 30.
The objects that I have called plant stalks or flowers, in a pot on the altar, were differently interpreted by Mr. Seyrig, who published a stone of this kind some years ago. He thought they were nails, which in fact those on his stone do resemble; and pointing to the well-known use of nails in *defixiones*, he thought that their purpose might be to bind the ibis, with its magical qualities, to the service of the person wearing the gem. That interpretation, however, cannot be maintained, because other stones of this pattern show these plants more clearly. They sometimes have two or even three horizontal projections, which are evidently meant to suggest leaves or buds; in fact, there is a notable resemblance to the Egyptian signs  and , which represent clumps of papyrus, the second with two buds bent down.

It may be only a curious coincidence that on a Kassite cylinder seal in the Newell collection an altar is shown upon which there are three stalks or rods, each topped by an eight-pointed star; although they might be taken for rude representations of flowers, the use of stars on other Oriental cylinder seals is against such an interpretation.

Stones bearing this design are usually dark gray-green steatite, black jasper, or dark-brown limonite, and they are either heart-shaped or oval. The heart-shaped specimens always have a suspension loop made from the stone itself, usually perforated in a direction perpendicular to the plane of the stone, but occasionally parallel to the surface. This loop appears in one stone of oval outline, but as a rule the oval stones were hung by a loop attached to the setting. One detail of the principal design remains to be mentioned. Several specimens show, at the left and the right of the design, a short reversed curve, which may be meant for a worm or a small snake, because the ibis was known to destroy many such creatures. A poorly cut star, often merely a sketchy four-pointed cross, is sometimes seen in the field, less often a crescent. The reverse of these stones is sometimes plain, but more commonly it bears an inscription, usually πέσω πέσω πέσον, "digest," less commonly ωφέπετον, "good digestion!"; in one case πεκ three times.

Thus far we have considered the essential parts of the ibis and altar design; but elements of outside origin are added on several specimens. Some have the inscription Ιω in the exergue, and others have still another addition, a symbol consisting of a horizontal line crossed by two reversed curves, much resembling the familiar symbol of Chnouibis, which, however, has three curves, not two.

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2 Henri Seyrig, "Invidiae Medici," *Baytus*, 1, 2 (fig. 3). Delattre also had described these plants as nails or swords (*Musée Beige*, 18 [1914], 67).
3 See the remarks of A. Merlin, *Rev. arch.*, 19 (1924), 419.
4 Gardiner, Sign-list, M 15, 16.
5 H. H. von der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Edward T. Newell*, No. 273; see Pl. 20 and p. 43; for stars on such seals cf. p. 112.
6 For these variations cf. Petit, *Amulets*, Pl. 21, 135 p-r.
8 This type is discussed in § 2 below.
It is quite possible that the sign consisting of two curves crossed by a horizontal line is simply another way of writing Iao. Something like it occurs in P. Oxy. 1007, a vellum fragment of Genesis written in the third century. Hunt describes it as “a most remarkable abbreviation of the so-called tetragrammaton, which in the Septuagint is regularly represented by κόρος. This abbreviation consists of a doubled Yod, the initial of the sacred name, written in the shape of a Z with a horizontal stroke through the middle, the stroke being carried without a break through both letters; the same form of Yod is found on coins of the second century B.C.”

Some specimens show the Chnoubis snake on the back, thus adding another stomach charm to that of the ibis. Still another ill is provided for on a few stones which have the uterine symbol (pp. 79–85) carved on the reverse; and Chnoubis usually appears among the deities who guard that symbol. On a specimen in the Southesk collection (N 42) the ibis and altar seem to be a secondary subject, the obverse design being the uterine symbol with attendant deities. The word Ooroiouth, which regularly accompanies that design, occupies a place under the ibis and altar on the reverse.

Because of the ibis’s well-known reputation as a devourer of serpents and other reptiles it has been suggested that the imperatives πέσος and ἐπέπτειεν are addressed to the bird himself, as if urging him to eat heartily of the harmful vermin. But surely ἑφαγε would be more natural if that were the meaning. It is true that on some bronze pendants of a kind common in Syria an ibis-like bird is shown, tied to a pillar or an altar, and about to devour a snake; most pendants of this kind in no way indicate a reference to the stomach, and it may well be that on them the bird is an amulet against reptiles, or against evil in general typified by a snake. But on the specimens here discussed, the stone amulets with the inscription πέσος or ἐπέπτειεν, the imperatives are certainly addressed to the stomach, just as we find στόμαχε πέπτε on the reverse of a haematite in the British Museum, which, however, has a different design on the obverse. That this is the right interpretation is further proved by the occurrence of πέσος, usually thrice repeated, on the reverse of other designs in which the ibis plays no part. A fine gray-blue chalcedony in the University of Michigan collection is made in the shape of a peach stone or pearse seed. On one side, in very shallow cutting, is a Chnoubis snake with nimbus and seven rays, on the other, the words πέσος τέσον. A broken haematite in the same collection shows on one side a poorly executed snake-legged demon, on the other, apparently, πέπτε. It is likely that amulets thus inscribed were hung from the neck in such a way as to rest over the uneasy organ; in fact, Galen states expressly that stomach amulets were worn in that position. The magic of the ibis probably lay in his vigorous digestive powers, which the amulet was designed to impart to the wearer.

9 Petrie, _Amulets_, Pl. 21, 135 f.
10 No. 56497.
11 D. 182.
12 Ibid., 135 p.
13 Ibid., op. cit., p. 3.
14 C. 85.
2. Nothing relating to gem amulets is better attested than the use of the
so-called Chnoubis stones as a remedy for pains and diseases of the stomach.
This matter has been touched upon before, but it must now be dealt with at
length. The principal authority upon the point is Galen, who is writing
about the medicinal qualities of various minerals.\(^8\)

'\'I\'d\'o\'t\'e\'a\, d\'e t\'i\'n\'e\, e\'n\'o\'s\, l\'i\'d\'o\'s\, m\'a\'r\'t\'i\'r\'o\'u\'s\, t\'o\'i\'a\'i\'t\'h\'n, o\'i\'a\'n\, d\'n\'t\'o\'s\, \'h\'e\'i\' ka\'i\, o\' h\'l\'a\'r\'o\'s\, l\'a\'s\'p\'i\'s, \'h\'fe\'l\'o\'w\'n\, t\'o\'n\, t\'e\' s\'t\'o\'m\'a\'h\'o\'n\, ka\'i\, t\'o\' t\'h\'s\, g\'a\'s\'t\'r\'h\'s\, s\'t\'o\'m\'a\, p\'e\'r\'i\'a\'p\'t\'h\'o\'-
me\'n\'h\'n. E\'\'n\'i\'b\'e\'s\'i\, t\'e\, k\'a\'i\, b\'a\'k\'t\'u\'l\'t\'h\'w\, a\'u\'t\'o\'n\, e\'n\'o\'s\, k\'a\'i\, h\'l\'e\'f\'o\'u\'n\\n\'h\'w\, e\'n\' a\'u\'t\'h\'w\, t\'h\'n\, t\'h\'s\, a\'k\'t\'i\'n\'h\, e\'x\'o\'t\'h\'a\'r\'o\'t\'a, k\'a\'d\'a\'p\'e\'r, k\'a\'i\, o\' b\'a\'s\'i\'l\'e\'u\'s\, N\'e\'c\'h\'e\'p\'s\'o\'s, e\'x\'a\'r\'a\'g\'e\'n, e\'n\' t\'h\'e\, t\'h\'e\'s\'e\'s\'e\'r\'a\'k\'a\'i\'d\'e\'k\'a\'t\'h, b\'i\'b\'l\'w. T\'o\'u\'t\'h\' o\'d\'e, o\'n\' t\'h\'a, l\'i\'h\'o\'n\, k\'a\'g\'h\'o, p\'e\'r\'a\'n, l\'i\'k\'h\'i\'n\, e\'x\'h\'o, k\'a\'i, d\'r\'o\'m\'h\'i\'o\'n, n\'h, t\'h\'e, p\'i\'o\'f\'s\'a, e\'k, l\'i\'h\'i\'d\'o\'n, t\'h\'o\'u\'l\'h\'o, e\'x\'h\'p\'t\'h\'o, t\'o\'u, t\'h\'a, r\'a\'h\'h\'o, s\'i\'m\'m\'e-
trh\'n, o\'t\'h\'o, o\'n\'s, h\'l\'h\'o, t\'o\'u, s\'t\'o\'m\'a\'s\', t\'h\'s, g\'a\'s\'t\'r\'h\'s. E\'h\'a\'l\'i\'s\'h\' o\'d\'e, m\'h\'d\'e\'n, h\'t\'t\'h, \'h\'fe\'l\'o\'u\'t\'e, h\'h, t\'h\'e, g\'l\'u\'f\'h, o\'n\' s\'h\'o, e\'x\'h\'o, o\'n, o\' N\'e\'c\'h\'e\'p\'s\'o, e\'x\'a\'r\'a\'g\'e.

The text of the last sentence is not quite in order; perhaps η is an error
for καί (abbreviated).

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

Galen’s interest in King Necheospos' prescription is, as we see, confined
to the material of the stone itself, which he considered to have some medicinal
value whether inscribed with the design of the radiate serpent or not. What
is important for us is the testimony that this design was recommended in
Prolemaic times for ailments of the stomach, since the book attributed to
Nechosepos is apparently to be dated about 150 B.C. We cannot be sure that
Galen meant what is generally considered the typical Chnoubis, i.e. a thick-
bodied snake with the head of a lion. His lack of interest in the carving on
such stones may have led him to omit mention of the lion head; but it is
also to be observed that snakes marked as divine by rays round the head
are sometimes entirely serpentine in form, and a human-headed type of
Chnoubis snake is also known. However, statements of other writers make
it likely, if not quite certain, that Galen had in mind the familiar lion-headed
type. The passages are collected by Drexler and need not be repeated here
in full.\(^7\) In the so-called Sacred Book of Hermes to Asclepios, the first
decade of Leo is Chnoumos (Χνοῦμος), who has the face of a lion and for
body the coils of a snake rearing upward; he rules over all affections of the

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\(^8\) Galen De simp. 10, 19 (XII, 207, ed. Kühn).

\(^9\) See Drexler’s article "Knuphis" in Roscher, II, 1, 1266–1265.
heart. But the third decan of Cancer has a similar name, Chnouphos, though the form here is entirely different—a bust resting on a base, and with two female faces turned in opposite directions. In Hephæston of Thebes, Chnoumis is the third decan of Cancer and is expressly said to be used as a φυλακτήριον τοῦ στομάχου;19 Χαρχιφιμες is first decan of Leo, but nothing is said of his appearance or special powers.20 The name may be represented by Χυλχυροβις and Χραχροβις;21 names attested on a few amulets that belong to this general class. In the περὶ λέοντος of Socrates and Dionysius we have the prescription:

ἐπιχάρασαν εἰς αὐτὸν (i.e. λήδος ὁνυχίτης) σπέραμα δύσως ἵχων προ-
τομὶ ἤτοι κεφαλῆς λέοντος καὶ ἀκτίνως. οὕτω φοροῦμεν οὐκ ἔξις ὅλως
ἀληθῶς τῶν στήμαχον, ἅλλα καὶ διαίης ἄν χρήση τροφὰς εἰσεπτήμενες.22

“Engrave on it (a kind of onyx) a serpent coil with the upper part or head of a lion, with rays. Worn thus it prevents pain in the stomach; you will easily digest every kind of food.”

It may be safely assumed, then, that stones in which the principal design is the lion-headed snake are stomach amulets; and we may accept as the typical design a thick-bodied serpent with the head of a lion, usually facing to the left of the stone. The coils of the snake are often elaborately rendered, with a loop on each side of the upraised head and neck; but variations are common, and in a few examples the snake is almost straight. There are usually seven or twelve rays round the head, sometimes six; sometimes there are twelve arranged in six pairs, and occasionally there are seven pairs. When the rays are arranged in pairs there is a nimbus encircling the head; the rays may then begin at the circumference of the nimbus or at the head and project beyond the nimbus. When there are seven rays, the seven vowels are sometimes placed at the ends of the rays or between them; sometimes the letters of the name Χυλχυρις are similarly placed. In several specimens the serpent is on or just above a little altar or base.

A much more striking variety of the lion-headed Chnoubis is, as far as I know, represented by four stones, three of which are in Ann Arbor. Two of them are so similar in design and execution that they may well have come from the same workshop. The first, which belongs to the collection of President A. G. Ruthven, is a gray-green oval steatite, convex on the obverse, flat on the reverse, with a very narrow bevel (D. 99). On the obverse is a lion-headed demon facing left; he has the trunk and arms of a man, and wears a cuirass fitted to the lines of his body; under this is a tunic with short sleeves, which forms a kilt below the cuirass. The lower half of the body is a serpent with a large coil on each side of the upright part. There are six rays round

20 P. 54, 15.
21 Χυλχυρις is inscribed in the field of a Chnoubis amulet in Raspe, No. 556. References to stones inscribed Χυλχυρις will be given below.
22 Mély-Ruelle, II, 177.
the head. In his right hand the god holds two short daggers with the points upward; in his left are two stalks of grain inclining back over his elbow. These stalks appear in many representations of Agathodaimon, thrust into the coils of the snake tail. The companion gem, in the University of Michigan collection, is a smoky-brown chaledony, of which the upper third has been broken away.\(^{23}\) It was almost certainly found in the Fayûm. This stone is convex on both faces, which meet in a sharp edge without a bevel; but this is almost the only difference in the execution of the two amulets. The head of Chnoubis has been lost, but the lower line of the leonine jaw and the neck remain, and the rest of the figure has been done in the same style; the rendering of the cuirass and the tunic is identical in both gems. In this one the stalks of grain might be taken for torches, since the ears incline slightly upward from the line of the stems.

The third of these stones (D. 101) is a brownish-yellow jasper, roughly circular, pierced for a cord after the design was completed. The workmanship is inferior to that of the two previously described, and there are some differences in the design. The lion head is encircled by a nimbus, from the rim of which seven double rays project; the middle pair was almost obliterated by the perforation. The body of the god is nude except for the kilt. The right hand holds a sword, point upright, the left a palm leaf.\(^{24}\)

The fourth of the group, discovered in the excavation of Byblos, was published recently by M. Dunand (*Fouilles de Byblos*, I, Pl. 137, No. 1235; II, 44). Here the left hand of the god, apparently empty, is held in front of the body, and the right holds two swords (?) upright. On the reverse the inscription *Chnoubis naabīs biennuath* encircles the familiar symbol of three broken lines crossed by a long horizontal stroke, and also a diagonal cross with short strokes, almost dots, in the four angles.

Attention has already been called to the Egyptian habit of clothing their gods in military costume such as they saw on the statues of the Roman emperors (p. 40). The rather awkward combination of human arms and trunk with a single serpent coil has not appeared on any other Chnoubis amulets that I know, but the device of covering such a junction with the clothing is not new. Several terracotta figures of Isis as serpent give her human arms and clothe her with a tunic from which the snake coil emerges below;\(^{25}\) and the Greek vase painters divide Kekrops' human and serpentine parts in a similar manner.

The longer inscriptions that are cut on magical amulets are to be considered in a later division of this study, but those on these three stones should be

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\(^{23}\) D. 100.

\(^{24}\) The blade of the sword narrows abruptly near the point, and the projections at the top of the hilt, intended to keep the hand from slipping, are exaggerated, with the result that the sword looks much like a candle in its wick. On the Byblos amulet to be described next the "swords" look like long pins or sharpened wands.

\(^{25}\) For this type of Isis see Perdrizet, *Terres cuites de la Collection Feugnet*, Pl. 15, lower row, and Breccia, *Terrecotte figurine*, Pl. 6, 29 (No. 33); only the head is human in other specimens, as Perdrizet, Pl. 15 (above), Breccia, Pl. 9, 32 (No. 37). For Kekrops see Cook, *Zeus*, III, 180-187 (fig. 95 and Pl. 24).
examined here. On its reverse the Ruthven amulet has after the name Χιλαναμ the words ναβιν θευνα, separated from the following words by a peculiar sign, a chi with dots in the four angles formed by the letter. These two words were also on the other stone, though the break has taken all but the letters νθ. The phrase has been explained by Kopp as an equivalent in Greek letters of the Hebrew פז פז, which he renders "bound by charms." That idea is not unsuitable, since many magical formulas are meant to compel a god or a demon to do the will of the person who writes or speaks them; but the transliteration is inexact, and Semitic scholars may object to Kopp's interpretation of the second word. The most that can be said is that the interpretation is possible if allowance be made for some latitude in the meaning of פז and in the mode of transferring Hebrew sounds into Greek letters. However that may be, the phrase has been found chiefly in connection with the name Chnoubis, and it occurs on several specimens with slight variations in spelling, such as ναβιν, βευνα, βευνα. The following words, γιαναφοφατα and βαροφατα, apparently meaning "breaker of giants" and "crusher of serpents," will be discussed more fully in Chapter XIII.

Round the obverse of the Ruthven stone runs a long formula, σοροσ-μειρογραμμαερειοντος. The babbling repetition of syllables in the middle of the formula shows plainly enough that it is meaningless, and its value may have lain partly in its power to impress the uninitiated by its mysterious sound; but it was evidently a recognized part of the magician's code, for it is to be seen on many amulets of the "uterine" type, of which, in fact, it is a characteristic mark. Its use may not have been confined to medicomagical purposes; it occurs in one magical papyrus, along with Iao, in a string of magical words, and in another as a name of "a daemon of the great god." Its use on a Chnoubis amulet is surprising; but there is another interchange between these two amulet types, for the Chnoubis snake is frequently seen on uterine amulets. It is possible that in amulets intended for women the makers pretended to provide in one magical stone a remedy for various pains and disorders located in the abdomen.

All the formulas just mentioned are placed on the reverse of Mich. 26012 (D. 100). There are a few trivial differences in the execution of the inscription; the last ρ in the σοροσ formula has been omitted, and the engraver has put βαρβαροφίλα where the Ruthven stone has βαροφιτα. The λ is certainly a careless error, and so probably is the repetition of βαρ. The letters are alike in both stones, and they have a peculiarity in common:

26 The same mark is cut on the reverse of the amulet from Byblos.
28 The words Μιχαηλ βευνα (written βαρνα), along with other magical names, are inscribed on a Boston haematite (D. 71). The design is a lion which seems to be holding a round object (a skull?) under its forepaw.
29 PGM IV, 1566; XII, 171. In the latter place the formula contains several errors.
30 Yet it occasionally occurs on other amulets. Perhaps such a form as βαρβαροφοτε was confused with βαροφιτα.
o and θ are broadly rhombic, almost square, with an angle downward. If not from the same workshop, the two amulets must at least represent a similar tradition of the craft.

On the reverse side of D. 101 is the inscription αξαξ αραθ βαχυ. Under the χ the engraver seems to have cut a short stroke for the final χ which would be expected (βαχυ), but did not finish the letter. Βαχυ occurs often in the sequence χυχ βαχυ κτλ., which is most commonly associated with lion-headed gods and other solar deities. The words αξαξ αραθ have been noted together only here and on the reverse of the Athenian gem (No. 615), which Delatte considered a representation of the Headless God; its obverse is inscribed βαχυ. A different view will be developed later under the head of “Aggressive Magic” (Chapter VIII). In the Michigan stone the words are associated with the solar demon Chnoubis. ὁ θεὸς Ἀραθ is invoked in PGM XIII, 592 (cf. 79), words addressed to the sun-god as creator.

Another variant of the Chnoubis type gives the snake a human head surrounded by rays. A rather crude specimen in the Southesk collection (N 9) shows the head in front view, with the tail coiled as in many of the lion-headed types. The inscription σπεσελαύψ links it with several other Chnoubis stones bearing that word, which, however, occurs also with other types, notably Harpocrates and the cock-headed god. A neatly cut small chalcedony in my possession shows a snake in a crawling position with a youthful human head (radiate) in profile. There is no inscription, but the sign on the reverse marks it as a Chnoubis type. Finally, there is a well-cut bloodstone in the collection of Professor A. B. Cook on which the snake crawls to the left as in mine, but the head is turned so as to show the full face. The name Chnoubis does not occur on this specimen, and the inscriptions, though well known from both gems and papyri, are found in connection with various other types and appear to have no special appropriateness with this design.

An odd fancy of the engraver appears on two Chnoubis amulets. The human-headed serpent in the Southesk collection (N 9) is coiled round “five small ovoids.” They must surely be eggs, which the snake is guarding. A very well cut stone in the Michigan collection (D. 91) shows several eggs round or between the coils of a lion-headed snake.

Still another variant of the serpentine god appears on a few gems. Only one example of it has been published in a satisfactory manner, No. N 10 in the Southesk collection. The central design is a serpent apparently swathed like a mummy; all but a small part of the creature is shown erect, facing outward, only a slight curl at the lower right indicating the remainder of the snaky tail. The snake has a human face surrounded by seven rays, above which is an inscription that the editor read, somewhat hesitatingly, as σε-
μέθαια. It was probably intended for σεμεσειλαμ. The marginal inscription has been damaged, but the word γαντωτοντορκητα can be read.

The other specimen, which was in private possession in Paris early in the last century, is illustrated by Matter in his Histoire critique du gnosticisme (Pl. 2A, io). The obverse closely resembles that of the Southesk stone; the differences, which need not be dwelt upon here, have to do with the reading of the marginal inscription, which is somewhat damaged in the Southesk specimen, and may or may not have been the same as in Matter’s stone. But while the Southesk gem has on the reverse simply the figure of a scarab beetle, the Paris stone has the symbols 𓊪𓊨𓊪, each three times. The first two of these are common on Chnoubis amulets; the third occurs on many types of magical stones.

The words αυχα at the left, and Χαλχούμις at the right, of the upright serpent are to be read on both amulets. αυχα may be the Coptic first person pronoun, but some doubt is cast upon this equation by the fact that αυχα is found with other nomena sacra in circumstances that seem to mark it as a name in itself. Χαλχούμις we have seen as a possible representative of Χαλχούμις, the first decan of Leo in Hephaestion’s scheme; but apart from the snake form, the close connection with the ordinary Chnoubis type is shown by the use of some of the same magical words, and, in particular, in the case of the Paris gem, by the characters associated with Chnoubis amulets.

Besides the ancient evidence showing that Chnoubis amulets were esteemed as a remedy for stomach troubles, there are several inscriptions that prove this use of them. I have already mentioned in another connection (p. 10) the peachstone-shaped chalcedony in the Michigan collection which is inscribed πέσε τέσσε on the reverse. The same inscription, except that τέσσε is written three times, is seen on the reverse of a Chnoubis amulet of normal type (brownish chalcedony) in the Museo Borghiano. On the reverse of a Syran specimen the maker has inscribed στομακον η Χρονις (sic), of which the editor (Mouterde) remarks: “Il est fort possible que le graveur ait copié servilement une recette où l’on indiquait, à côté de l’image à graver, deux textes à choisir: Chnoubis ou Στομαχους.” An obsidian in the Cabinet des Médailles has on the reverse of an ordinary Chnoubis design the words φαλαζω γη το στόμαχον Πρόκλου, “Keep Proclus’ stomach healthy.”

No little importance was attached by the ancients to the material used for these amulets, though the prescriptions are not entirely in agreement. Galen recommends χαλχονις ιαςις; evidently the stone was light green, but whether it was what is now known as jasper is much less certain. Marcellus in one passage recommends for stomach ailments an amulet of the Chnoubis type on jasper (color not stated); but in another he recommends the sign 𓊪𓊨𓊪, usually seen on Chnoubis amulets, cut on ιαςις Phrygia aerizousa

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33 The swathed serpent is described as a chrysalis by Matter, III, 365; M. Schwab calls it a cornucopia with a human face emerging from it (Mem. Acad. Insér., 10, 390).
34 Museo Borghiano, p. 459, 39.
36 Chabouillet 289; Matter, Pl. II A, 8.
for pains in the lungs and sides; this stone would seem to be of gray or bluish color. In the lapidarium of Socrates and Dionysius it is said that the Chnoubis design should be cut on λίθος ὄξυθεν ... λευκός καὶ διανεύθυς καθά-
περ ἄμφω, which would seem to correspond best to translucent white or light-
gray chalcedony.

The materials actually used for the type of the lion-headed snake cover a
fairly wide range, and yet there are certain manifest preferences. Commonest
of all is chalcedony, white, gray, blue, pale yellow, and smoky brown; next,
probably, green jasper, plasma, chrysolite, and prase. There are also some
specimens on agate and on black jasper and obsidian, and I have seen several
on stones that had been so altered by heat, whether purposely or accidentally
applied, that the original color and even the material could not be readily
determined. Yellow jasper is rare, red jasper probably rarest of all. There
is so much irregularity about all magical amulets that we should hesitate
to treat an unusual material as a ground for suspicion of forgery, yet I should
now examine red stones showing the lion-headed Chnoubis with more than
ordinary care. However, it may be noted that the variant type of the human-headed
Chnoubis is done on red carnelian in the case of the Southesk specimen
(N 10); the material of that published by Matter is not recorded.

3. Another type of digestive amulet is represented, so far as I know, by
only a few specimens; there is reason to think that all came from Syria,
though the subjects are Egyptian. The best preserved is in my collection
(D. 103). It has in its central design a crane with seven rays round the head
(the phoenix) looking to left, and standing on an ovoid object possibly meant
for a globe; but one thinks also of the egg shaped from myrth in which,
according to Herodotus, the young phoenix placed the body of his dead
father. This egg rests upon the broad top of an altar supported by a nar-
rower, columnar, base. Above the head of the phoenix is a scarab beetle with
extended wings, at each side of the head, a bird of uncertain kind (apparently
they are not hawks); the one on the right seems to be holding something
in his beak. On each side of the phoenix’s legs is what seems to be a con-
ventionalized worm or snake in the shape of a tall reversed S made of short
straight lines instead of a continuous curve. Still farther away, beyond these
stylized reptiles, is a scorpion near each edge of the stone. Similarly placed
on each side of the altar is a thick-bodied snake, and below the altar is a
crocodile, its head to the right. A noteworthy feature of the design is the
stylizing of the phoenix, which is given excessive length of neck and legs as
if to harmonize with the long narrow form of the stone. The reverse has the
word πεντέ crudely engraved, and below it the symbol that usually accom-
panies Chnoubis, a straight line crossed by three broken ones.

Father Mouterde has called my attention to another specimen of this
type, formerly in the Sarrafin collection in Beirut, and has kindly allowed

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25 Marcello 20, 96; 24, 7.
26 Yellow jasper, B. M. 56433; red, B. M. 56229.
38 Mély-Ruelle, II, 177.
40 Herodotus 2, 73.
me to use a photograph of it (D. 104). The stone is smaller than mine, but the differences in the design are very slight. This amulet also has πέπτε on the reverse, with two of the usual Chnoubis signs.

This type has affinities with the two other principal classes of digestive amulets, the ibis tied to the altar and the Chnoubis snakes. The small worms or snakes that are barely suggested in the field of the ibis amulets are here more distinctly indicated, and other hints of the wading bird’s value as a destroyer of vermin are here present in the forms of the scorpions and the larger snakes beside the altar. The symbol on the reverse is a link with the Chnoubis stones. Here, as in the ibis amulets, the voracity of the bird is taken as good magic for a weak digestion; and the stories about the long life of the phoenix suggest a natural reason for its use in medical magic. The type just described is to be seen in a somewhat simplified form in two specimens belonging to Mr. Seyrig. One of these (D. 105), a narrow rectangle of haematite, has lost splinters from both sides, but the design is little injured. There is no altar, the phoenix standing upon the crocodile. The beetle and the birds are placed as before, the scorpions are opposite the body of the phoenix, and the snakes are opposite its legs. Reverse, πέπτε. The length of the phoenix’s neck and legs is even more exaggerated than on my stone.

The other Seyrig amulet (D. 106), again a tall narrow oval (haematite), shows only the long-necked, long-legged bird standing on a scorpion, the tail of which, prolonged unnaturally, extends half way up the left side of the stone. The same inscription, πέπτε, is cut on the back.

A haematite in the Cernola collection (D. 102) is evidently closely related to the type in my collection and to the Sarraḥān stone. Though found in Cyprus it probably came from Syria, like the others that resemble it. It differs from them in two points. Instead of the phoenix, a human figure with a lion’s head, surrounded by seven rays, stands on the altar; and the crocodile at the bottom is so roughly engraved that it might be taken for a beetle with extended wings. The inscription on the reverse is much worn, and some letters are uncertain. I read it τ. αχεταὶε. πέπτε. The last word marks it as a digestive amulet.

The use of amulets for the digestion was not confined to the three types just described. It is well known that a god who had proved his power by answering the prayers of his worshipers was often appealed to for aid in matters outside his usual province. Just so an amuletic design believed to possess a general protective value might be marked by an inscription to show that some particular benefit was expected from it. The following examples show that various types were worn to aid the digestion or relieve distress in the stomach.

B. M. 55459: στομάχει, “for the stomach,” is carved on the reverse of a type that is very common, especially in Syria, representing a horseman spearing a figure, usually clearly

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4 Metropolitan Museum, Handbook of the Cernola Collection, 4299. The author takes it to be Mihrāzī, but there is no evidence to support that attribution. The figure on the altar is described as human, no mention being made of the leonine head.
indicated as female, lying on the ground. My memoranda are unfortunately defective; but I think the stone was haematein, and the obverse bore the usual inscription, “Solomon.” The purpose of such amulets is to give general protection; the inscription gives this one a special application.

B. M. 56497: στόμαχε πέπτε, on the reverse of a very strange type, a standing figure wearing a kilt or apron, with three wings projecting from each thigh; the hands are held over the head, which is crudely executed and indistinct, but resembles the head and neck of a snake more than anything else.

Collection De Clercq (De Ridder No. 3456): στομάχον on the reverse; obverse a lion-headed deity wearing kilt, arms raised. From each side of the trunk there project three scorpion legs (De Ridder thought they represented flames).

Seyrig collection No. 16: στομάχον on the reverse of a snake-legged demon carrying whip and shield like the common cock-headed anguipede; but in this specimen the head is more like that of a dog or jackal (D. 181).

Michigan No. 26155: πέπτε (for πέπτε) on the reverse of a similar anguipede; here also the head is doubtful. From Syria (D. 182).

Michigan No. 26059: πέπε πέπε at the end of a long palindrome (the Iaen formula) which often occurs on magical amulets; following it is the symbol and name of Chnoubis. The inscription is on the reverse of the stone; the obverse shows a demon with two heads, one of an ibis, the other a snake. From Egypt (D. 204).

Drexler cites from Gruter an inscription ἀπάλησον τῷ περὶ τῆς στομάχου πάθος τοῦ πάθερον. Gruter’s publication is not accessible to me, but it appears that he did not describe the accompanying design. However, some magical words that accompany the sentence just cited belong to the formulas that usually go with the Chnoubis design.

**COLIC**

We have now seen that amulets inscribed πέπσε, εἵπεπτευ, στομάχον provide for the cure of various stomach ailments, and that certain types, such as the Chnoubis snake and the ibis at the altar, have the same purpose, whether they are so inscribed as to indicate it or not. Another painful disorder of the digestive tract, colic, seems to have been common, and amulet makers did not fail to offer a remedy for it. Our principal authority here is Alexander of Tralles, a sixth-century physician, who naïvely confesses that he has found himself obliged to recommend amulets to some patients who would not follow a strict regimen or endure drugs. For colic his prescription is as follows:

“On a Median stone engrave Herakles standing upright and throttling a lion; set it in a gold ring and give it to the patient to wear.”

Abraham Gorlaeus seems to have been the first modern writer to recognize that many gems showing Herakles and the lion were medicomagical and corresponded to Alexander’s prescription. Yet the agreement may not be complete, for we do not know just what “Median stone” meant to Alexander. In the work on stones attributed to Damigeron we find, “Medius lapis niger

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42 Drexler, Mythologische Beiträge, note on pp. 64–65; he cites Gruter, Inscript., 1064; 35; see also Kopp, Pal. Crit., IV, 264.
43 II, 277 (ed. Puschmann).
44 II, 377.
45 In the preface to his Dacyliastheca (p. 13, ed. of 1655; the original edition appeared in 1601). He was corrected in one detail by Chillet, p. 127.
est; tritus autem emittit croceum colorem," 46 a description which would fit limonite, an iron ore nearly related to haematite; it is dark brown and gives a yellow streak when scratched. Pliny mentions Median zmaragdos, doubtless a green stone, but probably not emerald. 47 The actual specimens bearing this design and shown by inscriptions to be magical are usually cut in red jasper (D. 108–110). This is another illustration of the discrepancy between the literary and the archaeological evidence relating to magical amulets. I have listed twelve specimens of the Herakles and lion type, all on red jasper; one on red carnelian; one on heliotrope, or green jasper flecked with red. 48 Most of these stones have nothing to indicate their magical character except the three letters KKK, to which the stonemason sometimes adds other characters of uncertain import; but Lenormant published a specimen that leaves no doubt about its purpose. 49 The usual design of Herakles with the lion is partly encircled by the inscription ἀναχορὴ χελόν εἰς δίους (ἀναχορὴς, κόλο, το κρεάς σε δίωκες); in the exergue, KKK and an eight-pointed star. On the reverse there is a figure of the triple Hecate, holding in her three pairs of hands torches, daggers, and whips.

As for the meaning of the three kappas, it was natural to seek an explanation in the initial letter of the word κολύκη (διάθεσις), the term for colic used by Alexander of Tralles (8, 2); the suggestion was first offered by Chillet. Other explanations may be proposed, however. Two amulets bear inscriptions that may throw light upon the matter. A heliotrope belonging to the British Museum has on the obverse Herakles wrestling with the lion; behind him, a palm, above, the unintelligible σκεθύω. On the reverse κόλοκερ κόλοπο σιρ, with KKK, and below the kappas, ϛϟ ϛϟ. 50 This is no more intelligible than the word on the obverse, but it has three kappas in it; hence one may very well imagine this to be a secret magical name, and the kappas a mnemonic device to enable the wearer to remember the word of power. On the Copenhagen carnelian published by Ettrem there is an incomplete version of the same inscription partly encircling the obverse type, κέρκωλοςφόςσιρ; the first κόλο was omitted, perhaps for want of room, and ϕπ and ειι are mere orthographic variants. 51

Another demonic name with kappas is to be found in a fever charm written on papyrus. 52 First there is a long magical word, repeated with removal of initial and final letters until it is reduced to a single letter, the whole being in the form of an inverted pyramid. Then, ἀκάματε Κοκ Κον Κολ is invoked to relieve Tais of every kind of fever. It is possible that this demon

46 De lapidibus 21 (ed. Abel). The work is thought to be of the second century of our era.
47 N. H. 57, 71.
48 B. M. 56244, 56364; Chabouillet 1765; Babelon, Guide, 2220 bis; Furtwängler, Beschreibung, 8477, 8478; Southeast N 58; Ravena, Library, No. 10 (see Rev. arch., 1883, 1, p. 306); M. M. Cat. Genis, 386. To these may be added D. 108–110.
49 Rev. arch., 1846, 5, pp. 310 ff.
50 B. M. 56236.
51 Copenhagen, National Museum, Inv. 1612; see Symb. Oslo., 19, 76 f.
52 PGM XXXIII, 19 (P. Tebt. 775).
with the three-kappa name was held to be effective against colic also; but
beyond the possibility that Κωκ may represent Egyptian *kk*, "darkness," nothing has been suggested that could help to identify him.83

Finally, it is possible that the three kappas served not as a reminder of a cryptic name or formula, but to call to mind the kappa words in an intelligible Greek charm. One of Marcellus' numerous prescriptions for colic directs that a gold ring made in a special manner 14 — the metal is to be obtained by melting down the ashes of a tunic made of gold-woven cloth — have its bezel engraved with the figure of a fish or a dolphin, and its hoop inscribed inside and outside with the legend θέσις κελεύει μη κελεύν κόλον πόνους; imitating the alliteration, we may render this roughly, "God bids bowls breed no banes." This charm, with certain variations, was read by Drexler on a gold ring previously published by Schlumberger; 55 if his ingenious but somewhat conjectural reading is right, the inscription should have been as follows: μήτρα ἔπασχε θέσις κελεύει μη κελεύν κόλον πόνους. The decoration of the ring, a long serpent and stars, a crescent and characters, does not conform to that prescribed by Marcellus, and it is probable that the legend was engraved on amulets of various forms and designs. This ring was intended to alleviate the pains, not of intestinal colic, but of cramps originating in the female organs.

Before leaving the Herakles amulets it may be worth while to mention another example of a type used for more than one purpose. A red jasper in the British Museum has on the obverse the familiar type of Herakles struggling with the lion, but the reverse shows a nude woman in a position which may indicate that the stone is a childbirth amulet. The design will be discussed in detail in Chapter VI.

A very curious type of colic amulet is represented by two specimens, one in the National Museum at Copenhagen, the other in the collection at the University of Michigan.56 The Michigan stone, a haematite, originally rectangular, has lost about a third of its breadth, and after this piece had broken away from the left side, the bottom of the remaining fragment was rounded, perhaps to fit it into a new setting. The design, however, is almost intact. At the right a human figure, apparently male, nude or else clothed in a very close-fitting tunic, stands on a pedestal or small altar. The figure is in a stooping position, and holds a bag over the left shoulder.57 The right hand is raised, palm outward, in what looks like a gesture of protest or entreaty. On the ground, before the pedestal, is an eagle with his wings raised. In the field, over the eagle, is a triangle or some solid object of triangular outline, with a small vertical finial at the apex. A star over the human figure seems

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83 See the authorities cited in PGM, as in the preceding note. 86 De medic. 29, 23.

84 See Drexler's article in Philol., 59 (1899), 68 f. Schlumberger published the ring in REG 5 (1893), 85 ff. (repeated in his Milanges d'archéologie byzantine, p. 131). Under a misapprehension of its character Cumont listed the ring as Mithraic (Monumenti, II, 452, fig. 405).

85 See Eitrem, Symb. Oslo, 15, 76; Bornet, HTR 35, 87-95; 37, 333-334.

86 Eitrem, who had not the advantage of comparing the two stones, supposed the figure to be female and winged.
to have no purpose, for the design apparently contains no astrological element; it is perhaps remotely possible that the eagle suggested the constellation Aquila, but stars and crescents are so often engraved on magical amulets that their use came to be merely a matter of routine.

The purpose of this design was made clear by Professor Eitrem's publication of a Copenhagen haematite with a slightly varied version of the same design. This is an oval haematite, almost intact; a splinter has broken away from the left side. In this example the man carrying the bag stands on the ground, and the eagle's wings are folded, though the lapidary has placed a large garland behind the eagle's shoulders in such a position as to resemble the raised and fully extended wings. Over the design is a crescent between two stars, and there is another star in the field between the man and the eagle. Over the tips of the garland is a curious object which Eitrem thought to be, perhaps, a magical basket. Viewed from the front it presents, below, a narrow horizontal parallelogram, crosshatched, whose ends are prolonged upward and terminate in knobs. From them slanting lines descend in such a manner as to meet in the middle of the upper boundary of the parallelogram. Thus the upper part consists of two right-angled triangles meeting at their lower acute angles. On the back of the stone is the inscription πόρος κολάνεμον. Although κολάνεμος is not to be found in the lexicons, there can be no doubt about its meaning. Eitrem rightly pronounced the stone to be an amulet for colic; and he supposed the man to represent the demon of colic.

This interpretation was carried a step further by my suggestion that the part of the colic demon was taken by Aeolus, the god of the winds, who might naturally be imagined as carrying the sack of winds on his back. Such exploitation of mythological personages for magical purposes is well attested in magical papyri and gems, and to some extent even in literary sources. If Aeolus represents the colic demon, it would seem natural to take the eagle as the counteracting, curative influence. Some evidence for the eagle as good magic is cited in the article where I discussed these amulets, but, as will be shown shortly, there is a better reason for his presence.

I owe to the keen observation of Mr. Henri Seyrig some further light on this peculiar type. He called my attention to the fact that the design upon both the Michigan and the Copenhagen amulets was copied rather closely from certain coins of Neapolis in Samaria. In the reign of Philip the Elder (Philip the Arab, 244–249), Neapolis was given the inscription Italicum, and, like other towns so favored, set up in some public place a copy of the "Marsyas" of the Roman forum, really a Silenus carrying a skin of wine. This statue

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68 On some coins of Caracalla struck at Caesarea in Palestine a wreath is set over the lifted wings of an eagle, fitting into their curve, or else is placed behind the wings in such a manner as to continue their upward curve without a break; see Seyrig, Syria, 13, 356–357, figs. 1–2.
69 HTR 35, 90 f.
70 See HTR 37, 215.
71 B. M. Cai. Palestina, p. 64, 118–120, with Pl. 6, 17–18, Pl. 39, 13; also Hill's introduction, xxv, xxviii, xxxii, xxxiii.
72 See PW X, 1249 (Von Premerstein); XIV, 1993 (Burckhardt); Boscher, II, 5, 2444.
was also used as a reverse type for some coins of Neapolis, generally accompanied by an eagle seeming to support with his extended wings a representation of Mount Gerizim, which was near the town.63 The coincidence between this type and the two amulets is too close to be accidental. We have the slightly stooping figure with a bag on his shoulder, and on the Michigan stone this figure stands on a pedestal, like a statue; we have also the eagle with spread wings, which probably appears on the amulets because it was a part of the coin type that served as their model. Further, the triangle or pyramid on the Michigan stone and the curious two-pointed object on the Copenhagen amulet may be, as Mr. Seyrig suggests, simplified, schematic representations of the sacred mountain. It has two peaks, which may account for the bizarre form of its symbol on the Copenhagen stone. Even the stars on the amulets may be explained by the coin type; for one coin, which has a small Nike in place of the eagle, has a star in the field.

Mr. Seyrig and I agree in the opinion that this account of the amulet type does not invalidate the explanation of its purpose which was previously advanced. The ignorant amulet makers, along with others of their compatriots — for they must have been Syrians — may have believed that the Neapolis statue actually represented Aeolus with the winds in a bag. In any case the type could be so interpreted, and if it were so understood, its use as a colic amulet was natural. It is certain that art types were sometimes used with a meaning quite different from that intended by the designer. A good example of this is the Mithraic tessera made from a denarius of Augustus; its reverse design, Tarpeia half buried under shields, was obviously employed to represent the child Mithra born of the rock (p. 39).

This discussion of amulets intended as aids to digestion or cures for diseases of the alimentary tract may be closed with a reminder of the previously mentioned liver amulet in the British Museum, a haematite representing Ares wearing helmet, cape, tunic, and high boots.64 He is standing facing left, holding in his right hand a spear with the point resting on the ground. There is an uncertain object in his left hand, where a chip has injured the surface. The illustration in King's Gnostics shows his hand touching the rim of a shield, which rests upon the ground; and although the cut is a poor one, it is possible that the chip flaked off after King saw the stone. The figure is incircled by the inscription Άρης ἔτηες τοῦ ἡματος σῶν πόνων. There are some magical characters on the reverse. In conclusion, it is perhaps worthy of mention that we have just dealt with three types that seem to owe nothing to Egypt — Herakles and the lion, Ares, and Aeolus (though historically Silenus) with the bag. The makers of the last type found their pattern in Syria, it is true; but the mythological element is Greek.

63 B. M. Cat. Palæstine, p. 67, 132.  
64 B. M. 56112; King, Gnostics, Pl. M 7.