

Magical gem: Magna Mater, Danubian riders (A) ταυαγε (B)

CBd-Number	CBd-687
ID-Number	GB-BM-MMEu_G 117, EA 56117
Collection	GB_London, The British Museum
Inventory	G 117 (EA 56117)
References	Michel, BM, no. 301; Michel, DMG, no. 13_4
Former Collections	Eastwood, George; Mertens-Schaaffhausen, Sibylle (Köln, 1797 – Rome, 1857)
Material	moss agate (white and green)
Dimensions	20 x 29 x 6 mm
Dating	2nd–3rd c. AD (Michel)
Iconography	bird, unspecified; bird: eagle; bread (3 loaves); bust; clothing: cap, Phrygian; clothing: garment; clothing: mantle; Danubian riders (2); figures, male (2); fish; gesture, lying; gesture, orant; head, of ram; headband; Helios; Magna Mater; moon, crescent; object, unidentified; rays (4); Selene; snakes (2); stars (2); table; vessel, unspecified; vessel: krater; weapon: armour; weapon: axe
Divine Names & Voces	voces, unidentified



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A: In the centre, frontal view of a standing female figure, head to left, clad in peplos and kolpos, and wearing a headband, holding two horses, represented in profile, by the reins (Magna Mater). The horses face each other, and raise one foreleg, while trampling over a lying figure. Their riders wear Phrygian caps, armour and chlamys, one arm raised and holding an axe, behind the riders two smaller figures with arms raised in prayer, and snakes represented vertically, in line with the curve of the stone. In front of the horses's heads: an eight-pointed star on each side. Above the goddess's head, an eagle, and the bust of Helios with four rays around the head (on the left), and the bust of Selene with a lying crescent on the head. In the lower segment of the image, elements of a sacrifice scene (from left to right): fish, krater, table with three loaves of bread, another vessel, a bird, a ram's head, and an unidentified object.

B: Inscribed in one line: ταυαγε → unidentified vox.

As E. Zwierlein-Diehl has pointed out, the gem is from the Collection Sybille Mertens-Schaaffhausen, not the Paulus Praun Collection, and is not identical with the piece known from the Rousseau Collection. (cf. E. Zwierlein-Diehl 2010).

Bibliography

[Michel, BM on CBd-687](#)

[Zwierlein-Diehl 2010](#), 850-853.

[The British Museum Collection database on CBd-687](#)