

Magical gem: Sarapis, mummy, solar animals (A) Ares, Aphrodite, Horus, Hecate (B)

CBd-Number	CBd-664
ID-Number	GB-BM-MMEu_G 217, EA 56217
Collection	GB_London, The British Museum
Inventory	G 217 (EA 56217)
References	Michel, BM, no. 278; Michel, DMG, no. 45.1.a_7
Former Collections	Chester, Greville John (1830-1892)
Material	haematite (black)
Dimensions	27 x 16 x 3 mm
Dating	3rd c. AD (Michel)
Iconography	Sarapis; weapon: helmet; weapon: shield; Hecate; clothing: garment; modius; weapon: dagger; flail; Ares, Mars ultor-type; Ouroboros; Osiris?; clothing: bandage; torch, burning; scarab?; Aphrodite anadyomene; whip; throne; clothing: mantle; scepter, unspecified; animal: crocodile; animal: lion; moon, crescent; star; Harpocrates sitting on lotus flower; Harpocrates seated with knees drawn up; plant: lotus buds (2); solar disk; gesture, hand raised to mouth; side-lock of youth; gesture, lying Ἀβλαναθαναλβα, palindrome; Ἴάω; voces, unidentified; Βαῖνχωωχ; αρρωριφρασις and variants; vocales, αηιουω
Divine Names & Voces	



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A: Part of an Ouroboros, enclosing the representation of Sarapis enthroned, holding a tall scepter in his left hand. Above the head of Sarapis, perhaps traces of a scarab with outstretched wings (cf. [CBd-663](#)). The throne of Sarapis rests on the back of a crocodile, facing left. Below the crocodile: mummy (Osiris?) lying head to left, carried by a lion walking also left. Inscription below the lion: $\alpha\omega \rightarrow \text{I}\acute{\alpha}\omega$, rests of an inscription outside the Ouroboros. In the free field to the right of Sarapis, a small lying crescent, and an eight-pointed star above it. Below: inscription in seven lines: $\alpha\epsilon\eta\iota\sigma\omega|\epsilon\eta\iota\sigma\omega|\eta\iota\sigma\omega|\iota\sigma\omega|\sigma\omega||\upsilon\omega|\omega \rightarrow$ The Greek vowel series in pterygoma form. Greek letters around the edge, outside the Ouroboros: $[\text{---}]\epsilon\nu[\text{---}] \rightarrow \text{I}\alpha\epsilon\omega$ -palindrome, cf. [CBd-663](#).

B: Horus sitting nude, with knees drawn up, on a lotus flower with two buds represented on a baseline indicating the primeval mound(?). Head turned left and crowned with a solar disk, sidelock of youth visible. Right hand raised to mouth, left hand holding a flail. Beside the head, on the left: an eight-pointed star, on the right: a crescent. To the left of Harpocrates, two smaller figures: Aphrodite wearing himation, and touching her hair with her left hand; and Ares wearing a helmet and holding a shield in his left hand. To the right of Harpocrates Hecate trimorph clad in peplos and kolpos, her three right arms holding whip (lowermost), a burning torch (middle), and dagger (uppermost). Inscription at the top in three lines: $\alpha\beta\lambda[..]|\alpha\theta\alpha\nu\alpha[...]$ $\rightarrow \alpha\beta[\alpha\nu]\nu\alpha\theta\alpha\nu\alpha[\lambda\beta\alpha]$, $[\alpha\rho\rho\omega[.]$ - at the bottom in two lines, to the left of the lotus flower: $\upsilon\phi\eta[\text{.}]\sigma\iota\sigma \rightarrow \alpha\rho\rho\omega[\rho]|\upsilon\phi\eta[\alpha]\sigma\iota\varsigma$. To the right of the lotus flower, in three lines: $[\text{.....}]|\omega\omega|\omega\chi \rightarrow [\text{B}\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\chi]|\omega\omega\omega\chi$.

C: Remains of an inscription running around the edge: $.\zeta\eta\delta\iota\alpha\dots\xi\kappa\omega\alpha\dots$ \rightarrow unidentified voces.

Based on similar representations, in which Sarapis leans on a scepter with an ibis at the top, and a passage in the Greek Magical Papyri (PGM V 446ff.), S. Michel raises the possibility of Sarapis being identified with Thoth, also mentioning the deity's possible identification with Zeus/Hades and Kronos. On the other hand, the representation of Harpocrates on a lotus flower connects the gem with love charms. A praxis known from a papyrus (PGM LXI 1-38) specifies that love charms had to be incised with the image of Horus on a lotus flower and the magical name Abraxas. Pieces with the Horus-scheme used as love charms: [CBd-533](#), [CBd-534](#). The connection here is further reinforced by the representation of Aphrodite and Ares.

Bibliography

[Michel, BM on CBd-664](#)

[The British Museum Collection database on CBd-664](#)

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