

# Magical(?) gem: Scorpion with human head holding snakes (A) characteres (B)

<b>CBd-Number</b>	CBd-722
<b>ID-Number</b>	GB-BM-MMEu_G 396, EA 56396
<b>Collection</b>	GB_London, The British Museum
<b>Inventory</b>	G 396 (EA 56396)
<b>References</b>	Bonner 1951, no. 39; Michel, BM, no. 345; Michel, DMG, no. 51.2
<b>Former Collections</b>	Towneley Collection
<b>Material</b>	jasper, green and red
<b>Dimensions</b>	17 x 11 x 3 mm
<b>Dating</b>	2nd-3rd c. AD (Michel)
<b>Iconography</b>	scorpion, human-headed; snakes (2); crown, Isis-



Credits: Photo: Christopher A. Faraone  
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A: Human-headed scorpion-figure standing on thin insect legs, and holding onto two snakes coiling vertically upwards, tails touching, heads turned outwards. The scorpion figure's probably female head is crowned with the cow's horns and the solar disk (Isis-crown).

B. Three letters or characteres (probably post-antique).

According to S. Michel, the representation on the obverse is probably influenced by the Egyptian hieroglyph for *Qjs* (man holding necks of animals), but is also connected with the figure of the scorpion goddess, Selket (goddess with a scorpion on her head or scorpion with the head and arms of a woman), while recalling the decans list of Hermes Trismegistos (second decan of Scorpion). See below.

## Bibliography

[Bonner 1951 on CBd-722](#)

[Michel, BM on CBd-722](#)

[The British Museum Collection database on CBd-722](#)

## Images

[Cast of CBd-722 in the Gems Database of the Beazley Archive, Oxford](#)