L. KÁKOSY

A MAGICAL AMULET FROM PUSZTASZABOLCS

Magical gem .....stone. H. 17 mm, w. 12 mm. (Fig. 1—2). Description. On the *obverse* the oval engraved scene can be divided into two parts. The lower half is occupied by the figure of a vessel with upturned bottom. The mouth continues in an appendage consisting of perpendicular and slanting lines. It ends in a horizontal line. The strange vessel is a familiar symbol of the uterus. (See below).

Beside and under the vessel the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet are engraved.

The upper part contains four figures of gods. The jackal-headed figure with the body of a mummy is Anubis. Behind him a human figure whose identification remains doubtful. The religious context would suggest the young Horus or Hermes. The flat hat of the god which could be the *petasos* speaks more in favour of the latter. If really Hermes, his sceptre may be a carelessly engraved *kerykeion.* Hermes and Anubis were closely related in Late-Egyptian religion and even came to bo amalgamate d as Hermanubis.

Provenance: Pusztaszabolcs in the county Fejér, 1977. It was brought by the veterinarian Mr. István Gulyás into the István Király Museum in Székesfehérvár.

Although the composition and symbolism of the piece makes at first an odd impression, its interpretation is beyond doubt. It belongs to the large group of medical amulets against women's diseases. (*SMA* 1950, 79—84; DELATTE-DERCHAIM 1964, 245—258). Serious difficulties were caused by the so-called vessel. It is a point of interest in the history of archeology that its true identification as uterus appears as early as in the year 1623. It was the famous art and manuscript collector, Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc who interpreted such an amulet in the correct way in a letter written to Peter Paul Rubens, the painter (*SMA* 1950, 80). Later on, as it frequently happens in schlolarship, this idea was rejected in favour of plays of fancy. It was the merit of A. Delatte to adduce unmistakable evidence for the interpretation of the vessel as an uterus. (Delatte 1914) Inscription on some of the gems compel to accept this solution. (*SMA* 1950, 82).

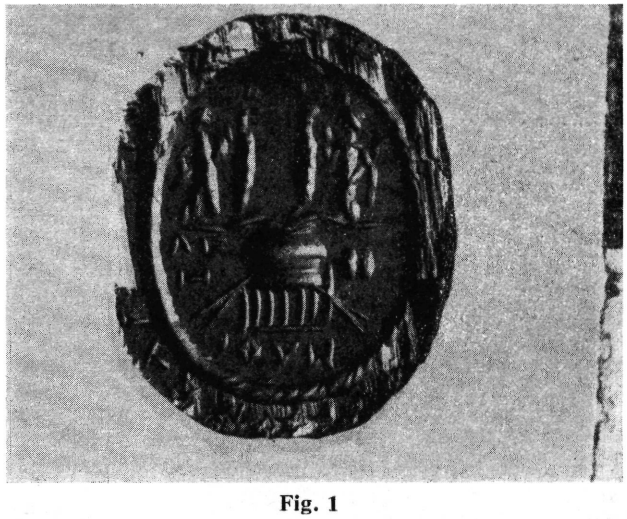

Fig. 1

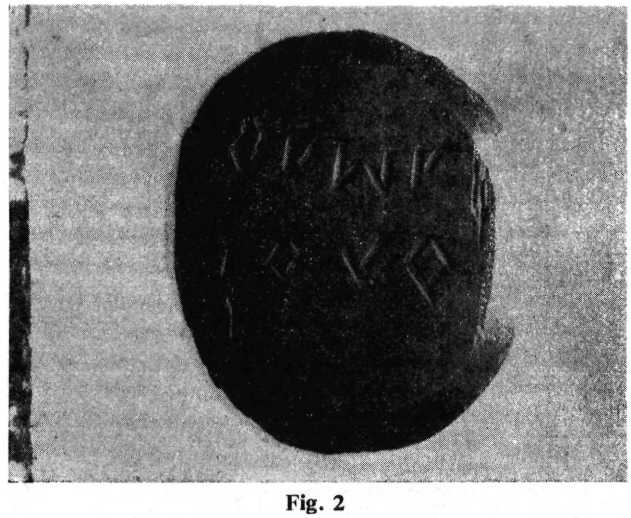

Fig. 2

In the opposite pair of gods the second figure is Isis holding the cornucopia and with the *uraeus*-snake on her head. The divinity before her, represented as a mummy, must be Osiris. The shape of the god would permit also an identification with Ptah; this latter is, however, very rarely depicted on magical gems.

The frame enclosing the obverse scene is broken away in its upper part. Like on many other amulets, (*SMA* 1950, 250; Cf. Kákosy 1964), it was most probably an *ouroboros*, i.e. a serpent devouring its own tail. Outside this frame only three letters are well preserved on the margin:

Before them uncertain traces:

Reverse. Inscription in two lines (ορωριουθ).

The slanting lines below the vessel are the ligaments holding the uterus in position. The crank handle with two knobs beside the uterus and the vertical lines under it have breen rightly interpreted as a symbolic key. (*ibid.*, 85) One could suggest that the key is an element of black magic and intended to hinder the conception or delivery. The inscriptional evidence points, however, in another direction: it was hoped that the amulet with the key would cure mennorhagia (*ibid.*, 88).

Recovery from this grave disease (excess of bleeding at the menses) was unthinkable without divine help. The four divinities represented on the amulet in Székesfehérvár are closely linked with family life. As to Osiris and Isis. these ideas are too

common to be elaborated here. Moreover, Isis and Serapis were venerated as highly respected healing divinities (GRIFFITHS 1975, 139, 236; WITT 1971. 185—197).

The presence of Anubis may be explained, on the other hand, in various ways. In the version of the myth related by Plutarch (De Iside 14, 44) Anubis was the fruit of the adultery of Osiris with Nephthys. In spite of the offence committed against her status as wife, Isis was ready to adopt Anubis. *(ibid.*, 44) In other texts it is Isis who is said to be his mother (GRENIER 1977, 19). Besides the cow-goddess Hesat (LÄ, I, 327: B. Altenmüller) also Bastet is mentioned as the mother of Anubis, (GREINER 1977, 21). This fiiliation is all the more significant for our amulet, since Bastet was regarded as the patrongoddess of love. The tradition that Osiris was the father of Anubis is attested from the XIXth dynasty (*ibid.*, 18) on. Anubis became more and more a member of the Osiris (Serapis)-Isis-Horus family. Numerous Greek inscriptions outside Egypt are dedicated to him along with these deities, (*ibid.*, 93—133).

Anubis appears also in love charms used in Roman Egypt. (*ibid.*, 72). In the spicy story in Josephus his mask was abused by the seducer Mundus to acquire the love of a respectable Roman lady who believed to have had a sexual intercourse with the god himself (Josephus Flavius, Antiquitates, XVIII.3.).

Beside all his accessory features Anubis remained above all a funerary deity, the *psychopompos* of the Egyptian religion. While in the traditional Egyptian belief Anubis attended the judgement of the dead, in the Roman Period his guardian role came into prominence. As the doorkeeper of the netherworld, he is often represented with a key of Roman type (GRENIER 1977, 35—36). In this particular case he was probably thought to control the uterus in his capacity of κλεδοῦχος

In addition to the four divinities represented here, the uterus is protected by Ororiouth, the guardian spirit of this female organ. In a Greek inscription on a gem he is invoked as "Lord of the uterus of women" (*SMA* 1950, 85). The seven vowels are a well-known element in magic of the Roman Period (DORNSEIFF 1925, 75-56). We find an allusion to their use even in the historical work of Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIX, 2, 28).

While a product of Late-Antique syncretism, the amulet displays close links with Egyptian religion. Magic and medical science cannot be separated within Egyptian civilization. Charms and invocations to gods were used side by side with medical treatment and drugs. Egyptian physicians had special intructions for the treatment of gynaecological diseases in the Middle and New Kingdom (Pap. Med. Kahun, Pap. Ebers, no. 808—830 (GRAPOW 1954, 88—89; GRAPOW 1955, 107—108, 130). Their expertise was obviously on a high level in the Late Period too. Egyptians were concerned also with birth control as shown by contraceptive measures described in medical papyri. (LÄ, I., 1975, 1127—1128: A.T. Sandison).

The amulet in Székesfehérvár may have been in possession of a woman who was, if not a devotee of the Isiac cult, at any rate believing that Egyptian gods and magic may be helpful in restoring her good health.

The evidence of representations would suggest Egypt as the place of production of the magical gems. In the case of most pieces we are, however, not informed about the exact provenance (DELATTE-DERCHAIN 1964, 253, inr. 354). One piece, and precisely an uterus amulet, very similar to that one in Székesfehérvár, was found in Egypt in Tuna el-Gebel. (Some megical gems were found in Pannonia: Bilkei 1979, passim). We have to note, moreover, that according to the French traveller, Jean de Thévenot who visited Egypt in 1658, it was easy to find gems in the ruins of Alexandria at that time. (Derchaim 1974, 19—20).

As to the age of the amulet, it may be dated with certainty to the Roman Imperial Period. Within this wide frame the bulk of magical amulets seems to belong to the 3—4 th century as they display close relationship with the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri (*PGM* 1973, passim) of this age.

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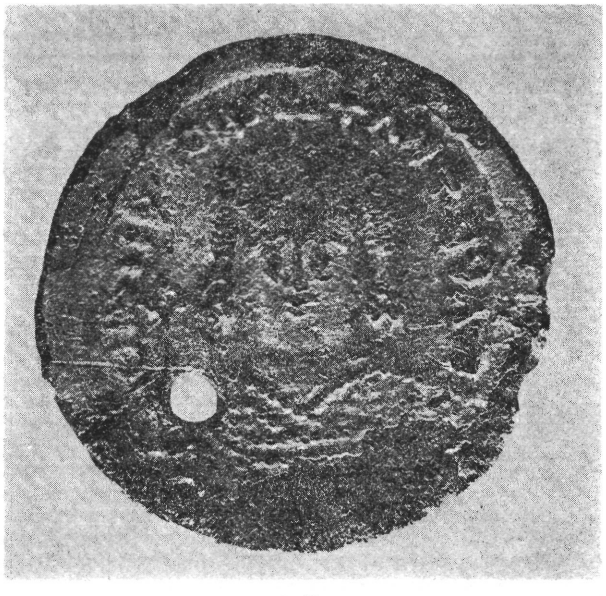
Gy. FÜLÖP

ÚJABBB BIZÁNCI ÉREMLELET TÁCRÓL

Tác-Gorsium 1981-ik évi ásatásán újabb avarkori sírok kerültek elő. A keleti városfalon belüli temetőrész *7. sírja* a következőket adta: lelőhelye: 330/720. számú szelvény c-d Bolygatott gyermeksír, Nemeskéri János szíves szóbeli közlése szerint életkora 8—12 év. A sír hossza: 146 cm, szélessége: 37—46 cm, mélysége: 158 cm. Tájolása: Ny—K, 47'. *Mellékletei: Nyakék*, 46 darab különböző üvegpaszta, agyag- és kagylógyöngyszem: 14 szemesgyöngy, 1 kettős szemesgyöngy, 1 virágszirom berakásos üveggyöngy, 8 sötétkék, kerek, 1 zöld kerek, 2 barna és 2 zöld lecsapott sarkú hasáb, 1 világoskék kerek, 14 sárga kerek, 1 hármasan összetett, bordázott fehér, 1 lapos, kerek kagyló *(3. ábra, 2)*; közöttük *aranyozott bronz bizánci érem:* átfúrt, II. Tiberiosz Konsztantinosz hamis solidusa, *Av:* császármellkép, fején korona kereszttel, jobbjában kereszt, a lyuktól induló körirat OBTIPCONS TANTPPAVI; *Rv:* Victoria jobbjában a Krisztusmonogrammos kereszt, baljában országalma kereszttel, körirata VICTO AVGGS, alul CONOB verdejegy. *(1—2. ábra). Késő római kisbronz* érem. *(3. ábra 1, 3).* Lt. sz.: 81.149.1—3.

A szóban forgó sír a hajdani római városközpont D—DK-i részén elterülő, az egész avar koron át használt temető egyik sírja. A korábbi kutatások ettől Ny-ra 50—60 méternyire felszínre hozták a temető VIII. századi részét (Fitz 1960, 161.). A közép avar kori lovassírok csoportja a 7. számú sírtól nyugatra 110 méternyire került elő (Fitz 1978, 173—74, 239—40). 1981-ben a 7. sír környékén a korai avar temetkezések kerültek napvilágra (Fitz 1983, 203—204.).

A 7. sír lelete a bizánci érmek egykorú, bizánci területeken készült hamisítványai közé tartozik. Ilyen minőségében nem áll egyedül a Kárpát-medencében (Bóna 1980, 34—36.). Első látásra a veret mindkét oldala hiteles: az előlapon a jó kivitelű császármellkép, a hátlapon Victoria, a hátlap alján a „hitelesítő" verdejegy „garantálja" a verdét CON és az aranyminőséget OB. Éremleletünk a Bizánccal hadban álló avarok számára adóként, vagy sarcként adott összeg részeként készült. A külalak, az aranyozás, és a súly volt a lényeges. Így elcsúszott a számolás közbek a valódiak között, minden bizonnyal eddig ismeretlen többedmagával egyetemben. A táci avar harcos abban a hiszemben fűzte fel kislánya nyakékére, hogy valódi ajndékot hozott távoli útjáról. Valószínűleg ekkor derült ki a turpisság. A „verdefényes" érmen a fotón látható kopások a bronzkorrózió által ledobott hiányos aranyozás nyomai.



1. ábra

2. ábra

Az a tény, hogy az érem nem volt forgalomban további következtetéseket enged meg. Minthogy az érem Tiberiosz Konsztantinosz (574—582) vereteit utánozza, készítési ideje sem lehet sokkal későbbi, mint a császár uralkodása. A hamisítók a hitelesség látszatának megőrzésére általában minden korban a legfrissebb pénzeket utánozzák. Az érem, elkészülte után nem sokkal avar kézbe került. Minthogy az érem nem kopott, hamarosan sírba is került kis tulajdonosának nyakékeként. Összevetve az avar betelepülés, az éremverés lehetséges dátumát a kislány életkorával, arra a következtetésre jutunk, hogy szüleiben a honfoglaló avarokat, személyében az elsőként itt születettek egyikét tisztelhetjük.