

**MUZEUL NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE A ROMÂNIEI**

**CERCETĂRI  
ARHEOLOGICE**

**XXXI**

**1**



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ARHEOLOGICE**

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**1**

**BUCUREȘTI**

**2024**

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Ilustrația de pe copertile 1, 4: Poarta de nord a „cetății vechi” de la Axiopolis, vedere dinspre exteriorul incintei (după Netzhammer, R. 1918. Die christlichen Altertümer der Dobrudscha. București: Socec & Co: p. 118, fig. 37).

ISSN 0255-6812

[www.cercetări-arheologice.ro](http://www.cercetări-arheologice.ro)

<https://doi.org/10.46535/ca.31.1>

<https://doi.org/10.46535/ca.31.2>

Volum editat de Muzeul Național de Istorie a României  
Calea Victoriei 12, București, 030026, România

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# GRYLLOI: A BEING WITH MIXED DEPICTIONS FROM KONYA

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NİZAM ABAY

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## ABSTRACT:

This study is based on a mixed figure on a ring stone from the Roman period (1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) preserved in the Konya Archaeology Museum. This figure is seen as a combination of four elements: a horse protome, a *Silenus* mask body, rooster feet and a ram's head. This depiction, which is encountered in different typologies in Antiquity, is called *Grylloi*. A Greek-Roman word, widely used on ring stones since the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, this depiction is also known by other names such as mask-animal, multi-headed creatures and fantastic concoction. These beings, usually depicted on oval rings with easily workable jasper stones, were thought to be worn as talismans or amulets with an *apotropaic* function. In this way, they were probably intended to ward off evil, possibly as amulets.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: GRYLLOI: EINE GEMISCHT DARGESTELLTE ENTITÄT AUS KONYA

Diese Studie basiert auf einer gemischten Figur auf einem Ringstein aus der römischen Periode (I.-II. Jahrhundert n. Chr.) der im Archäologischen Museum von Konya aufbewahrt wird. Diese Figur ist auf dem Artefakt als eine Kombination aus vier Elementen zu sehen: Pferdeprotom, Silenusmaskenkörper, Hahnenfüße und Widderkopf. Diese Darstellung, die in der Antike in verschiedenen Typologien anzutreffen ist, wird als *Grylloi* bezeichnet. Ein griechisch-römisches Wort, das ab dem 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. auf Ringsteinen weit verbreitet war. Diese Darstellung ist auch unter verschiedenen Namen wie Maskentier, mehrköpfige Kreaturen und fantastische Mischung bekannt. Diese Wesen, die meist auf ovalen Ringen mit leicht zu bearbeitenden Jaspissteinen zu finden sind, wurden vermutlich als Talismane oder Amulette mit apotropäischer Funktion getragen. Auf diese Weise sollten sie wahrscheinlich auch als Amulett das Böse abwehren.

KEYWORDS: Grylloi, Roman Period, Mixed Being, Typologies, Talisman.

STICHWORTE: Grylloi, Römische Zeit, Mischwesen, Ikonographie, Talisman.

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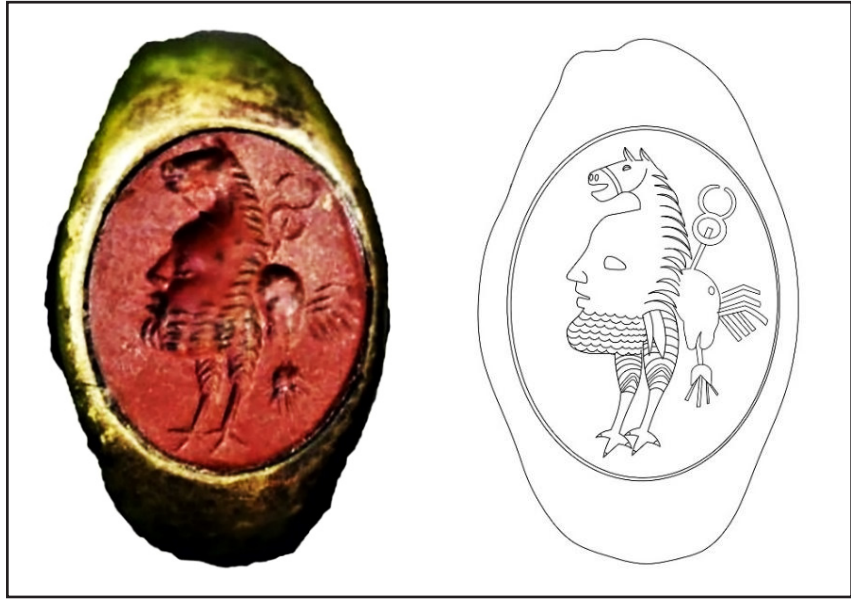
## Introduction

A bronze ring was added to the jewellery collection of the Konya Archaeology Museum by purchase in 2009. The inventory number is 2009-7-6 and the discovery location is unknown. A red jasper stone set into the brow of the bronze ring, brow with an initially unidentified figure. When this strange being, which is a combination of many human and animal limbs, is examined in the light of mythological sources, it is seen that it is quite different from its counterparts. However, through the research of ancient and modern sources, it is understood that the figure is a *Grylloi*, which was rarely engraved on ring stones in the Late Republican and Roman periods. In this context, the question arises as to what function the figure serves. This study aims to question the place of the figure in *Grylloin's* glyptic art based on its iconography and typology. At first, an evaluation was made about the origin and function of the figure. Then, iconographic analysis and typological classification were made respectively, and date suggestions were made. Thus, the fact that the figure subject to the study shows unique characteristics to form a type on its own will contribute to the little-known typology and iconography of glyptic art.

## Description

The bronze ring shows corrosion on the edges. The surrounding ring is worn and missing. The subject of this study is a ring stone from the Roman period. Inventory number 2009-7-6, the ring is made of bronze and is preserved in the Konya Archaeology Museum. The ring measures 21.14 x 21.11 mm in diameter and the stone measures 13 x 10 mm. The figure of Grylloi on an oval-shaped red jasper stone with a flat surface on the brow of the

ring brow (Fig. 1). This figure is a combination of rooster legs, horse protoma, Silenus mask and ram's head. The figure ends with a bearded, bald, and blunt-nosed Silenus mask seated on rooster legs turned in profile to the right, and above it a horse protome with a bridle and mane from the neck down. Behind the mask is a ram's head holding a cornucopia in its mouth. Above the ram's head, a rooster's tail is engraved. Behind the horse protome is the kerykeion decoration, the attribute of Hermes (Drawing 1). In the production of the figure, fine features were processed with a narrow tool, and details were processed with a wheel in short narrow grooves.



Fig/Draw. 1: Grylloi figure sitting on rooster legs (Author's photo archive).

### Grylloi: Origin, naming and function.

The word *Grylloi* is not known as an absolute concept. As a starting point for the concept of *Grylloi*, Pliny the Elder attributes it to a figure used by the Egyptian artist Antiphilos in reference to a painted caricature depicting a poorly dressed Egyptian artist with a comical and bizarre appearance.<sup>1</sup> *Grylloi* also appear in literary texts. This name is used humorously for figures who are vile, ugly and should be humiliated.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is not clear exactly which features the figure encompasses. Although the origin of such mixed creatures is not yet clear, there are some connections with the East. Such composite creatures are not known from an early date before the second millennium BC. Although such rooster-legged and masked beings are thought to be related to the hippalectryon<sup>3</sup> depiction seen in Greek pottery in the 570-500/490 BC and later in the Roman period, it seems unlikely that the *Grylloi* figure originated from such a mythological being. In addition, the Egyptian effect also comes to mind in such composite assets. For example, in Egyptian art, syncretic<sup>4</sup> beings are known in late magical papyri.<sup>5</sup> However, the depiction of *Grylloi* on ring stones does not appear earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> –2<sup>nd</sup> century BC<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, we see mixed figures of this type mostly on Roman ring Stones.<sup>7</sup> For example, according to Grylloi, Lapatin on artifacts<sup>8</sup> multi-headed creatures are called by different names, such as composite head and fantasy blend. Of course, some sources published today are more precise. Like mask-animal-defined gems.<sup>9</sup> King notes that the Chimera, from the Italian word *Grylli*, meaning both cricket and whim, are grotesque<sup>10</sup> figures composed of fragments of various mythological animals assembled in the outline of a single monster, usually in the form of a bird or a horse.<sup>11</sup> Binsfeld saw them as depictions of ridiculous, ugly misrepresented figures. He therefore tried to establish

<sup>1</sup> The Egyptian artist Antiphilos painted comedic scenes with caricatures of pigs, which is why his paintings came to be known as “*grylli*”. In addition, the artist also depicted tiny figures with large buttocks, large bellies and large genitals in scenes overlooking the Nile River. The physical appearance of these caricatures in the scenes is thought to be incongruous and comical (Pliny. Nat. Hist., 35, 114f).

<sup>2</sup> Herchenroeder 2008, 354.

<sup>3</sup> A kind of mixed creature with a horse on the front and a rooster on the back (LIMC V.I, 1990, 427–432).

<sup>4</sup> Unification of disparate traditions or cults.

<sup>5</sup> Derchain 1965, 825.

<sup>6</sup> Sliwa 2012, 382.

<sup>7</sup> Sliwa 2012, 380.

<sup>8</sup> Lapatin 2011, 88.

<sup>9</sup> In German: ‘Gemmen mit Tier-Masken’ or ‘Maske Tier-Kombination’. ‘Groteskes/phantastisches Mischwesen’ or ‘Phantasie-Tiere’ *Grylloi* concepts are used, while terms such as. In French “*grylles*” and “*figures groteskler*” as the concepts of (Zazoff 1983, 337).

<sup>10</sup> A ludicrous combination or combination of human animal or plant figures.

<sup>11</sup> King 1860, 329.

a relationship with the ugly and nameless dancers.<sup>12</sup> Plutarch also interpreted the term *Grylloi* in this context as pig-headed sensual dancers.<sup>13</sup> This figure expresses awkwardness in speech and is characterized as a mocking figure with puns with the names of Egyptian dance design and paradox painting style.<sup>14</sup> The first examples that emerged in the Hellenistic period were interpreted as a realistic depiction of deformed and ridiculous human types. Wrede, for example, equates *Grylloi* with Mahdia figurines, known as deformed crippled figurines.<sup>15</sup> Guida refers to the concept of *Grylloi*, which appears on a papyrus from the Roman Imperial Period, as a humorous cartoon image accompanying texts.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the concept is also thought to represent a type of dancer as mentioned above.<sup>17</sup> It therefore raises a chronological problem. Pliny the Elder is sceptical of the historical and ridiculous-looking portrayal of *Grylloi*, while *Grylloi* traces his origins to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Alexandrian painter Antiphilus.<sup>18</sup> However, Pliny the Elder also says that the type of painting was called *Grylloi* because the painters Calycles and Kallates, who dealt with lower figural depictions, painted ridiculous-looking people called *Gryllus* on panels.<sup>19</sup> Moreover in translation<sup>20</sup> *Grylloi*'s authorial ideas, thought to be linked to funny names, are better known. Pliny also uses the expression "*Pinxit et Gryllum Ridiculi habitus*" to describe these fantastic or hybrid creatures.<sup>21</sup> It has also been used to describe caricatured creatures, often a mixture<sup>22</sup> of parts of an animal or animal bodies in jewellery, or a combination of human and *Silenus* faces with the body parts of various animals.<sup>23</sup>

Such carved depictions like *Grylloi* are mostly found in nature on jasper stones because they are easy to work and cheap.<sup>24</sup> These stones, which are generally in red and brown tones, are also preferred because they are cheap. Therefore, a very popular stone for these subjects was red jasper, no doubt because its colour was thought to be suitable for such depictions. This type of stone was classified among the *Gnostic*<sup>25</sup> gems.<sup>26</sup> Amulet-stone jewellery, such as jasper, gained popularity among the nobility in the Roman civilization from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>27</sup> With the experts Nigidius Figulus and Appius Claudius Pulcher, superstition and magic became widely accepted. The love spell was the most popular, especially the love spell that creates emotional turmoil. It was additionally believed that jasper with red stones gives courage, fortitude and strength. The ring gave courage to its bearer and was considered a natural medicine. It was thought to be effective in calming the blood, stopping bleeding, slowing down a racing heart and restraining excessive desires.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the need for such a depiction on this stone is not only understood but also debatable. In this context, the purpose of combining the faces standing on top of each other and back-to-back, such as Silenus, rooster legs, horse protoma, ram's head, in a funny and tragic way, may have been aimed at an eternity with the effect of similar or opposite groups on each other.<sup>29</sup> According to Johnston, these figures, which are common in the Roman period, emphasize their *apotropaic*<sup>30</sup> function, that is, their function to ward off the evil eye, and these hybrid figures placed in rings could have been designed for this purpose in most cases.<sup>31</sup> Kuzmanovic also states that after Late Hellenism, this *grotesque* figure functioned as a protective and preventive amulet on carved stones.<sup>32</sup> King believes that these imaginary composite objects symbolize earth, air and sea, and that they have a deep and mystical relationship with each other. Or do these objects serve as seals of the virtues and qualities attributed to them by the owner of the jewels on which they are set?<sup>33</sup> Plutarch also thinks

<sup>12</sup> Binsfeld 1956, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Plutarch, v.6 681ff.

<sup>14</sup> Herchenroeder 2008, 347.

<sup>15</sup> Wrede 1988, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Guida 1985.

<sup>17</sup> Hammerstaedt 2000, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Plinius Nat. Hist. 32, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Plinius Nat. Hist. 32, 114.

<sup>20</sup> Hammerstaedt 2000, 31.

<sup>21</sup> King 1860, 327.

<sup>22</sup> Blanchet 1920, 43–51.

<sup>23</sup> Sliwa 2012, 380.

<sup>24</sup> Sliwa 2012, 328.

<sup>25</sup> The origin of the word comes from the Greek "*Gnosticos*". It means to know, but it is more of a relational or experiential knowledge of God through a metaphysical or mystical intuition rather than knowledge. This knowledge leads to the doctrine of salvation (Carus, 1898, 502, 502).

<sup>26</sup> King 1860, 328.

<sup>27</sup> Gesztelyi 2001, 85–90.

<sup>28</sup> Bąkowska-Czerner and Świerzowska 2015, 4–5.

<sup>29</sup> King 1860, 328.

<sup>30</sup> It is a concept that refers to objects that are believed to ward off evil, a kind of evil eye.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan 2021, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Kuzmanovic 2002, 206.

<sup>33</sup> King 1860, 330.

that these jewels were produced for stamping or sealing purposes.<sup>34</sup> Love was also believed to provide virtues such as wealth and fertility.<sup>35</sup> It is also thought that the head of *Silenus* is linked to celebrations such as fun or festivities, the cornucopia to abundance, the snake to health, the bird or palm branch to victory, and the rooster to the belief in the sun.<sup>36</sup> The fact that some *Grylloi* depictions are named after their owners or artists can also be interpreted as a wish for happiness or good luck. Therefore, such hybrid or mixed beings were not some kind of imaginary monsters or continuations of mythological giants, but rather the purpose of creating such a composition was that they wanted to create an interesting caricature iconography by incorporating a large number of magical elements.<sup>37</sup>

### Iconographic and Typological Evaluation of the Grylloi Figure on Roman Ring Stones

The figure of the *Grylloi* is depicted on ring stones starting from the Early Republican period until the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. This figure can be seen on ornamental jewellery in various decorations and mixed compositions. Although it can be seen as complex because of the many different body parts and the many typologies of specimens, there are two main types that can be distinguished.<sup>38</sup>

The first main type was created by placing the *Silenus* mask and animal head combination (ram, snake, eagle, elephant, horse, fly) on rooster legs. The key word in this type is the concept of rooster legs. There are also complementary decorative elements above, to the right or left of the figure, such as a palm branch, *kerykeion* and a snake. The depiction on the ring stone in the Konya Museum, the subject of our study, is good evidence for the iconography described above. The *Silenus* mask, which ends with a horse's head presented in profile to the left, appears to be seated on rooster legs. On the back of the mask is a ram's head holding a cornucopia in its mouth. The composition is completed with a *kerykeion* attribute on the upper right. This caricature, which is found to be the result of a combination of four elements, is known to be the most common and popular type in the Roman Period.

If we look at the iconographic meaning of these four elements that enable the formation of our figure, which is the subject of our study, in mythology: The rooster was revered as a *chthonic*<sup>39</sup> deity in Ancient Greece. It is therefore linked to gods such as *Asclepius*, *Dionysus* and *Mithras*. It is known that a rooster was sacrificed to *Asclepius* for a more painless life in the afterlife.<sup>40</sup> In Greek mythology, *Ares*' friend *Alektron* was identified with the rooster. *Alektron*, whom *Hephaistos* put as a watchman at the door to have forbidden love with his wife *Aphrodite*, was turned into a rooster because he could not fulfil his duty as a watchman because he fell asleep. The sun (*Helios*), which announces the news of love to *Hephaistos*, has to announce every sunrise by singing.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the rooster has a preventive meaning by crowing at sunrise, suggesting a connection with sunlight.<sup>42</sup> The feature of crowing at sunrise also adds a meaning such as the transition from darkness to light. The depiction of roosters, which were thought to be male symbols in the cult of the dead in Antiquity, was also interpreted as light overcoming darkness in the afterlife.<sup>43</sup> This suggests a preventive role against demonic or dark forces. Another element is the horse. In Ancient Greece, the concept of horse derives from the Greek word *hippos*. Horses are associated with the god *Poseidon* in plastic arts. This is why the god *Poseidon* is known as the creator of horses.<sup>44</sup> These horse depictions, which we encounter more in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are the companions of heroes and warriors.<sup>45</sup> Also in funerary art, horses are funerary images that guide the souls of the dead. Another element is the mask. In the Archaic Period, the mask was perceived as the appearance of *Dionysus*, the god of wine. Because in the wine ceremonies of women called *Bakkhas*, the mask was personified as *Dionysus*.<sup>46</sup> The mask element, which became an important symbol of Dionysian ceremonies with the spatial emergence of the theatre over time, includes only the god. Like souls, masks have no backside. This mask, which is thought to be used as a confrontation of opposites on the stage, is a reality where the spiritual and the mundane, the god he believes he sees and the god who is unreachable, or life and death coexist.<sup>47</sup> Another interesting element is the depiction of a ram's head. It is known that in ancient Egyptian

<sup>34</sup> Plutark *Questiones conuiuiialis* v.6 681ff.

<sup>35</sup> Henig 1978, 130.

<sup>36</sup> Henig 1978, 128-141.

<sup>37</sup> Sliwa 2012, 382.

<sup>38</sup> Sliwa 2012, 380-381.

<sup>39</sup> Gods of the underworld connected to the earth.

<sup>40</sup> Csapo 2006, 17-20.

<sup>41</sup> Özer 2016, 6.

<sup>42</sup> Kalla 2018, 863-878.

<sup>43</sup> Özer 2016, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Karaosmanoğlu 2005, 40-41.

<sup>45</sup> Mannsprenger 2001, 319-322.

<sup>46</sup> Kerenyi 1995, 250.

<sup>47</sup> Otto 1993, 91.



art, the head of the gods was depicted as a ram's head or ram's horns. It was associated with the protective role. In Egypt, for example, the ram-shaped god is known as Amon, the god assigned to protect Pharaoh Taharqa in the temple of Kawa.<sup>48</sup> In ancient Greece, the ram is more commonly seen as a sacrificial animal. The ram, which was not seen among the animals of the Olympian gods, was more associated with fertility and power.<sup>49</sup> It is also seen as a male symbol. Behind the figure of *Grylloi*, which is formed by the combination of these four elements, the depiction of the *kerykeion* as a decorative element is remarkable. *Kerykeion* is known as the magic golden wand of *Hermes* in Ancient Greece. It was given by the god *Apollo* in exchange for the pipe produced by *Hermes*. The *kerykeion* used by *Apollo* to guide the sacred cattle is a sign of the god *Hermes* role as the protector of shepherds, merchants and herds.<sup>50</sup>

We believe that the iconographic scheme of this figure, which is more common in the Roman glyptic art, belongs to a date range between the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD in the light of comparisons with similar works preserved in museums around the world. The narrow and short groove work on the beard of the mask is very similar to the style of short grooves known as a classicist tradition of the Hadrianic period.<sup>51</sup> Stylistically, this similarity brings the work closer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date.

Works similar to the distinct typology of the *Grylloi* iconography, which is more common in small works of Roman art and the subject of our study, belong to a collection of jewels belonging to the group of mask-animal jewels

of Constantine Schmidt-Ciazynski (1818-1889), preserved in the National Museum of Krakow.<sup>52</sup> For example, the depiction on the bronze ring stone preserved in the museum<sup>53</sup> represents the first main type definition for the *Grylloi* figure that I have described above. A profile face of a moustachioed man with a beard placed horizontally on the legs of a rooster to the left on a ground line. The tail feathers of a bird form the beard of a human head. An elephant's head rises in profile from the forehead of the mask upwards. There is also a palm branch as a decoration (Fig. 2a). Another piece closely resembling the first typology is preserved in the Marlborough gemmae collection in England.<sup>54</sup> On this gemma, which is made of *jasper* stone, we see a composite depiction of a bearded, bald and blunt-nosed *Silenus* mask walking to the left on rooster legs, ending with a



Fig. 2. a. *Grylloi* figure with rooster legs (Sliwa 2012, Fig. 1e); b. *Grylloi* figure with rooster legs (Boardman et al., 2009, No. 191); c. *Grylloi* figure with rooster legs (<https://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?q=Grylloi>); d. *Grylloi* figure with rooster legs (Boardman et al., 2009, No. 718).

<sup>48</sup> Haines 1998, 82-83.

<sup>49</sup> Turak 2018, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Erhat 2014, 141.

<sup>51</sup> Bouzek and Ondrejova 1982, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Sliwa 2012, 380.

<sup>53</sup> Sliwa 2012, Fig. 1e.

<sup>54</sup> Boardman et al. 2009, No. 191.

horse protoma with mane and bridle (Fig. 2b). Behind the mask is a corncob. On the corncob is the rooster's tail. In another work in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which is placed within the first type category and is similar to our subject, a *Silenus* mask with a flat nose and beard turned to the left on rooster legs ends with a horse protoma.<sup>55</sup> On the back, Eros/Amor is depicted standing naked on the ram's head emerging from behind the mask, possibly holding a whip or a victory wreath (Fig. 2c), in the Marlborough collection in England.<sup>56</sup> On the preserved gemma, we see the head of a bearded man joined with the head of a ram on the back. This junction on the legs of a rooster ends with the head of a snake (Fig. 2d).

The second main type is a combination of a *Silenus* mask or bearded human head with animal heads (horse, bird, donkey, elephant, pig, etc.) or a bearded human head or limb (phallus). The decisive element in this type is the concept of the head. Representations of this type can be found in the Belgrade National Museum.<sup>57</sup> Towards the right is a bearded bald and blunt-nosed Silenus with a phallus in the occipital part? combination. Kuzmanovic, however, notes that the occipital part merges with the boar's mouth, which turns into a mouth as an attribute of Silenus<sup>58</sup> (Fig. 3a). Another artifact is in the jewellery collection from Marlborough, England.<sup>59</sup> On the ring stone dated to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the occipital part of the head of a bearded, mustachioed, bald and blunt-nosed Silenus mask or head is combined with a bearded human figure looking down. This junction ends at the back with an elephant's head (Fig. 3b). It is possible to multiply the number of these parallel examples.<sup>60</sup> Another example of the second type can be seen on a ring stone in the Belgrade National Museum.<sup>61</sup> Eros, a mythological figure, is seen standing and on a dolphin. In front of Eros, we see the combination of the torso with Perseus and Andromeda in the form of janus. This junction ends with a horse protome on it (Fig. 3c)<sup>62</sup>.



Fig. 3. a. *Grylloi* figurine with mask combination (Kuzmanovic 2002, Pl. 9); b. *Grylloi* figure with mask combination (Boardman et al., 2009, No. 192); c. *Grylloi* figure with a head join (Kuzmanovic 2002, Pl. 10).

The figure of the *Grylloi*, that is, these fantastic and hybrid beings, of which we have given above numerous examples, was later placed in the rings of medieval artists, and the carved Roman ring stones were the origin of their reuse, usually in the jeweller's relics and tombs.<sup>63</sup> In this period, imaginary hybrid species without a head but with faces and heads moved to different parts of the body were called "*Gryllos/Grylloi*" in the Medieval Period.<sup>64</sup> These hybrid beings, which are thought to have passed from East to West during this period, are thought to offer fertility and magical power over artifacts. According to Emile Male, a French historian, the loss of the head and its reappearance in various parts of the body is a symbolic displacement, which suggests that the one who loses the love of God is reduced to the level of an animal.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>55</sup> (<https://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?q=Grylloi>)

<sup>56</sup> Boardman et al. 2009, No. 718.

<sup>57</sup> Sliwa 2012, 380, Fig. 1d.

<sup>58</sup> Kuzmanovic 2002, 201, Pl. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Boardman et al., 2009, No. 192.

<sup>60</sup> For *Grylloi* types consisting of human masks and animal figures, see. Furtwangler, AG, 1900, Taf. 46/17, 19, 33, 36, 37; Zazoff, 1965, 74 f., Abb. 12 Nr. 39.

<sup>61</sup> Kuzmanovic 2002, 203.

<sup>62</sup> Kuzmanovic 2002, 201.

<sup>63</sup> Morgan 2021, 51.

<sup>64</sup> Baltrusaitis 2001, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Baltrusaitis 2001, 45.



This figure also appears in modern art today. It has become a popular icon, especially in German and Austrian folk art. For example, in the Austrian Tyrol in the 17<sup>th</sup> century on wood panels<sup>66</sup> oil painting of a human head resting on the legs of a rooster and a bird's head in the form of a long neck emerging from the top of this head, holding a human nose with its beak. This caricatured figure is also known to be used as a creature on Halloween.

## Assessment and Conclusions

The artist has succeeded in melting *Grylloi* into a single pot by combining this hybrid being, which he created by bringing together many opposing depictions or incompatible elements in a serious but ridiculous and exaggerated appearance, with many elements such as luck, good wishes, evil-eye and magic, and depicted the figure with a composite iconography. The artist's purpose in creating such iconography was probably also linked to superstitions and talismans. The ring can therefore also be an expression of the owner's commitment to a certain faith. However, it was also believed to be worn as an amulet to ensure fertility and prosperity for the owner or to prevent the evil eye in an apotropaic function. Because amulets or magic were part of everyday life in Rome, and it would not be unusual for a person to have more. This cartoonish hybrid being may have driven the devil away by causing laughter. Later inscriptions on the edges of this composite depiction suggest that it may have been produced by the ring bearer for stamping or sealing purposes.

Unlike other mixed beings from mythology and legends, *Grylloi* seems to have lived more as a metaphorical being than as being involved in many archaeological encounters. It is clear from the beginning that such a being does not exist, but it represents an idea.

An examination of ring stones from the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the National Museum in Krakow and the National Museum in Belgrade shows that the *Grylloi* iconography is found in very different typologies. This iconography, which is quite complex and intricate and represented by a large number of different examples, has been simplified and divided into two main types. The first type consists of a *Silenus* mask on rooster legs combined with animal heads, the second type consists of only one *Silenus* head combined with an animal or object. In addition, when the compositions of these typologies were analysed in detail, it was found that many symbols (plants, objects) from the Greek and Roman Periods were also used as decoration elements.

Considering both the published examples and the work that is the subject of this study together, *jasper* is mostly used as a ring stone. Cheap, easy to process and readily available in nature. these may be the reason for its preference. In addition, jasper stone is also said to have had the function of luck, fortune and evil eye to ward off evil in the Roman Period.

It is difficult to attribute this bronze ring stone, which was acquired by the Konya Museum, to the production of a workshop in Anatolia. Since the depiction of *Grylloi* is not seen as a mythological figure, it is determined that there is no cult in Anatolia, and it is rarely found on archaeological artifacts. In addition, when we evaluate stylistically and iconographically this figure on the ring stone, which is the subject of our study and exhibits a widespread type, it reduces the possibility of the existence of any workshop as the figure is spread in many museum collections around the world.

Based on iconographic comparisons with its close analogues and the superficial, rough and schematic rendering of the figure, we believe that it dates to the late 1<sup>st</sup> and late 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD. It can also be said that the narrow and short groove work on the beard of the mask is quite similar to the style of short grooves known as a classicist tradition. This stylistic similarity brings the work closer to a 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date.

In conclusion, we state that this hybrid or mixed figure *Grylloi*, which is the subject of our study, is not well known in Anatolia and that it is introduced in detail in Turkish for the first time in this article. Thus, in this study, we have tried to prove that this mixed entity is *Grylloi* through detailed interpretations of its origin and function and comparisons with similar ones. Therefore, this article will be a pioneer for more reliable evaluations in future academic studies in the context of the *Grylloi* issue.

<sup>66</sup> Schmidt 1952, 134–144.

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## Abbildungsverzeichnis

Abb. 1. Auf Hahnenbeinen sitzende Grylloi-Figur (Fotoarchiv des Autors).

Abb. 2. a. Grylloi-Figur mit Hahnenbeinen (Sliwa 2012, Abb. 1e); b. Grylloi-Figur mit Hahnenbeinen (Boardman et al., 2009, Nr. 191); c. Grylloi-Figur mit Hahnenbeinen (<https://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?q=Grylloin>); d. Grylloi-Figur mit Hahnenbeinen (Boardman et al., 2009, Nr. 718).

Abb. 3. a. Grylloi-Figur mit Maskenkombination (Kuzmanovic 2002, Pl. 9); b. Grylloi-Figur mit Maskenkombination (Boardman et al., 2009, Nr. 192); c. Grylloi-Figur mit Kopfgelenk (Kuzmanovic 2002, Pl. 10).

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