The Religious and Philosophical Assimilations of Helios in the Greek Magical Papyri

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This paper examines the religious and philosophical assimilations of the god Helios expressed in the Greek magical papyri. It assesses the religious construction of Helios through his various assimilations with gods from other religious systems and with abstract epithets and philosophical concepts. Questions to be addressed are: How these manifold assimilations and the notions of ‘many-namedness’ and ‘many-formedness’ of Helios, and his various transformations, could be paralleled with or influenced by the tensions of contemporary religious and philosophical currents in relation to the concept of ‘one and many’, or ‘the manifold one’ transcending plurality. And do the religious and philosophical assimilations of Helios reflect coherent religious attitudes?

The spells to be examined are: (I) “Spell to bring the god” (PGM IV.985–1035) included in the “Spell that produces direct vision of the divinity invoked” (930–1114); (II) “(This is) the consecration ritual for all purposes. Spell to Helios” (IV.1596–1715); (III) “Systasis to Helios” (III.494–611); and (IV) “Systasis with your own daimon” (VII.505–528).

I. “Spell to bring the god,” _θεαγωγὸς λόγος_ (IV.985–1035, IV A.D.)

1) _Helios the greatest god, lord Horus Harpocrates_

The magician assimilates Helios with “the greatest god (τὸν μέγιστον θεόν), lord Horus Harpocrates,” “god of gods (θεὲ θεῶν),” whom he invokes (IV.987–988, 999–1000, 1048–1049). Helios is also described as “the one who enlightens everything and illuminates by his own power the whole cosmos” (989–
In the hymn “To Helios” (939–948) Helios is also described as “gathering up the clover of the golden bean” (941) and identified with Harpocrates, “the god seated on a lotus, decorated with rays,” as he is described at the end of the spell at the moment of his expected revelation to the magician (1107–1108). Harpocrates, the Egyptian young Sun god, is often depicted in magical amulets of the late Hellenistic and Roman period as a naked child seated on a lotus flower or in a boat, representing the rising sun. In another hymn “To Helios” included in the “Wondrous erotic binding spell” (296–466), Helios is once again identified with Horus (κλῄζω δ’ οὖνομα σόν, Ὡρ’), 454. Iamblichus explains the symbolism: “For sitting on a lotus implies pre-eminence over the mud, without ever touching the mud, and also displays intellectual and empyrean leadership,” τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ λωτῷ καθέζεσθαι ὑπεροχὴν τε ὑπὲρ τὴν ἱλὺν αἰνίττεται μὴ ψαύουσαν μηδαμίως τῆς ἱλύος, καὶ ἡγεμονίαν νοερῶν καὶ ἐμπύριον ἐπιδείκνυται (Myst. 7.2, 251–252).

(2) Helios holding the reins and steering the tiller, restraining the serpent

Helios is also represented as “holding the reins and steering the tiller, restraining the serpent” (ἡνιοχῶν καὶ κυβερνῶν ὀίακα, κατέχων δράκοντα, 993–994). The origins of the idea of the chariot of the Sun are Indo-European. The representation of Helios in his chariot is familiar in Greek literature.

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3 In the salutation to Helios in the same spell (930–1114) the magician also salutes the Hours (αἱ Ὡραι), personified and characterized as Helios’ Hours, “on which you ride across” (ἐν αἷς διϊππευεις, 1049–1050), in similar ‘chariot’ imagery.

4 See P. Gelling and H. E. Davidson, The Chariot of the Sun and Other Rites and Symbols of the Northern Bronze Age (London 1969).

5 E.g. Hymn.Hom. 31.9; Eur. Med. 1321–1322; the myth of Phaethon,
and in Near Eastern religious texts as well. In the Arsacid period of Iranian religious history, on which there are various Hellenistic and Semitic influences, we find the first artistic representations of the chariot god. The rituals of sun cult were performed, for example, in the Kushan period by the magas, the Iranian Magi who originated in eastern Iran among the Saka. Further evidence of the cult is the statue of the Iranian sun god in a sanctuary in Kabul, and the frescoes in Bamiyan (Afghanistan) depicting the chariot sun god associated with Mithras. There are additional examples of the assimilation between Helios and Mithras. In the “Mithras Liturgy” (IV.475–829) Helios is assimilated to Mithras, ὁ μέγας θεός Helios Mithras (482), who has revealed his mysteries for immortality to the initiated magician and author of that spell. The spell for foreknowledge and memory called “A copy from a holy book” (III.424–466) greets “Helios Mithras” (462). In the spell III.98–124, included in the spell III.1–164, “the greatest (μέγιστος) Mithras” is associated with Helios, addressed as “the holy king, the sailor, who controls the tiller of the great god” (100–103 and 81–82). This description must refer to the daily solar sea journey on the boat of the Egyptian sun god Re. On the Greco-Egyptian magical amulets inscribed on small pieces of papyrus or gems there are also depictions of Helios driving his four-horse chariot.

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8 Note also the one reference to the Persian Zoroaster (Ζωροάστρης ὁ Πέρσης) in PGM (XIII.967–968).
10 Bonner, Studies 148–155 and plates XI–XII.
Thus the idea is very widespread. But in our text there is a very specific Egyptian influence. The whole phrase “holding the reins and steering the tiller” followed by “restraining the serpent” alludes to the Egyptian ritual of repulsing the serpent Apophis, who according to the myth each night tries to destroy the ship of the sun god Re while he is making his journey through the skies. This magic ritual and spell is recited in a text entitled “The Beginning of the book of overthrowing Apophis, the enemy of Re and the enemy of king Wen-nofer,” dated to 310 B.C.\(^\text{11}\)

Furthermore, Iamblichus, referring to the “intellectual interpretation of the symbols according to Egyptian thought” (Myst. 7.2, 250), explicates the symbolism of sailing in a ship (252): “The one who sails in the ship represents the rule that governs the world. Just as the steersman mounts on the ship, being separate from its rudders, so the sun, separately from the tillers, mounts upon the whole world.” ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενος τὴν διασυνιστώσαν τὸν κόσμον ἑπικράτειαν παρίστησιν. ὃςπερ οὖν ὁ κυβερνήτης χαριστὸς ὃν τῆς νεώς τῶν πηδαλίων αὐτῆς ἐπιβέβηκεν, οὕτω χαριστῶς ὁ ἥλιος τῶν οἰάκων τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς ἐπιβέβηκεν.

(3) Helios – praised, Iao

Helios/Harpocrates is “praised (εὐλόγητος) among all gods, angels, and daimons” (IV.998); this implies Jewish influence.\(^\text{12}\) Helios is also assimilated to Ἰάω (991), a name derived from the Hebrew god YHWH. Iao’s identification with Helios is mentioned in almost all the spells included in the collection 930–1114,\(^\text{13}\) with one exception, the hymn “To Helios” (939–948).

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\(^{11}\) The Bremmer-Rhind Papyrus (British Museum 10188) XXVI.21, XXVIII.4–18; J. A. Wilson, \textit{ANET} \textsuperscript{3} 6–7; cf. R. Ritner, in Betz, \textit{Greek Magical Papyri} 57 n.138.

\(^{12}\) εὐλόγητος: e.g. Gen 9:26, 12:2, 14:20, 24:27, 26:29; Deut 7:14; Od 7:26, 8:32, 9:68.

\(^{13}\) E.g. IV.962, 980 (Iao mentioned together with Σαβαώθ), 1000, 1010, 1034, 1039, 1043, 1049, 1076; Griffiths suggests that Ἰάω may also possibly be derived from “the Egyptian for ‘ass’”, cf. Coptic ‘εἰω’: J. G. Griffiths,
The reason may be that this hymn with traces of meter was composed earlier than the other spells in this collection.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, in IV.985–1035 Helios is assimilated with deities from other religious systems, as for example the Egyptian Horus Harpocrates and the Jewish Iao. Helios’ description as “sitting on the lotus” and “holding the reins and steering the tiller and restraining the serpent” implies influences from Egyptian religion, although the latter phrase may also allude to Greek literature and to Zoroastrian religion.

II. “This is the consecration ritual for all purposes. Spell to Helios,” ἔστιν δὲ ή κατὰ πάντων τελετὴ ἕδε. πρὸς Ἥλιον λόγος (IV.1596–1715, IV A.D.)

The purpose of this spell is to consecrate a phylactery, stone, or ring by reciting to Helios a spell with ritual symbols which apply to the various stages of its preparation. The magician asks Helios: “give glory and honour and favour and fortune and power to the NN stone which I consecrate today (or to the phylactery being consecrated) for NN,” δὸς δόξαν καὶ τιµὴν καὶ χάριν καὶ τύχην καὶ δύναμιν, ὃ ἐπιτελοῦσαν σήμερον τῷ δεῖνα λίθῳ (ἢ φυλακτηρίῳ τελουμένῳ) πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα (IV.1616–1619). The portrait of Helios is based on the synthesis of natural, divine, and cosmic powers, which at the same time are necessary for the consecration of the phylactery. More specifically, Helios’ preeminence over the physical and divine powers and the cosmos is established by his assimilation with various deities and via abstract epithets that allude to attributes and powers of deities.

The spell lists the twelve different animal forms and magical names of Helios, which correspond to the twelve hours of the day. The twelve animal forms and creative powers of Helios

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. W. Grese, in Betz, Greek Magical Papyri 56 n.128.
are associated with the twelve stages of consecration of the phylactery. For example, “in the first hour you (Helios) have the form of a cat, your name (is) ΦΗΡΑΚΟΥΝΕΘ. Give glory and favour to this phylactery, this stone, and to NN, δός δόξαν καὶ χάριν τῷ φυλακτηρίῳ τούτῳ, τῷ λίθῳ τούτῳ καὶ τῷ δεῖνα (1647–1650).  

(4) Helios — the gracious Good Daimon

Helios is ὁ ἱλαρὸς Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων (IV.1607) and τὸ παρεστὸς Ἀγαθὸν Δαιμόνιον (1709–1710). The Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the Classical and Hellenistic age was the Good Genius to whom a toast was made after banquets, associated with snakes and fertility, and is here assimilated to Helios. Is there Egyptian influence? Helios is also addressed as Ψοι φιονθι νυνθηρ (1643), Egyptian for “the Agathodaimon, the god of the gods.” Another description of Helios that betrays Egyptian influence is “the lotus emerged from the abyss” (1683–1684). In a further reference to Egypt, Helios is described as ὁ τὴν ἄρχην τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἔχων καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν τῆς ὅλης οἰκουµένης,”“who controls the beginning of Egypt and the end of the whole inhabited world” (1637–1640). The motif of the beginning and end in describing the power of a god is very common in both

15 See below on possible influence of the Egyptian dodekaoros in III.494–611.


17 Ritner, in Betz, Greek Magical Papyri 68 n.210. In Ptolemaic Egypt the Agathodaimon was identified with the Egyptian god of destiny Shai, also called Psaias, Psōi, or Psoeio (Ψωειω, III.144–145); F. Dunand and C. Zivie-Coche, Gods and Men in Egypt (Ithaca 2002) 244, 349.

18 On the origin of life from a lotus see S. Morenz, Egyptian Religion (Ithaca 1973) 179–180; on the lotus and Harpocrates see above.
Here Helios’ world-rule is in fact defined in relation to Egypt (being one of the traditional ‘ends of the world’). But there is also an allusion in τελευτή to the mystery cults, as emphasised by the repetition of this ritual term and its cognates throughout this spell. Hence Helios’ world-rule as defined in relation to Egypt has also mystical implications.

As to ἰλαρός, the epithet is attributed to Helios elsewhere in the magical papyri, e.g. in the “Spell that produces direct vision” (IV.1041). In the “[Systasis to] Helios” (III.494–611) Helios as invoked by the magician is “with your face gracious,” ἵλαρῳ [σο]υ τῷ προσώπῳ (III.569, cf. 575).21 Why is Helios described as ὁ ἰλαρός? Already in the Odyssey Helios is a god “who gives joy to mortals” (τερψίµβροτος, 12.269, 274). In our spell the magician says specifically: ἀνέθαλεν ἡ γῆ σοῦ ἐπιλάψαντος καὶ ἐκαρποφόρησεν τὰ φυτὰ σοῦ γελάσαντος, ἐζωογόνισε τὰ ζῶα σοῦ ἐπιτρέψαντος, “the earth flourished when you shone forth and made the plants fruitful when you laughed, and brought to life the living creatures when you permitted” (1610–1614).22 Thus, the epithet ἰλαρός is justified by the idea of Helios as a source of life and regeneration and by his association with the creation of the world.23 Furthermore,

22 Morton Smith translates “the earth flourished when you shone forth, and the plants became fruitful when you laughed; the animals begat their young when you permitted”: in Betz, Greek Magical Papyri 68. But the translation of τὰ φυτὰ and τὰ ζῶα as the subjects of ἐκαρποφόρησεν and ἐζωογόνισε, and not ἡ γῆ as the subject of both verbs, diminishes the fruitful and life-giving powers of the earth.
Helios’ joy is related to the mention of his secret names, “which you rejoice to hear,” as the practitioner characteristically asserts, referring to the traditional reciprocal relationship of satisfaction between the worshipper and the god (1611). The reciprocity of the feeling of happiness in the relationship between the god and the magician is also expressed in the the Hermetic “Prayer of Thanksgiving” (III.591–609) included at the end of the “[Systasis to] Helios,” in which the magician says to Helios, “we rejoice (χαίροµεν), because you showed yourself to us, we rejoice, because, while we are still in bodies, you deified (ἀπεθέωσας) us by the knowledge of who you are” (559–600).

(5) Helios – Sabaoth Adonai, the great god

Helios is assimilated to Σαβαώθ· Ἀδωναί, ὁ θεὸς ὁ μέγας, “Sabaoth; Adonai, the great god” (IV.1626). The assimilation to Sabaoth, Adonai reflects Jewish influence. While ὁ μέγας is

24 The rejoicing here has a Gnostic character ("the knowledge of who you are"). IV.591–609 is one of the three versions of the Hermetic “Prayer of Thanksgiving”; the other two are the Coptic VI.7 (Nag.Ham.Libr. VI.63.33–65.7); J. M. Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library in English [Leiden 1996] 329), and the epilogue of the Hermetic Asclepius (41), graías tibi, summe, exsuperantissime ... haece optantes convertimus nos ad param et sine animalibus cenam. The Prayer of Thanksgiving must be in origin part of a Hermetic liturgical ritual involving also a cultic meal after the prayer, as we see in the Asclepius passage, or the rituals of embrace and a meal mentioned in the Nag Hammadi material. Generally on ‘knowledge’ in Gnosticism see Nag.Ham. Libr.Gos.Thom.and Interp.Know. (Robinson 126 ff., 473 ff.); also Gos.Jud. 50, 54 (R. Kasser, M. Meyer, and G. Wurst, The Gospel of Judas from Codex Tchacos [Washington 2006] 37 ff.). On the further association between knowledge and the womb (III.603–606) see E. Pachoumi, “The Religious-Philosophical Concept of Personal Daimon and the Magico-Theurgic Ritual of Systasis in the Greek Magical Papyri,” Philologus 157 (2013) 46–69, at 61–62.

not restricted to the Jewish god, it can be used of him as well.\textsuperscript{26} The context together with the two Jewish names makes this association operative here. One might say that a megatheistic concept under Jewish influence has been grafted onto a basically henotheistic concept of the divine supported by the phrase εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπις (1715), which the magician is to say when the ritual is accomplished.\textsuperscript{27} The concept of a god to whom can be attributed many names is already attested in the Aristotelian εἰς ὁν ὁ θεὸς πολυώνυμος ἐστιν (Mund. 401a11).

On the notion of megatheism the Greek magical papyri offer examples. In the “Mithras Liturgy” (IV.475–829) the two-named Helios-Mithras is addressed as ὁ μέγας θεὸς Ὅλος Μύθος (482).\textsuperscript{28} Similarly in the “Compulsion spell” (ἐπάναγ-κος, 1035–1046), which is included in the “Spell that produces direct vision,” Helios is given orders by “the great living god”


\textsuperscript{28} H. D. Betz, The “Mithras Liturgy”: Text, Translation and Commentary (Tübingen 2003) 98.
(ὁ μέγας ζῶν θεός), “the one who lives for aeons of aeons” (ὁ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων), “who shakes together, who thunders, who created (κτίσας) every soul and race” (1038–1040). In this example Helios is subordinate to “the great living god,” but in another spell, 959–973, also included in the “Spell that produces direct vision,” Helios is himself invoked as “the living god” (τὸν θεὸν τὸν ζῶντα, 959). These imply Jewish influence and, more specifically, the claim of the Jewish religion about their ‘living god’ in contrast to the ‘dead’ pagan gods. The reference to the creator-god of every soul and race also reveals influence of the Jewish concept of the creator-god; and the use of κτίζω in the sense of ‘create’ has Jewish connotations. Finally, ὁ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων echoes Jewish and Christian hymnology. Hence, in the “Compulsion spell” the megatheistic concept of the divine points to the ‘Jewish’ living god, mentioned as superior to Helios.

(6) Helios – The Cosmokrator, the Thalassokrator, Heaven as Helios’ processional way

The Cosmokrator

Helios is “the greatest god, the eternal lord, the ruler of the cosmos (κοσμοκράτωρ), the one over the cosmos and under the cosmos” (IV.1598–1600), and “the one who shines in the whole inhabited world” (1635–1636). Cosmic characteristics are attributed to Helios here. Similarly, in the Orphic Hymn to Helios he is addressed as κοσμοκράτωρ and δέσποτα κόσμου (8.11, 16). The same epithet is used of Pan in Hymn. Orph. 11.11.


32 The same description of Helios occurs in III.142–143; cf. IV.1639–1642 and 989–991.
In Iamblichus’ *De mysteries* κοσμοκράτωρες seems to refer to two types of the archons, those “who administer the sublunary elements,” οἱ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα διοικοῦντες, and those “who preside over matter,” οἱ τῆς ύλης προεστηκότες.33

The epithet κοσμοκράτωρ is often used in the first centuries A.D. as an epithet of Helios, Zeus, or, in the plural, of Helios and Selene.34 Christian authors can use it in a negative sense, either of kings as lords of ‘this world’ (as opposed to the heavenly world),35 or most often of the diabolos himself, whom, according to Irenaeus, “they also call lord of the world/darkness,”36 or also in the plural of the evil powers in general, “the lords of the world of darkness.”37 On the other hand, Christians can use the epithet παντοκράτωρ to describe God himself.38 The term (or similar terms), therefore, was widely contested—within the religious sphere, between Christians and pagans. Its application to various gods by the Egyptian magicians in the Imperial period must be seen within this complicated agonistic context.


38 E.g. *PMG* Christ. 1; cf. Lampe s.v.
The Thalassokrator

Helios is θαλασσοκράτορα, “ruler of the sea” (IV.1600–1601, 1696–1697), rather than the cosmos or the inhabited world. In relation to this characterization, he is also described as the one “who mates (ὀχεύων) in the ocean” (1642–1643). This sexual imagery of Helios must be connected with the visual image of the sun setting in the ocean and in this way reinforces Helios’ description as the powerful ruler of the sea. Similarly, in the Derveni Papyrus the sun is likened to the genital organ as a vital power of regeneration: αἰδοίωι εἰκάσας τὸν ἥλιον[v] (col. XIII.9).

Heaven as Helios’ processional way

Helios is also assimilated to heaven when described as the god ὁ οὐρανός ἐγένετο κωμαστήριον, “to whom heaven has become the processional way” (IV.1608–1609). The concept of heaven as the processional way occurs elsewhere in the magical papyri. This is a complicated assimilation. The κωμαστήριον was the meeting place of κωμασταί, those who carried sacred images in a religious procession. κωμαστής, originally meaning a member of a κόσμος, was also an epithet of Dionysus and consequently an allusion to that god’s mystic rites. Helios’ characterization also as οργεατής [sic] in 1629, implying ὀργαστής, “he who celebrates ὀργία/orgiastic rites,” which are often associated with Dionysus, accentuates the mystical allusions. Generally, the use of terms originally derived from the mystery cults to describe magic, the magicians, the initiate, or the uninitiated (e.g. μυστήριον, μύστης, μυσταγωγός, συμμυστής, ἄμυστηρίαστος) reveals the magicians’ attempt to as-

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40 Ar. Nub. 605: κωμαστής Διόνυσος.

41 On οργεατής see Smith, in Betz, Greek Magical Papyri 68 n.207; E. Pachoumi, “Dionysus in the Greek Magical Papyri,” SymbOslo 88 (2014) 126–133, at 131, 133, and n.27.

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similate magic to the mysteries.42 Thus in 1607 the religious
and mystical observances of initiates on earth imitate and fore-
shadow the “processions of the heavenly hosts.”

But could there be other religious influences on the descrip-
tion of the heavenly processions? Helios is also identified with
“Sabaoth, Adonai, the great god” (1626), as we have seen in
the spell 1596–1715. Similarly in the Jewish Hekhalot literature,
which displays elements of early Jewish mysticism and magic,
there are allusions to the mystical ascent to Hekhalot, “the
heavenly places,” and to Merkabah, “the chariot,” of Elijah by
which he ascended to Heaven.43 This, then, is the final element
in the description of Helios as the one “to whom heaven has
become the processional way.” But there is of course a differ-
ence of status: Elijah is a great prophet who ascends to Heaven.
Helios is himself the great god, who has appropriated and ex-
tended a prophetic motif.

Thus, in 1596–1715, Helios’ divinity is articulated by his
assimilations with other deities and with a variety of epiphets.
He is assimilated with the gracious Good Daimon, the Jewish
Sabaoth, Adonai, and with the megatheistic concept of the
great god. The epiphetes attributed to him such as “eternal ruler
of cosmos,” “ruler of the sea,” the god “to whom heaven has
become the processional way,” and the source of life and

42 E.g. IV.722–723: ὡς σὺ ἐνομοθέτησας καὶ ἐποίησας μυστήριον,
IV.476: τὰ <ἀ>πρατα, παραβοτά μυστήρια, I.127: ὃ μουχαρίε μύστα τῆς
ἰερᾶς μεγετᾶ; for more examples see discussion in Pachoumi, SymbOslo 88
(2014) 128–129 and n.16–18. For the association between magic and the
mysteries see also H. D. Betz, “The Formation of Authoritative Tradition in
the Greek Magical Papyri,” in B. F. Meyers and E. P. Sanders (ed.), Jewish
in the Greek Magical Papyri,” in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.),
Magika Hiera (New York 1991) 244–259, and “Secrecy in the Greek Magical
Papyri,” in H. G. Kippenberg and G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), Secrecy and Conceal-
ment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions
(Leiden 1995) 153–175.

43 See R. Elior, “Mysticism, Magic and Angelology – The Perception of
fertility on earth substantiate his supremacy over the natural, divine, and cosmic powers. The influences from Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish religions prove the interreligious character of the spell.44

III. “[Systasis/Spell for connection to] Helios,” Σύστασις πρὸς Ἡλίον (III.494–611, IV A.D.)

(7) Helios – the image, the whole of the cosmos; forms and names

In this magico-theurgic systasis prayer Helios is assimilated to the entire cosmos in his address as ὁ τύπος, “the image/archetype, the whole of the cosmos” (III.338–339). He is also described as ἀεροδρόμον μέγαν θεόν, “air-traversing great god” (497). τύπος can itself be a philosophical term. According to the Chaldaean Oracles, “for the master set before the many-formed cosmos a noetic imperishable image/archetypic κόσμῳ ἄναξ πολυόρφῳ προὔθηκεν νοερὸν τύπον ἀφθιτον (37.5–6).47 Thus τύπος is used metaphorically in an allusion to philosophy/science to establish an association of Helios with the cosmos.48

At the beginning and at the end of the formula the magician

44 Dieleman describes the technique of accumulating various religious currents in one spell as a “rhetorical device” and argues that “one of the native guiding principles leading to this rhetorical device was certainly the habit of compiling word lists, today known as ‘onomastica’, that catalogue all physical and metaphysical phenomena of the cosmos”: J. Dieleman, Priests, Tongues and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (Leiden 2005) 166.

45 The Σύστασις πρὸς Ἡλίον (III.494–611) and the two spells that follow—the untitled spell concerning your own shadow (612–631) and the spell 633–731—may be parts of a broader systasis with Helios spell (494–731). See Pachoumi, Philologus 157 (2013) 56–57.


47 Cf. Orac.Chald. 144. For τύπος in the philosophical tradition see e.g. Democ. 68 A 135 D. -K. (= Thphr. Sens. 52); Epicur. Ep.Her. 35, 36, 46, 68.

48 For parallels to the concept of the mixture of all and its relation to the whole as expressed in Neoplatonist philosophy see the discussion below on VII.505–528.
emphasises to Helios that “I know your signs and symbols and forms,” οἶδά σου τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ παράσημα (499–500), and “I have told your signs and symbols,” εἴρηκά σου τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ παράσημα (535).\textsuperscript{49} Similarly, Helios assimilated to Apollo is described as πολυώνυμε in the spell II.64–184, at 107–108. Furthermore, Helios in III.499–536, as in IV.1596–1715, is identified with twelve different animal “forms” and magical names, which correspond to the twelve hours of the day. Each magical name and animal form is associated with the production of a different tree, stone, and bird (III.501–536). For example, “in the first hour you (Helios) have the form (μορφήν) and image (τύπον) of a child monkey; you produce a silver fir tree, an apheanos stone, a ... bird ..., your name (is) PHROUER;\textsuperscript{50} in the second hour you have the form of a unicorn, you produce a persea tree, a pottery stone, a halouchakon bird, on land an ichneumon, your name (is) BAZETOPOTH” (501–506). These various forms of Helios represent different attributes of the god. They are noteworthy for the following reasons.

First, the association of the hour or hours and the divine is attested in the magical papyri. For example, in XIII.1–343 “A sacred book called Monad or Eighth Book of Moses about the holy name,” which is the first of the three different versions of the Eighth Book of Moses included in XIII.1–734, the magician according to the ritual of σύστασις should be connected “with the gods who beget the hours,” τοῖς ὥρονμενοις θεοῖς (29–31), and “invoke the god of the hour and the day, so that you may be connected through them,” ἐπικαλοῦτον τὸν τῆς ὥρας καὶ τὸν τῆς ἡμέρας θεόν, ἵνα ἔχῃ συσταθῆς (378–379). Similarly in the systasis spell VII.505–528 the magician greets “the present hour,” “the present day,” and “every day” (VII.506–507).\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} On the signs and symbols in theurgy see Pachoumi, Philologus 157 (2013) 60–64.
\textsuperscript{50} I.e. Pre the great, see Ritner, in Betz, Greek Magical Papyri 31 n.97.
Second, the association of the twelve animal forms and magical names with the twelve hours of the day finds parallels in the zodiac signs and their associated animals in the Egyptian dodekaoros.  

Third, the depiction of the gods in animal form, or in human form with animal heads, reveals the influence of Egyptian religion. According to the Egyptian concept of the personification of the divine, humans, animals, plants, and inanimate objects can all be associated with the divine power and considered attributes of a deity. About the notion of power and the personification of the divine in Egyptian religion, Morenz rightly points out that “we proceed from ‘power’ as primary cause, which can elevate to the rank of deity man and animal, even plant and object, so that neither animal nor plant, still less inorganic matter, ever ceases to be God in potentia.” This can be explained by the point that powers, which were thought to be originally autonomous in Egyptian mythology, participated in the formation of the divine visual images and the establishment of their cult.

Iamblichus, attempting “to interpret the mode of the Egyptian theology” (Myst. 7.1, 249), explains the notion of the manifold powers and transformations of the one god Helios (7.3, 253–254):

for this reason the symbolic teaching wishes to indicate the one god through the multitude of givings/offering, and to represent his one power through the manifold powers; wherefore it (the symbolic teaching) indicates that he (Helios) is one and the same, but assigns the changes of form and of configuration to the

52 On the dodekaoros see F. Boll, Sphaera (Leipzig 1903) 295–346.

recipients. Therefore it (the symbolic teaching) indicates that he
(Helios) is changed according to the Zodiac and every hour, just
as these are variegated/changeable around the god according to
his many receptions.

διὰ τούτῳ βούλεται μὲν ἡ συμβολικὴ διδαχὴ διὰ τοῦ πλήθους
tῶν δοθέντων τὸν ἕνα θεόν ἐμφαίνειν, καὶ διὰ τῶν πολυτρόπων
dυνάμεων τὴν μίαν αὐτοῦ παριστάναι δύναμιν· διὸ καὶ φησιν
αὐτὸν ἕνα εἶναι καὶ τὸν αὐτόν, τὰς δὲ διαμεῖσες τῆς μορφῆς
καὶ τοὺς μετασχηματισμοὺς ἐν τοῖς δεχομένοις ὑποτίθεται. διό-
περ κατὰ ξυόδον καὶ καθ’ ὀρᾶν μεταβάλλεσθαι αὐτὸν φησιν,
ὡς ἔκεινον διαποικιλλομένον περὶ τὸν θεόν κατὰ τὰς πολλὰς
αὐτοῦ υποδοχὰς.

Fourth, the various “forms” of Helios in his description as a
god who represents the whole cosmos (or, in the “Systasis
with your own Daimon” spell, “the mixture of the cosmic nature”)
seems parallel to Plotinus’ doctrine of the “generically” and
“manifold” One which “at the same time” is “also many” (Enn.
6.2.2).

Fifth, Proclus refers to the various attributes of Helios in the
different entities which participate in his nature: “thus you
could see the particular characteristics that are coiled up in
Helios to be distributed to those who participate in his nature,
angels, daemons, souls, animals, plants, stones,” ἵδοις ἣν ὧν
τὰς συνεσπειραμένας ἰδιότητας ἐν ἡλίῳ μεριζομένας ἐν τοῖς
μετέχονσιν ἄγγελοις, δαίμονις, ψυχαῖς, ζῴοις, φυτοῖς, λίθοις.54

Similarly, Iamblichus claims that “the theurgic art … many
times joins together/combines stones, plants, animals, aromatic
substances (herbs), and other such things (that are) holy and
perfect and godlike,” ἡ θεουργικὴ τέχνη … συμπλέκει πολ-

Psellos Demonol.: Catalogue VI 128.23–129.5: ἣ δὲ γε μαγεία πολυδύναμον τι
χρῆμα τοῖς Ἑλληνὶς ἔδοξε. μερίδα γούν εἶναι ταύτῃ φαιν ἐσχάτην τῆς
ἰερατικῆς ἐπιστήμης … ἀνιχνεύουσα γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη δύναμις τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν
σελήνην γενέσθαι ἐκάστης ὑςίαν καὶ φύσιν καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ποιότητα,
λέγω δὲ στοιχείον καὶ τὸν τούτων μερόν, ζῶον παντοδαπῶν, φυτῶν καὶ τῶν
ἐντεύθεν καρπῶν, λίθων, βοτανῶν, καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, παντὸς πράγματος
ὑπόστασιν τε καὶ δύναμιν, ἐντεύθεν ἀρά τα ἐστὶν ἐνεργάζεται.
Sixth, these theurgical practices also point to the medico-magical text *Kyranides*. At the beginning of each chapter of the first book of the *Kyranides* the names of a plant, a bird, a fish, and a stone are listed, which all start with the same letter as the letter of the chapter. In some cases they can even be homonymous; in chapter Gamma for example we have γλυκισίδη βοτάνη, peony (herb), γλαύκος πτηνόν, owl (bird), γνάθιος λίθος, gnathios (stone), γλαύκος ἰχθύς, glaukos (fish). The four represent the four elements of nature. The combination of the power of these natural elements evokes the sympathetic forces of universe and can be used for theurgic practices. At the end of each chapter of Book 1 there are usually instructions for medico-magical remedies and for making amulets, depending each time on the various combinations of some or all of the four elements. In our spell (III.494–611) Helios, characteristically addressed as κοίρανε (551), is also associated with the four elements as the god “who created all things: abyss, earth, fire, water, air” (554–555).

Thus, in the magico-theurgic “Systasis to Helios” prayer, Helios is assimilated with the τύπος/image, the σύνολον/whole of the cosmos. The philosophical term τύπος possibly reflects influences from the *Chaldaean Oracles*. The many-formedness of Helios shows influences of the dodekaoros, the Egyptian religious concept of the personification of the divine, and the Neoplatonists’ concept of one and many, also from theurgical pracrices as described by the Neoplatonists Iamblichus and Proclus and by the medico-magical text of the *Kyranides*.

IV. “Systasis/Connection with your own daimon,” Σύστασις ἰδίου δαίμονος (VII.505–528, A.D. III/IV)

(8) Helios – the mixture of the cosmic nature

The purpose of this spell is to connect the magician, or

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56 κύρανε MS., emended by Preisendanz.
generally any individual, with his personal daimon through the magico-theurgic ritual prayer of systasis. In the systasis spell, among the various assimilations with deified abstract concepts, Helios is addressed as σὺ ἐστὶν ἐσθιον ἐν σεαυτῷ τὴν τῆς κοσμικῆς φύσεως σύγκρασιν, “you are the one who has in yourself the mixture of the cosmic nature” (VII.511). This association of Helios with σύγκρασις occurs only here and is in fact the only occurrence of the term in the magical papyri.

The simple form κρᾶσις is also found only once in the magical papyri, in the (so-called by scholars) “Mithras Liturgy” (IV.475–829), in which the magician addresses fire among the four elements (pneuma, fire, water, earth), defining it as πῦρ, τὸ εἰς ἐμὴν κρᾶσιν τῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ κράσεων θεοδώρητον, “fire, given by god to my mixture of the mixtures in me” (490–491).

This shows one formal difference from our spell, in that, although fire is god-given, the term κρᾶσις refers to the mixture/constitution not of a divine but of a human agent, that of the magician. But the mixture/constitution of the human agent reflects the larger divine or cosmic constitution. The term itself is found as early as the Pre-Socratic philosophers, e.g. in Empedocles, as Kingsley notes. But Betz holds that in context κρᾶσις implies specific influences from Stoic cosmology on the four elements. Betz’s view of 490–491 seems right, because

58 A. Dieterich, Eine Mithrasliturgie (Leipzig/Berlin 1923); M. W. Meyer, The Mithras Liturgy (Missoula 1976); Betz, The “Mithras Liturgy.”
60 The “Mithras Liturgy” 107–108. For κρᾶσις see Zeno fr.102 SVF I; Chrysip. fr.414, 420 fin., 470–473, 476, 478, 487 SVF II, 33, 229a fin. SVF III. For the σύγκρασις of the four elements, fr.555 SVF II. For τὴν τοῦ περίεχοντος κρᾶσιν see Posidon. fr.13 (I 29 Theiler); also 169 (I 138), 290a (I 213), 291 (I 218) 307 (I 225), 309a (I 227).
the verbal and conceptual parallels are close. But what of our spell? Which religious and philosophical influences are implied in the notion of σύγκρασις?

In Corpus Hermeticum “A Holy Discourse of Hermes Trismegistos,” there is a parallel reference to ἡ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις, “the entire cosmic mixture,” which depends on god and is renewed by nature, “for it is in the divine that nature also has been established,” ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις καθέστηκεν (Corp. Herm. 3.4).

Similarly, in Corpus Hermeticum “A Discourse of Nous to Hermes” it is stated about the mixture of the opposites that it becomes light (11.7): “the friendship and mixture of opposites and dissimilar elements has become light, which is shined over all by the energy of the god, the begetter of everything good and ruler of every order and leader of the seven worlds,” ἡ γὰρ φιλία καὶ ἡ σύγκρασις τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ τῶν ἀνοίκων φῶς γέγονε, καταλαμπόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας παντὸς ἁγαθοῦ γεννήτορος και πάσης τάξεως ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος τῶν ἑπτὰ κόσμων.

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ist, asserts (Enn. 6.2.2) “so, by mixing the genera (τὰ μὲν γένη), all of them together with each other, each with those under these, do we accomplish the whole (τὸ ὅλον) and make a mixture of everything (σύγκρασιν ἀπὸντων)?”64 Earlier in the same treatise, Plotinus argues that the “one is at the same time also many (ἕν ἅμα καὶ πολλά) and that anything manifold (πολικίλον) has the many in one.” Therefore, it is necessary according to Plotinus that this “one” should either be “generically (τῷ γένει) one” and the beings (τὰ ὄντα) its species, “by which it is many and one,” or “there should be more genera than one, but all under one,” or more genera and “none of them under the other, but each containing (περιεκτικόν) those under it” and that “all would contribute (συντελεῖ) to one nature (µίαν φύσιν)” and that “from all there would be the connection (τὴν σύστασιν) with the intelligible cosmos (τῷ νοητῷ κόσµῳ), which we indeed call being.” In the final steps of Plotinus’ argument this “one” defined as “one nature” is associated with the intelligible cosmos. Proclus also refers to “the mixture from all (ἡ ἐκ τῶν ὅλων σύγκρασις) towards the implied creation, which exists on the whole.”65

Thus, in the “Systasis with your own daimon” (VII.505–528) Helios is assimilated with the σύγκρασις/mixture of the cosmic nature. The philosophical concept of σύγκρασις reflects the Corpus Hermeticum and the Neoplatonists on the notion of the one and many. Influences from Presocratic philosophy and Stoic cosmology with the term κρᾶσις are also possible.

64 Cf. Enn. 6.3.25, 3.3.4; Porph. V.Plot. 31.9; Iamb. Comm.Math. cap. 10 (p.4 Festa), Theol.Ar. (p.5 de Falco).
65 In Ti. II 268.1–3 Diehl. Cf. In Ti. II 297.15; In Parm. 777.5–9, 723.29, 1051.22-23; Hier. Ar. 150.29-31. See also Pachoumi, Philologus 157 (2013) 51.
Conclusion

This paper has considered the religious and philosophical assimilations of Helios. The assimilation process makes possible the manifold attributes of Helios, which evoke natural, cosmic, and divine powers. The participation of these powers characterises his divine image, which can be described as his ‘inclusive hyperpower’. In sum, the assimilation process functions in the following ways:

(i) assimilation with other deities

Helios is assimilated with the Egyptian Horus Harpocrates, as in the description “leaping upon the clover of the golden bean” or “the god seated on the lotus decorated with rays” (IV.985–1035). His representation “holding the reins and steering the tiller and restraining the serpent” shows influence of Egyptian religion, without excluding possible allusions to Greek literature and Near Eastern religious texts. The association of the chariot sun god with Mithras has also been pointed out. The reference to the divine spirit and fire may also imply influence from Zoroastrianism. Helios’ assimilation with the Agathodaimon reveals Egyptian influence (IV.1596–1715). Other attempts to assimilate Helios to Egyptian religious concepts and symbolisms are his description as the “lotus emerged from the abyss,” or the god “who controls the beginning of Egypt and the end of the whole inhabited world.” Helios is identified with Greek Apollo. He is also assimilated to the Jewish Sabaoth Adonai and addressed as the great god. That assimilation reflects a megatheistic concept of the divine, which is mixed with Jewish influences. Helios is also assimilated to the Jewish Iao, Sabaoth, the living god, and the creator-god of every soul and race.

(ii) assimilation with various epithets

Helios is presented as the cosmokrator and the thalassokrator (IV.1596–1715). Mystical characteristics are attributed to him as the god who celebrates orgiastic rites and “to whom heaven has become the processional way.” Helios’ assimilations via these epithets substantiate his supremacy over the physical and divine powers and the cosmos.
(iii) assimilation with abstract concepts

Helios is assimilated with the “image” (ὁ τύπος), “the whole” ([τ]ό σύνολον) of the cosmos (III.494–611). τύπος, a philosophical term used since the Presocratics, possibly reflects here the influence of the Chaldaean Oracles. Helios has in him the “mixture” (σύγκρασις) of the cosmic nature (VII.505–528). This reflects religious and philosophical influences from the Corpus Hermeticum and the Neoplatonists in relation to the notion of the one and many, while κράσις has roots in Presocratic philosophy and Stoic cosmology on the four elements.

(iv) assimilation with various forms

Helios is identified with various forms of animals (III.494–611). The many-formedness of Helios reveals influences from the Egyptian concept of the divine and from theurgical practices, as described by the Neoplatonists Iamblichus and Proclus. The twelve different names and animal forms of Helios, which correspond to the twelve hours of the day echo the Egyptian zodiac of the dodecaoros (IV.1596–1715).

The religious and philosophical assimilations of Helios reflect coherent approaches to the concept of diversity and plurality of powers and attributes of one god, and unity, which are on the whole consistent with the Egyptian concept of personification of the divine and with the Neoplatonists’ doctrine of the diversity and unity of the manifold one, which is also many. Religious and philosophical influences from the Corpus Hermeticum and the Chaldaean Oracles support this notion of unity.66

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