

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

Eleni Pachoumi

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 (θεὸς 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–

991).¹ 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”² included in the “Wondrous erotic binding spell” (296–466), Helios is once again identified with Horus (κλήζω δ’ οὐνομα σόν, Ἦρ’, 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 ἰλὺν αἰνίττεται μὴ ψάδουσας μηδαμῶς τῆς ἰλῦος, καὶ ἡγεμονίαν νοερὰν 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 οἴακα, κατέχων δράκοντα, 993–994).³ The origins of the idea of the chariot of the Sun are Indo-European.⁴ The representation of Helios in his chariot is familiar in Greek literature⁵

¹ For this cosmic depiction of Harpocrates in the Greco-Roman period see A. M. El-Kachab, “Some Gem-Amulets Depicting Harpocrates Seated on a Lotus Flower,” *JEA* 57 (1971) 132–145; C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (Ann Arbor 1950) 143, plates IX–X; cf. *PDM* xiv.45.

² Reconstructed as Hymn 4 in *PGM²* II 239–240 (A = IV.436–461, B = IV.1957–1989, C = VIII.74–81, D = I.315–325).

³ In the salutation to Helios in the same spell (930–1114) the magician also salutes the Hours (αἱ Ἦραι), personified and characterized as Helios’ Hours, “on which you ride across” (ἐν αἷς διῦππεύεις, 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.⁶ 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.⁷ 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).⁸ In the spell III.98–124, included in the spell III.1–164, “the greatest (μέγιστε) 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰

dramatized by Euripides (C. Collard, M. J. Cropp, and K. H. Lee, *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays I* [Warminster 1995] 195–239); *Hymn. Orph.* 8.18–19 (G. Quandt, *Orphei Hymni* [Berlin 1955]).

⁶ W. Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1985) 175.

⁷ See J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism* (New York 1966) 108–111; for the cult of Helios in Syria and his depictions in his chariot see H. Seyrig, “Le culte du Soleil en Syrie à l’époque romaine,” *Syria* 48 (1971) 337–373.

⁸ Note also the one reference to the Persian Zoroaster (Ζωροάστρης ὁ Πέρσης) in *PGM* (XIII.967–968).

⁹ See H. D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago 1986) 21.

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.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 δ’ ἐπὶ πλοίου ναυτιλλόμενος τὴν διακυβερνώσαν τὸν κόσμον ἐπικράτειαν παράστησιν. ὡς περ οὖν ὁ κυβερνήτης χωριστὸς ὦν τῆς νεῶς τῶν πηδαλίων αὐτῆς ἐπιβέβηκεν, οὕτω χωριστῶς 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.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 930–1114,¹³ with one exception, the hymn “To Helios” (939–948).

¹¹ The Bremmer-Rhind Papyrus (British Museum 10188) XXVI.21, XXVIII.4–18; J. A. Wilson, *ANET*³ 6–7; cf. R. Ritner, in Betz, *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, 8.52, 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 ‘ειω’”: J. G. Griffiths,

The reason may be that this hymn with traces of meter was composed earlier than the other spells in this collection.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 ἡ κατὰ πάντων τελετὴ ἥδε. 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, ᾧ ἐπιτελοῦμαι 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

¹⁴ *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Swansea 1970) 409 n.4, 5. But the Jewish influences in some spells and the references to other Jewish deities often mentioned together with Iao make the reference to the Jewish god more likely.

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) PHARAKOUNETH. Give glory and favour to this phylactery, this stone, and to NN, δὸς δόξαν καὶ χάριν τῷ φυλακτηρίῳ τούτῳ, τῷ λίθῳ τούτῳ καὶ τῷ δεῖνα (1647–1650).¹⁵

(4) *Helios – the gracious Good Daimon*

Helios is ὁ ἰλαρὸς 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,¹⁶ and is here assimilated to Helios. Is there Egyptian influence? Helios is also addressed as Ψοῖ φνουθι νινθηρ (1643), Egyptian for “the Agathodaimon, the god of the gods.”¹⁷ Another description of Helios that betrays Egyptian influence is “the lotus emerged from the abyss” (1683–1684).¹⁸ In a further reference to Egypt, Helios is described as ὁ τὴν ἀρχὴν 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.

¹⁶ See Burkert, *Greek Religion* 180; C. Colpe, “Geister (Dämonen): Die wichtigsten Gestalten: c. Agathos Daimon,” *RAC* 9 (1976) 619–620; R. Merkelbach and M. Totti, *Abrasax: Ausgewählte Papyri Religiösen und Magischen Inhalts* III (Opladen 1992) 59–65. The Good Daimon is also identified with a deity in XXI.1–29 (“Good Daimon” at 7–8); “the greatest god, lord Horus Harpocrates,” called “Good holy Daimon” (IV.987–988, 995); the deity invoked as “Good Daimon” (XII.135–137). For the Good Daimon as a πάρεδρος see I.25–26.

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, Psoi, or Psoeio (Ψωετω, 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.

pagan and Christian contexts.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ Hence Helios' world-rule as defined in relation to Egypt has also mystical implications.

As to *ίλαρός*, 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," *ίλαρῶ [σ]ου τῶ προ[σ]ώπῳ* (III.569, cf. 575).²¹ Why is Helios described as *ὁ ίλαρός*? 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 ἐπιλάμψαντος 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 *ίλαρός* 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,

¹⁹ E.g. *Hymn.Orph.* 4.2: ἀρχὴ πάντων πάντων τε τελευτή. Christian: Rev 21:6: ἐγὼ τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, cf. 22:13.

²⁰ 1617–1619: ἐπιτελοῦμαι ... τελουμένῳ; in the title of this spell, *τελετή ἥδε*; cf. 1661–1662: εἰς ὃ τελεῖται πρᾶγμα; 1679 and 1700–1701: *τελεσθήτω*; 1703: ἐφ' ᾧ αὐτὸ τελῶ; 1710–1711: πάντα μοι τελέσαι; 1714–1715: ἐὰν τελῆς.

²¹ Cf. *Hymn.Orph.* 8.3: ζῶων ἡδεῖα πρόσοπι, 6: φαιδρωπέ, 14: εὔδιε.

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.

²³ See also H. Jacobson, "Papyri Graecae Magicae XIII.447," *Phoenix* 47 (1993) 261.

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).²⁴

(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.²⁵ 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), *gratias tibi, summe, exsuperantissime ... haec optantes convertimus nos ad puram 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.

²⁵ For these Jewish divine names see also V.464–485, III.219–221, XII.62–63. Cf. J. G. Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield 1993); R. Kotansky, "Kronos and a New Magical Inscription Formula on a Gem in the J. P. Getty Museum," *AncW* 3 (1980) 29–32.

not restricted to the Jewish god, it can be used of him as well.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.²⁷ The concept of a god to whom can be attributed many names is already attested in the Aristotelian εἰς ὃν ὁ θεὸς πολυώνυμός 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 Ἥλιος Μίθραξ (482).²⁸ Similarly in the “Compulsion spell” (ἐπάναγκος, 1035–1046), which is included in the “Spell that produces direct vision,” Helios is given orders by “the great living god”

²⁶ E.g. Hes. *Th.* 168 and 459: μέγας Κρόνος, 176 and 208: μέγας Οὐρανός; Aesch. *Supp.* 1052: ὁ μέγας Ζεὺς, *Eum.* 273: μέγας Ἄιθης; Soph. *Trach.* 399: ἴστω μέγας Ζεὺς, *Ant.* 140: μέγας Ἄρης, *El.* 174: ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ Ζεὺς, *OC* 1471: ὦ μέγας αἰθήρ, ὦ Ζεῦ; Eur. *Andr.* 37: Ζεὺς τάδ’ εἰδείη μέγας, *Bacch.* 1031: ὦναξ Βρόμιε, θεὸς φαίνη μέγας, fr.177: ὦ παῖ Διώνης, ὡς ἔφυς μέγας θεός, Διόνυσε, θνητοῖς τ’ οὐδαμῶς ὑποστατός; Ar. *Av.* 570: Βροντάτω νῦν ὁ μέγας Ζάν; Ap. Rhod. 3.715: μέγας Οὐρανός; Plut. *Alc.* 21.2: ὁ μέγας Ἑρμῆς; Luc. *Bis.acu.* 33: ὁ μέγας ἐν οὐρανῷ Ζεὺς; *Corp.Herm.* 12.15: ὁ δὲ σύμπας κόσμος οὗτος, ὁ μέγας θεὸς καὶ τοῦ μείζονος εἰκόν. For Jewish ὁ μέγας θεός see Deut. 7:21: ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐν σοί, θεὸς μέγας καὶ κραταίος, 10:17: ὁ θεὸς ὁ μέγας καὶ ἰσχυρὸς καὶ ὁ φοβερὸς; Ps. 85:10, 94:3; 2 Esd. 11:5, 19:32; Ps.Sal. 18:10; etc.

²⁷ See Merkelbach and Totti, *Abrasax* IV 103–104. Cf. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 1999); S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2010); A. Chaniotis, “Megatheism: The Search for the Almighty God and the Competition of Cults,” in S. Mitchell and P. van Nuffelen (eds.), *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2010) 112–140; H. S. Versnel, *Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysus, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden 1990), and *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden 2011).

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 αἰῶνας 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.²⁹ 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.³⁰ Finally, ὁ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων echoes Jewish and Christian hymnology.³¹ 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 (κοσμοκράτορα), the one over the cosmos and under the cosmos” (IV.1598–1600), and “the one who shines in the whole inhabited world” (1635–1636).³² Cosmic characteristics are attributed to Helios here. Similarly, in the *Orphic Hymn* to Helios he is addressed as κοσμοκράτορ and δέσποτα κόσμου (8.11, 16). The same epithet is used of Pan in *Hymn. Orph.* 11.11.

²⁹ Cf. J. M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (London 1974) 31; contrast XII.79.

³⁰ See discussion in E. Pachoumi, “An Invocation of Chrestos in Magic. The Question of the Orthographical Spelling of Chrestos and Interpretation Issues in PGM XIII.288–95,” *Hermathena* 188 (2010) 29–54.

³¹ Cf. Ps. 9:6, 37, 20:7, 21:27, 44:17; 4 Macc. 18:24; Gal 1:5, Phil 4:20, 1 Tim 1:17, 2 Tim 4:18, Heb 13:21, 1 Pet 4:11, Rev 1:18, etc.; see also the alchemist Ostanes Magus *Pet.* II 262.21 Berthelot/Ruelle.

³² The same description of Helios occurs in III.142–143; cf. IV.1639–1642 and 989–991.

In Iamblichus' *De mysteriis* κοσμοκράτορες seems to refer to two types of the archons, those “who administer the sublunary elements,” οἱ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα διοικούντες, and those “who preside over matter,” οἱ τῆς ὕλης 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.

³³ Iambl. *Myst.* 2.3, 71: τὰ δὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων, εἰ μὲν σοι δοκοῦσιν οὗτοι εἶναι οἱ κοσμοκράτορες οἱ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα διοικούντες, ἔσται ποικίλα μὲν, ἐν τάξει δὲ διακεκοσμημένα, εἰ δ' οἱ τῆς ὕλης προεστηκότες, ἔσται ποικιλώτερα μὲν, ἀτελέστερα δὲ τούτων μᾶλλον; 9.9, 284: ἀεὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ θεουργικῇ τάξει διὰ τῶν ὑπερεχόντων τὰ δεύτερα καλεῖται· καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δαιμόνων τοίνυν εἶς κοινὸς ἡγεμὼν τῶν περὶ τὴν γένεσιν κοσμοκρατόρων καταπέμπει τοὺς ἰδίους δαίμονας ἐκάστοις. Cf. J. Dillon, *Iamblichi Chalcidensis. In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta* (Leiden 1973) 51 n.1; E. C. Clarke, *Iamblichus' De Mysteriis. A Manifesto of the Miraculous* (Aldershot 2001) 110–111.

³⁴ Zeus: e.g. Clem. Rom. *Hom.* 6.21.2; Helios: e.g. Vett. Val. 8.7.272; Heph. *Apotel.* 2.18.27 Pingree; Helios and Selene: e.g. Vett. Val. 9.16.2.

³⁵ Ephr. Syr. *Serm. de sec. aduent. et iud.* p.226.12–13 Phrantzoles; *Serm. in eos qui in Christ. obdorm.* p.103.9.

³⁶ Iren. *Adv. haer.* 1.1.10; Joh. Chrys. *Vid. Jun.* 443; Ps.-Macar. *Hom.* 25.2; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 17.9 (PG 35.976C).

³⁷ Eph 6:12; Ignat. *Ep.* 11.13.2 Diekamp/Funk; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 3.16.101.3, 5.14.105.2, *Quis dives* 29.2; Orig. *C. Cels.* 8.34, *De princ.* fr.12, *Comm. in Evang. Joh.* 2.167, *De orat.* 29.2.

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 (ὄχεύων) 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 ἥλιο[v] (col. XIII.9).

Heaven as Helios’ processional way

Helios is also assimilated to heaven when described as the god ᾧ ὁ οὐρανὸς 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.³⁹ 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 κῶμος, was also an epithet of Dionysus and consequently an allusion to that god’s mystic rites.⁴⁰ Helios’ characterization also as οργεατής [sic] in 1629, implying ὀργεαστής, “he who celebrates ὄργια/orgiastic rites,” which are often associated with Dionysus, accentuates the mystical allusions.⁴¹ 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, συμμύστης, ἀμυστηρίαστος) reveals the magicians’ attempt to as-

³⁹ E.g. III.130, XII.183, 252, XIII.774, XXI.10, LXXVII.13. Cf. P.Duk. inv. 729.33–34: ᾧ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐγένετο κωμαστήρι[ον]: D. R. Jordan, *GRBS* 46 (2006) 159–173, at 163.

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) 126–135, at 131, 133, and n.27.

simulate magic to the mysteries.⁴² Thus in 1607 the religious and mystical observances of initiates on earth imitate and foreshadow the “processions of the heavenly hosts.”

But could there be other religious influences on the description 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 difference of status: Elijah is a great prophet who ascends to Heaven. Helios is himself the great god, who has appropriated and extended a prophetic motif.

Thus, in 1596–1715, Helios’ divinity is articulated by his assimilations with other deities and with a variety of epithets. He is assimilated with the gracious Good Daimon, the Jewish Sabaoth, Adonai, and with the megatheistic concept of the great god. The epithets 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 <ᾰ>πρατα, παραδοτὰ μυστήρια, I.127: ὃ μα[κάρ]ιε μύστα τῆς ἱερᾶς μαγείας; 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 and Christian Self-definition III* (London 1982) 161–170, “Magic and Mystery 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 Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions* (Leiden 1995) 153–175.

⁴³ See R. Elijior, “Mysticism, Magic and Angelology – The Perception of Angels in Hekhalot Literature,” *JSQ* 1 (1993) 3–53.

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 Ἥλιον (III.494–611, IV A.D.)

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

In this magico-theurgic systasis⁴⁵ prayer Helios is assimilated to the entire cosmos in his address as ὁ τύπος, [τ]ὸ σύνολον τοῦ κόσμου, “the image/archetype, the whole of the cosmos” (III.538–539). He is also described as ἀεροδρόμο[ν] μέγαν θεόν, “air-traversing great god” (497).⁴⁶ 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/archetype,” κόσμῳ γὰρ ἄναξ πολυμόρφῳ προὔθηκεν νοερόν 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 Ἥλιον (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.

⁴⁶ For air-traversing Helios cf. *Orac. Chald.* 61.f des Places: καὶ πλατὺς ἀήρ μηναιὸς τε δρόμος καὶ ἀείπολος ἡέλιος.

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 [π]αράσ[ημα καὶ μ]ορφάς (499–500), and “I have told your signs and symbols,” εἴρηκά σου τὰ σ[ημ]εῖα καὶ τὰ παράσημα (535).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 *aphanos* stone, a ... bird ..., your name (is) PHROUER;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) BAZETOPHOTH” (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 ὠρογενέσιν θεοῖς (29–31), and “invoke the god of the hour and the day, so that you may be connected through them,” ἐπικαλοῦ τὸν τῆς ὥρας καὶ τὸν τῆς ἡμέρας θεόν, ἵνα ἐξ αὐτῶν 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).⁵¹

⁴⁹ On the signs and symbols in theurgy see Pachoumi, *Philologus* 157 (2013) 60–64.

⁵⁰ I.e. Pre the great, see Ritner, in Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri* 31 n.97.

⁵¹ See Pachoumi, *Philologus* 157 (2013) 49–50.

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.⁵²

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*.”⁵³ 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/offerings, 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/his

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

⁵³ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* 17–21 (quotation at 20), 139–142. Cf. E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (Ithaca 1982); M. L. Ryhiner, “A propos des trigrammes pantheists,” *REgypt* 29 (1977) 125–137; G. G. Stroumsa, “Polymorphie divine et transformations d’un mythologème,” *VigChr* 35 (1981) 412–435; J. F. Quack, “The so-called Pantheos. On Polymorphic Deities in Late Egyptian Religion,” *Aegyptus et Pannonia* III (Budapest 2006) 175–190; E. Pachoumi, “Eros and Psyche in Erotic Magic,” *ClMed* 62 (2011) 39–49, at 40.

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 τοῦτο βούλεται μὲν ἡ συμβολικὴ διδαχὴ διὰ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν δοθέντων τὸν ἕνα θεὸν ἐμφαίνειν, καὶ διὰ τῶν πολυτρόπων δυνάμεων τὴν μίαν αὐτοῦ παριστάνει δύναμιν· διὸ καὶ φησὶ αὐτὸν ἕνα εἶναι καὶ τὸν αὐτόν, τὰς δὲ διαμείψεις τῆς μορφῆς καὶ τοὺς μετασχηματισμοὺς ἐν τοῖς δεχομένοις ὑποτίθεται. διόπερ κατὰ ζῳδίων καὶ καθ' ὥραν μεταβάλλεσθαι αὐτόν φησιν, ὡς ἐκείνων διαποικιλλομένων περὶ τὸν θεὸν κατὰ τὰς πολλὰς αὐτοῦ ὑποδοχάς.

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,” ἴδοις ἂν οὖν τὰς συνεσπειραμένας ιδιότητας ἐν ἡλίῳ μεριζομένας ἐν τοῖς μετέχουσιν ἀγγέλοις, δαίμοσι, ψυχαῖς, ζώοις, 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-

⁵⁴ Procl. *Hier.Ar.: Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques* VI 150.22–23. Cf. Psellos *Demonol.: Catalogue* VI 128.23–129.5: ἡ δὲ γε μαγεία πολυδύναμόν τι χρῆμα τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἔδοξε. μερίδα γοῦν εἶναι ταύτην φασὶν ἐσχάτην τῆς ἱερατικῆς ἐπιστήμης ... ἀνιχνεύουσα γὰρ ἡ τοιαύτη δύναμις τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν σελήνην γενέσεων ἐκάστης οὐσίαν καὶ φύσιν καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ποιότητα, λέγω δὲ στοιχείων καὶ τῶν τούτων μερῶν, ζώων παντοδαπῶν, φυτῶν καὶ τῶν ἐντεῦθεν καρπῶν, λίθων, βοτανῶν, καὶ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, παντὸς πράγματος ὑπόστασιν τε καὶ δύναμιν, ἐντεῦθεν ἄρα τὰ ἑαυτῆς ἐνεργάζεται.

λάκις λίθους βοτάνας ζῶα ἀρώματα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἱερὰ καὶ τέλεια καὶ θεοειδῆ (*Myst.* 5.23, 233).

Sixth, these theurgical practices also point to the medico-magical text *Kyranides*.⁵⁵ 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), γλαῦκος πτηνόν, owl (bird), γνάθιος λίθος, *gnathios* (stone), γλαῦκος 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),⁵⁶ 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 theurgic practices 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

⁵⁵ D. Kaimakis, *Die Kyraniden* (Meisenheim 1976).

⁵⁶ κύρανε MS., emended by Preisendanz.

generally any individual, with his personal daimon through the magico-theurgic ritual prayer of systasis.⁵⁷ In the systasis spell, among the various assimilations with deified abstract concepts, Helios is addressed as σὺ εἶ ὁ ἔχων 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),⁵⁸ 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 Presocratic philosophers, e.g. in Empedocles, as Kingsley notes.⁵⁹ But Betz holds that in context κρᾶσις implies specific influences from Stoic cosmology on the four elements.⁶⁰ Betz’s view of 490–491 seems right, because

⁵⁷ On this systasis in VII.505–28 see Pachoumi, *Philologus* 157 (2013) 47–55.

⁵⁸ A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*³ (Leipzig/Berlin 1923); M. W. Meyer, *The Mithras Liturgy* (Missoula 1976); Betz, *The “Mithras Liturgy.”*

⁵⁹ Emped. 31 A 86 D.-K.: οἷς δὲ καθ’ ἕν τι μόνιον ἢ μέση κρᾶσις ἐστὶ, ταύτη σοφοῦς ἐκάστους εἶναι (= Thphr. *Sens.* 11); 68: ἔτι δ’ οἷς ἡ κρᾶσις ἐξ ἴσων, ἀνάγκη συναύξεσθαι κατὰ μέρος ἐκάτερον (= *Sens.* 19); 96.12–13. See P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford 1996) 374–375; Betz, *The “Mithras Liturgy”* 105 ff.

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 περιέχοντος 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”⁶¹ 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 ἀνομοίων φῶς γέγονε, καταλαμπόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ γεννήτορος καὶ πάσης τάξεως ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος τῶν ἑπτὰ κόσμων.⁶²

Parallels to Helios’ description as a deity who has inside him “the mixture of the cosmic nature” can also be found in Neoplatonist philosophy. Plotinus,⁶³ an Egyptian-born Neoplaton-

⁶¹ Henotheistic messages are implied at 11.11: καὶ τὸν μὲν κόσμον ὁμολόγησας αἰεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἓνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν καὶ θειότητα μίαν.

⁶² In Julian’s “Encomium to King Helios” (150b) σύγκρασις is used of Aphrodite, who is described as “being near to Helios” and “the joint cause with him”: ἔστι δὴ οὖν αὕτη σύγκρασις τῶν οὐρανίων θεῶν, καὶ τῆς ἀρμονίας αὐτῶν ἔτι φιλία καὶ ἔνωσις. Ἡλίου γὰρ ἐγγὺς οὖσα καὶ συμπεριθέουσα καὶ πλησιάζουσα πληροῖ μὲν τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐκρασίας, ἐνδίδωσι δὲ τὸ γόνιμον τῇ γῆ, προμηθουμένη καὶ αὐτῇ τῆς ἀειγενείας τῶν ζῴων, ἧς ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς Ἡλῖος ἔχει τὴν πρωτοουργὸν αἰτίαν, Ἀφροδίτη δὲ αὐτῷ συναίτιος.

⁶³ The Neoplatonists generally were interested in magic, and the relative chronology allows the possibility of two-way influence. See e.g. S. Eitrem, “La théurgie chez les Neoplatoniciens et dans les papyrus magiques,” *Symb Oslo* 21 (1941) 49–79; E. R. Dodds, “Theurgy and its Relationship to Neoplatonism,” *JRS* 37 (1947) 55–69; Ph. Merlan, “Plotinus and Magic,” *Isis* 44 (1953) 341–348; A. H. Armstrong, “Was Plotinus a Magician?” *Phronesis* 1 (1955/6) 73–79; E. R. Dodds, “Tradition and Personal Achievement in

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 ἁπάντων)?”⁶⁴ Earlier in the same treatise, Plotinus argues that the “one is at the same time also many (ἐν ἅμα καὶ πολλά) and that anything manifold (ποικίλον) 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 (συντελεῖν) 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.

the Philosophy of Plotinus,” *JRS* 49 (1959) 1–7; C. Zintzen, “Die Wertung von Mystik und Magie in der Neuplatonischen Philosophie,” in *Die Philosophie des Neuplatonismus* (Darmstadt 1977) 391–426; H. Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Paris 1978).

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]ὸ 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 κρᾶσις 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

January, 2015

School of Ancient Language
and Text Studies
North-West University
Internal Box 147, Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom
PC 2520, South Africa
elenipachoumi@hotmail.com

⁶⁶ I would like to thank Kent Rigsby and the anonymous reviewers of *GRBS* for their helpful comments.