CHAPTER XI
HELIOS AND OTHER SOLAR TYPES

PURELY Greek types of Helios, which show no connection with magic, are well known on gems of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and in the late Roman period they are applied to magical use either by combining them with other types used chiefly for magical stones or by inscribing them with magical words or formulas. Attention has been called above to some amulets that show on one side Helios driving his four-horse chariot, on the other the cock-headed god. Here we notice briefly some specimens in which the sun-god is the principal subject. They fall into two groups: first, those in which the god in his quadriga is seen either in a front view or from the side; secondly, those in which the god is shown standing, and his character as driver of the solar chariot is indicated only by the whip that he carries.

A good example of the first group, hitherto unpublished, belongs to the collection of Mr. Seyrig (D. 228). It is a greenish-black jasper, with a design of Helios driving his four-horse chariot to the left. His head has six rays, and he carries a whip over his shoulder. Round the design, above, at the right, and below, the seven vowels were cut, each with a six-rayed star below it; the omicron is damaged, and the iota, which was at the right, has been chipped away. The stars show that the letters represent the seven planets. The reverse and bevel are fully occupied by an inscription which is unintelligible; but part of it is a formula found elsewhere. It may be specifically solar since it occurs on the reverse of a bronze amulet in the Michigan collection which has Harpocrates with the animals as the obverse type (D. 203). Among the adequately published gems of this sort the most interesting is one in the Southesk collection (N 51). The chariot of the sun-god is preceded by Phosphor, the morning star, represented as a woman with radiate head, carrying a lighted torch. The reverse bears, in addition to some magical words, a personal petition which has been mentioned before—"Keep me ageless and full of charm." The ever-renewed brilliance of the sun seems to have caused representations of its god to be taken as propitious emblems in various ways. Thus a heliotrope with a standing figure of Helios was a love gift, to judge from the inscription Σωμα θεος ιτιτε (l. ιτιτε).

A bloodstone in the Ruthven collection (D. 227) shows Helios in his chariot seen from the front, with the horses in the usual arrangement, the two outside facing outward, the two pole horses with their heads turned towards

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1 Examples may be seen in R. M. Cat. Gems, 1657, 1660, 1661; De Radder 5060–5061; Southesk D 1.
2 This formula should read ουθεβαλενποι ουθεβαλακαιαθουμις (a version established by comparing several slightly varying examples).
3 Furtwängler, Beschreibung, 8653, Pl. 61.
each other. The god’s right hand is raised in the gesture of benediction, the left holds a whip over his shoulder. Six stars surround the design. On the reverse a winged Victory, facing left, holds out a garland, while a palm leaf rests against her left shoulder. The inscriptions, Μιχαηλ Σαθαω[θ]Ραφαηλ on the obverse, Ραχαηλ (for Ραφαηλ) Δβραααξ on the reverse, illustrate the common tendency to use Jewish angel names in magical formulas. The presence of the Victory on the reverse does not, in the absence of other signs, warrant us in calling this amulet Mithraic, for the notion of the sun as invictus was not confined to Mithraic circles. A gem published by King, now in the Metropolitan Museum, has been called Mithraic because, on the reverse of a Helios, it has a figure, apparently female, wearing a Phrygian cap and in the act of sacrificing a bull. The analogy of the Ruthven stone suggests that this may be only a Victory (here, as rarely elsewhere, represented without wings), for Victories are often shown in this act of immolation. But it must be allowed that the figure bears a certain superficial resemblance to Mithras Tauroktonos, even though the person stands beside the bull and does not, like Mithras and many of the Victories, rest a knee on the animal’s shoulder.

The second group, in which the god is shown standing, is represented by many gems that bear no mark of magical character, as well as in other forms of art. An excellent illustration of a wall painting of this sort is the Helios of the Casa di Apolline in Pompeii. The youthful god has a nimbus and seven rays round his head, and wears only a chlamys, which waves behind his right shoulder and hip as if blown by the wind. His right hand holds the whip, which belongs to him as charioteer, his left a globe. With this design one may compare a gem published by Chiflet, in which the positions of globe and whip are just reversed; the stone seems to have had no inscription or other mark of magical use. On most of the specimens that are clearly magical amulets the right hand of the god is raised in the familiar gesture, the left holds the whip or the globe, sometimes both, less frequently a torch.

A stone in the Royal Museum of Archaeology in Toronto is exceptional in some respects. The radiate god holds his right hand to his lips, like Harpocrates, and the whip held over the left shoulder is more like the flail

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1 Curmont, Monuments, I, 47-49.
1 King, Gnostics, p. 257, fig. 6; D. 71.
4 E.g. Pumwagner, Beschreibung, Pl. 16, 476.
5 Ibid., 657-663; Artike Gemmen, I, Pl. 36, 39, 31; B. M. Cat. Gems, 5033-5036, Metropolitan Museum, Cat. Gems, 189.
6 E.g. B. M. Cat. Gems, 1537, Pl. 22.
7 A good and conveniently accessible reproduction of this painting may be seen in an article by Doro Levi in Neues Jb., 12, 253, fig. 21.
8 Chiflet, Pl. 1, 4.
9 Among the examples previously published with illustrations the following may be mentioned: D. 223, formerly Wytham Cook 255; (the published description does not mention the globe, which is present); Pieper, Mitt. des deutschen Inst. in Kairo, 5, 141, No. 11928, Pl. 23:2; De Ritter 3457-3458.
10 D. 176.
or ladanisterion than the whip of a charioteer. But from the chest down the body is swathed like a mummy, which suggests Osiris. Apparently the stone indicates a tendency to endow even the Lord of the Dead with solar attributes. This seems to be borne out by the inscription Iao in the field and by the fact that the design is on the reverse of a stone whose obverse represents the solar anguipede. Sarapis, who is in many ways the successor of Osiris, is sometimes represented with rays or other solar attributes, and the tendency to identify him with Helios is indicated not only by coins and inscriptions, but also by the oracular verse, cited by Julian,

eis Zeus, eis 'Athen, eis "Hlios kòsê Sarapès."

But I know of no certain instance of Sarapis represented as a mummy; the nearest approach to it is the rigid figure clothed, almost swathed, in a narrow, close-fitting tunic, which is the reverse design of an Osiris amulet in my possession. See D. 1.

On some examples the sun-god is riding or standing on the back of a lion. The deity is sometimes clearly characterized as the young Horus (Harpocrates), as on a noteworthy specimen in the Metropolitan Museum; here Harpocrates not only has the disk overhead and carries the flail, but he also wears the scalplock of the Egyptian child. Most, however, represent him as the Greek Helios. The lion introduces into the composition a non-Greek element. Various oriental deities, Babylonian, Hittite, and Syrian, are shown standing on the backs of certain animals, but the lion seems to have a special reference to the sun. This appears in a passage of Horapollo (1, 17) which contains some truth along with its absurdities:

"When they wish to indicate 'anger,' they draw a lion, for the animal has a large head and fiery eyes. Its face is round, and a raylike mane surrounds it, resembling the sun. For this reason they place lions under the throne of Horus, suggesting the symbolic relation of the beast to the god. Helios is Helios, so called because he rules the hours ( diávòr)."

More important as evidence are the fairly numerous works of older Egyptian art in which the lion is represented in connection with Horus, or the god has the head of a lion. Since the association of lion and sun is well known in Egyptian religion, one should not be too ready to accept the often repeated statement that amulets bearing such designs are Mithraic. It is true that both sun and lion have their places in Mithraism, and it is true also that amulets showing those designs are sometimes inscribed with words that are neither Egyptian nor Greek. But unless there is definite evidence

11 B. M. Cat. Alex., 264, Pl. 15; Ditzenberger, OGI, 678, 3; Herpetia, 15, 34 and n. 17.
12 Or. 4, 132 A.
13 D. 211.
14 Compare also Plut. Sympos. 4, 5, 2; Ael. N. A. 12, 7; Hopfner, Der Tierkult der alten Aegypten (Denkm. Wien. Akad., 57 [1914], 1, 40-47); Kees in PW XII, 1055.
15 Lanzone, Ph. 228, 4; 244, 1.
of some kind to prove Mithraic origin, Egypt has as good a claim to such types as Persia has.

To begin with the lion, the best specimen known to me belongs to the University of Michigan. It is a fine piece of rock crystal, of a thick lentoid form, engraved on one side only. The lion is walking to the right, and there is a star just over his back. The margin is completely encircled with the inscription Ιω υλαμω αβαραςξ. The word υλαμω has been interpreted as “eternal” on the basis of the Assyrian illamu, which has that meaning. A yellow jasper in the same collection shows a lion with moon and star; it is not inscribed and hence is perhaps to be classed as religious rather than magical. Still another (citrine) has the seven vowels inscribed over the lion. A good specimen in the Southesk collection shows the lion springing forward over a mummy; on another (yellow jasper) the lion rests a forepaw on the skull of an ox. The lion with the ox skull, surrounded by seven stars, is depicted on a Michigan haematite, which has on the reverse the common design of Harpocrates on the lotus with the inscription αβαραςξ Ιω. A haematite specimen in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts has the lion with a forepaw resting on a rounded object, evidently intended for a skull. Despite the fact that the lion with the skull is reported to be a common tomb device in Phrygia, and may therefore be of Asiatic origin, I hesitate to accept the Museum’s tentative classification of this stone as Mithraic. The magical names that are engraved on both obverse and reverse, though mostly of Semitic origin, are found in Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri and on gems that are known to have come from Egypt; and the lion is a solar animal in Egypt.

Gods or demons with the head of a lion are fairly often represented on magical amulets, but there is considerable variety in the details of the types, and it is not certain that all are to be interpreted alike. The simplest and most readily understood of these shows the god standing, the leonine head adorned with seven rays. He wears a long narrow tunic, like that of the Egyptian priests, which reaches to the lower part of his legs. His right hand is raised towards his mouth, his left hangs at his side. Of four specimens that answer to this description, three have in the field or on the reverse variants or parts of the common magical formula, χυχ χαχυχ χαχυχ χαχυχ χαχυχ χαχυχ.

There is little doubt that this design represents a form of Horus as god of the sun. The rays show the solar character of the deity, the lion head is sometimes given to Horus, and the gesture of the right hand is characteristic of Harpocrates, the young Horus; it resembles proskynesis, but the gesture of homage to a god is scarcely appropriate in a figure which is itself obviously intended as divine. Finally, a figure possibly intended for this lion-headed

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18 D. 237. 19 Genezin, ARN 17 (1914), 315 f. 20 D. 239, 238.
21 Southesk N 61, 69. 22 D. 75. 23 See p. 36 above.
24 D. 259, 230, 231. 25 Vito Borgese p. 453, 11. 26 B. M. 5633 may also belong to this group; my notes do not describe the dress of the leonine figure.
god has been found in a position where Harpocrates is to be expected, that is, surrounded by the triads of adoring animals.\textsuperscript{38}

The same interpretation may be applied to a variation of this type, or at any rate to a majority of the objects comprised under it. Here the god wears a kilt reaching to the knees; the chest is bare or (rarely) covered by a cuirass, and the hand is not raised to the lips. Usually one hand holds some "attribute," sometimes both are so employed. The following variations may be mentioned:\textsuperscript{37}

1. Right hand is raised (a solar gesture), left holds a tall scepter.
2. Left hand holds tall scepter, right holds ankh.
3. Sword in right, scepter with snake twining round it in left.
4. Radiate snake in right, ankh in left.
5. Lion-headed radiate serpent (Chnoubis type) in right, two ears of corn in left.
6. Right holds situla, left serpent (head chipped away).
7. Right holds cobra.
8. Right holds dagger, left caduceus.

The inscriptions on these stones vary, but Iao and Abrasax are common; one has the word \(\varphi \rho \eta \nu\), doubtless for \(\varphi \rho \eta\), "the sun." One of the designs just listed serves as the reverse for an obverse with the solar anguipede. On the whole, the solar character of this group, like the former, seems to be well established.

Here belongs a special group of five amulets which have been mentioned more than once before.\textsuperscript{38} They are strikingly alike in several respects, and if not executed in one and the same workshop, which is not improbable, they certainly follow the same magical tradition even to a peculiar spelling. The similarities consist in the following points: all are thick rock crystals with convex surfaces, all are engraved with the figure of a lion-headed god carrying whip and orb, all have unintelligible inscriptions which are identical except for minute errors in copying, and which I have not seen on other stones or in magical papyri; and all prefix to the unintelligible part the address \(\zeta \theta \delta \omega \beta \kappa\), though in two of the specimens the \(\phi\) has been carelessly omitted. The differences are in the dress of the god, the rays and nimbus round his head, and the treatment of the whip. Further, on two of the stones a personal petition has been added to the inscription after the voces magicae.

The finest of this group, in the Boston Museum, shows the lion-headed god in front view, the head, which is turned to the left, adorned with seven linear rays (D. 234). The figure is nude except for a chlamys fastened on the right shoulder and hanging down over the back as far as the knees. The

\textsuperscript{38} See p. 143 above, with D. 391; cf. also D. 102.

\textsuperscript{37} The following stones illustrate these variants: B. M. 56127 (Kings, Gnostics, Pl. L 2); Chaboillet 2158 (Matter, Pl. I, F 1); De Ridder 1455; Montfaucon, II, 1, Pl. 144, 2; Soudzilow N 52, Pl. 14; D. 231; B. M. 56482; D. 233.

\textsuperscript{38} The stones are as follows: D. 234-236; Chaboillet 2171; B. M. 56502.
right hand brandishes a whip, the left holds a globe on which the equator
and a meridian line are faintly indicated. The work is much better than the
average of these amulets, though the attempt to foreshorten the right foot
is an awkward failure. The inscription on the reverse is as follows:

Zeθ αφοβε
tωρθροψιμον
μεθοροεσιαχι
ειλεσ τη εμε
ψυχη και τυς
εμοις τεκνους

The first three lines of this inscription are found on all five of the group
with no more differences than can be explained by carelessness in reproducing
a copy. The last three are to be read, taking into account some gross ortho-
graphic errors, Νεος τη εμε ψυχη και τοις εμοις τεκνους. The insertion of ο
into εμοις is the worst piece of carelessness. Τ is often written for οθ at a
late period, and the failure to differentiate ε and η is common. The meaning
is “Be gracious to me and my children.” τη εμε ψυχη is no more than “to
myself”; a spiritual meaning of ψυχη is hardly to be allowed here (see further
pp. 118–119). 20

The second and third lines are unintelligible and, so far as I have observed,
are not found elsewhere either in papyri or on stone or metal amulets. There
remain the two words Zeθ αφοβε, “fearless Zeth.” This “Zeth” seems to be
Σηθ; it is hard to account for the coincidence in the spelling of five different
inscriptions except by assuming that the lapidaries all followed the same
copy, and that may mean that all the specimens came from the same work-
shop. There is enough likeness in the style in which the figures are engraved
to justify a suggestion that one artist did them all; at least this is true of the
four that I have minutely examined. Some slight differences in the lettering
make it safer to call them products of one studio rather than of one gem
cutter.

The narrowly local, perhaps narrowly personal, character of these types
may explain the strange fact that an invocation to Seth (Σηθ) is carved on
the reverse of a type that all observers would agree to be solar. The attributes
of whip and orb place this interpretation beyond the range of dispute; and
a figure exactly like that on the crystals is prescribed in a magical procedure
where everything points to a solar deity. Further, a plausible restoration
of an abbreviation in the papyrus text offers Ηλιωροσ, “Horus the Sun,” as
the name of the figure. 20 It would therefore seem to be an inescapable con-
clusion that in some small group of religious theorists syncretism had gone
so far that even the ancient god of darkness and evil could borrow a well-
known type of the sun-god.

A word should be said about another creature that was connected with the
sun from very ancient times, namely, the scarabæus beetle. On magical

20 Compare Luke 13, 19; Theocr. 16, 24. 20 PGM I, 144.
amulets it occurs oftener as an accessory detail than as the principal design; yet several stones with the scarab as the principal subject have been published. A good specimen, hitherto unpublished, is in private possession in New York. It is a lentoid rock crystal showing the beetle with extended wings encircled with an inscription that I do not remember to have seen elsewhere; certainly it is not one of the familiar formulas — οσαφροτάχως φτεροτάχως. The reverse has the common word μαρμάρανθ. According to Schwab, this represents the Aramaic “Lord of luminaries” (ראֶבֶּל); others take it to be “Lord of Lords.”

The most remarkable specimen of this kind is a lapis lazuli scarab in the British Museum (19377). Here we have, not as in the former example, a mere engraving of the flying insect, but, rather, a solid representation of the beetle with its wings fully extended, much as it appears in some amulets of the dynastic period. On the under side of the wings are the words αβαναθαναλήθα, which is often associated with Harpocrates, and ακραμαμαμαμε. A much longer inscription covers the body of the insect, but the only elements recognized are at the end — ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄμην ἄμην.

The most interesting published amulets in which the scarab is the main element are three illustrated by Matter, which may be passed over with brief comment. On one the beetle is given a human face with radiate nimbus; on another, where a hawk is placed at each side of the beetle, the reverse is inscribed φον. “the sun.” On the third the scarab seems to have the canine head of Anubis, and is encircled by the chabracb formula, which generally belongs to the Harpocrates gems. The reverse has the long λακόν palindrome, which also has solar associations.

It should not be forgotten that the very numerous “Chnouhis” stones, with a radiate lion-headed serpent as their chief subject, are to be counted among solar amulets, although they were often, perhaps usually, applied to a medical purpose, the cure of stomach ailments. We have seen that two other solar types are very numerous also, namely, Harpocrates and the cock-headed god with serpent legs. In fact, it is safe to say that a considerable majority of all Graeco-Egyptian amulets were made under the influence of a solar religion of highly syncretistic character. Since such amulets seem to have been very widely used by all classes of the population, one has the right to infer that this solar religion exerted an influence far beyond the circle of believers who gave it its original impulse.

From very ancient times the cynocephalus baboon was considered by the Egyptians to be a sacred animal, because of its habit of chattering at sunrise. This was supposed to be its greeting to the sun-god, and consequently Egyptian
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artists depicted the animal with its paws raised as in a gesture of adoration towards the sun disk. Here we find the explanation of the numerous amulets showing an adoring baboon before Harpocrates as he sits on his lotus throne. Thus the baboon may be regarded as a solar animal. However, when the baboon appears without Harpocrates, the interpretation is open to a slight doubt, because the animal was also taken as a symbol of Thoth in his capacity as god of the moon. In the older art Thoth, whether in human form or represented as a baboon, wears on his head the moon disk resting in a crescent; this can be seen on the head of the baboon in D. 196. Usually, however, the disk over the head of the baboon is identical with the ordinary solar disk. After all, the attempt to discriminate between the baboon as a solar animal and as a representative of Thoth is scarcely worth while, for the moon itself was conceived to be the nocturnal representative of the sun.

In certain cases it is clear that the baboon is actually a surrogate for Harpocrates, as on an interesting stone in the Newell collection, where the central design is a baboon riding on a lion, right paw raised, palm outward, the left holding the flail; above, two snakes, a scarab with extended wings, two crowned hawks. Behind the baboon’s head is a crescent, but the star which doubtless balanced it in front has disappeared in consequence of extensive chipping at the left and lower parts of the design. The reverse has three Greek letters scattered among a score of characters, which are cut with unusual care and precision. A similar design, with baboon and lion, but without the other animals, has been published by Barry. The baboon carries a whip (not a flail), and the disk is over his head. The solar character is present also in a Michigan amulet that shows the baboon standing and holding out in his paws the infant Harpocrates seated on a lotus flower in the usual attitude; yet here the disk over the animal’s head seems to rest in a crescent. The reverse design, Aphrodite drying her hair, is sometimes associated with Harpocrates, and the inscriptions of both the obverse and the bevel contain words that are common on stones whose solar connections are certain. An amulet in Athens, published by Delatte, shows still another way of connecting the baboon with solar religion. Here the animal has the head of a hawk (the bird of Horus) with an elaborate crown above it, is clothed, carries a scepter in the left hand, and holds the right towards his mouth. The bevel is engraved with the Chabrach formula, which belongs almost exclusively to Harpocrates amulets.

A well-cut chalcedony in the Michigan collection, which shows a seated baboon with disk over his head, is worth mentioning because of the inscription on its reverse, Oserpe, Osiris. It is imprudent to assume that all inscriptions are rationally related to designs that accompany them, but in all probability this is one of several instances in which Osiris has a solar aspect, here shown only by the connection of his name with a solar animal.

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37 Müller, p. 35, fig. 12; p. 33, fig. 17. 40 Ann. du cor., 7, Pl. 1 (facing p. 285), 8.
38 Erman, p. 22. 41 D. 196.
39 Musée Belge, 18, 48–50: Pl. 2, 13. 42 D. 244.
40 King, Gnostics, Pl. E 2.