

CULTURE AND COSMOS

A Journal of the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy

Vol. 19 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter
2015

Published by Culture and Cosmos
and the Sophia Centre Press,
in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David,
in association with the Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology
in Culture,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David,
Faculty of Humanities and the Performing Arts
Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales, SA48 7ED, UK.

www.cultureandcosmos.org

Cite this paper as: Claire Chandler, 'Investigating the Magical Practice found in PGM (Greek Magical Papyri) XIII', *Celestial Magic*, special issue of *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 19, nos. 1 and 2, Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer 2015, pp. 87-97.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue card for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publishers.

ISSN 1368-6534

Printed in Great Britain by Lightning Source

Copyright © 2018 Culture and Cosmos
All rights reserved

Investigating the Magical Practice found in *PGM (Greek Magical Papyri) XIII*

Claire Chandler

Abstract: *PGM XIII* is a Greco-Egyptian magical papyri dated to the mid fourth century CE. It contains at least two versions of a rite to summon the creator god and gain his name, which is then used in further spells also included in the papyrus. This paper examines the practices involved in this rite and explores their theoretical underpinning, investigating timing, writing and symbolism to expose the interconnectedness implicit in the ancient worldview and the place of magic within it. The magical papyri are documents which reflect the methods and experience of actual magical practitioners rather than literary depictions. These accounts and methods contextualise magic within an ontological world view.

The Greek Magical Papyri

PGM XIII is one of the Greek magical papyri that are surviving documents from Egypt which have been published as a modern collection.¹ This collection of documents, as published by Karl Preisendanz and his team, is known as the *Papyri Graecae Magicae (PGM)*, *Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri* or *The Greek Magical Papyri* in English, and dates from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE.² An English translation was

¹ For recent studies of *PGM XIII* see Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100-300 CE)*, Vol. 153, *Religion in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005); Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 195, 200–205; Todd Klutz, 'Jesus, Morton Smith and the *Eighth Book of Moses* (PGM 13.1-734)', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 21, no. 2 (2011): pp. 133–59; Todd Klutz, trans. 'The Eighth Book of Moses', in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, Vol. 1, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013).

² K. Preisendanz et al., eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae, Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Berlin and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1928); K. Preisendanz et al., eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae, Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, Vol. II (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1931).

Claire Chandler, 'Investigating the Magical Practice found in *PGM (Greek Magical Papyri) XIII*', *Celestial Magic*, special issue of *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 19, nos. 1 and 2, Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer 2015, pp. 87-97.

www.CultureAndCosmos.org

published in 1986.³ Hans Dieter Betz, the editor, begins his introduction to that volume as follows:

The Greek magical papyri is a name given by scholars to a body of papyri from Greco-Roman Egypt containing a variety of magical spells and formulae, hymns and rituals.⁴

These documents present us with real working documents, ‘direct from the magician’s workshops’ as William Brashear said in his exhaustive survey of the papyri.⁵ These are not literary accounts of magic, open to artistic license and imaginary flare, but actual working documents. The content of these papyri present us with material as used in Late Antiquity rather than an historical commentary or literary treatment. These documents have also managed to arrive in the modern world untouched by editorial influence. No one was sufficiently interested in them to cite them in another text or consider them interesting enough not to be thrown away; they were also fortunate not to have been destroyed by accident. Any textual errors introduced via the copying process are as potentially interesting as they are perplexing and these puzzles shed light on both the scribe and his environment.

PGM XIII was part of an ancient collection of documents which came to light in 1828. We know nothing about the archaeology of that discovery as the documents appeared on the antiquities market having being allegedly found by shepherds in a tomb near Thebes, which is modern Luxor, in Upper Egypt. No one knows these circumstances with any certainty, so anything we may deduce about the provenance of these documents must take this lack of evidence into account.⁶ This collection of

³ Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1 [*GMPT*] (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1992).

⁴ Betz, *GMPT*, p. xli.

⁵ William M. Brashear, ‘The Greek Magical Papyri: an Introduction and Survey; annotated bibliography (1928 - 1994)’, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung (ANRW) II.18.5*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), p. 3400.

⁶ Brashear, ‘Greek Magical Papyri’, p. 3402.; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: a Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 168–70; Jacco Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, p. ix.; Pieter W. Van der Horst, ‘The Great Magical Papyrus of Paris (PGM IV) and the Bible’, in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament*

documents, which became known variously as the Theban Magical Library, the Thebes Cache, or the Theban Cache as I will refer to it:

..._is still the largest find of magical papyri ever made. ...the texts remain unrivalled for their length and importance for the study of Greek and late Egyptian magic.⁷

The Theban Cache, along with other papyri which have since been recovered, became known collectively as the Greek magical papyri and were published in the early twentieth century by Carl Preisendanz and other scholars in two volumes as mentioned above, presenting the Greek text with the corresponding German translation; commentary and introductory sections are also in German. The numbering system derives from the numbers denoting the order in which scholars worked on these papyri.⁸ *PGM XIII* is also known as P Leid J 395, it being a papyrus held in the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. To be clear, the *PGM* is a modern collection, not an ancient one. There is scholarly agreement that the contents of the Theban cache very likely formed part of the library of one individual. Looking at the text itself there is a good indication that the same hand is present on more than one of the Theban cache papyri, indicating a possible common origin of the documents.⁹ The owner was certainly someone interested in magic, if not a practitioner.¹⁰ The Theban cache is also interesting as a number of different languages are used: Demotic, Hieratic, old Coptic and Greek are present in various combinations.¹¹ *PGM XIII* is completely in Greek.

While the *PGM* as a whole span from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE, the Theban cache dates from the third to fourth century CE; *PGM XIII* is dated to the mid fourth century CE.¹² To place this in

and its Religious Environment, ed. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2007), p. 173.; Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. ix.

⁷ Brashear, 'Greek Magical Papyri', p. 3404.

⁸ Preisendanz et al., *PGM II*, p. v.

⁹ Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, p. 169.; Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 28.

¹⁰ Hans Dieter Betz, *The 'Mithras Liturgy'* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p. 7.

¹¹ Brashear, 'Greek Magical Papyri,' p. 3405.

¹² Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, p. 169.; Van der Horst, 'PGM IV and the Bible,' pp. 173–4.; Robert W. Daniel, ed., *Two Greek Magical Papyri in the National Museum on Antiquities in Leiden: a Photographic Edition of J 384 and J 395 (= PMG XII and XIII)* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), p. xi.; Reinhold Merkelbach, *Abrasax: Ausgewählte Papyri Religiösen und Magischen Inhalts*.

historical context, this is the late Roman Empire and Egypt has been under Greek cultural influence since it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the third century BCE. Hence the Greek language was culturally dominant and the social and economic elites were culturally Greek. *PGM XIII* is interesting as it contains multiple versions of the same rite to obtain the Great Name of the creator god. This rite is also referred to as *The Eighth Book of Moses*. The use of Jewish names does not necessarily imply a direct Jewish influence. The cultural mix of Roman Egypt included strong strains of Hellenistic Greek and traditional Egyptian and Jewish imagery and language. There is widespread mention of Jewish divinities in Greco-Roman pagan texts but, as John Gager points out, the presence in a text of names of Jewish derivation is no guarantee that that the text itself is of Jewish origin.¹³ Gideon Bohak describes the cultural mix as ‘international, or cosmopolitan’¹⁴ and notes the different influences but cautions on automatically ascribing Jewish origin. The intermingling of terms, divinities and practices is indicative of the cultural richness of this period and the interest each group paid to the other’s magical traditions.¹⁵ As Gager puts it:

My own observation is that the distinction between Jewish and pagan in many cases presents a false alternative. ...it is often more accurate to speak of the Jewish or Greek contribution to a syncretistic document...¹⁶

Band 3: Zwei Griechisch-ägyptische Weihezeremonien (die Leidener Welterschöpfung; die Pschai-Aion-Liturgie), 3 vols (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), Vol. 3, p. 92. For a fuller discussion of the palaeographic considerations see Eleni Pachoumi, ‘The Greek Magical Papyri: Diversity and Unity’ (PhD diss., Newcastle University, 2007), pp. iii–iv.; Robert K. Ritner, ‘Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: the Demotic Spells and their Religious Context,’ in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung (ANRW) II.18.5*, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), p. 3335; John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 146; Betz, *GMPT*, p. 181.

¹³ Gager, *Moses*, p. 142.

¹⁴ Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 195.

¹⁵ Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, ‘The Eighth Book of Moses (PLeid J 395): Hellenistic Jewish Influence in a Pagan Magical Papyrus,’ in *A Kind of Magic: Understanding Magic in the New Testament and its Religious Environment*, ed. M Labahn and B. J. L. Peerbolte (London: T&T Clark International, 2007), p. 188.

¹⁶ Gager, *Moses*, p. 136.

Timing of the Rite

The first element I would like to look at is the timing of the Rite. The practitioner is instructed to begin a period of purification which will end on the Aries new moon, that is the new moon after the spring equinox, one of the turning points of the year. The new moon, having no light, is associated with times of secrecy or privacy. The rite includes many entreaties to the reader to keep both the book and knowledge of the rite secret.¹⁷ The stress on secrecy was not only a precaution against those unsympathetic to magic. There were also 'issues of secrecy and strict limitation of both knowledge and practice to select individuals and circles'.¹⁸ Even where these ritual practices were accepted and valued the element of secrecy was acknowledged and accepted.

Language

Language can be communicated in many ways. It can be written or spoken, and therefore heard. There is also the use of shapes and pictures to represent words and sounds and Egypt has a rich tradition of hieroglyphic writing. There is the sound that the letters and syllables make which may be connected to semantic meaning in a particular language, may be a word or name in another language, or may have no sensible translation. Some have described this as nonsense. A less judgemental term is non-semantic sounds.¹⁹ Essentially we have a visual or an aural communication vehicle. There is also the idea that letters have numeric values, known as *gematria*, and therefore words can be represented by a number. This practice survives as modern numerology. Many ancient number schemes exist and they were by no means universally accepted.²⁰ We also find linguistic tricks such as palindromes, words which are spelt the same forwards as backwards, an example of visual communication, as the arrangement of letters is not apparent. There are palindromes in the multilingual papyri, in Demotic, which only make sense if they have been mistranslated back into Demotic from Greek.²¹ This is an illustration of the complex intercultural

¹⁷ Betz, *GMPT*, p. 179, l. 230–234; p. 189, l. 740–744.

¹⁸ Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity*, (Pennsylvania, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Janowitz, *Icons of Power*, p. 45.

²⁰ Janowitz, *Icons of Power*, pp. 50–1.

²¹ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 67.

connections indicative of this period.²² Rhymes are spoken as are tones, which may be sung.

Non-semantic sound is a characteristic of the magical voices or *voces magicae*. These are streams of words or characters, not obviously in the language of the rest of the text. They consist of names or gods, vowels and words of other languages, the meaning of which is difficult to penetrate. These magical or mystical voices appear in magical text around the beginning of the Christian era.²³ As the cultural mix of Egypt in this period is rich, it is difficult to say whether the presence of particular gods has anything to say about the cultural influence on the writer of the document. *Iaw*, one of the names for the Jewish god, is the most common deity found in the *PGM* but that does not make all documents containing it Jewish.²⁴ Known variously as *voces magicae* (magical voices), *ephesia grammata*, or *onomata barbara* (non-Greek names or words), these strings of names and words without a directly associated meaning are characteristic of magical texts from Late Antiquity.²⁵ Divine names have implicit meaning so these words may not have a readily apparent semantic meaning: they are the deity they represent. These streams of non-semantic sounds have several interesting features including the use of streams of vowels and the inclusion of divine names from many different cultures. These divine names have not been translated into Greek because of their nature. As the name *is* the deity it cannot be translated, so the original language remains.²⁶ Iamblichus explains that certain names have ‘weightiness and great precision, participating in less ambiguity, variability and multiplicity of expression’.²⁷ When trying to convey the name of a deity the language

²² Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 69.

²³ Brashear, ‘Greek Magical Papyri’, p. 3414.

²⁴ Betz, *GMPT*, p. lvii ; Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 78.

²⁵ Crystal Addey, ‘Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: ‘Unknowable’ Names and Invocations in Late Antique Theurgic Ritual’, in *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion*, in *Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World*, ed. A. P. M. H. Lardinois, J. H. Blok, and M. G. M. van der Poel (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 279; Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, pp. 258–9; Brashear, ‘Greek Magical Papyri’, p. 3414; David Frankfurter, ‘The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: The Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions’, *Helios* 23, no. 2 (1994): p. 199.

²⁶ Iamblichus, *Di Mysteriis*, trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 299, VII.5.

²⁷ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, p. 299, VII.5.

used needs to convey an essentially unknowable concept.²⁸ For a language to do this successfully it needs to be able to convey meaning in a non-discursive way. Egyptian hieroglyphs are an excellent tool for this job as the word is pictorially represented and cannot be broken down. As Patricia Cox Miller explains in her exposition on the divine name in written form, logic and discursive language must be abandoned and paradox embraced.²⁹

David Frankfurter contrasted the Egyptian and Greek approaches to language and demonstrated a difference in culture and approach.³⁰ The Egyptian worldview values writing as the tool of Thoth, the Egyptian scribe God, and sees it as a means for establishing harmony and cosmic order to the world.³¹ With pictorial writing the message itself was present in the writing: as Frankfurter put it, ‘the *medium* was the message – the writing by its very nature was efficacious, not just the content’.³² The Greek language, by contrast, consisted of twenty four characters representing phonetic sounds which convey oral speech in written form.³³ The Greeks had little respect for the written word, believing it ‘brought with it... deceit and laziness’.³⁴ Greek texts generally convey instructions that summarise the oral account, that is they outline what must be said and done.³⁵ Hermes and Thoth are the gods associated with writing and language. Hermes has both positive and negative qualities: provider of language and speech but also lies and deception, he is also responsible for the invention of the philtre or charm.³⁶ In *Phaedrus*, Plato describes the alphabet as Thoth’s ‘recipe for wisdom’, and the term used for recipe is *pharmakon*, a term for magic dealing with poisons and herbal preparations used in healing. As this could denote a poison or a cure it reinforces the double-edged quality of an association with Hermes.³⁷ Hermes, or Mercury, is also the intermediary between gods and men.³⁸

²⁸ Patricia Cox Miller, ‘In Praise of Nonsense,’ in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 482; Addey, ‘Assuming the Mantle of the Gods’, p. 282.

²⁹ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 481.

³⁰ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’.

³¹ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 190.

³² Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 192.

³³ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 194.

³⁴ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 191.

³⁵ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 191.

³⁶ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 492.

³⁷ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 492.

³⁸ Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, p. 31.

By Late Antiquity, after over three centuries of Hellenic influence, these two contrasting approaches to language appear to have had significant influence on each other: as Frankfurter wrote, ‘oral and written media converged uniquely’.³⁹ Coptic, the last stage of the Egyptian language, used, vowels, allowing the Egyptians to express their verbal pronunciation more accurately, which was extremely important as the sound of the name was part of the non-discursive nature of the language.⁴⁰ As Greek became the dominant culture and language, the streams of vowels and other non-semantic sounds in Greek script may be seen to be an attempt to introduce a non-discursive element into Greek.⁴¹ Cox Miller put it thus:

When the God who is ‘an invisible symbol’ breaks into human speech, his sounds are the echoes of the alphabet, the vowels.⁴²

Vowels can be considered as single characters or as a word in themselves; this in turn can be spelt out by letters.⁴³ Each single character has symbolic associations, and by breaking down the name of the character those associations can be seen. Cox Miller cites Zosimus of Panopolis who broke down the characters in Adam, so exposing the association with the four elements and therefore the cosmos.⁴⁴ There is an equivalency between the letter and the cosmic association.⁴⁵ Vowels, notated in Greek script, have been associated with both the seven planets and the seven notes of the musical scale.⁴⁶ There was little agreement in antiquity on the scheme of association but Diane Touliatos, in her study of nonsense syllables in ancient Greek music, gives associations shown in Table 1. Egyptian priests

³⁹ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 199.

⁴⁰ Addey, ‘Assuming the Mantle of the Gods’, p. 284.

⁴¹ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, pp. 199–201; Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 483.

⁴² Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 483.

⁴³ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, pp. 495–7. For example: A – L – P – H – A.

⁴⁴ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, pp. 495–6.

⁴⁵ Janowitz, *Icons of Power*, p. 55; Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 497.

⁴⁶ Frankfurter, ‘Magic of Writing’, p. 201; Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 498; Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 64.

were reported to sing the seven vowels during rites, so transcending both speech and writing as what is nonsemantic as a word becomes music.⁴⁷

Name	Greek Upper	Greek Lower	Latin Text	Planet	Note
Alpha	Α	α	A	Moon	D
Epsilon	Ε	ε	E	Mercury	C
Eta	Η	η	Ē	Venus	B flat
Iota	Ι	ι	I	Sun	A
Omicron	Ο	ο	O	Mars	G
Upsilon	Υ	υ	Y	Jupiter	F
Omega	Ω	ω	Ō	Saturn	E

Table 1.⁴⁸

The following is an extract of some magical voices from PGM XIII.

205	[The pair] was then called DANOU P / CHRATOR BERBALI BALBITH IAŌ.
	'Lord, I imitate [you by saying] the 7 vowels; enter and hear me, A EE ĒĒ IIII
	OOOOO YYYYYY ŌŌŌŌŌŌŌ ABRŌCH BRAŌCH CHRAMMAŌTH PROARBATHŌ IAŌ
	OYAEĒIOYŌ'.

Table 2.

Here you can see a stream of names, including *Iαω*, and then the use of the seven vowels. On the second line you can see that the vowels increase in number as you move up the series, so alpha is only used once, but omega is used seven times so reflecting the order of the planets as seen from the Earth. See Table 1.

⁴⁷ Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues and Rites*, p. 65.; Frankfurter, 'Magic of Writing', pp. 201–5.; Cox Miller, 'Praise of Nonsense', p. 493.; Betz, *GMPT*, p. 187, *PGM XIII.630*.

⁴⁸ Diane Touliatos, 'Nonsense Syllables in the Music of the Ancient Greek and Byzantine Traditions', *The Journal of Musicology* 7, no. 2 (1989).

Materials used in the Rite

The Rite, which is found in both part A and part B of the papyrus, begins by gathering materials which will form part of that rite. Seven incenses and seven flowers are specified, matching the seven planets. These are dried, ground to a powder, and mixed with the milk of a black cow and wine which has not been mixed with seawater. This mixture is both used as ink to create a tablet and used as a drink later in the ritual. So here we have materials with corresponding symbolic value which have been mixed to create an ink which will be used to create a further level of symbolism. The directions then proceed as follows:

Next, for the all-important meeting, have a square of natron on which you will write the great name with the seven vowels. Instead of the popping noise and the hissing [sound in the name] draw on the first part of the natron a falcon-faced crocodile and the nine formed god standing on him, for this falcon-faced crocodile at the 4 turning points of the year greets the god with the popping noise. For, coming up to breathe from the deep, he goes ‘Pop, pop, pop,’ and he of the 9 forms replies to him antiphonally. Therefore, instead of the popping noise, draw the falcon-faced crocodile, for the popping noise is the first element of the name. The second is a hissing. Instead of the hissing [draw] a snake biting its tail. So the two elements, popping and hissing, are represented by a falcon-faced crocodile and the nine-formed god standing on it, around these a snake and the seven vowels.⁴⁹

The nine shaped one and using the tablet

A name is then created through a visual representation of sounds. Reinhold Merkelbach’s paper shows an image of the god as drawn by Andreas Brodbeck.⁵⁰ This shows the two gods as they greet each other at the four quarters of the year, the nine formed god standing on the falcon faced crocodile, both surrounded by the snake and the vowels. Merkelbach recognises this nine formed god as the Egyptian Sun god and the crocodile as time and this can be seen as a representation of the passage of the sun around the zodiac.⁵¹ In the above passage it also mentions the four turning points of the year – which are the solstices and equinoxes – which is also a reference to the Sun’s journey. Another deity appearing in the magical voices is Abrasax (Abraxas), a god of equivalent stature to *Iao*, whose

⁴⁹ Betz, *GMPT*, p. 173, ll. 39–52.

⁵⁰ Reinhold Merkelbach, ‘Kosmogonie und Unsterblichkeitsritus. Zwei griechisch-ägyptische Weilerituelle’, in *Auferstehung und Unsterblichkeit*, ed. Erik Hornung and Tilo Schabert (Munich: Fink, 1993), p. 27.

⁵¹ Merkelbach, ‘Kosmogonie’, p. 28.

name has a numerical value of 365, another reflection of the Sun's yearly passage. In addition to the visual depiction of sound, we have additional symbolic resonance from the associated deities to complete the whole message shown on the tablet, which is designed to bring the supreme god into the manifest world constrained by time and materiality.

Once we have our tablet, which is written with ink made of the symbolic ingredients mentioned above and showing a visual representation of the great name, as part of the invocation ceremony we do two things with the tablet. We first lick the tablet and then pour over the wine to wash off the text and then drink the wine, which has been caught in another vessel. So the final act is to imbibe the text within the body, and as the wine is swallowed into the belly – which in Egypt was regarded as ‘the power center of a person’.⁵²

Conclusion

So we can see that many different methods of communication are used in this rite and that the symbolic elements reinforce them. The correspondences between the nature of the act, the deities involved, the physical characteristics of the materials chosen and the planetary attribution all reinforce the same message. Likewise it can be seen that the use of like correspondences can bridge the gap between the material and divine realms. The assumption is that the practitioner can become one with the god via the methods described in the text, that he becomes part of the god as the god links to him and by correspondence, to the cosmos. This stands in contrast to some interpretations of magical material as attempting to command the gods; rather it can be seen to align the practitioner with them and aid ascent to their level.⁵³

⁵² Jeremy Naydler, *Temple of the Cosmos: The Ancient Egyptian Experience of the Sacred* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1996), p. 184.

⁵³ Cox Miller, ‘Praise of Nonsense’, p. 502; Addey, ‘Assuming the Mantle of the Gods’, pp. 291–2.