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SOPHIA

**IGNITE HER
SOUL, HEART,
LIVER, & BREATH
WITH LOVE
FOR ME**

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Sophia translation, introduction, and notes © Em Setzer 2024

Greek text from: Robert W. Daniel & Franco Maltomini, eds, *Supplementum Magicum*, Vol. 1 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990)

Back cover art: 'Inflamed Heart' © Emily Setzer 2024

THE TRANSLATOR

Em Setzer

I am a translator and poet interested in romantic or erotic literature. In particular, I am drawn to what history may have deemed unorthodox or even perverse; as a queer scholar, this often means I seek out representations of queer sexuality and sensuality. Recent endeavors of mine include translations of Stesichorus, and my undergraduate thesis, which examines the multi-faceted nature of love in Ancient Greek erotic poetry. I am now a Master's student in Cornell University's Creative Writing MFA.



The sixty-two line love spell referred to as SM 1.42¹ comes to us from Hermopolis Magna (modern-day el-Ashmunein) on an oval-shaped lead tablet, dated to the third or fourth century. The author is unknown, although the spell is cast on behalf of a woman named Sophia, daughter of Isara.

Spell or curse tablets, called *katadesmoi* in Greek or *defixiones* in Latin, were commonplace throughout antiquity, and erotic spells make up roughly a quarter of the extant tablets we have today.²

SM 1.42 contains a rather traditional spell, in that it is formulaic, features violent imagery, and is laden with spiritual invocations, pulling from Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian religions. The spell contains interjections of magical language, or *voces magicae*, which is overall untranslatable; according to the authors of such magical spells, *voces magicae* would have been understandable to divinities, and rendered less powerful if translated into Greek.³ When combined with the repetition of stock phrases throughout the spell, the language used in SM 1.42 shows its purpose as an oral text, meant to be read aloud by Sophia.

The spell in SM 1.42 is perhaps most remarkable for how extreme Sophia's wishes are. The text bears signs that it was written by a formulary on behalf of Sophia, and that the formulary likely had a pre-existing template of sorts and filled in the two women's names.⁴ This draws into question how much Sophia, as a client, would have personally desired the actions detailed throughout the spell. Regardless, SM 1.42 is significant for its portrayal of homosexual desire between women as something intense and sensual.

¹ SM = *Supplementum Magicum* (Daniel & Maltomini 1990).

² Brooten (1996) p. 75. For further reading on erotic spell tablets see Winkler (1990), Gager (1992).

³ Brooten (1996) p. 79. In the following translation of SM 1.42, *voces magicae* are transliterated and italicized, and glossed wherever possible.

⁴ Brooten (1996) pp. 88–9.

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ROOT & BRANCH READING GUIDE

Our translations branch out to explore
a variety of options for the text:
any variants in the original < ^{Greek}_{Latin} > texts
and the various possible meanings in English.

Our translations are rooted in the words
of the original text, replicating when possible
word order, root meanings of words, and
grammatical gender ($\begin{pmatrix} [n] \\ [f] \\ [m] \end{pmatrix}$) of words about people.

You, the reader, will choose which branches you prefer to follow.

THE SOPHIA TEXT READING GUIDE

The original Greek contains many spelling and grammatical errors.
This text reproduces Daniel & Maltomini's estimated corrections.

[English text] = words added to the translation for clarity

[] = missing or supplemented text

< > = corrected text in the Greek

{ } = text in the Greek that should be deleted

[[]] = text deleted in the original Greek

underdot (e.g. $\pi\dot{\iota}$) = a doubtful or missing letter in the Greek

Line breaks preserve the original formatting of the tablet.

Voces *magicae* are in italics, transliterated from the Greek.

Some approximate pronunciations:

e = egg / ē = air, o = not / ō = note, z = adze, ph = fly, ch = loch

SM 1.42

{Dismal
Hated} darkness's {seat
basis}, {pointy-
sharp-}
 {mouthed
toothed} puppy, {serpent-spiralled
covered-with-spiralling-serpents}, three-head-turning,
 abyss-wayfarer, come, {spirit-
breath-} driver, with the Erinyes,
 savage with {stinging
sharp} whips: holy serpents, maenads,
 {horrifying
shudder-inducing} girls, come to my impassioned incantations:

before I forcibly {persuade
coerce} {him
this one} [Kerberos], {this moment
on the turn-of-the-scales} make {[him]
[this one]} a fire-breathing
 demon: listen and do everything quickly, {do
perform} nothing to oppose



στυγνοῦ σκότους ἔδρασμα, χαρχαρό-
 στομα σκύλαξ, δρακοντέλιξε, τρικαρανοστρεφῆ,
 κευθμωνοδίτα, μόλε, πνευματηλάτα, σὺν Ἑρινύσιν
 πικραῖς μάστιξιν ἡγριωμέναις· δράκοντες ἱεροί, μεν-
 άδες, φρικτὲ κόραι, μόλετ' αἰς [ἐπα]οιδὰς τὰς ἐμὰς θυμουμέ-
 νας· πρὶν ἢ με ἀνάγκη τοῦτον ἐκπεῖσαι ται ῥωπῇ ποίησον πυρσόπνευ-
 στον δαίμων<a>· ἄκουε καὶ πύησον ἅπαντα ἐν τάχῃ δρᾶσαι μηδὲν ἐναντι-

NOTES

1–4 *στυγνοῦ ... μενάδες*: these lines appear on the reverse of the tablet, with more mistakes – probably the scribe’s first attempt at the spell (Brooten 1996 pp. 85, 88 n. 27).

1–3 *Dismal/Hated darkness’s seat/basis, pointy-/sharp-mouthed/toothed puppy, serpent-spiralled / covered-with-spiralling-serpents, three-head-turning, abyss-wayfarer, ... spirit-/breath-driver*: Kerberos (Cerberus). The epithet ‘puppy’ for Kerberos is striking, and is an ironic move, especially in conjunction with the surrounding terrifying descriptions of the hellhound.

3, 22 *Erinyes*: Greek chthonic vengeance goddesses.

6 *ταὶ ῥωπή*: *this moment / on the turn of the scales*: usually spelled *ῥοπή*, this refers to a pivotal instant.

5–8 It is unclear whether the spell addresses the Erinyes or Kerberos, as the grammar slips from plural (5) to singular (6–8) and back to plural (8). The Erinyes seem likelier, especially as the pronoun used for the addressee in line 8 is plural, and is paired with a singular verb (as in the preceding lines) and a plural feminine noun.

me: for you are <the earth's / Gaia's X first-leaders / founders>[f]. *alalachos allēch Harmachimeneus*

magimeneus athinembēs astazabathos artazabathos ōkoum

10

phlom longchachinachana thou Azaēl and Lykaēl and Beliam and Belenēa

and *sochsocham somochan sozocham ouzacham bauzacham oueddouch*: with him, the

death-demon, <inflammearouse> the heart, the liver, the <spiritleft> of Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore)

with <love / desire> and affection <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore): <forced / bound> may Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) be

to throw herself <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore) into the bath-house, and become a bath-woman: <ignite / scorch>, <burn / set on fire>

15 <inflammearouse> the soul, the heart, the liver, the <spiritleft> with <love / desire> X <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore): <take / bring>



ωθεῖς ἐμοί· ὑμῖς γάρ ἐσται τῆς γαίης ἀρχηγέται. *αλαλαχος αλληχ Ἀρμαχι-*

μενευς μαγιμενευς αθινεμβης ασταζαβαθος αρταζαβαθος ωκουμ

10

φλομ λογαχιναχана του Αζαηλ καὶ Λυκαηλ καὶ Βελιαμ καὶ Βελενηα

καὶ σοχσοχαμ σομοχαν σοζοχαμ ουζαχαμ βαυζαχαμ ουεδδουχ· διὰ τούτου τοῦ

ναικουδαίμονος φλέξον τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα Γοργονία, ἣν αἵταικεν Νιλογενία,

ἐπ' ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ Σοφία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Ἰσάρα· καταναγγάσεται Γοργονία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Νιλογε-

νία, βληθῆναι Σοφία, ἣν αἵταικεν Ἰσάρα, εἰς τὸ βαλανῖον, καὶ γενοῦ βαλάνισσα{ν}· καῦσον, ποίρω-

15

σον, φλέξον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα ἐπ' ἔρωτι Σοφία, ἣν αἵτεγεν Ἰσάρα· ἄξατε

8 Harmachimeneus: Harmachis means 'Horos [Egyptian falcon-headed sun god] on the Horizon' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 144).

10 Azaēl and Lykaēl and Beliam and Belenēa: for notably pantheistic syncretic spells such as SM 1.42, it was common to call upon early Christian and Jewish religious entities, such as angels, alongside Greco-Egyptian deities. Azaēl (alternatively spelled Asiel) was a fallen and corrupted angel. Beliam is an alternative spelling of Beliar, which refers to Satan (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 144). I have been unable to find any information about Lykaēl and Belenēa; perhaps they are the author's own variations on the names Azaēl and Beliam?

12 (etc.) Gorgonia: the name of Sophia's beloved was a relatively uncommon Greek girl's name derived from Γοργώ, 'gorgon'.

12 (etc.) Nilogenia: an even more uncommon Greek name likely coming from Νεῖλος, 'Nile', + γενεά, 'birth, descent', literally meaning 'Nile-born'. Nilogenia's name speaks to a probable Egyptian heritage.

13 (etc.) Sophia: a very popular Greek name which means 'skill, wisdom'.

13 (etc.) Isara: a Greek name of unclear etymology, perhaps from the river Ἰσάρας, 'Isaras', now called the Isère (in modern-day France).

14 (etc.) *throw herself ... into the bath-house, and become a bath-woman*: bath-houses were popular loci for Ancient Greek magic, with many spells either being physically placed within a bath-house, or making mention of bath-houses in the text. For further examples of Greek spells involving baths, see Brooten (1996) p. 89 n. 37. As Brooten notes, the sensuality of a bath-house and the intimacy of the relationship between bath-attendant and bather is evident, although Greek bath-houses were not explicitly identified as sites with sexual potential. The transition of bath-houses into spaces frequented by homosexual men – and, to a lesser extent, women – seeking sex seems to begin with later Roman baths; even then, Roman bath-houses were used less for public sex acts – as is the case for modern bath-houses since the fifteenth century – and more for finding a partner or initiating foreplay. For a comparison between Roman and modern-day bath-houses, see Eger (2007). For further reading on Ancient Greek bathing practices, see Lucore & Trümper (2013).

Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore), <take
bring> her, <torture
test> her body night and day, <compel
control>
her to jump from every place and every house out of affection <for
the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore), she having been <given over
surrendered
married off>
like a slave [f], offering herself to her and all of her possessions, since the great god

wants and orders this, *iartana ouousiō ipsenhanchōchainchoueōch aeēiouō iartana ousiousiou ipsoenpeuthadei*
20 *annoucheō aeēiouō*. Blessed lord of the <undying
immortals>, grasping the sceptres of Tartaros, of <dismal
hated>, terrifying [Styx],
and of frightful, life-stealing Lethe, the <stinging
sharp> manes of Kerberos tremble before you, you crack the <loud
well-noisy>
whips of the Erinyes: <you delight your <heart
mind> [in] Persephone's <bed
couch>>, whenever on the longed-for bed
Persephone's <bed
couch> delights your <heart
mind>



20 Γοργονία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἄξατε αὐτήν, βασανίσατε αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμαίρας, δαμάσα-
ται αὐτήν ἐκπηδήσῃ ἐκ παντὸς τόπου καὶ πάσης οἰκίας φιλοῦσα<v> Σοφία, {η}ἣν αἵτεκεν Ἰσάρα, ἐκδότῃν αὐτήν
ὥς δούλῃν ἑαυτὴν αὐτῇ παρέχουσα<v> καὶ τὰ ἑαυτῆς [κ]τήματα πάντα, ὅτι τοῦτο θέλει καὶ ἐπιτάσσει ὁ μέγας
θεός, ἱार्टανα ουουσιω ιψενθανχωχαινχουεωχ αεηιουω ἱार्टανα ουσιουσιου ιψοενπευθαδει
αννουχεω αεηιουω. ἄναξ μάκαρ ἀθανάτων, Ταρτάρου σκῆπτρα λαβών, στυγνοὺς δὲ δεινῆς
φοβεράς καὶ βιαρπάγου Λήθης, σαί τ' ἐπικραὶ τρέμουσι Κερβέρε χέται, σύ τ' Ἐρινύων μαστιγῆς εὐψό-
φους ῥήσις· τὰ Περσεφόνης λέκτρα σὰς φρένας τέρπεις, ὅταν ἐπ' εὐναίς ταῖς ποθουμέναις

16 (etc.) *βασανίσαι*; *torture/test*: this verb typically refers to various forms of torture used to obtain information.

16, 38 *δαμάσσαι*; *compel/control*: in other contexts, this verb can also mean ‘tame’ or ‘break in’, and when used specifically of women it can mean ‘give in marriage’, ‘rape’, or ‘kill’.

20 *Blessed lord of the undying/immortals*: Hades.

20 *dismal/hated, terrifying* [*Styx*]: the original text makes no explicit mention of the Styx, but I follow Daniel & Maltomini (1990) in this supposition. Not only is *δεινός*, ‘terrifying’, commonly used to describe the river Styx, *στυγνός*, ‘dismal/hated’, and *Στύξ*, ‘Styx’, are derived from a common etymological source. Furthermore, given that the river Styx is perhaps the most significant of the subterranean rivers (and is often referenced in conjunction with the river Lethe), it would be odd for the text to make no mention of it.

21 *manes*: *χαίτη* is typically reserved for the manes of horses and lions, which makes it an intriguing word to describe Cerberus’s fur. Also note it is used here in the plural (*χῆται*, as it is spelled in the manuscript, is likely a misspelling of *χαῖται*), perhaps because Cerberus has three heads.

22 *τὰ Περσεφόνης λέκτρα σὰς φρένας τέρπει*; *you delight your heart/mind [in] Persephone’s bed/couch / Persephone’s bed/couch delights your heart/mind*: ungrammatical Greek in the manuscript leaves this phrase up to interpretation. Brooten (1996) translates it as ‘the couch of Persephone delights you’, whereas Suárez de la Torre (2021) has ‘El lecho de Perséfone deleita tu corazón’ (‘the couch of Persephone delights your heart’).

you move, whether you be the <unfading
undying> Sarapis, whom [m] the universe trembles before, or Osiris, star of the Egyptian land: for your guide

is the all-wise boy; yours is Anoubis, pious herald of the <faded
dead>: come here, <fulfill
realize> my ideas,

25

I <summon
call> you with these <secret
hidden> cryptic symbols: *achaiḫō thōthō aiē iaē ai ia ēai ēia ōthōth ōphiacha*

emen barasthromouai mōnsumphiris tophammieartheiaēaima saaōōeuase enbērouba amen ou[ra-]

lis sōthalis sōthē mou raktrathasimour achōr arame chreimiei moitbips thabapsrabou thlibarph[ix]

zamenēth zatarata kuphartanna anne Ereschigal eplangarbōbōthithoēalithaththa diad[ax]

sōthara sierseir summutha phrennōbatha ōaē[. .] leichoiretakestreu iōaxeiarnu koruneukn[uoro]

30

alis sōtheōth <twelv
dōdekakistē> <akrourobore
tailtip-eating one> *sōk[. .] rounge souchiar anoch anoch* <brittandra
outweighing-men> *skulm[. .]*



25

χοροῖς, εἴθ' ἄφθιτον Σάραπιν ὃν τρέμι κόσμος, ἴδε σε Ὁσίριν ἄσ{σ}τρον Ἑγύπτου γαίης· σὸς γὰρ διάκτωρ
ἐστὶν πά{ι}σσοφος καὶ πα<ί>ς, σὸς δ' ἐστὶν Ἀνουβις, εὐσεβῆς φθιτῶν κήρυξ· δεῦρο ἔλθέ, τὰς ἐμὰς γνῶμας

τέλει, ἐπὶ σαι κρυπτοῖς τοῖσδ' αἰ συνβόλοις κλήζω· *αχαιῶ θωθω αιη ιαη αι ια ηαι ηια ωθωθ ωφιαχα*
εμεν βαρασθρομουαι μωνσυμφιρις τοφαμμιαρθειαςηαιμα σασαωευασε ενβηρουβα αμεν ου[ra-]

λις σωθαλις σωθη μου ρακτραθασιμουρ αχωρ αραμε χρειμiei μοιτβιψ θαβαψραβου θλιβαρφ[iξ]

ζαμενηθ ζαταρατα κυφαρταννα αννε Ερεσχιγαλ επλανγαρ[[βω]]βωθιθοθαλιθαθθα διαδ[αξ]

σωθαρα σιερσειρ συμμουθα φρεννωβαθα ωση . . λειχοιρετακεστρευ ιωαξειαρνευ κορυνευκν[uoro]

30

αλις σωθεωθ δωδεκακιστη ακρουροβόρε σωκ . . ρουμε σουχιαρ ανοχ ανοχ βριττανδρα σκυλμ[. .]

23 *Sarapis*: a Greco-Egyptian man-headed god created in the third century, deriving attributes from Osiris and other chthonic deities.

23 *Osiris*: the green-skinned Egyptian god Osiris ruled over the underworld, like Hades.

24 *the all-wise boy*: Hermes, Greek messenger god.

24 *Anubis*: a dog-/jackal-headed Egyptian god who was also a psychopomp, like Hermes.

23–4 The syntax in the Greek is confusing here, but the text is clearly attempting to syncretize powerful chthonic deities from Greek and Egyptian mythology.

27, 29, 30 *sōthalis sōthē ... sōthara ... sōtheōth*: probably *Sōthis*, the Greek name for Egyptian dog-star goddess Sopdet (Sirius) (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 147).

27 *achōr*: probably Coptic ‘snake’ (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 147).

28 *Ereschigal*: a Sumerian/Babylonian underworld goddess (Ereshkigal), often associated with the Greek goddess Hekate (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 148).

30 *δωδεκακιστή ἀκρουροβόρε*; *twelvest/twelve-kisted tailtip-eating one*: the ouroboros, a ‘symbol of eternity and resurrection’ which was also associated with Hekate (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 148). In Gnosticism, the ouroboros was imagined as a dragon surrounding the world with twelve chambers in its body (corresponding to the Zodiac) where souls were punished (Trammell 2009 p. 344). The unusual word *δωδεκακιστή* may be a superlative of *δώδεκα*, ‘twelve’, or it may be *δώδεκα*, ‘twelve’, + *κίστη*, ‘chest, box, kist’.

30 *anoch*: Coptic personal pronoun, ‘I / I am’, used as a divine name (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 148).

achal bathraēl emabrima chrēm̄la aostrachin[.] amou salēnasau tat cholas sōrsangar madou[re]

boasaraoul saroucha sisirō zacharrō ibibi barbal sobouch Ōsir ouōai Azēl abadaōt[. .]

iōbadaōn berbaisō chio u u u phthōbal lamach chamarchōth basara batharar neaipeschiōth[. .]

phorphor iuzze uze chuch chuch chuch. <Forced
Bound> may Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) be to throw herself <for the sake of> ^{for}

35 Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore) into the bath-house for her: yes, master, king of the <chthonic
underground> gods, <ignite
scorch>, <burn
set on fire>,

<inflame
arouse> the soul, the heart, the liver, the <spirit
breath> of Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) with <love
desire> [and]

affection <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore): <take
bring> Gorgonia herself, <torture
test> her body night and

day: <compel
control> her to jump from every place and every house, out of affection <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f])



αχαλ βαθραηλ εμαβριμα χρημλα αοστραχιν. αμου σαληνασσυ τατ χολας σωρσανγαρ μαδου[ρε]

βοασαραουλ σαρουχα σισισρω ζαχαρρω ιβιβι βαρβαλ σοβουχ Ωσιρ ουωαι Αζηλ αβαδαωτ[. .]

ιωβαδαων βερβαισω χιω u u u φθωβαλ λαμαχ χαμαρχωθ βασαρα βαθααρ νειαιπεσχωθ[. .]

35 φορφορ ιυζζε υζε χυχ χυχ χυχ. καταναγγάσεται Γο<ρ>γονία, ἣν ἄταικεν Νιλογενία, βληθῆναι Σ[ο-]
φία, ἣν αἵταικεν Ἰσάρα, εἰς τὸ βαλανῖον αὐτῇ· ναί, κύριε, βασιλεῦ χθονίων θεῶν, καῦσον, ποίρω[σον,]
φλέξον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα Γοργονία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἐπ' ἔρωτι [καὶ]
φιλία Σοφία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Ἰσάρα· ἄξατε αὐτὴν Γοργονία, βασανίσατε αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα νυκτὸς καὶ
ἡμαίρα· δαμάσεται αὐτὴν ἐκπηδήσai ἐκ παντὸς τόπου καὶ πάσης οἰκίας φιλοῦσα<ν> Σοφία, ἣν αἵτε-

31 amou: probably Coptic 'come' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 148).

32 barbal: probably Aramaic 'son-of-Bal / son-of-the-Lord' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 148).

32 Ōsir: Osiris, possibly connected to the preceding 'bouch' as 'Bouchis-Osiris', an incarnation of Osiris as a sacred bull (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 149).

32 Azēl: presumably Azaēl (see n. 10 above).

32 abadaōt: possibly Hebrew 'destructions' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 149).

Isara bore), she, Gorgonia, having been $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{given over} \\ \text{surrendered} \\ \text{married off} \end{smallmatrix} \right)$ like a slave [f], offering herself and all of her possessions:

40 yes, master, king of the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{chthonic} \\ \text{underground} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ gods, help to $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{fulfill} \\ \text{realize} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ what is written upon this leaf, since I $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{adjure you} \\ \text{bind you by oath} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$,

who divided the whole universe, a single domain, *Thōbarabau Semeseilamps sasibēl saraēphthō laō ieou*

ia thuēōēō aeēiouō panchouchi thassoutho Sōth Phrē ipechenbōr Sesengen Barpharangēs ōlam bōrō[.]

sepanasase thōbausthō iaphthō sou thoou. Therefore, do not $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{ignore} \\ \text{turn a deaf ear to} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ my $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{supplication} \\ \text{plea} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, but make Gorgonia (whom [f]

Nilogenia bore), $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{force} \\ \text{bind} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ her to throw herself $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{for} \\ \text{for the sake of} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore) into the bath-house for her: $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{ignite} \\ \text{scorch} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{burn} \\ \text{set on fire} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$

45 $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{inflame} \\ \text{arouse} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ the heart, the liver, the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{spirit} \\ \text{breath} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ of Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) with $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{love} \\ \text{desire} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ and affection $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{for} \\ \text{for the sake of} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ Sophia (whom [f]

Isara bore), to $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{the good} \\ \text{a happy end} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$: *bolchozē gonsti ophthē*, $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{ignite} \\ \text{scorch} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{burn} \\ \text{set on fire} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ the soul, the heart, the liver, the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{spirit} \\ \text{breath} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$



40 κεν Ἰσάρα, ἐκδότην Γοργονία ὡς δούλην ἐ[αυ]τῇ<v> παρέχουσα<v> καὶ τὰ ἑαυτῆς κτήματα πάντα·
ναί, κύριε, βα<σι>λεὺ χθονίων θεῶν, συντέλεσον τὰ ἐ[γγ]εγραμμένα τῷ πεδάλῳ τούτου, ὅτι ἐξορκίζω σαι
τὸν ὅλον κόσμον, ἀρχὴν μίαν, μεμερισμένον, *Θωβααραβου Σεμεσειλαμψ σασιβηλ σαραηφθω Ιαω Ιεου*
ια θυηοηω αειηιουω πανχουχι θασσουθο Σωθ Φρη ιπεχενβωρ Σεσενγεν Βαρφααραγγης ωλαμ βωρω·
σεπανασασε θωβαυσθω ιαφθω σου θοου. θιῶ μή μου παρακούσης τῆς δεήσεως, ἀλλὰ ποιήσον Γοργονία, ἣν αἵται-
κεν Νιλογενία, κατανάγγασον αὐτὴν βληθῆναι Σοφία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Ἰσάρα, εἰς τὸ βαλανίον αὐτῇ· καῦσον, πύρωσον,
45 φλέξον τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα Γοργονία, ἣν αἵτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἐπ' ἔρωτι καὶ φιλῷ Σοφία, ἣν αἵτε-
κεν Ἰσάρα, ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ· *βολχοζη γονστι οφθη*, καῦσον, πύρωσον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα

41 *domain*: ἀρχή literally means ‘beginning’.

41 Thōbarabau: a very common magical name, perhaps from the Hebrew mercantile phrase meaning ‘[the] surety [is] good’ (Kotansky 1994 p. 80).

41 Semeseilamps: either Hebrew ‘the eternal sun’ or Aramaic ‘my name is peace’ (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 28).

41, 56 Iaō: Greek for ‘Yahweh’ (Hebrew for ‘God’).

42 Sōth: Sōthis, Egyptian dog-star goddess (see n. 27/29/30 above).

42, 56 Phrē: Egyptian ‘the Sun’ (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 28).

42, 58 Sesengen Barpharangēs: (Sesengebarpharangēs) possibly a Jewish protective spirit, ‘Sesengen son of (bar) Pharangēs’; or ‘a potent fig tree located in a ravine (tês *pharangos*) near a place called Baaras’ (Németh 2010 p. 186).

42 ōlam: Hebrew ‘eternity’ (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 149).

of Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) with <love
desire> and affection <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore), since the great

god wants this, *achchōr achchōr achchach ptoumi chachchō charachōch chaptoumē chōracharachōr aptoumi*

mēchōchaptou charachptou chachchō charachō otenachōcheu and *sisisrō sisi phermou Chmouōr Harouēr*

50 *Abrasax Phnounoboēl ochloba zarachōa barichamō* who [m] is called *bacham kēbk*. <Forced
Bound> may Gorgonia

(whom [f] Nilogenia bore) be to throw herself, <for the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore), into the bath-house, and to <love
kiss> her with passion,

longing, and unending <love
desire> . *thēnōrthsi thēnōr Marmaraōth krateochei radardara xio chio chiōcha*

sisembrēch ēchberēch chach psempsi ops emphrē chalach ērere tōrcheiramps mōps malachēmala

chibērthulitha charabra thōbōth: <ignite
scorch>, <burn
set on fire> the soul, the heart, the liver, the <spirit
breath>



Γοργονία, ἣν ἔτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἐπ' ἔρωτι καὶ φιλῖα Σοφία, ἣν αἵταικεν Ἰσάρα, ὅτι τοῦτο θέλει ὁ μέγας
θεός, *αχχωρ αχχωρ αχχαχ πουμι χαχχω χαραχωχ χαπτουμη χωραχαραχωρ απουμι*

50 *μηχωχαπτου χαραχπτου χαχχω χαραχω οτεναχωχευ καὶ σισισρω σισι φερμου Χμουωρ Ἀρουηρ*
Αβρασαξ Φνουνοβοηλ οχλοβα ζαραχωα βαριχαμω ὃν καλοῦσιν βαχαμ κηβκ. καταναγγάσεται Γορ-
γονία, ἣν αἵταικεν Νιλογενία, βληθῆναι Σοφία, ἣν ἔτεκεν Ἰσάρα, εἰς τὸ βαλανίον αὐτῇ, φιλήσῃ αὐτὴν φίλτρον,
πόθον, ἔρωτι ἀκαταπαύστῳ. θηνωρθσι θηνωρ Μαρμαραωθ κρατεοχει ραδαρδαρα ξιω χιω χιωχα
σισεμβρηχ ηχβερηχ χαχ ψεμψοι οψ εμφρη χαλαχ ηρερε τωρχειραμψ μωψ μαλαχηρμαλα
χιβηρθυλιθα χαραβρα θωβωθ· καῦσον, ποίρωσον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἥπαρ, τὸ πνεύ-

49 Chmouōr: probably a combination of Chnum, Egyptian ram-headed god of the Nile, and Horos (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 150).

49 Harouēr: Egyptian for 'Horos the great/elder' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

50, 56 Abrasax: a Gnostic solar deity and Jewish angel, depicted as an anguipede – snake-legged and cockerel-headed (Németh 2010 pp. 182–3). In numbers, its Greek letters equal 365 (A = 1, B = 2, P = 100, Σ = 200, Ξ = 60). This may also be the origin of the word 'abracadabra'.

51, 55 *φίλτρον*; *with passion*: it is not entirely clear what this word means. It is derived from φιλέω, 'feel affection for', and may be a misspelled comparative adjective, 'more affectionate', or may be an ungrammatical noun, 'love charm'. Either way, 'with passion' seems like a good translation.

52, 56 thēnōr: Hebrew 'give light' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

52 Marmaraōth: perhaps Aramaic 'lord of lords' or Greek/Hebrew 'gleaming lord' (Charlesworth 1983 p. 980 n. z2).

53 chach: Egyptian 'countless' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

53 psemposi: Egyptian/Coptic for 'son of Shai', Egyptian god of fate (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

53 emphrē: Egyptian/Coptic 'of / to/for Ra', Egyptian sun god (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

55 of Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) with <love
desire> and affection <for
the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore) [...] passion, longing, [...]

<love
desire>: ēnōr thēnōr Abrasax Mithra peuchrē Phrē Arsenophrē abari mamarembō laō labōth:

<take
bring>, Helios, honey-<having
holding>, honey[comb]-cutting, honey-producing kmē[...]m Ablanathanalba Akrammachammari

Sesengen Barpharangēs, <take
bring> Gorgonia (whom [f] Nilogenia bore) to the <love
desire>

of Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore): <ignite
scorch>, <burn
set on fire> the soul, the heart,

60 the liver, the <spirit
breath> of <ignited
scorched> [f], <burned
on fire> [f], <tortured
tested> [f] Gorgonia [-]

(whom [f] Nilogenia bore) until she throws herself <for
the sake of> Sophia (whom [f] Isara bore)

into the bath-house, and you – become a bath-woman.



55 μα Γοργονία, ἣν αἶτεγεν Νιλογενία, ἐπ' ἔρωτι καὶ φιλία Σοφία, ἣν αἵταικεν Ἰσάρα, < > φίλτρον, πόθον, . .

ἔρωτι· ηνωρ θηνωρ Αβρασαξ Μιθρα πευχρη Φρη Αρσеноφρη αβاري μαμαρεμβω Ιαω Ιαβωθ·

ἔξαν, Ἦλιε μελιούχε μελικέτωρ μελιγενέστωρ κμη . μ Αβλαναθαναλβα Ακρμμα-
χαμμари Σεσενγεν Βαρφαραγγης, ἄξον Γοργονία, ἣν αἶτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἔ-

60 ρωτος Σοφία, ἣν αἶτεκεν Ἰσάρα· καῦσον, ποίρωσον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδί[αν,]

τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα, καομένη, πυρουμένη, βασανιζομένη Γοργονία, -

ἣν αἶτεγεν Νιλογενία, ἕως ἂν βληθῇναι Σοφία, ἣν αἶτεκεν Ἰσά[ρα,]

ἰς τὸ βαλανίον, καὶ κενοῦ βαλάνισσα{ν}.

56 Mithra: Persian god of covenants and light.

56 Arsenophrē: Egyptian/Nubian god Arsenouphis/Arensnuphis (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 151).

56 labōth: from the Samaritan pronunciation of 'Yahweh' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 42).

57 *μελιούχε μελικέτωρ μελιγενέστωρ*; *honey-having/holding, honey[comb]-cutting, honey-producing*: these three epithets of Helios are uncommon and inscrutable. When considered together, the *μελι-* suffixes of all three can be reasonably understood as coming from *μέλι*, 'honey'. For *μέλιουχε*, Bortolani (2016) argues for an etymology from *μέλος*, 'limbs, corpse', or *μελίζω*, 'dismember', but I follow Brooten (1996), 'honey-holder', and Fauth (1995), 'der Honig hat' ('who has honey'), in understanding the etymology to be *μέλι* + *ἔχω*, 'have, hold'. For *μελικέτωρ*, Maravela (2022) questions whether *-κέτωρ* has some relation to *κερδῶ*, 'thief', but I follow Brooten, 'honey-cutting', and Fauth, 'Honigschneider' ('honey-cutter'), in understanding the epithet to be *μέλι* + *κείρω*, 'cut', similar to the name *Μελικέρτης*. For *μελιγενέστωρ*, the clearest of the three epithets, the etymology is from *μέλι* + *γενέτωρ*, 'begetter, producer'.

57 Ablanathanalba: a magical palindrome (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 25).

57 Akrammachammari: Aramaic 'uproot the magic spells' (Daniel & Maltomini 1990 p. 28).

60 *ignited/scorched [f], burned / on fire [f], tortured/tested [f]* Gorgonia: note that in this penultimate line of the spell, Sophia's beloved is imagined to have already succumbed to some of the effects of the spell.



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