

A New Osiriform Lamp from Antioch in the Hatay Archaeological Museum

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THE MUSEUM OF HATAY (Antioch on the Orontes, today Antakya, Turkey) preserves a mummiform bronze lamp (inv. no. 7587) of great interest, so far unpublished (*fig. 1*). The record of the inventory states that in 1931 some soldiers (who are thought to have probably unearthed it in Antioch or in the immediate vicinity) brought it to the museum, which was opened by the French administration.¹

It is about 38 cm. long, about 8 cm. wide, and rests on an oval base, which ensures its stability; it appears in good condition but is missing a small piece of the figure's chin. What is depicted is an individual entirely wrapped in a funerary bandage that leaves only the face uncovered. Thick, lozenge-shaped incisions decorate the bandage.² Four curved folds at the shoulder seem to indicate a sort of cloak. Neither arms nor feet are shown. The head is enclosed in a hood. A snake, elongated and very thin, winds about the figurine and its head protrudes on the top of the hood. At the centre of the body is the hole for adding oil: it is simply cut into the bronze surface. In place of the feet is a large nozzle.

¹ The lamp has been studied with the authorization issued by the Directorate of the Museum of Hatay, no. B.16.0.KVM.4.31.00.01.155.01-85 and date 11/01/2012. Documentation was done in April 2012. Photographs were taken by E. Lafli.

² This detail is in the osiriform lamp from Canosa, and has been related to the representation of Ptah: so G. Capriotti Vittozzi, "Una enigmatica figura nel Codice Farrajoli 513 e una lampada di Canosa," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae* 15 (2008) 101–127, at 104 n.12.



Figure 1. Mummiform lamp, Hatay Archaeological Museum

Our specimen belongs to a very small group of so-called mummy lamps on which recently Jean-Louis Podvin has focused;³ we can add another from Alexandria.⁴

Origin, museum	Material	Length	Image	Particularity	Date, cent. A.D.	Bibl.
Athens, Agora	Clay	22.1	Isis	Bandage	III–mid. IV	Podvin 261
Egypt?, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge	Bronze	28.5	Osiris	Bandage, snake	II	Podvin 261
Luni Museum	Bronze	26	Osiris		III–IV	Podvin 261
Canosa	Bronze	16	Osiris?	Inscriptions, bandage, lozenges	II?	n.2; Podvin 156, 262
Alexandria			Isis	Bandage, lozenges	III–IV?	n.4
Antioch	Bronze	38	Osiris	Inscriptions, bandage, lozenges, snake	II–III?	present article
Gerasa, private collection		20.3	Harpocrates		Not determined	Bakarat Gallery L0249, Podvin 261

Even if all of them might appear similar, each lamp is unique, for some details are close to one another and yet different. Our lamp has a close resemblance to the example in Cambridge because of the presence of a snake. That figure, however, has

³ J.-L. Podvin, *Luminaire et cultes isiaques* (Montagnac 2011) 261–262.

⁴ P. Gallo, “Lucerne osiriformi d’epoca romana,” in J.-Y. Empereur (ed.), *Alexandrina 1* (Études alexandrines 1 [Cairo 1998]) 149–155, and A. A. el-Fattah, P. Gallo, “Aegyptiaca Alexandrina. Monuments pharaoniques découverts récemment à Alexandrie,” 7–19; P. Gallo, “Gli aegyptiaca della colonia romana di Luni,” in *Atti del convegno Archeologia nei territori Apuo-Versiliese e Modenese-Reggiano* (Modena 1994) 67–87; S. Francocci, “New Data on the ‘Osiriform’ Lamps,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 186 (2002) 37–42.

arms along the sides, which are not represented in our case: here the figure is rather like a tapered column. Because of the Greek inscriptions, the Hatay lamp may be closer to that from Canosa, although the latter has cartouches.

The large size of this lamp (it is the largest of the mummy group), the material, and the inscriptions suggest that it was not used simply to light a private house, but was used in a place of worship.

There is no doubt that our lamp represents Osiris. The lamps from Alexandria and from the Athenian Agora are considered to represent Isis;⁵ the Cambridge lamp, however—very similar to ours—is probably Osiris.⁶ The god Osiris was never properly Hellenized and maintained the appearance of a mummy as he had been represented ever since the Old Kingdom.⁷ In a shroud probably from Memphis, dated to A.D. 170–180 and now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (inv. 4229/I, I a, 5749), we can see three figures, the dead person between Hermanubis and Osiris.⁸ Osiris wears a shroud decorated with lozenges, as on our lamp: the same lozenges appear on the lamp from Canosa and also in a magical gem in the British Museum.⁹ According to tradition they were golden and dark.¹⁰

⁵ J. Perlzweig, *Lamps from the Athenian Agora* (Agora Picture Book 9 [Princeton 1963]) 24, no. 58.

⁶ See Podvin, *Luminaire* 156 n.40.

⁷ C. Sfameni, “Fra religione e magia: temi isiaci nelle gemme di età imperiale,” in L. Bricault (ed.), *Isis en Occident* (Leiden 2004) 377–404, at 380.

⁸ K. Parlasca and H. Seemann, *Mumienporträts und ägyptische Grabkunst aus römischer Zeit* (exh. cat., Munich 1999), fig. 165.

⁹ S. Michel, “(Re)interpreting Magical Gems, Ancient and Modern,” in S. Shaked (ed.), *Officina Magica. Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity* (Leiden 2005) 141–170, at 147 and fig. 2.

¹⁰ *Totum corpus habet sepulturam Osireos, ornatus aureis corrigiis et fuscis: Corp. Herm., De triginta sex decanis* 1.7 (P. Scarpi, *La rivelazione segreta di Ermete Trismegisto II* [Milan 2011] 176–177).

A good comparison for our representation of Osiris can be found in a famous bronze statuette from the Janiculum in Rome. It is very similar to our lamp, but its interpretation is even more uncertain; it was found at the beginning of the twentieth century in the so-called Sarapeum¹¹ of the Janiculum and is now housed in the Museo Nazionale Romano – Museo Epigrafico. Many interpretations have been proposed in the voluminous bibliography:¹² this god has been identified as Kronos or Atargartis (Gauckler), Hadad (Darier), Adonis (Cu-

¹¹ C. Sfameni, “Isis and Cybele in Late Antique Rome,” in A. Mastrocinque and C. Giuffrè Scibona (eds.), *Demeter, Isis, Vesta, and Cybele. Studies in Greek and Roman Religion in Honour of Giulia Sfameni Gasparro* (Stuttgart 2012) 119–138, at 125–128, suggests that it could have been a Late Antique *domus*.

¹² E.g. P. Gauckler, “Le bois sacré de la nymphe *Furrina* et le sanctuaire des Dieux syriens, au Janicule, à Rome,” *CRAI* (1907) 135–159; G. Perrot, *CRAI* (1909) 116–119; P. Gauckler, *CRAI* (1909) 490–492; G. Nicole, G. Darier, “Le sanctuaire des dieux orientaux au Janicule,” *MEFR* 29 (1909) 5–86; P. Gauckler, “Nouvelles découvertes dans le sanctuaire syrien du Janicule,” *CRAI* (1910) 378–408; G. Darier, “Note sur l’idole de bronze du Janicule,” *CRAI* (1914) 105–109; S. M. Savage, “The Cults of Ancient Trastevere,” *MAAR* 17 (1940) 25–56; M. Le Glay, “Sur les dieux syriens du Janicule,” *MEFR* 60 (1948) 129–151; E. Will, “Le ou les sanctuaires syriens du Janicule,” *Syria*, 26 (1949) 161–168; B. M. Felletti Maj, “Il santuario della triade eliopolitana e dei misteri al Gianicolo,” *BullCom* 75 (1953–55) 137–162; E. Will, “Encore le sanctuaire syrien du Janicule,” *Syria* 37 (1960) 201–203; V. von Graeve, “Tempel und Kult der Syrischen Götter am Janiculum,” *JdI* 87 (1972) 314–347; N. Goodhue, *Lucus Furrinae and the Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum* (Amsterdam 1975); M. Mele, C. Mocchegiani Carpano, *L’area del santuario siriano del Gianicolo* (Rome 1982); M. Le Glay, “Aion,” *LIMC* I (1981) 399–411; W. Friese, “The Dead Lover. Adonis in Cult and Architecture,” in *POCA 2006* (http://www.shc.ed.ac.uk/archaeology/publications/poca2006/documents/15_Friese.pdf) 232–242; C. Goddard, “The Evolution of Pagan Sanctuaries in Late Antique Italy,” in M. Ghilardi et al. (eds.), *Les cités de l’Italie tardo-antique* (Rome 2006) 281–308; C. Goddard, “Nuove osservazioni sul ‘Santuario siriano’ al Gianicolo,” in B. Palma Venetucci (ed.), *Testimonianze di culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo* (Rome 2008) 165–173; R. Gee, “The Lucus Furrinae and the Syrian Sanctuary on the Janiculum: Enchroachment? Or Renovation and Transformation?” *Bollettino di archeologia on line*, 2010 (http://151.12.58.75/archeologia/bao_document/articoli/4_GEE.pdf).

mont), or Aion (Le Glay). Felletti Maj specifically mentions Osiris and now Goddard (2006) thinks that the statue depicts this deity. This statuette finds a strict comparison with another, 14.8 cm. high, found at Arezzo in 1943 in an area that was used as a dumping area for the detritus from the kilns from the first century B.C. through the first A.D. and then, in the second century, as a waste deposit. This inscription is engraved on the back: ΜΙCΧΙΘ. It is made of tropical or subtropical wood, and was originally covered with gold leaf. This object has been dated to the late second or early third century, and has been linked to the god Aion and to the small bronze statue from the Janiculum.¹³ A snake surrounds it with seven coils, as in the case of the idol from the Janiculum. We can, finally, add a third statuette, in gold, 5.6 cm. high, from Leontini (Sicily), preserved in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva.¹⁴ It depicts a bearded old man with hair combed straight back and a knot at the top of the head. He has six rays behind the head, wears a tight garment with a collar of seven circles and a series of six chains or joining circles down the front, and holds a snake-like object in his left hand. Deonna and Vermeule think this is a sun god and assign the figurine to the imperial period.

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The Inscriptions

It is possible to read the following inscriptions on the surface of the lamp.

1. On the chest (*fig. 2*):

CECE[ΝΓ]EN
 ΒΑΡΦΑΡΑΝ
 ΓΗCСOPME
 YC

¹³ S. Vilucchi, "Idolo di divinità orientale," in *Il rito segreto. Misteri in Grecia e a Roma* (exh. cat., Rome/Milan 2005) 256–259.

¹⁴ Inv. no. Q0018: W. Deonna, "De quelques monuments connus et inédits. Dieu solaire du Musée de Genève," *RA SER. IV* 19 (1912) 354–372; C. C. Vermeule, *Greek and Roman Sculpture in Gold and Silver* (Boston 1974) 34.

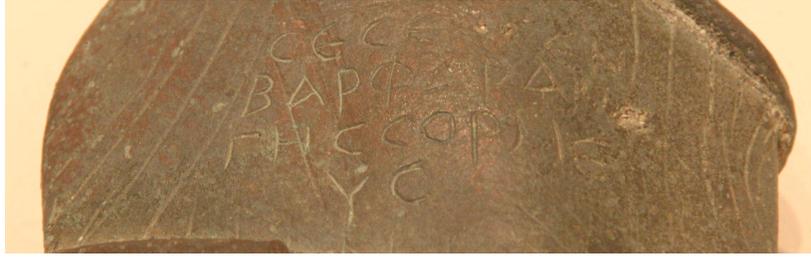


Figure 2. Inscription on the chest

2. Around the oil feed hole (*fig. 3*):

CACIBHΛ CAPECIΦΘΩ



Figure 3. Inscription around the oil feed hole

3. Right side (the god's left flank), in a long column, divided by one coil of the snake (*fig. 4*):

CE	A
ME	BP
CI	A
ΛA	ΩΘ

M
 ΩΛ
 AM
 B
 Ω
 P
 Ω
 TYΔ
 IC
 E



Figure 4. Inscription on the right side (left flank)

4. Left side (right flank), in a long column, divided by one coil of the snake (fig. 5):

ΘΩ	I
BA	E
PP	I
AB	E
A	A
Y	E
Θ	I
AE	A
HIO	Ω
Y	
Ω	



Figure 5. Inscription on the left side (right flank)

Many of these words are known, for they occur often in magical papyri, lamellae, and gems. In (1), Σεσενγενβαρφορανης, *Sesengenbarpharanges*, the second part could mean (in a mixed language) “son (*bar*) of Tartarus” (*pharanges*, a nominative form instead of the genitive *pharangos*).¹⁵ In fact the Hebrew name of Tartarus was Gehenna, the valley of the son of Hinnom (*ben Hinnom*), in Jerusalem. In υἱὸς Ἐννόμ it was synonymous with *Tartarus*, as Celsus wrote: “the son of Gehenna, or of Tartarus” (Orig. *C.Cels.* 6.25). In this area of the holy city there was a ravine, and so it was it called φάραγξ in Greek.¹⁶

Σορμεύς is an otherwise unknown magical name. It is possible that it is related to σορός, the tomb or coffin or cinerary

¹⁵ φάραγξ / φαραγγής: cf. φόρμιγξ / φορμικτής, σῦριγξ / συρικτής, φέγγος / καλλιφεγγής.

¹⁶ φάραγξ υἱοῦ Ἐννόμ: 4 Reg. 23:10; Jer. 7:31–32, 39:35. The term recurs in medieval spells attributed to St. Zacharias: A. Barb, “St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr,” *JWarb* 11 (1948) 40. In Coptic spells the place corresponds to the West (in ancient Egypt the dead were called “those living in the West”): A. M. Kropp, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte II* (Brussels 1930) 105. A survey of previous theories on the etymology of the *vox* is in D. G. Martinez, *P. Michigan XVI. A Greek Love Charm from Egypt* (Atlanta 1991) 78–79. This *vox magica* recurs also in some gnostic texts: *Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III 2; IV 2) 64, Untitled Text of the *Codex Brucianus* (GCS, Koptisch-agnostische Schriften 1, 362 Schmidt) 20.

urn. σοροδαίμων signified one on the brink of the grave, or an old ghost,¹⁷ and σορέλλη was a nickname of an old man, with one foot in the grave (Ar. fr.205 K.-A.). A name related to the tomb was suitable for an image of Osiris. However such an interpretation remains very uncertain.

In (2), Σασιβηλ Σαρεσιφθω contains *si Bēl*, i.e. “son of Bel,” while in *Saresiphthō* it is possible to single out *Esi*, i.e. Isis. These two words recur in a spell which will be studied below. *Sa* is the well-known Egyptian symbol for “protection” or a protective amulet, but it is impossible to recognize it here beyond doubt.

In (3), Σεμεσιλαμ, *Semesilam*, signifies “eternal sun” in the Semitic languages.¹⁸ Such a name fits well with Osiris, because it is a predicate of divine eternity. ὠλαμβῶρος (incorrect writing for ὠλαμβόρος) signifies “he who eats eternity.” A gem from Aquileia¹⁹ bears the same word, accompanying the polymorphic god (the so-called Pantheos). This concept appears to be the same as that represented by the snake that eats its tail, the *ouroboros*, which is often depicted on magical texts and monuments. Τυδισε is an unknown word. Ἀβραῶθ is a theonymic form in *-oth*, typical of Hebrew. Ἀβρα- is the same root that recurs in the well-known magical word *Abrasax*. It is probably related to Hebrew *arbath*, “four,” which evoked the four letters of YHWH.²⁰ Ἀβραῶθ is also found on magical gems,²¹ and similar forms of this *vox* are common in magical texts.²² A similar *vox magica*, *Kabraōth*, “lion of the graves,” refers to Osiris.²³

¹⁷ Com. Adesp., *PCG* VIII 660; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 2.13B.

¹⁸ On the semantics of this word see M. G. Lancellotti, “Semes(e)ilam: una messa a punto,” *ZPE* 132 (2000) 248–254.

¹⁹ *Sylloge gemmarum gnosticarum* II, ed. A. Mastrocinque (*Bollettino di Numismatica Monogr.* 8.2.II [Rome 2008]) Aq7.

²⁰ W. Fauth, “Arbath Jao,” *OC* 67 (1983) 65–103.

²¹ A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiens* (Paris 1964) 326, no. 487.

²² E.g. *PGM* II.164, Ἀβραω; IV.990, 1001, 1079, Ἀβραωθ.

²³ R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets I* (Opladen 1994) 86–87.

In (4), $\theta\omega\beta\alpha\rho\rho\alpha\beta\alpha\upsilon$ is a Semitic word signifying “the Deposit is Good.”²⁴ According to the *Pistis Sophia*, Christ pronounced this *vox magica*.²⁵ It was used in both pagan and Jewish-Christian magical spells.

ΑΕΗΙΟΥΩ is the series of the seven vowels, which was very popular among the ancient magicians for their spells. This order, with iota at the centre, is the most common, and corresponds to the Chaldaean order.²⁶ Each vowel was supposed to be the particular voice of one of the planets.

At the end of the following series of vowels is written the name Ἰάω , *Iaó*, i.e. the name of the Jewish god.

Almost all these magical names recur in a spell preserved on a third-fourth century lead lamella from Hermoupolis:²⁷

ναί, κύριε, βα<σι>λεῦ χθονίων θεῶν, συντέλεσον τὰ ἐ[γγ]εγραμμένα τῷ πεδάλω τούτου, ὅτι ἐξορκίζω σαι τὸν ὅλον κόσμον, ἀρχὴν μίαν, μεμερισμένον, Θωβαρραβου Σεμεσειλαμψ σασιβηλ σαραηφθω Ιαω ιευ ια θυηοηω αειουω πανχουχι θασσουθο Σωθ Φρη ιπεχενβωρ Σεσενγεν Βαρφαραγγης ωλαμβωρω.

A third-century gold lamella from Gelduba (Germany) contains the same spell:²⁸

ωλαμβωρω σπν
 ιη φθω σουθ[ου]
 Α Σεμεσειλαμ
 Ε Σεσενγεν Βαρφαρ[αγγης]
 Η σασιβηλ σασμι(?)
 Ι Ιαω ειου ιευ(?)

²⁴ R. Kotansky, “ $\theta\omega\beta\alpha\rho\rho\alpha\beta\alpha\upsilon$ = ‘The Deposit is Good,’” *HThR* 87 (1994) 367–369.

²⁵ 4.136.2 (353 Schmidt/MacDermot). Probably the author intended him to invoke the Holy Spirit, which St. Paul (2 Cor 5:5) described as the “earnest” given by God to humankind.

²⁶ A. Bouché Leclercq, *L’astrologie grecque* (Paris 1899) 106–107.

²⁷ *Suppl. Mag.* I 42.40–42.

²⁸ Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets* I no. 4.

Ο πανχουχι θασσ[ου]
 Υ σωθηρη ιπανχυρω
 Ω θ[ω]βαρρωβαυ

It is evident that these were names of the king of the dead, who could be called, more simply, Osiris, Sarapis, or Hades. The recipe on the lead lamella was a love spell, by which a woman, Sophia, attempted to force another woman, Gorgonia, to love her. Many gods of the dead and the afterlife are invoked in order to make ghosts go to the desired woman and make her desire and approach Sophia and submit to her. This spell evidently was used to force Osiris (line 32) to do what the practitioner wanted, and hence we have a clue to hypothesize about the use of our lamp.

Iconography and Use of the Lamps

In Abydos Osiris was often represented lying down and framed by a snake, which forms a U around him. A scarab is flying out of his head.²⁹ This iconography corresponds to the hieroglyph



dt, i.e. ‘eternity’.³⁰ Osiris tightly wrapped by the snake’s coils was a later form of this iconography.

Snakes squeeze or entwine mummies on several *defixiones*;³¹ there the figures represent not gods, but the victims of the curses. The practitioners claimed to transform their enemies into the dead. The meaning of the snake is explained by a theogonic orphic passage, ascribed to Hieronymus and Helianicus.³² It describes some primeval gods, among them a

²⁹ S. Cauville, *Le zodiaque d’Osiris* (Louvain 1997) 62.

³⁰ Delatte and Derchain, *Les intailles* 104; L. Kákosi, “Osiris-Aion,” *OA* 3 (1964) 15–25.

³¹ E.g. those from Porta San Sebastiano: R. Wunsch, *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom* (Leipzig 1898); A. Mastrocinque, “Le *defixiones* di Porta San Sebastiano,” *MHNH* 5 (2005) 45–60.

³² Damasc. *De princ.* 123 bis (III 161 Westerink-Combès) = *OF* 54–58 Kern, F76 Bernabé.

Chronos-Herakles whose body was entwined by a snake which placed its head over the god's head. This kind of god is closely linked to the Mithraic Aiones.³³ The orphic theogony explains that the snake is *Ananke*, Necessity. This clarifies why a snake could entwine in its coils both a god of the dead and the victims of curses: it represented divine Necessity. We can conclude that divine and human prisoners of the snake's coils were supposed to be constrained by Necessity.

The osiriform lamps have been little studied. In 1998 Paolo Gallo³⁴ was able to present three lamps (two in terracotta, from the Athenian Agora and in the Museum of Alexandria; one in bronze, from a *sacellum* in Luni). He supposed they were used in the ceremony of searching for and discovering Osiris' corpse. Another bronze specimen has been discovered in a *domus* in Canosa.³⁵

A fifth lamp, of bronze, represents an Osiris-Attis wrapped as a mummy and entwined by the coils of a snake; surprisingly his head has an eagle headdress, which is a typical feature of Attis.³⁶ This object was sold at a Christie's auction and purchased by the Fitzwilliam Museum; its image can be seen on the internet.³⁷ Recent archaeological discoveries in Mainz (Moguntiacum) prove that Attis was worshipped as a god of the

³³ A. Mastrocinque, *Des mystères de Mithra aux mystères de Jésus* (Stuttgart 2009) 46–50.

³⁴ P. Gallo, "Lucerna osiriforme," in E. Arslan (ed.), *Iside: il mito, il mistero, la magia* (exh. cat., Milan 1997) 500, no. V.183, and *Alexandrina* 1 (1998) 149–155.

³⁵ M. Corrente, "Scavi e scoperte. Canosa di Puglia," *Taras* 12 (1992) 245–247; *Il dio con la folgore. Percorsi e immagini del sacro a Canusium* (exh. cat., Canosa di Puglia 2005) 37–41 (the lamp was found in 1992 stuck in a partition wall).

³⁶ R. Turcan, "L'aigle du pileus," in *Hommages à M. J. Vermaseren* III (Leiden 1978) 1281–1292.

³⁷ Christie's auction December 9, 1999, Lot 405 (<http://www.thecityreview.com/f99cant.html>). The lamp was previously in the collection of Dattari.

dead, to whom curses were addressed by local women.³⁸

The lamp from Canosa bears the following inscriptions:³⁹ on the chest: XAXAN; on the belly: ΔΑΒ[.]ΑΩ; on the legs: XOOOOOX; on the base: *charakteres*; reverse, on the left side of the base: ΑΛΕΙΑΑΧ; right side of the base: COMMOYX; on the base: two lines of magical signs.

In an early nineteenth-century manuscript in the Vatican Library, written by a bishop of Avezzano in the Abruzzi region, a drawing depicts a small statue resembling the Osirian bronze lamps.⁴⁰ The reverse side has letters and figures (hieroglyphs). The reading of the inscription as drawn is very difficult, almost impossible; I can propose hypothetically, from right to left: ΥΩΧΟΝ ΤΑΥΤΩ ΚΩΤΥ ΟΥΛ. It would be hazardous to proceed further (i.e. to recognize the names of Thoth-Tautos and Sothis) on the basis of this hypothetical reading.

The magical papyri preserve many recipes in which lamps were used to perform mantic seances. Sometimes Osiris was invoked by the practitioners in front of a burning lamp. We quote several interesting passages:⁴¹

PGM VII.222–249 reports a prayer to Bes and the headless god in front of a lamp, and this sentence should be pronounced: “You are the one who is over Necessity ARBATHIAO.” The same prayer recurs in CII.1–17.

PDM XIV.174a–176a: “The writings which you should write on the lamp: BAXYXSIXYX (and hieroglyphs) ... you should recite this other invocation to the lamp also. *Formula*: ‘O Osiris, o lamp, it will cause [me] to see those above.’” Apparently Osiris and the lamp

³⁸ Complete bibliography and discussion in R. Gordon, “‘Ut tu me vindices’: Mater Magna and Attis in Some New Latin Curse-Texts,” in *Demeter, Isis, Vesta, and Cybele* 195–212.

³⁹ See Capriotti Vitozzi, *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae* 15 (2008) 109–110.

⁴⁰ Capriotti Vitozzi, *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae* 15 (2008) 101–127.

⁴¹ The translations are from those in H. D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation including the Demotic Spells*² (Chicago 1997).

were identified, and so it is possible that the lamp allowed a manifestation by him, and perhaps was shaped in the form of this god.

PGM XXIIb.27–31: a “request for a dream oracle to a lamp, which lights the way to Osiris.”

PDM XIV.489–515: a prayer to underworld gods in front of a lamp.

PDM XIV.150–160, adduced by Capriotti Vitozzi:⁴² a recipe in which a lamp is addressed as “Osiris,” and is prescribed to be put into a cavity of a wall. This was precisely the archaeological context of the Canosa lamp. S. Francocci supposes that such a lamp was an instrument of private religion, in a city which was acquainted with Egyptian culture and religion from the Hellenistic age.⁴³

Therefore it is possible to suppose that the osiriform lamps were tool for performing mantic seances or other rituals, in which Osiris was supposed to be in some way forced to do what he was asked. Likewise the image of Seth, on the reverse of the lamp in Alexandria, was a means to urge or even intimidate Osiris.⁴⁴

The inscriptions on the Canosa lamp are similar to the magical inscriptions of the second and third centuries, and so one can not rule out the hypothesis of a ritual use in the style of the recipes known from the magical papyri.

– Attilio Mastrocinque

Magic Arts in Ancient Antioch

Our lamp from Antakya is very important for the history of magic arts in ancient Antioch. The lamp itself could have been used for the so-called *Lampenzauber*.⁴⁵ This city is well known for

⁴² *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae* 15 (2008) 108.

⁴³ Francocci, *Göttingen Miszellen* 186 (2002) 37–42.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mastrocinque, *MHNH* 5 (2005) 45–60, and “Riletture del mito di Osiris e Seth nella magia del Vicino Oriente,” in S. Pernigotti and M. Zecchi (eds.), *Sacerdozio e società civile nell’Egitto antico* (Imola 2008) 237–245.

⁴⁵ “Lamp or lantern magic (*Lampenzauber*) plays a major role here as well as generally in Egyptian magic”: S. Eitrem, “Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual,” in Ch. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera* (New York/Oxford 1991) 175–187, at 176.

its taste for magic and its series of prophylactic devices which date from the Hellenistic-Roman age. As Perdrizet wrote, “Antioche était adonnée à toutes les superstitions ... l’un des caractères de l’épigraphie syrienne à l’époque impériale, c’est le nombre considérable d’inscriptions à formules prophylactiques ou talismaniques qu’on y a relevées.”⁴⁶

We know the names of some magicians who practised their arts in Antioch; and in the sources we can read a series of very famous episodes of magic arts in the fourth century.

Concerning the aged Antiochene witches Julian writes, at the beginning of 363, that the people of Antioch said: “this we have had to put up with for seven months, so that we have left it to the old crones who grovel among the tombs to pray that we may be entirely rid of so great a curse.”⁴⁷

Ammianus Marcellinus reports that those accused by spies of having approached a tomb in the evening were deemed to be witches in search of the horrors of tombs or the empty shadows of souls that wander in those places, and suffered the death penalty (19.12.14).

Trials for magic and divination were instituted in Antioch against hundreds of persons by the emperor Valens.⁴⁸ An al-

⁴⁶ P. Perdrizet, “Une inscription d’Antioche qui reproduit un oracle d’Alexandre d’Abonotichos,” *CRAI* (1903) 62–66, at 66.

⁴⁷ *Misop.* 344a (transl. Wright). Cf. D. R. Reinsch, “Eine Satire als Inschrift am Torbogen? Ein abgeblicktes ‘Edikt’ Kaiser Julians,” in S. Kotzabassi and G. Mavromatis (eds.), *Realia Byzantina* (Berlin 2009) 247–252. For other commentators the mention of the old women who wander among the graves would be a slur against Christians, who prayed in their martyrial churches, which were assimilated to graves in this passage and elsewhere (*Or.* 7, 228c): so A. Marcone, in J. Fontaine et al. (eds.), *Giuliano imperatore, Alla madre degli dei e altri discorsi* (Milan 2006) 327. On the martyria, martyr cult, and Christian cemeteries in Antioch see P. Rentink, *La cura pastorale in Antiochia nel IV secolo* (Rome 1970), esp. 8–9, 63, 128–132. On the Antiochene sarcophagi now in the museum see E. Lafli, J. Meischner, and M. Buora, “Nuove considerazioni su alcuni sarcofagi del Museo archeologico dell’Hatay, Antakya”, *Rivista di archeologia* 35 (2011) 79–91.

⁴⁸ *Amm. Marc.* 29.1.40–29.2.3. Cf. F. J. Wiebe, *Kaiser Valens und die heidnische Opposition* (Bonn 1995) 106–111 and 116–119; a different view in N.

leged conspiracy had been formed in 371 with the aim of using magic to reveal whom the gods had chosen to succeed the emperor.⁴⁹ As a result, a large number of codices and rolls were burned. According to Ammianus, one of the measures that the emperor took in Antioch was to collect and burn many piles of magical handbooks under the eyes of the judges.⁵⁰ Some persons were denounced by Palladius as experts of magic, and agents were immediately sent to seal their homes and make an inventory of the sentenced owner's furnishings and learn if spells were being concealed, which were "worthy of an old woman." Then entire libraries were burned by their owners in the eastern provinces for fear of similar consequences. John Chrysostom wrote that "at that time I was still a youth" (μειράκιον, so in the 360s) ... "the city of Antioch was surrounded by soldiers who were looking for books of sorcery and magic" (βιβλία ἐζήτουν γοητικὰ καὶ μαγικά).⁵¹

Also in the Christianized Roman Empire a fairly large number of highly-educated men took an interest in magic, at least to the point of owning magical formulaires. At the end of the fourth century, according to an Armenian version of the life of Cyprian of Antioch, this saint practised magic before converting to Christianity and then becoming a bishop.⁵²

An extraordinary testimony to magical beliefs is body of *defixionum tabellae* found mostly near the Antiochene circus. Unfortunately only a limited number of these curses have been so far fully published or deciphered. In one of them, dating to the fifth century or even later, the Dionysus invoked could be,

Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley 2002) 223–224, and R. Lizzi Testa, *Senatori, popolo, papi. Il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (Bari 2004) 12.

⁴⁹ Lenski, *Failure of Empire* 213.

⁵⁰ Cf. M. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Graeco-Roman World* (London 2005) 302.

⁵¹ Joh. Chrys. *In acta Apost.* 38.5, PG 60.274.

⁵² F. Bilabel and A. Grohmann, *Griechische, koptische und arabische Texte zur Religion und religiöse Literatur in Ägyptens Spätzeit* (Heidelberg 1934) 170–171.

according to some authors, an identification with Osiris or Sarapis.⁵³

The Worship of Isis and Osiris in Antioch

Sadly, we can second the lamentation of Frederick Norris: “literally hundreds of artefacts are housed in the Antakya Museum, which have not been studied in any thorough way.”⁵⁴

We know in any case that the city worshiped Isis. According to Libanius (*Or.* 11.114), a native of Antioch, Seleucus IV (187–175 B.C.) built an Iseum, introducing this cult. Twenty-two oil lamps with images of Isis and two of Sarapis have been discovered in the excavations.⁵⁵ The mosaics of the so-called House of the Mysteries of Isis—thoroughly studied by Doro Levi,⁵⁶ although its interpretation is still under discussion—and of the House of Isiac Ceremony in Daphne prove that this deity was widely worshiped in the city. Isis, after Dionysus, is the best known deity to have a mystery cult in Antioch. And figurines of Sarapis, Isis, and Osiris are housed in the Hatay Museum.⁵⁷

⁵³ See A. Hollmann, “A Curse Tablet from the Circus at Antioch,” *ZPE* 145 (2003) 67–82, at 73.

⁵⁴ F. W. Norris, “Isis, Sarapis and Demeter in Antioch of Syria,” *HThR* 75 (1982) 189–207, at 189.

⁵⁵ Podvin, *Luminaire* 143; he judges that the lamps are not precisely datable.

⁵⁶ R. Stillwell, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* III (Princeton 1941) 178 ff.; D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaics Pavements* I (Princeton 1947) 163 ff., II pl. 33a; D. Levi, “Mors Voluntaria, Mystery Cult on Mosaics from Antioch,” *Berytus* 7 (1942) 19–55; S. Campbell, *The Mosaics of Antioch* (Toronto 1988) 74–76; Ö. Gençay, *A Private Spectacle in Antioch: Investigation of an Initiation Scene* (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Maryland 2004) 16–22. The mosaics are dated by Levi to the Severan period, by Sheila Campbell to the mid-third century,

⁵⁷ Gençay, *A Private Spectacle* 56 n.157; H. Pamir, “Isis and Sarapis Cult in Antioch,” in M. Novotná et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium “Cult and Sanctuary through the Ages”* (Trnava/Bratislava 2008) 355–368. On two figurines of Osiris in the Hatay Museum (provenance not better known) see E. Lafli and M. Feugère, *Statues et statuettes en bronze de Cilicie* (Oxford 2006) 57, and 30 on statues and statuettes of Isis and Sarapis in Cilicia.

We have no specific elements to date our lamp, even if we assume that it belongs approximately to the period of greatest blossoming of magic arts in the Roman Empire, the third century.

– Maurizio Buora

In conclusion, we have the satisfaction of having clarified the importance of a lamp that has been on display for many years in the Hatay Archaeological Museum, but whose inscriptions had so far remained unnoticed. They point us to the world of magic: the lamp is in a good state of preservation and is of a large size. Thus, in light of the texts, it could belong to the equipment of a place of worship. It might be supposed to have been carefully hidden during the persecution against magic and magical practices in Antioch, especially in the fourth century. Perhaps a similar action preserved the lamp from Canosa, discovered in a partition wall.

This bronze find enriches the small group of osiriform lamps so far known. It allows us further evidence of Osiris worship in ancient Syria. The inscriptions present us with a hitherto unattested epithet in addition to well-known formulas.⁵⁸

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