



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

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**Hermann Harrauer
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Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer, Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

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I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S

Michel Christol (Chilly-Mazarin), Thomas Drew-Bear (Lyon), Mehmet Taşlıalan (Yalvaç – Isparta): L'empereur Claude, le chevalier C. Caristianus Fronto Caesianus Iullus et le culte impérial à Antioche de Pisidie (Tafel 1–2)	1
Hans Förster (Wien): <i>Ich grüße meinen alltugendhaften Herrn</i> . Frag- ment eines koptischen Briefes (P.Vindob. K 33) (Tafel 3)	21
Matthias Haentjens (Amsterdam): Die Sonderabgaben in den Pachtur- kunden aus dem römischen Ägypten	27
Francisca A. J. Hoogendijk (Rossmoyne), Klaas A. Worp (Amster- dam): Drei unveröffentlichte griechische Papyri aus der Wiener Sammlung (Tafel 4–5)	45
Éva Jakab (Graz): Berenike vor Gericht. Apokeryxis, Gesellschaft und Buchführung in P. Oxy. XXII 2342	63
David Jordan (Athen): A Prayer Copied by Dioskoros of Kômê Aphro- ditês (PGM 13a)	87
Nico Kruit (Leiden), Klaas A. Worp (Amsterdam): P.Vindob. G 31701 verso: A Prefectural (?) Hypographe (Tafel 6)	91
Peter van Minnen (Cincinnati): P.Harrauer 48 and the Problem of <i>papas</i> Heraiscus in P.Lond. VI 1914	103
Amphilochios Papatthomas (Athen): A New Testimony to the Letter to the Hebrews (2. 9–11 and 3. 3–6) (Tafel 6)	107
Victor Parker (Christchurch): Sallust and the Victor of the Jugurthine War	111
Marijana Ričl (Belgrad): Donations of Slaves and Freeborn Children to Deities in Roman Macedonia and Phrygia. A Reconsideration (Tafel 7– 12)	127
Joshua D. Sosin (Cambridge, Mass.): Accounting and Endowments . . .	161
Martin Steskal (Wien): Zu den Stiftungen des M. Claudius P. Vedius Antoninus Phaedrus Sabinianus und ihrem Echo in Ephesos	177
Jean-Yves Strasser (Athen): La grande prêtrise dans trois inscriptions de Cilicie	189
Argyro B. Tatakı (Athen): Σάων, Ἰθαμβος and Other Names from LGPN III.B	205
Rudolf Wächter (Basel): <i>Ter tricennalia?</i> Zur Inschrift auf der Decenna- lien-Platte des Constans	211
Georgios A. Xenis (Limassol): A Papyrus Fragment with Mention of a Loan upon Mortgage (Tafel 12)	217
Ekkehard Weber, Martina Peditšček (Wien): <i>Annona Epigra- phica Austriaca 1999–2000: Text</i>	221
Index	267
Konkordanzen	271
Bemerkungen zu Papyri XIV (<Korr. Tyche> 373–396)	279

Buchbesprechungen	287
Michael Alpers, <i>Das nachrepublikanische Finanzsystem. Fiscus und Fiscii in der frühen Kaiserzeit</i> , Berlin, New York 1995 (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 45) (R. Wolters: 287) — Armin Daniel Baum, <i>Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum: mit ausgewählten Quellentexten samt deutscher Übersetzung</i> , Tübingen 2001 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament: Reihe 2, 138) (H. Förster: 290) — Diodoros, <i>Griechische Weltgeschichte, Buch XI–XIII</i> . Übers. v. Otto Veh, eingel. und komm. von Wolfgang Will, Stuttgart 1998 (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 45) (G. Dobesch: 292) — Johannes Engels, <i>Augusteische Oikumenegeographie und Universalhistorie im Werk Strabons von Amaseia</i> , Stuttgart 1999 (Geographica Historica 12) (G. Dobesch: 294) — Günter Figal, <i>Sokrates</i> , 2. überarbeitete Auflage, München 1998 (Beck'sche Reihe: Denker 530) (P. Siewert: 296) — Jörg-Dieter Gauger, <i>Authentizität und Methode. Untersuchungen zum historischen Wert des persisch-griechischen Herrscherbriefs in literarischer Tradition</i> , Hamburg 2000 (Studien zur Geschichtsforschung des Altertums 6) (G. Dobesch: 297) — Markham J. Geller, Herwig Maehler (Hrsg.), <i>Legal Documents of the Hellenistic World. Papers from a Seminar</i> , London 1995 (F. Winter: 299) — <i>Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike</i> . Hrsg. von Tonio Hölscher. München, Leipzig 2000 (G. Dobesch: 300) — Éva Jakab, <i>Praedicere und cavere beim Marktkauf. Sachmängel im griechischen und römischen Recht</i> , München 1997 (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 87) (R. Wolters: 307) — Luigi Loreto, <i>Il comando militare nelle province procuratorie 30 a. C.–280 d. C. Dimensione militare e dimensione costituzionale</i> , Napoli 2000 (Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di giurisprudenza della seconda Università di Napoli XII) (E. Weber: 308) — D. Lührmann, <i>Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache herausgegeben, übersetzt und eingeleitet in Zusammenarbeit mit Egbert Schlärh, Marburg 2000</i> (H. Förster: 309) — Eustathios Papapolychroniou, <i>Greek Papyri in the Benaki Museum. From the Collections of the Historical Archives</i> , Athens 2000 (A. Papatomas: 309) — Francisco Pina Polo, <i>Contra arma verbis. Der Redner vor dem Volk in der späten römischen Republik</i> . Aus dem Spanischen von Edda Liess, Stuttgart 1996 (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien, 22) (G. Dobesch: 312) — Reinhard Rathmayr, <i>Der antike Mensch in der Jahreszeit des Winters</i> , Hamburg 2001 (Schriftenreihe Studien zur Geschichtsforschung des Altertums 9) (P. Siewert: 313) — Eberhard Ruschenbusch, <i>Ein altgriechisches Gesetzbuch aus dem Kontext von Platons Gesetzen herausgehoben und in das Deutsche übersetzt</i> , München 2001 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Antiken Welt 38) (P. Siewert: 314) — Panagiota Sarischoyli, <i>Spätptolemäische Urkunden aus dem Herakleopolites</i> (BGU XVIII.1), Berlin 2000 (Ch. Armoni: 315) — H. K. Σβέρκος, <i>Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Άνω Μακεδονίας τών ρωμαϊκῶν χρόνων (πολιτική ὀργάνωση-κοινωνία-ἀνθρωπωνυμία)</i> , Thessaloniki 2000 (S. Zoumbaki: 322) — Markus Sehlmeier, <i>Stadtrömische Ehrenstatuen der republikanischen Zeit. Historizität und Kontext von Symbolen nobilitären Standesbewußtseins</i> , Stuttgart 1999 (Historia Einzelschriften 130) (P. Amann: 324) — <i>Bononia / Bologna. Scritti di Giancarlo Susini</i> , Bologna: Patron Editore 2001 (E. Weber: 325) — <i>Wege zur Genese griechischer Identität. Die Bedeutung der früharchaischen Zeit</i> . Hrsg. von Christoph Ulf, Berlin 1996 (G. Dobesch: 326) — <i>Alexander der Große. Eine Welteroberung und ihr Hintergrund</i> . Vorträge des Internationalen Bonner Alexanderkolloquiums, 19.–21. 12. 1996, hrsg. v. Wolfgang Will, Bonn 1998 (Antiquitas, Reihe I: Abhandlungen zur Alten Geschichte 46) (G. Dobesch: 329) — Claudia Wiotte-Franz, <i>Hermeneus und Interpres. Zum Dolmetscherwesen in der Antike</i> , Saarbrücken 2001 (Saarbrücker Studien zur Archäologie und Alten Geschichte 16) (G. Dobesch: 333)	
Indices (A. Pokorny: griechisch; H. Förster: koptisch)	335
Eingelangte Bücher	338
Tafel 1–12	

DAVID JORDAN

A Prayer Copied by Dioskoros of Kômê Aphroditês (PGM 13a)

In 1913 J. Maspero published, as P.Cair. Masp. II 67188^v.1–5, a prayer to the Almighty, one of the many papyrus texts in the hand of the 6th-century poet and scribe Dioskoros of Kômê Aphroditês; the sheet on which it was written contains also some attempts at verse and some commercial documents. The text of the prayer appeared again in 1972 as no. 13a in the photographic reedition of the second volume of K. Preisendanz' PGM. We are fortunate in that L. S. B. MacCoull has been able, subsequently, to inspect the papyrus itself, confirming most of Maspero's transcription (much of which he had presented as tentative); she also offers helpful comments on the Gnostic background of some of the unique epithets in the prayer¹. As a basis for discussion I present a text here that is chiefly Maspero's, with diacriticals and punctuation added, and a supplement of my own in the lacuna at the beginning of line 1.

- 1 [†(?) 'Επικαλοῦμαι] σε, κ(ύρι)ε π[αν]τοκράτωρ, πρωτογεν[έτω]ρ, [α]ὐτογενέτωρ, ἀσπερμολόγητε,
- 2 [c. 7] σ̣τ̣ε̣φανη ὁμοπανεπόπτης, σὺ καὶ Εἰαω Σαβαω Β̣ρ̣ιν̣θ̣αω, ἔχε με
 υῖόν,
- 3 παρ[α]φύλαξόν με ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πν(εὐμ)ατος κ(αὶ) ὑπόταξόν μου
 π̣ᾶν
- 4 πν(εὐμ)α δαιμονίων φθειροποιόντων ἀκαθάρτων, ἐπίγαια, ὑπόγαια,
- 5 ἔνυδρα κ(αὶ) χερσαῖα καὶ π̣ᾶσα σκιά. †

1 † ενορκίζω Masp., † 'Εξ- Prz, MacC. $\bar{\kappa}\bar{\epsilon}$ pap πρωτογενέτωρ *hapa*x
ἀσπερμολόγητε *hapa*x, -γόνγητε conj. Prz 2 σ̣τ̣ε̣φανη Masp., Prz; πυριφανή? MacC.,
comparing PGM IV 3023 ομ^οπαν^τεποπτης pap., ὁμοπανεπόπτης *hapa*x MacC., ομ(ο)
„interrompu avant d'avoir été achevé“ παντεπόπτης Maspero, ὁμοῦ π. Prz σὺ (εἶ)? σὺ
καὶ εἶ(ἰ) Ιαω? εἶαω pap. υῖόν pap. 3 π̣ν̣ᾶ̣τ̣ῶ̣ς pap. ὑποταξον pap. μοι 4 π̣ν̣ᾶ̣ pap.
„Lite δαιμονιον φθειροποιον“ Masp., φθειροποιούντων corr. Prz, φθειροποιῶν
τῶν MacC. 5 (ἐν) π̣ᾶ̣σ(η) σκιά (?) Maspero, π̣ᾶ̣σα(ν) σκιά(ν) Prz, π̣ᾶ̣σα σκιά MacC.

A few comments are in order.

In line 1, the editors have restored 'Ev- or the commoner 'Εξορκίζω „I adjure“. In Jewish and Christian prayers and spells, however, one „adjures“ mainly demons and

¹ P.Cair. Masp. II 67188 Verso 1–5. The gnostica of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, Tyche 2 (1987) 95–97.

such that one wants to bring under control. One may even adjure angels in the name of the Almighty, e. g. PGM XXXV 13–14 ἐξορκίζω (*vidi*; ἐξ- edd.) ἐμᾶς (*sic*) πάντας (i. e. the hierarchies of angels just invoked) κατὰ τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ τοῦ Ἀβραμ καὶ Ἰσακ καὶ Ἰακωβ „I adjure all of you (i. e. the hierarchies of angels just invoked) by the god of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob“; *Suppl. Mag.* I 29. 3–6 ὀρκίζω σε, Μιχαηλ, ... | ... τὸν παντοκράτορα Σαβαωθ „I adjure you, Michael ..., by the almighty god of hosts“². I have never found an actual adjuration of the Almighty himself, though: rather an invocation, with its verb ἐπικαλοῦμαι, is expected; cf. PGM 13. 1 [’Ε]πικαλοῦμαί σε, [θεὸν τῶ]ν οὐρανῶν etc., 21. 1–2 [’Επι]καλοῦμαί σε, θεὸς παντῶ-| [κρά]τωρ, etc. I should therefore restore this longer verb, whether or not it would leave any room for the editors’[†].

We owe much of our understanding of Dioskoros to Leslie MacCoull’s research and sensitive interpretation³. In her article, she assumed that the prayer of the papyrus was of Dioskoros’ own composition and that its epithets, some of them unique, reflect his own theological views: „in these five lines we see him, in typical Egyptian fashion, making his own deal with the unseen“. Against the assumption, however, of his necessary authorship is another magical text, which now appears as *Suppl. Mag.* II 65 and is assigned by its editor there, Robert Daniel, to the 3rd century. It is a graffito on a shallow terracotta bowl, considered by Daniel to have been used for divination. The part of the text that is preserved consists of a long palindrome, repeated περὺγο-ειδῶς, so as to form an inverted isosceles triangle, at the left of which there is an invocation, not ostensibly Christian, which has several elements in common with PGM 13a:

31	Δεῦρό μοι ὁ αὐτο-
32	γεννήτωρ θεέ, ἀσπερ-
33	μοβόλητε, αὐτοπάτω[ρ, αὐ-]
34	τομάτωρ, ἀφανής, [2–4]
35	[.. ἄ]σώματα, δέσποτα,
36	[c. 8]ς κρυφία [?
37	[c. 8] αληθ[

Αὐτογεννήτωρ and αὐτογενέτωρ are little more than variants in orthography. Even if the ἀσπερμολόγητε of the papyrus can admit of some explanation, surely it and ἀσπερμοβόλητε, neither attested elsewhere, sprang from the same archetype, at least one of the two forms being a scribal corruption. We may even wonder whether Maspero’s [c. 7]στέφανη and MacCoull’s πυρριφανῆ may not be the remeant of αὐτοπά]τωρ (or -μά]τωρ) ἀφανῆ. In any case, the invocation existed centuries before Dioskoros; the papyrus text that we have today is unlikely to be anything other than a traditional incantation, superficially Judaeo-Christianized and used now for protection rather than divination; Dioskoros would no doubt have jotted it down as a model for whenever he or his clients might require a papyrus amulet.

² The accusative here is a special usage found in such adjurations; the operant does not adjure Sabaoth.

³ See, for example, her *Dioscorus of Aphrodito*, Berkeley 1988.

Since MacCoull wrote, an important Greek-Coptic text has come to light, with a good example of a scribe's keeping copies of such models of magical spells. It was published in 1997 by Paul Mirecki, Iain Gardner, and Anthony Alcock, whose edition⁴ should be considered required reading for those interested in the transmission of ancient magical texts. The papyrus contains a letter, of around the year 365, from a scribe named Vale(n)s (Οὐάλης) to a fellow professional scribe named Psais or Pshai (Ψάις), the latter evidently a member of the Manichaean community at Kellis, in Upper Egypt, where the papyrus was found. Vale(n)s, writing presumably from some other oasis, responds to Psais' request for a magical recipe. I quote from the editors' translation:

§1. (*Greek*) „To my lord brother Psais, (from) Vales your brother“.

§2. (*Greek*) „I call upon You, the one who rules, the one sitting above the Cheroubin and Sarouphin, (*Coptic*) the one who stands (in judgement) over disputes and quarrels, the one who has stopped the winds with his great power. Just as you made the Land of Egypt lord, you cast quarrels over the Chaldeans. You (pl.) are the ones over whom I utter these names, you (sg.) [are the one who makes (?)] what is generated black (?). Let 'so & so' the son of 'so & so', let their heart be black for each other. Oh timely (?) natron of Arabia! Just as you will wash every thing, (so) you can wash (away) the desire which is between them for each other. And you are the burning of the mustard, as you can put burning and scorching into their heart for each other. The house in which I will place you (sg.), do not come out of it without having instigated a dispute and a quarrel with thundering'. And four-times (speak) the other (man's name), four-times (recite it all) again, four-times (speak the phrase), you will send these words upon them“. It is complete.

§3. (*Coptic*) „I greet you warmly. I pray for your continuing health until I embrace you once again in person and my joy be complete. I swear to you by our Lord Paraclete and the knowledge of truth. This⁵ is what I have found near me, and I have hastened to write and send it to you; for the other one is written on a small fragment of papyrus, and I did not find it. Should I find it, I will send it to you; I for my part knowing that it will not be brought to brother Kallikles⁶. I send it, for it is with my own hand that I wrote this. I have sent it, saying that perhaps this is what you need“.

The rest of the letter, which is about the commissioning of some codices to be copied by Psais and about Vale(n)s' collaboration, need not concern us here. In the text, unique in this regard, one correspondent sends another a recipe for a magical spell, but what is even more interesting is that the correspondence is between professional scribes.

In line 4 of Dioskoros' papyrus, however the phrase δαιμονίων φθειροποιώντων ἀκαθάρτων is to be understood and articulated, the adjectives that follow seem to

⁴ *Magical spell, Manichaean letter*, in: P. Mirecki and J. BeDuhn, eds., *Emerging from darkness. Studies in the recovery of Manichaean sources* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 43), Leiden 1997, 1–32.

⁵ I. e. the text in §2.

⁶ ΚΑΛΛΙΧΛΙΚΛΗΤΕΙ pap., „Kallikleitei“ in the editors' translation, but the form seems merely a heteroclitic dative, Καλλικληῆται (for -τι), of Καλλικληῆς.

modify a plurality of πνεύματα, not the singular πᾶν πν(εῦμ)α of the text. Should we assume that the singular found its way into the tradition as a mistake for πάντα πνεύματα? In any case, after the phrase ἐπίγαια, ὑπόγαια in *asyndeton* we find, in contrast, the *polysyndeton* of line 5. This, and the fact that the nominative πᾶσα σκιά of the papyrus is impossible after the ὑπόταξον of line 3, is enough to make us wonder whether the prayer acquired line 5 from a source different from that of the other lines. As the metrical shape of

ἔνυδρα καὶ χερσαῖα καὶ πᾶσα σκία

suggests, that source would presumably have been a poem in iambic trimeters⁷.

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⁷ In the magical papyri there are quotations, in varying lengths, of poems in iambic trimeters, which are collected as nos. 6, 8, 25, and 30 at the end of the second volume of PGM. Other magical texts with embedded trimeters are *Suppl. Mag.* I 26 (papyrus phylactery, choliambic; see HThR 84 [1991] 343–346), 49 (lead erotic spell); P.Köln VIII 339 (silver phylactery, choliambic).