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ΦΑΝΤΑΖΟΜΕΝΗ ΙΝ ΠΓΜ VII 888 – A POSSIBLE PARALLEL


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In their entry s. v. φαντάζομαι, LSJ devote a special section to the use of φανταζομένη found in a love-spell in the great British Museum magic papyrus. They give it the meaning 'to be terrified by visions or phantasms'. Compare Preisendanz's 'von Traumbildern geplagt'. E.N. O'Neil, however, in the collected translation of the Greek magic papyri translates 'seeing phantoms'. I am not absolutely sure whether LSJ and Preisendanz are essentially at variance with him here and whether they interpreted φανταζομένη as a true passive. I assume that the separate entry in LSJ was motivated primarily by a desire to indicate the absolute use of the verb. I believe, however, that I have found a parallel which suggests that φανταζομένη is indeed a true passive and shows that, consciously or unconsciously, LSJ and Preisendanz are correct against O'Neil.

The parallel comes from the late magico-medical work known as the Cyranides. It occurs in a passage not to be found in the most recent edition of the work. At about the same time as Kaimakis's edition was published it became known that the work entitled περὶ ἑπταρχῆς found in the fourteenth century manuscript Marcianus Graecus 512 (678) contained material appertaining to books two, three and four of the Cyranides. A considerable amount of this material was new and, in 1983, Anna Meschini published an edition of the chapters and parts of chapters not found in the manuscripts used by Kaimakis.

What concerns us a passage from one of the new chapters which deals with the medicinal and magical properties of the bird, νυκτικόραξ.
At first sight one might be inclined to link the syntagm ἰνδάλματι ... φανταζητεται with another passage where φαντάζομαι earns a special section in LSJ⁹ and where its use has troubled editors and commentators,¹⁰ Aesch. Αγ. 1501:

φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροὶ
τὸῦ ὁ παλαιὸς δριμὺς ἀλάστωρ
'Ατρέως χαλέπου θοινατήρος
τόνδ᾿ ἀπέτειεν
tέλεον νεαρὸι ἐπιθύμαθ.

The words would then mean 'he will resemble the appearance of demons' (i.e. 'people will think he is a demon'. But the plural ἰνδάλματι tells against this.

Taking φανταζητεται as a passive as in PGM VII 888, translate rather 'he will be frightened by visions of demons'.

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NOTIZ:

In III 15 p. 206,4-5 Kaimakis ist mit den meisten Handschriften zu lesen ... τεκνογονεῖ ἀρρενόθηλῳ.  R.Merkelbach

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⁹ S. v. II b. 4.

¹⁰ 'The meaning and construction in this passage are unique (rightly Peile); "likening himself to", as Homer uses εἰδόμενος and εἰκόμενος" (Paley) (Fraenkel on 1500). 'We have to accept a remarkable abuse of language ...', Denniston-Page on 1498-1500. (This seems something of overstatement. Aeschylus is adopting a construction possible in a verb of similar meaning, εἰδομαί. I remember Sir Kenneth Dover in lectures on the Agamennon drawing attention to parallel uses of the verb ἰνδάλλομαι).