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COLOGNE COPTIC MAGICAL TEXTS: SOME NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

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## COLOGNE COPTIC MAGICAL TEXTS: SOME NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

Among several commendable projects which have been announced lately in the field of Coptic studies, that of a comprehensive edition of the rich collection of Coptic magical papyri in the Papyrussammlung of Cologne University certainly ranks among the most promising<sup>1</sup>. Awaiting the appearance of this publication, we have to satisfy ourselves, for the time being, with such editions of individual pieces as are available. Since interest in Coptic magic is booming, I venture to present here my notes on four of these previously edited texts from Cologne. The following remarks merely propose some new readings and translations. They are neither exhaustive nor final, and do not pretend to supply a full commentary or an entirely new text. They are, moreover, exclusively based upon the published photographs, not upon personal inspection of the original manuscripts.

The following texts will be discussed: Inv. T 10 (a curse); Inv. 1470 (a love spell); Inv. 10235 (a spell for gaining influence), and Inv. 20826 (a spell for protection). A fifth Coptic spell from Cologne, Inv. 1471 (Pap. Colon. copt. 3 = P. Köln aegypt. 10), does not call for comment<sup>2</sup>.

### I. Cologne, Papyrussammlung, Inv. T 10 (P. Köln aegypt. 11)

A *defixio* on lead, edited by M. Weber, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* IX, Opladen 1980, pp. 109–112, pl. IX. This edition was critically reviewed by W. Brunsch, in *WZKM* 74 (1982), pp. 201–07 (at 205–06), by W. J. Tait, in *CdE* 57 (1982), pp. 249–252 (at 252), and by G. Vittmann, in *Enchoria* 11 (1982), pp. 119–128 (at 126–27). For some of the magical names in ll. 7–9, see my remarks in *Aegyptus* 71 (1991), p. 229. An English translation by R. K. Ritner appeared in: M. Meyer & R. Smith, edd., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic texts of ritual power*, San Francisco 1994, pp. 202–03, with notes on p. 371; it ignores the important corrections proposed by the reviewers.

The observations of the reviewers will not be reproduced here. I merely add two of my own:

l. 16 end – 17: the text as it stands is muddled and grammatically incorrect (cf. Tait, *loc. cit.*). Read:

ϣⲓ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲗ.....>

ⲟϣⲱⲙ / ⲛⲧⲉϥⲗⲁⲡⲉ

ϥⲱ ⲙⲧⲉϥⲗⲛⲟϥ

“Take away his <noun, fem. sing.>, eat his flesh, drink his blood!”

l. 19: instead of ϩⲛⲟϣⲟϥⲓⲛⲓ read ϩⲛⲟϣⲟϥⲓⲛⲓ, “quickly”, as in ll. 27 and 34.

### II. Cologne, Papyrussammlung, Inv. 1470

A quite typical love spell, edited by M. Weber, in *Enchoria* 5 (1975), pp. 115–18 (with plate 35). A note by G. M. Browne, in *ZPE* 22 (1976), pp. 90–91, corrects Weber’s interpretation of l. 4. An Italian translation by S. Pernigotti appeared in his “La magia copta: I testi”, *ANRW* II, 18/5, Berlin 1995, p. 3712. According to St. Emmel, in Meyer & Smith, *Christian Magic*, p. 345, the same scribe wrote spells Yale inv. 882 (A; edited and translated by Emmel, *ibid.* and pp. 216–17), 882 (B) and 3549.

l. 4: ⲛⲦⲙⲁⲟϣ, read: ⲛⲦⲙⲁ<ϩ>ⲟϣ (Browne; cf. Emmel, *op. cit.*, p. 345, n. 6).

<sup>1</sup> See C. Römer & H. J. Thissen, *ZPE* 84 (1990), p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> See the edition by M. Weber, in *Papyrologica Coloniensia* II, Cologne 1968, pp. 86–92, pl. IV–V; an Italian translation by S. Pernigotti, *ANRW* II, 18/5, p. 3709.

l. 7: read  $\varrho\text{NN} <\text{OY}>\text{OY}\omega\omega \text{C}\epsilon\text{OY}\Delta\omega\text{T}$ ; for parallel phrases, see e. g. BM Or. 10376, l. 13 (ed. W. E. Crum, *JEA* 20 [1934], p. 52), another love spell<sup>3</sup>.

The entire passage (ll. 5 end – 7) should be translated: “as soon as I will throw them (i. e. the ingredients mentioned before) into the water, and the race of Adam and [all] the children of Zoê (Eve) drink thereof, they desire me with desire and with love love me”<sup>4</sup>.

l. 8 is fairly garbled, but well understandable; read:  $\epsilon\text{NTM}\epsilon\text{T}\epsilon\text{CNOY}\text{C}\epsilon \text{N}\epsilon\text{YNOY}$  (etc.); translate: “they crave for me during the twelve hours of the day and the twelve (hours) of the night”; there is no question of “virgins” here nor of dittography (as suggested by the editor, p. 117, n. 15).

ll. 8 end – 9: translate: “like a [kind of animal?] longing for water”; one is tempted to find an echo of Ps 42 (41): 2 and fill the gap thus:  $\text{N}\theta\text{H} [\text{NOY}\text{I}\text{OY}\lambda]$ , “like a deer”, but this particular image may be too pious for the given context<sup>5</sup>.

l. 9: a second  $\lambda\text{I}\omega$  omitted by the ed.

ll. 10–11: translate: “every(-body?) who will drink from this water desires me like the sun, [loves me] like the moon, glorifies me like an angel of God”. For parallels, see BM Or. 10414-ro, ll. 9–10 (ed. Crum, *JEA* 20 [1934], p. 195: sun and moon); BM Or. 10376, ll. 14–15 & 22 (*ibid.*, p. 52: angel of God; Crum refers to Gal 4: 14). What precedes  $\text{NIM}$  remains obscure to me: *viderunt sapientiores!*

l. 13: the editor’s interpretation of  $\phi\text{HTOTICMO}\text{C}$  gives no sense; cf. my note in *Aegyptus* 71 (1991), p. 222, n. 22. Translate: “they [will be subjected] to me by the fetter of the heavenly ones through which ([N] $\varrho\text{HT}\varphi$ ) they (i. e. the latter) are subjected to the Father [. . .]”.

### III. Cologne, Papyrussammlung, Inv. 10235

A spell for gaining influence, edited by M. Weber, in *Enchoria* 2 (1972), pp. 55–63, pl. 2–4. An English translation by R. K. Ritner appeared in Meyer & Smith, *Christian Magic*, pp. 210–11, with notes on pp. 372–73; an Italian one by S. Pernigotti, in *ANRW* II, 18/5, pp. 3709–10. For some earlier comments of mine, see “Satan’s fall in Coptic magic”, in Meyer & Mirecki, *Ancient Magic*, Leiden 1995, pp. 415–16.

Although this interesting spell has been competently edited, Weber’s reconstruction of the badly damaged opening lines (ll. 1–9) can be improved. The spell invokes an anonymous power, who in ll. 1–5 is characterized as particularly formidable by a series of more or less conventional epithets; in ll. 5–9, he is invited to appear to the magician, together with his two “decans”, Archôn and Lamei<sup>6</sup>; in l. 10 ss., the magician formulates his wishes.

As Weber correctly saw, the demon in question is invoked as  $[\text{OY}\Delta\omega\omega\text{PE}]/\varrho\bar{\text{N}} \text{T}\epsilon\varphi\text{C}\text{OM}$  “[a strong one] in his power” (ll. 0–1)<sup>7</sup>. This epithet is expanded by a double series of “invocatory” relative clauses (l. 1:  $\text{P}\epsilon\text{NT}\lambda[\varphi\dots]$ ; l. 4:  $\text{P}\epsilon\text{T}\epsilon\text{PE} [\dots]$ ): the first one describes some of the power’s superhuman feats; the second, his superhuman stature. Unfortunately, the greater part of l. 3 cannot be read from the plates nor can Weber’s tentative reconstruction be accepted. I propose the following readings:

l. 2: . ] $\text{P}\epsilon\text{NIB}\epsilon \Delta\varphi\text{BO}\lambda\varphi \epsilon[\text{BO}\lambda$  (Weber:  $\Delta\varphi\text{B}\omega\lambda \epsilon\text{B}[\text{O}\lambda]$ )

l. 3 end:  $\epsilon\text{BO}\lambda [\text{MTN}]\text{O}\text{C} \epsilon\text{T}\text{HH}\text{B}\epsilon$  (the lacuna leaves room for a preposition preceding  $[\text{TN}]\text{O}\text{C}$ ).

ll. 4–5:  $\text{P}\epsilon\text{T}\epsilon\text{PE}[\Delta\omega\varphi \varrho\bar{\text{N}} \text{T}\text{T}]\epsilon \cdot [\text{P}\lambda]\text{T}[\varphi / \varrho]\bar{\text{M}} \text{TK}\lambda\varrho \cdot$

<sup>3</sup> For these constructions, see A. Shisha-Halevy, “The „tautological infinitive” in Coptic: A structural examination”, *JCoptS* 1 (1990), pp. 99–127.

<sup>4</sup> On the topic of poisoning mankind through water, in Coptic love-spells, see J. van der Vliet, “Satan’s fall in Coptic magic”, in: M. Meyer & P. Mirecki, edd., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, Leiden 1995, p. 405; cf. by the same, *L’image du mal en Egypte: Démonologie et cosmogonie d’après les textes gnostiques coptes*, Ph.D. thesis, Leiden 1996, pp. 375–79.

<sup>5</sup> On animal images in Coptic love-spells: D. Frankfurter, in: Meyer & Smith, *Christian Magic*, pp. 149–150.

<sup>6</sup> For names and terms involved, see the references in Van der Vliet, “Satan’s fall”, p. 415, n. 72.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. p. 59; cf. V. Stegemann, “ $[\text{OY}\Delta\omega\omega\text{PE} \varrho\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\epsilon\varphi\text{C}\text{OM} = \text{stark}]$ ”, *ZÄS* 71 (1935), pp. 81–85.

II. 7–8: Ν]ΓΟΥΕΝΘΚ ΝΑΙ ΕΒΟ[λ ΤΑΝΔΥ ΕΡΟΚ Ν]Θ[ο / ΜΝ̄] ΘΟ · ΝΓΩΔΔΕ Ν̄ΜΜΑΙ ΝΤΑΠΡ[ο ρΙ ΤΑΠ]ΡΟ ·<sup>8</sup>

Translate: “[I invoke you today, NN, a strong one] in his power! He who [. . .] / [of?] iron he dissolved<sup>9</sup> [. . . / . . .] the great finger / of his right hand! He whose [head] is in heaven, [whose foot] / in the earth!<sup>10</sup> I invoke you today, in order that / you shall come to me in this place wherein I am for you / and that you shall reveal yourself to me and [that I shall see you], face / [to] face, and that you shall speak with me, mouth to mouth<sup>11</sup>, / together with your two decans, namely Archôn and Lamei, and that you shall bring me . . . (etc., etc.)”.

#### IV. Cologne, Papyrussammlung, Inv. 20826

This spell for protection was edited by C. Römer & H. J. Thissen, in *ZPE* 84 (1990), pp. 175–181, pl. VIII. An English translation by M. Meyer can be found in Meyer & Smith, *Christian Magic*, pp. 110–11, with a note at p. 362.

II. 3–5: from ΚΚΕ† onwards, these lines (a prayer over honey) contain several problems which the editors did not solve satisfactorily.

First, the word which they read as ΕΠΗΤ (l. 3) looks rather like ÇΕΠΗΤ, ΕÇΠΗΤ, or the like (the editors’ interpretation, p. 179, is highly improbable); -ΠΗΤ seems quite certain, the two preceding letters less so. With some hesitation, I propose to read ΕΚΠΗΤ, admitting that the ensuing construction (a circumstantial clause which separates the main verb, -†, from its object, the “twelve powers” of l. 4), is not conspicuously elegant. An alternative interpretation would be to take the word as a scribal slip for ΕΠΕÇΗΤ, and translate “you shall bring down upon it . . .”.

Secondly, the editors’ interpretation of ΜΠΕ/Δ̄ as a writing of ΠΕΙΘΕ is unacceptable: the element Δ̄ must be (and actually is) an orthographic variant of the feminine demonstrative pronoun (or, article) †-<sup>12</sup>.

The latter, undubitable reading strands us at a meaningless element ΜΠΕ at the end of l. 3. The most economical solution would perhaps be to suppose that our scribe, in introducing the object of the verb †, choose the wrong gender, corrected masc. ΠΕ- into fem. Δ̄-, but did not bother to write the object marker (Μ-) again. Less economical, but preferable from the point of view of literary structure and coherence, is the assumption that a masculine noun on a par with -ΘΛΟΘ (l. 4) and governing Δ̄ΙΜΗΤCΝΟΟΥC Ν`Δ`ΕΝΔΜΙC has been omitted after ΜΠΕ-. This assumption is strongly recommended by the imperfect matching of ΠΕ- (article) and Δ̄- (demonstrative) and by the group λΥΩ ΠΕΥΘΛΟΘ / ΔΝ (II. 4–5), where ΔΝ = ΟΝ, “again, also”, with its suggestion of symmetry.

<sup>8</sup> Although a bit long for a mere point, the last sign is certainly too short for Ι.

<sup>9</sup> Possibly, “[the door? of] iron”; cf. Weber’s remarks, p. 59. Obviously, this phrase is part of a conventional series of mighty feats which the Coptic magicians ascribe to the supernatural powers they invoke; such series usually include “dissolving iron”, “splitting rocks”, etc., and frequently contain *descensus*-motifs; for characteristic examples, see Michigan 1190-ro, col. I, ll. 1–11 (ed. W. H. Worrell, *Or* 4 [1935], p. 6) and Berlin P. 8314 (see the forthcoming re-edition by S. Richter and G. Wurst). Ideally, the phrase mentioning “the great finger of his right hand” should fit into the same context.

<sup>10</sup> The power invoked represents a conventional figure in Egyptian magic: the “pantheos”, a giant with cosmic dimensions; see, for parallels, W. M. Brashear, *Magica varia*, Brussels 1991, pp. 28–33; for its traditional Egyptian background, J. Assmann, “Primat und Transzendenz: Struktur und Genese der ägyptischen Vorstellung eines “Höchsten Wesens””, in W. Westendorf, ed., *Aspekte der spätägyptischen Religion*, Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 7–42; the same, *Ägypten: Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 258–82.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. ed. Weber, pp. 59–60. For almost identical phrases in a similar, though literary, context (“Offenbarungszauber”), cf. *Confessio Cypriani*, coptic: ΔΙΝΔΥ ΕΠΑΙΔΒΟΛΩC ΝΘΟ ρΙ ΘΟ · ΔΙΤΡΕΦΟΥΩΝΘ ΕΡΟΙ ρΝ ρΝΘΥCΙΑ ... ΔΙΑCΤΑΖΕ ΜΜΟϕ ΝΤΑΠΡΟ · ρΙ ΤΑΠΡΟ ΔΥΩΔΔΕ ΝΜΜΔΙ, “I saw the devil face to face and through offerings caused him to reveal himself to me . . . I kissed him mouth to mouth and he spoke with me” (ed. Von Lemm, p. 11).

<sup>12</sup> Several other examples in P. E. Kahle, *Bala’izah*, Oxford 1954, vol. 1, p. 131, sub 111.

I propose to read the entire passage thus:

ΕΚΕΪ ΕΞΡΑΪ ΕΔ<Μ> ΠΕΪΕΦΙΩ  
 ΕΚΕ† ΕΚΠΗΤ ΕΡΟΦ ΜΠΕ<..... Ν>/ΔΪΜΗΤCΝΟΟΥC Ν`Δ`ΕΝΔΜΙC ·  
 ΔΥΩ ΠΕΥΞΛΟΘ / ΔΝ

I translate: “you shall come down upon this honey; rushing towards it, you shall give the <noun, masc. sing., of> these twelve powers and their sweetness as well!” Although slightly hypothetical, the present translation has the merit of best fitting the conventional character of this passage as a “magical epiclesis”.

l. 14: translate: “its light, which came down upon me!” (the verb is Ι, “to come”, not ΦΙ).

ll. 20–22: translate: “you shall give me the sun as a garment, the moon that I cover myself with it as a cloak” (no relative clause here, but a conjunctive, 1st sing.).

l. 21, beginning: read: ΝΘΗ Ν-, with Meyer, p. 362.

l. 24, beginning: ms. has ΕΚΕΤΙ.

l. 25: ΠΘΟΡΘ, with Meyer, p. 111: “the stuff”.

l. 26: ms. has clearly ΠΝΟΥΤΕ.

verso, l. 1: read: <Μ>ΠΚ<Ε>ΕΘΟΥ ΜΠΡΕ, “you shall give me the glory of the sun *too* . . .” (this sentence is the last of a series of parallel phrases, featuring i. a. “the boat of the sun” and “the stuff of the stars”).

l. 6: the obliterated names can still be read with reasonable certainty as: CHT İΩΤ ΒΔΡİΘΘ.

Finally, one is astonished to read that the editors believe the language of this spell to be a “Mischdialekt” with distinct Bohairic elements (p. 175). In fact, we are dealing with a common kind of non-literary Sahidic, exposed to occasional extraneous (Middle Egyptian or Fayyumic) pressure on the vowel-system (characteristic examples in this text: ΔΝ, ΞΥΔC, ΞΔΙ, ΚΕΩ, ΡΕ, ΞΗ and, once only, ΠΝΟΥ†)<sup>13</sup>. I am unable to detect any Bohairic here.

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<sup>13</sup> The classic reference remains: Kahle, *Bald'izah*, vol. 1, pp. 48–192, ch. VIII (“Dialectical variations in Sahidic non-literary texts”).