

Further notes on the Greek-Coptic Glossary of Dioscorus of Aphrodito*)

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The recent article of Barry Baldwin¹⁾ is a reminder that the bilingual glossary of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, preserved on the verso of *P. Lond.* V 1821, is indeed an editorial aid to his poems.²⁾ It is also an index of Dioscorus' wider culture. The paramount fact to be borne in mind is that Dioscorus was Coptic-speaking, and that it is the Greek words that he was glossing into Coptic, explaining them, as in any student's vocabulary list, by their Coptic equivalents. As Baldwin is not a Coptologist, it may be useful to raise some further points from the angle of Coptic philology and cultural history, based on autoptic work with the original papyrus.

I cite according to the line numbers of the original edition.³⁾

27. The notion of 'daughter' [κόρη] 'of the eye', unexceptionable in Coptic usage, should be compared to the gloss in 25, κόρη ὀφθαλμοῦ = ⲭⲏⲣⲟⲙⲉ ⲛⲏⲃⲁⲗ, where ⲭⲏ- = Ⲯⲏ-, construct form of Ⲯⲏⲣⲉⲃ/Ⲯⲏⲣⲉⲃⲉ (Crum *Dict.* 585 b). ⲕⲉⲕⲉ/ⲕⲁⲕⲉ, 'child', can be of either gender (Crum *Dict.* 101 b with lemmata): here it is feminine and appears in the short form ⲕⲁⲕ. (The Sahidic of Psalm 16: 8, 'Keep me as the pupil of the eye', varies between ⲕⲉⲕⲉ and ⲕⲁⲕⲉ; the London MS. [6th-7th c.] has corrected ⲕⲁⲕⲉ to ⲕⲉⲕⲉ. We have no Lycopolitan (Subakhmimic) witness for this Psalm text.) For 'man of the eye' compare the Bohairic Ⲣⲣⲟⲙⲉ ⲙⲡⲏⲃⲁⲗ, 'pupil', in Kircher's *scala (Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta, 1636) 75*, rendered *ansan al-'ayn*. The notion of 'maiden of the eye' persists as late as the early fourteenth-century *Triadon*,⁴⁾ 288.2, a passage which punningly rhymes ⲕⲁⲕⲉ

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¹⁾ B. Baldwin, 'Notes on the Greek-Coptic glossary of Dioscorus of Aphrodito,' *Glotta* 60 (1982) 79-81.

²⁾ As Baldwin pointed out in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples 1984) 327-331. Compare his *Anthology of Byzantine poetry* (Amsterdam 1985) 100-105, which does not cite this writer's commentary in *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 575-585.

³⁾ By Bell and Crum in *Aegyptus* 6 (1925) 184-198 (text).

⁴⁾ Newly ed. by P. Nagel (Halle 1983).

‘darkness’ with **ΚΕΚΕ** ‘pupil’. It seems that the pun is not so much in the Greek (*κόρη*) as in the Coptic: since there exists the masculine noun **ΚΑΚΕ/ΚΕΚΕ**, ‘darkness’, this has influenced the secondary meaning of ‘dark part of the eye’. To Crum’s lemma in *Dict.* 101 b I would add that as a proper name **ΚΑΚΒΑΛ** would be more likely to mean ‘apple of (the parent’s) eye’ than the descriptive ‘bare-eyed’ (101 a).⁵)

161 ff. Coptic words for the sexual organs are abundantly attested. So far as terms for ‘penis’ are concerned, **ΒΑΖ** is of uncertain etymology; **ΤΜΘ** is ‘the giver of urine’; **CHT** is ‘tail’ (Crum *Dict.* 47 b, 158 b, 359 a). The Coptic **ΧΑΧ** renders not only ‘sparrow’ but also ‘ostrich’, which would give rise to a clever slang usage for ‘the one that hides its head’. Baldwin passes over the most interesting word in this semantic field, 163 *σαρακοιτιν* = **ΣΑΡΑΚΩΤΘ**, ‘wanderer’.⁶) The usage ‘wandering monk’ was intelligible as late as, again, the *Triadon*, 471.1–2, in the amusing rhyme **ΟΥΡΗΡΑΚΟΤΘ/ΝΙΖΕΝΣΑΡΑΚΟΤΘ**: ‘Are you an Alexandrian?’ – ‘Do I look like a wandering bum?’ This too would be an excellent slang word for ‘penis’. The Coptic rendering of 164–166, **ΤΩΝΘ**, means ‘the stone’, which would more logically mean ‘testicle’ rather than ‘penis’: it translates ‘bull-roarer’, *rhombos*. The more usual Coptic term for ‘testicle’ is **ΧΟΒΙΤ**, literally ‘olive’ (there are also a few Bohairic late hapaxes). Then, in the glossary, *ψωλή* resumes the order of words for ‘penis’.

190, *ύδροκόμος*. Technical terms for parts of well equipment and irrigation machinery are well-known in both Greek and Coptic from Dioscorus’ documentary papyri. *Hydrokomos* is glossed by the Coptic **ΟΥΘΙΡΘ ΝΥΗΙ**, an *eire* of a well. From Crum *Dict.* 84a, an **ΘΙΡΘ** appears to be a plaited leather strap which functions rather like a fan-belt in a typical water-wheel, including at the present day in Egypt. The Greek term being explained by Dioscorus is not so much a ‘well-bucket’ (Crum), i. e. a *shaduf*-bucket, as rather the drive-cable of a *sakiyeh*. It is apparent from the present grouping of terms that it is the *sakiyeh* or water-wheel that is being discussed. Other sections of the glossary text that deal with tools and matters to do with agriculture and irrigation are lines 111–123, 350–374, and 386–400, all of which lie near one another across the columns (see below on

⁵) See also P. de Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca* (Göttingen 1883) 242.27 (Canones ecclesiastici § 12), a proverbial usage. Heuser’s ‘wimpernlos’ is erroneous.

⁶) See L. S. B. MacCoull in *Actes du XV^e congrès international de papyrologie 2* (Brussels 1979) 116–123.

how the text is organized and laid out on the papyrus). Comparable terms are found in Coptic in P. Vat. Copti Doresse 1 and 5.⁷⁾

343 (misprinted in Baldwin's article as 340), *ἀννουάλια*. Baldwin is apparently not acquainted with the numerous legal Latinisms in Dioscorus' documentary papyri. In fact three Latinisms are glossed all together here as a group: *ἀννουάλια*, *λήγατον*, and *πεκούλιον* (*λήγατον*). The parallels from Dioscorus' other writings are: *ἀννουάλια*: *P. Lond.* V 1706.11 n.; *λήγατον*: *P. Lond.* V 1706 11n., *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67151.295, 299, III 67312.110, 67314.33, II.5, III. 18.26; *πεκούλιον*: *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67312.101, 102, 67313.68, 67314.20, 29, 33, III. 18. The juxtapositions are apparent. I have commented on these legal Latinisms in *Dioscorus of Aphrodito: his work and his world* (Berkeley, to appear), chapter III. By the reign of Justin II they have become completely at home in the scholarly jargon of Egyptian Greek.⁸⁾

The editors of the glossary, Crum and Bell, point out (p. 180, cf. 184) that Dioscorus organized his glossary by subjects, working horizontally across three main columns as they stand on the papyrus. (Organizing a wordlist by subjects is a familiar practice, going back even to Ancient Egyptian parallels.⁹⁾ This means that when writing he had the entire piece of papyrus unrolled vertically in front of him – or else, more logically, he worked by unrolling it as he went along. Now *P. Lond.* inv. 1727 (1–3) is, so to speak, doubly a rotulus, or a *transversa charta* roll twice over. That is to say: The first thing Dioscorus wrote on it, on the so-called recto, i. e., *transversa charta* across the fibres (which on that side run the long way, parallel to the long edges of the roll), is *P. Lond.* V 1674, a draft of a petition to Athanasius Duke of the Thebaid, which is written in short lines parallel to the short edge of the papyrus roll. Then, to write the glossary, he turned the roll over, and began writing again across it, i. e., this time *with* the fibres, parallel to the short edge, making three short double columns of Greek and Coptic word lists that cohere horizontally by

⁷⁾ See L. Papini, 'Notes on the formulary of some Coptic documentary papyri from Middle Egypt,' *BSAC* 25 (1983) 83–89; eadem, 'Annotazioni sul formulario giuridico di documenti copti del VI secolo,' *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples 1984) 767–776. Compare line 392, **TBINQ**, found in Hall p. 108.

⁸⁾ See s. vv. in S. Daris, *Il lessico latino nel greco d'Egitto* (Barcelona 1971).

⁹⁾ Compare *P. Rainer Cent.* Kopt. 12 (pp. 206–213 and Tafel 17), and the editorial remarks on this 7th-c. Greek-Coptic word list from the Fayum, with the literature there cited. Cf. also H. Satzinger in *Cd'E* 47 (1972) 343–345.

subjects. The Greek words and their Coptic equivalents are separated either by a colon (:) or by just a space. Thus the lines numbered, in Crum and Bell's publication, 4-58, 131-180, 272-312, all dealing with parts of the body, go together to form a section that coheres horizontally across the papyrus. So too do the sections on farming and irrigation equipment referred to above. Lines 1-3, the beginning of the leftmost column, are glosses on 'man', 'animal' and 'death'. In the space to the right of them, above columns 2 and 3, Dioscorus has written what Crum and Bell identified as question-and-answer aphorisms deriving from the 'Secundus' corpus.¹⁰⁾ Baldwin has offered no remarks on this anomaly in the glossary, which deserves attention.

Instead of 'man', 'animal', and 'death', the three Secundine excerpts appear to respond to queries about the definition of 'man', 'the sea', and 'death', in that order. It is possible that the points in which Dioscorus' text differs from the known Greek texts of Secundus (but are closer to the Arabic) derive from a possible Coptic version of this popular work.¹¹⁾ In particular we should notice 130, *ἀπέρατον διάστημα*, 'boundless separation' as an epithet of Death. This equals the *ⲭⲏⲛⲓⲱⲣⲁ* of Coptic epitaphs,¹²⁾ the yawning gap that knows no closing. Dioscorus may well have known in a Coptic version the school text that was to be put, in the West, even into the mouths of Pippin and Alcuin.

As described above, Dioscorus' glossary was written on the other side of a draft petition to the Duke of the Thebaid, dated by Bell to between A.D. 567 and 573. It would seem logical to infer that the glossary was written later than the petition, when Dioscorus was back home at Aphrodito and doing some serious work on his Greek poetic vocabulary, relating it at every turn to the world around him and the landscape of his ancestral village. Dioscorus' glossary is a kind of genre sketch, with its topographical terms, names for local animals and Nile fish, the typical occupations of the late antique Upper Egyptian countryside, and, in happy celebration, words for Dionysiac festival figures and the poetry of drinking songs. He may have compiled it with a view to writing dedicatory epigrams for vari-

¹⁰⁾ See B.E. Perry, *Secundus the silent philosopher* (Ithaca 1964).

¹¹⁾ In spite of the many faults of the study of E. Revillout in *CRAIBL* ser. 3 no. 1 (1872) 256-355, his postulation of a sixth-century Sahidic Coptic version of Secundus makes sense.

¹²⁾ M. Cramer, *Die Totenklage bei den Kopten* (Vienna/Leipzig 1941).

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ous occupations. As a document, Dioscorus' glossary summons up a picture of the life and seasonal round of the estate of a Coptic landowner, at a point where prosperity and opulence were informed with a deep-rooted sense of the vitality of classical culture in both the languages of Christian Egypt.