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Setho-Gnostic Curses found in Rome *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom*, herausgegeben Richard von Wünsch. 8vo, pp. 123. Teubner, Leipzig. 1898.

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to generally received tradition, the *Codex Ambrosianus* found its way to Milan? This is no doubt what the Germans call a 'hair-erecting' hypothesis. But it led me to a renewed examination of the readings quoted by Turnèbe in his *Adversaria* and collected works, with the following remarkable result. In nearly every passage (32 in all) in which Turnèbe distinctly speaks of his special Codex, by such terms as *membranae*, *membranulae*, *membranae morticinae* ('carion parchments'), *schedae antiquae*, etc.,¹ the reading quoted agrees with the reading of the Ambrosian palimpsest (*A*) so far as the latter is now accessible to us.² The question then arises: was the 'Codex Turnèbi' simply *A* in a less mutilated condition? There is evidence that it was known before the time of Angelo Mai; why not, then, to a six-

¹ See Ritschl, *Opusc.* ii. p. 4.

² The only exceptions are Cas. 640, Poen. 319. Here Turnèbe possibly referred by mistake to the wrong MS. In Pseud. 738 *alis* (*Adv.* xx. 10) agrees with *A*; *aliis* (*Opusc.* i. p. 64, 53) is not from the 'schedae,' but from a MS. which he calls 'peruetustus' (perhaps *B*, which Camerarius often describes as *liber vetus*.) Similarly Rud. 767, and perhaps Rud. 525. In Cas. 729 the only MS. which has *μέγα κακόν* 'plane et literate perscriptum' is *A*, though it also has *tibi*, omitted by Turnèbe. In Poen. 371, 413, 471 Studemund read as Turnèbe (except in 413 *minore* and *meo*; in 471 *lenullo* for *lenulle*, and details of spelling in last word). In Poen. 1313 Turnèbe is probably quoting from the Palatine MSS. Rud. 724 *Non licet* etc. may well have been visible in *A* in the sixteenth century. It must never be forgotten that *A* is difficult to decipher, and probably was so even before the application of Mai's chemicals; so that some difference of opinion as to its readings may be expected. The marvel is that there are not more. [The passages in which the Cod. Turn. differs from *BCD* more than from *A* are more numerous: e.g. Cas. 523, Poen. 30, 47, 530, 770, 977, 1033.]

teenth century scholar like Turnèbe, whether its home at that time was Bobbio or Sens?³ The language in which Turnèbe speaks of the 'carion parchments' which he 'at one time had in his hands'⁴ fits *A* to perfection: and the phrase *alta manus* of the Bodleian marginalia receives a new significance. Yet there is no absolute impossibility in there having been two fragmentary and almost identical MSS. in two separate monasteries both named after a 'Columba'; and in view of the fact that Lambinus constantly refers to several MSS. (e.g. on Cas. 729 he quotes no less than six, which he names, for the reading *dabo μέγα κακόν*), and that Pareus quotes 'plerique MSS.' for *eas*, *easque* Rud. 519, and bearing in mind also the difficulties involved in supposing that Turnèbe could have read the palimpsest even in isolated passages, I think it safer to maintain that the Cod. Turn. if not *A* was a MS. very similar to *A*. One thing, however, results from this enquiry. It becomes still more difficult to identify the *dr.* readings with those of the Cod. Turn. For the former have in general a marked affinity to the Palatine family. Their actual source will probably be discovered when the meaning of the symbol *dr.* is made out. Any further light on this or other points from Mr. Lindsay will be very welcome.

E. A. SONNENSCHIN.

³ Studemund says it is not certain that *A* came from Bobbio.

⁴ 'Schedae morticinae,' 'quas aliquando habui' (*Adv.* xv. 7); 'aliquando in aliquot membranas peruetustas incidi, in quibus scriptus erat Poenulus' (*Adv.* xix. 12). Not only, then, did Turnèbe write in haste (*cursim et properanter*) but he had not got the MS. before him when he wrote his *Adversaria*.

SETHO-GNOSTIC CURSES FOUND IN ROME.

Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom, herausgegeben von RICHARD WÜNSCH. 8vo, pp. 123. Teubner, Leipzig. 1898.

IN this brief monograph the able editor of the *Deficiendum Tabellae Atticae* has rendered a further substantial service to the study of ancient religion, especially of its later developments, and incidentally to other sides of learning. In his preface to that collection he cited a long Latin curse written on a sheet of lead, directed against one

'Praeseticus son of Asella.' The roll had been discovered with several others in a tomb on the Via Appia, and was transcribed by de Rossi for a meeting of the German Archaeological Institute in 1880,⁵ having lain with the rest in the papal lumber-rooms for some thirty years; Henzen, to whom they were once offered, had discreetly refused to unroll them. Wunsch has now re-discovered them in the Museo Kircheriano, and publishes the text of all the

⁵ *Bull. Inst. Arch. Röm.* 1880, pp. 6-9.

'tables' so far as it can be deciphered, with the striking if not exactly artistic illustrations kindly provided by the original authors. To these he adds a similar table, now in another museum in Rome, found in a cinerary urn. Nos. 1-8 are Latin, but of these only the first is of any length; 9-49 are Greek, and all but six of them, as Wunsch points out (p. 56), exhibit so precisely the same handwriting and style that they must all have been written by one hand, that of a professional wizard.

The peculiarity of the group lies in the deity, or rather deities, who are invoked. The chief of these is the Egyptian Typhon-Seth, the servant of Necessity but master of all the other gods, who is depicted on all the tables as an ass-headed monster with a most blood-curdling smile. But the 'holy symphony' of the seven stars or archangels who are associated with him, the *Δόγος* and the names of many of the human beings, with other characteristics of the two curses, are not pagan, but Jewish and Christian; the curses are the work of Christian secretaries, and Seth has been promoted by his Gnostic worshippers to a new and strange elevation. The editor reserves to the end the most striking conclusion of his study of the career of this Ass-god; it involves a re-interpretation of the famous Palatine graffiti *Ἀλεξάμενος σέβετε θεόν* and *Ἀλεξάμενος fidelis*, with the terrible picture attached to the first. It is fairest to refer the reader to the book itself for an account of the identification suggested and the chain of argument in its support; I will only add that on epigraphic grounds the case seems fairly good, but that the real decision depends on the evidence drawn from the early history of the Christian sects, and this evidence I am not competent to judge.

But, apart from the theological interest of a particular question, the collection deserves attention for its own sake, as a historical 'document' of some curiosity, a genuine record of popular language and beliefs in a dark period. For the date of the inscriptions, which considerations of writing and the like do not suffice to determine, has been fixed by Wunsch with admirable precision by a comparison of the names of the persons cursed—who are all either jockeys or charioteers—with those on the large medals of the third and fourth centuries A.D. known as *Contorniiati*.¹ The

comparison shows that three charioteers mentioned on these tables, Euthymius (cf. *C.I.L.* 6, 10,066), Eugenius, and Artemius, were all living and racing between 390-420 A.D.

Of the Latin curses the text of the first may serve as a specimen (p. 6-7); the beginning is broken away.

Tere contere confr[ing]e[t].....t[ra]de morti fili[u]m Aselles Praseti[c]ijum pristinarium qui manet in regione nona ubi uidetur arte sua (i.e. *artem suam*) facere et trade Plutoni praeposito mortuorum. Et si forte te contempserit, patiat[ur] febris frigus tortionis palloris sudores obbrillationis meridianas interdianas serutinas nocturnas ab hac ora ab hoc die ab hac (nocte). Et perturba eum ne repraeensionem abeat, et si forte occasione (i.e. *occasionem*) inuenerit praefocato eum Praestetium fili[u]m Asell[is] in terminas in ualneas in quocunque loco cupede (?) frange Pr[ae]setici[o] Aselles et [si] forte te seducat per aliqua..... et rideat de te et exsultetur tibi, unce peroccide filium mares Praesete[c]ijum pristina[ri]um filium [A]selles qui manet in regione [nona.....]. ed[e] ede tacy tacy.

repraeensionem is taken by Hülsen to mean 'recovery' (from the plagues previously invoked) on the strength of the similar meaning of the Italn. *reprendersi*. Wunsch prefers to attribute the curse to a runaway slave, who prays that his master may never 'recover' him, though there is no other evidence of this in the insc. Possibly if we possessed the beginning of the insc. we should find some special wish expressed in regard to Praeseticus and the author of the curse which would explain both the *repraeensionem* and the alternative of submission which the *si te forte contempserit* suggests. The curse would then belong to the conditional class, i.e. would be invoked only on non-fulfilment of certain desires, like the curse of Vibia, *A.J.P.* x. 454. *filium mares* (i.e. *maris*), if the text be sound, Wunsch takes to mean 'hardhearted.'

Several well-known phonetic changes of late Latin and Greek are here represented (e.g. the complete loss of final *-m*, the conversion both of consonant *u* and of the Greek *β* into the spirant *v*—written *u* in the early Minuscule hand used here—), which are attested for earlier dates; on the other hand the confusion of *-tium* and *-cium* in the different spellings of the enemy's name, with *ζύκλα* for *κύκλα* in one of the Greek tables, vouches for the assimilation of the explosives before consonant *i* in the Latin of the lowest class of the community at the date of these tables (400 B.C.), which is a century earlier than has been hitherto assumed (p. 57).

¹ Wunsch refers especially to Cohen, *Médailles Impériales*, viii. pp. 273-323.

An extract from No. 49 may serve as a specimen of the Greek :

(p. 52) ἐξορκίζω ὑμᾶς, ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι καὶ ἅγια ὀνόματα συνεπισχύσατε τῷ κατόχῳ τούτῳ καὶ δῆσατε καταδῆθαι ἐνποδίσατε ἀκο(ν)τίσατε καταστρέψατε συν[εργή]σατε ὀλέσατε ἀποκτίνετε συνκλάσατε Εὐχέριον τὸν ἡνιώχον καὶ ὅλους τοὺς ἱ[ππους] αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐρίῳ ἡμέρα ἐν τῷ ἱπ<ι>πικῷ Ῥώμης· μὴ τας θύρας καλῶς. . . , μὴ ὀξυμαχίῃ μὴ παρέλθῃ μὴ πιάσῃ μὴ νικήσῃ μὴ καλῶς κάμψῃ μὴ ἄθλα λάβῃ μήτε πιάσας ἀπονικήσῃ μήτε ὀπίσθεν ἀκολουθήσας παρέλθῃ ἀλλὰ συμπτέσῃ συνδεθῇ συνκλασθῇ συρῇ ἀπὸ τ[ῆς] δυνάμεως ἑμῶν προΐνας ὥρας καὶ ἀπάριστα. ἥδη ἥδη τάχῃ τάχῃ.

ὁ κάτοχος is the charm, and the words ὀξυμαχεῖν κ.τ.λ. are technical terms denoting various methods of winning in the chariot-race; most of the Latin equivalents appear in the inscc. of *Agitatores*, *C.I.L.* vi. 10,044 ff. *πιάζειν* corresponds to *premere* (*Sil.* 15, 397-408), or *opponere* (*Plin. H.N.* 8, 160) and seems to mean either 'nursing,' i.e. intentionally steering so as to prevent a rival from passing you, or deliberately causing him to 'foul' your own vehicle; see p. 70.

In these extracts the reader will recognise much of the familiar furniture of magic all the world over; from the Iguvine Tables down to the Ingoldsby Legends cursers have always been voluble, always vulgar, and generally in a hurry. The pictures give other details; chains, ladders for torture, demons with a raven's head, the serpent

Sarapis, the seven stars and their seven (Greek) vowels; the *πάρεδροι* of Seth who are appealed to, to influence the other gods, just as Seth is—and as I believe Jove, Vejove and Saturn were in the Duenos-curse (*It. Dial.* p. 330); 'Ephesian letters' (*βακνχ, βαχαχνκ, βαζακνχ, κ.τ.λ.* at great length; were the Gnostics quoting from their sacred symbol of immortality, the frog?); epistolary form, foreign words, inane repetitions and the general paraphernalia of the regular magic prescription in its fullest development. The habits of the early Christian jockeys are attested by an excellent story (p. 75) from Jerome's *Life of St. Hilarion*. That pillar of the church was one day besought by a charioteer of Gaza for deliverance from a spell cast upon him and his horses by a pagan wizard. The saint consented, and by a modicum of holy water the wizard's spell was broken. The Christian charioteer of course won his race, and by his victory the people of Gaza learnt the power of the Christian faith, and all came to be baptised to share the benefits of the saint's wonderful water.

Wünsch's edition of the Tables is a model of clear and careful treatment of a difficult branch of epigraphy; and though I cannot attempt to judge the learning with which he has treated the subject matter, I may testify with gratitude to the interest with which he has filled it for the lay reader.

R. S. CONWAY.

CARDIFF, April 1899.

HEIBERG'S PTOLEMY.

Claudii Ptolemaei opera quae exstant omnia.
Volumen I. *Syntaxis mathematica.*
Edidit J. L. HEIBERG, Professor Havnensis. Pars I. Libros I.-VI. continens.
Lipsiae, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
MDCCLXXXVIII. pp. vi. + 546.

ALL who are interested in the history of Greek mathematics already owe an incalculable debt to the indefatigable scholar who has successively given us revised texts, based on the best MSS., of the works of Archimedes with the commentaries of Eutocius (Teubner, 1880-1881), of so much of Apollonius of Perga as is extant in Greek (including the first four books of the *Conics*) with the ancient commentaries thereon (Teubner, 1891-3), of Euclid's *Elements* with

the scholia (5 volumes, Teubner, 1883-1888), and of Euclid's *Optics*, etc. (Teubner, 1895), to say nothing of Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *de caelo* (the seventh volume of *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca*, Berlin, 1894), and very numerous contributions to philological journals. We welcome therefore the latest addition to this formidable list, the first instalment of the works of Ptolemy, consisting of the first six books of the *μαθηματικὴ σύνταξις*, which was called *μαθηματικά* by Pappus as it is also in the headings to Books V. and VI. of the work itself, though it has been generally known as the *μεγάλῃ σύνταξις* or by the bastard name *Almagest*. The need for a thoroughly good text of this work will be appreciated when it is remembered that there have