



## GEMF 22 (P.Bingen 13)

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## GEMF 22 (P.Bingen 13)

Provenance unknown

II–III CE

ED.PR.: P.Bingen 13 (Fournet 2000a)

TRANSL.: ed.pr. (French)

COMM.: ed.pr.

LOC.: Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, P.IFAO inv. no. 313

TM 66744

This papyrus sheet (H. 11.8 × W. 10.4 cm) seems to preserve the upper, lower and left margins. The text consists of three different blocks written by the same hand, although the letters of l. 3–6 are slightly smaller than elsewhere. The verso is blank. The hand is irregular and awkward, strongly influenced by the cursive (in addition to ligatures, the ε of l. 4–6 should be noted). There are two types of α: one with a round belly, the other—only at the beginning of lines—with an angular belly and plunging below the line. The latter can be observed from the second century (e.g. P.Yadin 16 [127 CE] or 21 [130]) down to the end of the third century (P.Berl. 11734 [Brashear 1990]). Other clues, such as the shape of η with an apex or the very narrow ε like a Latin e, suggest a second century date, without rejecting the beginning of the third century. The text is not very neat: the lines, e.g., are far from horizontal and there are mistakes (e.g. l. 2 ⟨ἐν⟩). Finally, the text is written across the fibers, which would be surprising for a literary roll. Since we have the beginning of a text with its title, we might have the *protokollon* of a roll, which would explain the orientation of the fibers. But normally, the *protokollon* is left blank or, if necessary, reserved for the title, whereas it is partially occupied here by the first column of text. In addition, the height preserved, which is probably original, is much lower than what is expected in the case of a literary roll.

The formal and external elements suggest strongly that this is an excerpt of longer work, in this case an astrological work of Nechepso, copied for private use, and not the beginning of a roll that contained the entire work. Nechepso is considered one of the most famous astrologers of Greek and Roman antiquity, whose work is only extant in quotations by later authors (see Riess 1890 and 1892; Krauss 1982; on the historical figure of Nechepso, see Ray 1974 and Ryholt 2011). Beginning in the second century BCE, texts circulated under his name (often associated with Petosiris), which can be divided into four sets, according to the analysis most recently given by Pingree 1974: (i) fragments of astrological texts based on the principle of astral *omina*; (ii) texts in iambic trimeters transmitting Nechepso's teaching after the revelation that endowed him with the art of the horoscope; (iii) iatromathematical texts (or astral medicine) and *materia medica* in connection with the stars; and (iv) numerology based on zodiac signs.

This papyrus probably offers a recipe consisting of an invocation (l. 7–10) and a procedure of a medical or magical type (l. 11); it ends, moreover, with a formula that gives it the character of a magical rite (l. 13). Such a text would point in the direction of an iatromathematical treatise, but, in fact, the excerpts and quotations of Nechepso that inspired the treatise of Thessalos of Tralles or that are quoted by Aëtius do not include any magic formulae and they give a much fuller description of the pharmacological preparation itself (or the conditions for collecting *materia medica*) than our papyrus seems to do. The presence of the magical words, moreover, creates a problem for the date of Nechepso's treatise in the second century BCE, because they do not appear until the first century CE (see Brashear 1995, 3413–3414 et 3430, and GEMF 6, first published in 1998). Rather than assuming that we have here a second century BCE example of *voces magicae*, I would suggest that this is an applied magical procedure to ward off a misfortune or more probably a disease (one of the meanings of ἀποτροπιασμός), that was integrated into Nechepso's corpus as early as the first or second century CE. The presence, in the last line, of a concluding formula suggests that the sheet did not include an additional column and was therefore designed for a practical purpose, a fact which explains why it is not the work of a professional scribe and why it contains errors. It is not impossible, in fact, that this surprisingly small sheet itself was used as an amulet, which is one of the senses of ἀποτροπιασμός.

↓

1 ἀποτροπιασμῶν [   
 ἡλίου παρθένῳ ὄντος [   
 Νεχεψοῦς ιε ω. [   
 5 τελ [   
 μερ [   
 ερε [   
 ανιευ βανιε [   
 ερομεδοψ. ζα [   
 απληξ. αν [   
 10 αριουχεμ. ν. [   
 μασι ἐν ὕδρομ[έλιτι ?   
 μεμν. θηνῳ. [   
 τελέσατέ μοι τε[λέαν ἐπαιοιδήν

2 ἡλίου <ἐν> || 3 inter νεχεψους et ιε vacat || 4 τ vel γ | λ vel μ || 7 inter ανιευ et βανιε vacat || 8 inter ερομεδοψ. et ζα fort. paulum vacat || 9 inter απληξ et . αν fort. paulum vacat || 10 fort. αριουχεμᾶν || 12 fort. μεμνη (μέμνη?) vel μεμνο.

Apotropaic procedures<sup>1</sup> when the Sun is in Virgo.<sup>2</sup> Book 15 of Nechepso. ... (5) ... ANIEU BANIE[U?...] EROMEDOPS.ZA ... ASPLĒX<sup>3</sup> ... AN ... (10) ARIOUCH<sup>4</sup>EM.N ... in hydromel(?)<sup>5</sup> ... perfect for me a perfect [incantation].<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One might be tempted to translate this as a hitherto unknown title: “Book 15 of Nechepso of the *Apotropiasmoi* (to be done) when the Sun is in Virgo,” but it is implausible that Nechepso wrote at least 15 books on *apotropiasmoi* to be made under the sole sign of Virgo; the presentation of this title is also unusual: the author’s name normally precedes the title of the work followed by the book number. The genitive case of ἀποτροπιασμῶν is to be explained by the ellipse of ἐκ τῶν “taken from.” The word ἀποτροπιασμός refers to any action or object intended to repel an evil or evil demon. It can be a ritual, a sacrifice, a formula or even an amulet (for the last, see Berosius *FGrHist* 680, fr. 4C, where pieces of Noah’s ark serve as *apotropiasmoi*). Its connection with astrology is highlighted by Nemes. *Nat.Hom.* 35: “Egyptians ... claim that the destiny determined by the stars is true and that it can be modified by prayers and *apotropiasmoi*, because, they say, we even go so far as to render cults to these very stars to appease them. They and other higher powers are capable of changing destiny, and that is why prayers, cults towards the gods, and *apotropiasmoi* were invented.” See also Ptol. *Tetr.* 1.3.18

<sup>2</sup> Although this expression of time leaves no doubt about the astrological nature of the text, it is a priori difficult to locate our fragment in one of Pingree’s four categories given above in the introduction.

<sup>3</sup> The word απληξ (l. 9) has an ending found in other magical words, for example, νιχαροπληξ or οπλομυρτιοπληξ; perhaps it should be compared to the name of the demon of the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 5<sup>th</sup> day, ἄπληξ, in the *Hygromantia Salomonis* (CCAG 8.2).

<sup>4</sup> One might just be tempted to connect αριουχ (l. 10) to αριχ of SM I 4, 2 (3<sup>rd</sup> cent.).

<sup>5</sup> Hydromel or mead is not a rare ingredient in medical preparations. The word before it is a neuter noun in -μα in the plural dative, which leaves the field open to multiple possibilities, for example, Orib. *Syn.* 8.42, 2: καταπλάσμαιι χρητέον ἀλεύρω τε καθαρῷ καὶ πάλῃ ἀλφίτου ἐν ὕδρομέλιτι ἠψημένη.

<sup>6</sup> Our papyrus seems to end with a popular coda for magical formulae, cf. SM I 45, 53: τελίτε τελίαν τὴν ἐπαιοδὴν; GEMF 57/PGM IV 294–295 τελέσατέ μοι τὴν τελείαν ἐπαιοδὴν. Other examples of this expression are: 57/IV 2939 τέλει τελέαν ἐπαιοδὴν; 74.714/VII 992 (κ)αλῶς μοι[ι τέλει ταύτην τὴν ἐπα]οιδὴν; GEMF 4 (τέλει τε[λέαν ἐπαιοδὴν]; and Julius Africanus, P.Oxy. III 412, 17 (τελείετε δ’ ἄμμιν ἀοι[δὴ]ν).