

Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies:

Text and Translation

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Volume I

Edited by

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GEMF 33 (PGM XIb)

Provenance unknown

III CE

ED.PR.: PGM XIb [Pr]

TRANS.: Kotansky, GMPT, 151 (English); Calvo Martínez and Sánchez Romero 1987, 251 (Spanish)

LOC.: London, British Library, P.Lond. inv. 147

TM 64086

Single sheet (H. 14.7 × W. 12.6)¹ conserved on cardboard under glass; the back is not visible and presumably blank. It is broken at the left, complete on the other sides, with margins at top (ca 1.5 cm), right (0.8–4 cm, largest in l. 1, then growing smaller) and bottom (ca 1.8 cm). *Kollesis* ca 3.6 cm from left; fold marks at ca 1.2, ca 5.6, and ca 9.4 cm from left. Possibly the left most section broke away along another such fold line. The restorations of Preisendanz estimate a loss of ca 4 letters (2 cm) at the left, but more could be lost, if the text were restored differently.

Three prescriptions written along the fibers in the same hand, a semi-regular slightly right-leaning script, not dissimilar to that of GEMF 19, with letters mostly abutting but rarely ligatured. Similar (though not identical) scripts are found at various points in the third century, to which this papyrus should be assigned; compare from various perspectives e.g. SB XIV 11907 (239 CE); P.Coll.Youtie II 71 (281 CE); P.Oxy. XII 1492 (end of the 3rd cent. CE); PSI IX 1041 (end of the 3rd cent. CE). Lines skew upwards towards the right, and the baseline is irregularly followed. A blank line is left between recipes. There are ink blotches below the text, and in line 10. The papyrus is rubbed in the central section, making readings in places difficult. The bottom half of the papyrus is lighter than top half.

The first two prescriptions on this papyrus have not been published before and were brusquely summarised by Preisendanz as “popular medicine.” Only the third prescription was included in PGM and Betz’s translation. The first two prescriptions are difficult to read because of the rubbing, even where all the letters appear visible. They are clearly “medicinal” (the usefulness of which categorization *vis à vis* magic is of course in question), and both deal with ailments faced by women, an unidentifiable problem in the first, and seemingly a bloody discharge in the second. The third has been understood as a party trick and seems concerned with making the faces of symposiasts appear to be those of donkeys, yet the ritual is much more obscure than previous commentary has implied. A number of Preisendanz’s interpretations of the clear reading of the papyrus (on which his translation and that of Kotansky in Betz are based), cannot be explained by any scribal or copying error (see especially l. 14). We have chosen to interpret what is actually on the papyrus before adopting such radical emendations; possible interpretations may be found in the commentary to the text below.

Looking at the three prescriptions together changes the tone of the papyrus. The first two prescriptions are clearly more strictly medical in nature, if we can draw such a distinction, and it is thus not a handbook of parlour tricks or table gimmicks (as in Betz), but of medical prescriptions and, perhaps, a parlour trick (if the third has been rightly interpreted).

The visible fold marks force us to question the oft quoted *dictum* that fold marks indicate applied or used texts, like amulets. It is likely that GEMF 33 is not an “applied” or “amuletic” text—there are many reasons texts could be folded, and it provides a clear example of a formulary which bears signs of having been folded.

¹ First described in the *Catalogue BM* 1894, 398, “Pap. CXLVII Fragment containing portions of three short magical spells. 2nd or 3rd cent. 5¾ in. x 4¾ in. Imperfect, wanting the left-hand portion of the papyrus; in a rather square semi-cursive hand,” reprinted in P.Lond. II, p. xiv.

recto →

GEMF 33/PGM XIb

- 1 [. . . .] λαμβανούσης δέξε
 [. . . .] φυτὸν γραμβεῖον καὶ αἷμα τῆς
 [. . . .] κος κραιβέον τὸ κραιβεῖον καὶ κραι
 [. . . .] . α τοῦ αἵματος εἰς ἐγγεῖνον τόπον
 5 [. . . .] , ησον ἐν ρακαδιδίῳ λινοῦς καὶ θες
 [. . . .] τεινοῦ
- [. . . .] κα ἐμαρρόεις ἐδεξα δέξιμην πράσα
 [. . . .] εἰσης καὶ σας χυδρεῖον καινόν
 [. . . .] . τον εἶτα ε . ρ . οραγ καὶ μετακενω
 10 [. . . .] . [μ]πειν καινὸν καὶ σ αὐτὸν καὶ ὑπόθεσ
 [. . . .] . κει
- [άνθρ]ώπουσ πείνοντα[ς] ἐν κυμποσείῳ πρόσ-
 [ωθε]γ τοῖς ἔξοθεν ὀνορύγγουσ φαίνεσθαι
 [. . . .] εβειβακοτος τὸ δρεῖλλον ἀπὸ τοῦ λύθρου
 15 [. . . .] , ὀνίφ ἐμάξε καὶ ποιῆσαι ἐλλύχνει και-
 [νὸν εἰ]ς λύχον καινὸν καὶ ἄψε τοῖς πείνωσι.

2 l. κραιβεῖον: v ex corr? || 3 fort. [γυνα]κὸς || 4 fort.]τα : με]τὰ ? | l. ἐκεῖνον || 5 fort.]τὸν σὸν? | fort. l. ρακκάδιον vel ρακίδιον | l. λινοῦ? || 7 l. αἱμορρόεις | fort. ε . δεξα | fort. l. πράσων || 8 fort. σπ]είσης || 9 fort. πρ]ῶτον εἶτα || 10 μ: fort. corr. ad α? || 13 l. ἔξοθεν || 14 εβειβακοτος τὸ δρ . λλον Pr suppl. [λαβόν] ἐπὶ σκότος τὸ θρυαλλ(ιδ)ιον ἀπὸ τοῦ λύχνου? || 15 [ἔματ]ι, l. [αἷματ]ι Pr | l. αἱμάξει || 16 l. λύχ(ν)ον | l. ἄψαι | l. πίνουσι

For a woman who is receiving ... take²... plant, decoction of cabbage,³ and blood of woman(?), burn the decoction of cabbage, and set(?)⁴ (it) with(?) the blood in that place ...⁵ (5) on a little linen rag(?) and place (it) ... bloody discharge⁶ take(?)⁷ a handful (of?) leeks(?), you pour(?) and having burnt(?)⁸ a new (10) small cup⁹ ... first, then ... and pour(?)¹⁰... new ... and ... it and place it under ...

For people drinking in a symposium to appear donkey-faced from afar¹¹ to those outside, raise(?)¹² the penis (?) from the impure blood,¹³ (15) stain (it) with donkey blood(?), and make a new wick in a new lamp and illuminate(?)¹⁴ the drinkers.

M. Choat

² The feminine participle suggests a female subject for the procedure, with the exact issue lost in preceding word. δέξε is probably complete here, for δέξαι (compare line 15), or as the late aorist imperative form δέξε which occurs rarely.

³ At the beginning of the line, a small piece of stray papyrus obscures the φ. Φυτόν is a word for “plant” used in a number of places in the PGM; it was probably preceded by a short adjective. The term κραιβίον, ‘decoction of cabbage’, occurs frequently in medical literature.

⁴ Perhaps a part of κείμαι: κείθω?

⁵ At the start of l. 5, -ησον suggests an aorist imperative to complete the instructions begun in l. 1. The next word resembles εἰρακα (perhaps for ἰέρακα, ‘bandage’, see LSJ s.v.), but seems more likely to be ἐν followed by a word ending in διω, perhaps ῥακάδιω for the late ῥακκάδιον, ‘little rag’ (cf. ῥάκος, ‘strip of cloth’, frequent in the medical literature). If the following λινούσ qualifies this, we must read λινῶ.

⁶ For the form αἱμαρροίε (pap. ἐμαρώε), see P.Lond. VI 1914, 14, where the form may however be an error. [ca 4]κα invites [γυναι]κα, so perhaps “for a woman with a bloody discharge” (i.e. αἱμόρροια), or “for a woman with hemorrhoids” (i.e., l. αἱμορροίσι), as leeks are associated with relief from hemorrhoids in a number of medical traditions.

⁷ εἰδέξα: presumably a part of δέχομαι, but rubbing makes the exact form obscure.

⁸ ζαζ suggests an aorist participle describing the ritual action: καύζαζ, “having burnt the cup”? (though the traces do not exactly support kappa).

⁹ χυδρειον: probably for χυτρίον, itself an alternative form of χυτρίδιον, ‘a small pot, cup’. The form of και in καινόν is ligatured as with the conjunction (so too at 10, 15 bis, 16).

¹⁰ μετακενόω: perhaps l. μετακένω[cov], from μετακενώ, ‘to pour from one vessel to another’, LSJ s.v. Alternatively, understand something like μετὰ κένω[ctv], ‘after emptying / evacuation’.

¹¹ This prescription was presented by Preisendanz, followed in GMPT, as a parlour trick, to turn the faces of symposiasts into donkey snouts, ὀνορύγχου; he compares it to GEMF 74.241–259/PGM VII 167, the parlour tricks of Demokritos. In *Cyranides* 2.31, the tears of a donkey mixed with oil and placed in a burning lamp are said to make everyone in a symposium appear donkey-headed (ὀνοκέφαλος). The word ὀνορύγχος occurs only in Psellos (*Lectiones mirabiles*, ed. Duffy, 112.32–33), where donkey tears are rubbed on a mirror to make women seen in it appear donkey-faced. For ὀνορύγχος, LSJ cites the gloss *bunilla* from late Greek-Latin glossaries (e.g. CGL II 31): the Latin word is glossed in many early Latin dictionaries as having a face like a donkey or ox.

¹² Kotansky, GMPT, read line 14 “In the dark [take] a wick from a lamp” (see app.cr.), but this is not what the Greek says. The first words (as printed by Preisendanz) are εβειβακοτος: if εβει might be a phonetic rendering of ἐπί, βακοτος can in no way represent κότος. The next word, δρεῖλλον, cannot be understood as an error for θρυαλλ(ίδ)ιον (so Preisendanz, conjecturing δ>τ>θ) any more than the last—which reads clearly λύθρου—can be understood as a mistake for λύχνου. -κοτος suggests a genitive perfect participle; a verb derived from βιβάζω, such as ἀναβ]εβ]ε]βακότος, would neatly fill the available space.

¹³ This is probably δρεῖλλον, for which the only resolution I can suggest is δρῖλον, ‘penis’ (see DGE s.v, citing epigraphic witnesses; see also δρῖλος in AP 11.197 where it is glossed with *verpus*; cf. *verpa*, ‘penis’). Understanding λύθρου as ‘(impure) blood’ (from a woman’s womb, LSJ s.v.), perhaps one might translate something like “having brought the penis out of the impure blood,” but it is difficult to understand how this relates to the rest of the procedure: it is thus likely that δρεῖλλον has a different sense. Some form of θρυαλλίς, ‘wick’ might be considered, but an entirely separate word for wick is used one line later. One might also consider λύτρον for λύθρου, bearing in mind the use of the former for *lysimachios*, ‘loosestrife’, in manuscripts of Dioscorides. Could the δρεῖλλον refer to the stamen of a flower? This object is then stained with donkey’s blood (if Preisendanz’s [ἐματ]ι, i.e. [αἱματ]ι in 15 is correct), then used to fashion a wick for a new lamp.

¹⁴ This final instruction directs the ritualist to perform an action on the symposiast: ἄψε (l. ἄψαι) was translated as ‘set alight’ (‘zündet’) by Preisendanz and ‘touch’ by Kotansky in Betz: but the first seems unlikely and the second ineffective; I have chosen to translate ‘illuminate’, as this seems the most plausible action to undertake with a lamp.