

Cybele on the Red Sea: New Verses from Berenike

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EXCAVATIONS conducted in 2012 by a joint U.S.-Polish team at the Red Sea site of Berenike yielded a small cache of papyri and ostraka,¹ which were discovered alongside other small finds in trenches dug in the Early Roman trash dump to the north of the city, the source of much of the written evidence recovered from the site over the past couple of decades.² In addition to just over thirty Greek documentary ostraka and approximately two dozen small papyrus scraps, the 2012 season produced inv. 84029, a papyrus measuring 13.0 x 8.5 cm and preserving two incomplete columns of Greek poetry (*figures* 1–2). This is the most significant piece of Greek

¹ Most of the texts, including our papyrus, were found in trench 84, located in the northwest area of the Early Roman dump. A few others came from trench 88, which lies to the west of 84. For more information about the site and ongoing excavations see S. E. Sidebotham and W. Z. Wendrich (eds.), *Berenike 1994. Preliminary Report of the 1994 Excavations at Berenike* (Leiden 1995); *Berenike 1995* (Leiden 1996); *Berenike 1996* (Leiden 1998); *Berenike 1997* (Leiden 1999); *Berenike 1998* (Leiden 2000); *Berenike 1999/2000. Report on the Excavations at Berenike, Including Excavations in Wadi Kalalat and Siket, and the Survey of the Mons Smaragdus Region* (Los Angeles 2007); S. E. Sidebotham and I. Zych (eds.), *Berenike 2008–2009. Report on the Excavations at Berenike, Including a Survey in the Eastern Desert* (Warsaw 2011); S. E. Sidebotham, *Berenike and the Ancient Maritime Spice Route* (Berkeley 2011).

² Two volumes of written material from Berenike, mainly Greek ostraka, have been published to date: R. S. Bagnall, C. Helms, and A. M. F. W. Verhoogt, *Documents from Berenike I, Greek Ostraka from the 1996–1998 Seasons* [Pap.Brux. XXXI] (2000); II, *Texts from the 1999–2001 Seasons* [Pap.Brux. XXXIII] (2005); a third volume edited by R. Ast and R. S. Bagnall is in preparation.

literature to be uncovered so far in Berenike and an important addition to the small body of non-documentary evidence from the Eastern Desert. Most of the literary texts published thus far have been brief, elsewhere unattested prose and verse writings preserved on ostraka (see Appendix). While some clearly come from a school context, it is not certain that all do. One of the most fascinating is a dactylic poem that praises the site of Xeron Pelagos, a water station located along the road between Berenike and Coptos, and the place where the ostrakon was found.³ The Berenike papyrus continues the trend of offering what might be described as non-canonical literature. Furthermore, it attests cultural interests not normally associated with Eastern Desert ports and military outposts.

Writing on the papyrus runs along the fibers and is in a competent, though not particularly elegant, semi-cursive script; the back contains several lines written against the fibers, and its relationship to the front is unclear. The papyrus does not appear to have undergone significant reuse. The Early Roman dump in which it was found has over the years been the source of material dating, for the most part, from the reign of Augustus to the late first century, with a large number of texts coming from the reigns of Nero (54–68), Vespasian (69–79), Titus (79–81), and Domitian (81–96). In the 2012 season, it also yielded fragments of painted glass and two discoid mosaic-glass face beads of a type generally associated with Egypt during the first century B.C. and first A.D.⁴ Based on the chronological distribution of these texts and artifacts, a date anywhere in the first century A.D. seems acceptable for the papyrus, with the second half of the century somewhat favored. This is also not incongruent with paleographical considerations. While no single dated text offers a perfect paleographical

³ A. Bülow-Jacobsen, “Den syngende korporal,” in *Festskrift til Chr. Gorm Tørtzen* [*Aigis* Suppl. 1] (Copenhagen 2009) [accessed 09/10/2014 at <http://aigis.igl.ku.dk/CGT/AdamB-J.pdf>].

⁴ For comparanda see e.g. E. M. Stern and B. Schlick-Nolte (eds.), *Early Glass of the Ancient World* (Ostfildern 1994) 414–415, nos. 153 and 154.

match, similarities can be observed in such documents as *P.Fouad* 67 (A.D. 39, May 14), *O.Berenike* II 126 (A.D. 61, September 17), and *P.Oxy.* XXXIV 2725 (A.D. 71, April 29), particularly in the shapes of *pi*, *nu*, *eta*, and *upsilon*, and to some extent *kappa*.⁵

Three fragments survive, one large piece containing the remains of two columns, and two smaller fragments. The large piece (fr. a) is broken on all sides, with the lower left part preserving the bottom and left margins. The two smaller fragments could not be placed with a satisfactory degree of certainty. The color and overall appearance of fr. b suggest that it could come from the top of col. 1. Fr. c may belong to col. 2, to the right of lines 9 to 11, as fibers and the writing appear to line up across the fragments, but there are no obvious verbal or physical connections proving this placement. We therefore transcribe it separately.

The format of the papyrus cannot be determined with certainty: there are no signs of a kollesis, and it is thus unclear if the verses belonged to a roll or were written on a single sheet. In estimating the original size of the papyrus, we assume that it was once part of a book roll. In total, the large fragment contains 27 lines arranged in two partially surviving columns. The shortest preserved line, col. 1 line 11, is ca. 2.9 cm long; the longest complete line (col. 1 line 8) is just under 5 cm and contains 19 letters. If the beginning of line 5, which is no longer extant, was aligned with the surviving verses below it, the line would have been ca. 5.5 cm long, which is still quite short for a verse text.⁶ The fragment's height is 8.5 cm, including the lower margin; the height of the extant column is thus ca. 7.5 cm. If we imagine an overall height of 16 cm or a little more, which is based on the lower limit observed in other rolls of the period, such as *GMAW*² no. 41 = *P.Oxy.* XXXIII 2654

⁵ For images see www.papyri.info/ddbdp/p.fouad;67; www.papyri.info/ddbdp/o.berenike;2;126; and www.papyri.info/ddbdp/p.oxy;34;2725.

⁶ Cf. W. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto 2004) 115–117.

(Menander, 1st half of 1st c. A.D.),⁷ which is about 16 cm high, we can postulate a loss of at least 7.5 cm from above col. 2. Taken together, surviving text accounts for a column of 19 lines. We therefore reckon with a total of at least 35 lines per column.

Where discernible, the meter in col. 1 appears to be dactylic-based, as seen in lines 7–12:

– ∪∪ – ∪∪ –
 – – ∪∪ – ∪∪ –
 – – ∪∪ – ∪∪
 – ∪∪ – ∪∪ –
 ∪∪ – ∪∪
 – ∪∪ – ∪∪ [

In the second column, the meter is difficult to ascertain. It might still be dactylic, though lines 3 and 4 look rather like anapests. The employment of ekthesis in the last two verses suggests that the meter changes there, and the wavy line—too elaborate for a paragraphus, too simple for a coronis, and lacking the fork of a *diple obelismene*—under verse 13 probably indicates a section change of some kind.⁸

There appear to be different dialectic forms at play in the surviving verses. The reading *ἀμετέρους* in col. 1 line 8 can hardly be avoided, but there is no unambiguous evidence for Doric elsewhere (*ταν* in col. 1 line 5 and col. 2 line 11 might not be the article). On the other hand, there are Ionic forms in col. 2 line 4, where *φοβερή* is relatively certain, and line 3,

⁷ Johnson, *Bookrolls* 213–216. An image of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus is at <http://163.1.169.40/gsd/collect/POxy/index/assoc/HASH0124/7d49a99e.dir/POxy.v0033.n2654.a.01.hires.jpg>.

⁸ A paragraphus can be used to mark a change of meter along with ek- or eisthesis (cf. *P.Harr.* I 38, early 2nd c. A.D.), as can the *diple obelismene*, or “forked paragraphus,” (e.g. *P.Oxy.* XXIII 2369); the latter also sometimes indicates the end of a poem. On the employment of the paragraphus, *diple obelismene*, and ekthesis for signaling metrical and other changes, see *GMAW*² 8 and 12. On the significance of eisthesis and ekthesis in the layout of Greek tragedy preserved on papyrus see L. Savignago, *Eisthesis: Il sistema dei margini nei papiri dei poeti tragici* (Alessandria 2008).

where *καλύπτρη*[] also looks fairly clear. It is possible that the different dialectic forms simply reflect indiscriminate use of what might have been established poetic expressions characteristic of a certain genre. One can compare the paean to Asclepius inscribed in A.D. 97 in Ptolemais Hermiou which employs such ostensibly Doric forms as *ἀμετέρων* (14) and *τῶιδε* (20), along with the address *Ἀσκληπιέ* (5, 11, 17, 23).⁹ It is also conceivable that verses in columns 1 and 2 belonged to different poems or to different types of verses within the same work, each of which followed its own dialectic conventions.

The text has scattered accents, punctuation, and other lectional signs: a circumflex is preserved in col. 1 line 8 and col. 2 lines 9 and 11; an apostrophe signals elision in col. 2 line 11; there is an acute in col. 2 line 4. Marks resembling grave accents appear above letters in col. 2 line 11 and fr. c line 3, but their significance is unclear. They could be there in order to indicate a compound word or to mark words or letters intended for deletion, although cancellations are typically signaled with a dot rather than a diagonal stroke.¹⁰ All the signs seem to be written with the same pen by the same person who wrote the text. Editorial intervention by the writer is clearly visible after line 4 in col. 2 where he has inserted a verse.

Content and Genre

The reference in col. 1 line 7 to an attendant of Cybele, *κερνοφορῶ*[] *Κυβέλης*, establishes the context: the verses, at least in the first column, pertain to the rites of the goddess Cybele. The earliest literary attestation of *κερνοφόρος* appears in Nicander's *Alexipharmaca* 217 (2nd cent. B.C.), in which the term is applied to the priestess of Rhea (*κερνοφόρος ζῆακος*

⁹ E. Bernard, *I. métriques de l'Égypte* 176.

¹⁰ Grave accents can also be used to anticipate an oxytone, though this seems unlikely here; see J. Moore-Blunt, "Problems of Accentuation in Greek Papyri," *QUCC* 29 (1978) 140–142. On the employment of the grave accent to indicate a compound word and the use of dots for cancellation see *GMAW*² 11 and 16.

βωμίστρια Ῥεΐης) who rushes into the streets with terrible cries, and a Latin inscription connects the title with the Mother of Gods (*CIL* II 179, Lisboa). Although Cybele is routinely assimilated with these goddesses and κερνοφόροι have long been thought to be servants in the Cybele-Attis cult,¹¹ our papyrus for the first time makes this connection explicit.

κερνοφόρος can designate individuals of either sex. Hesychius glosses the word as “a man who conducts sacrifices” (κερνοφόρος· ὁ τὰς θυσίας ἄγων), while in Nicander it is a priestess. Two Latin inscriptions also employ the term for a woman (*CIL* II 179; X 1803, Puteoli). The word does not always refer to a person, however: in two Greek examples it describes a dance (Ath. 629D, Poll. 4.103). Presumably a synonym for κερνοφόρος, the uncompounded word κέρνας is used in an epigram attributed to Alexander Aetolus (*Anth.Gr.* 7.709, see commentary to col. 1 line 11). There it must be masculine—even if emasculated—since it describes the priest that the poet Alcman would have become had he been raised in his native Sardis. In the extant lines of our text, the gender of the goddess’s κερνοφόρος is not possible to determine.

After the introduction of Cybele, the rest of col. 1 deals with the rites or dance that the speaker claims to have performed many times. This includes the tossing of hair and clashing of cymbals to the accompaniment of the Phrygian flute. Much in this description is reminiscent of the depiction of the *galli*, the priests of Cybele and associated deities, in a series of epigrams preserved in the *Greek Anthology*.¹² There, five epigrams relate a story in which a *gallus*, a castrated man (and hence a feeble half-woman), encounters a lion, the most fearsome of all creatures, and drives it away with his loud timbrel and shrieks (6.217–220, 237). In most of these epigrams, special attention is paid to the hair, which the attendant of the goddess inevitably

¹¹ P. Pachis, “Kernophoros,” *SMSR* 50 N.S. 8 (1984) 125–129.

¹² E. Lane treats the subject of the *galli* in “The Name of Cybele’s Priests the ‘Galloi,’” in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren* (Leiden 1996) 117–133.

swirls around in a frenzy. The language used for this tends to be fairly elaborate, as seen in 6.219, attributed to Antipater of Sidon (*HE* LXIV), in which the priest is described as ῥομβητοῦς δονέων λυσσομανεῖς πλοκάμους / θηλυχίτων, ἀσκητὸς εὐσπεῖροισι κορύμβοις, “tossing his whirling raving-mad hair, clad in women’s clothes, adorned with well-coiled braids” (2–3). Later in the same epigram the poet describes how the priest, after encountering the lion, “at once uttered a loud bellowing shriek from his mouth and whirled about his braided curls,” ἀλλ’ ἔμπας ἐρίμυκον ἀπὸ στομάτων ὀλολυγὰν / ἦκεν, ἐδίνησεν δ’ εὐστροφάλιγγα κόμαν (17–18). In 6.220, an epigram ascribed to Dioscorides (*HE* XVI) that, according to Gow and Page, might be the earliest in the series, Atys, the priest of Cybele, is portrayed as “frenzied, giving his raging hair to the winds,” ἔκφρων μαινομένην δούς ἀνέμοισι τρίχα, as he makes his way from Pessinus in Phrygia to Sardis.

Two more epigrams in the *Greek Anthology* are styled as dedications of ritual accoutrements made by recently retired servants of Cybele (6.173 features a female attendant, 6.234 a *gallus*). The *gallus* in 6.234 is called χαιτάεις, “long-haired,” and he dedicates his μυρδέντα βόστρυχον, “anointed curl,” along with instruments belonging to the rites, among them λάλα κύμβαλα, “noisy cymbals.” In 6.173 the priestess is described as frequently tossing her consecrated hair around the torches, περὶ πεύκας / πολλάκι τοὺς ἱεροὺς χευαμένη πλοκάμους (1–2). The close association of this female servant with the *galli* is borne out by the description of her shrieks: γαλλαίῳ Κυβέλης ὀλολύγματι πολλάκι δοῦσα / τὸν βαρὸν εἰς ἀκοὰς ἦχον ἀπὸ στομάτων, “often she emitted from her lips a loud cry painful to hear in the manner of a *gallus* of Cybele” (3–4). The priestess and *gallus* are effectively identified.

In col. 2 it is very difficult to establish continuous sense. While there is talk of something frightening (φοβερ- in lines 4 and 5, and possibly 6), there is no clear mention of an encounter with a lion, which one might expect if the verses allude to the story found in the epigrams. The cover, καλύπτρη, in 4 might have something to do with the place where the *gallus*

takes shelter, but it could also designate Cybele's veil, a known part of her iconography.¹³ δρακοντοζ[in 4 might then refer to a serpentine girdle worn by the goddess, although snakes are usually near, not on her. The occurrence of φαοσφόρος, if this is the correct reading, makes it possible that col. 2 treats Hecate, who from as early as the fifth century B.C. frequently appears along with Hermes as a companion of Cybele.¹⁴ Cybele and Hecate share some of the same attributes, such as the serpents and eunuch attendants,¹⁵ and these similarities make it difficult to distinguish the two, especially when the textual remains are as meager as they are in our papyrus. On the other hand, if φάος was followed by φοβ-, presumably a form of φοβερός (see commentary), then emphasis would be on some frightening scene.

As for the genre of the Berenike piece, three features argue for a dramatic work or collection of songs: the employment of lyric meter (or meters); a likely change of meter signaled by ekthesis in the last lines of col. 2; apparently different dialectic forms in columns 1 and 2. Known dramas and hymns dealing with Cybele and/or her attendants include Menander's *Theophoroumene*, *Semele* by Diogenes of Athens (*TrGF* I 45 F 1), and what is purported by Philodemus to be a hymn by Pindar (fr. 80).¹⁶ There is no direct overlap between our text and any other works, but the verses preserved in *PSI* XV 1480 (= *MP*³ 1309.1 = *LDAB* 2725) display similarities that warrant some discussion. Originally published as hymns to Cybele, they were

¹³ M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA)* I–VII (Leiden 1977–1989), *passim*.

¹⁴ P. A. Johnston, "Cybele and her Companions on the Northern Littoral of the Black Sea," in *Cybele, Attis* 111–113.

¹⁵ Eunuchs served in the temple of Hecate at Lagina in Caria, cf. *I. Stratonikeia* 513 and 544; both inscriptions possibly date to the 3rd c. A.D., but the temple and cult are likely to have been there by the 2nd c. B.C.

¹⁶ Cf. J. B. Lidov, "Pindar's 'Hymn to Cybele' (fr. 80 SM): Meter, Form, and Syncretism," *GRBS* 37 (1996) 129–144.

attributed, even if not indisputably, to Menander's *Theophoroumene* by Eric Handley.¹⁷ The content and structure of *PSI* 1480 can be summarized as follows. The beginning contains iambic lines (lines 1–5 = 31–35), followed by a hymn to the Phrygian goddess (θεά, Φρυγία βασίλεια) and almighty queen (βασίλεια μέγιστα) (6–11 = 36–41). The hymn is in hexameters and displays Doric forms. After more iambic lines (12–19 = 42–49) there is an invocation to the mother of the gods (μητηρ θεῶν), of which the papyrus preserves eight line-ends before breaking off (20–27 = 50–57). This invocation is in a lyric meter and the dialect is no longer Doric. It has been thought that this scene follows directly upon that preserved in *PSI* XII 1280, in which Lysias and Kleinias and/or another man first discuss whether the girl after whom the play is named is truly demoniac, which Lysias suggests testing with a tune played on an *aulos* (24–28)—the idea being that, if she is possessed, she will be drawn out by a Cybelean tune. If *PSI* 1480 follows this, then the lyric passages concerning Cybele and her rites (36–41, 50–57) are sung by the girl after she became affected by the music, thereby proving that she is possessed.

In addition to clearly featuring the same subject as *PSI* 1480, viz. the rites of Cybele, the Berenike papyrus might also display change of lyric meters (in col. 1 and col. 2), while the ekthesis of the last lines of col. 2 may signal the transition to a spoken meter; furthermore, there are dialectic differences between the two columns. If these verses formed a continuous lyric section

¹⁷ E. Handley, “Notes on the *Theophoroumene* of Menander,” *BICS* 16 (1969) 88–101. The editors of *PSI* 1480 and F. Sandbach (*Menandri reliquae selectae*² [Oxford 1990] 146) consider it a *fragmentum dubium* of the play; W. G. Arnott (*Menander* II [Cambridge (Mass.) 1996] 64) and C. Austin (*Menander, Eleven Plays* [PCPS Suppl. 37 (2013)] 35–38) include the verses in Act II of the play directly following the text of *PSI* XII 1280; they number the lines accordingly as 31–57, although Arnott (56) concedes that the attribution of *PSI* 1480 to the *Theophoroumene* “cannot be considered absolutely certain.” In our discussion we follow the numeration of Arnott and Austin. For a concise overview of the attribution history and bibliography, along with a transcription, papyrological commentary, and photograph, see *PSI* 1480.

from col. 1 to the ekthesis in col. 2, the section would have been over 30 lines long (see above on the possible size of the columns), perhaps too long for a scene of New Comedy. It is conceivable, however, that the lost upper part of col. 2 had iambic verses. Once again, the differences in dialect and possibly in meter in the two columns add weight to the supposition that verses preserved in the two columns belonged to different sections and may have been separated by yet another section or sections.

Despite similarities in content and form with *PSI 1480*, we do not think that we can attribute the Berenike papyrus to Menander's *Theophoroumene* with confidence; the reasons for doing so are too tenuous, and there is still too little understood about that play. We also recognize that the temptation to label a work with the name of a known author can mislead. Indeed, the verses may come from an entirely different poetic genre. Other possibilities include tragedy or a collection of songs or lyric poems, and since the vocabulary is rather post-Classical, perhaps the latter is likelier. The repeated sequence of dactyls in col. 1 is reminiscent of the strange dactylic composition from the Roman fort of Xeron Pelagos mentioned above, which praises the waters of the place in a meter that Eric Handley identifies as "dactylic octameter catalectic."¹⁸ This affinity for dactylic meters in the Imperial period may reflect a continuation of the late Hellenistic taste for dactylo-epitrites, which were well suited, in the words of Martin West, to "educated bourgeois lyric."¹⁹ If our papyrus contained a collection of songs, they may have been of an occasional type, such as for a festival or simply for entertainment.

Text

fr. a

13 x 8.5 cm

¹⁸ Quoted by Bülow-Jacobsen, in *Festschrift til Chr. Gorm Tørtzen* 7.

¹⁹ West, *Greek Meter* (Oxford 1982) 139.

col. 2 2] ναφθα, a radically different reading, leads us nowhere; οφθαλμον better than οφθα[λ]μων; or βα[3 Traces before εροι are compatible with λ, μ, or λλ, thus θαλεροι, μαλεροι, ημεροι, would conform paleographically; δολεροι does not fit the traces and ιμεροι is probably too short 4 φοβερη γε is also possible; an alternative, though less likely, word division is φοβερη τ εδρακον τόζ[, but the accent above -τοζ[favors the printed reading 5 τ' έπε [or τε πε [, and the last letter may be υ, τ, or π 6 The first letter might be δ; ετε is also possible; at line end, below π in 5, is top of either ρ or β 7 εῖριο or εῖρις fit traces best 9 An apparent circumflex over a lost letter in this line is visible below and slightly to the right of the nu in 8 13 αω[possibly αω[cov(?); below the line, there is a wavy stroke that looks more elaborate than a paragraphus 14 or εδ; this and following line in ekthesis ca. 3 letters.

fr. b

]θαη[
]ταπα[
]ινα[

fr. b 3 or]ινδ[

Verso, fr. a

] μ λ ...
]του ομ[
] σαβ ..

1 Maybe κ]αμηλ ... , but a form of καμηλίτης vel sim. is hard to see in traces of the last letters 3 αβαι, αβει, or εβει; instead of β, κ also possible

fr. c

]ηλη[
]τανμο[
]ών [

fr. c 1 πλη is also possible, and it is conceivable that the second letter is *chi* 2 or παν

Verso, fr. c

] ...

Translation

(fr. a col. 1 only)

... the *kernophor-* of Cybele for whom I often tossed around my curls and with slender palms clashed(?) noisy cymbals to the accompaniment of a Phrygian flute ...

Commentary

fr. a col. 1

3 No traces of writing are visible, but there is enough space between lines 2 and 4 to accommodate a line, which might have been short like lines 6 and 11.

4 The state of the papyrus does not allow one to decide between ἐ]γέπουσι (or ἐξε]γέπουσι) and] διέπουσι. A horizontal line at the base of the first letter suggests δ̄, and thus may favor] διέπουσι.

5 ταν could be the ending of a word like ὄ]ταν or ὀπό]ταν; Doric τάν is also a possibility.

μογεράν: a poetic word attested in Attic drama (Aeschylus and Euripides) and Hellenistic poets such as Apollonius, Aratus, Nicander, as well as in epitaphs, both literary and inscriptional. Here it might refer to Cybele's mourning for Attis.

7 κερνοφόρο[ς], κερνοφόρο[υ], κερνοφόρο[υ], κερνοφόρο[υς], κερνοφόρω[ι], and κερνοφόρω[υ]/-ῶ[υ] are all conceivable, although the crescent shape just before the lacuna may favor ω. The lacuna before Κυβέλης is quite large, but spacing between letters tends to vary throughout the papyrus (cf. the beginning of line 8 where the letters ἦπ are written relatively far apart), so that we cannot say for sure how much is missing. Whatever the termination was, we believe that the word describes an attendant (or attendants) of the goddess and not the goddess herself. κερνοφόρος appears elsewhere in connection with Rhea and the Mother of the Gods, both of whom Cybele is commonly assimilated with, even if it is a bit optimistic on the part of G. S. Gasparro to state that “[t]he function of the *kernophoroi*

is fully attested in the cult of Cybele.”²⁰ On the basis of descriptions provided by Athenaeus and on the archeological record, *kernos* can be understood as a bowl whose characteristic feature is a fringe of small vessels around the border. Athenaeus (478D) cites Polemon of Ilium for the description: τοῦτο (sc. τὸ κέρνος) δ’ ἐστὶν ἀγγεῖον κεραμεῶν ἔχον ἐν αὐτῷ πολλοὺς κοτυλίσκους κεκολλημένους, “this is a clay vessel with many cups attached to it.” Elsewhere (476E) Athenaeus gives a similar description with a reference to Ammonius’ work *On Altars and Sacrifices*. Numerous *kernos*-vessels have been found in the Athenian Agora. They date for the most part to the fourth century B.C. and were probably associated with the City Eleusinion.²¹

ὁ ἀμετερος presents problems, despite the more or less secure reading. Traces between the initial *alpha* and the *epsilon* are consistent with *mu*. If there was any letter after *alpha* and before *mu*, it can hardly have been larger than an *iota*, but a word like αἰματηρός is not what is on the papyrus. One may consider reading ἄμ’ ἐτέρους or ἄμ’ ἐτέραις, taking ἄμα as either an adverb or a preposition. The former hardly yields satisfactory sense, whereas the latter, which is much more problematic paleographically, could be understood as “with others,” meaning other female attendants. In either case, ἄμ’, in which *alpha* is short, would not fit the dactylic meter here, if this what it is, while ἄμ’ for ἄμφ’ seems like a long shot. In the end, we are left with a Doricism (ἀμετέρους), which is unique in the surviving text, unless ταν in line 5 and ταν in fr. c line 2 are Doric for τήν. A further problem is presented by the ending of ἀμετέρους, since one would expect it to agree with ὄστλιγγες in the following line, but the latter is feminine. ὄστλιγγες is a rare and learned word, admittedly, but the mistake is baffling since most words in -ιγξ are feminine. There are, however, ex-

²⁰ G. S. Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis* (Leiden 1985) 69.

²¹ J. J. Pollitt, “Kernoi from the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 48 (1979) 205–233.

ceptions, such as the non-poetic στρόφιγξ, “turning pin, axle,” which is masculine, and the hand behind the Berenike papyrus might not have had a firm grip on such words.

9 ὄστλιγγες: although the ending suggests the nominative case, we take it as an accusative plural governed by ἐγύμνασα. The use of the nominative plural for the accusative is not uncommon in documentary papyri,²² and it also occurs in inscriptions, e.g. τοὺς ἐπειχάραντες *I.Fay.* III 198.4–5 (145 B.C.) or τοὺς ἐπιδιδόντες *SEG XVII* 823.4 (A.D. 56). Attestations of the word ὄστλιγξ do not predate the Hellenistic period. It apparently denotes a “curl,” and by extension is used to describe hair (Callim. *Aet.* fr.7.12), a flame (Ap. Rhod. 1.1297), vine tendrils (Theophr. *Hist.pl.* 3.18.5), and arms of a cuttlefish or squid (Nic. *Alex.* 470). In our papyrus, it makes sense as “curls of hair.”

ἐγύμνασα: perhaps “exercised” or even “wore out,” in the sense of “tossed around,” as suggested by the prominence of whirling hair in epigrams about *galli* (see above). Less likely (and more bland) is the idea that γυμνάζω is a synonym for γυμνόω, “make bare” or “expose,” cf. *Συναγωγή λέξεων χρησίμων* (ed. Cunningham) s.v. ἀνεσύρατο· ἐγύμνασεν.

10 ῥαδιναῖς: mostly, though not exclusively, poetic. The employment of this adjective with παλάμαι seems to be unique in surviving literature, but it often modifies χεῖρες. Parallels in Latin literature for the use of palms or hands (*palmae*) in the playing of percussions include a bacchic scene in Catullus 64, in which the Thyades are said to beat the drums (*tympana*) with *proceris palmis*, “outstretched hands” (261–264), and Lucretius’ description of the Cybelean rites of the *galli* who *tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum / concava*, “sound with their palms the taut tambourine and hollow cymbals all around” (2.618–619) Cf., in a similar context, παλάμας in *P.Hib.* II 176 (= *TrGF* II 629).

²² Cf. F. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Period* II (Milan 1981) 46–47.

11 *λάλα*: the word is hard to see because of abrasion, but the last letter is certainly *alpha* and the one before it is probably *lambda*. The traces of the first letter are compatible with *alpha*, *delta*, and *lambda*, but definitely not with *kappa*. Given the space and considerations of meter, *λάλα* is very likely. It is further supported by an epigram attributed to Erycius which describes a dedication by a *gallus* who has retired from his ritual services (*Anth.Gr.* 6.234; *GP X*):

Γάλλος ὁ χαιτάεις, ὁ νεήτομος, ὠπὸ Τυμόλου
 Λύδιος ὄρχηστὰς μάκρ' ὀλολυζόμενος,
 τῶ παρὰ Σαγγαρίῳ τάδε Μαστέρι τύμπαν' ἀγαυῶ
 θήκατο καὶ μάστιν τὰν πολυαστράγαλον
 ταῦτά τ' ὀρειχάλκου λάλα κύμβαλα καὶ μυρόεντα
 βόστρυχον, ἐκ λύσσας ἄρτ' ἀναπαυσάμενος.

The long-haired *gallus*, castrated young, who is from Tmolus, a Lydian dancer with loud shrieks, to the illustrious Mother by the banks of Sangarius dedicated these drums and the whip of strung *astragaloi* and these noisy cymbals made of brass and his anointed lock of hair, having recently retired from the frenzy.

In turn, the reading of our papyrus supports the correction proposed by Meinecke and followed by both Powell and Gow–Page in the text of *Anth.Gr.* 7.709 (ascribed to Alexander Aetolus; *HE I*). As preserved in the Palatine manuscript the text reads (minus obvious mistakes):²³

Σάρδιες ἀρχαῖαι, πατέρων νομός, εἰ μὲν ἐν ὑμῖν
 ἐτρεφόμαν, κέρνας ἦν τις ἂν ἢ μακέλας
 χρυσοφόρος, ῥήσσω καλὰ τύμπανα· ...

Ancient Sardis, the dwelling place of my fathers, if I had been reared by you, I would have been some *kernas* or a *makelas*, wearing [or carrying] gold and striking fine *tympana* ...

Meinecke suggested *λάλα* for *καλά* on the basis of 6.234 and the equation *λαλάγημα τοῦτο* = *τύμπανον* in 6.220. Although Gow and Page accept the correction (because, as they say,

²³ An image, *Pal.gr.* 23 p.319, is at <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpgraec23/0345>.

“καλά is extremely flat”) they express their uncertainty. Our papyrus goes some way towards confirming Meinecke’s intuition.

12 πρὸς Φρύγα λωτὸν ἐπ [: λωτός is used for αὐλός already in Euripides, and in the Berenike papyrus the meaning must be “to the accompaniment of the *aulos*.” In Euripides, λωτός in the sense of αὐλός is usually qualified as Libyan and does not necessarily imply orgiastic music. In *Tro.* 544–545, however, the Libyan λωτός plays a Phrygian song, Λίβυς τε λωτὸς ἐκτύπει / Φρύγιά τε μέλεα, “and a Libyan lotus resounded with a Phrygian song/melodies.” The form φρύγα for φρύγιον (i.e. Φρύξ = Φρύγιος) is possibly built on the analogy Λίβυς = Λιβυκός. Cf. the αὐλός Φρύγιος in the Cybelean scene described in *P.Hib.* II 176 (*TrGF* II 629).

We presume that a verb for “striking” or “clashing” was written at the end of the line. Possibilities include forms of παταγέω (of τύπανα in Luc. *Bacch.* 4), πλαταγέω (cf. *Anth.Gr.* 6.218.6 and Nonnus *Dion.* 9.116), παίω, and πλήσσω, for which, in similar contexts, see Philostratus *Ep.* 1.69 and *Imag.* 1.2.5.

fr. a col. 2

1–4 Since the margin to the left of the first two lines is missing, it is impossible to know whether these two lines were aligned with the following 11 lines or written in ekthesis like 13 and 14. We are not entirely happy with οὐδ’ ὀφθαλμόν, mainly because the hole in the papyrus may be large enough to accommodate a letter between the *alpha* and *lambda* (see col. 1 line 7n. for a similar dilemma with spacing), and we find it hard to read ὀφθα[λ]μῶν instead, which is the only alternative we can think of.

Taken together, the sequence of detectable words in these lines describes “not seeing” (2), a cover or veil (3), and something frightful and serpent-girded, φοβερή and δρακοντοζ[- (4). Where words should be divided in line 4 is unclear: letters in δρακοντοζ are fairly certain, and it looks like an accent was added above the second omicron, δρακοντόζ; for the com-

pound see δρακοντόζωνες in *P.Oxy.* III 412.29 (magical incantations) and, in inverted form, ζωνοδράκοντις in *PGM* IV.2864 (for Cerberus). If φαοσφόρος (φωσφόρος is an epithet of Hecate already in Attic drama) is the correct reading in 6 (see below), it is tempting to see the goddess here, who is described as wearing a belt of serpents in an oracle quoted by Porphyry (*De phil. ex orac.* p.134 Wolff), ἀμφὶ δὲ τῇ ζώνῃ δολιχοὶ προθέουσι δράκοντες. But belts of serpents are also worn by the Gorgons in [Hes.] *Scutum* 233–234, ἐπὶ δὲ ζώνῃσι δράκοντε / δοιῶ, and by maenads in Luc. *Bacch.* 4, αἱ Μαινάδες ... δράκοντας ὑπεζωσμένα. And snakes are common in representations of Cybele as well.²⁴

5 This line might be an insertion of an omitted verse rather than a correction of the previous line since corrections are generally written above the line to be corrected. The repetition of φοβερ- words would account for the scribe's initial omission; but if line 6 has φοβ[at the end (see below), the insertion might be a correction to that line. Letters before φοβερὸν are hardly decipherable. If δε is a conjunction, then we would like to find a prefix for φοβερον, but παμ does not suggest itself. After this is τεπε [, perhaps to be read τ' επε [. Parsons makes the attractive suggestion ἐπέτ[εθ' ἄρμα, an allusion to Cybele's chariot—if, as he points out, this part of the poem is still concerned with her. But *pi* or *upsilon* instead of the last *tau* cannot be excluded.

6 If we read ετε instead of στε, the beginning of the line suggests a possible plural imperative, δ . . . ετε (χαίρετε does not present itself). What follows is curious: φαοσφο is clear, but then there is a lacuna, above which we see the semi-circular top of a letter positioned between the legs of π in 5. This is either the top of ρ, hence a form of φαοσφόρος, or the head of β, hence another instance of the word φοβερός. If it is the former, then the line may invoke a torchbearing (φαοσφόρος

²⁴ Snakes, often coiled, usually appear in the background of reliefs depicting Cybele—numerous examples can be found in Vermaseren, *CCCA*; but a snake can also be depicted coiling over her body (e.g. a marble relief from Acmonia in Phrygia, *CCCA* III 104).

for φωσφόρος) goddess and her companion or companions. φωσφόρος can describe Hecate, who often appears as a torch-bearer in visual representations, but the epithet can also be applied to other deities, especially Artemis. In *P.Lond.Lit.* 51.5 (Herod. *Mimiambi* fr.8 Cunningham) φαοσφόρος (sic) seems to be used of Phaethon; the same poem mentions Cybele in line 10, but her appearance there is simply for comparison of her lament for Attis with that of Clymene for Phaethon; the term can also be used of the planet Venus, i.e. the morning-star. If, however, φοβ- (perhaps φάος φοβερόν) is right, then we have an instance of a frightening light and a triple—unless line 5 is a correction of line 6—repetition of the word φοβερός. If so, emotions are perhaps heightening at this point, which may be reflected in the apparent anapestic meter of lines 3 and 4.

7 The first word looks like a form of σείριος or σειρίς, either Sirius or any bright star, and by extension the sun, thus perhaps a continuation of the theme of light. Alternatively, σειριο[κ]αύτου deserves consideration; cf. *Anth.Gr.* 9.556.3 where Daphnis is described as sun-tanned, σειριόκαυτος.

There seems to be no writing after αυτου, nor is ink visible just before the *alpha*, though the papyrus is abraded there. It does not seem possible, however, to read τοῦ αὐτοῦ, treating the line as a header introducing the verses that follow—as, for example, in the 1st cent. anthology of epigrams P.Berol. 10571 (*BKT* V.1 pp.75–76, no. 1) where τοῦ α(ὐτοῦ) introduces one of the epigrams.

8 The only word about which one can feel reasonably secure in this and the following lines is ἄσθμα, “labored breathing” or “panting,” but it is unclear who is doing the panting. Nonnus speaks of ἄσθμα δρακόντων (*Dion.* 1.283, 10.15), but such breathing was not confined to serpents; cf. later in Nonnus ἄσθμα συῶν, μύκημα βοῶν, σύριγμα δρακόντων (2.254). Elsewhere, in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.56, a seer is considered exceptional for not panting, ταῦτα δὲ ἔλεγεν, οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν λεγομένων ἐνθέων ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, ἀσθμαίνουσα καὶ περιδινοῦσα τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ πειρωμένη δεινὸν ἐμβλέπειν, ἀλλὰ πάνυ ἐγκρατῶς καὶ σωφρόνως, “she pronounced these

things, not like many inspired men and women who pant, toss the head around, and try to look possessed, but rather with utter self-control and moderation"; and in Catullus 63.31, Attis is described as possessed and panting (*anhelans*) (in the manner, that is, condemned by Dio Chrysostom). It is not beyond the realm of possibility that our papyrus also depicts someone in a demoniac state.

9–11 Perhaps καὶ θαμι[ν'] at the beginning of 9, followed by a word beginning with a long vowel or diphthong to account for the circumflex visible below the last letter of 8. Lectional signs marking ταῦτ' ἀν[in 11 presumably signal the difference with τὰυτα (ταύτας?) in 10. The grave accent above ἀν[might indicated that the letters go with the word that followed (see on fr. c below).

12–13 There may be a plea to a deity to accept (δέξαι) a sacrifice or offering, followed in 13 by a request for protection (σάω or σάωσον), as in Callim. *Epigr.* 33, Ἄρτεμι, τὴν τόδ' ἄγαλμα Φιληρατὶς εἴσατο τῆδε. / ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν δέξαι, πόντια, τὴν δὲ σάω, and in the final prayers of *Hymns* 5 (137–142) and 6 (134–138). And possibly the plea was directed to a queenly goddess: δέξαι, βασιλίεια, cf. Menander *Theophoroumene* 40 and 56.

The precise form of the wavy line below line 13 is not entirely clear. It looks somewhat more elaborate than a simple paragraphus, but what appears to be an upper fork-like prong is rather a tear in the papyrus. Thus we are hesitant to call it a *diple obelismene*.

14 εα or εδ? This is perhaps ἔα, either an exclamation of surprise or the imperative verb.

fr. c

This fragment may line up with verses 9–11 in col. 2. The color of the piece and the layout of the fibers both favor this positioning, but we have been unable to find any indisputable physical or semantic join. For this reason, we transcribe them separately. Nevertheless, we find it worth considering what the text could have looked like, if the fragment came from this

point in the poem. In line 2 of fr. c, we could perhaps read, along with line 10, ταῦτα τὰν μο[, the end of which shows curious similarity to col. 1 line 5; the line is otherwise difficult to construe. In line 3 we could imagine ταῦτ' ἀν' ὄν . If the grave accents are intended to signal that the marked syllables are to be kept together as a single word, we might read ταῦτ' ἀνώνομαστα, “these nameless, or ineffable, things,” possibly referring to rites. This would be consistent with a scene in which a character has become possessed, as suggested in the discussion of the term ἄσθμα above.

Verso

1–3 It is unclear whether one or two hands are at work, or how this side relates to the recto. Some letters are big and bold, such as]του ομ[and] σαβ, while others are small and cursive. The bold letters, at least]του ομ[, almost look like an address or title, while the smaller resemble a document. It is tempting to construe the cursive letters at the beginning of line 1 as κ]αμηλ . . . , although it is hard to see any form of the word καμηλίτης in the traces at the end of the word. In line 3, one might read σαβαι, σαβει, or σεβει. σαβαι could point to the South Arabian city of that name, home to the Sabaeans²⁵ or to the “Bacchanalian cry” σαβαῖ (cf. LSJ s.v.), but here we are in the realm of pure speculation. There is probably a simpler explanation, but it eludes us.

APPENDIX: EASTERN DESERT LITERATURE

Of the literary texts from the Eastern Desert that have been published thus far, many can be characterized as eclectic, brief verses on sundry themes with marked influence of Greek myth.²⁶ In addi-

²⁵ See *Peripl. M. Rubr.* 23, with L. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton 1989) 149–151.

²⁶ Whether all those from Mons Claudianus come from a school setting, as suggested by the editor, seems doubtful to us; for similar reservations see R. S. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, “O.Florida inv. 21: An Amorous Triangle,” *ChrEg* 85 (2010) 217.

tion to these, the desert outposts have yielded interesting paraliterary texts that are important from a sociological (if not also religious) perspective, such as isopsephisms and oracular responses. As a whole, these texts give a flavor of the cultural interests of the individuals stationed in the Eastern Desert. The table below, which excludes *abecedaria* and other similar exercises, is intended to offer an overview of their content.

ID	Date	Genre	Mentioned names	Notes
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 190 (TM 62952)	100– 120	Vergil + unknown		
<i>O. Claud.</i> II 413 (TM 59051)	130– 140	Prose	Aesop + Diogenes	
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 182 (TM 63412)	II	Hexameter		a writing exercise consisting of a pangram (also known as a <i>chalinos</i>)
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 183 (TM 63415)	II	Trimeters	Zeus	didactic?
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 184–187 (TM 61489– 61492)	II	Menander’s sententiae		didactic
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 188 (TM 63411)	II	Elegiac couplets	Nestor, Zeus Kronides	didactic?
<i>O. Claud.</i> I 189 (TM 63414)	II	carmen populare?		
<i>O. Claud.</i> II 409 (TM 63417)	II	Dramatic lyric verses?	Heracles (=Alcides), Polydeuces, Peleus, Meleager, Hermes, Adonis	

<i>O. Claud.</i> II 410 (TM 63418)	II	Trochaic verses		washed out text under <i>O. Claud.</i> 409
<i>O. Claud.</i> II 411 (TM 63420)	II	Iambic tr. + hexameters	Hero and Leander	might be the same hand as II 409+410
<i>O. Claud.</i> II 412 (TM 63422)	II	Irregular trimeter + hex., the latter partly from Homer	related to marriage of Polyxena; shares features with Dares Phryg. version. Zeus, Priam, Achilles	
<i>O. Claud.</i> II 414 (TM 63423)	II	Isopsephism		more examples of isopse- phisms are reported but remain as yet unpublished
<i>O. Xer.</i> inv. 48 (TM 143318; n.3 above)	II	Dactylic poem on the water of Xeron	Athena, Xeron, Nilus, Oceanus	
<i>O. Dios</i> inv. 994–997, 1000, 1012, 1015, 1024, 1027 (TM 130163– 130171) (= nos. 15–23 in the ed. pr.) ²⁷	II	Oracular responses	Apollo, Leto, Typhon, Cronus	no. 15 is in iambics

²⁷ The oracles can be found in H. Cuvigny, “The Shrine in the Praesidium of Dios (Eastern Desert of Egypt): Graffiti and Oracles in Context,” *Chiron* 40 (2010) 245–299.

O.Max. inv. 361 (TM 128467) ²⁸	175– 225	Lyric prose on love	Eros, Bacchants	composed along with O. Max. inv. 359 by Roman soldier named Sosianus
O.Flor. inv. 21 (TM 129728; n.26 above)	150– 250	Prose composition with erotic content		possibly from Maximianon, but exact provenance unknown

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²⁸ H. Cuvigny, *La Route de Myos Hormos II* (Cairo 2003) 461.

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