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WOMEN IN P.WÜRZB. 3?

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WOMEN IN P.WÜRZB. 3?<sup>1</sup>

P.Würzb. 3<sup>2</sup> transmits two intercessory prayers, each consisting of a string of requests and topics prayed for. The question of who is prayed for at r.14–17 of the papyrus has generated scholarly controversy. In a contribution in the Festschrift for Ramon Roca-Puig the liturgist Klaus Gamber advanced the view that this prayer concerns females consecrated to God, virgins or widows.<sup>3</sup> This view was met with the criticism of Pieter Sijpesteijn and Kurt Treu<sup>4</sup> who rightly pointed out that this interpretation of the passage did not square with Wilcken’s text of ll. r.14–15 followed by Gamber: κατάρτιον δὲ σεαυτῶ καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐ[ν] ἄ[γν]ί[ς] καὶ παρθενία τοῦ λαοῦ σου, θε(ε)έ, ἰδίᾳ μενούσ[α]ς.<sup>5</sup> As the text stands, τὰς ψυχὰς must be taken as the subject of the participle. “No mention whatsoever of women is made in the Würzburg papyrus”, asserted Sijpesteijn and Treu.

An inspection of the photo of the papyrus<sup>6</sup> shows that, as already noted by Wilcken,<sup>7</sup> there is no *nomen sacrum* stroke over the invocation of God at l. r.15. While Wilcken assumed that the omission of the stroke was a scribal error, an alternative would be to assume that no abbreviation was intended and that the vocative was written out in full. Rather than the ι read by Wilcken and Hammerstaedt, what remains of the letter between ε and δ could be a partly expunged or deformed ε, comparable to the lower right part of the first ε of θερόπευσον at the end of l. v.13. More importantly, the traces of the last letter of l. r.15, visible after the lacuna, do not appear to me to be compatible with a c, which the scribe tends to draw out well into the left margin as the line immediately below shows (as well as l. r.20), but rather with the upper peaks of a v.

I would then propose to restore P.Würzb. 3 r.14–17 as:

κατάρτιον δὲ σεαυτῶ καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐ[ν] ἄ-  
 [γνί]α καὶ παρθενία τοῦ λαοῦ σου θεέ διαμενουσ[ω]ν  
 [δικ]νὸς πιτὰς ἐγκρατεῖς ἀμετακινήτο[υ]ς  
 [βεβ]αί(α)ς ἐν ταύτη[ν] τῇ πίττει ἐν ταύτη τῇ ἀγ[ά]πη

14–5 l. ἀγνεία, ἐ[ν] ἄ[γν]ί[ς] Wilcken: (ἐν) ἄ[γν]ί[ς] Hammerstaedt

16 [δ(ε)ικ]νὸς? Hammerstaedt

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the participants of the Oslo seminar in papyrology Ágnes Mihálykó, Joanne Stolk, Jens Mangerud and Carlos Hernández Garcés for their critical observations on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Van Haelst 1036, LDAB 5475, TM 64255 (Hermopolis; 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.). *Ed. pr.* Ulrich Wilcken, *Mitteilungen aus der Würzburger Papyrussammlung*, Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl. 1933.6 (Berlin, 1934), 31–6; *ed. post.* Jürgen Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente aus Ägypten und Nubien*, Papyrologica Coloniensia XXVIII (Opladen, Wiesbaden, 1999), 142–50, no. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Klaus Gamber, Liturgiegeschichtliche Bemerkungen zum Würzburger Papyrus Nr. 20, in *Miscellanea papirologica Ramon Roca-Puig en el seu vuitantè aniversari*, ed. Sebastià Janeras (Barcelona, 1987) 129–32, esp. p. 131: “Es handelt sich demnach möglicherweise um ein Gebet über Gott geweihte Jungfrauen oder Witwen (Diakonissen?) bei deren Weihe bzw. zu einem anderen Anlaß.”

<sup>4</sup> Pieter J. Sijpesteijn and Kurt Treu, Zum liturgischen Fragment P.Würzb. 3, *ZPE* 72 (1988): 67–8.

<sup>5</sup> Hammerstaedt’s version does not differ substantially from that of Wilcken. Transl. Hammerstaedt: “Richte für dich her auch die Seelen derjenigen aus deinem Volk, die <in> Reinheit und Jungfräulichkeit sind, Gott, welche – scil. die Seelen – für sich bleiben ...”

<sup>6</sup> See <http://papyri-wuerzburg.dl.uni-leipzig.de/index.xml> and Hammerstaedt, *Anaphorenfragmente*, Taf. VIII–IX.

<sup>7</sup> Wilcken, *Mitteilungen*, 35 ad l. 15.

“Perfect/Confirm<sup>8</sup> in you(rself), God, also the souls of those (females) of your people who persevere in chastity and virginity, proving(?) them faithful, self-controlled, unmoved, steady in this faith, in this love(?) ...”

This restoration has the advantage of enabling us to dispense with the construction of μένω with the bare adverb ἰδίᾳ, which is unattested in Greek.<sup>9</sup> The noun τὰς ψυχὰς would in this reading govern the adjectival participle in genitive plural feminine (τῶν διαμενουσῶν) which is in turn complemented by the prepositional phrase with ἐν + dative, a usual syntax for this verb. Despite Gamber’s “many problematic assumptions”<sup>10</sup> about this papyrus, the text may be aligned with the interpretation that the persons prayed for in these lines are female dedicatees to God.<sup>11</sup>

What distinguishes the prayer in P.Würzb. 3 r.14–17 is that the female identity of the chaste individuals prayed for is grammatically explicit. The intercessory prayer for the bishop and the church (no. 25) in the euchologium of Sarapion of Thmuis δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ τῶν μοναζόντων καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν παρθενεουσῶν<sup>12</sup> transmits a similar, grammatically explicit, construction of the gender of this particular group. Gender transparent is also the intercession in the Liturgy of St. Gregory 89–90 καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν περιούτων ἐπισκόπων πρεσβυτέρων (...) μοναζόντων, ἀειπαρθένων, ἐγκρατῶν, χηρῶν, ὀρφανῶν (...).<sup>13</sup> As a rule, however, the gender of individuals practising sexual abstinence is masculine or grammatically non-transparent in Greek liturgical prayers. Examples include: ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν ἀγνείᾳ διαγόντων ... ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν παρθενίᾳ διαγόντων in the thanksgiving prayers in the Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom<sup>14</sup>, ἔτι προσφέρομέν σοι ... ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν παρθενίᾳ καὶ ἀγνείᾳ and τοὺς ἐν παρθενίᾳ διατήρησον<sup>15</sup> ... τοὺς ἐν ἀγνείᾳ ἐνδυνάμωσον in the Syrian/Antiochene rite,<sup>16</sup> μνήσθητι κ(ύρι)ε ... καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν παρθενίᾳ in the Egyptian Liturgy of St. Basil (Greek version) 113.<sup>17</sup> In Coptic liturgical prayers the practice of sexual abstinence is denoted by the terms ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ, ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ, ΤΟΥΒΟ and ΟΥΟΠ. The gender of the practitioners is certain perhaps only where they are mentioned together with the monks or the widows. Witnesses include: Bas. Lit. 113 (Sah.) ἀΡΙΠΜΕΕΥΕ ... ΔΥΩ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΖῆ ΟΥΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ Μῆ ΟΥΟΠ and *ibid.* (Boh.) ἀΡΙΦΜΕΥΙ ΠΣΟΕΙΣ ... ΝΗ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΕΤ ΘΕΝ †ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ ΝΕΜ ΟΥΤΟΥΒΟ,<sup>18</sup> Greg. Lit. 214 [ΜΟΙ] ΟΥΤΟΥΒΟ ΝΝΗ ΕΤΘΕΝ †ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ and *ibid.* 236 [ΠΡΟΕΥΞΑΘΑΙ ΥΠΕΡ] ΝΙΜΟΝΔΧΟΣ ΝΙΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΝΙΧΗΡΑ ΝΙΟΡΦΑΝΟΣ ΝΙΕΓΚΡΑΤΗΣ,<sup>19</sup> and several anaphoric prayers from the White Monastery euchologium in fol. 42.4–14, esp. 8–9 ἀΡΙ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ... |ΜΝ ΜΜΟΝΔΧΟΣ

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) 717 s.v. καταρτίζω C and D.

<sup>9</sup> μένω is combined either with adverbial dative (e.g. ἕκαστον ἰδίᾳ κλήσει μένειν Bas. *Reg. Br.*, answer to question no. 303 = PG XXXI 1297A) or with prepositional ἐν + dative (e.g. μείναντες ἐν τῇ παρθενίᾳ, said of the Apostles in Epiaph. *Pan. haer.* 58, 3, 6 = GCS 231, 361.11 Holl/Dummer). The latter construction occurs also with ἴδιος as adjectival modifier (e.g. ἀλλ’ ἔμεινεν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἀτρέπτω φύσει, said of Jesus in Epiaph. *Pan. haer.* 77, 26, 1 = GCS 37, 438.29 Holl).

<sup>10</sup> Kurt Treu, Referat: Christliche Papyri XIV, *AfP* 35 (1989): 110 (*ad* Van Haelst 1036).

<sup>11</sup> The status of this group of Christian believers developed towards greater institutionalisation starting from the third/fourth century; see Roger Gryson, *Le ministère des femmes dans l’ église ancienne* (Gembloux, 1972) 101–4; Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994) 137–66; Georg Schöllgen, Jungfräulichkeit, in *RAC* Vol. XIX (Stuttgart, 2001) 575 and 579–80.

<sup>12</sup> Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis. A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 249 (Rome, 1995) 76.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des eucharistischen Hochgebetes*, *Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen* 65 (Münster, 1984) 38–41.

<sup>14</sup> Frank E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Vol. 1: *Eastern Liturgies* (Oxford, 1896) 332–3.

<sup>15</sup> In this prayer a verb with διά as its first compound serves to express the perseverance anticipated of those pledged to abstinence, constituting a parallel of sorts to the proposed διαμενουσῶν in P.Würzb. 3r.15.

<sup>16</sup> *Apost. Const.* VIII, 12, 44 (292) and VIII, 15, 19–20 = SC 336, 202 and 212 Metzger.

<sup>17</sup> Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora* (Münster, 2004) 168–9.

<sup>18</sup> Budde, *Basilios-Anaphora*, 168–9.

<sup>19</sup> Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Die koptische Gregoriosanaphora. Syrische und griechische Einflüsse auf eine ägyptische Liturgie* (Berlin, 1957) 42 and 46.

ΜΝ ΜΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ ΜΝ ΝΕΓ|ΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΜΝ ΝΕΧΗΡΑ ..., fol. 61.13–25, esp. 19–21 ΔΡΙ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΠΧΟΕΙC ... ΝΕ|ΤΕΓΚΡΑΤΕΥΕ ΜΜΟΥΥ ΝΡΕCΔΙΑΚΟΝΕΙ |̄| CΖΙΜΕ ΝCΙΟΥΡ ΜΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ |̄|ΧΗΡΑ ... and fol. 108.23–31, esp. 26 ΔΡΙ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ ΠΧΟΕΙC ... |ΜΝ ΜΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ ΜΝ ΜΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Emmanuel Lanne, *Le grande euchologue du monastère Blanc*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 28.2 (Paris, 1958) 298–9, 300–1 and 322–3.