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Scott, W

Brev til Samson Eitrem, (1872-

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On Eitrem's three papers on the Magic Papyri.

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1. Keble Road
Oxford
England
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To Prof. Litrem.

Dear Sir

Many thanks for the three papers on the Magic Papyri, which you have so kindly sent to me. It is clear to me, from my first reading of them, that by your careful examination of the originals you have made an important advance towards the correct reading and explanation of these difficult texts; and I have no doubt that your comments on particular passages will supply valuable additions and corrections to the notes on words that I have sent to Stuart Jones for the new Liddell and Scott.

I happen to have a special interest in Pap. Mimaut Col. X. 280-298, because that passage is (as of course you know) an extract from the Greek original of the Latin Asclepius of B. - Apuleius, c. 41. I am bringing out an edition of the philosophic Hermetica, which is now being printed; and as the Asclepius is included in it, I have had to try to restore the text of this passage, both in the Greek and in the Latin translation. I have re-written the Greek as follows:—

χάριν σοι οἶδαμεν ψυχῇ πάσῃ καὶ καρδίᾳ πρὸς
σὲ ἀνατεταμένῃ, ἄφραστον ὄνομα

("tua enim gratia tantum sumus cognitionis tuae
lumen consecuti," Ascl., omitted in Pap.),

ἄφραστον ὄνομα, τετιμημένον τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ προσηγορίᾳ,
καὶ εὐδογούμενον τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς, εὐδορίᾳ?

ὅτι πρὸς πάντας πατρικὴν εὐνοίαν καὶ στοργὴν καὶ
φιλίαν, καὶ εἴ τις γλυκυτέρα (sc. τῆς πατρικῆς), ἐνεργεία
ἐνεδείξω,

χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν νοῦν, λόγον, γνῶσιν,

νοῦν μὲν, ἵνα σὲ νοήσωμεν,

λόγον δέ, ἵνα σὲ ἐπικαλέσωμεν,

γνῶσιν δέ, ἵνα σὲ ἐπιγνώσωμεν. (It may perhaps be inferred

from the Latin transl. that the original was γνῶσιν δέ, ἵνα σὲ
ἐπιγνόντες καὶ τῷ φωτί σου σωθέντες χαίρωμεν.)

<καὶ θεότητι σου σωθέντες χαίρωμεν.> / αἰσῶμεν

χαίρομεν ὅτι σεαυτὸν ἡμῖν <ὄλον (totum) Aocl.> ἔδειξας.

χαίρομεν ὅτι ἐν σώμασιν* ἡμᾶς ὄντας ἀπεθέωσας τῇ <αἰωνίῳ> σεαυτοῦ ζωῇ. ("aeternitati" Aocl., — which may be a misreading of "aeterna vita tua".)

χάρις ἀνθρώπου πρὸς σε μία, <σοῦ τὸ μέγεθος> γνωρίσαι. ("Haec est enim humana sola gratulatio, cognitio maiestatis tuae" Aocl. But the magician seems to have either omitted σὺν μέγεθος, or shortened it into σε.)

ἐγνωρίσαμεν σε, ὦ λαμπὰς <μεγίστη> τῆς ^(ἀνοσίεως?) γνώσεως.

ἐγνωρίσαμεν σε, ὦ <ζωὴ ἀληθὲς> τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς.

ἐγνωρίσαμεν σε, ὦ μήτρα πάμφορε ἐν πάτρῳ φυτεία.

ἐγνωρίσαμεν σε, ὦ τοῦ πάντα <ἐν?> στάσει κυκλοφοροῦντος αἰώνιος διαμονή.

οὕτως οὖν σε προσκυνήσαντες <ἀγαθὸν ὄντα ("bonum" Aocl.)>

<παρὰ τῆς σῆς ἀγαθότητος> μηδεμίαν αἰτήσαμεν <δέησιν (or δωρεάν?)>

πλὴν <τούτου?> (or ἀλλ' ἢ <τούτου?>)

θέλησον ἡμᾶς διατηρηθῆναι ἐν τῇ τῆς σῆς γνώσεως φιλότητι,

ὥστε (?) ^(οἰμῆδ' ἔποτε) μηποτε σφαλῆναι τοῦ τοιούτου βίου.

* "corporibus" Aocl.: but your reading of the Pap. shows that the Greek word was πρὸ σώμασιν.

Here I follow the Latin transl. which differs from the Pap. in the order of the clauses, as well as in the words.

Perhaps the original was σε προσκυνήσαντες τὸν μόνον ἀγαθὸν ὄντα. "bonitatis tuae hoc tantum te precamur" Aocl.

"ut nos velis servari perseverantes in amore cognitionis tuae" Aocl. (But perhaps ἐν τῇ σῇ γνώσει καὶ φιλότητι would be better.) "et nunquam ab hoc vitae genere separari" Aocl.

This is the best that I have hitherto been able to make of the hymn. But many things in my attempted restoration of it are doubtful; and perhaps, when I have time to study your ^{reading} of the Pap. more thoroughly, I may get some fresh suggestions from it.

I am not quite satisfied with the clause which begins with ἄφραστον ὄνομα (l. 28^{1/2}). The meaning must have been that God's true name is ἄφραστον, — that is to say, that no name that we can give him is adequate, or worthy of him, to describe him, and we call him Θεός and πατήρ only because we must use some name when we speak of him, and can find ^{no names} ~~some~~ that are

more suitable than these. That is a thought⁽³⁾
which occurs repeatedly in the Hermetica,
(e.g. in Ascl. c. 20) But it is not clearly expressed in the Greek
as here written; and I think that some
words which connected ἔφραστον ὄνομα with
what precedes must have fallen out.

The reading ἦ μήτρα πάνμορε ἐν πατρὸς
φυσίᾳ ("O Womb, made all-fertile
by the Father's begetting")^{l. 293} ~~is doubtful~~
was suggested to me by the ^{Latin} translation. The
words are ~~also~~ doubtful; but I think
the Hermetist must have written something
like this. It is a reference to Ascl.
(Part) cc. 20-21, where the Creator is described as
ἔφραστότης, and human procreation is
said to be an "image" of God's creative
energy.

And similarly, in the following clause,
ἐφ' ἣν I have written ἦ τοῦ πάντα (ἐν?)
σάσα κυκλοφοροῦντος αἰώνιος διαμονή, I
have little doubt that the writer's
meaning was that which is expressed
more fully in Ascl. cc. 29-32, a
passage which deals with the relation
between eternity (in the Platonic sense)
and time.

I am sending you a paper which
I wrote two years ago. There is
nothing in it that will be new to
you; but it will at least serve to
explain my interest in the subject
of the Magic Papyri. After ~~that~~ I had
written it, I heard more about the
proposed Corpus, both from Hoffner and
from Preisendanz. Hoffner (who works
with Wessely) has now joined Preisendanz;
so that there is now only one plan of
publishing a Corpus Pap. Mag. But the
publication has been prevented by want
of money. Both Hoffner and Preisendanz

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wrote to me some time ago, and asked me whether it would be possible to get a contribution of money for the purpose from England; and I did what little I could to help, by speaking and writing to men in Oxford and elsewhere who were likely to be interested in the subject; but this led to no result. When Prejoudant last wrote to me, he told me that the Corpus was completely written and ready for printing, and that a part of it was actually in print, but the publishers declined to do anything more until they were paid, and ~~he had~~ there was no money to pay them; and he seemed to have lost all hope of getting anything more done.

You probably know all this already. Do you think there is any prospect of getting the German Corpus published? It seems to me a really important piece of work; and I still hope that, before very long, some way of getting over the difficulty will be found, and that we shall at last have the Magic Papyri in an accessible and intelligible form, — with the Papyri Osloenses included among them.

I am yours sincerely
W. Scott.