A REDISCOVERED TEXT OF PORPHYRY ON MYSTIC FORMULAE*

Students of later Platonism know well the significant role Porphyry played in the development of what we now call Neoplatonism.[1] His own biography of Plotinus makes clear that we probably owe the very existence of the majority of Plotinus' written works to Porphyry's nagging.[2] Having cajoled the master into penning a large number of works during his latter years, Porphyry then edited and published them, giving them the title Enneads which they have since borne. We must, of course, take Porphyry's claims regarding the importance of his own influence with a grain of salt. Still, with the sole exception of Plato himself, no figure in the Platonic tradition had ever enjoyed Plotinus' good fortune in the transmission of his complete works, and none would again, for which we clearly have Porphyry to thank.

This deed is typical of Porphyry's contribution to philosophy. Without denying his occasional significance in doctrinal disputes,[3] it would be fair to say that his major importance lay in the area of collecting and passing on. Even the oracle of Apollo, according to David, *In Isag.* 92, 3, contrasted the πολυμαθία of Porphyry with the 'divine inspiration' of Iamblichus ὁ ἔνθους. Paradoxically, this virtue resulted in the loss of most of his own writings. These were gratefully used and copiously excerpted by subsequent thinkers, such as Iamblichus and Proclus, whose own works proved to have greater philosophical impact. Although many of these works are also no longer extant, in their time they superseded and eclipsed the corresponding works of Porphyry.

Few of Porphyry's works, therefore, have survived intact. Fragments of more than seventy-five works (including those extant) have recently been gathered by Andrew Smith,[4] who has thus made good a promise made twenty years ago to fill this glaring gap in Porphyrian scholarship.[5] We now possess in published form virtually all that remains of Porphyry's vast output.[6] The purpose of the present article is to add to this nearly complete œuvre a further, perhaps final, text, the manuscript of which has now been rediscovered for the first time since it was used in 1691 by Richard Bentley. The edition and discussion of the text will show that it does indeed stem from the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry.

    [1] His influence, particularly in the West, has been documented by P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident* (Paris, 1948). On the history of the term 'Neoplatonism', see Heinrich Dörrie, *Der Platonismus in der Antike*, vol. I (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1987), p. 44.
    [2] Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 5–6; in ch. 18, Porphyry tells us that he inspired 'Amelius too' to write.
    [3] On some of these, those regarding the soul, see Andrew Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition. A study in post-Plotinian Neoplatonism* (The Hague, 1974). See also R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London, 1972), pp. 94–118.
    [4] *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, Andrew Smith (ed.), (Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1993).
    [5] Smith expressed his intention in the preface to the work cited in note 3.
    [6] Information on the modern editions of the extant works can be found in Smith (note 4) under the individual titles.

THE MANUSCRIPT AND THE TEXT

On the verso of P. Köln 175, line 4 reads $\tau\eta\sigma\phi\lambda\epsilon\gamma\mu o\delta$[. In her discussion of this papyrus, Cornelia Römer[7] recognized in these remains part of a formula which has been found in various texts and papyri, but the sense and origin of which remain uncertain. The full formula, in *scriptura continua*, is:

$$\kappa\nu\alpha\xi\zeta\beta\iota\chi\theta\upsilon\pi\tau\eta\sigma\phi\lambda\epsilon\gamma\mu o\delta\rho\omega\psi$$

In her commentary on the line,[8] Miss Römer collects a number of other occurrences of the formula, one of which is a short text of Porphyry first discovered by Richard Bentley and published in his famed *Epistula ad Millium*.[9] She reproduces Bentley's *editio princeps*, adding (p. 103) that the text has to her knowledge never again been published. This has been confirmed by Reinhold Merkelbach. In his article on Thespis 1 F. 4 Snell,[10] Merkelbach mentions the text reproduced by Römer and gives the reason why it has not been edited since Bentley: the manuscript used by Bentley has seemingly not yet been identified.[11] The consequent neglect of this short tract is unfortunate, for it represents the only extant attempt to give a purely philosophical explanation of the $\kappa\nu\alpha\xi\zeta\beta\iota$-formula. Such explanations seem nevertheless not to have been uncommon, and were no doubt the model for the Christian exegesis given by Clement of Alexandria, to which I shall return.

The manuscript, which I had the good fortune to discover while working on other texts in the Bodleian library,[12] is the Ms. Bodl. Gr. Barocci 50[13] and dates from the early 10th century.[14] Its first part (ff. 1–321^v) contains grammatical and lexicographical works, the contents of the second (ff. 322–86^v) are miscellaneous. Barocci 50 has attracted a certain amount of attention in the past thirty years or so because

[7] Cornelia Römer. *Schriftproben eines christlichen Schreibers. Kölner Papyri* Band 4 (Opladen, 1982), pp. 98–104.   [8] Pp. 101–3 of the article cited in note 7.

[9] Bentley's celebrated *Epistula* was first published as an appendix to *Joannis Antocheni cognomento Malalae Historia Chronica cum interpret. et notis Edm. Chilmeadi* (Oxford, 1691), in which it is independently paginated. It was reprinted in Ludwig Dindorf's edition (*Ioannis Malalae Chronographia* [Bonn, 1831]) on pages 677–755 and in vol 2 of Alexander Dyce's edition (London, 1836, repr. by Olms, Hildesheim, 1971) of Bentley's collected works on pp. 239–368 (I quote the page numbers of this edition). To commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of Bentley's birth, the University of Toronto Press published a reprint, edited by George Goold, and Goold's introduction (pp. 7–24), as well as his Cambridge address commemorating the same occasion, published in *HSCP* 67 (1963), 285–302, are a good source of information regarding the contents of the letter and the circumstances which occasioned it. See now also C. O. Brink, *English Classical Scholarship* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 42–49.

[10] Reinhold Merkelbach, 'Weiße KNAZZBI-Milch (Zu Thespis 1 F 4 Snell)', *ZPE* 61 (1985), 293–6.   [11] Merkelbach (note 10), p. 296 n. 13.

[12] It is a pleasure once again to be able to thank Prof. Jonathan Barnes for making possible my stay in Oxford that led to this discovery.

[13] The manuscript is described by Klaus Alpers, *Theognostos Περὶ ὀρθογραφίας: Überlieferung, Quellen und Text der Kanones, 1–84* (Hamburg, 1964), p. 4ff.: Paolo Eleuteri, *Storia della tradizione manoscritta di Museo* (Pisa, 1981), pp. 3–5 (with further literature) and especially Christopher K. Callanan and Alessandra Bertini Malgarini, 'Übersehene Favorin-Fragmente aus einer Oxforder Handschrift', *RhM* 129 (1986), 170–72 (with full bibliography). I will repeat only the most important points in the present article.

[14] On the date see Callanan/Bertini (n. 13), p. 170 n. 5. Paul Maas first dated the codex to the first half of the 10th C., whereas Coxe in the catalogue of the Greek manuscripts in the Bodleian gave the 11th C. Nigel Wilson has recently (*Scholars of Byzantium* [London, 1983], p. 137) said that the MS. 'may be as early as *c.* 925'.

it is thought by some to be a product of a scriptorium in southern Italy.[15] For the purposes of the edition which follows, I have assigned the manuscript the letter O.

The opusculum of Porphyry is contained on the folio pages 353ᵛ15–354ʳ13. The text is highly corrupt. The title is given in the manuscript as περὶ τοῦ κνάξ· ζβί· χθύ· πτίς· φλεγμῶ· δρόψ· ἑρμηνεία.

Bentley evidently discovered the manuscript during one of his searches through the Bodleian Library and treasured it. He used it repeatedly, especially the grammatical and lexicographical tracts of the first part. We might be forgiven for thinking that he was deliberately vague about the exact whereabouts and identity of the codex. In the *Epistula ad Millium* he says that the Porphyry opusculum is taken '*ex libro MSᵗᵒ Oxonii*', not the most accurate of descriptions; elsewhere in the *Epistula*, referring to the Barroci 50, he says: '*extat in Bibliotheca publica Oxonii liber antiqua manu notatus, continens mille regulas de recta scribendi ratione…Theognoti Grammatici*', information not overly useful in the absence of manuscript catalogues.[16]

<div align="center">

Πορφυρίου φιλοσόφου
περὶ τοῦ κναξζβιχθυπτησφλεγμωδροψ· ἑρμηνεία

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3 ἐν Δελφοῖς εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἐπιγέγραπται τράγος ἰχθὺς ἐπὶ δελφῖνος
ἐπικείμενος· κνὰξ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὁ τράγος κατὰ ἀποκοπὴν τῶν
στοιχείων τοῦ κων, ἢ καὶ πάλιν ἀφαιρέσει τοῦ ξ· κνάκων γὰρ
6 καλεῖται, ὡς καὶ Θεόκριτος ἐν βουκόλοις λέγει, οἷον τράγος
καὶ ἰχθὺς ὁ μὲν φλεγόμενος ὁ δὲ δρόψ ὄψον.
λέγει δὲ ὅτι ὁ τράγος φλεγόμενός ἐστιν πάντοτε ὑπὸ λαγνείας,
9 ὅτι ἐάν τις τὰς ῥῖνας αὐτοῦ ἀποσφαλίσῃ, διὰ τῶν κεράτων
ἀναπνεῖ. ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἑτέραν ἑρμηνείαν οὕτως· τὸ κναξζβὶ γάλα
ἐστὶν· τὸ δὲ χθύπτης τυρός· δρόψ ὁ ἄνθρωπος· δρῶπες γὰρ οἱ
12 ἄνθρωποι λέγονται.
καὶ ἕτερα δὲ πλεῖστα τοιαῦτα διὰ τῶν κδ στοιχείων ἀπαρτίζοντα
ἴδιον σκοπὸν εὕρομεν· οἷον βέδυ ζὰψ χθώμ πλῆκτρον σφίγξ. ὅ ἐστιν
15 οὕτως· βέδυ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑγρὰ οὐσία· ζὰψ ἡ πυρώδης οὐσία· χθώμ ἡ γῆ·
πλῆκτρον ὁ ἀήρ· σφὶγξ ἡ τούτων φιλία διὰ τὸ συνεσφίγχθαι.
Κλώδιος δὲ ὁ Νεαπολίτης οὕτως ἡρμήνευσεν τὸ προκείμενον· ἀήρ·
18 θάλασσα· γῆ· ἥλιος. καὶ ἕτεροί τινες φιλόσοφοί τε καὶ ποιηταὶ
τοῦτον τὸν σκοπὸν ἡρμήνευσαν·

2/11 πτίς O   3 ἰχθὺς scripsi ἰχθύει O ἰχθύι Bentley   5 κῶς O | ἡ O del. Bentley | ἀφαιρέσει scripsi ἀφαίρεσις O ἀφαίρεσιν aut potius πρόσθεσιν cj. Bentley | κνάκων Bentley coll. Theocr. Id. 3,5 κνάκον O   6 Βουκολικοῖς Bentley   7 δρόν ὄψόν O   9 ἀποσφαλίσῃ scripsi ἀποσφαλίσει O | οὐάτων aut ὤτων Bentley sed v. comm.   14 εὕρομεν scripsi εὕραμεν O | ὅ ex ω corr. O   14/16 σφήγξ O   14/15 χθώμ scripsi sec. Nauck, *Bull. de l'Acad. de St. Pétersb.* 17 (1872), 270 χθῶ O ζάμψ, χθώ Bentley   15 χθώμ scripsi χθῶν O   17/19 ἡρμήνευσ- scripsi ἑρμήνευσ- O

THE NATURE OF THE TEXT

Everything about this text points to its being an excerpt from a larger work. Its very length shows that it could hardly be an independent treatise. This is after all a philosopher who wrote four books on the Delphic utterance γνῶθι σαυτόν![17] The form of the title, also, Περί τινος· ἑρμηνεία, would seem to be without parallel for a separate work.

The first sentence (lines 3–4) does read like the beginning of an introduction, but

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[15] On this see Callanan/Bertini (n. 13) p. 171–2.
[16] In the following edition all emendations not otherwise attributed are due to Bentley.
[17] Suda IV 178,21 = Porph., Fr. 272T. Smith, p. 308.

the following explanation immediately interrupts whatever flow there was. It also assumes knowledge of the formula, which was only mentioned in the title and is in fact never repeated in the text itself. This contrasts with the way the second formula, βέδυ ζάψ, is first mentioned at line 14, and then discussed.

All of this seems less odd if we assume the text is an epitome and the excerptor is only copying what is both relevant to his needs and not obvious. This might explain the two ὅτι clauses at lines 8–9, which do not seem to be connected in any way. I think that the subject of λέγει here is not the formula,[18] but Porphyry (or perhaps a source cited by Porphyry), and the object clauses merely contain some (for the excerptor) notable facts gleaned from the original text.

No quote is give from Theocritus at line 6, something we might have expected from Porphyry himself. And what we are given from Κλώδιος ὁ Νεαπολίτης (lines 17–18) is pretty clearly not a verbatim quotation, but simply a bare bones summary, again not Porphyry's style.

I proceed then, on the assumption that the text is an epitome. We must not, therefore, expect the syntax to be entirely coherent, and in fact it occasionally degenerates to telegram style. Further textual difficulties have doubtless been introduced at some point by a fairly dim scribe. Lest the apparatus not already sufficiently reflect the limitations of his competence, let me mention the following manuscript readings: 8 ὑπολαγνίας; 9 ῥίνας; 10 τῷ for τὸ; 15 πυρόδης; 16 τούτων; 17 Κλόδιος. The alphabet, too, causes him difficulties, as he does not notice that if he writes πτίς instead of πτής, the formula contains two iotas and no eta. And finally, even counting is too tedious for him: for he does not notice that the second formula, as he gives it in line 14, only contains 23 letters, not the 24 which Porphyry has just promised in line 13.

WORD DIVISION IN THE κναξζβί-FORMULA

Turning to the text and the first formula, it would be well to deal first with the problem of word division. There are at least eight independent ancient witnesses to the form of this formula (counting Hesychius as being independent):

(1) a wooden tablet in the Louvre (Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes, inventory nr. A.F. 1193) edited by Wm. Brashear, 'Lesefrüchte', ZPE 50 (1983), pp. 97–107, esp. p. 98;

(2) Clem. Alex., Strom. V 8, 48, 5–9 (ed. Stählin/Früchtel pp. 359–60): contains Thespis fr. 4 TGF² p. 833, TrGF 1 F 4, 66 Snell and a reference to Callimachus, fr. 194. 28–31 (Vol. I p. 179 Pfeiffer);[19]

(3) Pap. Köln IV nr. 175 (see note 7);

(4) O. Guéraud and P. Jouguet, Un livre d'ecolier du IIIe siècle avant J.-C. (Cairo, 1938) = Publ. de la Société royale ég. de papyrologie II 6–7;

(5) Hesychius κ 3086, II 492 Latte: κνάξ· γάλα λευκόν;
　　　　cf. κ 3084, II 492 Latte: κνακόν· λευκόν. πυρρόν;
　　　　ζ 85, II 259 Latte: ζαβιχ· λευκόν;
　　　　θ 920, II 336 Latte: θύπτης· ὁ τυρός;
　　　　δ 2468, I 482 Latte: δρώψ· ἄνθρωπος;

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[18] In such contexts, this verb would be unusual anyway, as verbs meaning 'signify' are generally used.　　　　[19] Much of the relevant passage is quoted below, pp. 223ff.

cf. φ 585, IV 247 Schmidt: φλεγμός· τὸ αἷμα;

(6) Porphyry;

(7) C. Wessely, *Stud. Pal. II*, p. XLV (s. 1. p.C.): reproduced in E. Ziebarth, *Aus der antiken Schule* (*Kleine Texte* 65, hrsg. von H. Lietzmann, Bonn, 1913), n. 6, p. 5;

(8) the address side of a Coptic letter preserved in the British Museum and identified by F. Wisse, 'Language Mysticism in the Nag Hammadi Texts and in Early Coptic Monasticism I', *Enchoria* 9 (1979), 110 n. 9.

The manuscript of Porphyry (our text, n. 6) has in the title κνάξ· ζβί· χθύ· πτής· φλεγμῶ· δρόψ, and adheres to this word division throughout.[20] The manuscript of Clement (n. 2) has κναξζβί, χθύπτης, φλεγμό, δρώψ at *Strom.* 5, 8, 48, 5 (p. 359, 7). κναξζβί is repeated by Clement at 48, 6 (p. 359, 8) and in the Thespis fragment quoted by him at 48, 7 (p. 359, 12). Nevertheless, Stählin, in his edition of Clement, has printed in each case κναξζβίχ on the alleged authority of Hesychius. Hesychius does indeed have κναξ as one entry, and ζαβιχ as a separate entry. Consistent with this word division is the presence of a third entry: θύπτης. '*Sed profecto non ea est Hesychii auctoritas*' is the laconical rejoinder of Bentley (p. 303), who knew Hesychius intimately and for that very reason valued far higher the authority of Clement and Porphyry, noting in addition that the readings in Clement can hardly be due to scribal error.

It appears, however, to have been overlooked hitherto that Clement, in his first attempt to explain the meaning of the formula, clearly derived θύπτης from θῦψαι, the aorist of τύφω. This would seem to indicate that he did indeed accept the division: κναξζβιχ θυπτης. For he would otherwise have had at least to mention the presence of the χ.[21] So it would seem that Clement's authority, on internal evidence, not on any authority of Hesychius evinced by Stählin, does indeed lie with κναξζβιχ.

Wessely's papyrus, being written *scriptura continua*, is no help on this point. Although the texts mentioned in the previous paragraph and preserved in manuscripts derive of course at some remove from texts written *scriptura continua*, this same restriction does not apply to them because the words in question are discussed individually, leaving little doubt as to the word division intended by the author. In this context the wooden tablet from Antinoe published by Brashear (number 1 in the list above) has great weight due to the peculiar arrangement of the letters:

κ	ζ			φ	γ	δ
ν	β	χ	π	λ	μ	ρ
α	ι	θ	τ	ε	ο	[ω]
ξ		υ	η			ψ
			σ			

This division matches, at least in this point, our manuscript of Porphyry and is also supported by the external evidence mentioned by Merkelbach, that no Greek word

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[20] That is, it has e.g. at line 11: τὸ δὲ χθὺ πτής.

[21] The passage is quoted in note 54. Although in ancient etymologies, almost any other letter can be ignored, the first letter of the word is generally considered vital. It is certainly not impossible that the position of the χ should have been changed at some point by a scribe who had learned the formula with the other word division, and only natural that the same scribe would have changed the text accordingly within the entire discussion, which would meet Bentley's argument mentioned above, as Bentley objected only to an *accidental* change in the text, not a deliberate one.

ends with χ, whereas some do begin with χθ.[22] Of course these are not real Greek words, but they are supposed to look, or rather sound, like real words.

After all this discussion, it should perhaps be stressed that the original, 'correct' word division and the division adopted in each of our sources are quite separate matters. The formula was one learned, possibly with errors, by many as children and remembered throughout their lives. Even if the 'original' form could be established beyond any doubt, it would not do to start emending the texts on this basis. The most important result of our discussion is that the word division in Porphyry's text has parallels and should be accepted for him.

It will be noticed that Porphyry has φλεγμῶ δρόψ, whereas the other sources generally agree on φλεγμό and δρώψ. Since the obvious purpose of the formula is to use each letter of the alphabet once and only once, the only thing we can be sure of is that one of these pairs of variants must be correct, that e.g. φλεγμῶ δρώψ cannot be right.

COMMENTARY

Porphyry's work breaks cleanly into two sections, the first dealing with κναξζβί, the second with βέδυ ζάψ.

Section one begins with what looks like an introduction. The first sentence, lines 3–4, is in the manuscript made unclear by the uncertain syntactical function of ἰχθύ(ε)ι. I do not know how Bentley construed the text as he printed it. A. Sideras has cleverly suggested reading ἰγνύι or ἰγνύσι. We could then picture the goat either sitting side-saddle on the fish, as Professor Sideras suggested to me, presumably taking the dative as instrumental, or join the dative with ἐπικείμενος: the goat would then be lying, with its legs folded under it, upon the back of the fish.[23]

Two considerations seem, however, to preclude this otherwise attractive solution. Firstly, ἰχθύς is mentioned in the text again at line 7. More importantly, though, it here clearly seems to derive from the first half of the formula: κναξζβιχθυπτησ, and here the letters are guaranteed by the fact that γ and ν are used elsewhere in the formula, and each letter of the alphabet may only be used once.[24]

I would suggest that the pictorial representation in Porphyry, be it real or apocryphal, is related in some way to astrology. The constellation Capricorn, Αἰγοκέρως, was in the ancient world regularly represented as a cross between a goat and a fish.[25] Of Capricorn, Haebler says, 'allem Anschein nach war dies Zeichen auch bei den alten Babyloniern bekannt als 'Ziegenfisch', eine Bezeichnung, die eine überraschende Ähnlichkeit mit Eratosthenes, den Scholiasten zu Germanicus und Hygin, sowie der *sphaera Empedoclis* (140) aufweist, denn diese alle stellen den Steinbock dar als phantastische Zwittergestalt von Ziege und Fisch, während Arat und Ptolemaios den Fischschwanz nicht kennen'.[26] In the sky, and very distinctly on some late ancient representations, Capricorn could be thought of as above (ἐπί) the

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[22] In the article cited in note 10, p. 293 n. 4. I hesitate to attach much weight to this argument, as the formula clearly begins, if not a word, at least a syllable, with ζβ, as is also done in a final example given by Clement at 49, 1, the last word of which is ζβυχθηδόν.

[23] ἐπίκειμαι was used both with dative and with ἐπί + dat, but also with ἐπί + genitive (codd. at Hdt. 7.6; PTeb 50.6 [ii BCE]; Corp. Herm. 1.13), just as the corresponding active ἐπιτιθέναι was also used with ἐπί + gen. (Hdt. 2.121.δ) in addition to the more usual dative.

[24] More on this below, p. 225.

[25] See Roscher, *Mythologisches Lexikon*, Vol. 6, coll. 971–2.

[26] Haebler in *RE* s.v. Capricornus, p. 1550, citing P. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier* (1890), p. 76ff. and 313f.

dolphin, for the tail of the dolphin, curving upwards, reaches to the horns of Capricorn.[27] Porphyry need only have been familiar with the Greek tradition, but of course if he did know of the Babylonian roots this would have pleased him all the more.

I would conclude then, that the text is not referring to a goat lying on a fish, but rather a creature representing a mixture of goat and fish. Both words should be in the nominative and form together the preliminary stage of what could become a compound word.[28]

There are also a number of striking similarities between this section and a passage in Athenaeus which connects a pictorial representation of a goat and a dolphin with an enigmatic series of words, in this case a poem by Simonides: Athenaeus *Deipnosoph.* 10, 84: γριφώδη δ' ἐστὶ καὶ Σιμωνίδη ταῦτα πεποιημένα, ὥς φησι Χαμαιλέων ὁ Ἡρακλεώτης ἐν τῷ περὶ Σιμωνίδου (fr. 172 Bergk = 69 Diehl = 113 Edmonds)

> μιξονόμου τε πατὴρ ἐρίφου καὶ σχέτλιος ἰχθὺς
> πλησίον ἠρείσαντο καρήατα· παῖδα δὲ νυκτὸς
> δεξάμενοι βλεφάροισι Διωνύσοιο ἄνακτος
> βουφόνον οὐκ ἐθέλουσι τιθηνεῖσθαι θεράποντα.[29]

φασὶ δ' οἱ μὲν ἐπί τινος τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀναθημάτων ἐν Χαλκίδι τοῦτ' ἐπιγεγράφθαι, πεποιῆσθαι δ' ἐν αὐτῷ τράγον καὶ δελφῖνα, περὶ ὧν εἶναι τὸν λόγον τοῦτον. οἱ δὲ εἰς ἐπιτόνιον ψαλτήριον δελφῖνα καὶ τράγον εἰργασμένον εἰρῆσθαι, καὶ εἶναι τὸν βουφόνον καὶ τοῦ Διονύσου θεράποντα τὸν διθύραμβον.

There follows a third, unrelated explanation.

We are not concerned at present with whether the explanations of Simonides' poem given are correct,[30] but only with the similarities between them and the Porphyrian exegesis. In both cases we have a goat and a dolphin engraved on a religious object, a temple or an offering, and associated with a mysterious verse, in Simonides' case a definite γρῖφος.

This explanation need not necessarily conflict with the previous astrological one. The relationship between the astrological signs, the engraved pictorial representations and the mysterious formula could easily be seen as an example of the analogy that, for a Neoplatonist, holds between different levels of reality, different layers of meaning in a text and so on.

Later Platonists were virtually all interested in Delphi and oracles. Plutarch is a notable example and Porphyry himself wrote four books on the Delphic utterance γνῶθι σαυτόν[31] and a work *De philosophia ex oraculis haurienda.*[32] I believe, therefore, that with ναὸν and the definite article in line 3 he must be referring to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Although I can find no direct evidence of the decoration Porphyry describes, its relationship to 'Απόλλων Δελφίνιος is evident. This epithet may in fact

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[27] See Roscher, *Mythologisches Lexikon*, Vol. 6, coll. 926–7.

[28] We find a very similar virtual compound at Athenaeus, *Deipnosoph.* 8,5,332d: τῷ καλουμένῳ τράγῳ ἰχθυδίῳ.

[29] 'The father of the promiscuously-feeding kid and a reckless fish have pressed their heads together closely; but when their eyes catch sight of the child of night, they refuse to nurse the ox-slaying servant of prince Dionysus': the translation of Charles B. Gulick in the Loeb Athenaeus (London and New York, 1930), vol. 7, pp. 569–71.

[30] On this question see Richard Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der alexandrinischen Dichtung* (Giessen, 1893), pp. 117–18.

[31] See note 17.

[32] The fragments have been collected by G. Wolff (Berlin, 1856) and now by Andrew Smith (note 4), pp. 351–407, frr. 303–50. I do not mean to imply that this work dealt exclusively with Delphic oracles.

simply be derived from the place name, Delphi, as Pythios was probably derived from the oracle centre Pytho. But the Greeks told the story of how Apollo, in the shape of a dolphin, led Cretan sailors from Knosos to Kirrha, and then, now in the shape of a handsome young man, on into the mountains to his temple. A dolphin appears on the coins of Delphi to commemorate this.[33]

The goat, and the he-goat in particular, was also an attribute of Apollo,[34] and a goat often appears on votive reliefs dedicated to him.[35] 'Auch geographische Bezeichnungen im Bereich von Delphi, wie der Fluß Aigas, das πεδίον αἰγαῖον, der ὀμφαλὸς αἰγαῖος (Hesych. s. vv.) stellen sich in diesen Zusammenhang.'[36]

The sentence beginning at line 4 (κνάξ μὲν γάρ...) is, I feel, not so garbled that we need to follow Bentley and substitute πρόσθεσιν for the ἀφαίρεσις of O. I believe Porphyry's train of thought is the following: 'For the he-goat is κνάξ, by dropping the letters κων ⟨from κνάκων⟩, or, going in the other direction, also by elimination of ξ ⟨from κνάξ, and of course the subsequent addition of the just-mentioned κων⟩'. Bentley's rewriting of the sentence makes the thought-process smoother and less convoluted, but is unnecessary, in particular once we realize that this is an epitome.

The beginning of the next sentence is tolerably clear,[37] but the text after οἷον τράγος line 6 seems seriously corrupt; I suspect significant loss of text here. It would seem that Porphyry was at this point offering glosses for the individual parts of the formula. Since, as I will show, we must connect φλεγόμενος with the τράγος, I believe ὁ δὲ refers to the ἰχθύς. As the expected explanation is clearly wanting, I would assume a lacuna in the text before δρὸψ ὄψον.

As I said, we must connect φλεγόμενος, which will have been introduced to explain the φλεγμῷ of the formula, here with the τράγος, and it will be used in the not uncommon erotic sense, i.e. 'burning with passion'.[38] The goat was thought to have an unusually powerful sex drive and this is the characteristic most often mentioned by ancient writers.[39] It was occasionally thought to be a result of a permanent high temperature.[40]

On the content of line 9, that a goat can breathe through its horns, Bentley cites Varro, De re rustica 2, 3, 5: 'de quibus [scil. capris] admirandum illut, quod etiam Archelaus[41] scribit: non ut reliqua animalia naribus, sed auribus spiritum ducere solere pastores curiosiores aliquot dicunt'. Cf. Aelian, Hist. Anim. 1, 53: ἀναπνεῖ γὰρ [scil. αἴξ] καὶ διὰ τῶν ὤτων καὶ διὰ τῶν μυκτηρίων, and Pliny, Nat. Hist. 8, 202: 'auribus eas [scil. capras] spirare, non naribus... Archelaus auctor est'. The unanimity of these authorities, at least on this point, led Bentley to conjecture οὐάτων or ὤτων for κεράτων.

But Bentley appears to have missed two important passages. The first is Aristotle, Hist. An. I 11, 492a13: ἔτι δὲ κεφαλῆς μόριον, δι' οὗ ἀκούει, ἄπνουν, τὸ οὖς·

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[33] More on all these details in RE s.v. Delphoi, p. 2526.

[34] Will Richter in RE s.v. Ziege, p. 426; ancient testimony is collected by Wernicke, RE s.v. Apollon, p. 111.   [35] Pausanias X 16,5; IGA LVII 89.

[36] Will Richter in RE s.v. Ziege, p. 426.

[37] On the meaning of κνηκός et sim. see Gow on Theocr., Id. 3, 5. Bentley's Βουκολικοῖς in line 6 is certainly attractive, but may well be an improvement on the author himself.

[38] Cf. φλεγόμενος (τῷ) ἔρωτι Chariton 2, 3, 8; 8, 8, 7. Both the dative and ὑπό are common: for ὑπό cf. e.g. Philo, De ebr. 95, 1: ὑπ' οἴνου Legat. 125, 5: Dion. Hal., Antiqu. Rom. 9, 66, 3; 11, 28, 5.

[39] E.g. Varro, De re rustica II 3, 9; Verg., Georg. II 526, IV 10; Horace, carm. III 13, 4f. Many further passages are offered by Will Richter in RE s.v. Ziege, p. 407 and p. 421.

[40] Varro, De re rustica II 3, 5; Pliny, NH VIII 202.

[41] On Archelaus see RE II, 1896 (Reitzenstein), col. 453.

Ἀλκμαίων (= *DK* I⁶ A7, p. 212) γὰρ οὐκ ἀληθῆ λέγει, φάμενος ἀναπνεῖν τὰς αἶγας κατὰ τὰ ὦτα. Porphyry would certainly prefer Aristotle to Alcmaion as an authority, but unfortunately neither of them agrees with the doctrine he is handing down.

We must look further, then, for an authority for goats' breathing through the horns. We find one in Oppian, an author with whose work Porphyry, who wrote extensively on the Homeric epics, may have been familiar. The text is Oppian, *Cynegetica* II 338–42:

> αἰγάγροις δέ τίς ἐστι δι' αὐτῶν αὐλὸς ὀδόντων
> λεπταλέος πνοιῆς, κεράτων μέσον, ἔνθεν ἔπειτα
> αὐτὴν ἐς κραδίην καὶ πνεύμονας εὐθὺς ἱκάνει·
> εἰ δέ τις αἰγάγρου κηρὸν κέρασιν περιχεύοι,
> ζωῆς ἐξέκλεισεν ὁδοὺς πνοιῆς τε διαύλους.⁴²

This passage also offers an indirect parallel for the detail in our text involving the blocking off of the nose. Porphyry does not make clear whether the closing off of the nasal passages is supposed to be a necessary condition or whether the goat breathes through his horns anyway, and this is just a drastic method of making or proving this point. Aelian held that goats were capable of breathing through both the nose and the ears, and the wording of our text seems to point in this direction, but Varro and Pliny represent the tradition that they breathe only through the ears.⁴³ Oppian agrees with the latter authorities in holding that they cannot breathe through the nose.

It must be mentioned that the meaning of ἀποσφαλίσῃ assumed here, namely 'close off',⁴⁴ is not absolutely certain. The present passage represents the first use (as opposed to mention) of any form of this verb in extant Greek literature, as far as I see. The compound is not in *LSJ*, but is derived form σφαλίζω, which, according to ancient grammarians, who connect it etymologically with σφαλ(λ)ός,⁴⁵ means 'to put in fetters'.⁴⁶ Although unattested in earlier literature, the simplex, σφαλίζω, meaning 'lock up, close', and used with doors, buildings, the mouth or eyes as the object, is used in patristic and later Greek, as are various compounds, especially κατασφαλίζω.⁴⁷

This first interpretation offered by Porphyry for the κναξζβί-formula has no parallel in extant literature. The second, though, which follows at lines 10–12, is clearly related both to the Hesychius glosses quoted above⁴⁸ and to the discussion of Clement of Alexandria at *Stromateis* V 8, 48, 4–9.⁴⁹ This is by far the most important parallel to our text, since Clement is not merely concerned with glossing the mysterious words, but, like Porphyry, attempts a kind of exegesis of the formulae. I shall try to point our similarities between Clement and Porphyry in what follows.

Clement begins by noting a magical use of the formula. Citing Ἀπολλόδωρος ὁ Κερκυραῖος,⁵⁰ he tells how Branchus, while purifying and healing the Milesians, sang

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⁴² 'And wild goats have a slender channel for the breath right through the teeth between the horns, whence again the channel goes straight to the very heart and lungs. If one pours wax about the horns of the wild goat, he blocks the paths of its life and the channels of its breath.' The translation is that of A. W. Mair in the Loeb Classical Library (London, 1928).

⁴³ The evidence of Aristotle concerning Alcmaion seems to me ambiguous on this point.

⁴⁴ Bentley too glossed the word with '*obturere*.'

⁴⁵ Hesychius s.v. ἐσφάλιξεν (ε 6435 Latte): σφαλὸς γὰρ ὁ δεσμός.

⁴⁶ τὸ πέδαις δῆσαι according to Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. ἐσφήλιξεν (I 22, 13 Porson).

⁴⁷ See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961) s. vv.

⁴⁸ See page p. 218, no. 5.

⁴⁹ In the edition of Stählin, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte, Clemens Alexandrinus, Zweiter Band* (Berlin, 1960³).

⁵⁰ Christ conjectured Ἀθηναῖος, Koetschau Κυρηναῖος.

to Apollo and Artemis,[51] while 'the people accompanied him, as it were',[52] with the chant:

> βέδυ, ζάψ, χθώμ, πλῆκτρον, σφίγξ·
> κναξζβίχ, θύπτης, φλεγμό, δρώψ,

an event, Clement says, also mentioned by Callimachus.[53]

In his first interpretation of the κναξζβί-formula,[54] Clement proceeds, as Porphyry too initially does, by way of etymology. But κναξζβίχ he views as a derivative of κναίειν (being used in the sense of διαφθείρειν[55]) and he attributes to it the meaning 'sickness'. θύπτης he connects with θύψαι, which he then oddly explicates by φλέγω, although this itself must certainly be intended as the etymology of φλεγμό.

As in Porphyry, this first attempt leads nowhere and Clement drops it without further ado, in order to mention a different interpretation which he has found in verses of Thespis [fr. 4 *TGF*² p. 833, *TrGF* 1 F 4, 66 Snell]:

> ἴδε σοι σπένδω κναξζβὶ [τὸ] λευκὸν
> ἀπὸ θηλαμόνων θλίψας κνακῶν·
> ἴδε σοι χθύπτην τυρὸν μίξας
> ἐρυθρῷ μελιτῷ, κατὰ τῶν σῶν, Πὰν
> δικέρως, τίθεμαι βωμῶν ἁγίων.
> ἴδε σοι Βρομίου [αἴθοπα] φλεγμὸν λείβω.

As Merkelbach saw,[56] the meaning of the exotic words is unambiguously clear from the context: κναξζβί = 'milk', χθύπτης = 'cheese' and φλεγμός = 'wine', and so Clement wastes no time belabouring the obvious. The verses, though contain no mention of δρώψ, and Merkelbach has argued that they must for this reason be incomplete: 'es folgte gewiß noch ein Vers, in dem das Wort δρώψ vorkam' (p. 295). But it is noticeable that Clement first deals with the verses as they stand above. Then for δρώψ alone he gives an etymology and an explanation. Why should he do this rather than simply quote the final verse or two, which must have glossed δρώψ? Further, although they agree on the other glosses, Clement and Porphyry disagree radically on δρώψ, which Porphyry says means ἄνθρωπος, deriving it from δρῶπες, whereas Clement glosses it with λόγος and derives it from δρᾶν/δραστήριος. I think we must conclude either that the Thespis verses did not go on to include δρώψ,[57] or at least that Clement only knew the verses he cites, but incorporates δρώψ into his exegesis, since it is part of the formula.

Again, the epitome of Porphyry breaks off after the explanation of the individual words, without giving any sort of meaningful interpretation of the formula as a whole. We might reasonably expect both that Porphyry himself will have offered a synoptic exegesis and that it may have resembled that of Clement's sources. According to this, the formula symbolizes three stages of education, beginning with the letters of the alphabet as the elements of reading and writing, progressing through more solid food,[58] and culminating in λόγος. However, Porphyry does not gloss δρώψ

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[51] 48, 4, p. 359, 5: ἐκάεργον καὶ ἐκαέργαν. For the compound referring to Artemis, see Aristophanes, *Th.* 972.   [52] 48, 5, p. 359, 6: ἐπέψαλλεν δὲ ὡς εἰπεῖν ὁ λαός.

[53] Fr. 194, 28–31 (vol. I, p. 179) Pfeiffer.

[54] 48, 6, p. 359, 8–9: κναξζβὶ δὲ κατὰ παραγωγὴν ἢ νόσος παρὰ τὸ κναίειν καὶ διαφθείρειν, θύψαί τε τὸ κεραυνῷ φλέξαι.   [55] The MS. of Clement has διαφέρειν.

[56] Note 10, p. 295: 'die Bestandteile der alphabetischen Formel...werden aber jeweils so deutlich glossiert, daß kein Hörer mißverstehen konnte, welchen Sinn der spielende Dichter diesen scheinbaren Wörtern zuteilte.'

[57] In the same way, the explanations of Clement and Porphyry sometimes offer no explanation for part of the formula: e.g. Porphyry, lines 10–12, ignores, as far as we can see, φλεγμώ.   [58] πεπηγὸς γάλα = 'cheese': v. *LSJ* s.v. πήγνυμι III.

as λόγος, as Clement does. Since Hesychius, too, with whom Clement otherwise agrees on the glosses, matches Porphyry in this point, and since Clement takes this λόγος-interpretation in a Christian direction, punctuated by a phrase from Paul's letter to the Ephesisans,[59] it seems likely that this aspect at least of the exegesis is peculiar to Clement. I don't believe that Porphyry would have known Clement's text directly, and he would in any case have been disinclined to accept a Christian source.

In the text of Porphyry, lines 13–14, there follows a transitional sentence, which demonstrates that the writer is well aware that the κναξζβί-formula is designed to use each of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet once. Clement too makes this clear at 46, 3 (p. 357, 10–11), when in introducing βέδυ ζάψ he refers to ἡ στοιχειωτικὴ τῶν παίδων διδασκαλία. Since the men deal with the two formulae in reverse order, the position of this comment is in fact the same in both texts, immediately preceding the treatment of βέδυ ζάψ.

The use of σκοπός in this sentence is of interest, but can only be approached by clarifying the syntax first. ἀπαρτίζειν is a verb glossed in antiquity by τελειοῦν,[60] ἀναπληροῦν,[61] etc. When, as here, it is used transitively, the subject is generally the parts or elements that 'comprise' or 'make up' some composite thing, e.g. a metric foot, a thought or a definition. Hence I take ἀπαρτίζοντα in line 13 as the neuter participle with ἕτερα πλεῖστα τοιαῦτα as its subject and ἴδιον σκοπόν as the object.

But what does σκοπός here and in line 19 mean? Outside of his works on Homeric criticism, Porphyry does not seem to use this word often. A few times he uses it to mean 'goal' or 'intention', as in τέλος γὰρ αὐτῷ [scil. τῷ Πλωτίνῳ] καὶ σκοπὸς ἦν τὸ ἑνωθῆναι καὶ πελάσαι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ.[62] Starting no later than with Iamblichus, however, we know that this was a key term in the Neoplatonic exegesis of Platonic texts, and designated the 'topic' or 'subject' of a dialogue. In Porphyry's extant works, I can find something approaching this meaning only once, in a commentary on Aristotle.[63] Even here, though, it seems only to mean 'the topic' of the moment, not a single overriding subject to which every detail of the work must contribute and be subordinate, the Iamblichean meaning.

In the only other instance of σκοπὸν ἀπαρτίζειν known to me,[64] σκοπός means a unified literary 'plot' or 'theme' produced from elements that are in and of themselves disparate. If this is the meaning in our text, then Porphyry will be making explicit reference to the particular (ἴδιον) synoptic meaning produced by all of the mysterious words together, as opposed to the individual glosses. We will see that Porphyry differs from Clement in the interpretation of the following formula precisely in that he assumes such a holistic exegesis, where Clement does not. But it seems to me also possible that σκοπός here might mean 'genre': the formulae together form their own (ἴδιον) class or genre of symbolic utterances, which have been interpreted by many other philosophers and poets. But this meaning is not to be found in Porphyry elsewhere and the importance of the term σκοπός in writers close to him would also speak for the former understanding.

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[59] *Ephes.* 4, 13, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας, cited by Clement on p. 360, 1–2.
[60] Hesychius α 5818 Latte.
[61] *Eliae* (olim Davidis) *in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, 189, 18.
[62] *Vita Plot.* 23: cf. *Vita Pythagorae*, 46: φιλοσοφίαν δ' ἐφιλοσόφησεν ἧς ὁ σκοπὸς ῥύσασθαι καὶ διελευθερῶσαι...
[63] *In Aristotelis categorias* 4, 1, p. 60, 1: Ἀλλ' οὔτε περιττεύων οὔτε ἐπιλελησμένος τοῦ σκοποῦ περὶ τούτου ποιεῖται πρῶτον λόγον...
[64] Suda s.v. Κέντρων, κ 1344: ὡσαύτως καὶ λόγους ἐκ διαφόρων συνειλεγμένους καὶ ἕνα σκοπὸν ἀπαρτίζοντας [scil. καλοῦσι κέντρωνας], οἷά εἰσι τὰ Ὁμηρόκεντρα.

The word explanations in Clement match those in Porphyry closely, but Clement's text has a richness that Porphyry's has lost to the excerptor and that is evidently due to Clement's source, the grammarian Didymus Chalcenterus, whom he names at 357, 8 and refers back to with φησί at 357, 12.[65] In addition to the abundance of literary citations, so characteristic of Didymus, and the tendency to prefer the usage (συνήθεια) of the ancients to meanings derived from etymology, typical of Alexandrian grammarians, the polemical tone which recurs throughout the passage[66] seems to me to indicate that Didymus is responsible for the whole of the passage under discussion. Porphyry on the other hand implies at least some degree of dependency on Clodius Neapolitanus. We must ask whether he too is dependent, directly or indirectly, on Didymus.

Porphyry agrees with Clement on the meaning of βέδυ, which is established in Clement (= Didymus) by literary usage, despite one passage where it seems to mean 'air', a meaning supported by connecting it etymologically with βιόδωρος. Porphyry says ζάψ means the element 'fire', an interpretation Didymus knows but rejects: ζὰψ δὲ τὸ πῦρ οἱ μὲν παρὰ τὴν ζέσιν ἀμαθῶς ἐδέξαντο· καλεῖται δ' οὕτως ἡ θάλασσα,[67] contending on the basis of four ancient passages that it denotes the sea. The two agree on χθώμ, Didymus adding what appears to be an etymology,[68] but diverge again on πλῆκτρον. Didymus knows of Porphyry's gloss, 'air', which some support by etymology from πλήσσοντα or πληρωτικόν, and he adds a further gloss, πόλος, but he follows the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes, who, he says, outright calls the sun πλῆκτρον, which term then comes to mean the other stars too.

The end result of Porphyry's glosses is clear. He winds up with the four elements: water, fire, earth and air. But following Didymus, Clement on the other hand has preferred water (or air), the sea, earth, and the sun (or stars). Taking the sun or stars as representative of fire, this would also add up to the four elements, if we assume the variant 'air' for βέδυ. But he does not make this assumption and this is clearly not the direction that his exegesis is heading. Clement's final gloss on σφίγξ, which Porphyry will use to tie everything together, further confuses things by mentioning three or four possible interpretations. A preference is expressed, though, for 'aether', and the two preferred glosses are unambiguously connected with philosophical doctrines of the Stoics and Empedocles.

In our epitome of Porphyry, nothing is explicit, owing to the abbreviation. But the gloss σφίγξ... φιλία points clearly to the influence of Empedocles. Firstly, Empedocles was said to be the first to postulate the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, which he called 'roots'. More importantly, the driving forces in his cosmology are φιλότης and νεῖκος, and surely with φιλία Porphyry is alluding to the former. Indeed, Plutarch[69] tells us that Empedocles often called this principle φιλία as well as φιλότης or even ἁρμονία.[70]

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[65] Cf. *Didymi Chalcenteri grammatici Alexandrini Fragmenta Quae Supersunt*, ed. Mauricius (Moriz) Schmidt (Leipzig, 1854): Συμποσιακά Fr. 9. Concerning this particular fragment, see also *RE* (Leopold Cohn) s.v. Didymos [8], pp. 469–70.

[66] See οἱ μὲν... ἀμαθῶς ἐδέξαντο (47, 2, p. 357, 23–4); οὐκ ἀνέγνωσαν δ' οὗτοι (48, 1, p. 358, 11).   [67] Didymus Chalc. apud Clem. Al., *Strom.* 47, 2, p. 357, 23–4.

[68] Didymus Chalc. apud Clem. Al., *Strom.* 47, 6, p. 358, 9: χθὼν δὲ ἡ γῆ εἰς μέγεθος κεχυμένη.

[69] Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 48, 370D = *DK* 31 B 18. Aristotle, without explicitly stating that this was Empedocles' usage, often uses φιλία in reporting Empedocles' views: see the passages in H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* (Berlin, 1870), p. 819ª26–30.

[70] On the workings of φιλότης, see above all *DK* 31 B 17 and Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London and New York, 1982²), pp. 308–10.

Consistent with the assumption that $\phi\iota\lambda\iota\alpha$ points to Empedocles is the fact that virtually all the terms used for the elements in our text are also used by Empedocles: $\pi\hat{\upsilon}\rho$, $\chi\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$ and $\grave{\alpha}\acute{\eta}\rho$.[71] The same is true for Clement's terms: $\H{\upsilon}\delta\omega\rho$, $\theta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha$ and even $\H{\eta}\lambda\iota\sigma$ ($\grave{\eta}\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\sigma$) for 'fire'. However, $\alpha\grave{\iota}\theta\acute{\eta}\rho$, which Didymus (= Clement) prefers for $\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\gamma\xi$, is equivalent in Empedocles not to $\phi\iota\lambda\acute{\sigma}\tau\eta\sigma$, but to $\grave{\alpha}\acute{\eta}\rho$. It adds nothing to the synoptic interpretation, is in fact superfluous. In Porphyry's interpretation, on the other hand, $\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\gamma\xi = \phi\iota\lambda\acute{\sigma}\tau\eta\sigma$ adds the crucial ingredient and makes the exegesis coherent. The 'roots' enter into productive connections due to $\phi\iota\lambda\acute{\sigma}\tau\eta\sigma$.[72] Therefore, despite the coincidence of Didymus citing Empedocles for this aspect of the interpretation, it would seem to me that Porphyry is independent of Didymus here.

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP

The connection between the $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\upsilon$ $\zeta\acute{\alpha}\psi$-formula and the philosophy of Empedocles already points at Porphyry.[73] Aside from the clear attribution contained in the title in the manuscript, the strongest circumstantial argument for genuine Porphyrian authorship is the reference to a work of Clodius of Neapolis in line 17. This author is only mentioned once elsewhere in all of extant Greek literature,[74] and that by none other than Porphyry, De abstinentia 1, 3, 3 p. 87, 10 Nauck = p. 44 Bouff.: $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\phi\iota\lambda\omicron\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omega\nu$ $\sigma\upsilon\chi\nuο\grave{\iota}$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $K\lambda\acute{\omega}\delta\iota\acute{\sigma}\sigma$ $\tau\iota\sigma$ $N\epsilon\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\acute{\iota}\tau\eta\sigma$ $\pi\rho\grave{\sigma}\sigma$ $\tau\omicron\grave{\upsilon}\sigma$ $\grave{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\sigma$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\beta\iota\beta\lambda\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\beta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\tau\omicron$.[75] The form of the citation ($K\lambda\acute{\omega}\delta\iota\acute{\sigma}\sigma$ $\tau\iota\sigma$) shows that even Porphyry considered the man little known, and it would be stretching credibility too far to believe that he could make only his second appearance in a text that just coincidentally happened to be falsely ascribed to Porphyry.

Who Clodius was is another question. Jacob Bernays[76] identified him with Sextus Clodius, a rhetorician and the teacher of Mark Antony,[77] an identification characterised by Bouffartigue and Patillon as 'happy'.[78] While it is true that Sextus Clodius was in Suetonius' words[79] Latinae simul Graecaeque eloquentiae professor, and therefore fully capable, at least from a linguistic standpoint, of writing the work cited by Porphyry, he was a rhetorician and therefore not the most likely person to have written on such topics. In addition there is the small matter that the sources are unanimous in making him a Sicilian. Bernays claims that this is no real argument, but he does not explain why it should not be. Besides, Sextus Clodius was so well known that, if he were indeed meant, one would wonder firstly why there are no other citations of these works and secondly why Porphyry introduces him as if he expected the reader not to have heard of him.

[71] See the table of 'Terms used by Empedocles for the four roots' in M. R. Wright, Empedocles: The Extant Fragments (New Haven and London, 1981), p. 23.

[72] See esp. Plutarch, De amic. multit. 5, p. 95A = DK 31 B 33: $\grave{\eta}$ $\mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\grave{\alpha}\rho$ [scil. $\phi\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$] $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\eta\sigma\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\pi\upsilon\kappa\nu\omicron\hat{\upsilon}\sigma\alpha$ $\tau\alpha\hat{\iota}\sigma$ $\grave{\omicron}\mu\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\sigma$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\phi\iota\lambda\omicron\phi\rho\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\iota\sigma$ '$\grave{\omega}\sigma$ δ' $\grave{\omicron}\tau$' $\grave{\omicron}\pi\grave{\sigma}\sigma$ $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha$ $\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\grave{\omicron}\nu$ $\grave{\epsilon}\gamma\acute{\omicron}\mu\phi\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\grave{\epsilon}\delta\eta\sigma\epsilon$'. Could it be the mention of $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha$ $\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\acute{\sigma}\nu$ that led Porphyry to connect the $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\upsilon$ $\zeta\acute{\alpha}\psi$-formula with the philosophy of Empedocles?

[73] On Porphyry's relationship to Empedocles, see F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, Porphyrios und Empedokles (Tübingen, 1954).

[74] A fact already noted by Bentley without the aid of modern handbooks.

[75] Cf. also Porphyry, De abstinentia, 1, 26, 17.

[76] Theophrastos' Schrift über die Frömmigkeit (Berlin, 1866), 10ff.; 141f.

[77] On him see Brzeska, RE IV, Stuttgart 1901, s.v. Clodius (13), col. 66–7. Brzeska himself seems somewhat sceptical about Bernays' suggestion, which he mentions without comment.

[78] Bouffartigue, Jean and Patillon, Michel. Porphyre De l'abstinence. Tome I (Paris, 1977), p. 25: 'Le rapprochement avec Sextus Clodius, rhéteur sicilien...a très heureusement été fait par J. Bernays.' [79] Suetonius, De gramm. et rhet. p. 99 Rffsch.

A further, linguistic argument for Porphyrian authorship is the use of πάντοτε in line 8 of our text. Plotinus for example, whose extant works far outnumber Porphyry's, only uses this word once. Proclus never uses it. Porphyry on the other hand seems fond of the word, and I have found at least 11 instances of it in the remains of his works.[80]

I have argued that our text is an excerpt, but unfortunately I see no hope of determining from which work of Porphyry it was taken. Porphyry evidently did write two books Περὶ ἀρχῶν,[81] but the only extant fragment from this work[82] deals not with the material elements, but with the νοῦς and the ἕν. On the basis of two Arabic references to 'The book of the elements, one section existing in Syriac',[83] Smith has tentatively suggested a work titled Στοιχεῖα. It is tempting to think that our epitome might derive from this work, but in the absence of any fragments or other testimony, this remains speculation.

THE MEANING OF THE FORMULAE

Having looked at the interpretations of Porphyry, Didymus and Clement, we must ask what the sense of these formulae in the ancient world might have been. Whatever their origin, that they were used in schools is evident from the fact that one of the κναξζβί-texts (above, p. 5, n. 7) represents an exercise done by a school child. The purpose is less clear. Bentley seems to have thought them the result of a mere childish game, constructing barbarous and ill-sounding words using each letter of the alphabet once and only once.[84] As far as I can see, it was Christian Lobeck[85] who first suggested the use of such formulae as tongue twisters to improve the pupils' pronunciation.[86] He cited Quintilian 1, 1, 37 to show that difficult words and verses were indeed used for this purpose.[87] This explanation was accepted by Dornseiff[88] and by Cornelia Römer.[89] Römer makes the further assumption, that such formulae will 'naturally' have also been popular for writing exercises.[90] I am not so certain how natural this was, but that it was indeed the case is made clear if we read on in the text of Clement of Alexandria. For after dealing with the above formulae, he goes on to

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[80] I have ventured to change the MS. forms εὕραμεν (line 14) and ἑρμήνευσεν (lines 17 and 19) in the text to bring them into line with Porphyry's usage in his extant works.

[81] The title attested in the Suda IV 178, 15 = Porph., Fr. 231T, p. 253 Smith.

[82] Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I 11 p. 51, 4–11 = Porph., Fr. 232F, p. 253 Smith.

[83] Porph., Fr. 422T and 422aT, p. 492 Smith.

[84] Bentley (note 9), p. 301: '*Videlicet erat olim ridicula et puerilis ratio; ut ex quatuor et viginti literis, semel duntaxat positis singulis, barbara quaedam et infaceta verba conficerent, prout diuque libitum fuerit.*'

[85] Christian August Lobeck, *Paralipomena grammaticae Graecae. Pars Prior* (Leipzig, 1837), p. 118 n. 45.

[86] '*quo absolutius os fieret et expressior sermo*': cf. the following footnote.

[87] Quintilian 1, 1, 37: '*non alienum fuerit exigere ab his aetatibus, quo sit absolutius os et expressior sermo, ut nomina quaedam versusque affectatae difficultatis ex pluribus et asperrime coeuntibus inter se syllabis concatenatos et veluti confragosos quam citatissime volvant (χαλινοί Graece vocantur).*'

[88] Dornseiff, Franz, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* [*ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ*: Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Weltbildes und der griechischen Wissenschaft, hrsg. von Franz Boll, Heft VII] (Leipzig, 1925²: repr. Zentralantiquariat der DDR, Leipzig 1975), p. 70.

[89] Römer (note 7), p. 101.

[90] Römer (note 7), p. 101: 'Natürlich waren diese Sprüche dann auch für Schreibübungen sehr beliebt.'

yet a third, which he introduces with the words: ἀλλὰ καὶ τρίτος ὑπογραμμὸς φέρεται παιδικός.[91] These were then used as copy-heads (ὑπογραμμός) in schools, at least at his time.

Be that as it may, we find attempts, beginning at least in the early Hellenistic period, to attribute meaning to the κναξζβί-formula. These attempts seem to have been of two kinds, humorous and serious.

The humorous variety is best represented by the Thespis verses cited by Clement.[92] As Merkelbach has shown,[93] Thespis is playing humorously on his audience's childhood memories of this formula and glosses each element in such a way that the new meaning he is attributing to the meaningless combinations of letters becomes clear. Because of this jesting character, Merkelbach follows Crusius[94] in assuming that the tragedies written under the name of Thespis of which the verses in question are a part were not seriously intended as forgeries.

The serious variety is of a dual nature. On the one hand, according to Merkelbach, grammarians like Hesychius (who is just following his sources) derived the lemmata cited above in all seriousness from the text of Thespis. We saw how Didymus paid attention only to the etymology and meaning of the individual words, and made no attempt to offer a synoptic exegesis. He and his colleagues bequeathed this understanding of the intention of the texts to their modern counterparts, who of course did not have the advantage of being able to read the Thespis-verses in their original context.

On the other hand we have a tradition represented for us by Porphyry and Clement and not really discussed since the days of Bentley. Here meaning is attributed to the formula as a whole. It carries a deeper significance than simply that of a string of disparate and discreet glosses. Bentley perhaps alludes to this when he says (p. 301): '*Postea certandum erat ingenio, ut sententiam istorum verborum aliquam omnibus vestigiis indagarent; non eam quidem omnino alienam et absonam, sed a propinquo si fieri potuit, et verisimili petitam*'. Lobeck[95] understands Bentley to mean '*certandum fuisse pueris*', a notion he strenuously rejects: '*Quis autem homo sanus pueris ejusmodi Abracadabra interpretandum proponat?*' I am not certain that Lobeck's interpretation of Bentley's statement is necessary, but it is true that the gerund '*certandum*' makes it seem that this too is part of the task set for the youngsters. In any case, Bentley was probably only referring to the discovery of supposed etymologies, and hence to the isolated, individual glosses. Certainly he misapprehended the intent of both Clement and Porphyry, if he assumed that they viewed the exegesis as a game or a contest.

For I would contend that both Clement and, writing about a century later, Porphyry took the formulae seriously. I do not mean by this that either failed to recognise their relationship to the Greek alphabet. They remark upon this clearly.[96] Nevertheless, the formulae were clearly archaic, and for a Neoplatonist of Porphyry's bent it was more or less an article of faith that much deep truth and meaning was contained in ancient formulae, whatever meaning they might appear on the surface to bear.[97] It was

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[91] Cl. Alex., *Strom.* V 8, 49, 1, p. 360, 3–4: ἀλλὰ καὶ τρίτος ὑπογραμμὸς φέρεται παιδικός· 'μάρπτε, σφίγξ, κλώψ, ζβυχθηδόν'.   [92] See above, p. 224.

[93] Merkelbach (note 10), pp. 294–5.

[94] Crusius, O. 'Lobon und seine Verwandten', *Philologus* 80 (1925), 176–91 (esp. 190).

[95] Lobeck, *Paralipomena* (see note 85) p. 118 n. 45.   [96] See above, p. 224.

[97] See on this e.g. Heinrich Dörrie, 'die Wertung der Barbaren im Urteil der Griechen. Knechtsnaturen? Oder Bewahrer und Künder heilbringender Weisheit?' in: Ruth Stiehl and Gustav Adolf Lehmann (eds.), *Antike und Universalgeschichte. Festschrift Hans Erich Stier* (Münster, Westfalen, 1972), pp. 146–75, esp. 166–7: 'Viele einst allen verständliche Äußerungen des Logos sind nun sozusagen versteinert; sie finden sich noch in Rechts-Satzungen und in

assumed that inspired texts, which included those of Plato, the Chaldaean Oracles, Homer, etc., would contain different levels of meaning. The discovery of one valid interpretation does not preclude the validity of another, perhaps deeper, exegesis.[98]

These formulae would be σύμβολα, in that they bear a deeper, hidden meaning. Porphyry discusses comparable σύμβολα in his Life of Pythagoras, where in chapters 41–42 two εἴδη τῶν συμβόλων are distinguished,[99] the first consisting of mysterious nominal phrases, the second of injunctions which indicated symbolically something quite different from the surface meaning of the words.

The new text is important in that it represents Porphyry's own attitude and attempts at exegesis. His approach, particularly in the case of the βέδυ ζάψ formula, seems clearly to derive from the fact that the word for 'letters of the alphabet', στοιχεῖα, is the same as the word for 'elements of the universe'. For Porphyry, these letters are not arbitrary, either in number or in nature: the divine origin of language is indicated by many inspired texts, and Plato in his Cratylus has a great deal to say on the subject.[100] So it is not at all unnatural that Porphyry should expect the στοιχεῖα of language to mirror the στοιχεῖα of the universe, even if, as Socrates points out in the Cratylus, time and men's lack of understanding have obscured the relationship. These formulae in particular reflect the way in which reality as we know it is constructed out of the primary elements. Just as not all combinations of elements are possible, so only certain meaningful formulae could be constructed using each letter once only. for theoretically there are thousands of different ways in which this could be done, and certainly hundreds of ways which would be pronounceable for a Greek. And yet when Porphyry collected the ones that actually existed, he found only a handful. This he will have taken as evidence that these are the very few combinations which truly mirror reality and thus warrant and merit exegesis.

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kultischen Bräuchen, in Riten und Mysterien. Der Philosoph kann und soll solche Phänomene aufspüren, in denen keimhaft...noch immer etwas vom alten Logos erkennbar ist.' Cf. also Dörrie, *Der Platonismus in der Antike* (note 1), vol. I, pp. 27–8.

[98] Cf. Plutarch's interpretations of an Egyptian ritual at *De Is. et Os.* 7, 353D and 32, 363D, where the surface meaning, τὸ πρόχειρον, is contrasted with a deeper understanding, τὸ φιλοσοφώτερον. This distinction is common in later commentaries on Plato. Others, too, are frequently found. For example, Hermeias, *In Phaedrum*, p. 15, 11–16, 12 Couvreur, offers at least three separate valid interpretations of one brief passage, λογικῶς, ἠθικῶς, and φυσικῶς.

[99] Clement introduces the lengthy section in which he eventually discusses κναξζβί and βέδυ ζάψ with the comment that Egyptian and other non-Greek philosophers have zealously pursued τὸ συμβολικὸν εἶδος (*Strom.* V 8, 44, 1; cf. V 8, 46, 1).

[100] See also Maurus Hirschle, *Sprachphilosophie und Namenmagie im Neuplatonismus* [Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie, 96] (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976).