

XXVII. The Charles E. Wilbour Inscriptions From Egypt

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I

Charles Edwin Wilbour (1833–1896) needs little introduction to Egyptologists.* He was an American whose passion for learning led him to become a student of Gaston Maspero in Paris and to devote a large part of his life to the study of the Egyptian language and archaeology. However he was not, strictly speaking, a professional scholar, and he never published a single word in any learned periodical. Yet his discoveries and accomplishments were considerable. He seems to have been satisfied with the possession of knowledge and to have lacked the usual accompanying desire to communicate his thoughts to the world by publication. The last twenty years of his life were spent in France and Egypt. The winters he would spend traveling up the Nile, often in the company of Maspero himself.¹ He visited tombs, inspected temples, assisted at excavations, copied inscriptions, and frequented the shops of dealers in his insatiable desire for antiquities. He bought large quantities of papyri, ostraca, scarabs, and a wide variety of ornaments from all periods of Egyptian history.² His collection of Aramaic papyri, recently published, would have caused a sensation if it had appeared fifty years ago.³ A famous papyrus of Ramesses V bears his name.⁴ Although he was a spectator and a collector rather than a participant and professional scholar, his abilities were never once questioned. A. H. Sayce

* I wish to thank the anonymous referee of this paper for a number of bibliographical notes and suggestions.

¹ See the publication of his letters in *Travels in Egypt: Letters of Charles Edwin Wilbour*, edited by Jean Capart (Brooklyn 1936).

² A large number of these are now in the Brooklyn Museum. See Claire Préaux, *Les Ostraca grecs de la Collection Charles-Edwin Wilbour au Musée de Brooklyn* (New York 1935); William C. Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn 1955); E. Riefstahl, *Toilet Articles From Ancient Egypt* (Brooklyn 1943).

³ *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri*, edited by Emil Kraeling (New Haven 1953). See his remarks, pages 9 ff.

⁴ *The Wilbour Papyrus* 1–4, edited by Sir Alan H. Gardiner (Oxford 1941–52).

has this to say about him in his *Reminiscences* (London 1923, page 289):

At Abu Simbel, Wilbour, who had been delayed in Cairo, managed to join us in a government gunboat, and from that time onward I had someone to help me in copying the Egyptian texts. And very efficient help it was, for Wilbour was not only a good Egyptologist but the most accurate of copyists.⁵

In 1916, twenty years after Wilbour's death, the bulk of his Egyptian collection was presented to the Brooklyn Museum by his widow and children. Through the courtesy of Mr. Cooney and Mr. Bothmer of the Museum I was able to examine the numerous notebooks which Wilbour had kept during his Egyptian travels. In them he recorded his purchases, drew sketches of monuments, and copied inscriptions of all types. The number of Greek and Latin inscriptions is not very large, and almost all of them have seen publication long ago.⁶ As far as I have been able to discover, two of them are new and are presented below. A third is of some use in establishing the correct text.

II

Wilbour notebook 3c, page 247. No indication of origin. Gray limestone, with a notation in Wilbour's hand of the size: 32 cm. by 21 cm.

Παφῶῖς καὶ Τι-
θαῖς καὶ Ψαμ-
μήτιχος καὶ Ψ[ῶ-]
ῖς υἱοί. (ἔτους) ἱ' Τραυ[ν]ο[ῖ]
Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου.

Wilbour himself supplied the omega of Ψ[ῶ]ῖς, which is found in several orthographic varieties: Ψᾶῖς and Ψόῖς.⁷ The date is A.D. 106/7.

⁵ Quoted by Jean Capart (above, note 1) viii.

⁶ The most important of the known texts are the following: temple ordinances from Ptolemais (*Sammelbuch* 3451 = Wilbour notebook 2d, page 40); the elephant hunt inscription from Edfu (*OGIS* 82 = Wilbour notebook 2h, page 10); two decrees of the Dionysiac artists from Ptolemais (*OGIS* 50–51 = Wilbour notebook 2f, pages 10 ff.); the inscription of C. Cornelius Gallus from Philae (*OGIS* 654 = Wilbour notebook 3c, page 264). These copies and the others show no important variations from the published texts, but I am in the process of comparing all the Wilbour copies more minutely. I have microfilms of them all.

⁷ For Ψῶῖς see also *POxy.* 6.984.17. Ψᾶῖς and Ψόῖς are very common: see the examples cited by Preisigke, *Namenbuch* (Heidelberg 1922), s. vv. The derivative

III

Wilbour notebook 2a, page 37. A black crocodile, 27 cm. long, with an inscription on a flat space behind the rear legs. A note by Wilbour indicates that he had seen it in the possession of Mohammed Mohassib on April 1, 1881. Mohassib was an Arab dealer in antiquities in those years with a shop at Luxor.⁸ Despite a careful search I have not been able to discover either its present location or any other reference to it.

Κρόνω θεῶ (Left side)

Γέμελλος Ἀντονίου<υ>. (Right side)

Wilbour's copy of the second line shows an iota at the very end of the line instead of an upsilon. The lettering is bold and clear. It is most unfortunate that this crocodile cannot be located, for it is easily the most interesting of the Graeco-Roman objects mentioned in Wilbour's notebooks. The Egyptian adventures of Cronus illustrate the readiness of the Greeks to equate foreign gods with their own and to give Greek names to the old Egyptian deities. For although the Greek cult of Cronus was never widespread, our sources tell us that it was introduced into Egypt at the very beginning of the Hellenistic Age.⁹ In the course of time,

form Παφῶϊς is found in *BGU* 3.700.11 and *Sammelbuch* 1.5662.9. For other derivative forms such as Παφῶϊς, Περεψῶϊς, Περεψῶϊς, Περεψῶϊς see Preisigke, *Namenbuch* s. vv. Wilcken's reading of Παφ[ά]ιτος in *Arch. f. Papyrusf.* 5 (1913), 246.2 (= *Chrest.* 352) has been changed to Πάφιτος in his publication *Die Bremer Papyri* (*Abh. Preuss. Akad. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl.* 1936, No. 2), No. 36.

⁸ Through his hands passed many Egyptian treasures now reposing in European and American Museums. See P. E. Newberry in *JEA* 14 (1928) 184.

⁹ See Pohlenz in *RE* 11 (1922) s. v. "Kronos," 2000 f. and Roscher, *Ausführ. Lex. d. gr. u. röm. Myth.*, s.v. "Kronos," 1508, 1516, 1526. The most important references are Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 3.110B and Macrobius (ed. Eyssenhartd) *Sat.* 1.7.14. The fullest is Macrobius, whose account is interesting and worth quoting here:

Cum igitur consedisent, Horus Avienum intuens, quem familiarius frequentare solitus erat, 'in hoc' inquit 'Saturni cultu, quem deorum principem dicitis, ritus vester ab Aegyptiorum religiosissima gente dissentit. nam illi neque Saturnum nec ipsum Serapim receperant in arcana templorum usque ad Alexandri Macedoniae occasum: post quem tyrannide Ptolemaeorum pressi hos quoque deos in cultum recipere Alexandrinorum more, apud quos praecipue colebantur, coacti sunt. ita tamen imperio paruerunt, ut non omnino religionis suae observata confunderent. nam quia numquam fas fuit Aegyptiis pecudibus aut sanguine sed precibus et ture solo placare deos, his autem duobus advenis hostiae erant ex more mactandae, fana eorum extra pomerium locaverunt, ut et illa sacrificii solemnitas sibi cruore colerentur, nec tamen urbana templa morte pecudum polluerentur: nullum itaque Aegypti oppidum intra muros suos aut Saturni aut Serapis fanum recepit.

perhaps not until the first century A.D., the name of Cronus became permanently embedded in the religion of Graeco-Roman Egypt in connection with the crocodile god Sobk. The worship of this old Egyptian god existed in both Upper and Lower Egypt but was very strong in the Fayum, the ancient Arsinoite nome. At Tebtunis in the great temple of Sobk, or Suchos as the Greeks called him, this crocodile god was given the Greek name Cronus. The two names were used interchangeably as *Σοκνεβτῶνις ὁ καὶ Κρόνος* and even *Κρόνος* alone.¹⁰ Recent investigations by Holm into the *nomina theophora* of the Tebtunis area have shed considerable light on the process that led to this, at first glance rather strange, identification of Sobk with Cronus. From the sources Holm assembled a total of 157 Geb-names and 338 Cronus-names among the people living in Tebtunis and the general vicinity.¹¹ This could be no mere accident. Clearly there was a connection with the local cult, and especially significant was the fact that the Geb-names were very closely confined to Tebtunis and belonged so obviously to the priestly families.¹² Holm concluded that the old Egyptian god Geb was the intermediary between Suchos and Cronus and served to bring the two together. His reasoning becomes clear when it is realized that Geb has been identified at an earlier time with Cronus and then also with Suchos. Thus the identification of Suchos with Cronus was indirect, for the combinations of Geb-Kronos and Suchos-Geb produced Suchos-Cronus.¹³

The Wilbour crocodile therefore could very easily have been an offering to Suchos-Cronus in the Fayum. It forms a counterpart to the relief in the Berlin Egyptological Museum which shows Isis

In a future paper I hope to investigate more fully the details of the introduction of the cult of Cronus into Egypt. The matter is all the more worthy of investigation in the light of Prof. C. B. Welles' most persuasive argument for the influence of Alexander in spreading the cult of Sarapis during his life time. See his article "The Discovery of Sarapis and the Foundation of Alexandria" in *Historia* 11 (1962), Heft 3, pages 271-98.

¹⁰ Grenfel and Hunt in their introduction to *PTeb.* 2.291, pages 54 ff. The indispensable reference work for the cult of Cronus and his connection with Sobk is Carl E. Holm, *Griechisch-Ägyptische Namenstudien* (Uppsala 1936), especially chapter 3, pages 49-117. The oldest reference for *Σοκνεβτῶνις ὁ καὶ Κρόνος* is *PTeb.* 2.302.3 of A.D. 71/2 and for *Κρόνος* alone *PTeb.* 2.299.10 of A.D. 50. See Holm, *op. cit.*, page 65.

¹¹ Holm (above, note 10) 51-52 and his register of names on 125 ff.

¹² Holm (above, note 10) 64-65.

¹³ Holm (above, note 10) 68-69.

with a lance in one hand and a crocodile in the other, for Isis as the daughter of Geb soon came quite naturally to be reckoned also as a daughter of Cronus.¹⁴ The connection with Isis then brought Sarapis to the cult, and the full title of the temple incorporated all of them: *ιερόν λόγιμον Σοκνεβτύνεως τοῦ καὶ Κρόνου καὶ Ἰσιδος καὶ Σαράπιδος καὶ Ἀρποχράτου καὶ τῶν συννάων θεῶν*.¹⁵

Greek inscriptions have been found on very many representations of animals such as lions, rabbits, frogs, and others, but the present one on a crocodile is unique. And it illustrates nicely the cultural fusion of the Egyptian and the Greek as well as the growth and multiplicity of cults in Graeco-Roman Egypt.¹⁶ Whether Gemellus is Egyptian or Greek is difficult to tell, for names in the Roman period are not very reliable indexes of nationality.¹⁷

IV

Wilbour notebook 2g, page 45. From Acoris (Tehneh), copied in 1891. This inscription had been published long ago in *CIG* III.4703c (= *OGIS* 94), but recently a new publication appeared (*SEG* 14.880), based upon another copy and edited by Fr. von Bissing in *Aegyptus* 33 (1953) 350. Since that text appears defective in two places, I present Wilbour's copy:

Ἐπεὶ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου
θεοῦ ἐπιφανοῦς μεγάλου εὐχαρίστου
Ἀκορις Ἐργέως Ἰσιδι Μωχιάδι Σωτείραι.

In the third line von Bissing gives *Ἀκορις* with an omicron, while Wilbour has a clear omega. And in the same line von Bissing has *Μοιχιάδι*, which is certainly wrong, as Fraser almost immediately indicated (*JEA* 41 [1955] 135). In this word

¹⁴ The relief is conveniently seen in Holm's book at the end. It has the inventory No. 7770. It illustrates the connection of Isis with Suchos.

¹⁵ *PTeb.* 2.302.3 and 298.6; *PSI* 10.1146.6; *PSI* 10.1147.3. See also Holm (above note 10) 67, and 69, note 1.

¹⁶ See H. I. Bell, "Hellenic Culture in Egypt", *JEA* 8 (1922), 146-47 and the same author's *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York and Liverpool 1953) 62-64.

¹⁷ Wilcken, *Grundzüge* 61. It is especially difficult with Gemellus and Didymus because they may be translations of the Egyptian *Hatre*, meaning "twin," occurring in the papyri as *Ἀτρής*. See Gustav Heuser, *Die Personennamen der Kopten* (Leipzig 1929) 64 (top), and Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, s. vv. *Ἀτρής*, *Ἀθρής*. Consider the case of a certain Eudaemon, son of Psois and Tiathres, who applies for change of name to Eudaemon, son of Heron and Didyme: Wilcken, *Chrest.* 52 (= *Select Papyri* 2, No. 301).

Wilbour also gives a clear omega. The apparent difficulty in accepting *Μωχιάδι* seems to have been its meaning. But it almost certainly refers to the *Μωχίτης τόπος* of the Hermopolite nome, as Grenfell and Hunt pointed out long ago in another publication.¹⁸ The word is therefore a geographical epithet, and I see no reason for changing the accepted reading of the stone.

¹⁸ *POxy* 11.1380, note on line 45 of that papyrus.