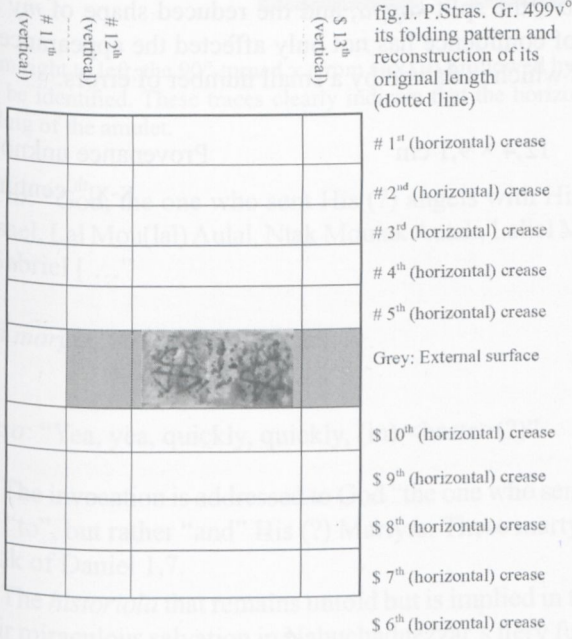


7. AN AMULET FOR PROTECTION,
PROBABLY AGAINST FEVER

P STRAS. INV. GR. 499 is a strip of paper of 13 cm by 9.7 cm. Its upper, left and right margins are complete, while its lower margin is torn off. The folding pattern as well as textual criteria suggest that about the half of the original amulett is lost.

The folding pattern can be reconstructed from clearly visible creases and from imprints of ink caused by folding. To make the inscribed sheet an amulett, it had to be reduced in length (by horizontal folding) and width (by vertical folding), and thus to be turned into a “magical parcel”. The 1st to -5th horizontal creases were folded top down (with the recto being the inner, and the verso the outer side), while the 6th to -10th horizontal creases (only the 10th being preserved) might have been folded bottom up.



The ink imprint of signs from the recto, line 7 (i.e., the 4th crease), on the 2nd crease of the verso (cf. below) proves that the horizontal folding preceded the vertical folding (while the reversed order is mostly evidenced by magical amulets from the Berlin papyrus collection studied by Myriam Krutzsch [personal communication]).

The text of P.Stras. Inv. Gr. 499 starts with an invocation to God and to a specific ensemble of powerful beings on the recto side, and ends in the appeal “Yea, yea, at once, at once!” at the top of the verso side. The magical request that originally must

have been made is now missing. The amount of text to be calculated for a concise prayer for health and protection (the purpose of which is to be guessed from the selection of addressees in the invocation, cf. below), as well as the assumption that the amulet's external surface inscribed with the linear cross and the pentagramme was originally placed roughly in the middle of the paper strip seems to support a reconstruction of five further creases, i.e., almost the length of the preserved part. Whether the lost text was equivalent in size to the extant text, or slightly less or more extensive, is not particularly important; at any rate, there is a loss of textual substance.

The text is written in black ink by an extremely irregular, unpracticed hand. The writing style the scribe of the text had in mind can nevertheless be identified. It is obviously meant to be sloping uncial, a typical choice for magical writing. Features such as the asymmetric *ypsilon*, the split *kappa*, and the reduced shape of *my* are indicative. The scribe's lack of confidence has not only affected the appearance of the text but also the text itself which is flawed by a small number of errors.

P.Stras. Inv. Gr. 499

12,4 × 9,1 cm

Provenance unknown

Fig. 24-25

X-XIth centuries

Recto

1 ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΝΤΑ[ϣ-]

2 ΧΟΟΥ ΝΑΓΓΕ-

2a ΝΕϣ-

3 ΛΟC ΜΝ ΜΑΡ-

4 ΤΕΡΟC ΑΝΔ-

5 ΝΙΑC CΑΡΙΑC

6 ΜΙCΑΗΛ ΑΔΑ

7 ΜΟΥ ΑΥΛΑΛ

8 ΝΤΑΚ ΜΟΥ-

9 ΤΑΚ ΑΥΤΑΚ

10 ΑΔΛΙΗΛ ΜΟΥ-

11 ΡΙΗΛ ΘΑΘΙΗΛ

12 Β ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ

Left margin, 90° turned: ΜΙCΑΗΛ

2a. ΝΕϣ: or ΝΕϣ? Not clear where to insert: "His" angel(s) or "His" martyrs (to which it is closer)?

5. CΑΡΙΑC: for ΔCΑΡΙΑC, cf. below, the comment to this addressee.

7. ΜΟΥ ΑΥΛΑΛ: probably a misspelling for ΜΟΥΛΑΛ ΑΥΛΑΛ due to *homoioteleuton*; cf. below, the comment to these addresses.

12. Ⲅ: possibly a numeral indicating the repeated utterance of the preceding name (as e.g. in the collection of protection spells known as “Rossi’s Gnostic tractate”, ed. MEYER).

Verso

- 1 ΔΙΩ ΔΙΩ
- 2 ΤΑΧΗ ΤΑΧΗ
- 3 ΘΕΜΕ

3. ΘΕΜΕ: probably a misspelling for (ⲉⲛ ⲟⲩ)ⲑⲉⲛⲉ. At the end of the line, traces of imprinted ink are visible. They are the mirror image of the beginning of line 7 ro:



From right to left, the 90°-turned χ (from $\mu\iota\chi\alpha\eta\lambda$) followed by μ , \omicron , γ and λ (from $\mu\omicron\gamma\ \alpha\gamma\lambda\alpha\lambda$) can be identified. These traces clearly indicate that the horizontal folding preceded the vertical folding of the amulet.

Recto: “God, the one who sent His (?) angels with His (?) Martyrs: Ananias Sarias Misael, Lal Mou(lal) Aulal, Ntak Moutak Autak, Laliel Mouriel Thathiel – two times(?) – Gabriel [...”

Left margin, 90° turned: “Michael”

Verso: “Yea, yea, quickly, quickly, (in) <haste>(?)”

The invocation is addressed to God “the one who sent His (?) angel(s)”, apparently not “to”, but rather “and” His (?) Martyrs. These martyrs are the three youths of the Book of Daniel 1,7.

The *historiola* that remains untold but is implied in these names is the narrative of their miraculous salvation in Nabuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, that is, their protection from deadly heat. This context made the three youths, referred to both by their Hebrew names Ananias, Asarias and Misael as well as by their Babylonian names Setrak, Misak and Abtenako, preferred addressees of magical prayers for protection, especially from fever, cf. e.g.

P.Stras. Inv. Kopt. 201 ab 202 (ed. Burns in this volume, n° 6), a parchment amulet against fever: ?Ananias Azarias Misael, Sedrak Meisak Abdenako, Thalal Malal Boulal?

P.Oxy. Inv. 39 5B.125/A (ed. ALCOCK, “A Coptic Magical Text”), a paper amulet against fever: “Lal Moulal Shaulal, Zetrak Mezak Aftenako, Ananias Azarias Mazaneh Daniel”

P.Heid. Inv. 564 (ed. QUECKE, “Zwei koptische Amulette”), parchment amulet against fever: “Ananias [As]arias Misael, Se[d]rak Misak Abdenago, Thalal M[ou]lal B[...]”

P.Berl. Inv. P 11347, l. 41-43 (ed. KROPP, *Ausgewählte Zaubertexte* II, p. 113-117; reed. Beltz, *Die Zauberpapiere*, p. 32-35): in a series of spells against every disease: "Ananias, Asarias Misael Setrak Misak Abdenako Lal Moulal Boulal"

P.Heid. 684 (ed. MEYER, *Rossi's "Gnostic" tractate* 19), pag. 18,1-14, a spell against fever: "Ananias Azarias Misael Setrak Misak Abdenako Lal Boulal Moulal"

P.Vindob. K 8637 (ed. STEGEMANN, *Die koptischen Zaubertexte*, p. 50-52): against an unspecified disease.

As has been noticed before¹, there are three magical names – *Lal*, *Moulal*, *Boulal* – that are typical associated with the three youths, and our text offers a variation of them: *Lal*, *Mou(lal)*, *Aulal*. The following *voces magicae*, although I cannot produce parallels to them, are well formed along the lines of the "poetics of magic", that is, the enhancement of efficacy through alliteration, rhyme, etc. In fact, the following string of magical names, *Ntak Moutak Autak*, resembles the morphological pattern # \emptyset -x – Mou-x – Au-x # as in *Lal*, *Mou(lal)*, *Aulal*, with similar "prefixed" elements *N-*, *Mou-* and *Au-*, and with *-tak* instead of *-lal* as "suffixed" element. The suffix *-tak* may echo with *Setrak* and *Misak*, the Babylonian names of Ananias and Misael. The following sequence of names: *Laliel Mouriel Thathiel* starts again alliterating with *Lal-* and *Mou-*, and evokes a main pattern of angelic names by means of the ending *-iël*. The last preserved name is that of the archangel Gabriel. At the left margin, the name of the archangel Michael is added. The whole "crew" recruited here to help the beneficiary of the spell clearly points to a protective purpose, most likely to shield from diseases, perhaps fever.

Tonio Sebastian RICHTER

1. Cf. KROPP, *Ausgewählte Zaubertexte* III, p. 132; BRASHEAR, "Lese Früchte", p. 106-107; BRASHEAR, *Greek Magical Papyri*, p. 3437; QUECKE, "Zwei koptische Amulette", p. 258f.; VAN DER VLIET, "Varia Magica Coptica", p. 236-239.