

When more than a century later the historian Ammianus Marcellinus discussed the issue of the origin of the Nile at 22.15.4—something he interestingly called *latentem notitiam* ('undisclosed knowledge')—he was convinced that it would never be resolved.¹⁰ Indeed, it was not until modern times that European explorers would eventually 'discover' the river's sources.¹¹ Should the proposed emendation of line 68 be correct, the long-concealed adjective of the Nile's source in Nemesianus may now be considered 'discovered' too.¹²

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ORIBASIOS ON CABBAGE: *LIBRI AD EVNAPIVM* 3.13.4*

ABSTRACT

This article suggests a new reading for Oribasius' Libri ad Eunapium 3.13.4. Based on evidence from both Greek and Syriac sources, it argues that the variant contained in Oribasius' Synopsis ad Eustathium should be adopted as the correct reading of the original.

Keywords: Oribasius; *Libri ad Eunapium*; *Synopsis ad Eustathium*; Paulus Aegineta; Dioscorides; Syriac pharmacopeia

In the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* edition of Oribasius' *Libri ad Eunapium* by J. Raeder, the text of 3.13.4 (= *CMG* 6.3.406.33–7) reads as follows:

(4) ὑγρῶν μὲν οὖν κάλλιστόν ἐστιν οἶνος· ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ ὀξύκρατον καὶ μελίκρατον· τῶν δ' ἄλλων κολλᾶ τραύματα δρυὸς φύλλα καταπλασσόμενα καὶ ἰτέας καὶ κράμβης τε ὁ καρπὸς καὶ τὰ φύλλα καὶ ὁ χυλὸς καὶ ὁ φλοιὸς τῆς αὐστηροτέρας καὶ ὀξυτέρας, ἄρνόγλωσσον, πάπυρος (5) ὀξύκρατῶ ἢ οἴνω βραχεῖσα καὶ ἐν κύκλῳ περιειλουμένη.

post κράμβης *add.* μηλέας *Syn.*

And truly among the wet drugs, wine is very good, and both sour wine mixed with water and honey water work; and among other things which join the wounds: oak leaves applied as a plaster, willow leaves, and the fruit, leaves, juice, and bark of the more bitter and sharper cabbage, plantain, and papyrus, steeping in sour wine mixed with water or wine, and wrapped round in a circular manner.¹

¹⁰ See also Claud. *Nilus* 11–12 on the Nile's secluded source (*secreto ... fonte*) 'that will forever remain hidden' (*qui semper ... latet*).

¹¹ Cf. R.O. Collins, *The Nile* (New Haven and London, 2002), 8.

¹² Since a scribal error hardly accounts for the textual corruption, a deliberate manipulation of the original wording seems more likely. Perhaps a semi-learned reader who was unfamiliar with the Nilotic question, and thus could make no sense of the fact that somebody would be drinking from a source said to be hidden, decided to substitute the 'odd' adjective with the metrically apposite *bibunt* from the line before.

* I thank *CQ*'s reader and editor for their illuminating comments, and the reader for kind assistance in checking the manuscript tradition.

¹ If not otherwise indicated, the English translations are my own.

‘quince and apple trees’ (𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓 𐤌𐤊 𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓 𐤌𐤊𐤓), not merely apple trees.⁵ The differences can be explained if we consider 1. that the reading ‘vine’ probably results from a scribal error which confuses 𐤌𐤊 (cabbage) and 𐤌𐤊 (vine);⁶ and 2. that *μηλέα* refers to apple trees which includes quince trees, as can be found in Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* 1.115.1 (= 1.107.5–6 Wellmann): *μηλέας πάσης τὰ φύλλα καὶ τὰ ἄνθη καὶ οἱ βλαστοὶ στύφουσι, μάλιστα δὲ τῆς Κυδωνίας* ‘The leaves, flowers, and shoots of all apple trees are astringent but especially those of the quince tree’.⁷ In the same entry Dioscorides further explains that besides the leaves, flowers, and shoots of apple trees, their fruits are also astringent when unripe (καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ἔνωμος μὲν στυπτικὸς καθέστηκε, πεπανθεὶς δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως, 1.107.6–7 Wellmann). This confirms that ὁ καρπὸς καὶ τὰ φύλλα καὶ ὁ χυλὸς καὶ ὁ φλοιὸς in our text should indeed be ascribed to *μηλέας*. Further evidence is found in the entry *Περὶ μηλέας* in Galen’s pharmacological treatise *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* (7.12.16 = 12.75.3–76.6 K.). In this entry, after an analysis of different fruits including the bitter ones (ἀύστηρό), Galen further comments on the medical effect of the leaves, the juice and the bark of the apple trees, and reveals that they could help to join wounds, especially those which are more bitter and sharper (οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰ φύλλα καὶ οἱ χυλοὶ καὶ οἱ φλοιοὶ τῶν δένδρων ἀλλήλων διαφέρουσιν, ὥστ’ ἔχοις αὐτοῖς μὲν ἀύστηροτέροις τε καὶ ὀξύτεροις τραύματά τε κολλῶν ..., 12.75.10–13 K.). As for the cabbage, in the entry on *κράμβη ἄγρια* ‘wild cabbage’ (2.121 = 1.194.12–17 Wellmann) Dioscorides explains the medical effect of its leaves as follows: *δύναμιν δὲ ἔχει τὰ φύλλα καταπλασσόμενα κολλητικὴν τραυμάτων καὶ διαφορητικὴν οἰδημάτων καὶ φλεγμονῶν* ‘Its leaves, applied as a plaster, have the ability to close wounds and to disperse swellings and inflammations’ (1.194.16–17 Wellmann).⁸ This indicates that *κράμβης* in our text should be read as a genitive related to the earlier *φύλλα καταπλασσόμενα*, as is the case with the preceding *δρυὸς* and *ἰτέας*.

In short, both the parallel texts in Paulus, the Syriac pharmacopeia, and the medical analysis in Dioscorides and Galen provide good evidence for the reading in *Synopsis*. The reading in *Synopsis* should therefore be adopted as that of the original text.

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⁵ The standard translation of *μηλέα* in Syriac is 𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓, as we can find in both Sergius of Rēš‘ainā and Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq’s translations; see respectively A. Merx, ‘Proben der syrischen Übersetzung von Galenus’ Schrift *Über die einfachen Heilmittel*’, *ZDMG* 39 (1885), 237–305, at 281 and R. Duval, *Lexicon syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule: voces syriacas graecasque cum glossis syriacis et arabicis complectens*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1888–1901), 1071.12. See also P. Gignoux, *Lexique des termes de la pharmacopée syriaque* (Paris, 2011), 41; U. Seidel, ‘Studien zum Vokabular der Landwirtschaft im Syrischen II’, *Altorientalistische Forschungen* 16 (1989), 89–139, at 121; R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1879–1901), 1238. For 𐤌𐤊 𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓 and its variant 𐤌𐤊 𐤓𐤓𐤓𐤓, see Gignoux (this n.), 24, 66; Seidel (this n.), 122.

⁶ Scribal errors occur often in the manuscripts of this Syriac pharmacopeia: Lin (n. 3).

⁷ Translated by L.Y. Beck (transl.), *Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarbus. De materia medica* (Hildesheim, 2005), 84.

⁸ Beck (n. 7), 144.