

Cyranidea: Some Improvements

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There is much of value in George Panayiotou's (henceforth P.) recent lexical study of the *Cyranides*.¹ However, a good deal requires correction or deserves supplement. And some of P.'s philological history may be vitiated by his cavalier acceptance² of a 1st- or 2nd-century A.D. date for the work. P. seems altogether unaware of the detailed and cogent study by Klaus Alpers³ which assigns the *Cyranides* to the late 4th century, a fair amount of the book being a redaction of the work of Harpocraton, an iatrosophist of the period. On this reckoning,⁴ the vocabulary of the *Cyranides* will often follow where P. has it lead. Alpers' dating is strongly enhanced by Martin West's disclosure⁵ of acrostic references in the *Cyranides* to Magnus and Marcellinus, also unknown to P. Magnus is now generally and plausibly taken to be the celebrated 4th-century doctor Magnus of Nisibis; Marcellinus may or may not be the historian Ammianus Marcellinus.⁶ Finally, P. nowhere acknowledges the serious shortcomings⁷ of the edition of the *Cyranides* by Dimitris Kaimakis (Meisenheim am Glan 1976) which he uses.

¹ "Paralipomena Lexicographica Cyranidea," *ICS* 15 (1990) 295-338.

² In his own words, P. simply takes the date from LSJ and the cognate *Canon of Greek Authors and Works*² (New York 1986) designed for the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* by L. Berkowitz and K. A. Squitier.

³ "Untersuchungen zum griechischen Physiologus und den Kyraniden," *Vestigia Biblicae (Jahrbuch des deutschen Bibel-Archivs, Hamburg)* 6 (1984) 13-84.

⁴ Alpers' dating is accepted by the two latest writers on the work: D. Bain, "'Treading Birds': An Unnoticed use of πατέω (*Cyranides* 1. 10. 27, 1. 19. 9)," in E. M. Craik (ed.), *Owls To Athens: Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover* (Oxford 1990) 295-304; G. W. Bowersock, review of J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, *JRS* 80 (1990) 247-48. The Harpocraton in question would appear to be the medical writer from Alexandria, possibly to be conflated with the homonymous poet and rhetorician attested at Constantinople in the years 358-63; cf. *PLRE* I 408.

⁵ "Magnus and Marcellinus: Unnoticed Acrostics in the *Cyranides*," *CQ* 32 (1982) 480-81.

⁶ Bain and West are tempted by the identification; Bowersock finds it implausible.

⁷ Trenchantly exposed by Bain 298-99.

ἀγνώστως: This adverb is far commoner in patristic Greek than P. implies, and is there used in senses very close to that of “unawares” or “unknowingly” which P. claims to be unique to the *Cyranides* (henceforth *Cyran.*).

ἀγριολάχανον: P. ignores a probable occurrence of this rare noun in Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 26; true, there is a variant reading, but Lampe accepts our word.

ἀειθαλής βοτάνη: P. may well be right in taking these words to signify a particular plant (the houseleek) rather than any kind of green vegetable. But he is perhaps too dogmatic on the matter; also, one should consider such locutions as τῆς ἀειθαλοῦς ἀκάνθης, applied by Clement (*Paed.* 2. 8) to Christ’s crown of thorns.

ἀερόθεν: According to P., “*Cyran.* antedates by some centuries the authors cited for this word in the lexica.” Perhaps so. But it ought to be made clear that this adverb is hardly in the lexica; LSJ and Stephanus adduce only Eustathius, and it is not in Lampe, Sophocles, or Du Cange.

ἀμέθυσος: It can be added that this word occurs as a feminine noun in Michael Psellus, *De lapidum virtutibus* (p. 72, line 20, ed. P. Galigani [Florence 1980]).

ἀπειθέω: P. claims that the construction of this verb with the infinitive in the sense of “to refuse to obey an order to” is unattested in the lexica. But cf. Lampe *s.v.* 3 and 4 for close parallels in *Hom. Clem.* and Cyril of Alexandria.

ἀράχνιος: This may not be a new word, as P. maintains, since it is a variant reading at Basil, *Hex.* 6. 6. It can also be observed that in one form or another the epithet is something of a favourite with Gregory Nazianzenus.

ἀρμενίζω: Even if *Cyran.* does belong to the 1st or 2nd century, P. is not justified in saying that this word is in “much later” Christian sources: It occurs in *Test. Neph.* 6. 2 in the *Testamenta XII Patriarchum*, the Greek version of which is tentatively dated by Lampe (xl) to c. A.D. 50.

ἀρρενοτόκος: P. translates “associated with the birth of male children,” calling it a new meaning, but in point of fact this does not much differ from the sense comported by the epithet in the passages from Aristotle and Christian writers adduced by LSJ and Lampe.

ἀρσενόθηλυ: P. censures LSJ for restricting the meaning of this compound to “hermaphrodite,” but overlooks patristic examples (on parade in Lampe) of the requisite sense of considering male and female together.

ἀχειμάστως: P. correctly observes that this adverbial form is not in the lexica, but might have noted the cognate ἀχειμαστί from Methodius, *Symp.* 11. 3.

βαμβάκινος: All that P. says about this word is correct. In view of the recorded allotropes and sketchiness of the entries in, say, Stephanus and Du Cange mentioned by P., it is worth subjoining the word's survival into modern Greek, also the Albanian equivalent, *pambuk*.

βολβός: P. complains that, of the lexica, only Stephanus records the sense of "eye-ball," although it is the first meaning given in Lampe's entry for the word, taken from a work wrongly attributed to John Damascene.

γαλλικόν: P. says that only Sophocles of modern lexicographers records this word, but the same passage from Theophanes the chronicler is adduced by Lampe.

δενδροκολάπτης: For completeness' sake, add the equally rare cognate δενδροκόλαψ on show once in the late (perhaps 9th-century) writer Meletius, *Nat. Hom.* 27.

διακλύζομαι: What P. says about the novelty of this verb's passive use of a lotion used for washing out the mouth seems correct, but one should note the relative frequency in medical writers of the cognate noun διάκλυσμα for a mouth-wash, also the term διάκλυσις, not in LSJ, apparently unique to Theodore Stud., *Epp.* 2. 219.

διωκτικόν: P. regards this substantive use in the sense of an apotropaic amulet as new. The claim is not wrong, but the novelty may be tempered by the occurrence of the adjectival form meaning "able to drive away" in the *Const. App.* 8. 29. 3, a document of the 4th century.

ἐνηδόνως: It should be added to P.'s otherwise adequate account that this adverb occurs at least three times in Johannes Climacus (*Scal.* 15, 22, 30), clearly something of a personal favourite with this author. Lampe records no other user; the cognate adjective is also infrequent, but has a wider distribution over pagan and Christian writers.

ἐπτάπολος: P. appears correct in calling this a new word. One may detect something of a Christian and/or late Greek influence, given the large number of compounds with this prefix to be found in patristic authors but missing from LSJ.

εὐστομαχία: It is worth noting that Isidore of Pelusium (*Epp.* 4. 49) has the cognate adjective in the sense of "having a good digestion"; this slightly tempers the novelty claimed by P. for Cyran.'s use of the noun.

ζωογονέω: P.'s claim that the transitive use of this verb in the sense of "resuscitate" is new is amply refuted by a glance at Lampe's many entries for the word.

ἡδύλαλος: P. classifies this proparoxytone adjective as a new word, bearing a passive sense in contrast with the active meaning of the paroxytone form which is equally rare, being reported by LSJ only from an inscription at Amorgos. However, Lampe registers (it is his only example) the proparoxytone in an active sense from Ephraem the Syrian.

καστόριον: For the Latin equivalent of this Greek term for the testicles of a beaver (used for magic and medicine), P. reproduces from Stephanus a passage from Pliny, *NH* 32. 26. One may add from the same author *NH* 8. 109: *easdem partes sibi ipsi Pontici amputant fibri periculo urgente, ob hoc se peti gnari: castoreum id vocant medici.*

κογχύλη: P.'s information is in order, though the presence of the word in the requisite sense in such vernacular authors as John Malalas and the *Paschal Chronicle* suggests it was commoner than his notice implies.

κροτών: P. finds the unparalleled meaning of "young dog" in this word, since both lemma and entry in this passage (2. 20) of Cyran. have to do with puppies. But he confesses to "serious doubts" about the soundness of the reading. In my opinion, the word (if correct) comports its primary sense of "tick" and the author will be talking about the delousing of dogs. If P. is on the right lines, one might invoke the Albanian word *kone* for "puppy" to justify a Greek equivalent.

λύσις: P. claims novelty for employment of this noun in the sense of a magical or medicinal antidote, but it is in fact very similar to one of its patristic meanings of a remedy for trouble or difficulties.

μοιρικός: It is not true that this term in the sense of "ordained by destiny" is unique to Cyran.; Lampe gives an example from John Malalas.

μονανδρία: Not a new word, as P. says, since it occurs in John Chrysostom, *Ad Vit. Jun.* 2 tit. Notice also the cognate verb and adjective, featuring in both pagan and Christian Greek. In addition to the passages jointly adduced by LSJ and Lampe, the adjective can be seen in *AP* 15. 33. 9 (Arethas).

όνειριάζω: P. might have noted the patristic verb *όνειράζομαι* (not in LSJ) in this connection.

πατέω: The sexual sense of this verb (of roosters mounting hens), apparently unique to Cyran., is independently pointed out by Bain (above, note 4), who also surmises that the usage must have been common and this lonely example only a freak of circumstance.

πελεκᾶνος: P.'s argument that at least one bird of this name must have been a species with a large beak could have been enhanced by the patristic use of this word (recorded by Lampe) in the figurative sense of an aggressive person.

σπεκκᾶριον: A propos this word's sense of "window" in Cyran., P. might have noted the same meaning in patristic Greek of the cognate σπέκλον.

συντυχία: P. says that the meaning of "chance encounter" is a new one for this noun, an odd claim since this is the very first usage recorded in Lampe's entry, and it is very common in related meanings in patristic Greek.

τεκνοσπορέω: The uniqueness of this verb is probably a statistical freak in view of the existence of cognate noun and adjective.

τριχοποιέω: P.'s documentation of this verb can be strengthened by the lone occurrence of the cognate adjective, in the requisite sense of "hair-producing," in Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. Opif.* 30. 27.

χαριτήσιος: For epigraphic and papyrological examples of this adjective, claimed as a new word by P., see L. R. Palmer, *A Grammar of the Post-Ptolemaic Papyri* (London 1945) 31, 33.

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