

Ἀπόλλωνος παιδὸς ἀφθό-
νο[ι]ς χρήμασιν δωρησά-
μενος ἀντάποιναν ἕσ-
235 χεν εὐδαιμονίας πλή-
θος. ἀπολέμητος γὰρ τό-

ἐκείνος δυσσ[εβε]ῖ ἐπὶ
τούτοις κακοῖς [ἀ]ναλίσκον-
245 ται. ὃν δὲ τρόπον ἔχρη-
σεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς Ἀ]σκληπίος
σπουδάσειν αὐτ[ο]ῦ περὶ

‘Nectenibis on hearing this, being extremely vexed with the deserters from the temple and wishing to ascertain their number speedily by a list, ordered Nechautis, who then performed the duties of archidicastes, to investigate the book within a month, if possible. Nechautis conducted his researches with much strenuousness, and brought the list to the king after spending only two days instead of thirty upon the inquiry. On reading the book the king was quite amazed at the divine power in the story, and finding that there were twenty-six priests who conducted the god from Heliopolis to Memphis, he assigned to each of their descendants the due post of prophet. Not content with this, after completing the renewal of the book (?), he enriched Asclepius himself with three hundred and thirty arurae more of corn-land, especially because he had heard through the book that the god had been worshipped with marks of great reverence by Mencheres.

Having often begun the translation of the said book in the Greek tongue, I learnt at length how to proclaim it, but while I was in the full tide of composition my ardour was restrained by the greatness of the story, because I was about to make it public; for to gods alone, not to mortals, is it permitted to describe the mighty deeds of the gods. For if I failed, not only was I ashamed before men, but also hindered by the reproaches (?) that I should incur if the god were vexed, and by the poverty of my description, in course of completion, of his undying virtue (?). But if I did the god a service, both my life would be happy and my fame undying; for the god is disposed to confer benefits, since even those whose pious ardour is only for the moment are repeatedly preserved by him after the healing art has failed against diseases which have overtaken them. Therefore avoiding rashness I was waiting for the favourable occasion afforded by old age, and putting off the fulfilment of my promise; for then especially is youth wont to aim too high, since immaturity and enterprise too quickly extend our zeal. But when a period of three years had elapsed, in which I was no longer working, and for three years my mother was distracted by an ungodly quartan ague which had seized her, at length having with difficulty comprehended we came as suppliants before the god, entreating him to grant my mother recovery from the disease. He, having shown himself favourable, as he is to all, in dreams, cured her by simple remedies; and we rendered due thanks to our preserver by sacrifices. When I too afterwards was suddenly seized with a pain in my right side, I quickly hastened to the helper of the human race, and he, being again disposed to pity, listened to me, and displayed still more effectively his peculiar clemency, which, as I am intending to recount his terrible powers, I will substantiate.

It was night, when every living creature was asleep except those in pain, but divinity showed itself the more effectively; a violent fever burned me, and I was convulsed with loss of breath and coughing, owing to the pain proceeding from my side. Heavy in the head with my troubles I was lapsing half-conscious into sleep, and my mother, as a mother would for her child (and she is by nature affectionate), being extremely grieved at my agonies was sitting without enjoying even a short period of slumber, when suddenly she perceived—it was no dream or sleep, for her eyes were open immovably, though not seeing clearly, for a divine and terrifying vision came to her, easily preventing her from observing the god himself

or his servants, whichever it was. In any case there was some one whose height was more than human, clothed in shining raiment and carrying in his left hand a book, who after merely regarding me two or three times from head to foot disappeared. When she had recovered herself, she tried, still trembling, to wake me, and finding that the fever had left me and that much sweat was pouring off me, did reverence to the manifestation of the god, and then wiped me and made me more collected. When I spoke with her, she wished to declare the virtue of the god, but I anticipating her told her all myself; for everything that she saw in the vision appeared to me in dreams. After these pains in my side had ceased and the god had given me yet another assuaging cure, I proclaimed his benefits. But when we had again besought his favours by sacrifices to the best of our ability, he demanded through the priest who serves him in the ceremonies the fulfilment of the promise long ago announced to him, and we, although knowing ourselves to be debtors in neither sacrifices nor votive offering, nevertheless supplicated him again with them. But when he said repeatedly that he cared not for these but for what had been previously promised, I was at a loss, and with difficulty, since I disparaged it, felt the divine obligation of the composition. But since thou hadst once noticed, master, that I was neglecting the divine book, invoking thy providence and filled with thy divinity I hastened to the inspired task of the history. And I hope to extend by my proclamation the fame of thy inventiveness; for I unfolded truly by a physical treatise in another book the convincing account of the creation of the world. Throughout the composition I have filled up defects and struck out superfluities, and in telling a rather long tale I have spoken briefly and narrated once for all a complicated story. Hence, master, I conjecture that the book has been completed in accordance with thy favour, not with my aim; for such a record in writing suits thy divinity. And as the discoverer of this art, Asclepius, greatest of gods and my teacher, thou art distinguished by the thanks of all men. For every gift of a votive offering or sacrifice lasts only for the immediate moment, and presently perishes, while a written record is an undying meed of gratitude, from time to time renewing its youth in the memory. Every Greek tongue will tell thy story, and every Greek man will worship the son of Ptah, Imouthes. Assemble hither, ye kindly and good men; avaunt ye malignant and impious! Assemble, all ye . . ., who by serving the god have been cured of diseases, ye who practise the healing art, ye who will labour as zealous followers of virtue, ye who have been blessed by great abundance of benefits, ye who have been saved from the dangers of the sea! For every place has been penetrated by the saving power of the god.

I now purpose to recount his miraculous manifestations, the greatness of his power, the gifts of his benefits. The history is this. King Mencheres by displaying his piety in the obsequies of three gods, and being successful in winning fame through the book, has won eternal glory. He presented to the tombs of Asclepius son of Hephaestus, Horus son of Hermes, and also Caleoibis son of Apollo money in abundance, and received as recompense his fill of prosperity. For Egypt was then free from war for this reason, and flourished with abundant crops, since subject countries prosper by the piety of their ruler, and on the other hand owing to his impiety they are consumed by evils. The manner in which the god Asclepius bade Mencheres busy himself with his tomb . . .'

1. $\tau\alpha[\overset{\cdot}{\underset{\cdot}{\tau}}]a$: the supposed τ has an unusually short cross-bar on the left, and perhaps $\pi\alpha[\lambda\lambda]a$ should be read. The preceding word might be [. . .]i. From the references to $\tau\alpha\upsilon\iota\epsilon\rho\upsilon\upsilon$ (l. 4), $\tau\eta\varsigma\ \beta\acute{\iota}\beta\lambda\omicron\upsilon$ (l. 9), and $\tau\omicron\nu\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ (l. 20), as if they had been mentioned previously, it is clear that Col. i is not the actual beginning of the papyrus, which on the recto breaks off in the middle of a column at this point.

$\text{N}\epsilon[\kappa\tau\epsilon\nu\epsilon]i\beta\iota\varsigma$: for the form cf. $\text{N}\epsilon\kappa\tau\epsilon\nu\acute{\iota}\beta\iota\varsigma$ in Theopomp. Fr. 101 (G-H); $\text{N}\epsilon\kappa\tau\alpha\nu\epsilon\beta\acute{\omega}$, $-\tau\epsilon\nu\alpha\beta\acute{\omega}$, $-\tau\alpha\nu\acute{\epsilon}\beta\iota\varsigma$, &c., are found elsewhere.