

πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ' ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι
 τὰ στείβειν, ἑτέρων δ' ἵχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά
 δίφρον ἐλ] ἄν μηδ' οἶμον ἀνά πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
 ἀτρίπτο] υς, εἰ καὶ στενωτέρην ἐλάσεις.

'This too I bid you: tread a path which carriages do not trample; do not drive your chariot upon the common tracks of others, nor along a wide road, but on unworn paths, though your course be more narrow²⁸⁵.'

5 – Conclusion

It is not the purpose of this contribution to discuss all metrical fragments from the manual of Nechepsos and Petosiris but a selection of passages with different characteristics, preferably such texts that are particularly important and/or – regarding Riess' collection – new. Therefore five texts that have already been discussed by Usener and Riess are omitted here. Valens assigns each one of them explicitly to either Nechepsos (N) or Petosiris (P), as indicated in parentheses in the left column of the list below. The right column indicates the number of iambic trimeters reconstructed by Usener and the relevant page in Riess 1891-1893:

Val. 2,41,3 (P) = NP frg. 24,3-7	5 ia. trim. Us., p. 376 ²⁸⁶ .
Val. 3,11,3 (N) = NP frg. 19,6-19	8 ia. trim. Us., p. 364.
Val. 7,6,12 (N) = NP frg. 21,54-56	3 ia. trim. Us., p. 373 ²⁸⁷ .
Val. 7,6,193 (N) = NP frg. 21,201-204	3 ia. trim. Us., p. 374.
Val. 7,6,211 (N) = NP frg. 21,255-263	8 ia. trim. Us., p. 374.

Although one can disagree with Usener and Riess as to the details of their reconstruction, there is little doubt that these five passages really go back to iambic originals²⁸⁸. However, none of them is a literal quotation like the one in Val. 6,1,9 = Nech. et Pet. frg. 1.

It is further clear both from the above list and from the passages discussed earlier in chapter III that we have metrical fragments of both Nechepsos and Petosiris. While the majority of all relevant passages is attributed to Nechepsos, Petosiris is the alleged author of the first passage in the list just given as well as of Val. 9,2,7 (see above, ch. 4.b), Val. 7,6,35 (4.c), and probably also Val. 8,6,14 (4.d) and Ptol. apotel. 3,11,1 (4.f.1).

²⁸⁵ Trypanis 1958, 7-9.

²⁸⁶ At least two more verses seem to be hidden in the final part of that quotation (2,41,4) which was unknown to Usener and Riess.

²⁸⁷ As Riess informs us, Usener changed his mind later.

²⁸⁸ Only Val. 7,6,12 may be an issue of debate.

As far as meter is concerned, all fragments point to an original in iambic trimeters. The lyric fragment preserved by Aëtius (e) is unique and may not be part of the original Greek writings under the names of Nechepsos and Petosiris.

More difficult to answer is the question whether the manual attributed to them was entirely or only partly in verse. Most of the preserved fragments (see the list above pp. 32-34) are in prose, but theoretically these may all be paraphrases of originals in verse²⁸⁹. In two instances, however, Valens emphasizes that he is quoting the very words of Nechepsos, and these are prose texts: see Val. 7,6,21 αὐταῖς λέξεσι προεθέμεθα (after a very long quotation) and, in the same chapter, 7,6,208 καθὼς ἐμήνησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς περὶ τούτων αὐταῖς λέξεσιν ὑποτάξω. This indicates that the Greek original was in prosimetron²⁹⁰.

While it is certain that at least parts of the Greek original were in verse, the demotic tradition on which our pseudepigraphic author drew seems to have been in prose, as far as one can tell from the recently discovered demotic fragments²⁹¹. We do not know whether the author of the Greek version simply drew inspiration from demotic precursors or whether he actually translated them²⁹². Since the versification of technical manuals was a widely spread activity of Hellenistic poets (e.g. Aratus), it would not be surprising if the Greek version attributed to Nechepsos and Petosiris came, at least partially, close to an actual translation from demotic. At present, however, we know far too little to settle this question. Even if our fragments and *testimonia* contained an explicit claim to being a translation from Egyptian, which is not the case, this would require critical examination because such claims are a widespread literary fiction aimed at bestowing greater authority on certain Greek texts and can, therefore, not *a priori* be trusted²⁹³. The prerequisite for a reliable assertion would be the find of demotic parallels on papyri of an early date.

²⁸⁹ See, for example, the case of Val. 7,6,35, above ch. 4.c.

²⁹⁰ Another passage that may be relevant is Ps.-Maneth. 1[5],3.8.11-13 (= Nech. et Pet. test. 8): ἀξιά σοι τάδε δῶρα φέρω βασιλίδος ἀρχῆς, | νύκτας αἴπνος ἐὼν καὶ ἐν ἡμασι πολλὰ μογήσας, | ὄφρα κεν, ὅσα περ αὐτὸς ἐπιτροχάδην Πετόσιρις | εἶρηκεν, τάδε πάντα μάλ' ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω | ῥυθμοῖς ἥρωικοῖσι καὶ ἑξαμέτροις ἐπέεσσιν ('[...] so that, as many things as Petosiris himself said fluently, all these quite exactly I might recount in heroic rhythms and in hexameters'; Lopilato 1998, p. 187). Is the contrast here between prose text and versification? The meaning of ἐπιτροχάδην is not quite clear: LSJ take it as 'cursorily', a meaning attested only from Dionysius Halicarnassensis (1st c. BC) onwards (Dion. Hal., Thuc. 10 κεφαλαιωδῶς καὶ ἐπιτροχάδην ἐν ἐλάττοσιν ἢ πεντακοσίοις στίχοις. *ibid.* 14 οὕτως εἶρηκεν ἐπιτροχάδην. *Id.*, De Thuc. idiom. 11 ἐπιτροχάδην ἀναλήψομαι τῶν προθέσεων ἐκάστην). The alternative is to think of the old epic usage: ἐπιτροχάδην occurs twice in Homer (Il. 3,213 and Od. 18,26) in the sense 'trippingly', 'fluently', 'glibly', and one wonders if this was developed by Ps.-Manetho to mean 'in prose'. Note that in both the Homeric cases the position of ἐπιτροχάδην in the hexameter is the same as in Ps.-Manetho. Note also the indisputably Homeric μάλ' ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω in the next following line, which has its model in Hom. Il. 10,413 = 10,427 = Od. 24,303. No other occurrences of ἐπιτροχάδην that could have inspired Ps.-Manetho are known from Greek literature.

²⁹¹ See above p. 25.

²⁹² For a hypothesis to the latter effect, see Ray 1974, 255.

²⁹³ See Koenen 2002, 180-183, on the difficult question whether the 'Oracle of the Potter', which does (in the colophon) make such a claim, is a translation from Egyptian. In that case, Koenen concludes, after passing the diverse arguments in review, that the question cannot be answered and that it is largely irrelevant because of the mixed cultural environment in which the text originated ('[...] daß die Frage weitgehend irrelevant ist. Entscheidend ist, daß das sprachliche wie das kulturelle Milieu, in dem das *Töpferorakel* zu Hause ist, vom Ägyptischen ebenso wie vom Griechischen beeinflusst ist.')

A few questions remain to be answered: Why is it that among the many ancient authors who praise Nechepsos and Petosiris for their astrological knowledge, no one speaks a word in favor of their poetical qualities? Why does no one except Aëtius²⁹⁴ call one or both of them 'poet(s)'? And why is it that Valens seems to resort mostly (though not always, as the two instances of ἀντὰρ λέξεσι show) to paraphrasing instead of quoting literally from their work? What Valens found important was apparently the teaching of Nechepsos and Petosiris, not the poetical form. With Homer, Cleanthes, and the Orphic poems (which are all in the heroic meter), Valens' attitude is different, and his quotations are literal²⁹⁵. But not so with the comparatively humble iambic trimeters of Nechepsos and Petosiris. The same can be observed with Hephaestio of Thebes, who gives long prose paraphrases from Nechepsos and Petosiris while quoting long sections from Dorotheus of Sidon in the dactylic original.

For future work, the first goal of philological investigation should not be the reconstruction of iambic sections, because this does not yield definitive results, but rather the identification of clusters of iambic elements, especially in Valens, and the detection of poetic sources on which the anonymous author of Nechepsos and Petosiris seems to have drawn. In addition, it is to be hoped that further discoveries of demotic texts will deepen our understanding of the sources and inspiration of this milestone in the development of Hellenistic astrology²⁹⁶.

²⁹⁴ See above, note 241.

²⁹⁵ See Val. 5,6,14. 6,9,13. 7,1,3. 7,3,53. 9,1,12-15. 9,9,12.17.19.20.

²⁹⁶ I am grateful to Angela Kinney, M.A., who corrected my English in an earlier version of this paper, and to my former colleague Prof. David Sansone who read this article extremely carefully. He kept me from several mistakes and contributed important parallels from the classical authors.