

***Albounout* “Frankincense” and *Alsounalph* “Oxtongue”:  
Phoenician-Punic Botanical Terms with Prothetic Vowels  
from an Egyptian Papyrus and a Byzantine Codex \***

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The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden, usually dated to the third century C.E. on paleographic grounds, contains a Semitic loanword that appears to have been overlooked by Semitists. In V/6, the word appears in Demotic alphabetic characters as *ʾlbwnʾt*; in XXIX/17, 24, it appears in an alphabetic cipher substituting for an Old Coptic ΑΖΒΟΥΝΟΥΤ (*albounout*)<sup>1</sup>.

The meaning of the word in Egyptian is reasonably clear. The occurrence in Demotic characters (V/6) is written with the same pellet determinative as *hl* “myrrh” in the previous line (V/5)<sup>2</sup>. The substance to which it refers is put on a brazier (XXIX/17), presumably functioning as an incense burner. Griffith translates the word as “frankincense”, equating it with Greek *λιβανωτός* “frankincense”<sup>3</sup>. J. H. Johnson uses the same translation, while W. Erichsen (who also cites *λιβανωτός*) gives the more general meaning “Räucherwerk”<sup>4</sup>.

Neither Griffith nor Erichsen mentions that the Greek word *λιβανωτός* is a borrowing of Semitic *\*lbnt* “frankincense”<sup>5</sup>. They may have assumed that the Egyptian word was borrowed from the Greek, but the phonetic differences between *albounout* and *λιβανωτός* militate against this assumption. It is more likely that

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<sup>1</sup> F. Li. Griffith and Herbert Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* I (London 1904) 44, 166, 168.

<sup>2</sup> F. Li. Griffith and Herbert Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*: II. *Hand Copy of the Text* (London 1905) V/6, XXIX/24.

<sup>3</sup> Griffith and Thompson, *Magical* I 45, 167, 169.

<sup>4</sup> H. D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago and London 1986) 202, 239, 240; W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen 1954) 7.

<sup>5</sup> The Semitic origin of the word is undisputed, since frankincense was produced in South Arabia and since a number of Semitic languages have a word meaning “white” from the same root. See E. Masson, *Recherches sur les plus anciens emprunts sémitiques en grec* (Paris 1967) 53-54 and W. W. Müller, “Zur Herkunft von *λίβανος* und *λιβανωτός*”, *Glotta* 52 (1974) 53-59 and the literature cited there. It has long been recognized that the vowels of *λιβανωτός* are problematic, for it is difficult to imagine a Semitic language that has *ō* as the reflex of *\*a* but not of *\*ā*. Masson and Müller discuss some of the explanations that have been offered in the past. Another possibility is that this anomaly is the product of an inner-Greek development. An original Greek *\*libōnatos*, reflecting Canaanite *\*libōnatu*, may have been changed to *λιβανωτός*, due to contamination with its synonym, *λίβανος*, borrowed from a South Arabian language.

the Egyptian word, like the Greek one, was borrowed from one of the Semitic languages – but which one?

A number of features point to Phoenician-Punic, where the word for “frankincense” appears as *lbnt*<sup>6</sup>. The presence of a Phoenician-Punic word in Demotic should not be surprising. Phoenician-Punic words have recently been identified in another Demotic text, and Phoenician-Punic inscriptions from Egypt are not uncommon<sup>7</sup>.

One Phoenician-Punic feature is the fs absolute ending *-ut* < *-at*. In reality, this ending exhibits two distinct Phoenician-Punic features: the raising and rounding of etymologically short stressed \**a* and the retention of the final *t* of the fs ending in the absolute state<sup>8</sup>. The latter feature, shared apparently with Moabite and Ammonite<sup>9</sup>, is reflected both in the Demotic spelling, which exhibits the “strong” (non-quiet) *f*, and in the Old Coptic cipher. It should be noted, however, that “in the *-at* ending the *t* was eventually lost, as it was in the other Semitic languages, although it was preserved in the writing until Neo-Punic times”<sup>10</sup>. It is impossible to date this loss with any precision, since ancient scribes did their best to conceal such changes through the use of historical spellings, but it is clear that the loanword *ʾlbwnʾt*-*albounout* is centuries older than the papyrus in which it is attested.

A third characteristic feature of our loanword is its prothetic vowel, reflected in the Demotic orthography as *ʾ* and in the Old Coptic cipher as *a*. Such vowels are attested in many Semitic languages, but they seem to be especially common in Phoenician-Punic<sup>11</sup>. Their function was presumably to break up what would otherwise be a word-initial consonant cluster, whether that cluster was inherited or borrowed or created by vowel-deletion.

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The Old Coptic form *albounout* sheds much light on a plant-name attributed to the *Appoi* (i.e., the Carthaginians) in those manuscripts of Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* that list the names of each plant in a variety of ancient languages. These “synonyms” are believed to have been added before the end of the third

<sup>6</sup> *KAI* no. 76B 6.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. Steiner “Semitic Names for Utensils in the Demotic Word-List from Tebtunis”, *JNES* 59 (2000) 191-194; *KAI* II 64-70 (nos. 48-53); J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* III (Oxford 1982) 141-144, 161-162; and G. Vittmann, “Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu fremden und hellenisierten Ägyptern im Dienste einheimischer Kulte”, *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years*, Part II: *Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur* (ed. W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and J. Willems; Leuven 1998) 1246-1247.

<sup>8</sup> J. Friedrich, W. Röllig, M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, and W. R. Mayer, *Phönizisch-punische Grammatik* (Rome 1999) (henceforth *PPG*<sup>3</sup>) § 78, §§ 227-228.

<sup>9</sup> W. R. Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia 1985) 93-94.

<sup>10</sup> Z. S. Harris, *A Grammar of the Phoenician Language* (New Haven 1936) 59; cf. *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 229. In *JNES* 59, 193, I took Demotic *swsʾt* to be borrowed from a Phoenician-Punic plural (“horses, trestles”), on the assumption that the borrowing took place in the Roman period. I should have noted that if the word was borrowed early enough it could be a singular.

<sup>11</sup> See P. Schröder, *Die phönizische Sprache* (Halle 1869) 90; Harris, *Grammar* 33; and *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 95.

century C.E., possibly from a work by the first-century Alexandrian lexicographer, Pamphilos<sup>12</sup>.

The plant-name in question is *αλσουναλφ* or *λασουναλφ*. That its literal meaning is “ox-tongue”, *lšn 'lp*, was clear already to Bochart – despite the corrupt state of the reading available to him (*ανσαναφ*) – from the fact that it is listed as a synonym of Greek *βούγλωσσον*<sup>13</sup>. “Ox-tongue” (or rather, “tongues of oxen”) is also the literal meaning of at least one other synonym in the list: Latin *λιγγουαιβοβουμ*, i.e., *linguae bovum*.

The form of the name is controversial, pitting Semitists of the nineteenth century against those of the twentieth. Gesenius and Schröder cite it as *αλσουναλφ*, while Harris, van den Branden, *HALAT*, Friedrich-Röllig, and Krahmalkov write *λασουναλφ*<sup>14</sup>. Accordingly, in discussing prothetic vowels (or prothetic *aleph*), Schröder includes this form<sup>15</sup>, while Harris, van den Branden and Friedrich-Röllig omit it<sup>16</sup>.

The problem has sometimes been compounded by typographical errors. Vattioni’s list of variant readings ascribes the readings *ανσαναφ* and *λασουναφ* to K. P. J. Sprengel’s edition of Dioscorides<sup>17</sup>. In fact, the reading *λασουναφ* is nowhere to be found in that edition; *αλσουναλφ* is the only variant reading recorded there<sup>18</sup>. The same ghost form, *λασουναφ*, is given by *DNSJ*, with *αλσουν-, αυσαν*, and *ανσαν* listed as variant readings<sup>19</sup>.

The reading *αλσουναλφ* comes from Codex Constantinopolitanus (henceforth C), prepared before 512 C.E. for the Byzantine Princess Juliana Anicia<sup>20</sup>. The same reading is found in Codex Phillippicus 21975 (c. tenth century C.E.; henceforth Ph), now Codex M. 652 of the Pierpont Morgan Library<sup>21</sup>. In other manuscripts, our Punic term is badly corrupted, but in most of them it begins with *α*. The “inter-

<sup>12</sup> M. Wellmann, “Die Pflanzennamen des Dioskurides”, *Hermes* 33 (1898) 369, 373, 375; C. Singer, “The Herbal in Antiquity and its Transmission to Later Ages”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 47 (1927) 22, 24.

<sup>13</sup> S. Bochart, *Geographia sacra... Phaleg... Chanaan* (Frankfurt am Main 1674) 843. Bochart compared it with the Arabic plant-name *lisānu t-tawr*, for which see *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache* II, I (Wiesbaden 1983) 636–637 s.v. In Codex Phillippicus 21975, f. 20v (see below), that Arabic name has been added to the right of the illustration. For the Aramaic and Hebrew versions of the name, see I. Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen* (Leipzig 1881) 244–45; I. Löw, *Die Flora der Juden* I (Vienna and Leipzig 1924–1934) 294ff.

<sup>14</sup> W. Gesenius, *Scripturae linguaeque Phoeniciae monumenta quotquot supersunt* (Leipzig 1837) 385; Schröder, *Sprache* 90; Harris, *Grammar* 115; A. van den Branden, *Grammaire phénicienne* (Beirut 1969) 14–15; *HALAT* 509 s.v. *לשן*; *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 89, § 197; C. R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven 2000) 264.

<sup>15</sup> Schröder, *Sprache* 90.

<sup>16</sup> Harris, *Grammar* 33; *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 95; van den Branden, *Grammaire* 14–15.

<sup>17</sup> F. Vattioni, “Glosse puniche”, *Augustinianum* 16 (1976) 525 (no. 41).

<sup>18</sup> See n. 47, below.

<sup>19</sup> *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (ed. J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling; Leiden 1995) 584.

<sup>20</sup> Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Codex Medicus Graecus I, f. 76r. This manuscript usually has the least corrupt forms of Dioscorides’ African plant-names, and it is this manuscript that Gesenius cites. Two facsimile editions exist: a black-and-white edition in *Codices Graeci et Latini phototypice depicti*, vol. 10 (Leiden 1906), and a dazzling color edition in *Codices selecti phototypice impressi*, vol. 12 (Graz 1965–70), which I used.

<sup>21</sup> *De materia medica libri VII accedunt Nicandri et Evtecnii Opuscula medica: Codex Constantinopolitanus saeculo X. exaratus et picturis illustratus olim Manvelis Evgenici...* (Paris 1935) f. 20v–21r. This manuscript is described briefly in the introduction to Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei, *De materia medica* (ed. M. Wellmann; Berlin 1906) II xix, but I have encountered no

polated" codices read *αῦσανάφ*; two other manuscripts read *ἀνσανάφ*<sup>22</sup>. The Latin Dioscorides, on the other hand, reads *lasymaf*<sup>23</sup>.

The significance of the agreement between C and Ph naturally depends on the relationship between these two manuscripts. According to Singer's stemma, the common ancestor of C and Ph is the recension of Dioscorides to which the synonym lists were first added<sup>24</sup>. This would seem to make the agreement in question highly significant.

Wellmann's stemma is rather different. Among the differences is a broken line connecting C to the archetype of Ph and Codex Athous, reflecting Wellmann's belief that that archetype was contaminated by C<sup>25</sup>. This difference may be only apparent, however, since Singer believes that some (not all) of the illustrations of that archetype were checked with C<sup>26</sup>.

It seems unlikely that Wellmann based his contamination theory on the foreign synonyms, which are not found in all manuscripts and which he did not study systematically<sup>27</sup>. What can we say about the synonyms in Ph? Have they been contaminated by C? Is that why C and Ph agree on the reading *αλσουναλφ*?

In a sample of African synonyms from Ph, I found no suspicious pattern of agreement with C against other manuscripts. Thus, Ph has *ατιρτοκπουρις* as the African synonym of *τηλέφιον* "Andrachna telephioides", agreeing with both the so-called "interpolated" codices and the seventh-century Codex Neapolitanus (a close relative of C; henceforth N), while C has *ατιρτοπουρρις*<sup>28</sup>. Similarly, the African synonym of *μοσοσις* "madwort" in Ph, *λαναθολαβατ*, is much closer to N's *λαναθλαβατ* (or *λαναθ θλαβατ*)<sup>29</sup> than to C's *λαναθ θαλβαθ*. Finally, the African synonym of *πράσιον* "horehound" in Ph, *ατιερβερζοια*, is midway between C's *ατιερπερζοια* and N's *ατιερβερζοιλ*<sup>30</sup>.

Even more to the point is the *βούγλωσσον* entry itself. Here Ph differs from C in two crucial ways. First, the illustration in Ph, although quite similar to that in N, is so different from that in C that it appears to represent a different plant. Second, the order of the synonyms in Ph agrees with that in N and the "interpolated" codices against that in C. Wellmann used this order as evidence for his conclusion that the synonym lists of the "interpolated" codices go back not to C but rather to

references to it in the apparatus of that work. It was only by chance that I learned that it is in New York and that it contains the synonym lists.

<sup>22</sup> Dioscorides, *De materia medica* iv 127 (ed. Wellmann II 274, line 15).

<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Singer, *JHS* 47, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Dioscorides, *De materia medica* (ed. Wellmann) II xviii, xxiv.

<sup>26</sup> Singer *JHS* 47, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Wellmann's recording of these data is incomplete and occasionally inaccurate. Even his explicit assurance that a synonym is omitted in a given manuscript is not always reliable.

<sup>28</sup> Dioscorides, *De materia medica* ii 186 (ed. Wellmann I 255, line 12).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* iv 86 (ed. Wellmann II 246, line 16). Ph reads O where N reads the graphically similar Θ.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* iii 105 (ed. Wellmann II 116, line 15). I suspect that *ατιερβερζοιλ* may be the correct form, reflecting \**ḥaṣīr barzil* "iron plant". For the name, cf. Greek *σιδηρῆτις* and English *ironwort*, "so called from the belief that such mints cure sword wounds" (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary* 1195 s.v. "ironwort"). It is true that such a plant-name would have been more appropriate as a synonym of *σιδηρῆτις* (*De materia medica* iv 33), but *πράσιον* too is a mint. For Greek *οι* = Punic *i*, see n. 44, below. For Greek *τ* = Punic *ṣ*, see R. C. Steiner, *Affricated Ṣade in the Semitic Languages* (New York 1982) 60-63 (cf. also pp. 41 and 66-68).

the archetype of C and N<sup>31</sup>. The same conclusion would appear to be justified for the synonym lists of Ph.

What is the source of the reading *λασουναλφ*? Harris’ source is recorded in his glossary, in a brief parenthetical note: “*λασουναλφ* (corr. from *αλ-*)”<sup>32</sup>. In other words, Harris’ *λασουναλφ* is an *emendation* of *αλσουναλφ*<sup>33</sup>. The later scholars who cite the form *λασουναλφ* do not give a source for it, but it seems very likely that the great majority of them got it from Harris, some directly and some indirectly.

What led Harris to emend this form? One factor was certainly his assumption that Phoenician-Punic *lšn* was a noun on the *qatāl* pattern, like Hebrew *יָשָׁן*<sup>34</sup>. Another must have been his observation that Punic construct forms like *p’n’ b’l* (*Φενη Βαλ*, *Φανη Βαλ*) “face of Baal” do not exhibit the total deletion of pretonic \**a* that *αλσουναλφ* allegedly exhibits<sup>35</sup>. Finally, the fact that the difference between *α* and *λ* in the uncial script (A and Λ) is not very great probably also played a role in his thinking.

It seems to me that Harris’ initial assumption is dubious. It is not necessary to assume that Phoenician-Punic *lšn* had a reflex of \**a* in the first syllable. And there is even less reason to list this word under the rubric “Gemeinsem. \**qatālu*”<sup>36</sup>. The cognates of this word in the other Semitic languages — Akkadian *lišānu*, Aramaic *liššān*, Arabic *lišān*, Ethiopic *læssān*, etc. — have a reflex of \**i* in the first syllable<sup>37</sup>. It is simpler to assume that the reflex of \**a* in the first syllable of *יָשָׁן* is a Hebrew innovation not shared by Phoenician, which originally had an \**i* in the first syllable. Since *lbnt* also originally had \**i* in the first syllable<sup>38</sup>, it is no wonder that *albounout* and *αλσουναλφ* are so similar.

The most reasonable conclusion is that both the reduction of pretonic open-syllabic \**i* in the construct state (*αλσουναλφ*) and the reduction of antepretonic open-syllabic \**i* (*albounout*) were more complete in Phoenician-Punic than the reduction of pretonic open-syllabic \**a* in the construct state (*p’n’ b’l*, *Φενη Βαλ*, *Φανη Βαλ*)<sup>39</sup>. The reduction of \**i* in our two botanical terms was, in fact, a de-

<sup>31</sup> Wellmann, *Hermes* 33, 377-378.

<sup>32</sup> Harris, *Grammar* 115.

<sup>33</sup> I assume that the abbreviation “corr.” is for “corrected” rather than “corrupted”!

<sup>34</sup> Harris, *Grammar* 58.

<sup>35</sup> Harris, *Grammar* 36; *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 89. Harris also cites a construct *Μακομ* but the only such form listed in his glossary (p. 142) is the toponym *Μακομαδα*, which he derives from *mkm ḥdš* — not a genitive construction.

<sup>36</sup> So *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 197.

<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to know what to make of the form *liššōn* in the modern Samaritan reading tradition, recorded in Z. Ben-Hayyim, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew* (Jerusalem 2000) 429. Is it a northern dialectal form that preserves the original vowel? The Samaritan reading tradition does have certain features, such as the merger of \**š* with \**ṣ* and the contraction (monophthongization) of \**ay* in the absolute state (Ben-Hayyim, *Grammar* 35-37, 65), that appear to have a northern origin. The latter is known from the Samaria ostraca (where the word for “wine” is written *yn*), while the former appears to be attested in Phoenician (Steiner, *JNES* 59, 191), a language that exerted a strong influence on northern Hebrew. On the other hand, the gemination of *š* in *liššōn* would seem to point to contamination with Aramaic *liššān*, for, since the sibilant was not geminated in Phoenician (as shown by the reduction of *i* in *αλσουναλφ*) or Masoretic Hebrew, there is no reason to believe that it was geminated in northern Hebrew. A similar problem exists with the Samaritan reading of *יִשְׁבֹּן*, *šibbon*, which is also reminiscent of Aramaic.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the evidence from Greek, South Arabian, Cushitic, etc. cited by Müller, “Zur Herkunft” (see note 5).

<sup>39</sup> For evidence that *a* was more resistant to reduction and deletion than *i* in the Semitic

letion; it created an initial cluster that was dissolved, perhaps immediately, by the addition of a prothetic vowel.

The assumed difference between the reduction of \**i* and the reduction of \**a* may perhaps explain why the Phoenician-Punic preposition *b-* is occasionally written with a prothetic *aleph* (*'bmkdš*, *'bhy*, *'bšdn ym*, *'bbt*, *'bmsbt*) while the prepositions *k-* and *l-* are never so written<sup>40</sup>. It is generally assumed that *b-*, unlike *k-* and *l-*, was vocalized with *i* in Phoenician-Punic (as in Arabic and Ugaritic)<sup>41</sup> rather than *a* (as in Hebrew)<sup>42</sup>. On the other hand, in two divine names with prothetic *aleph*, *'šmn* and *'skn*, the evidence seems to point to the loss of an original \**a*<sup>43</sup>.

We may observe that the cluster began with the sonorant *l* in both examples, but the significance of this observation, if any, will not be clear until a systematic study of the prothetic vowel in Phoenician-Punic is undertaken. At the moment, all one can say is that one would expect initial clusters like *lb-* and *ls-* with sonorant preceding obstruent (i.e., non-sonorant) to be less stable than initial clusters like *bl-* and *sl-* with sonorant following obstruent<sup>44</sup>.

languages and elsewhere because of its greater sonority, see the literature cited in R. C. Steiner, "From Proto-Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew: The History of ך and ך׃", *Hebrew Annual Review* 3 (1979) 168-69, n. 27 and add S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Chicago 1974) 147-148 and id., "On Vowel Reduction in Aramaic", *JAOS* 104 (1984) 88, 94. I am indebted to A. Gianto for the last reference.

<sup>40</sup> So *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 95c and § 251.

<sup>41</sup> I am indebted to A. Gianto and M. G. Amadasi Guzzo for calling this to my attention.

<sup>42</sup> Note also the post-biblical Hebrew form אבבא attested in IQpHab 11:6, Mur 42:4 (Bar Kokhba), and (alongside אבבא) in Rabbinic literature, a form that has long been interpreted as [abbe:t] and compared to Punic *'bmkdš*, *'bbt*, etc.; see J. N. Epstein, סבא לשון הכתובים (Jerusalem 1948) 1258-1259; H. Yalon, "הערות לשונית ל'פטר חבקוק'", *Kiryat Sefer* 27 (1950-1951) 175, reprinted in H. Yalon, נגילות מרבר יהודה: רבני לשון (Jerusalem 1967) 69; P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. de Vaux, *Les grottes de Murabba'ât* (DJD II; Oxford 1961) 158. If our explanation is correct, we are probably obliged to attribute Hebrew אבבא to Phoenician influence, because there is no reason for a prothetic vowel to develop with \**ba-* but not \**la-* and \**ka-*. In the modern Samaritan Hebrew reading tradition, the prothetic vowel of -ב (e.g., *abyom* = אביום) has spread to -ל (e.g., *alyom* = אלוים) but not to -כ; Ben Ḥayyim, *Grammar* 316.

<sup>43</sup> *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 95b.

<sup>44</sup> More generally, such clusters are less stable if the sonorant is at the syllable boundary instead of adjacent to the vowel. This is true at the end of the word as well: word-final clusters with sonorant following obstruent (e.g., *-br*) are less stable than word-final clusters with sonorant preceding obstruent (e.g., *-rb*); see R. C. Steiner, "On the Origin of the ḥēḏer – ḥāḏār Alternation in Hebrew", *Afroasiatic Linguistics* 3 (1975) 85-102 and the literature cited there on pp. 94-96. Thus, in Punic we find anaptyxis in *kb'r* "grave", *nd'r* "vow", and *sk'r* "remembrance" but not in *αλφ*, *erslirs* = *hirš* "potsherd", *ars* = *harš* "craft", *Μελκάρθος* = *milk qart* "king of the city", and *Χουσαρθίς* = *Kūsart*; *PPG*<sup>3</sup> § 96, § 193. One example of anaptyxis cited by *PPG*<sup>3</sup> (loc. cit.) seems, at first glance, to contradict this principle: African *σοιρις/συρις* from Dioscorides, *De materia medica* ii 163 (ed. Wellmann I 227, line 20). That this is the Phoenician-Punic word *šrš* "root" is clear from the fact that the Latin name of the plant is *ράδιξ σανάρια*, but the assumptions made by *PPG*<sup>3</sup> about the vocalization of the word are open to question. The reading *σοιρις* is from N and *συρις* is found in a few late manuscripts, but C (f. 295r) may well be correct in reading *σοιρς* with only one vowel. As for the identity of that vowel, its Greek transcription is the same as that of the vowels in *φοιστ* "flax" (in *ζεραφοιστ* and *χουφοιστ*) and *γοιδ* "coriander"; Dioscorides, *De materia medica* ii 103, ii 176, iii 63 (ed. Wellmann I 177, line 20; I 244, line 18; II 74, line 14). Now, *φοιστ* corresponds to Hebrew -פס and *γοιδ* corresponds to Targumic Aramaic אָדָּי (Onqelos to Exod 16:31 and Num 11:7; cf. Yoma 75a). It is therefore possible that *σοιρς* and *σοιρις* are reflexes not of \**šurš* (as assumed by *PPG*<sup>3</sup>, loc. cit.) but of \**širš*; cf. Mandaic *širšalšarša*, Syriac *šeršā*, and colloquial Arabic *širš/šarš* (Dozy 744) — all with the meaning "root" — as well as classical Arabic *širsun/šarasun*, a thorny bush (Lane 1532). For the

Harris could have greatly strengthened the case for his emendation — or even obviated the need for it — by simply consulting Wellmann's critical edition of Dioscorides' work. In his apparatus, Wellmann records the reading of N as  $\Lambda\Sigma\text{OY}\text{NAA}\Phi$ <sup>45</sup>. Unfortunately, that reading is by no means certain, since the first two letters are imperfectly preserved<sup>46</sup>. As a result, Löw gives a different reading for N:  $\Lambda\Sigma\text{OY}\text{NAA}\Phi$ <sup>47</sup>. The readings  $\Lambda\Sigma\text{OY}\text{NAA}\Phi$  and  $\Delta\Sigma\text{OY}\text{NAA}\Phi$  are also possible. It is, therefore, likely that the beginning of our plant-name exhibits at least one case of A ~  $\Lambda$  variation in the manuscript record. Such variation is well attested among the African synonyms; indeed, we have already encountered three other cases in two plant-names above. Later in our plant-name there is yet another case, in  $-\text{AA}\Phi$  (N) vs.  $-\text{AA}\Phi$  (C Ph). It is clear that C and Ph are correct in reading  $\text{AA}\Phi$ , which is universally recognized as  $\text{ʾ}p$ , the Phoenician-Punic word for "ox". The form *albounout* is strong evidence that C and Ph are correct in reading  $\Lambda\Sigma\text{OY}\text{N}$ — as well. It suggests that the first  $\Lambda\Lambda$ -sequence of  $\Lambda\Sigma\text{OY}\text{NAA}\Phi$  is just as reliable as the second.

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merger of Greek  $\sigma$  with  $\nu$  and (later)  $\iota$ , see E. H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin* (Philadelphia 1940) 44, 52.

<sup>45</sup> Dioscorides, *De materia medica* iv 127 (ed. Wellmann II 274, line 15).

<sup>46</sup> *Codices selecti phototypice impressi*, vol. 88 (Graz, Austria 1988) 28.

<sup>47</sup> Löw, *Pflanzennamen* 403. Prudently, Sprengel records only the reading of C for our word, even though four words later he gives the readings of both C and N; Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei, *De materia medica libri quinque* I (ed. K. P. J. Sprengel; Leipzig 1829) 611, nn. 4 and 7.