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SALVATORE COSTANZA – AMPHILOCHIOS PAPATHOMAS, *I trattati divinatori greci e il dinamismo della società tardoantica e bizantina: papiri, epigrafi e fonti letterarie* (Tyche Supplementband 15). Vienna: Holzhausen Verlag, 2023. 238 pp. – ISBN 978-3-903207-74-5 (€ 105)

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*I trattati* is a book co-authored by SALVATORE COSTANZA and AMPHILOCHIOS PAPATHOMAS, both scholars who already published extensively on Greek divination. This erudite study primarily draws on divinatory material in Greek surviving either as technical manuals or as mentions in literary texts. As expected, the treatment thereof occasionally extends to Roman and broader Mediterranean contexts. As it transpires from the title and is plainly stated in the preamble (*Premessa*, p. 11), the book's aim is to apply a social-economic reading to the sources in order to derive knowledge concerning the social and economic profiles of both diviners and their clients, which includes the anxiety-inducing aspects of clients' lives, thereby illuminating societal dynamics in the late-antique and Byzantine periods.

The book comprises an introduction, ten chapters (pp. 13–185), a brief conclusion, followed by the bibliography and indices. The first section (pp. 14–26) introduces readers to various taxonomies of divination and its social significance; it also provides a cursory overview of the scholarship of divination. In chapter one (pp. 28–35) mantic is correlated with crisis and risk, while adopting a twofold periodization – Antiquity and Byzantium. If up to this point the discussion involves varieties of inductive divination, chapter two (pp. 38–55) discusses the actual corpus of evidence: the papyrological and epigraphic material concerning various mantic techniques – to some of which a 'lay' reader of divination may be less acquainted –, as well as material preserved in medieval compilations. Given that the *Sortes Astrampsychi* provide evidence for the discussion and are rightly used numerous times in the study, this corpus of *sortes* should have perhaps featured in the census of sources. The subsequent section, rather concise (pp. 58–63), categorizes divinatory methods based on the level of knowledge required and the social status of their practitioners. The fourth chapter (pp. 66–79) contains a discussion of the social profile of professionals of divination, starting with mythical figures (such as Melampous or Mopso);

it establishes a hierarchy of diviners according to their social prestige, at the top of which stood the *hieroskopoi*, and highlights the place of women and bisexuals *manteis*. The coffee cup readers of modern Greece and the Neapolitan *feminielli* offer compelling parallels that reinforce the author's observations (pp. 71&73).

The most consistent chapter (pp. 82–130) –and arguably the most insightful–, systematically traces the categories of clients of divination as they emerge from the various mantic texts under scrutiny. Oracles, dream-keys or exegeses of bodily twitches or spasms targeted explicitly merchants, soldiers, athletes, slaves –and their owners–, or even thieves, all of whom sought to obtain advice concerning their intended endeavors or their prospects. The discussion of terminology is minutiose; suffices to say, the authors point out the economic implications of words such as ὁδός (“way” or “travel”), εὐδαιμονία (“happiness”) or φίλος (“friend”). One notices that the chapter expands upon considerations previously made by COSTANZA in an essay from a remarkable collective volume.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 6 (pp. 132–149) is dedicated to women clients of divination and their specific concerns, of which matrimony, including widowhood, stands out (pp. 134–140), whereas the next chapter (pp. 152–164) covers diachronic features of divination; it looks at the diffusion of some prognosticatory techniques (e.g., extispicy) into the Greek world, including the late-Byzantine case of geomancy, and samples of pseudoepigraphy (e.g., Melampous). The next section (pp. 166–172) surveys the way mantic texts underwent changes when adjusted to the shifting realities of the late-antique Mediterranean, including the rise of Christianity. The Christianising of earlier divination does not reflect only in the incentive to pray present in the prefatory parts of various treatises, but also in the insertion of names coopted from biblical tradition (pp. 169–170). A social reading of pseudoepigraphy is the aim of chapter 9 (pp. 174–178), and the authors make a fair point in observing that ascribing authorship to famed (mythical) heroes represents most of the time “una citazione nobilitante” aimed at enticing clients (p. 175). The last pages (pp. 180–184) refer to instances of divination derivative of Graeco-Roman ones from connected realms: Jewish, Islamic, and Coptic.

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1. In ANNEMARIE LUIJENDIJK – WILLIAM KLINGSHIRN (eds), *My Lots are in Thy Hands: Sortilege and its Practitioners in Late Antiquity* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 188). Leiden – Boston, 2018, pp. 78–100.

A few aspects merit revision in a second edition.<sup>2</sup> The indices are certainly helpful for navigating the volume; due to the frequent references to papyri, I often used the *Index fontium*. However, the latter can occasionally be less reliable: e.g., the entry on P. Ryl. I 28 lacks references to pages 40, 144, 145.

These minor points aside the collaboration between COSTANZA and PATHOMAS produced a very stimulating synthesis framed around a close reading of primarily Greek divination, advocating persuasively for the latter's value in reconstructing the social history of the Greek Eastern Roman world. Although densely referenced and bound to specialized terminology, *I trattati* remains a readable book that could have perhaps reached a broader audience than its intended one: however, the authors surely assume proficiency in Greek on the part of their readership.

#### **Keywords**

divination; Antiquity; Byzantium; social history

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2. For example: at p. 44, P. Oxy. IV 773 appears as an item distinct from P. Brux. inv. E 5938 (see ALAIN MARTIN et al., *Papyrologica III. Chronique d'Égypte* 91, 181 (2016) pp. 211–224, at 211–213). At p. 106, “*Sortes Sanctorum*” is erroneously used instead of *Sortes Astrampsychi*. At p. 112, the paragraph starting with “Riguardo alla concezione” is misplaced, as it fits into the section “d)” below. At p. 145, “P. Ryl. I 21” should designate the same source discussed before and after, namely a papyrus from the Rylands collection with the shelf mark “P. Ryl. I 28.” The latter is misnamed as “P. Ryl. I 1. 31” at p. 175.