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The Power of the Phallus: Its Value in Greek Divination

Salvatore Costanza

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THE POWER OF THE PHALLUS: ITS VALUE IN GREEK DIVINATION

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RÉSUMÉ

LE POUVOIR DU PHALLUS SELON LES TRAITÉS DE DIVINATION GRECS

Cet article examine les pouvoirs attribués au phallus dans les traités divinatoires grecs, en particulier les *Oneirocritica* d'Artémidore de Daldis, le papyrus hiéroscopique *P.S.I. X 1178*, ainsi que des textes de palmomancie (interprétation des mouvements instinctifs du corps) et d'éléomancie, l'étude des grains de beauté.

MOTS-CLÉS

Métaphore phallique, divination, oniromancie, hiéroscopie, palmomancie, éléomancie, microcosme.

Besides the power commonly attributed to the phallus, Greek divination assigns to it much value in prognostic systems of divination. This article focuses on the role the phallus plays in the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus Daldianus, the hieroscopic papyrus *P.S.I. X 1178* and palmomancy (the interpretation of involuntary movements of bodily parts), as well as in elaeomancy, the study of bodily moles for divinatory purposes.

KEYWORDS

Phallic metaphor, divination, oniromancy, hieroscopy, palmomancy, elaeomancy, microcosm.

Article accepté après évaluation par deux experts selon le principe du double anonymat

The phallus has a noteworthy influence in Greek divination for its meaning as a symbol of strength and power. This value clearly appears in various prognostics relating to different methods of forecasting the future in Roman imperial times. Subsequently, it is useful to analyze ancient divinatory texts and methods revealing the power of the phallus in accordance with current frames of mind.

At first, we analyze phallic dreams according to ancient Greek techniques of interpreting oneiric materials. In Roman imperial times, dream interpretation is also focused on oneiric images of the phallus. It is noteworthy to examine the treatise of Artemidorus of Daldis, *Oneirocritica*, an extant work on this subject in five books. Artemidorus was born in Ephesus in the 2nd century, while his mother was of Daldis, a little town of Lycia, to which he wanted to link his fame, whereas many personalities have given glory to Ephesus. Artemidorus was a theorist as well a professional dream interpreter who gives a great emphasis on symbolic meanings of dreams, in order to rightly predict the future of the dreamer or someone else closely linked with him (Book I, 1) [1]. According to previous classifications inspired by the Stoic school, Artemidorus distinguishes between two types of dream phenomena, non-predictive dreams (*enhýpnia*), merely indicative of the dreamer's thoughts, and prophetic dreams (*óneiroi*). These ones were interesting as a means to foresee the future and needed another, fundamental division. He also had to further distinguish between the immediately perspicuous dreams (*óneiroi theōrēmatikoi*) that predict the future directly and come true instantly, and the symbolic ones (*óneiroi allēgorikoi*) that predict it allusively. For the former category, the *theorematic dreams*, no explanation is needed; their meaning was openly transparent, whereas the latter, the *allegorical*, were completely unclear and required the skill of an interpreter, coming true only after a certain lapse of time. The art of Artemidorus was only devoted to these types of dreams in order to explain their true meaning, thereby foreseeing what would happen in the future [2].

[1] On the work and activity of Artemidorus, see HOPFNER 1937, col. 2241-2244; ПАК 1955, p. 83-86; WHITE 1975, p. 10-12; WEBER 2000, p. 2, with further bibliography;

In his first Book dedicated to Cassius Maximus, likely the Neoplatonist, the sophist Maximus of Tyre, Artemidorus enunciates some general rules of dream interpretation. He puts bodily parts in comparison with respective symbolic functions. So, he asserts in this section, that the penis corresponds to one's parents or children and also to his wife, given that this bodily part is strictly necessary to procreate children as well as to guarantee a normal sexual life of a married couple.

Artemidorus clearly says in Book I, 2 (7-8 HERCHER):

Τὰ δὲ ἀμφὶ <τὸ> σῶμα ἢ μέρος τι σωματικὸν καὶ τὰ ἐκτός, οἷον κλινίδια ἢ κιβώτια ἢ κιστίδια καὶ τὰ ἄλλα σκεύη ἐσθήματά τε καὶ τὰ ὅμοια, καίτοι ἴδια ὄντα, πολλάκις φιλεῖ καὶ τοῖς πέλας ἀποβαίνειν κατ' οἰκειότητα τῶν χρειῶν, οἷον κεφαλὴ εἰς πατέρα, πούς εἰς δοῦλον, δεξιὰ χεῖρ εἰς πατέρα υἱὸν φίλον ἀδελφόν, ἀριστερὰ χεῖρ εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ μητέρα καὶ φίλην καὶ θυγατέρα καὶ ἀδελφήν, **αἰδοῖον** εἰς γονεῖς καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ τέκνα, κνήμη εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ φίλην. Τῶν δὲ ἄλλων ἕκαστον, ἵνα μὴ μακρολογῶμεν, οὕτω σκοπέον.

But things related to <the> body or a part of the body and also external objects such as beds or boxes or baskets and the other household based on the nature of the relationship. For example, the head refers to a father, the foot to a slave, the right hand to a father, son, friend, or brother, the left hand to a wife and mother and lover and daughter and sister, **the male penis** to the parents and wife and children, the lower leg to a wife and lover. And -to be brief- everything else should be assessed in this manner (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, p. 53 revised).

According to Artemidorus's theory, dreaming of a phallus has important consequences for one's parents. This exegetical rule for interpreting phallic visions occurs in Book I, 45 (= 42-43 HERCHER), where it is properly a matter of the penis, as we can ascertain in following quotations:

HOLOWCHAK 2002, p. 94, 101-103; PRICE 2004, p. 233-253.
[2] See KESSELS 1969, p. 391-392; FRENCHKOWKI 1995, p. 305; HOLOWCHAK 2002, p. 94-97; PRICE 2004, p. 233-235.

Τὸ **αἰδοῖον** ἔοικε γονεῦσι μὲν, ἐπεὶ τὸν σπερματικὸν ἐπέχει λόγον· τέκνοις δέ, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸ τέκνων αἴτιον, γυναικὶ δὲ καὶ ἐρωμένη, ὅτι πρὸς ἀφροδίσια ἐπιτηδεῖον ἐστίν. Ἀδελφοῖς δὲ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς καθ' αἷμα προσήκουσιν, ἐπεὶ τοῦ παντὸς οἴκου ὁ λόγος ἤρτηται ἀπὸ τοῦ **αἰδοίου**. Ἰσχύϊ δὲ καὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος ἀνδρεία, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸ τούτων αἴτιον· διὸ ἀνδρεία πρὸς τινων καλεῖται. Λόγοις δὲ καὶ παιδεία, ὅτι γονιμώτατον πάντων τὸ **αἰδοῖον** ἐστίν ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ λόγος. Εἶδον δὲ καὶ ἐν Κυλλήνῃ γενόμενος Ἑρμοῦ ἄγαλμα οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ **αἰδοῖον** δεδημιουργημένον λόγῳ τινὶ φυσικῷ. Ἔτι καὶ περιουσία καὶ κτήσει διὰ τὸ ποτὲ μὲν ἐπιτετάσθαι ποτὲ δὲ ἀνεῖσθαι καὶ παρέχειν καὶ ἀποκρίνειν δύνασθαι. Βουλευμάσι δὲ ἀπορρήτοις, ὅτι μήδεα καλεῖται τὰ τε βουλευμάτα καὶ τὸ **αἰδοῖον**. Πενία δὲ καὶ δουλεία καὶ δεσμοῖς ὅτι ἀναγκαῖον καλεῖται καὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἐστὶ σύμβολον. Πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἀξιώματος ἐπιτιμία· αἰδὼς γὰρ καὶ ἐπιτιμία καλεῖται. Τοιγάροι παρὸν μὲν καὶ μένον ἐν τῇ τάξει τῇ οικείᾳ ἐπιδιαμεῖναι τὸ παρὸν ἐκάστω ὅτι ἂν ἢ ὅμοιον τῷ **αἰδοίῳ** σημαίνει, αὐξήσαν δὲ καὶ ἐπαύξει, ἀφαιρεθὲν δὲ στερίσκει· δυσι γὰρ ἅμα **αἰδοίοις** οὐκ ἐνεστι χρῆσθαι.

Οἶδα δὲ τίνα, ὃς ἔδοξε τρία ἔχειν **αἰδοῖα** δούλος ὢν, καὶ ἐγένετο ἐλεύθερος καὶ ἀνθ' ἐνὸς ὀνόματος τρία ἔσχε, <τὰ> δύο τοῦ ἀπελευθερώσαντος προσλαβών. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἅπαξ ἐγένετο· δεῖ δὲ μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν σπανίων ἀλλὰ τῶν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἐχόντων τὰς κρίσεις ποιεῖσθαι.

The **male penis** is like parents, since it contains the generative principle. And children, since it is the cause of children. And a wife and one's lover, because it is made for sex. And also siblings and all those related to blood, since the explanation behind the entire house hinges upon the **penis**. And also the strength and manliness of the body, because the **penis** is the most fertile of all, as is speech. And I have also seen while in Cyllene an icon of Hermes that is nothing other than **genitals** crafted in a realistic fashion.

Moreover, they resemble profit and acquisition due to their ability to expand at times and at other times contract and furnish and emit. And 'unspeakable' plans, since both 'plans' and the **pudenda** are called one's 'counsel'. And also poverty and slavery and bondage because it is called one's necessity and is a signifier of need. And it is akin to respect based on reputation. For 'shame' is also called 'honour'. For, in fact, when the genitals are present and remain in their natural location, it signifies that whatever the **penis** signifies will remain in its present state. But increasing or decreasing, and increase or decrease, respectively. And, doubling, they signify that everything will be doubled except a wife or lover. Rather, one will be deprived of

these. For one has no use for two **penises**. And I know of a certain man who imagined that he, being a slave, had three **penises**, and he became free and in place of one name he received three, receiving <the> two names of the one who freed him. But this happened only once, and it is necessary to make interpretations not from rare cases but from those that occur often (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, p. 99 revised).

It is matter of testicles in the following chapter (I, 46, 43-44 HERCHER), where these sexual organs are taken into account as being near to the penis, which is the most relevant part in Artemidorus's discussion about the genitals:

Οἱ βουβῶνες οὐ μακρὰν τῶν **αἰδοίων** οὐδὲ διάφορον τι σημαίνουσιν. Ὅθεν χρή κατὰ ταῦτα τοὺς βουβῶνας τοῖς **αἰδοίοις** ἐκλαμβάνειν. Οἱ δὲ μηροὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα ἐπίσης τοῖς **αἰδοίοις** σημαίνουσι, μόνον δὲ πιαλέοι γενόμενοι τοῖς πλουσίοις ἀηδεῖς τετήρηται· ὡς γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον περὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια δαπάνας σημαίνουσι σχεδὸν δὲ οὐδὲ δαπάνας ἀλλὰ βλάβας.

The groin is not far from the **penis**, nor do they signify anything different. It is therefore necessary to interpret the groin in the same manner as the **penis**. And the thighs signify everything in common with the **penis**, except thighs that have become fat have been observed as disagreeable for the rich. For, for the most part, they signify expenditures for sex or, more precisely, not just expenditures but real damage! (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, p. 99 revised).

Further, it is interesting to read explanations given in some phallic dreams, whose interpretation is proposed by way of example in the Fifth Book. The last *Oneirocriticon* is devoted to Artemidorus's son, as well as the Fourth Book, in order to allow him the highest degree of professional excellence as dream interpreter. In his final Book, the author accounts various dreams accompanied by respective consequences for dreamers in their future life. The author gives explanatory commentaries about the semantic relation between an alleged oneiric vision, its predictive meaning and its fulfillment. Briefly to say, he intends to show through his allegorical exegesis why a given dream had necessarily to fulfill in a certain way. This procedure of interpreting oneiric frames is applied as the main rule in order to understand why a seemingly obscure vision signifies a given thing or consequence that will unavoidably occur in the next few years. Upon the dream interpreter's narrative point of view, it is inescapably matter of *real* dreams that happened sometimes. These oneiric episodes had such significance for the dreamers. Anyway, the same things will occur, if somebody else will have such a

dream. For the modern critic, it is in fact impossible to reconstruct real oneiric visions, even if we have an autobiographical dream report. That is the case for the well-known sophist of the 2nd century, Aelius Aristides, an engaged man, rhetor and otherwise a professional patient in Asclepius' temple shrines. This learned man of the second century CE was a professional observer of Asclepius's sanctuary at Pergamum, where he spent much time sleeping during his several incubation's stays. He left a journal of his dreams with regular daily or nightly apparitions of the benevolent god, whose special favour he was sure to experience all along his lifetime [3].

Let us consider phallic dream reports given by Artemidorus and their predictive significance. This is very interesting, in order to understand the mind of those times, where individual religious experience is investigated in detail.

At once, to dream of an iron phallus is not a sign of greatness nor power, as we could imagine. Indeed, it announces an omen of death on the grounds of the rust standing on the iron. So, Artemidorus says in Book V, 15 (257 HERCHER):

Ἔδοξε τις σιδήρεον **αιδοῖον** ἔχειν. Ἐγένετο αὐτῷ υἱός, ὑφ' οὗ ἀνηρέθη. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ σίδηρος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γενομένου ἰοῦ φθείρεται.

A certain man imagined that he had his **penis** made of iron. He had a son who killed him. For in fact iron is destroyed by the rust that arises from itself (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 379 revised).

Clearly, a peculiar association of ideas is here acting. The iron destroyed by the rust is the reference to predict to the dreamer that he will be killed by his own son, even if no mention of or reference to rust is counted in this dream report. That rust destroys iron is a very common idea relating to everyone's background. This otherwise means that a dream interpreter should collect much of his experience and information, in order to develop a consequent exegetical procedure.

Indeed, a fully hairy penis is linked with an omen of effeminacy and passive homosexual lifestyle in Book V, 65 (266 HERCHER):

Ἔδοξε τις τὸ **αιδοῖον** αὐτοῦ ἄχρις ἄκρας τῆς κορώνης τετριχῶσθαι καὶ λάσιον εἶναι πυκνῶν πάνυ τριχῶν αἰφνίδιον φουσῶν. Ἀποπεφασμένοις κίναϊδος ἐγένετο πάση μὲν ἀκολάστῳ χαρισάμενος ἡδονῇ [θηλυδρίας τε καὶ ἀνδρόγυνος ὄν], μόνῳ δὲ τῷ **αιδοίῳ** κατὰ νόμον ἀνδρῶν μὴ χρώμενος. Τοιγαροῦν οὕτως ἀργὸν ἦν αὐτῷ τὸ μέρος ἐκεῖνο, ὡς διὰ τὸ μὴ τριβεσθαι πρὸς ἕτερον σῶμα καὶ τρίχας ἐκφυῶσαι.

A certain man imagined that his **penis** had sprouted hair up to the very tip and suddenly became shaggy with thick, blooming hair. He became a well-known passive homosexual, delighting in every licentious pleasure, [being effeminate and a girly-boy], and did not use his **penis** in the normal manner of men. For, in this way, that part of him went unused so that, due to its not rubbing against some other body, it grew hair (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 395 revised).

Subsequently, the dream interpreter may conclude that to have a hirsute body part is a consequence of laziness. Such a meaning is not restricted to the penis, but it is also extended to other bodily parts, like the tongue and the hand.

In Book I, 32 (= 34 HERCHER), Artemidorus asserts that "to imagine having hair growing from the tongue, whether white or black, is not good" (τὸ δὲ δοκεῖν τρίχας ἔχειν ἐκ τῆς γλώττης πεφυκίας εἴτε λευκὰς εἴτε μελαίνας οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἂν εἴη, transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 87).

Moreover, hair growing from the tongue itself or from the palate or from the gums or from the teeth or from the lips is still a sign of idleness (ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς γλώσσης πεφυκέναι τὰς τρίχας ἢ ἐκ τῆς ὑπερώας ἢ ἐκ τῶν οὐλῶν ἢ ἐκ τῶν ὀδόντων ἢ ἐκ τῶν χειλῶν, *ibid.*).

In order to confirm this explanation, Artemidorus quotes the authority about this subject of an antecedent diviner and oneirocritic writer such as Apollonius the Attalean in the second book of his lost treatise [4].

And still more significantly in Book I, 42 (= 41 HERCHER), this principle has great value with respect to dreams of the hand:

τρίχας ἔχειν ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν πεφυκίας ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν καρπῶν δεσμὰ σημαίνει ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν πλατειῶν τῶν ἐντὸς σχολῆν καὶ ἀργίαν πᾶσι σημαίνει, μάλιστα δὲ γεωργοῖς καὶ χειροτέχναις· οὐκέτι γὰρ περὶ τὰ ἔργα τριβομένων τῶν χειρῶν οὐδὲ πυκνουμένης τῆς ἐπιφανείας εἰκὸς ἂν εἴη καὶ τρίχας ἀναφανῆναι.

To have hair growing from one's hands out of one's wrists signifies shackles, and from the flat of the hands on the palm-side signifies idleness and unemployment for all, and most of all for farmers and artisans. For when the hands are no longer worn away by work and the surface of the skin is not hardened, it is likely that hair will appear (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, p. 95, 97 revised).

[3] See FESTUGIÈRE 1954, p. 97-103; JOHNSTON 2008, p. 92.

[4] This is the only testimony about this writer *On Dreams* together with Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, III, 28 about a dream of a mouse and a weasel, with quotation of Attalean's second book and Melampus' book on portents and signs, see DEL CORNO 1969, p. 104.

In V, 86 (= 272 HERCHER), Artemidorus applies the above-named principle (see I, 2, 45), and he develops an interpretation based on the link between the male penis and the procreation of sons. So, he explains a specific oneiric vision as follows:

Ἔδοξέ τις γυνή τὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς **αἰδοῖον** ἀφηρημένον τοῦ λοιποῦ σώματος ἔχειν ἐν ταῖς χερσὶ καὶ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι αὐτοῦ καὶ πολλὴν ἔχειν πρόνοιαν ὅπως σώζοιτο. Ἐγένετο αὐτῇ υἱὸς ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς **αἰδοῖον** τοῦ παιδὸς ἦν σημεῖον· ἐξ αὐτοῦ γὰρ ὁ παῖς ἐγεγόνει. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀφηρέθη αὐτὸ τοῦ λοιποῦ σώματος, ἀναθρεψαμένη τὸν παῖδα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπηλλάγη.

A certain woman imagined that she was holding in her hands her husband's penis which had been removed from the rest of his body and took care of them and put much forethought into their safekeeping. She gave birth to a son by this husband, whom she raised. For her husband's penis signified the son, since from him he was born. But because they were removed from the rest of his body, after she raised the child, she separated from her husband (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 403-404 revised).

The following example in V, 87 (= 272 HERCHER) is devoted to an erotic dream referring to anal sex between a man and the god Ares. This is taken into account as a good omen. Here, Artemidorus does not explicitly speak of the male penis, but the god's sexual organ is here meant by analogy as a knife. Upon this basic prerequisite, the dream interpreter identifies the war god himself with a knife by metonymy, as he expressly says:

Ἔδοξέ τις ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἄρεως [τοῦ θεοῦ] περαίνεσθαι. Διάθεσις αὐτῷ ἐγένετο περὶ τὴν ἔδραν καὶ τὸν πόρον, καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἄλλω τινὶ τρόπῳ θεραπευθῆναι, τομῇ χρῆσάμενος ἐθεραπεύθη. Ἐσήμαινε γὰρ <ὁ μὲν Ἄρης> τὸν σίδηρον, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῇ συνηθείᾳ τὸν σίδηρον Ἄρην καλοῦμεν μετωνυμικῶς· ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ συνουσίᾳ ἡδονῇ τὸ μὴ ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ τὴν τομὴν γενέσθαι ἐδήλου.

A certain man was penetrated by Ares [the god]. A medical condition arose in him having to do with his buttocks and rectum and, because he was unable to get better by any other means, after resorting to surgery he was healed. For <Ares> signified the knife, just as we also customarily refer to a knife as 'Ares' by metonymy. And the pleasurable nature of their intercourse revealed that the surgery would not have a deleterious outcome (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 405).

Moreover, this vision offers a good omen for the dreamer, as a result that the intercourse with the god was a source of pleasure (*hēdonē*) for him. In sum, this man should have enjoyed to be penetrated by the divine phallus in his dream. If not, Artemidorus could not have deduced that this vision was a sign of a healing by the surgical procedure on this man's buttocks.

The interpretation of dreaming to have three penises instead of one, as normally, is founded about a more free association of ideas in V, 91 (272 HERCHER):

Ἔδοξέ τις τρία **αἰδοῖα** ἔχειν. Ἔτυχε δοῦλος ὦν καὶ ἐλευθερώθη καὶ τρία ἀντὶ ἐνὸς ὀνόματος ἐκτήσατο, τὰ δύο ἐκ τοῦ ἐλευθερώσαντος προσλαβών.

A certain man imagined that he had three penises. He happened to be a slave and was freed and, instead of having one name, he acquired three, receiving two more from the one who freed him (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, 405 revised).

Such a dream can prognosticate the end of slavery, given that three penises by analogy correspond to *tria nomina* according to Roman naming conventions. As a freedman, the dreamer will become a Roman citizen. Once released from slavery (*manumissio*), he will receive the *nomen* and *praenomen* of his former owner (*patronus*). This explanation shows that dreams have not the same value for everyone, as Artemidorus firstly overstated. In particular, the above-named interpretation is valuable only for slaves, while it is useless for free citizens, who already have three names. Other divinatory systems take great care of the individual's identity of their clientele. Usually, divinatory handbooks offer different prognostics, if the concerned person is a freeman or a slave, a soldier or a merchant, a girl in marriageable age or a widow. The slave (*doûlos*) is regularly quoted among the specific kinds of consulters, which are also the addressees of quiver-book, for instance in the series of four "lives" which regularly appear in *P. Flor.* III 391 [5]. Finally, current ideas about athletic life compelling young boys to chastity are the presupposition for the explanation given in V, 95 (= 273 HERCHER):

Ἔδοξέ τις ἀθλητῆς τὰ **αἰδοῖα** ἀποτεμῶν καὶ ἅμα τὴν κεφαλὴν δῆσας ἐστεφανῶσθαι. Ἐγένετο ἱερνίκης καὶ οὐκ ἄδοξος· καὶ μέχρι ἄφθορος ἦν, λαμπρῶς καὶ ἐπιφανῶς τῇ ἀθλήσει ἐχρήσατο, χαρισάμενος δὲ ἀφροδισίοις ἀδόξως κατέλυσεν.

[5] See COSTANZA 2009a, p. 11; Id. 2019, p. 88.

A certain athlete imagined that, cutting off his genitals and binding his head at the same time, he received a wreath. He became a champion in the Sacred Games and was not without esteem. And, so long as he remained chaste, he had an illustrious and conspicuous athletic career. But, delighting in sexual pleasures, he retired in ignominy (Transl. HARRIS-McCOY 2012, p. 407).

Here, oneiric emasculation is associated with a rigid chastity. This is the price the dreamer will be paying for his athletic victories. On the other hand, his sexual satisfaction in the next years will be counterbalanced by him being defeated by his competitors. Dio Chrysostom 28, 5-8 accounts of the boxer Melanchomas of Caria, the most beautiful of all, which thinks only to his matches, he does nothing else but competition. Despite his splendid athletic achievement, Melanchomas came to a pitiful end without having experienced any of the pleasures of life. He was so ambitious that on his deathbed he asked to his friend Athenodorus the pancratiast how many days were left in the competition [6].

All this ascertained, abstinence was the normal rule of life for everyone who was training in view of a match. All his energy should go into fighting. Plato uses the model of the athletes as a benchmark, given the benefits of abstinence. An ambitious athlete like Iccus from Taranto is quoted to have been the first to especially avoid sexual intercourse with either a woman or a boy during the hardest time of his training [7]. Also, many taboos in medicine precepts and philosophical writings reinforce the idea of athletes being chaste for their victory. On the contrary, sexual intercourse implies the loss of manly force. If a man accepts the pleasures of Aphrodite, his temple will wear down and he will lose his strength. He will not have anymore endurance [8]. Therefore, as a strong man, robust as a bull, every well-trained man could improve his own qualities by most rigidly observing his chastity [9].

On this prerequisites, it is easy to understand the logic applied by Artemidorus to explain of athletes dreaming of having their genitals cut off, on the grounds that not having sexual organs corresponds to a basic condition, in order to obtain their series of victories. On the other hand, to gain victory in an athletic match or not was a question frequently set in Roman times to divinatory items. Anxious sportly men were looking forward to foresee the exit of competition. A specific question if the consulter will win his match also occurs in the cleromantic set of questions and answers known as *Sortes Astrampsychi* [10].

Another divinatory example for the power of the phallus comes from a writing of the 2nd century CE, that is a text contemporary to Artemidorus's *Oneirocritica* or Aelius Aristides's oneiric reports. We quote a Graeco-Egyptian papyrus now in Florence (*P.S.I.* X 1178). It relates to hieroscopy (ἱεροσκοπία), a divinatory method performed in the realm of temple bloody sacrifice by inspecting animal entrails, especially the liver, and scrutinizing any irregularity or ostensible particularity like color, shape, absence or oversize of lobes to be observed [11]. Hieroscopy was already well attested in Ancient Mesopotamia and Near Eastern areas with authoritative influence in the cultic-political life of society [12]. Sacrificial divination is unknown to Homeric epics, while tragic poets of the 5th century describe it as a coherent system wholly developed. From the last quarter of the 6th century onward, it results in the most practiced expertise of Greek divination, especially in military contexts [13]. Connections with Near Eastern hepatoscopy is quite relevant. It is reasonable to state the borrowing of hieroscopy into Greece during the Dark Age through West-Semitic areas of Asia Minor. It seems very likely that hieroscopy actually originated in the Ancient Near East, where liver divination was previously exercised by a priesthood under the command of kings. Such a technique was borrowed from Mesopotamia to Greece between the 8th and 6th century BCE. Cyprus could have been the ideal station for this cultural transfer [14].

[6] See MILLER 1991, p. 161-162.

[7] Plato, *Leges* VIII, 839e-840a; Aelianus, *Varia Historia* XI, 3, *Historia Animalium* VI, 1; see FOUCAULT 2004, p. 124, 172.

[8] See Homerus, *Odysseia* X, 341; Ps.-Aristoteles, *Problemata* IV, 6; Galenus, *De semine* I, 16, p. 585 K.; *Aretas* IV, 5, p. 71 H.; Aetius in Photius *Bibliotheca*, cod. 231, i p. 177b 31, HOPFNER 1940, col. 50-64, esp. 62. According to medical thought, sex provokes the lost of energy, δύναιμις. Therefore, it weakens one's motion and mind. See parallels in Latin Poetry by Ovidius, *Amores* III, 11, 13-14; Propertius II, 16, 27; *Scholion to Persius* I, 18.

[9] On this topic, see HOPFNER 1940, col. 63-64; BURKERT 1972, p. 117 with nt. 43; PARKER 1983, p. 84; FOUCAULT 2004, p. 25. Such a conception is acting still today, it inspires the camp pre-match, which are organised in order to keep the sport-players in solitary confinement and compel them to a temporary sexual abstinence.

[10] See VAN DER HORST 1998, p. 166 with n. 96 on this known example of a question, which is changed into: "Should I be elected as bishop?" in Medieval manuscripts. After the end of ancient Greek athletic games, this question

had not more sense, while competition for a career in the church was very hard, see also LANE FOX 1987, p. 677.

[11] The Greeks named the technique under a great number of titles. Beyond *hieroskopía*, we find frequently terms such as *hieromanteía*, *hēpatoskopía*, *splanchnoskopía*, *thyoskopía*, *thytikē*, *bōmoskopía*.

[12] The 7th century's Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal actively promoted divination including hieroscopy. On Assyro-Babylonian hieroscopy, see BOISSIER 1905; BEZOLD 1905, p. 246-248; DILLON 1932; JEYES 1989, p. 52; STARR 1990; DIETRICH-LORETZ 1990 for Ugaritic liver-divination; GUINAN 2002, p. 19, 24, 2; SWECK 2002, p. 42-44; GLASSNER 2012, p. 30-39.

[13] See JAMESON 1991, p. 198; FLOWER 2008, p. 25.

[14] For the invention of hieroscopy by Cypriots, see Tatianus, *Adversus Graecos* I, 1, 6; BURKERT 1975, p. 76-78; WEST 1997, p. 46-47. On sacrificial divination linked with the island, as archaeological and epigraphical proofs from the temple of Apollo's 'The Sacrificer' (*Magēiros*) at Pyla show, see BESQUES 1936, p. 3-5; ROBERT 1978, p. 338-344 = Id. 1989, p. 640-646; DETIENNE 1989, p. 12-13.

It is credited to be the homeland of Greek sacrificial divination and undeniably played the main role as a bridge between West Semitic peoples and Greece, as confirmed by archaeological evidence [15].

Despite long-dating philosophical objections [16], hieroscopy had a wide favor of practitioners who were drawing revelation from the entrails of temple victims. By examining the entrails, the diviner develops a topographic lecture about splits and lines on their surface, in order to find prophetic signs [17].

The most useful testimonies on this matter are the practical handbooks of *observationes* preserved by Greek papyri on hieroscopy (2nd-3rd century CE), which provide exhaustive information about the effectiveness of practice in cultic life of hieroscopy linked to a priestly class [18]. Indeed, no Medieval manuscripts are extant. There are still available fragments from lost works *On Sacrifices* (*Peri thysiôn*) written by Atthidographers like Philochorus (4th/3rd century), who were strongly interested in religious traditions [19].

In *P.S.I. X 1178*, a prophecy about a hepatic lobe reveals the common ideas linked with the male sexual organ as source of strength. This 2nd century CE papyrus lists good and bad presages drawn by every aspect and peculiar sign remarked on a liver's parts and interpreted in favor of the one who purchased the sacrifice [20]. As usually, terms of human anatomy are transferred to hepatic parts: the liver of a victim, usually a sheep, is conceived as a man on scale. It is represented as a microcosm of a human being [21]. Subsequently, we read in *P.S.I. X 1178*, Fragment I, ll. 6-7:

ἀγα[[θός δὲ κ]ᾶν αἰδοῖ εὐίκη ἀνδρὸς ἢ παιδός· ἰσχὺν /
γὰρ καὶ κράτ[ος ση]μαίνει ἔσεσθαι τοῖς θύουσιν.

It is good if it resembles the **sexual organ** of a man or a child, for it signifies that the sacrificers will have strength and might [22].

A liver lobe looking exactly like a manly or childish penis signifies strength. This shows a main element of the like-to-like principle between microcosm and macrocosm ruling over the prerequisites of interpretation for sacrificial divination, where the victim's organ is seen to mirror the universe on scale. The liver is meant as a *homunculus* [23]. Therefore, we also read of the "head" (Greek *kephalē*, Latin *caput iocineris*), "feet" (*pódes*), "chest" (*stêthos*) within the liver [24]. This rule was applied as well as a bilateral division between the right and left side [25].

In ancient Greek divination, the penis was also considered in itself neither as a subject of oneiric vision nor as a likeness to hepatic lobes. It was notoriously a material source of prognostication in the specimen of palmomancy, that is, quiver-divination. This is a predictive method of interpreting spasms, tremors and involuntary movements of every bodily part [26].

At first, we quote a 4th century CE palmomantic papyrus, *CPG 2 = P. Ryl. I 28*, from the John Rylands Library of Manchester, a pocket-book of Late Antiquity. At l. 41-49 (*CPG*, p. 56) we have the following prognostics for a quivering penis:

Αἰδοῖον ἐὰν ἄλληται, πολ-
λὰ ἀποβάλλει ὁ τοιοῦτος
ἔχων δὲ τέκνα γηροβο-
σκηθή(σεται), ἐν δανίοις δὲ
ὑπάρχων ἀποδώσει.
Βάλανος ἢ ἐπιδερμὶς
ἐὰν ἄλληται, εὐφρασίαν
δηλοῖ· γυναικὶ δὲ [[κε]] κέρ-
δος μετὰ ψόγου δηλοῖ.

[15] See FURLEY & GYSEMBERGH 2015, p. 7; COSTANZA 2016, p. 437-441.

[16] Plato, *Timaeus*, 71c-e discredits the liver examination, once the victim is dead, this organ is drained of rational influence and it is not useful for prophetic ends, see LEHMANN 1898, p. 59-61, 75; HOPFNER 1928b, col. 1284. Objections against liver examination were strengthened by the Neo-Platonist Porphyry devoted to a spiritual worship, see his treatise *De Abstinencia* II, 28, 4, II, 31, 1-2. See VERNANT 1981, p. 16.

[17] A possible validity of the reading of the lines of the liver in order to prophesize is expressed with a scoffing irony by Cicero, *De divinatione* II, 28.

[18] See *P.S.I. X 1178* (= Pack² 2107), *P. Ross. Georg.* I 21 (= Pack² 2108), 2nd c.; *P. Gen. inv.* 161 (= Pack² 2106, LDAB 8895), 2nd-3rd c.; *P. Amh.* II 14 (= Pack² 2104), 3rd-4th c.

[19] On Philochorus, cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, I, 21, 134, l. 6; Suda, φ 441 s. v. *Philochoros* = *FGrH*, T3b, 328T1, where he is defined as a "seer and hieroskopos" (μάντις καὶ ἱεροσκόπος); Scholion to Euripides, *Alcestis*, 968, see also MONTERO 1997, p. 152; DILLERY 2005, p. 221. On Demon, see *FGrH*, T3b, 327 T2.

[20] See various sentences relating to the promoters of sacrifice in *P.S.I. X 1178* (τοῖς θύουσιν l. 7, τὸν θύοντα l. 16).

[21] See Furley & Gysembergh 2015, p. 2.

[22] Transl. FURLEY & GYSEMBERGH 2015, p. 73.

[23] Hephaestio of Thebe, *Apotelesmatica*, III, 6, 12: τὸ δὲ δεξιὸν μέρος τοῦ σπλάγγνου προσέσκει τῷ ὑπὲρ γῆν ἡμισφαίριῳ, τὸ δὲ εὐώνυμον τῷ ὑπὸ γῆν. Hübner 2003, p. 6 puts out the connection between the sides of entrails in a sacrificial victim and the visible, that is, the right side, and the invisible, that is, the left hemisphere, given by Hephaestio.

[24] For Ancient and modern definitions of hepatic parts, cf. Hephaestio of Thebe, *Apotelesmatica*, III, 6, 11-17 quoted and discussed by PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ 2005, p. 168-173 (without reference to Greek papyri on hieroscopy).

[25] On differences between propitious and unpropitious side according to various diviners and interpreters of hieroscopy, see Hippocrates, *De morbis acutis et chronicis* III 2, 240, 10-244, 1 (ed. Littré) = 39, 12-20 (ed. Joly) καὶ ἐν ἱεροσκοπῇ τὰ τοιάδε εὖροι τις ἀν' ἄλλα ἐπ' ἄλλοισιν· ἀλλ' ἔνιοι τῶν μαντιῶν τὰναντία τούτέων. For the liver at the sacrificial moment as a 'world's mirror', at whose surface the priest had to find the see of deities in places rigidly oriented and corresponding each other, see BLOCH 1963, p. 52.

[26] See RUELLE 1908, p. 137-141; DIELS 1908, p. 7; HALLIDAY 1913, p. 172-183; HOPFNER 1928, col. 1279; Id. 1949, col. 259-262; MEGA 1942, p. 118-120; COSTANZA 2009a, p. 9-11; Id. 2019, p. 78-80.

If the **penis** quivers, this person will have a great loss, he will have children but he will grow old and he will repay his debts.
If the **glans** or the skin around it quiver, it denotes joy, but for the woman gain with blame [27].

The first phallic prognostic is quite ill-omened. It echoes the Artemidorus's idea (V, 15) of a loss or failure to suffer in one's old age. A fully favorable idea is associated to the spasm of the glans with the remark that the woman will enjoy a financial gain connected with blame. Here, it is a matter of social blame regularly predicted for female people, girls of marriageable age or widows, who were particularly exposed to male violence as well as bad prejudice [28]. Upon this perspective, a reprehensible gain announced to the woman in our palmomantic papyrus is somehow linked to her sexual misconduct. Quiver-literature is also attested by medieval manuscripts and printed books of the 16th century. In the greatest version of medieval palmomancy (= *versio* A) § 126 (CPG, p. 136), the diviner says:

Βάλανος ἀλλομένη δούλω εἰς Ἀφροδίτην ἐλθεῖν δηλοῖ.

The **glans** quivering denotes pleasure of Venus for the slave.

In the following predictions of *versio* A, the diviner interprets the predictive meaning of quivering testicles:

128 Ὁρχις δεξιὸς ἀλλόμενος βίου καὶ τέκνων ἐπίκτησιν δηλοῖ.

129 Ὁρχις εὐώνυμος ἀλλόμενος εὐωχίαν καὶ γυναικὸς ὠφέλειαν δηλοῖ.

128 The right testicle quivering denotes acquisition of life and sons.

129 The left testicle quivering denotes a rich meal and pleasures of a woman.

In the second largest recension of Medieval quiver-books (*versio* B) it is again matter of the spasm of male penis. See B 110 (p. 159):

Αἰδοῖον πάλλον περι τέκνων χαρὰν δηλοῖ.

The male penis quivering denotes joy for children.

As already seen in Artemidorus's oneirocritical rules of interpretation, the penis is linked with one's children, because it is the organ for procreation.

A general prognostic of joy is given in version B 112:

Βάλανος ἢ ἐπιδερμὶς πάλλουσα εὐφρασίαν δηλοῖ.
The glans or the skin around it quivering denote joy.

For the testicles, the prediction concerning the left is lost, while we have a good omen for the right. See still in version B:

113 Ὁρχις δεξιὸς πάλλων ἀγαθὸν σημαίνει.

114 < Ὁρχις εὐώνυμος ... >

113 The right testicle quivering signifies something good.

114 <And the left....>

Beside the major versions A, B, we know two shortest and latest recensions of Medieval times (C, D), where the demotic evolution of Greek language clearly influences the linguistic *facies*. In the Version C assigned in the manuscript from Vienna to Hermes Trismegistus, there are not predictions related either to the penis or testicles and genitals. May it be a sign of a censored description about bodily quivers in Byzantine times? In other terms, may we deduce that the author of this compilation consciously deleted any reference to sexual organs in his final arrangement? Or is it only the result of text tradition from Late Antiquity to Byzantine times to have removed phallic omens in this version?

Anyway, the either late version D quotes a prognostic devoted to both testicles (p. 190) with the adding of a preliminary paragraph on the upper part of them, according to a previous distinction usual in Greek anatomy of imperial times, as Rufus of Ephesus in his work *On the Names of the Parts of the Human Body* attests [29]:

71 Τὸ ὑποκάτω τῶν ὄρχεων, ψόγον διὰ γυναικὸς δηλοῖ.

72 Ὁρχις δεξιὸς εἰάν ἄλληται, πρὸς ὀλίγον λύπην δηλοῖ.

73 Ὁρχις εὐώνυμος εἰάν ἄλληται, ἀγαθὸν δηλοῖ.

71 The lower part of testicles denotes blame because of a woman [30].

72 If the right testicle quivers, denotes grief for a brief time.

73 If the left testicle quivers, denotes a good thing.

[27] For the metaphoric use of this term drawn from botany and first referring to oak's acorn, see Skoda 1988, p. 161-163.

[28] See Costanza 2019, p. 88-89.

[29] Rufus of Ephesus, *De corporis humani partium*

appellationibus 106 p. 13 (ed. Clinch): opposes lower and upper part of this organ: τῶν δὲ διδύμων τὸ μὲν ἐπάνω κεφαλή, τὸ δὲ κάτω πυθμὴν, see Skoda 1988, p. 167.

[30] In *Versio* D, an article concerning the upper part of testicles is possibly lost before § 71.

This being attested for quiver-books, it is interesting to remark that the man is also evident as a *mundus minor* in a later prophetic method equally relating to body divination. We must take in account elaeomancy, that is, the study of natural bodily moles (Greek *elaía*, Latin *naeuus*) for divinatory purposes (ἐλαιοσκοπία) in the realm of physiognomy. In this case, the diviner deduces the future destiny of individuals by observing moles on any parts of the body. On these grounds, he also foresees one's moral and psychological features. A treatise *On Body Moles (De naeuus)* of early Byzantine times is attributed to Ps.-Melampus. Under this name, we know a work founded on detailed elaeoscopical conjectures discussed in order from head to toe (*a capite ad calcem*). For every mole (*elaía*), the author offers two distinct answers, one for men and the other for women. This tract was popular enough to be published in the mid-16th century [31], a translation into Demotic Greek also circulated, proving the survival of such superstitions in modern Greece [32]. An anonymous reworking of this treatise is also known, where the predictions are listed in two different sequences of presages upon the distinction of sex, starting from prophecies for men and then for women [33].

If we analyze elaeomantic prognostics, we may deduce the relation between the mole (ἐλαία) and its predictive consequences. So, if someone has a mole on his lips or his stomach, he will be a very greedy person, that is, he will be an example of πολυφαγία (gluttony). If he has moles on his hands, indeed, of πολυτεχνία (handiness), he will be excellent in every manual labour.

Subsequently, if someone has a mole on his penis, it should forecast, that he will give birth to males (ἀρρενογονία).

So, we quote the *versio B On Moles* (Ἐλαιοσκόπιον <ἀρρένων καὶ θηλέων>) in the sequence specifically destined to male consulters: Ἀρρένων § 13 a:

Εἰ δὲ ἐν τῷ αἰδοίῳ, ἀρρενογόνος.

If there is a mole on his sexual organ, he will procreate male sons.

Apart from moles on the penis, we remark a metaphorical value according to current folk ideas. With regard to this, it is noteworthy for the moles on the nose. This part of the face is meant in its

literal sense in *versio B* § 5a in the series for men. Subsequently, it gives a prognostic of having a good perfume (εὐοσμία):

Εἰ δὲ ἐν τῇ ῥίνι, εὐοσμος ἔσται καὶ καλοθελής.

If he has a mole on his nose, he will be perfumed and of good will.

But there is a wholly different idea in the *versio A*. Here, a clear phallic transposition is acting, given that the nose is conceived as a second phallus. The Pseudo-Melampus forecasts, as it follows:

5 a) Ἐὰν ἢ εἰς τὴν ῥίνα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἡ χροία αὐτῆς ἔσται πυρός, ἀκόρεστος ἔσται τῆς συνουσίας, ἐπειδὴ καὶ εἰς τὸ κρυπτόν ἐλαίαν ἔχει. b) Ἐὰν ἢ εἰς τὴν ῥίνα ἢ εἰς τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τῆς γυναίκος, ὁμοίως ἀποβήσεται τῷ ἀνδρὶ, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ εἰς τὸ κρυπτόν ἐλαίαν ἔχει καὶ ἀκόρεστος γενήσεται τῆς συνουσίας.

5 a) If it is on the **nose** of the man, and its colour is of fire, he will be insatiable of sexual intercourse, while he also has a mole on his **sexual organ**. b) If it is on the **nose** or the eye of the woman, it will equally happen with her, because she too has a mole on her **sexual organ** and she will become insatiable of sexual intercourse.

Correspondingly, the Modern Greek translation (= *versio C On Moles*) prophesies:

4 a) Μίτιν· ἐὰν εἰς τὴν μύτην τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ τὸ χρῶμά του ἦναι κόκκινον, δὲν χορταίνει συνουσίαν, διότι ἔχει καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀπόκρυφον μέλος ἐλαίαν. b) Τὸ αὐτὸ παθαίνει ἡ γυναῖκα, ἐὰν ἔχη εἰς τὴν μίτι<v> ἢ εἰς τὸ μάτι.

4 a) The **nose**: if it is on the **nose** of the man and its colour is red, he will not be satiated of sexual intercourse, because he has a mole also on his **sexual organ**. b) The woman suffers the same, if she has a mole on her **nose** or on her eye.

The divinatory treatise *On Moles, versio A* asserts that someone will be insatiable of sexual intercourse

[31] At first by Camillo Peruschi in the margin of his *editio princeps* of Aelianus, *Varia Historia*, Romae 1545. The last editor is still Franz 1780, p. 501-08. English Translation by IRBY-KEYSER.-KEYSER 2002, p. 343-344, who considers, however, Melampus, as a real living author of Hellenistic times.

[32] It is preserved by ms. *Athen. Bibl. Nat.* 1275 (γ. 1862), fol. 50: Περὶ τῆς σημασίας τῶν τοῦ ἐλαίων τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὅπου ἔχει εἰς τὸ σῶμα, another version

is to be read in a code of the same collection (1350, fol. 77^v); see DELATTE 1924, p. 101-103; MEGA 1942, p. 155-162; GREENFIELD 1995, p. 144; COSTANZA 2013. [33] Tract *On Moles of Males and Females* (ἀρρένων καὶ θηλέων), preserved by ms. *Par. Gr.* 2381, fol. 56: Ἐλαιοσκόπιον ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν; *Laur. Plut.* 28.14, fol. 301^v: Ἐλαιοσκοπία <ἀρρένων καὶ θηλέων>. Cf. *Scor. I Φ* 5, fol. 411: Τοῦ σοφοτάτου Ἀκταρίου λόγος περὶ ἐλαίων, inc. τὸν περὶ συνθέσεως ἐλαίων.

(ἀκόρεστος ... τῆς συνουσίας), if he or she has a mole on his or her nose, given the *simile* of the nose identified with the phallus. The association between nose and *πέος* corresponds to a very common popular concept. This is an extremely productive idea. In fact the manly penis is meant as the other *nose*. In Greek tradition, this folk idea goes back at least to the Iambic poet of the 6th century BCE Hipponax of Ephesus. See Fr. 78. 14 West, see 22 and 118. 1 West [34].

Also the Latin epigrammist Martial says in Book VI, 36 [35]:

*Mentula tam magna est, quantus tibi, Papyule,
nasus
Vt possis, quotiens arrigis, olfacere.*

His tool was large and so was his nose, / Papyrus
could smell it whenever it rose.

We would not believe that the Byzantine writer *On Moles* hidden under the pseudonym of Melampous was aware of such poetical antecedents. Anyway, we remark that the art of prognostication by moles draws its prophecies from the same frame of mind employed by Hipponax and Martial in their poems. In *versio* A, further elaeoscopic prophecies concern moles found on the penis. There are a prediction given to men and women with no further distinction (23ab) and another depending on the male or female sex of consulters (24 a, b) :

23 a, b) Ἐὰν εἰς τὸ κρυπτόν, ἄλληστοι ἀπὸ τῆς συνουσίας ἔσσονται.

24 a) Ἐὰν εἰς τὸ φυσικόν, ὁ μὲν ἀνὴρ ἀρσενογόνοσ ἔσται. b) Ἡ δὲ γυνή, τοῦναντίον.

23 a, b) If there is a mole on their **sexual organ**, they will be insatiable of sexual intercourse.

24 a, b) If there is a mole on his **penis**, the man will procreate male children, b) The opposite, if it is on the sex of a woman.

Here, Modern Greek *versio* C translates:

21 a, b) **Κρυφὰ μέλη**: ἐὰν εἰς τὰ κρυφὰ μέρη (i.e. μέλη) ἔχουν, ποτὲ δὲν χορταίνουσι συνουσίαν.

22 a, b) **Φύσιν** τοὺς ἐπάνω: ἐὰν τὴν ἔχουσι ἐπάνω εἰς τὴν φύσιν τοὺς, ὁ μὲν ἀνὴρ γίνεται ὡσὰν γυναῖκα καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ὡς ἄνδρας.

This notion is echoed by the Humanist poet Antonio Beccadelli called Il Panormita, that is, The Palermitan, since he was from Sicily, in his masterpiece *Hermaphroditus* (1425) VIII:

*De Ursae tentigine et naso
Si multus multae est nasus tentiginis index,
Ursae tentigo tenditur usque ad pedes.
Quin si multa ampli nasi tentigo sit index,
Nasus ad usque tuum tenditur, Ursa, genu.
Upon the lechery of Ursa and her nose.*

If a big nose is indicative of a great lechery,
Ursa's lechery goes just to her feet.
But, if a great lechery is an indication of a big
nose,
your nose, Ursa, is down to your knee.

This joke develops the idea already attested by mole-divination that a big nose is linked with insatiable desire for sexual intercourse. A very ancient idea that also goes back to Byzantine and modern times, as our prophecies assure, having a large credit.

Finally, the phallus seems to play an important role in Greek divinatory treatises with undeniable overtones linked with well spread folkloric ideas. Reading prophecies relating to male sexual organs allows us to better understand the frames of mind on this subject in ancient times. In fact, diviners were obliged to share the thought of their clients in order to start a satisfactory interactionist process. The results of our enquiry confirm how handbooks on ancient divination usefully overstate common beliefs. In sum, an educated theorist like the dream interpreter Artemidorus as well as the professionals on mole predictions in early Byzantine times share similar procedures of interpreting the omens with regard to the very productive association of ideas connected to the phallus. ■

[34] See the enquiry about this topic in DEGANI 1980, p. 514 = ID. 2004, p. 82; ID. 1998, p. 13-15 = ID. 2004, p. 165-167.

[35] Transl. F. PITT-KETHLEY, in SULLIVAN-WHIGHAM 1987, p. 235.

ABBREVIATIONS / ABRÉVIATIONS

CPG: Costanza 2009a.

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