MANTIC PERSPECTIVES:
ORACLES, PROPHECY AND PERFORMANCE

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ANCIENT NECROMANCY: FACT OR FICTION?

Necromancy was a mode of divination that, for a long time, drew only a moderate measure of interest from.[1] In the last few decades, however, more studies of necromancy have appeared than in the entire previous century. Recent interest in the topic has coincided with the increased popularity of studies in ancient magic, and it is, therefore, not surprising to find a whole book dedicated to necromancy, viz. Daniel Ogden's *Greek and Roman Necromancy*.[2] Now even he must have realised that a book-length study was

1 Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-Ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber. Seine Methoden* (Leipzig 1924), 148–63; *idem*, 'Nekromantie', RE 16 (Stuttgart 1935), 2218–34; F. Cumont, *Lux perpetua* (Paris 1949), 96–108; E.R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford 1973), 207f.

2 M.W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London and New York 2001), 237–9; D. Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton 2001); Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (New York and London 2002), 71–86; C. Faraone, 'Orpheus' Final Performance: Necromancy and a Singing Head on Lesbos', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 97 (2004), 5–27, 'A Skull, a Gold Amulet and a Ceramic Pot: Evidence for Necromancy in the Vigna Codini?', *MHNH: Revista Internacional de Investigación sobre Magia y Astrología Antiguas* 5 (2005), 27–44 and 'Necromancy goes underground: the disguise of skull- and corpse-divination in the Paris Magical Papyri (PGM 4.1928–2144)', in S.I. Johnston and P.T. Struck (eds), *Mantikê. Studies in Ancient Divination* (Leiden 2005), 255–82; S.I. Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (Oxford 2008), 171–5; K. Beerden, ''Dismiss me. Enough': A comparison between Mesopotamian and Greek necromancy', in R. Rollinger *et al.* (eds), *Interkulturalität in der Alten Welt* (Wiesbaden 2010), 265–81; W. Friese, 'Facing the Dead: Landscape and Ritual of Ancient Greek Death Oracles', *Time and Mind* 3 (2010), 29–40 (*non vidi*).

overdoing things, as he noted at the beginning of his analysis: 'There is little in any of our fields of evidence – arguably even none of it – that, when pressed, can be taken to document directly any specific historical performance of necromancy in antiquity. There is, then, a sense in which this is less a history of necromancy itself in antiquity, than a history of ancient ideas, beliefs, and prejudices about it' (xxii–xxiii). Speaking in football terms, one must say that Ogden put the ball right in front of the goal and that, sooner or later, somebody would kick the ball in. Indeed, in a severe but clear review, Fritz Graf argued that:

> the main problem is the concept of necromancy itself, with its heavy Judeo-Christian overtones: it is not very useful to an understanding of the ancient evidence that connects deceased humans and oracular power. Language shows that Greeks conceived of methods, places, and persons who would deal with and even draw prophecies from restless dead. The meaning of the Greek term νεκυομαντεία speaks for itself, but it is rare, literary, and polemical, as is Cicero's *necyomanteia*, which denigrates Appius Claudius as an adept of almost criminal Greek hocus-pocus. Earlier, but still rare, are ψυχαγώγιον, νεκυομαντεῖον, and ψυχοπομπεῖον as the places where souls could be placated (not asked about the future), and ψυχαγωγοί as the specialists who dealt with restless souls. Greeks thus know of persons who claimed to lay ghosts and of appropriate places apt for this. In the common imagination, there existed also rites (see Aeschylus' *Persae* and Cicero's attack on Appius Claudius); but they were entirely fictional – and different from Odysseus' rites at the outset of the *Nekyia* that were only later called necromancy. The modern associations of necromancy are manifest in the literary polemics only, but they are irrelevant at best, and rather deleterious to our understanding of Homer, Aeschylus, or Herodotus' Periander.[3]

3 F. Graf, *Classical World* 99 (2006), 459–60.

I have quoted Graf in full here, as he clearly sets out his ideas, which I may summarize as follows: (1) the term 'necromancy' is misleading, as it carries Judaeo-Christian overtones; (2) earlier mentions of necromancy do not concern divination via the dead but placation of the dead; (3) modern associations are manifest in literary polemics only, and (4) reports of necromantic rites are wholly fictional. It is no wonder, then, that the latest discussion of necromancy by Sarah Iles Johnston states: 'It must be emphasized that, in spite of the fact that the Greeks and Romans liked to *think* (her italics) about necromancy, they seldom or never practiced it'.[4]

There can be little doubt that Graf rightly criticises Ogden for exaggerating the importance of ancient necromancy. Yet one may also wonder if Graf himself, in turn, does not overstate his own case in some of the points he makes. I will therefore take a fresh look at the evidence by concentrating on the four main points of his argument isolated above. Let us start with the question of terminology. First, it is important to realise that 'necromancy' is a modern, somewhat generic term referring to a group of (sometimes alleged) ancient practices. In fact, there are at least four emic Greek and Roman terms which are all subsumed under our etic term 'necromancy', namely Greek *psychagôgia*, *nekromanteia*, *nekyomanteia* and Latin *necyomanteia* and *sciomantia*. Moreover, each term has its own history. The oldest of them is *psychagôgia*, and its practitioners, the *psychagôgoi*, are attested as early as Aeschylus. *Necyomanteia* is the title of a mime of Laberius (c. 105–43 BC), which 'appears to be a Latinised form of the Greek feminine noun *nekyomanteia* ('prophecy of the dead')'.[5] But the other terms all postdate the beginning of the Christian era. This fact alone should already

4 Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 97. This conclusion is a shift away from Johnston, *Restless Dead* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1999), 85.

5 C. Panayotakis, *Decimus Laberius: the fragments* (Cambridge 2010), 301.

alert us to the fact that we are dealing with changing ideas and/or practices regarding what we nowadays call 'necromancy'.

Ogden dedicates quite a few pages to the psychagogues, but without any chronological differentiation. All testimonies are thrown together from the early classical age to late antiquity. This will not do – later ideas clearly influenced the reporting of earlier beliefs and practices. In fact, we have very little early evidence about their activities. Yet it is obvious that the psychagogues were considered to be able to conjure up souls of the dead from the underworld. But what does the term mean exactly? At first, I thought that *psychagôgos*,[6] like *paidagôgos*, evokes the image of the domestication of a horse by the leading rein, *agôgeus*.[7] But there really is no evidence that the ancients saw the souls of the dead as an unruly lot, which makes the explanation less plausible. But Greek *agein* can also mean 'transport by sea/over water',[8] and I would suggest that, originally, *psychagôgos* meant 'soul-transporter', as in a fragment of Sophocles' satyr (?) drama *Cerberus* Charon says: 'only those who have died *psychagôgountai*' (F 327a Radt). In her authoritative commentary on the *Birds* Nan Dunbar translates the title of Aeschylus' play, *Psychagôgoi* with 'The Ghost-Raisers',[9] but this wrongly introduces the modern idea of spooky phenomena.[10]

6 Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 95–110.

7 C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham and London 1997), 215.

8 Cf. J.L. García Ramón, 'Thessalian Personal names and the Greek Lexicon', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 148 (2007), 29–67 at 42, who compares Thuc. 6.22.1; Herond 2.17.

9 N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Oxford 1995), 711.

10 For ghosts in antiquity, see V. Zangara, *Exeuntes de corpore: discussioni sulle apparizioni dei morti in epoca agostiniana* (Florence 1990); D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome: ghost stories from classical antiquity* (Austin 1999); Johnston, *Restless Dead*; A. Stramaglia, *Res inauditae, incredulae. Storie di fantasmi nel mondo greco-latino* (Bari 1999); D. Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford, 20092). Note also P. Aretini, *I fantasmi degli antichi tra Riforma e Controriforma. Il soprannaturale greco-latino nella trattatistica teologica del Cinquecento* (Bari 2000).

However, our evidence does not allow us to say with Graf that the main task of the psychagogue was to placate restless souls. In Aeschylus' *Persians* King Darius, who is hardly a restless soul, is conjured up from his tomb with 'psychagogic wails' (687). Similarly, when Admetus sees Alcestis, he wonders if he sees a ghost from the underworld, but Heracles assures his host that he is a 'guest friend not a psychagogue' (Eur. *Alc.* 1128),[11] and that Alcestis is not a restless soul. The contemporary presence of religious specialists that were able to bring the souls of the dead up from the underworld is also suggested by Empedocles' promise to his pupil Pausanias that he will be able 'to lead up from Hades the *menos* of a dead man' (B 111 DK), hardly surprising as the climax of his magical tricks.

The reference to the wails in Aeschylus' *Persians* perhaps suggests that words and sounds were more important for these specialists than specific rituals, even though we are treated to several ritual details in the *Persians* and in a fragment of Aeschylus' satyr drama *The Psychagogues* (F **273a Radt), which was situated near a lake, probably Lake Avernus in Italian Cumae. The personnel of its local oracle of the dead were actually called *psychagôgoi*;[12] in fact, the connection between *psygagôgia* and water is also apparent from the words of Charon in the already quoted fragment of Sophocles. Indeed, the importance of words is supported by the fact that by the late fifth century BC the verb *psychagôgein* was metaphorically

11 Note also the reference to ritual necromantic details in Eur. F 912 Kannicht.

12 Persians: S. Eitrem, 'The Necromancy in the Persai of Aischylos', *Symb. Osl.* 6 (1928), 1–16; C. Muntz, 'The Invocation of Darius in Aeschylus' Persae', *Classical Journal* 106 (2011), 257–71. Cumae: Aeschylus F 273 Radt, cf. S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Göttingen 1983), III.370–1; Sophocles F 748 Radt; Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 134a; Laberius, fr. 37 with Panayotakis *ad loc.*; Cicero, *Tusc. disp.* 1.37; Diod. Sic. 4.22.2; Strabo 1.2.18, 5.4.5; Plutarch, *Mor.* 109C (probably); Max. Tyr. 8.2b; (?) Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.11; Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 6.107; J. Rusten, 'The Aeschylean Avernus. Notes on P. Köln 3, 125', *ZPE* 45 (1982), 33–8; Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 61–74.

used for people who beguiled their audience with their words and teachings, whereas in later Greek it developed into the meaning 'to entertain'. Thus, in Aristophanes' *Birds* (1553–55), Socrates *psychagôgei*, 'evokes the souls of men', near a lake, a passage hardly to be disconnected from Aeschylus' satyr drama, as was seen after the latter's first publication in 1978.[13] The term is repeatedly used in Plato (*Phaedr.* 261a, 271c) and Isocrates (*Nic.* 49; *Evagr.* 10) for charming an audience with words, but it is also used for beguiling people with music, spectacles and sculptures.[14] As a metaphor it is probably older than its first occurrence 414 BC, the date of the *Birds*, since in the *Clouds* (94) of 425 BC, the inhabitants of Socrates' *phrontistêrion* are called *psychai sophai*, 'wise souls':[15] its metaphorical usage may well have been invented by Gorgias.[16] Evidently, the metaphor became so powerful that the learned Byzantine bishop Eustathius felt it necessary to refer to necromancy with the expression *nekyomantikê psychagôgia*.[17]

Having looked at the psychagogues, let us now turn to *nekromantia*, the verbal ancestor of our term 'necromancy'. The first thing to note is that instances of the term are surprisingly late. In the latter half of the second century AD the Egyptian astrologer Ptolemy (*Tetr.* 4.4.10) mentions νεκρομάντεις καὶ δαιμόνων κινητικούς (*nekromanteis kai daimonōn kinētikous*). This is our first attested passage with a term related to *nekromanteia*. The actual

13 See also Ch. Moore, 'Socrates *Psychagôgos* (*Birds* 1555, *Phaedrus* 261a7)', in F. De Luise and A. Stavru (eds), *Socratica III. Studies on Socrates, the Socratics, and the Ancient Socratic Literature* (Sankt Augustin 2013), 41–55.

14 The term deserves closer analysis. For a first exploration, see E. Moutsopoulos, *La musique dans l'oeuvre de Platon* (Paris 1959), 259–61; M. Wigodsky, 'The Alleged Impossibility of Philosophical Poetry', in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry* (Oxford 1995), 58–68 at 65–68 (with thanks to Simon Trepanier).

15 Dunbar on Ar. *Av.* 1553–5; A. Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes* (Oxford 2003), 113.

16 Dodds on Pl. *Grg.* 452e 1–8; A. Willi, *Sikelismos* (Basel 2009), 273 note 25.

17 Eustathius on *Od.* 1.322, 390; 9.65.

noun does not occur before Eusebius' *Against Hierocles* (392.20) circa 303 AD, where he seems to quote Hierocles himself as using the word. Subsequently, we find it in Christian fourth-century authors, such as Chrysostom (*Hom. in Matth.* 57.403), and in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* (1.5.2, 4), where the novelty of the term is still apparent, as the latter author speaks of 'the so-called *nekromanteia*'. It fits this late date that *necromantia* is not found in Latin before the early third-century in Porphyrio (on Hor. *Ep.* 5.pr.3),[18] Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 2.16.1), the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (2.13, 15) and Servius (on *Aen.* 3.67; 6.107, 149). In the last two cases the additional term *sciomantia* also appears, to which I will return shortly.

In Hesychius (ν 264), *nekromanteia* is a gloss that explains *nekyomanteia*, and it is also the latest attested occurrence of this term. *Nekyomanteia*, on the other hand, as a term for the practice of consulting the dead, first occurs in the Latinised form *necyomantea* to designate a painting by Nicias the Younger, which existed at Athens.[19] In our texts we do not find the term before Cicero (*Tusc. disp.* 1.37), but we see it appear more frequently in the second century in Justin Martyr (*Apol.* 1.18), Lucian (his work *Menippos or Nekyomanteia*), and the *Cyranides* (1.13 Kaimakis)[20] as well as in the mid third century in the *Martyrium Pionii* (13.8: *circa* 250 AD). It is also in the second century AD that we start to find *Nekyomanteia* as a name for the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*.[21] Additionally, Eusebius (*PE* 2.3.4) mentions that the *nekyomanteia* of the Etruscans (surely a reference to Cumae) was practised in the dark during a descriptive passage

18 For Porphyrio's date, see now S. Diederich, *Der Horazkommentar des Porphyrio im Rahmen der kaiserzeitlichen Schul- und Bildungstradition* (Berlin and New York 1999), 2f.

19 Pliny, *NH* 35.132: *Athenis necyomantea Homeri*.

20 Cf. M. Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet. Magical Amulets in the First Book of Cyranides* (Amsterdam 1987), 103–09.

21 Hermogenes, *Prog.* 2; Ps. Justin, *Ad Graecos de vera religione* 28.2 Riedweg; Prol. *AP* 3.8.

echoed by the Late Antique Christian bishop Theodoretus (*Graecarum affectionum curatio* 10.3). The late fourth-century astrologer Hephaestion (*Apot.* 2.19) quotes Ptolemy as using *nekromanteis*, but at least one manuscript (v) changed it into *nekyomanteis*.[22]

Given these late attestations, it is very interesting that we also find the term *nekryomanteia* in the apocryphal book *Jannes and Jambres*: 'Jambres, after opening the books under the apple tree, performed necromancy (*nekryomanteia*) and brought up from Hades the shade of his brother'. This book has been overlooked by all scholars working on necromancy in the last decade. The Biblical reference in 2 Timothy 3.8 to Jannes and Jambres may well have been occasioned by the appearance of the apocryphal book. Is this a neologism or a ghost (!) word? The editor of the fragments of the book, Albert Pietersma, emends the term to *nekromanteia*, but that cannot be correct. The book itself is dated by him to the first century AD, when the term *nekromanteia* did not yet exist, as we have seen. The emendation must be *nekyomanteia*, although *nekryomanteia* strongly suggests that the scribe also knew the term *nekromanteia*, as indeed befits the late fourth-century date of the papyrus.[23]

22 For *nekyomanteis*, see also Artem. 2.69; Cyril, *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* = *Patrologia Graeca*, 70, 649.44. We find the term first in Strabo 16.2.39 for Persian diviners. For Persians and Magi as necromancers, see Python *TrGF* 91 F 1; Pliny, *NH* 30.8.14; Plut. *Mor.* 369EF; Suet. *Nero* 34; Lucian, *Men.* 6; Iamblichos, *Babyloniaka* apud Photius 94.75b16; J. Alvares, 'A Hidden Magus in Chariton's 'Chaireas and Callirhoe'', *Hermes* 128 (2000), 383f.

23 A. Pietersma, *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians* (Leiden 1994), 90 (date papyrus), 213.20 (text), 220 (emendation) and (in German translation) *Jannes und Jambres* (Gütersloh 2013), 68.19 (text); see also G. Schmelz, 'Zwei neue Fragmente des Apocryphons über die Zauberer Jannes und Jambres', in *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Florence 2001), 1202–12 and Plates XLVIa, b, c; Pietersma, 'Two More Fragments of the Vienna Jannes and Jambres', *BASP* 49 (2012), 21–29. Note the recent discovery of an Ethiopic manuscript of *Jannes and Jambres*: http:// paleojudaica.blogspot.nl/ search?updated-max=2015-02-24T11:16:00Z (accessed 2 March 2015).

What can we conclude from this survey? It seems to me that the evidence we have does not support Fritz Graf's suggestion that the term 'necromancy' is misleading or carries Judaeo-Christian overtones. It is true that necromancy was forbidden for the Israelites, as witnessed in the story of the witch of Endor,[24] and that the early Christians simply followed suit. But they were no exception in Roman society, since Cicero was able to use the accusation of necromancy as an invective against his opponents.[25] In short, the term is well supported by both Greek and Latin evidence, even though we cannot fail to note that both terms (*nekromanteia* and *nekyomanteia*) became more popular in Christian late antiquity. Their solid pagan ancestors and origins allow us to continue using the term 'necromancy'.

But what did necromancers do? Did they just placate restless dead, as Graf argues, or were they engaged in other activities as well? There can be little doubt that restless souls were part of the psychagogues' business. We have the well-known examples of Periander and Pausanias. The first, after having mislaid something that a friend had left in his charge, sent envoys to the Thesprotian oracle to inquire about its whereabouts. The ghost of his wife Melissa, whom he had murdered despite her being pregnant, appeared but said that she would not tell, since she was cold and naked: apparently Periander had not given her a proper burial.[26] At

24 See, most recently, M. Parmentier, *Goddelijke wezens uit de aarde. Griekse kerkvaders over de 'heks' van Endor* (Kampen 1989); C. Grottanelli, *Sette storie bibliche* (Brescia 1998), 247–58; B. Arnold, 'Necromancy and cleromancy in 1 and 2 Samuel', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004), 199–213; R. Greer and M. Mitchell, *The 'Belly-Mother' of Endor; interpretations of 1 Kingdoms 28 in the Early Church* (Leiden 2007); E. Gass, 'Saul in En-Dor (1 Sam 28)', *Welt des Orients* 42 (2012), 153–85.

25 Cic. *In Vatin.* 14.

26 Her. 5.92 with Hornblower *ad loc.*; Nic. Damas. *FGrH* 90 F 58; Plut. *Mor.* 1104D; J. Stern, 'Demythologization in Herodotus: 5.92.η', *Eranos* 87 (1989), 13–20; N. Loraux, 'Melissa, moglie e figlia di tiranni', in *eadem* (ed.), *Grecia al femminile* (Rome and Bari 1993), 3–37; E. Pellizer, 'Periandro di Corinto e il forno freddo', in

the beginning of the fifth century, the Spartan king Pausanias enquired about a free-born girl, Kleonike, whom he had selected for a night of pleasure but had murdered instead. When he saw her often in his dreams, he visited an oracle of the dead: the place is alternatively identified as Heraclea Pontica or Phigalia. Here she appeared to him and advised him to return to Sparta where he died a violent death,[27] and his shade had to be pacified by Thessalian psychagogues.[28] Yet these famous cases should not be taken as the norm. In fact, the examples of Darius and Alcestis make it unlikely that it were just restless souls that were conjured up in the classical period. What they do show, though, is that the clientele of psychagogic oracles consisted of the elites in Greek society.

This social location is not surprising. The most famous oracles were situated at the margin of the Greek world: Thesprotia, Cumae,[29] and in Asia Minor in Heraclea Pontica, which also had a river called Acheron.[30] Others existed in Arcadian Phigaleia,[31] and in Hermione in the Argolid.[32] It seems reasonable to infer from the geographical location that the earliest oracles were situated at the edge of the Greek world (Cumae, Thesprotia and Heraclea Pontica) because that is where the Greeks imagined the place of the underworld to be. Yet their presence in Arcadia and the

R. Pretagostini (ed.), *Tradizione e innovazione nella cultura Greca da Omero all'età ellenistica*, 3 vols (Rome 1993), 2.801–11.

27 Aristodemus *FGrH* 104 F 1.8; [Themistocles], *Ep.* 4.14 Hercher; Plut. *Mor.* 555C, 560EF, *Cimon* 8, fr. 126 Sandbach; Paus. 3.17.8f.

28 Plut. fr 126 Sandbach.

29 Thesprotia: J. Dalégre, 'Un sanctuaire des morts, le Nekuomanteion de l'Acheron en Epire', *Connaissance hellénique* 6 (1983), 49–51; Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 43–60. Cumae: note 12.

30 Xen. *Anab.* 6.2.2; Pliny, *NH* 27.4; Plut. *Mor.* 555C, *Cimon* 6; Pomp. Mela 1.103; Schol. Lycophron 411; *Arch. Anz.* 1962–63, 590–2; Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 29–34.

31 Paus. 3.17.9, cf. Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 23.

32 Strabo 8.6.12; Apollod. 1.5.1; Paus. 2.35.10; *Orph. Arg.* 1130; Pfeiffer on Call. fr. 278.

Argolid, although attested only late in time, makes me hesitant to follow the argument of Johnston that for the Greeks 'consultation of the dead was a literary *topos* only, rather than a real practice'. Moreover, the fact that the Greeks went to supposed entrances of the underworld hardly allows us to say that 'it was not something that Greeks normally did'. On the other hand, Johnston rightly calls attention to the fact that Delphi was an important oracle for the Greeks when dealing with problems with the dead.[33] In any case, a journey to the most famous oracles must have been a considerable investment of time and money. Such a journey was not something for the average Greek!

With the decline of the influence of the oracles, there must have also been a change in the nature of their clientele. Around 300 BC, the philosopher Crantor mentions the case of a Greek who went to a *psychomanteion* to consult about the sudden death of his son,[34] and Maximus of Tyre (8.2b) relates that the visitors of Cumae used to call up the souls of 'fathers and friends'. The fate of those who had died abroad also seems to have been a regular item in the consultations of these oracles (Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.281). Undoubtedly, restless souls were placated, but our evidence suggests that this was not the only purpose of early necromancy, even though the questions posed seem to have concerned the past rather than the present. However, that was, of course, normal in ancient Greek divination. In any case, the questions seem to suggest that we now no longer have the Greek elite asking questions but people living near the oracles, who approach them for their private problems.

33 S.I. Johnston, 'Delphi and the Dead', in *eadem* and P. Struck, *Mantikê*, 283–306 at 292 (quotations).

34 Crantor, fr. 5a, b Mette (*Lustrum* 26, 1984, 18–22). The anecdote is related differently by Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.115 and Plut. *Mor.* 109C, but both use the term *psychomanteion*, and in neither case do we hear of consulting about a restless dead. Otherwise, the term only occurs in Aen. Gaz. *Thphr.* 18–19 Colonna.

Finally, to what extent are the reported rituals only literary representations with polemical purposes and what can we say about rituals involved, Graf's third and fourth theses? At first sight, Graf's arguments are hardly persuasive, as we have a number of oracles of the dead, terms for which start to appear in our evidence in the fifth century BC. Herodotus (5.92) is the first to mention a *nekyomanteion*, but in Greek the term is not attested again before Strabo, about 400 years later, and always remained fairly rare,[35] although it must have been familiar enough to be used by Varro in his discussion of Numa's hydromancy.[36] Towards the end of the fourth century BC we see the term *psychomanteion* in Crantor (see note 35), a term also used by Cicero (*Div.* 132) against Appius Claudius. Plutarch, in turn, offers us *psychopompeion*.[37] These terms are rare too as were the places with proper oracles of the dead.

According to Ogden, 'the bulk of our evidence for the basic rites of evocation in antiquity derives from a relatively conservative tradition of necromancy scenes in high literature, but there is no reason to doubt that the more sober details among these literary accounts reflect the normal circumstances, elements, and structures of rites actually employed'.[38] In order to prove and illustrate his points, Ogden has lumped together all kinds of descriptions, ranging from Homer to late antiquity, under the heading 'traditional rites of evocation', as if they all referred to an unchanging ritual repertory.[39] There can be no doubt, however, that Graf is correct in asserting that literature, in particular Book 11 of the

35 Strabo 1.2.18, 5.4.5; Diod. Sic. 4.22.2; Plut. *Cimon* 6; Paus. 9.30.6; Paus. Att. α 127 Erbse.

36 Varro: *Curio de cultu deorum*, fr. 4 Cardauns (= Aug, *Civ. dei* 7.35), cf. B. Cardauns, *Varros Logistoricus über die Götterverehrung* (Würzburg 1960), 32f.

37 Plut. *Mor.* 555C, 560E; Paus. Att. θ 6 Erbse = Hsch. θ 273 Latte.

38 Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 163.

39 Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 163–190.

Odyssey, played a big role in the depictions of necromantic activities. In fact, even the scene in the *Odyssey* is not based on actual necromancy (as it was widely practised across the ancient Near East)[40] but is a literary bricolage that is particularly based on Hittite purification rituals, in which deities of the underworld, not the dead, are summoned up.[41] Now it seems reasonable to assume that before the consultations of the dead in necromantic oracles people had to perform certain rituals. Indeed, Crantor (fr. 5a,b Mette) mentions a sacrifice preceding the consultation. However, that is all that can be said with any certainty about the performance of rituals outside literary depictions.

The rare mentions of the oracles of the dead and their concomitant rituals can probably be explained by the fact that even the most famous ones never acquired the same fame as those of Delphi or Dodona. Another reason may have been the fact that death and pollution were closely combined in Greek beliefs and practices. The latter would be one of the reasons that, even in the earliest time periods, private necromancy and necromancers were considered disreputable. This is well argued by Matthew Dickie on

40 I. Finkel, 'Necromancy in Ancient Mesopotamia', *Archiv für Orientforschung* 29 (1983), 1–17; J. Tropper, *Nekromantie. Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989); O. Loretz, 'Nekromantie und Totenevokation in Mesopotamien, Ugarit und Israel', in B. Janowski *et al.* (eds), *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* (Freiburg and Göttingen 1993), 285–315; B.B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead. Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Tübingen 1994); J.A. Scurlock, 'Magical uses of ancient Mesopotamian festivals of the dead', in M. Meyer and P. Mirecki (eds), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden 1995), 93–107; R. Schmitt, 'Totenversorgung, Totengedenken und Nekromantie. Biblische und archäologische Perspektiven ritueller Kommunikation mit den Toten', in A. Berlejung *et al.* (eds), *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen 2009), 501–24; A. Annus, 'The use of a skull in necromancy (1)', http://www.aakkl.helsinki.fi/melammu/database/gen_html/a0001438.php.

41 G. Steiner, 'Die Unterweltbeschwörung des Odysseus im Lichte hethitischer Texte', *Ugarit-Forschungen* 3 (1971), 265–83; M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford 1997), 426f.

the basis of the already quoted line in Euripides' *Alcestis*.[42] Plato abhorred all private religious activities, and in his *Laws* (10.909b) he even proposed solitary confinement for life for those who 'fool many of the living by pretending to charm the souls of the dead (*psychagôgein*)'. Yet we may wonder if this sentiment was shared in the whole of the Greek world, as in early fourth-century Dodona a group of people asked the oracle: 'should they really consult Dorios the *psychagôgos*?'.[43] We would love to know what the oracle thought of the competition, but, as is usually the case with Dodona, an answer has not survived.

Now the Greek terminology regarding consulting and placating the dead suggests the consultation of *nekyes* or *psychai*, both of which are terms for the dead in Homer, if in different ways. The *nekyes* in the underworld are always mentioned in the plural, whereas *psychê* can also be said of an individual soul of the dead. Yet they have in common that they refer to the more or less immaterial manifestations of the dead. They are no more than, to use related terms, *skiai*, 'shades' or *eidôla*, 'image-like phantoms', and it is no wonder, then, that Servius calls necromancy with souls and shades *skiomantia*. This Homeric practice, as he observes, has to be differentiated from the *necromantia* as practised by the Roman poet Lucan in the first century AD. This is a perceptive observation, which has not received quite the attention it deserves.

Indeed, when we survey our material from Homer to late antiquity we can see a clear dividing line around the time of Cicero. Before the middle of the first century BC we do not hear of necromancy with corpses or human sacrifices, but with Cicero we enter

42 Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 31. Heracles is also called a *psychagôgos* in Eur. F 379a Kannicht and clearly again with negative connotations.

43 See the re-edition of the question by A.-Ph. Christides *et al.*, 'Magic in the oracular tablets of Dodona', in D.R. Jordan *et al.* (eds), *The World of Ancient Magic* (Bergen 1999), 67–71 at 71; E. Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks* (Oxford 2007), 112f.

a new era. It is especially in Latin poetry of the second half of the first century BC that we start to find an abundance of references to necromancy with corpses.[44] These are still limited to the world of witches and magicians, but in the first century AD emperors such as Tiberius levelled the charge of necromancy against aristocrats and, in turn, historians such as Pliny and Suetonius against the emperor.[45] Scenes of necromancy now became *de rigueur* in Flavian epics,[46] although they were all much more restrained in their descriptions than the gruesome Seneca in his *Oedipus* or the even more gruesome Lucan, who in his *Pharsalia* (6.419–830) surpassed all others in the luridness of his scenes.

Lucan took his inspiration from a historical anecdote, which is recounted by Pliny (*NH* 7.178) as follows. During Sextus Pompeius' resistance against the forces of Caesar, his troops captured a Caesarian supporter, Gabienus. Sextus ordered him to be killed, and he was taken away to the beach where his throat was slit. Yet he did not die immediately, but at the end of the day he told messengers of Sextus that he had been sent back from the underworld, *ab inferis*, to declare that the Pompeian cause was the just one.[47] Lucan transforms this scene with an image of the witch Erictho,

44 Hor. *Epod.* 17.79 and *S.* 1.8.28–9, 40–1; Verg. *Ecl.* 8.98–9, *Aen.* 4.490; Prop. 4.1.106; Tib. 1.2.45–6; Ov. *Am.* 1.8.17–8, *Rem. Am.* 253–4, *M.* 7.206; L. Fahz, *De poetarum romanorum doctrina magica* (Giessen 1904), 4–15; W. Fauth, *Carmen magicum* (Frankfurt 1999), 81–102.

45 Tiberius: Tac. *Ann.* 2.28. Nero: Pliny, *NH* 30.6, 14; Suet. *Nero* 34.4.

46 For an excellent survey, see D. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge 1973), 235–58; add A. Perutelli, 'Pluralità di modelli e discontinuità narrativa: l'episodio della morte di Esone in Valerio Flacco (1, 747 sgg.)', *MD* 7 (1982), 123–40; C. Reitz, *Die Nekyia in den Punica des Silius Italicus* (Frankfurt 1982); M. Billerbeck, 'Die Unterweltsbeschreibung in den 'Punica' des Silius Italicus', *Hermes* 111 (1983), 326–38; R. Parkes, 'Chthonic Ingredients and Thematic Concerns: The Shaping of the Necromancy in the *Thebaid*', in A. Augustakis (ed.), *Religion and Ritual in Flavian Epic* (Oxford 2013), 165–80. Note also Pliny, *NH*. 37.192 (too concise to be very informative).

47 For a detailed discussion, see Stramaglia, *Res inauditae*, 390–8.

who embodies everything that was despised and feared by contemporary society. Among the corpses on the battlefield she searched for one whose lungs were still intact so that he was able to speak. Having found a suitable corpse she dragged it to her cave, opened it and filled it with hot blood. After the necessary spells the soldier finally revived and duly gave his prophecies. In the end, being drugged again, he obligingly climbed upon the pyre the witch had prepared for him.[48]

Unlike other authors, Lucan clearly knew something about magic as it was being practised, not just from literary models. For example, before Erictho began her long invocation of the infernal powers, 'she started to utter sounds that at first were confused and discordant, jarring and alien, weird, not like the speech of a human. Barking of dogs, wolf's howl, the dismal notes of the plaintive owls that mope by day and of those that screech in the night time' (6.686–9, tr. P. Widdows). The same use of animals we find in the magical papyri of Egypt, where a magician uses the sounds of birds (*PGM* XIII.139ff). Similarly, when Erictho's first invocation failed, she uttered threats to the Furies (750), threats that we also find in the magical papyri (*PGM* II.50–5, IV.1035–46). Finally, Erictho purportedly used the bodies of children, young boys or criminals condemned to the gallows. It is precisely these categories, the *aôroi* and *biothanatoi*, which frequently recur in descriptions of magic, since the Greeks and Romans believed that

48 W. Fauth, 'Die Bedeutung der Nekromantieszene in Lucans Pharsalia', *RhM* 118 (1975), 325–44; L. Moscadi, 'Osservazioni sull'episodio magico del VI libro della Farsaglia di Lucano', *SIFC* 48 (1976), 140–99; R. Gordon, 'Lucan's Erictho', in M. Whitby *et al.* (eds), *Homo viator. Classical essays for John Bramble* (Bristol 1987), 231–41; M. Korenjak, *Die Ericthoszene in Lukans Pharsalia* (Frankfurt 1996); F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge Mass. and London 1997), 190–4, 200–4; C. Tommasi Moreschini, 'Lucan's Attitude towards Religion: Stoicism *vs.* Provincial Cults', in C. Walde (ed.), *Lucan im 21. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig 2005), 130–54 at 147–50; A. Bärtschi and T. Fögen, 'Zauberinnen und Hexen in der antiken Literatur', *Gymnasium* 113 (2006), 223–51.

they did not receive a proper place in the hereafter and therefore could be more easily called up.[49] It seems clear, then, that Lucan was well acquainted with genuine magical texts.

Yet it would take some time before this literature made an impact on the Greek world. In the Roman period, Egypt became a great name in magic, the reality of which is supported by the hundreds of spells found on papyri.[50] Amongst these magical practices, necromancy occupied an important position. Our oldest example is Apion, who in the earlier first century AD boasted that he had conjured up shades of the dead to ask about Homer's parents and birthplace.[51] Towards the end of that century, we have Thessalus who travelled to Thebes where a priest asked him whether he wanted to converse with the soul of some dead person or with a god.[52] Around the same time the pupils of the Persian sage

49 J.H. Waszink, *Tertullianus, De anima* (Amsterdam 1947), 565–7.

50 For Egypt as the country of magic *par excellence*, see P. Achtemeier, 'Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament', in E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame and London 1976), 149–86 at 155–6; F. Graf, 'How to Cope with a Difficult Life. A View of Ancient Magic' and D. Frankfurter, 'Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt and the Problem of the Category 'Magician',' in H. Kippenberg and P. Schäfer (eds), *Envisioning Magic* (Leiden 1997), 93–114 at 94–5 and 115–35 at 119–21, respectively; G. Bohak, 'Rabbinic Perspectives on Egyptian Religion', *Arch. f. Religionsgesch.* 2 (2000), 215–31 at 220–1; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 203–5, 215–7, 229–31.

51 Plin. *NH* 30.18. For Apion, see most recently C. Damon, '"The Mind of an Ass and the Impudence of a Dog": A Scholar Gone Bad', in I. Sluiter and R. Rosen (eds), *Kakos. Badness and Anti-Value in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 2008), 335–64; J. Bremmer, 'Apion and Anoubion', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Pseudo-Clementines* (Leuven 2010), 73–92; W. Ameling, 'Some Remarks on Apion', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 33 (2014), 1–15; add now the important new evidence in *P. Oxy.* 79.5202.

52 Thessalus 12–13, ed. H.-V. Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles* (Meisenheim 1968). For the autobiography, see most recently A.J. Festugière, *L'Hermétisme et mystique païenne* (Paris 1967), 141–80 (with French translation and commentary); J.Z. Smith, *Map is not Territory* (Leiden 1978), 172–89; G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton, 19932), 162–5; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 216–7; I. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge 2011), 208/73.

Ostanes summoned this sage in a temple in Memphis,[53] and in the already mentioned *Jannes and Jambres* we find Jambres bringing up 'the *eidôlon* of his brother Jannes from Hades' to answer questions.[54] An interesting example is also presented by the publication, early last century, of a third-century papyrus from the conclusion of Book XVIII of Julius Africanus' *Kestoi* with the necromantic scene of the *Odyssey* (11.34–43, 4850), elaborated with a kind of magical hymn. According to the author, Homer or the Pisistratids had left out the hymn! As the hymn mentions not only Jaweh and Abraxas, but also the ancient Egyptian gods Anubis, Phtah, Phre (for Re) and Nephtho, the author evidently thought it necessary to 'update' Homer with contemporary magical material in order to make the passage more interesting to his readers.[55]

In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, both dating from the mid-fourth century but in this case going back to their source, the early third-century so-called *Grundschrift*,[56] Clemens is profoundly disturbed by the problem of the soul's immortality. He decides to travel to Egypt, and 'to find a magician, and persuade him with large bribes to call up a soul, the so-called necromancy, pretending to inquire about some business. And the inquiry shall

53 J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, 2 vols (Paris 1938), II.311–5.

54 Pietersma, *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres*, 213.21.

55 *POxy.* 412 = *PGM* XXIII, newly translated by A. Kahane, 'Blood for Ghosts? Homer, Ezra Pound, and Julius Africanus', *New Literary History* 30 (1999), 815–36, cf. R. Wünsch, 'Deisidaimoniaka', *Arch. f. Religionswiss.* 12 (1909), 1–45; W. Kroll, *RE* 10 (Stuttgart 1918), 122; Hopfner, *Offenbarungszauber* II, 334–7; J.-R. Vieillefond, *Les 'Cestes' de Julius Africanus* (Florence and Paris 1970), 277–91; M. Wallraff, 'Magie und Religion in den Kestoi des Julius Africanus' and J. Hammerstaedt, 'Julius Africanus und seine Tätigkeiten im 18. Kestos (P.Oxy. 412 col. II)', in M. Wallraff and L. Mecella (eds), *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung* (Berlin 2009), 39–52 at 47, 53–69, respectively; F. Middleton, 'Illusions and Vanishing Acts: Homeric Recension, Athetesis, and Magic in *P. Oxy* 412 (*PGM* XXIII)', *Helios* 41 (2014), 139–62.

56 For the complicated literary history of the Pseudo-Clementines, see J. Bremmer, 'Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places, Authors and Magic', in *idem*, *The Pseudo-Clementines*, 1–23 at 1–12.

be for the purpose of learning whether the soul is immortal' (1.5). These passages show that the idea of conjuring up a soul of the dead for questions had a long life, well into the third century. We still find the practice mentioned in the late third-century Egyptian astrological handbook (Ps.Manetho, *Apot.* 4.213).

At the same time, though, we can see necromantic claims becoming more grandiose. In his *Metamorphoses* (2.28), Apuleius introduces the Egyptian (!) *propheta* Zatchlas who can conjure up a shade from the underworld but also bring his corpse to life. In the already mentioned *Pseudo-Clementines*, Clemens' conversing with the soul of a dead person is combined with the more gruesome variant in the case of Simon Magus, which equally must go back to the *Grundschrift*, even though it is slightly differently related in the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*. Simon Magus not only 'astonishes the whole city every day, by making shades and ghosts appear in the midst of the market-place; and when he walks abroad, statues move, and many shadows go before him, which, he says, are souls of the dead' (*H* 4.4), but he also explains necromancy: 'I have', said Simon, 'made the soul of a boy, pure, violently slain and invoked by secret adjurations, to assist me; and it does all that I command.' 'But', said I, 'is it possible for a soul to do these things?' He answered: 'I would have you know this, that the soul of man holds the next place after God, when once it is set free from the darkness of his body. And immediately it acquires prescience: that is why it is invoked for necromancy' (*R* 2.13). The depiction of necromancy in Lucian's *Lovers of Lies* (14), where a Hyperborean magus conjures up a man who had already been dead for seven months, can be seen, at one level, as a mockery of such claims.

At the same time, we also notice another shift. Whereas Greek necromancy in the Archaic and Classical sources was concerned with conjuring up souls in order to find out something about their fate or to placate them, we now hear of corpses and skulls that

become the medium for divination, as is well attested in the magical papyri. In one of the most famous of them, a papyrus of the Bibliothèque Nationale, we find various spells connected with necromancy. To give an idea of the content of these spells, I will quote from one with the title 'Spell of Attraction of King Pitys over any skull cup.[57] *His prayer of petition to Helios*':

> I call upon you, lord Helios, and your holy angels on this day, in this very hour: Preserve me, NN, for I am THENOR, and you are holy angels, guardians of the ARDIMALECHA. And ORORO MISREN NEPHO ADONAI AUEBOTHI ABATHARAI THOBEUA SOULMAI SOULMAITH ROUTREROUTEN OPHREOPHRI OLCHAMAOTH OUTE SOUTEATH MONTRO ELAT CHOUMIOI LATHOTH OTHETH, I beg you, lord Helios, hear me NN and grant me power over the spirit of this man who died a violent death, from whose tent I hold [this], so that I may keep him with me, NN, as helper and avenger for whatever business I crave from him. (*PGM* IV.1928–54, tr. E.N. O'Neil)

And the papyrus proceeds with:

> If you (Apollo-Helios) go into the hollow of the earth to the land of the dead, send this ghost (*daimona touton*) <to me> in the middle hours of the night in order that he come compelled at our commands, (the ghost) from whose head (*kephalê*) I hold this object (*tode*), and let him tell me however many things I want in my mind, speaking the entire truth, gentle, mild, and pondering no thoughts against me. (IV 1962–68, tr. Faraone)

Apparently, the necromancer is holding the skull of the ghost he wants to evoke and consult. And indeed, the practice of necromancy with skulls is mentioned in the Jewish tractate *Sanhedrin* of

57 A. Dieterich, *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig and Berlin 1911), 6, persuasively connected Pitys with Bithys of Dyrrhachium, a magician mentioned by Pliny, *NH* 28.82, whose name confirms his origin from Northern Greece, cf. D. Detschew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste* (Vienna 1957), 66–8.

the Babylonian Talmud, which discusses two kinds of necromancer: 'both him who conjures up the dead by means of soothsaying, and one who consults skulls' (65b). Fortunately, there recently has been a publication of a number of skulls, both complete and fragmentary, with Hebrew inscriptions that testify to the actual magical usage of skulls in Late Antiquity.[58] The fact that we have these skulls with Hebrew inscriptions is the more remarkable since the practice of necromancy, according to the Mishna *Sanhedrin* (7.4), was punishable by stoning to death. The late date of both the magical papyrus and the skulls with inscriptions suggest to me that only in Late Antiquity, instead of well before the turn of the Christian era, Orpheus' head at Lesbos was supposed to give oracles instead of Orphic verse or recipes. In the latter case we would have to assume an influence from Mesopotamia where the practice has been well attested before the time of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon.[59] Although Lesbos was one of the islands that mediated Hittite material to Greece,[60] it seems adventurous to assume Mesopotamian influence without any intermediate attestation of skull divination in Anatolia.[61]

Regardless of these earlier practices, in Christian times, necromancy was no longer acceptable.[62] This is well illustrated by the

58 D. Levene, 'Calvariae Magicae: The Berlin, Philadelphia and Moussaieff Skulls', *Orientalia* 75 (2006), 359–79.

59 See the bibliography in note 40.

60 K. and S. Tausend, 'Lesbos – Zwischen Griechenland und Kleinasien', in R. Rollinger and B. Truschnegg (eds), *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante* (Stuttgart 2006), 89–111; H. Mason, 'Hittite Lesbos?', in B.J. Collins *et al.* (eds), *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours* (Oxford 2008), 57–62; J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden 2008), 317; A. Dale, 'Alcaeus on the Career of Myrsilos: Greeks, Lydians and Luwians at the East Aegean-West Anatolian Interface', *JHS* 131 (2011), 15–24.

61 *Contra* Faraone, 'Orpheus' Final Performance' and Beerden, '"Dismiss me. Enough": A comparison between Mesopotamian and Greek necromancy'.

62 Cf. Lact. *Div. Inst.* 2.16.1; *Codex Theod.* 9.16.5.

aforementioned *Homilies*, in which Simon Magus is turned into a murderer: 'For he even began to commit murder as he himself disclosed to us, as a friend to friends, that, having separated the soul of a child from its own body by unspeakable oaths, as his assistant for the exhibition of anything that he pleased, and having drawn the likeness of the boy, he has it set up in the inner room where he sleeps, saying that he once formed the boy of air, by divine arts, and having painted his likeness, he gave him back again to the air' (*H* 2.26; see also *H* 2.30). We see here the demonization of the necromancer, which is in line with other fourth-century reports, such as that in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (6.14–5; see also 3.16), where an old woman consulted a dead son about the fate of his vanished brother. After she had offered the usual libations of milk, honey, and wine, made a kind of voodoo doll and implored the moon, the corpse told his mother with a barely audible voice that she would not see her son again. Moreover, because of her magical practices she soon would die the violent death that is in store for all magicians.[63]

It is time to come to a close. There can be no doubt that Graf is correct in stating that most testimonies are literary, polemical and fictional. Yet the available evidence enables us to conclude (1) that 'necromancy' is an acceptable notion to use for ancient divination with the dead, despite the different terms used under the category 'necromancy', (2) that necromancy was regularly practised even though we hardly know in which manner, (3) that there was a distinct difference between the necromancy described in Archaic and Classical Greece versus the types reported in Late Antiquity, (4) that in Late Antiquity there were necromantic rituals using skulls (however hard to reconstruct by modern day scholars) and (5) that an actual, rather booming business of magic and

63 N. Scippacercola, 'Il romanzo Greco e la necromanzia', *Vichiana* 11.2 (2009), 209–35.

necromancy in Late Antiquity reflected itself in the magical papyri and ancient novels.

In the end, the reality of ancient necromancy largely eludes our attempts at lifting the veil of its practice. Nevertheless, both material and literary sources show that the idea and practice of necromancy as an accessible form of divination with the dead persisted, albeit in changing forms, until the end of the ancient world.[64]

64 I am grateful to audiences in Calgary, Edinburg, Volos (2010), Athens (2011) and Gardzienice (2013) for their comments. The perceptive criticisms of Suzanne Lye considerably improved the English and the argument of my contribution.