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## REFERENCES

Athanassia ZOGRAFOU, *Des dieux maniables. Hécate & Cronos dans les Papyrus magiques grecs*, Paris, Apolis éditions, 2016. 1 vol. 15 × 21 cm, 210 p. ISBN : 978-295324959-0

- 1 In recent decades, the increased academic interest in ancient magic has generated an extensive specialized bibliography on the topic, with particular attention on the analysis of the content and cultural background of the so-called Greek Magical Papyri (henceforth *PGM*), thanks to what our comprehension of these ancient writings has improved during the last years. However, one of the most interesting aspects of these texts for study is undoubtedly the rich and multifaceted pantheon of gods, divine forces, angels and spirits with which the writers of these magical *compendia* operated, since it is a clear reflection of the multicultural environment in which the texts were composed. The work of A. Zografou shows us that much remains to be said on the subject. Far from being yet another study on the divine figures of the magical texts, this book goes beyond the historical study of *PGM*'s divinities and explores the central importance of the divine in ancient Greco-Egyptian magic, as an axis around which tradition and innovation articulated and the whole magical ritual developed. The analysis of the succession of associations among divine entities and the transfer and assimilation of characteristics, as well as the mechanisms in which Greek tradition was exploited in order to incorporate the new religious trends is not a new topic in magical studies. Zografou's book, however, differs from the recent works of other scholars in her interdisciplinary method and original approach to these old questions, which she explores focusing on two divine entities, Hecate and Cronos, as they are dealt with in specific passages of *PGM*. Consequently, as the author explains in the introduction,

beyond the unavoidable division into chapters, the contents are actually arranged in two blocks: one dedicated to Hecate and the other which studies Cronos. The author reasons this bold choice and the unequal measure of both parts arguing the different weight carried by each of these divinities in magic and religion. She justifies her choice according to her purpose to explore the different ways in which the traditional Greek divinities are reworked.

- 2 The introduction (p. 11–44) begins with a general contextualization of the topic that stands out for its brilliant simplicity and concision. In less than forty pages, Zografou covers the main theoretical points needed to understand the complexity of the topic: she introduces the evasive notion of magic, explains what Greek Magical Papyri are and exposes the difficulty in defining the divine system of these texts and the debate that has opened around it. *PGM*, as texts composed in the context of the Imperial Roman Egypt, are, above all, the product of an era and a place eminently marked by the contact between ancient cultures and religions, but also by the spread of new religious trends. As a result, the authors of these magical practices adopted different strategies of theological ordination, which are particularly difficult to summarize in just one concept (megatheism, syncretism-henotheism, syncretism-juxtaposition), in order to satisfy a multicultural clientele, but also to cover the huge divine panorama that emerged in this period. The central importance of the divine entities in *PGM* is, therefore, examined in relation to other related texts, such as the *Cyranides* (p. 14–17), which demonstrates that the magic system of *PGM* did not simply work on straightforward principles like sympathy or ritual operations, but rather on a complex and personal theological thought that is actually the “quintessence” and source of power of these recipes (p. 18). Moreover, to better illustrate this complexity, Zografou selects a text, the invocation of Aphrodite in *PGM IV 281–2942* (p. 24–30), through which she analyses the broad concept of this goddess in magic and the variety of strategies adopted in a short spell in an attempt to invoke all her sides. The introduction ends with a brief portrait of the main Greek divinities that appeared in these texts (p. 39–44), which serves to initiate a detailed analysis of two of them: Hecate and Cronos.
- 3 In the first block of contents, the first chapter (*Hécate aux visages multiples*, p. 45–68) examines Hecate’s fields of power in *PGM* through an historical approach of her functions and evolution in Greek religion in order to analyse whether the magical Hecate was an innovative figure or only the derivation of more ancient features. Zografou reflects here on how the traditional cult contexts of Hecate in the Classical period as goddess of the house, the neighbourhood and crossroads, could have left her worship, celebrated in a more private context than the great cults of Olympic divinities, open to variation and individual innovation and consequently associated with marginal practices. Likewise, her role as a vindictive power may simply be the result of the extension of her characteristic as a protective goddess, which was already ambiguous in Classical Greece where her apotropaic character could not only protect from but also prevent dangers, by reacting against them. However, the way she is portrayed in magic, as Zografou points out, is not only the evolution of traditional characteristics; Hecate’s magical figure has features which can only be explained as a result of an erudite reinterpretation of this goddess in the context of philosophy. Chapter II (*Hécate dans le Papyrus de Paris [Suppl. Grec 574]*, p. 69–80) studies the presence of Hecate in a particular kind of magical text, the Greek magical hymns, which are especially frequent in the

papyrus on which the author focuses her analysis and which gives the chapter its name. This text serves as a pretext to entering into a particular characteristic of this goddess, the complexity of her triplicity, which is especially prominent in the magical hymns. The study of Hecate's capacity to assimilate attributes of other goddess continues in chapter IIIa (*Le monde chthonien : bouchées d'amertume et rites funéraires*, p. 81–93) where Zografou explores, in a descriptive tone, the more relevant epithets and attributes of Hecate in magical texts as a chthonic and aggressive divinity. The chapter IIIb (*Le monde chthonien : croisée des enfers et des mystères [P. Mich III,154 = PGM LXX, 4-19]*, p. 94–136) closes the discourse about this goddess with the analysis of a particular passage of PGM that allows Zografou to take up the opening discussion again concerning tradition versus innovation in magical texts. In this chapter, perhaps the most captivating of the book, the author stops at one intriguing, but scarcely studied, attribute of Hecate, which makes reference to the goddess' sandal. Exploring other parallel texts that transmit variations of this formula and the significance of the different metals with which this attribute is linked, Zografou delves into the mystery background of the P.Mich III, 154 and other related magical texts from which the provocative question of the ancient and religious roots of certain magical texts emerges.

- 4 The second thematic block, notably shorter than the first one, consists in just one chapter (Chapter IV *Cronos : du scélérat puni à l'ancêtre savant. La recette du « petit moulin »*, p. 137–174) dedicated to Cronos, which begins with an introductory tour of his role in Greek thought, his reception in the Egyptian world as an *alter ego* of Typhon and his presence in magical texts. The central focus of the discussion then unfolds, once the divinity has been contextualized, around the so called “Little Mill’s recipe” (PGM IV, 3087–3124), a magical recipe that Zografou dissects carefully, from the words to the ritual gestures. Particularities aside, the ways in which the figure of Cronos in magic has been reworked do not differ so much from those seen in the case of Hecate: the re-interpretation of the mythical accounts, philosophical assimilations and the identification of these powerful and primeval divinities with cosmic forces. After explaining the mythical concept of Cronos created *ad hoc* for this practice, the circular movement of the mill used in the ritual as well as the ground ingredients reveal a new meaning as an echo of the cyclic concept of time (*chronos*), with which the titan Cronos is identified. However, once again, many elements of this recipe such as the mill itself or the alliterative character of the spell pronounced while the magician is milling is reminiscent of very ancient Greek practices to which literary testimonies bear witness.
- 5 In her conclusion (p. 173–178), Zografou very briefly summarizes the main ideas dealt with in the different chapters. The book includes an appendix at the end of the study containing the different magical texts with the Greek text and an English translation (p. 179–186) and a useful general index of key terms and Greek words (p. 187–210), in which only an elenchus of cited texts is missing.
- 6 Zografou's book is surprising in more ways than one thanks to her choice of theme, structure and method, which Zografou herself recognises as bold. Hecate, as the paradigm of “magical divinity”, is a goddess on which so much has been written, that it is particularly challenging to say something new. In the case of Cronos the problem is the opposite; the lack of specialised studies forces the author to start from very little. However, it is important to understand that this book is not an exhaustive study on PGM's pantheon or Hecate in PGM, but a study on the construction of the ultra-efficient power of ancient Greco-Egyptian magic, illustrated by some strategic texts, which

justifies the particular selection of *PGM* passages, scrutinised by Zografou in order to bring to light the incredible amount of resources that a single spell can bring together. Likewise, she uses the two analysed divinities, Cronos and Hecate, as instruments through which she exemplifies the complex religious world of *PGM*, which emerges as the convergence of the Greek and non-Greek, the old and the new, the popular and the erudite, sometimes as a product of tradition, sometimes as a product *ad hoc* for a recipe but always in order to ensure the efficacy of the recipe. In this regard, the title of the book, *Des dieux maniables*, makes reference not to the coactive nature of magic but to the adaptable character of the magical divinities. The ratification of the first impressions obtained on the procedures examined in the block dedicated to Hecate then in the analysis of the “*Little Mill*’s recipe” addressed to Cronos balances out the unequal sizes of the contents’ blocks.

- 7 Magical texts are in themselves a crossroad of cultural, religious and intellectual influences and addressing this complex topic could only be successfully resolved by a specialist like A. Zografou; someone with extensive knowledge not only of ancient Greek magic, but also of its divinities and the Greek religion.<sup>1</sup> And it is the opinion of this reviewer that the clarity of her discourse is the result of her experience in the subject, enabling her to make such an excellent selection of sample texts from which to develop the discussion. Zografou’s efforts to present her multifaceted approach to magical recipes in a simple and comprehensible way are to be much appreciated. Although this is a specialised essay, the A. moves away from the exhaustive and dense style that sometimes characterizes these manuals to provide us with a fluid study that is both thought-provoking and instructive in its approach to working with magical texts. For experienced researchers, Zografou’s ability to connect ideas, suggest approaches and offer new perspectives provides a fertile ground on which to further the discussion. However, this book may also be of great use to people approaching magical texts for the first time, as the combination of theoretical discussion and key examples not only illustrates very clearly the intricate network of associations found in a magical recipe, but also provides an accurate and thorough model for working with rituals and divinities as complex and full of interpretative levels as those of *PGM*.

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## NOTES

1. This work reveals Zografou’s knowledge of magic and, especially, of Hecate, which has given rise to two books, as well as numerous articles : *Papyrus Grecs Magiques : le mot et le rite. Autour des rites sacrificiels*, Ioannina, 2013, and *Chemins d’Hécate*, o.c.

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