

## Citation style

Janko, Richard: review of: Marco Antonio Santamaría Álvarez (ed.), *The Derveni Papyrus. Unearthing Ancient Mysteries*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019, in: *Exemplaria Classica*, 24 (2020), p. 311-314, DOI: 10.33776/ec.v24i0.4996, downloaded from Website

**exemplaria**  
C L A S S I C A  
Journal of Classical Philology

## copyright

This article may be downloaded and/or used within the private copying exemption. Any further use without permission of the rights owner shall be subject to legal licences (§§ 44a-63a UrhG / German Copyright Act).

MARCO ANTONIO SANTAMARÍA (ed.), *The Derveni Papyrus: Unearthing Ancient Mysteries*. Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, 36. Leiden; Boston: Brill 2019, pp. viii+ 173, €116,00, ISBN 978-90-04-38484-2.

This slim but lavish volume is the outcome of a conference at the University of Salamanca in May 2012, plus two extra pieces. Publication was delayed to take account of further study of the original papyrus both by Valeria Piano (*Il Papiro di Derveni tra religione e filosofia*, Florence 2016) and by this reviewer (in Mirjam Kotwick, *Der Papyrus von Derveni*, Berlin and Boston 2017, 68–102). This was a wise decision: the will to *interpret* this text has always run far ahead of the ability to *read* it, and the will to *read* it far ahead of the means to *see* it, with results that have ranged from frustrating to ludicrous. Even Piano's and my latest published texts of the opening columns are already outmoded by further study of microphotographs taken with new techniques. More current versions by both of us will appear in the proceedings, edited by Glenn Most, of a conference held at the Scuola Normale in February 2018, *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 2, forthcoming from Oxford University Press. Even these will not be definitive, but each iteration gets nearer to the truth.

The first chapter, by Roger MacFarlane and Gianluca Del Mastro, concerns the conservation and restoration of the papyrus itself, which resides in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. In 1962 Anton Fackelmann conserved it by sealing it between panes of glass in nine frames. Astoundingly few people have had access to it since. In 2006 a team from Brigham Young University, brought in by Apostolos Pierris and Dirk Obbink, was able to record all its frames with multispectral imaging. The images then obtained have not yet been made available to scholars (see only fig. 1.2 and R. Janko, “Ο ἀπανθρακωμένος πάπυρος τοῦ Δερβενίου: καινούριες εἰκόνες, καινούριες ἐρμηνείες”, *Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν* 2017, 148–65, εἰκ. 2). However, it is good that they exist, since carbonized papyri are among the most fragile objects in the world; the more images there are of them, the better. The history of its conservation down to 2006 is valuable, but not all the details are correct. The Museum must have reopened the frames in 1977 for Makis Skiadaressis to photograph them, since the bottom row of pieces in Frame V were cracked in that year; this will explain why the ephor, Katerina Romiopulu, then asked Fackelmann how to repair the pieces (p. 10 n. 21). The damage is exactly what I would expect from a reclosure of the upper pane, since I long ago saw a Herculaneum papyrus that Fackelmann had framed suffer similar damage when Knut Kleve reopened it. The current state of the papyrus is well described, and proposals are made for its future conservation. However, whether it would be wise to reopen the frames is debatable: during reopening, static electricity would affix fragments to their upper panes. At least they now slumber undisturbed: for when UNESCO adopted

the papyrus in 2015 as a World Heritage Object, it was permanently installed in a fancy new case in the Museum's main gallery. Tourists may admire it there, from a stratospheric distance and through many panes of glass, as a distant archipelago of brightly-lit black ink-blots, while experts may gain no useful access to it at all.

Two chapters deal with the opening columns, of which Valeria Piano and this reviewer offer competing reconstructions. Piano well presents the complex editorial situation of these columns, in a reprise of her studies in Italian; her fig. 2.1 illustrates the crucial fragment G6 on which her layouts of columns 0–3 depend (for other images of it see V. Piano, 'Ricostruendo il rotolo di Derveni', in *Papiri Filosofici: miscellanea di Studi* vi, Florence, 2011, 5–38, Tav. 13, and R. Janko, 'Parmenides in the Derveni Papyrus', *ZPE* 200 (2016), 3–24, fig. 9). She holds that this piece exhibits down its right edge not a *kollesis* (i.e. a join between two sheets of papyrus) but simply the broken edge of a layer. However, her conclusion (p. 21) that it is virtually impossible to provide an indubitable interpretation of such traces underestimates the resolution that higher magnification (×37), not to mention the use of infrared imaging, can bring. Two letters, Σ in line 3 and O in line 5, overlap the line of the *kollesis*, which runs completely straight. Traces of the tips of the Σ and part of the O are visible to the right of this line, *before* the fracture which exposes the lower layer. In her image, however, which is taken at a smaller scale, the straight line is invisible wherever there is ink; hence she holds that the line is not vertical, but is simply a ragged break. Likewise, her defence of the reading [οὐ μ]έτεροι ἐκ[ἄς] in her column III line 5 depends on traces which I at first deciphered (in Kotwick 2017) as [ε]ρουδιεκω[ but now, as I continue to study my 10,000 images, as [φοβ]εροῑτσι, εκ[ with no need for dots (the dative plural in -οισι is paralleled at col. XXI 11). Again, her combination of fragments indicates that everyone has a personal *daimon* ([δαίμ]ωγ γίνετα[ι ἐκά]ττωι, col. III 3), whereas I put the piece containing [ἐκ]ἄττωι in a prior column.

Carlos Megino Rodríguez' paper on the *daimones* in these columns accepts Piano's text of column III. However, since the text of column VI is no longer controversial, this chapter does succeed in identifying striking parallels between the Derveni author's beliefs about *daimons* and those of the Stoics, and rightly locates him among the intellectual ancestors of Stoicism. This is perfectly compatible with the well-founded view that he was a follower of Anaxagoras. *Pace* L. Brisson, F. Jourdan, and F. Casadesús, the papyrus is simply too old to contain a text by a Stoic. Since it still uses the spelling E for EI (κροῡεν at col. XV 1, [ο]ικτε̄ρεθαι at XX 8, and ερη̄θαι at col. XXIV 4) but no longer uses O for OY, it was copied in about 360 BCE; for the first Attic inscriptions that still have cases of ē but use only ου date to 367/6 and 357/6 BCE (L. Thraette, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions*, Berlin and New York 1980–96, i. 188).

Marco Antonio Santamaría compares the poem of 'Orpheus' verse by verse with Hesiod's *Theogony*. His reconstruction of the poem is judicious, and his conclusion that its composer sought to revise Hesiod's cosmogony to support a monist perspective is compelling. He leaves aside the prickly questions of

whether a phallus and Protogonos appeared in it (contrast Bernabé's clarity on these points). Chiara Ferella well compares Zeus' splendid isolation in the Orphic poem (μοῦνος ἔγεντο) to Parmenides' One, which is μουνονγενέc. That the protomonist 'Orpheus' influenced Parmenides is highly probable, and the word ἀτέλετος, now restored at col. VII 15, is paralleled in Parm. fr. 8,4, discussed at p. 68 n. 27.

To turn to the Derveni author's interpretation of the poem, Radcliffe G. Edmonds III argues for the thesis familiar from his other writings, viz. that the author used allegoresis agonistically in order to show off his expertise as a 'ritual practitioner' and win clientele, without adopting a systematic philosophical position, like the contest in Plato's *Protagoras*. Edmonds relies on col. V 4–7, where the author consults an oracle, as proof that he had 'mantic expertise' (p. 85), but the consultation of an oracle no more proves the author a religious practitioner than was Socrates' friend Chaerephon (also, Derveni is not in Thessaly, *pace* p. 77). The Derveni author's question to the oracle remains controversial (p. 85 n. 46). From study of the photographs since 2017, I now restore and punctuate it as [κα]ἰ αὐτοῖς πάριμεν [εἰς τὸ μα]ντεῖον ἐπερ[ω]τήσοντε[ς] τῶμ μαντευομέν[ων] ἔ]γεκεν, εἰ θέμι[ς, ἐκ τ]οῦ καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου δεινά, i.e. 'for them we will go into the prophetic shrine to ask regarding what is prophesied, if it is proper, what is in fact the cause of terrors in Hades'; τοῦ is the alternative form of τίνος, and εἰ θέμις is a parenthetical aside (cf. *S. Tr.* 809, *OC* 1131, *E. Or.* 1052, *Men. Pk.* 799, *Call. fr.* 368,2). After ably rebutting the notion that the Derveni author was a Stoic (pp. 87–9), Edmonds compares the presence of allegory in the Orphic theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus, which may result, he argues, from 3rd-cent. BCE Peripatetic systematization rather than Stoic influence; he also suggests that the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* may be of Peripatetic origin too (pp. 90–6). Whatever its origin, Edmonds is right that allegory was thriving before the Stoics. Next, Sofia Ranzato argues that poets like Pindar, Parmenides and Empedocles set the stage for the Derveni author's assumption in column VII, shared by Plato, that poetry is riddling by nature.

Alberto Bernabé makes a fascinating and invaluable contribution, which on its own would have sufficed to justify the publication of these papers. Whereas past scholarship has held that the relation between the successive stages of the author's physical cosmogony and the generations of the Orphic theogony is imprecise, as one might expect, Bernabé shows that, with sufficient ingenuity, they can be made to fit together *exactly*, in a schema that is too complex to be reproduced here. He offers many brilliant reinterpretations, proposing, for instance, that the author interprets '(Νύξ) χρῆσεν ... ἐξ ἀδύτοιο (col. XI 1–4) as 'Night protects from what does not penetrate' (p. 114); he regards the αἰδοῖον as the phallus of Ouranos that floats above Earth as the sun, and denies that Protogonos and Metis appear in the poem as gods. The author emerges as a much more skilful thinker than has generally been recognized, with many parallels to presocratic thinkers, particularly the Anaxagoreans. One minor reservation: Bernabé relies on the reconstructed etymology of Οὐρανός as [ὁ Νοῦς] ὧς ὀρ[ί]ζετα]ι φύειν (col. XIV 12). Here

ὄρ[ιζετα]ι (Piano) may be correct, but the preceding ω turns out to be impossible, as the papyrus has [. . . .(.)]ιc (I do not yet know how to supplement it).

Ana Jiménez San Cristóbal, in an outstanding study of column XX, documents striking continuities between the Derveni author's ways of thought and far later interpretations, in authors like Strabo, Plutarch, and Clement of Alexandria, of the Orphic/Dionysiac mysteries. She rightly thinks that column XX introduced the scandalous episode of Zeus' rape of his mother Demeter and daughter Persephone, who gave birth to Dionysus, and suggests that the rites in the opening columns were predicated upon another part of the same myth, namely the *sparagmos* of Dionysus by the Titans. I do disagree with her belief, based as usual on *πάρμιεν* (col. V 4), that the author was an Orphic religious practitioner. Finally, Marisa Tortorelli Ghidini examines the naming of Aphrodite as Ourania and of Ouranos as Euphronides 'son of Night'.

The editor is further to be commended for appending a bibliography of studies of the papyrus which brings up to date that in Laks and Most's edited volume of 1997, as well as a complete set of indices.

RICHARD JANKO  
University of Michigan  
rjanko@umich.edu