Anche la forma tipografica è per lo più sorvegliata e corretta. Pochi i refusi.


Ogni nuova raccolta antologica di lirici greci deve preliminarmente giustificare la propria presenza, si è detto in incipit. Quella di Budelmann lo fa egregiamente.


Piano’s book is a most welcome addition to the enormous bibliography on the Derveni Papyrus (DP), for its remarkable contribution in illuminating many uncertain and problematic aspects of the first columns and for offering an explanation of the issue of their coherence with the rest of the document, devoted to the exegesis of an Orphic poem. She pays attention to specific points (single terms and expressions), to the general meaning of every column, to the sequence of thought and the correspondences among them (parallels and contrast) and to the general purport of the text involving both parts. Piano’s main conclusion is that the Derveni author (DA) shows the same inquisitive attitude towards the rites described in the first columns as he has towards the Orphic text. In both parts he distinguishes different kinds of signs which, once decodified by a shrewd interpreter, convey precious information on the intervention of the divine principle (the Νοῦς-ἀήρ) in the human moral sphere (esp. cols. I, III, V–VI) and in the cosmos (cols. IV, VIII–XXVI). G. Betegh is the author of a preface in which he praises the progress in the reconstruction of the first columns by Piano, her accurate interpretative method and her innovative hypotheses (XI–XVIII). A brief introduction follows, in which Piano goes through the landmarks in the study of the first columns and acknowledges all the help she has received (XIX–XXIV).

The book falls into three large blocks, the last ones divided into several chapters, on the archaeological context in which the papyrus was unearthed, about the interpretation of the first columns and on the cultural milieu in which the text was produced.

The first section, with only one chapter, focuses on an under-researched aspect in the studies of the DP: the context of the discovery, a tomb of a rich warrior in
4th century Macedonia. Piano decided to begin her study attending to the realia and the evidence provided by archaeology in order to determine the dates of the cremation with certainty, which must have happened between 340 and 320 BC. The presence of the papyrus among other belongings can be explained by the interest of the deceased in its contents, which combine eschatological hopes, rituals, myth and philosophy. These same elements can be observed in the frescoes of several contemporary tombs, which depict the judgment of souls described by Plato in Gorgias’ myth (Lefkadia/Mieza), a group of philosophers (Pella) and the abduction of Persephone (Vergina). These pictures bear witness to the concerns of a learned elite to which the Derveni warrior must have belonged (36–44). Many of the Macedonian kings promoted the arts and surrounded themselves with painters, poets and sometimes even philosophers, which created a cultural climate in which the richest families must have taken part (58).

The second part consists in five chapters which tackle the text and the interpretation of cols. φ–VI. In chap. 2 Piano includes a new reconstruction of the first columns, which she bases on an autoptic examination and a careful and precise analysis of all relevant material aspects of the papyrus (volumetric reconstruction, assignment of the scraps to different layers according to their form, identification of kolleseis, sovrapposti and sottoposti, etc.) (67–82). A whole study of the question will be published in another volume of the same series (‘L’inizio del Papiro di Derveni. Il rotolo e il testo’), which may contain textual novelties. An important new reading in the text concerns the quotation of Heraclitus in col. IV 7 (frs. 3 and 94 DK): ἥλιος κόσμου κατὰ φύσιν… ‘The sun, according to the nature of the world…’, where the words calling the Erinyes ‘servants of Dike’ are apparently omitted. Piano’s proposal for cols. φ–III partially agree with the text of the editio princeps but significantly differs from that of R. Janko, included in M. Kotwick, ‘Der Papyrus von Derveni. Griechisch-deutsch’, Berlin-Boston, 2017. In my view, Piano’s edition, although subject to improvements, is more convincing for offering a more natural Greek text and a more easily grasped meaning, in line with the rest of the papyrus, especially cols. IV–VI.

Chaps. 3 to 5 concentrate on cols. φ–II and unplaced fragments (ch. 3), cols. III–IV (ch. 4) and cols. V–VI (ch. 5). Something all of them have in common is that Piano begins by expounding the proposals of other authors and then assesses them and singles out their strong and weak points, always with respectful criticism. Since there is no continuous text for cols. φ to III, Piano has opted to identify key terms and thematic unities and to establish their mutual relations in order to reconstruct a coherent picture. Let us consider some examples from ch. 3. In ἐπεθήκε (fr. G 7.5) she sees a reference to the activity of an authority in a religious milieu (85–90); πυρὸς, ὕδατος (frs. F 18 + H 45, l. 3) have not, in her view, a mantic purpose, but were probably used in a funerary ritual (93–96). In fact, col. I reflects chthonic practices such as χοαί, usually addressed to deceased or heroes, but here, apparently, to the Erinyes (96–98). The allusions to σημεία and σημαίνειν allow us to deduce that the DA conceived the sacrificial practice as a

1 κόσμου was already proposed by A. Lebedev in ZPE 112, 1989, 39. It has been confirmed independently by Janko (see M. Kotwick, ‘Der Papyrus von Derveni. Griechisch-deutsch’, Berlin-Boston, 2017, 72, 125).
means to obtain knowledge of the superhuman through the interpretation of signs (112–114).

This last idea is ingenious, but not completely satisfactory, since the possibilities of divine entities to respond and send messages during the rituals are very limited, and the latter offer scarce room for signification and interpretation (f. ex. libations). Moreover, very different phenomena could happen in every ritual and it would be an extremely difficult task to anticipate them in a didactic treatise, as the DP seems to be. Only after the rituals take place could a learned priest interpret them, but the DP aims to instruct the initiands before the rituals begin, so that they could understand them. Therefore, it is more likely that the signs allude to hints or messages sent by gods outside the rites, in oracles, dreams or omina (cf. col. V), through daimones or other divine beings. It is significant that Socrates usually called his δαιμόνιον also σημείο (Pl. Ap. 40 b1, 40 c3, 41 d6, Euthyph. 3 b5, Euthyd. 272 c4, Resp. 496 c4, Phaedr. 242 b9) and that Alexander Polyhistor, in a passage with many similarities with the DP (D. L. 8.31 = FGH 273 F 93), says that the souls, called daimones and heroes, send dreams and σημεῖα to men.

Piano also studies col. XX, which unexpectedly interrupts the commentary criticising those who celebrate mysteries without explaining their meaning, thus disappointing the hopes of the participants (107–111). She compares it with col. V, in which disbelief (ἀπιστία) is considered a form of ignorance (ἀμαθία), and takes both columns as negative paradigms of religiosity which have to be avoided (112–114). On the contrary, the DA proposes a positive paradigm in col. VI, where he explains the rites in order to perform and understand them properly. Piano recognizes a fact decisive for the overall meaning of the DP: the author shows a similar epistemological approach towards the rites and the Orphic poem, since in both he perceives signs (σημεῖα) which lead to their deep meaning (111, 121). This analogy probably departs from the fact that both were part of the same ritual as dromena and legomena. Through his explanations, he aims to instruct the readers, eliminating their ignorance (due to passions) and substituting their disbelief for a superior knowledge (120–121).

This analogy is an attractive attempt to find a unifying link between both parts of the papyrus, but it is necessary to specify that the attitude and methods of the DA are different in each case: unlike the Orphic verses, the rites themselves, being acts, have no linguistic content, so it is not possible to recognize an apparent meaning and a true one. What the DA does is to try to find the true identity of the addressees of the ritual (col. VI, 8–10: the impeding daimones and the Eumenides are but souls) and the motivation of a rite (f. ex. col. VI, 7–8), but he puts aside his main linguistic methods, such as (par)etymology and synonymy, and allegoresis is also absent. Another objection is that not all the first columns have a ritualistic content (it is absent in cols. III and IV) and the mentions in the other columns are not necessarily regarding the same ritual: in col. VI two rites are described (even in case they are part of the same ceremony), which are nearly identical but different: that of the magoi and that of the mystai, with different recipients, the impeding daimones and the Eumenides. It is not certain that the sacrifices of the mystai are the same as the rites to the Erinyes mentioned in col. I. If they were, why are they described and interpreted much later in the text, in col. VI?

In the last part (121–129) Piano provides an excellent summary of her proposals. She seems to be right in rejecting the idea that there is a myth that serves as a background to the rites (f. ex. the Orphic myth of the Titans), because in this case the author would have showed the same attitude he adopts regarding the myth narrated in Orpheus’ poem (122–124). The correct interpretation of the
ritual signs provides access to the divine dimension in its interaction with the individual (microcosmic level), whereas the Orphic verses (properly interpreted) show its intervention in the cosmos (macrocosmic level). Ritual discourse and philosophical exegesis are linked by an analogous attitude of rational decoding of their signs, which are mediators of a superior knowledge only attainable to the wise. Their de-codification permits the individual to establish contact with the divine in its chthonic and superior aspects (125–126). In the last pages (127–129) Piano portrays the personality of the author: he is an expert in sacred matters with a strong intellectual tendency, not a physician nor an atheist, because he defends Orpheus' authority and does not criticize religious practices as such.

Ch. 4 is entitled 'Demonology and retributive justice in cols. III and IV'. Piano begins by assessing previous textual proposals and showing their shortcomings (136–138). In col. III she recognizes a triadic structure: the DA describes a mechanism of retribution or punishment of injustice that implies a superior divinity (Dike), subordinate figures who act as mediators (Erinyes, subterranean daimones) and unjust human beings (ἐξώλεις, ἄνηρ ἄδικος) (148–149). She explains the ἐξώλεις as «utterly ruined» men, perhaps for having committed perjury (144–147).

It is problematic to see in Dike a major divinity, a status she does not enjoy in Greek tradition, where she is Zeus' daughter (Hes. Thb. 902) and sometimes his attendant or πάρεδρος (f. ex. Hes. Op. 256–260; Aesch. fr. 281a.10 Radt; Soph. Oed. Col. 1382; Plut. Alex. 52.6; in the Orphic tradition: Orph. frs. 32, 33 and 233 Bernabé, Orph. Hym. 62.1–2). A possible solution is that she is also a subordinate goddess or, even better, given the henotheistic tendency of the DA, that for him Dike is just a poetic name used to refer to the supreme god, the Νοῦς-ἀήρ, who receives the name Dike in his moral dimension of overseer of human behaviour, just as he receives the names of Uranus, Cronus, Zeus and Oceanus in his diverse roles in the formation of the universe. That way the three-level structure (superior god – minor divinities – men) is safeguarded. On pp. 149 and 152 Piano speaks of the substantial identity of Erinyes and subterranean daimones, which seems excessive; it would be preferable to say that they play analogous but not identical roles, carefully distinguished by the DA.

In a long section the author outlines a brief history of Greek daimonology from Hesiod and the pre-Socratics until Plato (152–171) and vindicates the DP as an important tessera in this development (171). This part would probably have been more suitable for ch. 6, after the study of cols. III and IV. The next part (173–183), on col. IV, does not study the whole column, but concentrates on Heraclitus' quotation and its important function in the course of thought in the first columns.1 The Erinyes and Dike appear again, but, unlike col. III, they do not perform an ethical function, but a cosmological one. In both cases the Erinyes, attendants of Dike, have the auxiliary role to watch over an order (moral or

The new characterization of the Erinyes as cosmic forces, due to Heraclitus, led the DA to include the quotation (174). This is a clear example of the interrelation between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic dimensions, put under the aegis of the same divine justice (183). In col. IV the DA is advancing the content of the columns devoted to the commentary, and even such a specific topic as the size of the sun. The quotation thus serves as a link between the two parts of the papyrus (175). In the last section (183–190) Piano discusses some passages in the DP related to ethics, an aspect neglected in scholarship. In col. V it is stated that those dominated by pleasure fall into ignorance (ἀμαθία) and disbelief (ἀπιστία). From this we can deduce that for the DA upright behaviour is fundamental for the acquirement of knowledge about divine matters. Col. III can be inserted into this scheme assuming that injustice is a product of ignorance and that the right behavior is a consequence of a true knowledge of the divine, which impedes the committing of injustice.

However, in col. III there is no mention of knowledge, which is first alluded to in col. V regarding the afterlife, so it is risky to establish a correlation between ἀμαθία and ἀδικία in col. III. In col. V it is a bad attitude, pleasure, that leads to ignorance, not the contrary.

Ch. 5 deals with col. VI, which is much better preserved than the previous ones. Piano observes a triadic structure that articulates the text of the column: a ritual action, the effect that it causes in the spiritual world and an explanation. L. 1 is a presentation of the ritual and acts as a kind of lemma that, like a verse in the commentary, introduces a topic whose elements, εὐχαί and θυσία, are interpreted in detail in the following lines (199–202). She thinks that in l. 2 εὐχαί is substituted by ἐποιδή, characterised by its effective power (δύναται) (203), but, in my opinion, they are hardly interchangeable, since the prayers cannot have such a power and they cannot be attributed to the magoi, since in l. 2 δέ and μάγων introduce a new agent of the ritual.

In ll. 3–4 Piano supports the comparison, not identification, between the daimones and the souls, and for this reason she proposes ἔμποδίζουσι ὡς at the end of l. 3. In l. 4 she accepts the reading τιμωροί as an adjective of ψυχαί and thinks it is connected with the ποινή in the next line. In her view, the avenging souls are impure and for this reason they cannot become daimones (204–206).

However, the close parallel between daimones and Eumenides and the nearly identical rituals addressed to both groups in this column make it unlikely that, if for the DA the Eumenides are souls (l. 10), daimones are not. It would be against his way of reasoning that in l. 10 he identifies Eumenides with souls and in ll. 2–3 he compares the impeding daimones with souls. Moreover, in ll. 7–8 the DA states that the magoi sacrifice countless cakes because also the souls are countless, which clearly implies that for him these daimones, recipients of the offerings, are souls. A much more natural interpretation of col. VI is that in his view both impeding daimones and Eumenides are just names for souls, probably in

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1 According to Piano’s reconstruction of col. IV, the words of Heraclitus’ quotation (Δίκης ἐπίκουροι), referred to Erinyes, were omitted in the papyrus, but all the same they are implicit both for the author and the learned readers.

different situations. (Piano herself sometimes assumes that the daimones are a type of souls: f. ex. 258–259.)

Section 5.4 (216–225) contains a detailed status of the issue of the identity of the μόσται and the nature of the rituals they and the initiates perform. The author summarizes the Iranian interpretation of col. VI and convincingly discloses its flaws: the daimones cannot represent the daēva because the nature of the latter is always negative, they are never worshipped and cannot become propitious through the ritual (225–226). In addition, the spilling of water and milk on the bloodless sacrifices (cakes) implies the use of fire, whereas among the Persians it was forbidden to throw offerings into the fire, a forceful argument against the Iranian nature of the rites (227). The rituals and the demonological conceptions of col. VI can be ascribed to Greek religious practices. The verb προθύουσι (line 9) makes it clear that we are faced with a preliminary rite in honour of the Eumenides, for which there are plenty of parallels. Literary sources mention libations of water and milk to these divinities, called νηφάλια and ἄονοι χοαί because they lacked wine (228–231). The absence of libations of wine is typical of rituals that are marginal or transitory, as the ritual in col. VI seems to be, since it aims to convert certain divinities from hostility to benevolence. In conclusion, the details of col. VI square much more with Greek rituals than with Iranian practices and beliefs (231–234).

Regarding the aim of the rites, she assesses Bernabé’s view that they are a funerary ceremony, an Orphic τελετή intended to get rid of the Titanic fault, alluded to in ποινήν (l. 5), but she dismisses this interpretation (correctly in my opinion), as in the papyrus there are no references to Dionysus’ dismemberment (242–246). In col. VI there are strong soteriological components, but they must belong not to a funeral service, but to an initiation in which the μύσται sought the expiation of guilt of the souls, but also their own purification to facilitate their passing to the other world (246–248). She claims that this column offers a paradigm of positive religiosity against the negative one of col. V, which mentions people ‘defeated by mistake and pleasure’ who do not believe in the terrors of Hades and in oracles (248–249).

Ch. 6 is devoted to the reconstruction of the conceptions of the DA regarding the humans, the demons and the gods, and their interrelations. Taking into account the evidence of cols. III, IV, a clear tripartition emerges, the divine level, the demonic one (also divine, but lesser), and the human one (formed by souls). The fact that personal gods are not mentioned in the first columns must respond to the idea of the DA that the names of the gods allude to the same entity, the Νοῦς-ἀήρ. The second category is formed by mediating entities (Erinyes, chthonic daimones, a personal daimon, obstructing daimones, Eumenides) (253–254). To clarify the intermediary function of the daimones she resorts to a famous Platonic passage (Smp. 202e–203a) which defines the daimonic as something halfway between the gods and the mortals and claims that the daimones act as interpreters, passing on the prayers and sacrifices and also orders and retributions (255–258).

In my view, this passage is given excessive weight in Piano’s interpretation and cannot be projected into the demonology of the DP. In fact, nothing in the DP indicates that the daimones are carriers of the religious activities of men (in col. VI the daimones and the
Eumenides are the recipients of the rituals), and the impeding daimones in col. VI do not favour the communication between men and god, rather they obstruct it.

There is a certain permeability among the human and demonic planes, since apparently the different demonic entities are merely souls that, as a reward for their wisdom and upright behaviour, have been exalted to the superior condition of servant of gods, thus reintegrating with the Νοῦς-ἀήρ (258–259, 273–274). The daimonic entities do not act autonomously, but they seem to be manifestations of the only superior power, which makes use of them to interact with men. Their dependence on the Νοῦς-ἀήρ leads her to think that they are also formed by air (268, 271–272). Similarly, souls must consist of air (as Betegh had suggested), which would be another point of contact with the thought of some pre-Socratics, such as Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia. An important consequence is that, if the souls are constituted by air, there would be a substantial identity between them and the divine principle that rules the cosmos (270). This interpretation is, broadly speaking, very appealing, even if not every detail remains clear (f. ex.: how are the souls produced? Are there daimones who do not derive from superior souls?).

One of the many contributions of part II is the comparison between passages of the DP and Plato (often neglected in the study of the papyrus), f. ex. col. V and Grg. 493a (103), Ti. 71e–72b (112–114), and Crat. (116–119); col. VI and Resp. 364bc, 364e–365a (249–251); cols. III, IV and VI and Smp. 202d–203e (255–258). Both authors show how in intellectual circles there is not necessarily a rejection of religious practices, but a reinterpretation of the tradition in light of new forms of thought (112–114).

Part III is not as innovative and thrilling as parts I and II, but it is remarkable nonetheless. In ch. 7 Piano tries to illuminate the cultural context in which the work preserved in the DP was produced and with this aim offers a panoramic overview of authors between the 6th and the 4th centuries who present similar attitudes and interests to those of the DA, f. ex. philosophers who see analogies with their views in poetry (Hippias, Plato, Aristotle) and thinkers or priests who show a rationalistic approach towards mythic and religious tradition (which does not imply a rejection, but a reformulation and defense). Piano’s survey includes some pre-Socratics who resort to personifications of physical entities (Pherecydes of Syrus, Empedocles), the first allegorists (Theagenes of Regium, Stesimbrotus of Thasus, Metrodorus of Lampsacus and other disciples of Anaxagoras, who invented a new manner of interpreting poetry, using linguistic methods, such as etymology, and applying philosophical concepts), enlightened priests (such as Tiresias and Theonoe in Euripides), and μετεωρολόγοι (people devoted to the study of atmospheric phenomena, frequently mocked in comedy, f. ex. in the Clouds, and in Platonic dialogues, f. ex. in the Cratylus). Since the DA shares many features with these figures and shows a similar standpoint (with the difference that he attributes great authority to Orpheus), he must be framed in the cultural milieu developed in Athens between late 5th c. and early 4th c. A precise intellectual portrait of the DA can be found on pp. 305–307, which should be read along with that of pp. 127–129.

1 See also col. VII 9–11 and Crat. 388e–389a and 401b in pp. 302–303.
In ch. 8 Piano demonstrates that it is not necessary to take recourse to Stoic thought to explain the main features of the physical theories expounded by the DP. His concept of πνε ομα, for example, is incompatible with that of the Stoics, characterized by the unity of air and fire. The πνε ομα in the DP is more in line with the pre-Socratic thinkers, especially the Ionian tradition beginning in Anaximenes and culminating in Diogenes of Apollonia (329–347).

In the last part of the book we find an epilogue (349–356), which contains the main contributions of parts I and III, an extensive bibliography (357–399) and a list of passages (401–406), which give an accurate idea of the variety and quantity of primary and secondary sources Piano has employed. Although there are some typos in the Greek (most of them in the notes) and in some quotes and bibliographical items in modern languages (Spanish, French), they are an insignificant percentage, given the length of the book.

Piano’s approach to the papyrus is learned and comprehensive, as she skillfully uses evidence from archaeology, art, literature, religion and philosophy to shed light on the foggy opening columns of the papyrus. In some parts (especially in ch. 4–6), her discussions are long and dense (denouncing the origin of the book from a doctoral dissertation), but her insights are always thought-provoking, thus opening new paths to the research. One instance of this is her intuition that not only the gods, but also the intermediate divine beings (Erinyes, daimones) and the souls are of aerial nature. As a general assessment, this monography is a major contribution to the research on the DP, since it marks a decisive advance to a better understanding not only of the first columns and their mysteries, but also of the complex personality of its author and the general purpose of his puzzling and fascinating treatise on minor divinities and celestial bodies.

Salamanca

Marco Antonio Santamaría


The volume under review grew out of a series of seminars held at the Institute of Classical Studies in London in 2008 and 2009 on the topic ‘Galen and philosophy’. It continues the line of research on Galen of Pergamum (129–ca. 216 CE) instigated by historians of ancient philosophy such as Michael Frede, Jonathan Barnes and R. James Hankinson since the 1980s. This philosophical approach ended the long period of neglect suffered by Galen’s voluminous writings in