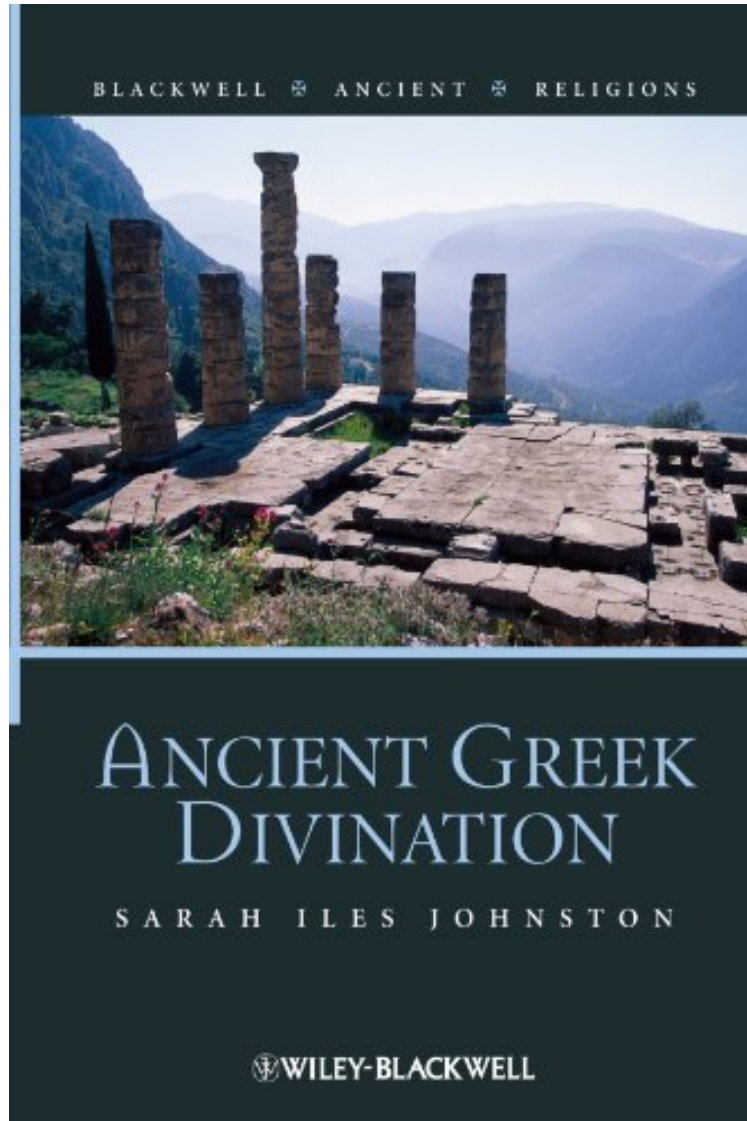


Ancient Greek Divination

Sarah Iles Johnston

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Sarah Iles Johnston : Ancient Greek Divination before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ancient Greek Divination:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is enjoyable as well as extremely useful for insight into ancient Greek magical practicesBy Tony WhitmanThis book is extremely well researched and presented in a very readable fashion. It is enjoyable as well as extremely useful for insight into ancient Greek magical practices.There are not enough books like this one that are slowly bridging the gap between hardcore academia and the mainstream reader. This book rides that line very well.If it is the goal of an author to make a research book entertaining and extremely

useful, I believe that this author has achieved that. This book will be one of my mainstays for many years to come.²² of 22 people found the following review helpful. A MasterpieceBy TimaeusThis is truly one of the best books I've read in a long time.In modern times, divination (tarot reading, astrology and other popular forms) is at best, taken as a form of entertainment, and at worst, a dirty little secret. If people engage in these sorts of things, then they typically have no explanation for how they work, and no interest finding an explanation.To the ancient Greeks, it couldn't be more different. Their whole religious ethos, of which divination was a part, had deeply esoteric philosophical explanations. Most modern people, and even scholars, have tended to view the Greeks in light of their own modern, post-enlightenment prejudices, and see these ancient people as merely being superstitious or following in the footsteps of some kind of "primitive" understanding of the world. The reality could not be further from the truth. Many brilliant and rational thinkers such as Socrates consulted with, and had belief in the value of oracles.The Stoics, such as Zeno, came up with the idea of Sympatheia. That is, strings of associations which connected the Gods, certain occurrences and certain symbols regardless of how far apart they were. This was used to explain both divination and magic. In divination, one could foretell the future by the symbols around, and in magic, one could create the future by using the symbols. This Stoic idea of "sympatheia" would later influence the Neoplatonist movement. In truth, the complex theology, ontology and philosophy of the Greeks which imbues reality itself with divine intelligence, beauty and inherent existential purpose puts modern theology and outdated 19th century materialism to shame.Professor Johnston has given a brilliant description, of, so far as we know, what happened at the various oracles such as Delphi, Dodona, Claris and Didmya, as well as how the Mantis, a freelance diviner as well as ordinary individuals used divination in their everyday lives. Along with this, she has explained these vital philosophical issues and the rationale behind divination.In the introduction to the book, there is a section called "The History of the History of Divination" which gives a review of every book on the subject, to date. This section alone is worth the price of the book, and yet the book has so much more to offer. In it, she explains very clearly the modern biases against divination and how they have crippled modern scholars with an inability to get into, and understand the ancient Greek mindset. In particularl discussing Halliday's book Greek Divination and the many flaws it suffers from (I've read this title and I can attest to it). She also explains why divination has been a neglected subject, particularly when magic is often more alluring due to being more on the fringes of the mainstream than divination was or is.If you are interested in understanding this subject matter, this book is a great place to start, giving one an understanding of how and why the Greeks did what they did, as well as citing sources which clearly show where to look for more information, and being a continual guide along the way. It also happens to be a very enjoyable read, and it moves right along.

The first English-language survey of ancient Greek divinatory methods, *Ancient Greek Divination* offers a broad yet detailed treatment of the earliest attempts by ancient Greeks to seek the counsel of the gods.Offers in-depth discussions of oracles, wandering diviners, do-it-yourself methods of foretelling the future, magical divinatory techniques, and much more Illustrates how the study of divination illuminates the mentalities of ancient Greek religions and societies

"This is a very accessible volume that explores the complicated roles and methods of divination throughout the Greek world. Johnston successfully elucidates the uses, importance, and pliancy of divination in the ancient world using both Greek and Roman sources. She bravely approaches this inherently vague realm and has created a text that is very useful in its breadth and scope." (Religious Studies , June 2010) "It is, in fact, difficult to find fault with this work." (Aestimatio: Critical s in the History of Science, June 2010) "A highly readable and engaging work. The complex and fascinating modes through which the Greeks discerned the will of the gods has never been more accessible to a modern audience. Johnston's sweeping yet detailed discussion will surely be of interest to a generously wide readership." Derek Collins, University of Michigan The most comprehensive, accessible treatment of ancient Greek divination available in English. It will be of interest to both specialists and students. Sarah Johnston brings lucid clarity to the shadowy range of ancient technologies by which the Greeks found messages from their gods. Peter T. Struck, University of PennsylvaniaFrom the Back Cover*Ancient Greek Divination* offers a broad yet detailed treatment of the attempts by ancient Greeks to seek the counsel of the gods. The first English-language survey of Greek divinatory methods, the book includes in-depth discussions of oracles, wandering diviners, do-it-yourself methods of foretelling the future, magical divinatory techniques, and much more. Author Sarah Iles Johnston provides essential facts on each method and highlights its social and cultural significance, effectively illustrating how the study of divination illuminates the mentalities of ancient Greek religions and society. The volume is illustrated and contains a chapter-by-chapter bibliography. Combining current scholarship with a lively and accessible style of writing, *Ancient Greek Divination* takes a new look at a phenomenon that was central to the lives of the Ancient Greeks.