

from the offices of the Poison Pie Publishing House

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Dear Fellow Pilgrim:

Please find enclosed a copy of A Practicum on Divination via Cleromancy, which was written one page per day in the year 2019. After an introduction on the first of January, the remaining days each contain one of 364 horoscopes. The horoscopes are expressed in terms of the interaction of a pair of individuals chosen from the fourteen youths (seven young men and seven maidens) offered as tribute to the minotaur in the labyrinth by King Minos of Crete. Each individual additionally represents a spectrum ranging from a vice to a virtue. For example, the maiden Periboea represents an axis from cowardice to courage.

Also enclosed is a cleromantic kit, including casting stones, a coin and a mat. To randomly determine a horoscope using this kit, the stones are cast on the mat. The stone with one hole represents the traveler and the stone with two holes represents the companion. If they land in the same space, the stones must be rerolled in whole or in part. The other twelve stones serve to randomize the process. The coin is flipped to determine the phase of the moon, crescent or gibbous, which influences the choice of vice and virtue. For the enclosed coin, associate the near side of the moon with the crescent phase and the dark side with the gibbous phase (or vice versa). With traveler, companion and phase of the moon determined, proceed to the "Index of Horoscopes by Name", beginning on page 367 and locate the horoscope.

This process is a version of divination also used in the I-Ching, in which yarrow stalks are cast to generate a random number between 1 and 64, as a means to select one of 64 horoscopes in the text. In either case, the passage is then read and interpreted in accord with the issue or question that prompted the querent to seek an oracle in the first place.

Any combination of stones, coin and mat can be used in place of those provided, so long as they randomly generate a companion, traveler and phase of the moon. We encourage those so inclined to assemble their own cleromantic kits. In our case the stones are Tennessee marble harvested from the grounds of the local abandoned quarry by the staff of the Poison Pie Publishing House.

Cleromancy is a joint exercise in introspection and apophenia, the finding of meaning in arbitrary data or patterns. Acknowledging the arbitrary nature of the casting does not diminish the potential value of the exercise whatsoever. In fact, the conscious evaluation of a pressing issue in terms of a randomly selected passage may prompt the seeker to view the situation from a new perspective, which may prove beneficial.

Good luck in your readings!

Sincerely,
Staff of the Poison Pie Publishing House

p.s. An electronic implementation of the oracle, in which the 14 individuals can be weighted, is also available online here: <https://www.poisonpie.com/publishing/cleromancy/oracle/oracle.html>.