

A FURTHER DIVINATION GUIDE

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In the May 1982 issue of *Word Ways*, Paul Hellweg presented a list of 124 English words designating various forms of divination. All of the terms listed ended in the combining form -MANCY, which specifically means "divination."

A second, though considerably smaller, group of words denoting forms of divination ends in the combining form -SCOPY, meaning "observation, scrutiny, examination." Since this additional group seems never to have been collected anywhere, I present a first list of -SCOPY terms for divination here. Readers are invited to expand the list, as well as to compile lists of divination terms ending in still other suffixes or combining forms. BLETONISM, for instance, is the faculty for discovering subterranean streams or springs through supernatural means, as by using a divining rod.

BRONTOSCOPY. Divination of the omen of a clap of thunder.

CERAUNOSCOPY. The observance of thunder as an omen; alternatively, divination by means of lightning.

DEUTEROSCOPY. Clairvoyance, second sight, or prophetic vision.

GELOSCOPY. An inferior form of the term GELOTOSCOPY.

GELOTOSCOPY. Divination of someone's character or future from the individual's way of laughing.

HEPATOSCOPY. Divination by inspecting the livers of animals.

HIEROSCOPY. Divination by observing the objects offered in sacrifice; alternatively, divination by inspecting the entrails of sacrificial victims.

HOROSCOPY. The art of determining the future from the positions of the heavenly bodies.

HYDATOSCOPY. Divination by means of water, as by observing the ebb and flow of tides, or by crystal vision.

KERAUNOSCOPY or KERAUNOSCOPIA. Divination by thunder. It intrigues me how one can watch or see thunder.

LECANOSCOPY. The practice of gazing fixedly at water in a basin. None of the major dictionaries explains the reason for so observing water. Since lecanomancy is divination by throwing three stones into water in a basin and invoking the aid of a demon (Century Dictionary, 1889-1891), one may assume that lecanoscopy is an allied form of divination. A minor dictionary (Howard G. Zettler,

-Ologies & -isms: A Thematic Dictionary, Detroit, Gale Research Company, 1978), however, defines the term as a form of self-hypnotism. Take your pick!

METOPOSCOPY. The art of telling someone's fortune from an examination of the markings on his or her forehead or face.

NAUSCOPY. The pretended power or act, or the gift, of discovering ships or land at great distances.

OMOPLATOSCOPY. Divination by observing a shoulder blade that is blotched or cracked in a fire.

ONEIROSCOPY. The art of interpreting dreams.

OOSCOPY. Divination by means of inspecting eggs.

ORNISCOPY. Divination by observing birds and their flight.

ORNITHOSCOPY. Divination by observing birds and their flight.

PYROSCOPY. Divination by means of fire or flames.

SCATOSCOPY. Divination by inspecting dung.

TERATOSCOPY. Divination by observing prodigies or monstrosities.

All of the terms both in Hellweg's list and in mine are taken either from Webster's Second Edition or from The Oxford English Dictionary. Ask not why - some things are better left unexplored. Hellweg's list includes at least two errors: ARITHOMANCY is a typographical error for ARITHMOMANCY, and HIDROMANCY is given merely as a variant of HYDROMANCY, whereas it is also an independent term (see below). The list omits at least seven forms of divination with names ending in -MANCY, all of them included in one or both of the two specified dictionaries:

CHAOMANCY. Divination by observing the air.

COUNTERNECROMANCY. Webster's Second does not define this word, leaving its signification to our imagination.

DAPHNOMANCY. Divination by means of a laurel tree.

HIDROMANCY. Divination by means of an individual's perspiration.

LIBANOMANCY. Divination by burning incense.

MACHAEROMANCY. Divination by means of knives or swords.

PESSOMANCY. Divination by means of pebbles.

It is possible to make further additions to Hellweg's list by consulting other reference works. As an example, Harry E. Wedeck's Dictionary of Spiritualism (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971) includes the seven following additional terms:

APANTOMANCY. Divination by observing objects that appear haphazardly.

ARITHOMANCY. An error for ARITHMOMANCY (divination by observing numbers).

CAUSIMOMANCY. Divination by casting objects into a fire.

CRITOMANCY. Divination by observing the paste of cakes and the barley flour sprinkled over a sacrificial victim. Probably a variant of, or an error for, CRITHOMANCY.

OVOMANCY. Divination by putting eggs on a fire and observing how they break. Possibly, an error for OOMANCY.

PEGNOMANCY. Divination by means of a wand.

PHYLLORHODOMANCY. Divination by observing rose leaves.

Wedek's work also provides an additional term ending in -SCOPY:

MOLEOSCOPY. The prediction of future events in an individual's life through studying the shape and location of his or her moles.

The 1961 Edition of Collier's Encyclopedia lists the following seven additional terms:

AXIOMANCY. Divination using a floating or turning axe.

CHARTOMANCY. Divination using a deck of Tarot cards.

CIROMANCY. Divination using wax.

KYPOMANCY. Divination using tea leaves in a cup.

MEILOMANCY. Divination using the location, size, and number of an individual's moles.

NEPHELOMANCY. Divination by observing clouds.

PHYSIOGMANCY [sic]. Divination by observing an individual's face.

The 1970 Edition of The Encyclopedia Americana provides one additional -MANCY and one additional -SCOPY term:

NEOMANCY. Divination based on the distribution of moles on the body - the third such term!

OPHTHALMOSCOPY. Divination by examining an individual's eyes.

In Chapter 25 of the third book of Gargantua and Pantagruel, Rabelais mentions 32 forms of divination ending either in -MANCY or in -SCOPY, including these two:

CHOIROMANCY. Divination by means of swine.

ONYOMANCY. Divination by rubbing wax and oil over revelatory fingernails.