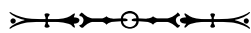


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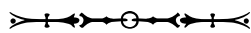
VOLUME 86 NUMBER 2 2008

DELPHI

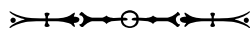
Each issue of the *Rosicrucian Digest* provides members and all interested readers with a compendium of materials regarding the ongoing flow of the Rosicrucian Timeline. The articles, historical excerpts, art, and literature included in this *Digest* span the ages, and are not only interesting in themselves, but also seek to provide a lasting reference shelf to stimulate continuing study of all of those factors which make up Rosicrucian history and thought. Therefore, we present classical background, historical development, and modern reflections on each of our subjects, using the many forms of primary sources, reflective commentaries, the arts, creative fiction, and poetry.



This magazine is dedicated to all the women and men throughout the ages who have contributed to and perpetuated the wisdom of the Rosicrucian, Western esoteric, tradition.



May we ever be worthy of the light with which we have been entrusted.



In this issue, we listen to the echoes from Delphi, its Oracles, and its Mysteries, across the ages. Active for more than a thousand years, its Temples and Priestesses connected the Divine and Human worlds, often with profound results which still powerfully resonate in our day. We open our hearts and our minds to these ancient voices once again.

# ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

No. 2 - 2008

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## Official Magazine of the Worldwide Rosicrucian Order

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# DELPHI

Grand Master Julie Scott, S.R.C..

*All people of good will should consider themselves citizens of Delphi.*  
UNESCO<sup>1</sup>

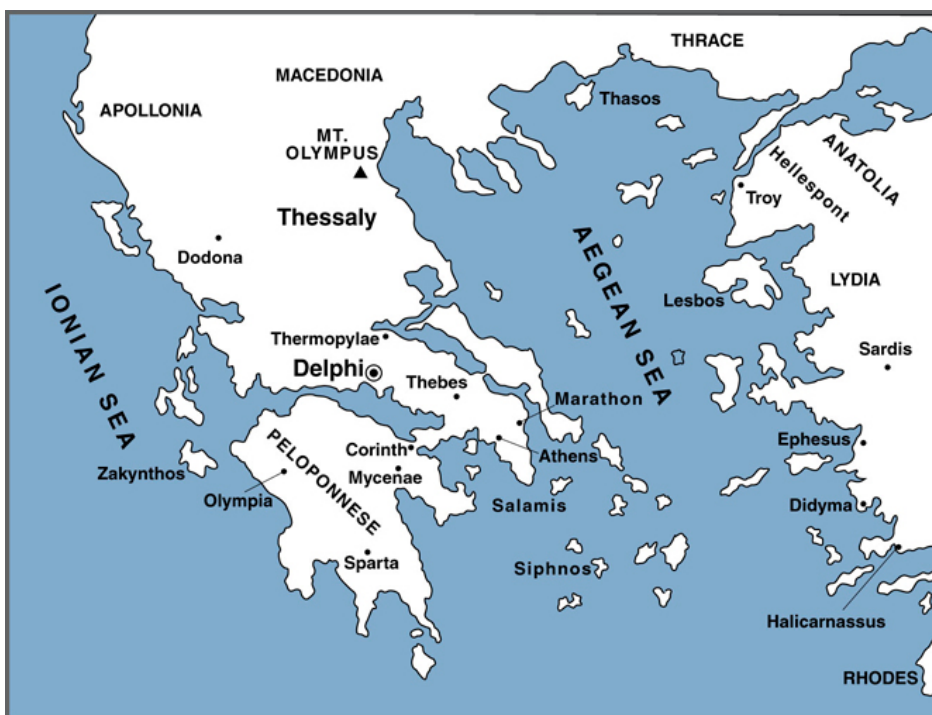
**F**EW traditions in the history of the world have exercised greater influence in their time or inspired more intrigue throughout the ages than Delphi.

For centuries, kings, generals, philosophers, and common people consulted the Oracles of Delphi before making any major decisions. The injunction “Know Thyself,” inscribed on the wall of the ancient Temple of Apollo at Delphi, still inspires many people today. Socrates invoked the words of the Oracle of Delphi at his trial, in order to make the point that ultimately ended his life. Every four years (on off years between the Olympian Games) a truce was called so that the ancient Greeks could gather in Delphi for the Pythian Games, which included not only athletic competition; they

also included contests in art and music. The *Omphalos*, a conical shaped stone, marked the navel or center of the world, which the ancient Greeks believed was located in Delphi. The Greeks always kept their sacred flame burning in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. More recently, one of the most fascinating transdisciplinary scientific inquiries into the ancient world centered around Delphi.

This issue of the *Rosicrucian Digest* explores these remarkable aspects of the ancient Delphic tradition and more.

To begin, let us consider the site. Delphi is perched on the southern slope of Mount Parnassus, one of the holy mountains of Greece. The surrounding cliffs were called the “shining ones” by the ancient Greeks.



Map of Greece and Asia Minor



The partially reconstructed Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia. The oldest goddess figurines were discovered underneath this sanctuary. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

Delphi is 110 miles (180 kilometers) northwest of Athens and 6 miles (10 kilometers) north of the Gulf of Corinth.

Before the Olympian gods invaded Greece, an Earth Mother tradition existed in Delphi for centuries, possibly millennia. The word *Delphi* comes from the Greek word *delphus*, meaning womb.<sup>2</sup> The Omphalos, or navel (symbolized by a carved stone), was placed at the location the Greeks believed was the exact center of the world. (What closer connection have any of us had to our mothers than through our navel?)

Terracotta figurines of female deities or priestesses (including some seated on three-legged chairs) dating to 1600 BCE were found in the area, and in the nearby Corycian Cave thousands of “knucklebones” were found. These “bones” are the hooves of sheep and goats that were used to draw lots or to obtain yes/no answers. They date from the even earlier Neolithic period (5000-3000 BCE).<sup>3</sup>

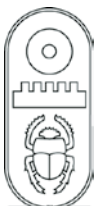
There were at least four phases of worship in Delphi. First, there was the worship of the Earth Mother, Gaia (or Ge); followed by Themis (daughter of Gaia

and Uranus), goddess of divine order; then Phoebe, a sun goddess; and finally Apollo, the sun god and god of music, poetry, art, cures, and prophecy, who arrived in the area some time before the eighth century BCE.<sup>4</sup>

There were many temples dedicated to Apollo around the ancient Mediterranean world, and at least four temples were built for Apollo at Delphi. The ancient travel writer Pausanias reported that, “the first temple of Apollo was made of laurel branches, the second temple of beeswax and feathers, and the third one of bronze.”<sup>5</sup> The



The Omphalos at Delphi. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.





The Sibyl's Rock. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

first temple was probably a hut. The second and third were sturdier structures later destroyed by a fire and an earthquake. The final Temple of Apollo was grand beyond all imagination.

The temple complex included the “Sacred Way,” a path lined with thousands of statues that had been donated to Delphi in gratitude for the advice or protection the Oracles had given wealthy petitioners and city/states. There were also at least a dozen treasuries on the path leading up to the Temple of Apollo. Each treasury would have been packed full of riches sent in thanks to the Oracles and Apollo. Before entering the Sacred Way, guests would bathe in the nearby Castalian Spring, where the Oracles also prepared themselves separately.

About halfway up the walkway to the temple, one can still see the craggy Sibyl's Rock (see photo above), the place where the earliest Oracles presented their prophecies. Later the Oracles moved inside the great temple. Just beyond the Sybil's Rock was a thirty-foot (ten meter) column that supported the famous Naxian Sphinx<sup>6</sup> (see photo, page 5). In front of the temple stood a colossal statue of Apollo (now missing, although the base is still

there) that was more than fifty feet (fifteen meters) in height.

In the pronaos of the temple, leading to the Holy of Holies, were inscribed at least two sayings: “Know Thyself” and “Nothing Too Much” (or “Nothing in Excess”). There may have been other sayings as well.

In the southwest corner of the temple was the *adyton*, the Holy of Holies where the Oracles presented their prophecies. Pausanias described the Oracles' inner sanctum. Just outside was a waiting room for petitioners. Inside there was a human-size statue of Apollo made of gold,

the Omphalos with gold eagles, the grave of Dionysus (also important in the Delphic tradition), the temple hearth (the ever burning flame), laurel, and the Oracle seated atop a tripod.

The outdoor Theater of Delphi was up the mountain from the temple and the stadium was beyond that.

The Delphic tradition, which began in the mists of time, ended in 394 CE with Roman Emperor Theodosius's edict that prohibited the practice of ancient (pagan) traditions. In 397 Romans were given permission to use materials from the old Greek temples for public works projects, and by 435 any extant temples were forced to close.

Little by little the debris from Mount Parnassus buried what had once been one of the most important and revered sites in the world. Eventually Delphi was lost and a new town, called Kastri, sprouted up on the site. By the sixteenth century no one even knew where the old sanctuary had been. Then, in 1676, two travelers recognized an inscription (DELFOI) carved on a stone that by then stood in the kitchen of one of Kastri's residents.<sup>7</sup> The location of old Delphi had been rediscovered.

Still, excavation was slow. The Turks had occupied Greece for centuries, and Greece was at war for much of the next two centuries, struggling to gain its independence.

In 1861 the French Archaeological Society began digging around Delphi. In the late 1880s, in a series of fascinating (and somewhat questionable) maneuvers, the French and Americans competed for the prestigious right to officially excavate the site.<sup>8</sup> The French won, after allowing certain trade concessions to Greece. They also earned the right to pay for the relocation of every resident of Kastri.

Today the entire site has been excavated and the well-organized and beautiful Archaeological Museum of Delphi (owned and managed by the Greek government) shares its extraordinary collection with more than one million guests annually. Several of the old buildings have been rebuilt or partially rebuilt, and a few of the restored columns of the ancient Temple of Apollo now stand upright again.

UNESCO includes the archaeological site of Delphi on its prestigious list of World Heritage Sites, thus acknowledging its outstanding cultural value to humanity. They note, “Blending harmoniously with the



The Naxian Sphinx.  
Photo from the  
Rosicrucian Archiives.

superb landscape and charged with sacred meaning, Delphi in the 6th century BCE was indeed the religious center and symbol of unity of the ancient Greek world.”<sup>9</sup>

Few traditions in the history of the world have exercised greater influence in their time or inspired more intrigue throughout the ages than has Delphi. Even now, amidst the ruins, one can sense the force of this mighty tradition, and if you listen closely, really closely, you can still hear the voices of Delphi, from so long, long ago.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Engraved on the UNESCO plaque at the entrance to the archaeological site of Delphi.

<sup>2</sup> William J. Broad, *The Oracle*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006) 22. *Delphus* also means “dolphin,” revealing the ancient Greeks’ knowledge that dolphins are mammals (with wombs), not fish.

<sup>3</sup> John R. Hale, “Delphic Oracle,” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, (London & New York: Continuum, 2005), 466, <http://www.religionandnature.com/ern/sample/Hale--DelphicOracle.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> No one knows exactly when the worship of Apollo began at Delphi. Suggested dates range from 1500 BCE to 900 BCE.

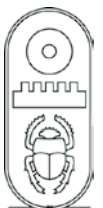
<sup>5</sup> Pierre Amandry, *Delphi and Its History*, (Athens: Greek Archeological Guide, 1984), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Donated by the people of the Cycladic island, Naxos.

<sup>7</sup> Amandry, *Delphi*, 29.

<sup>8</sup> For a fascinating description of this competition see Broad, *Oracle*, 77-82, and Ian Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural History*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 57-60. [http://books.google.com/books?id=k9XbDPZOcjQC&pg=PA60&clpg=PA60&dq=delphi+archaeology+french+and+americans&source=web&cots=ZjilDCg9N2&sig=AQtbyIH11u1fxJWVrf\\_kiGMJrJg](http://books.google.com/books?id=k9XbDPZOcjQC&pg=PA60&clpg=PA60&dq=delphi+archaeology+french+and+americans&source=web&cots=ZjilDCg9N2&sig=AQtbyIH11u1fxJWVrf_kiGMJrJg).

<sup>9</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites around the world that are considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/393/>.

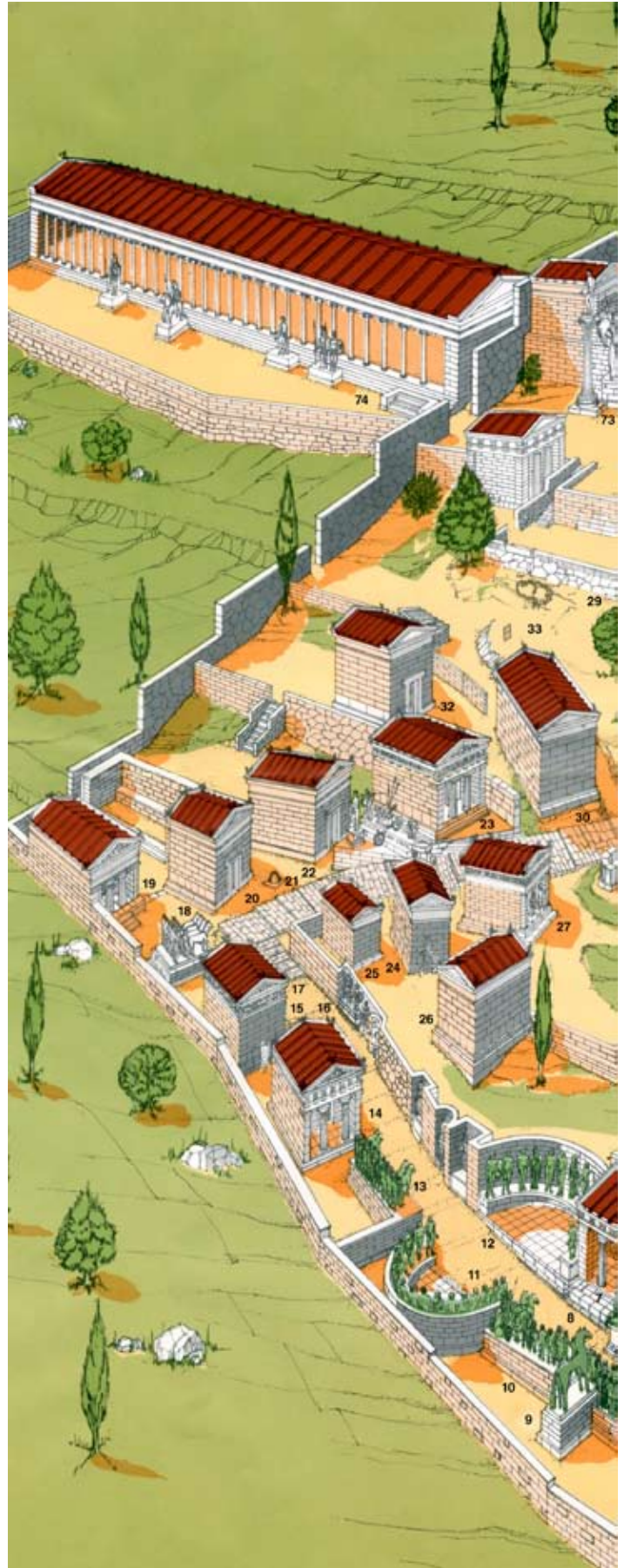


# PLAN AND RECONSTRUCTION OF DELPHI

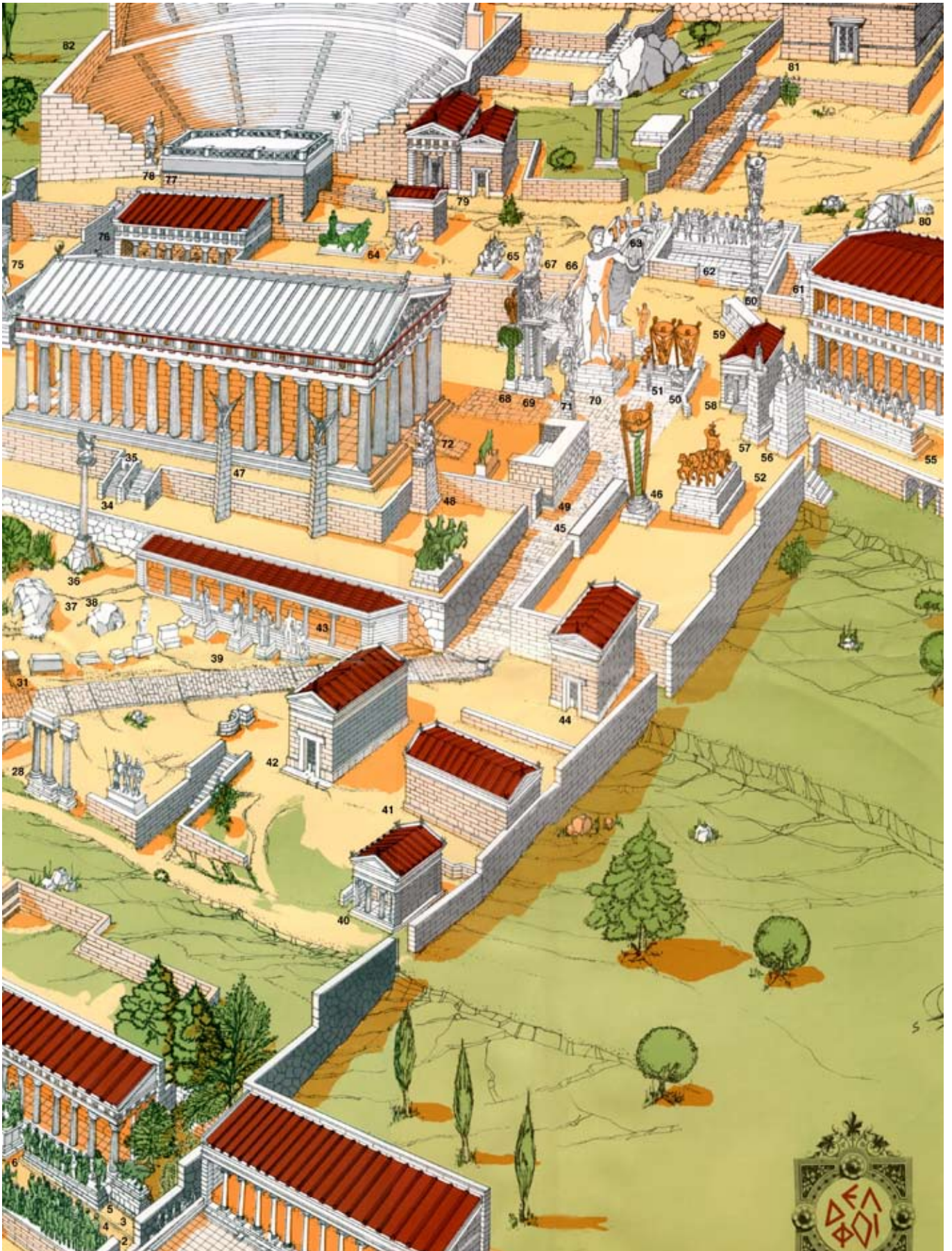
by C. Pappas

Published in Pierre Amandry, *Delphi and its History*  
(©Greece: An Archaeological Guide Edition, 1984).

Legend on following page.







# Delphi Plan And Reconstruction— I. The Sanctuary of Apollo

## Legend

1. Court and stoa: agora (market place) of the Roman period.
  2. Main entrance of the Sacred Way to the Sanctuary of Apollo.
  3. Bronze bull. Votive offering of the Corkyrans. About 480 BCE.
  4. The Admirals of the Spartans (37 statues). About 404 BCE.
  5. Ex-voto of the Arcadians (9 statues). About 371 BCE.
  6. Statue of mounted Philopoimen. About 207 BCE.
  7. Building with Doric stoa of the Hellenistic period.
  8. Ex-voto of the Athenians to commemorate their victory at Marathon, composed of 13 statues, created by Phidias. About 460 BCE.
  - 9-10-11-12. Argive votive monuments :
  9. Bronze "Dourian Horse" (Wooden Horse of Troy). About 371 BCE.
  10. Statues of the "Seven against Thebes." About 456 BCE.
  11. Statues of "Épigones." About 456 BCE.
  12. The Kings of Argos (10 statues). About 369 BCE.
  13. Ex-voto of the Tarentines. About 473 BCE.
  14. Treasury of the Sikyonians. 6th c. BCE.
  15. Statues of the Knidians. 6th c. BCE.
  16. Votive offering of the Aitolians. 3rd c. BCE.
  17. Treasury of the Siphnians. 530 BCE.
  18. Ex-voto of the Liparians.
  19. Treasury of the Thebans. About 371 BCE.
  20. Treasury of the Beotians. 6th c. BCE.
  21. The Omphalos (navel-stone)—present position.
  22. Treasury of the Poteidaians.
  23. Treasury of the Athenians. 590-585 BCE.
  24. Treasury of the Syracusans. About 413 BCE.
  25. Treasury of the Megarians.
  26. Aiolian Treasury - of the Klazomens.
  27. Treasury of the Knidians. 6th c. BCE.
  28. Pedestals and bases of monuments.
  29. The polygonal wall. 6th c. BCE.
  30. The Delphic Council House (Bouleuterion).
  31. Ex-voto of the Boeotians.
  32. The Asklepieion and spring.
  33. Pedestal of Herod Atticus.
  34. The Sanctuary of the goddess Ge (Earth) and the Muses. Kassotis Spring (6th c. BCE).
  35. Spring of the Sanctuary of the goddess Ge (Earth).
  36. The column (10 m) surmounted by a colossal Sphinx. Votive offering of the Naxians. 570 BCE.
  37. The rock of Sibyl.
  38. The rock of Leto.
  39. The Halos: threshing floor.
  40. Treasury of the Kyreneans. 4th c. BCE.
  41. The Delphic Prytanaion (Magistrates' Hall).
  42. Treasury of the Corinthians. 6th c. BCE.
  43. Porch of the Athenians. About 478 BCE.
  44. Treasury of the Akanthians. About 422 BCE.
  45. Ex-voto of the Tarentines.
  46. Columns of the Messenians. About 425 BCE.
  47. Statue of Aemilius Paulus. 168 BCE.
  48. Altar of Apollo, erected by the C'hians. 6th c. BCE.
  49. Golden tripod with serpent column. Ex-voto of the Greek victory over the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE.
  50. Stele of Cleitor (Arkadia). 332 BCE.
  51. Tripods and Victories of gold, offered by the Syracusan sons of Deinomenes, Gelon and Hieron after the victory at Himera over the Carthaginians. About 479 BCE.
  52. The golden chariot of Helios, dedicated by the Rhodians. About 304 BCE.
  53. The Stoa of Attalos I. 3rd c. BCE.
  54. Building (oikos) of Attalos—"Dionysion".
  55. Monument of Attalos I, King of Pergamon.
  56. Statue of Attalos I.
  57. Statue of Eumenes II.
  58. Archaic Treasury.
  59. Ex-voto of Corkyrans.
  60. Column with three dancers. 325 BCE. (To be seen in the Museum.)
  61. The temenos with shrine of Neoptolemos, son of Achilleus.
  62. The Thessalian monument, built by Daochos II. About 335 BCE. (To be seen in the Museum.)
  63. Votive offering, from the Hellenistic period. (117 statues)
  64. The Charioteer. Most likely position. 475-470 BCE. (To be seen in the Museum.)
  65. Statues of the generals of Aitolians. About 279 BCE.
  66. Spring of Cassotis 14th c. BCE).
  67. Column with statue of Prusias, King of Bithynia.
  68. The bronze Palm Tree, surmounted by a gilt statue of Athena. Votive offering of the Athenians after their victory over the Persians near the Eurymedon River in 468 BCE.
  69. Ex-voto of Aristaineta.
  70. Colossal statue of Apollo Sitalkas.
  71. Column that carried a statue of Eumenes II, King of Pergamon. 2nd c. BCE.
  72. The Temple of Apollo. Reconstruction of the Temple of the 6th c. BCE.
  73. Pedestals of statues.
  74. Western Portico of Aitolians. 3rd c. BCE.
  75. Archaic Treasury.
  76. The lion hunt of Alexander the Great, a bronze group. About 320 BCE.
  77. The stage building of the Theatre.
  78. The Theatre of Delphi.
  79. Archaic Treasuries.
  80. The rock of Cronos.
  81. Lesche (meeting hall) of the Cnidians. About 460 BCE.
  82. Exit towards Stadium.
- "Plan and Reconstruction of Delphi" by C. Pappas, published in Pierre Amandry, *Delphi and its History* (©Greece: An Archaeological Guide Edition, 1984). Every effort has been made to find the publisher of this source. Please send any information to contact the rights holder to [editorinchief@rosicrucian.org](mailto:editorinchief@rosicrucian.org).

# ENCOUNTERS AT DELPHI

Rosicrucian Library Research Staff

Over the millennium of its activity, the Oracle at Delphi gave advice to those from many walks of life, with sometimes surprising results. Collected here are some of these Oracular responses, as recorded by ancient historians and supplicants of the Oracle.<sup>1</sup>

## Know Thyself

One of the great inscriptions at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi was *Gnothi Seauton* ("Know Thyself"). Sages have debated its meaning and achievability for the thousands of years since prophecy began at Delphi:

"When he was asked what was very difficult, Thales said, 'To know one's self.' And what was easy, 'To advise another.' What was most pleasant? 'To be successful.' To the question, 'What is the divinity?' he replied 'That which has neither beginning nor end.'"<sup>2</sup>

"There are two sentences inscribed upon the Delphic oracle, hugely accommodated to the usages of a human being's life, *Know thyself*, and *Nothing too much*; and upon these all other precepts depend. They themselves accord and harmonize with each other, and each seems to illustrate the energy of the other; for in *Know thyself* is included *Nothing too much*; and so again in the latter is comprised *Know thyself*. And Ion hath spoken of it thus: —

'This sentence, *Know thyself*, is  
but a word;  
But only Jove himself could do  
the thing.'

"And thus Pindar: —

'This sentence brief, *Do nothing  
to excess*,  
The Wise have always praised  
exceedingly.'

"They therefore that have impressed these upon their minds as the precepts

μηδὲν ἄγαν  
Nothing in Excess

of the Pythian oracle, can easily conform themselves to all the affairs of life, and bear them handsomely; considering their nature, so that they are neither lifted up to arrogance upon a prosperous event, nor when an adverse happens, are dejected into complaint through pusillanimity and that fear of death which is so congenial to us; both which proceed from the ignorance of those things which fall out in human life by necessity and fatal decree."<sup>3</sup>

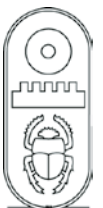
"The maxim 'Know thyself' comes down to us from the skies; it should be imprinted in the heart, and stored in the memory."<sup>4</sup>



## Take Council with the Majority

"In the city are graves of Megarians. They made one for those who died in the Persian invasion, and what is called the Aesymnium (Shrine of Aesymnus) was also a tomb of heroes. When Agamemnon's son Hyperion, the last king of Megara, was killed by Sandion for his greed and violence, they resolved no longer to be ruled by one king, but to have elected magistrates and to obey one another in turn.

"Then Aesymnus, who had a reputation second to none among the Megarians, came to the god in Delphi and asked in what way they could be prosperous. The oracle in its reply said that they would fare well if they took counsel with the majority. This utterance they took to refer to the dead, and built a council chamber in this place in order



that the grave of their heroes might be within it.”<sup>5</sup>



### **The Sky Will Not Fall**

“Podalirius went to Delphi and inquired of the oracle where he should settle; and on receiving an oracle that he should settle in the city where, if the encompassing heaven were to fall, he would suffer no harm, he settled in that place of the Carian Chersonnese which is encircled by mountains all round the horizon.”<sup>6</sup>



### **The Reward for Hospitality (Sixth Century BCE)**

“In the Chersonnese then the Phoenicians made themselves masters of all the other cities except the city of Cardia. Of these cities up to that time Miltiades the son of Kimon, the son of Stesagoras, had been despot, Miltiades the son of Kypselos having obtained this government in the manner which here follows:—

“The inhabitants of this Chersonnese were Dolonkian Thracians; and these Dolonkians, being hard pressed in war by the Apsinthians, sent their kings to Delphi to consult the Oracle about the war. And the Pythian prophetess answered them that they must bring into their land as founder of a settlement the man who should first offer them hospitality as they returned from the temple. The Dolonkians then passed along the Sacred Road through the land of the Phokians and of the Bœotians, and as no man invited them, they turned aside and came to Athens.

“Now at that time in Athens the government was held by Peisistratos, but Miltiades also the son of Kypselos had some power, who belonged to a family which kept four-horse chariot teams, and who was descended originally from Aiacos and Egina,

though in more recent times his family was Athenian, Philaios the son of Ajax having been the first of his house who became an Athenian. This Miltiades was sitting in the entrance of his own dwelling, and seeing the Dolonkians going by with dress that was not of the native Athenian fashion and with spears, he shouted to them; and when they approached, he offered them lodging and hospitality. They then having accepted and having been entertained by him, proceeded to declare all the utterances of the Oracle; and having declared it they asked him to do as the god had said: and Miltiades when he heard it was at once disposed to agree, because he was vexed by the rule of Peisistratos and desired to be removed out of the way.

“He set out therefore forthwith to Delphi to inquire of the Oracle whether he should do that which the Dolonkians asked of him, and as the Pythian prophetess also bade him do so, Miltiades the son of Kypselos, who had before this been victor at Olympia with a four-horse chariot, now taking with him of the Athenians everyone who desired to share in the expedition, sailed with the Dolonkians and took possession of the land: and they who had invited him to come to them made him despot over them.”<sup>7</sup>



### **Dead or Alive: Aesop’s Delphi Tale (Sixth Century BCE)**

“A Rogue laid a wager that he would prove the Oracle at Delphi to be untrustworthy by procuring from it a false reply to an inquiry by himself. So he went to the temple on the appointed day with a small bird in his hand, which he concealed under the folds of his cloak, and asked whether what he held in his hand were alive or dead. If the Oracle said ‘dead,’ he meant to produce the bird alive: if the reply was ‘alive,’ he intended to wring its neck and show it to be dead. But the Oracle was too much for him, for the answer he got was this:

. . . the Oracles  
 declared to Croesus  
 that if he should march  
 against the Persians  
 he would destroy  
 a great empire . . .

‘Stranger, whether the thing that you hold in your hand be alive or dead is a matter that depends entirely on your own will.’”<sup>8</sup>



### Croesus (595-547 BCE)

“And to the Lydians whom he sent to make trial of the Oracles he gave charge as follows,—that from the day on which they set out from Sardis they should reckon up the number of the days following and on the hundredth day they should consult the Oracles, asking what Croesus the son of Alyattes king of the Lydians chanced then to be doing: and whatever the Oracles severally should prophesy, this they should cause to be written down and bear it back to him.

“Now what the other Oracles prophesied is not by any reported, but at Delphi, so soon as the Lydians entered the sanctuary of the temple to consult the god and asked that which they were commanded to ask, the Pythian prophetess spoke thus in hexameter measure:

“But the number of sand I know, and  
 the measure of drops in the ocean;  
 The dumb man I understand, and I hear  
 the speech of the speechless:  
 And there hath come to my soul the  
 smell of a strong-shelled tortoise

Boiling in caldron of bronze, and the  
 flesh of a lamb mingled with it;  
 Under it bronze is laid, it hath bronze as  
 a clothing upon it.’

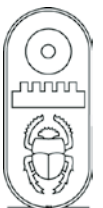
“When the Pythian prophetess had uttered this oracle, the Lydians caused the prophecy to be written down, and went away at once to Sardis. And when the rest also who had been sent round were there arrived with the answers of the Oracles, then Croesus unfolded the writings one by one and looked upon them: and at first none of them pleased him, but when he heard that from Delphi, forthwith he did worship to the god and accepted the answer, judging that the Oracle at Delphi was the only true one, because it had found out what he himself had done.

“For when he had sent to the several Oracles his messengers to consult the gods, keeping well in mind the appointed day he contrived the following device, he thought of something which it would be impossible to discover or to conceive of, and cutting up a tortoise and a lamb he boiled them together himself in a cauldron of bronze, laying a cover of bronze over them.”

[On another occasion] “Croesus gave charge that they should ask the Oracles this question also,—whether Croesus should march against the Persians . . . They inquired thus, and the answers of both the Oracles agreed in one, declaring to Croesus that if he should march against the Persians he would destroy a great empire . . .”

[When Croesus does attack the Persians, he is defeated, and it is his Empire that is destroyed. The Persian King Cyrus then asks him:] “ ‘Croesus, tell me who of all was it who persuaded thee to march upon my land and so to become an enemy to me instead of a friend?’

“And he said: ‘O king, I did this to thy felicity and to my own misfortune, and the cause of this was the god of the Hellenes, who incited me to march with my army. For



no one is so senseless as to choose of his own will war rather than peace, since in peace the sons bury their fathers, but in war the fathers bury their sons. But it was pleasing, I suppose, to the divine powers that these things should come to pass thus.’

“Croesus sent certain of the Lydians to Delphi, enjoining them to lay the fetters upon the threshold of the temple and to ask the god whether he felt no shame that he had incited Croesus by his prophecies to march upon the Persians, persuading him that he should bring to an end the empire of Cyrus, seeing that these were the first-fruits of spoil which he had won from it—at the same time displaying the fetters. This they were to ask, and moreover also whether it was thought right by the gods of the Hellenes to practice ingratitude.

“When the Lydians came and repeated that which they were enjoined to say, it is related that the Pythian prophetess spoke as follows: ‘The fated destiny it is impossible even for a god to escape . . . And as to the oracle which was given, Croesus finds fault with good ground: for Loxias told him beforehand that if he should march upon the Persians he should destroy a great empire: and he upon hearing this, if he wished to take counsel well, ought to have sent and asked further whether the god meant his own empire or that of Cyrus: but as he did not comprehend that which was uttered and did not ask again, let him pronounce himself to be the cause of that which followed . . . .’

“Thus the Pythian prophetess replied to the Lydians, and they brought the answer back to Sardis and repeated it to Croesus; and he, when he heard it, acknowledged that the fault was his own and not that of the god.”<sup>9</sup>



### **Solon (ca. 590 BCE)**

“Thus, there being great hopes on both sides, the chief men pressed Solon to take

the government into his own hands, and, when he was once settled, manage the business freely and according to his pleasure; and many of the commons, perceiving it would be a difficult change to be effected by law and reason, were willing to have one wise and just man set over the affairs; and some say that Solon had this oracle from Apollo:

“Take the mid-seat, and be the vessel’s guide;

Many in Athens are upon your side.”<sup>10</sup>

Solon then chose to institute a series of even-handed reforms in Athens that would be the eventual basis of the city’s democracy. He preserved the landowners’ holdings, while cancelling the debts of the poor. He outlawed debtors’ enslavement. He increased the power of the citizens’ legislature, and abolished the severe laws of Draco. Thus he obeyed the oracle, for his own good, and that of Athens.<sup>11</sup>



### **Athens Seeks the Oracle’s Aid (480 BCE)**

When an Athenian delegation asked how to defend against Persian attacks, the Oracle gave dire warnings, but also some glimmer of hope:

“Athena cannot prevail to appease great Zeus in Olympus,

Though she with words very many and wiles close-woven entreat him.

But I will tell thee this more, and will clench it with steel adamantine:

Then when all else shall be taken, whatever the boundary of Kecrops

Holds within, and the dark ravines of divinest Kithairon,

A bulwark of wood at the last Zeus grants to the Triton-born goddess (Athena)

Sole to remain unwasted, which thee and thy children shall profit . . . .’

[and later, as Herodotus explains:]

“. . . Meanwhile the citizens of Delphi consulted the Oracle of the god on behalf of themselves and on behalf of Hellas, being struck with dread; and a reply was given them that they should pray to the Winds, for these would be powerful helpers of Hellas in fight.”<sup>12</sup>

During the Persian attacks, it was the “bulwark” of wooden ships, and the great winds at the Battle of Artemesium which were credited with the weakening of the Persian forces and their eventual defeat at Salamis.



### The God, Called or Uncalled (Fifth Century BCE)

In the preparations for the Peloponnesian War, the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) made inquiry with Delphi as to their cause:

“And though the Lacedaemonians had made up their own minds on the fact of the breach of the treaty and the guilt of the Athenians, yet they sent to Delphi and inquired of the God whether it would be well with them if they went to war; and, as it is reported, received from him the answer that if they put their whole strength into the war, victory would be theirs, and the promise that he himself would be with them, whether invoked or uninvoked.”<sup>13</sup>

This expression of the Oracle made a lasting impression on history. The Emperor Julian II wrote to his friend, the historian Sallust:

“God on his side will not fail us, but in the words of the Oracle once given of old, ‘Invoked or uninvoked, God will be present with us.’”<sup>14</sup>

And in the twentieth century, the psychologist and mystic Carl Gustav Jung had the Latin version of this Delphic statement engraved above the doorway of his home:



Jung's Doors with the Delphic maxim “Vocatus atque non Vocatus, Deus Aderit” inscribed above. Photo ©Tim Gidal. [Every effort has been made to find the rights holder.](#)

### VOCATUS ATQUE NON VOCATUS DEUS ADERIT

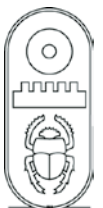
When questioned, Jung gave his reasons for this inscription:

“. . . it is cut in stone over the door of my house in Küsnacht near Zurich and otherwise found in Erasmus's collection of the Adagia<sup>15</sup> (XVIth cent.). It is a Delphic Oracle though. It says: yes, the god will be on the spot, but in what form and to what purpose? I have put the inscription there to remind my patients and myself: *Timor dei initium sapientiae* (Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom). Here another not less important road begins, not the approach to ‘Christianity’ but to God himself and this seems to be the ultimate question.”<sup>16</sup>



### Socrates (469 - 399 BCE)

In addition to his own life-changing encounter with Delphi related in “Socrates



Impoverished and Enriched” elsewhere in this issue, Socrates also highly valued the divine state reached by the Pythias at Delphi:

“It might be so if madness were simply an evil; but there is also a madness which is a divine gift, and the source of the greatest blessings granted to humanity. For prophecy is a madness, and the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona when out of their senses have conferred great benefits on Greece, both in public and private life, but when in their senses few or none. And I might also tell you how the Sibyl and other inspired persons have given to many a one many an intimation of the future which has saved them from falling.”<sup>17</sup>



### **Cicero (106-43 BCE)**

“And now when Cicero, full of expectation, was again bent upon political affairs, a certain oracle blunted the edge of his inclination; for consulting the god of Delphi how he should attain most glory, the Pythoness answered, by making his own genius and not the opinion of the people the guide of his life.

“Therefore at first he passed his time in Rome cautiously, and was very backward in pretending to public offices, so that he was at that time in little esteem, and had got the names, so readily given by low and ignorant people in Rome, of Greek and Scholar. But when his own desire of fame and the eagerness of his father and relations had made him take in earnest to pleading, he made no slow or gentle advance to the first place, but shone out in full luster at once, and far surpassed all the advocates of the bar.”<sup>18</sup>



### **Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40-120 CE)**

“I decided to go to the god’s temple myself and consult him, as a competent

adviser, according to the ancient custom of the Greeks. For surely, thought I, if he gives competent advice about sickness and, if children are not born to a person, about childlessness, and about harvests, he will not show any less ability about such a case as mine.

“And then when I consulted him, he gave me a strange sort of reply and one not easy to interpret. For he bade me to keep on doing with all zeal the very thing wherein I am engaged, as being a most honorable and useful activity, ‘until you come,’ said he, ‘to the uttermost parts of the earth.’ And yet lying is a harsh thing to impute and not consistent with even a human being’s standards, to say nothing of a god’s.

“Accordingly I reflected that Odysseus after all his wanderings did not hesitate to roam once more, when he carried an oar as Teiresias, a man dead and gone, had advised him, until he should fall in with people who knew not the sea, even by hearsay; and should not I follow his example if God so bade?

“So after exhorting myself in this way neither to fear nor be ashamed of my action, and putting on humble attire and otherwise chastening myself, I proceeded to roam everywhere. And those whom I met, on catching sight of me, would sometimes call me a tramp and sometimes a beggar, though some did call me a philosopher.

“From this it came about gradually and without any planning or any self-conceit on my part that I acquired this name. Now the great majority of those styled philosophers proclaim themselves such, just as the Olympian heralds proclaim the victors; but in my case, when the other folk applied this name to me, I was not able always and in all instances to have the matter out with them. And very likely, as it turned out, I did profit somewhat by the general report about me. For many would approach me and ask what was my opinion about good and evil. As a result I was forced to think



. . . there is also a madness which is a divine gift,  
and the source of the greatest blessings granted to humanity.

Socrates speaking of the Oracles at Delphi

about these matters that I might be able to answer my questioners.”<sup>19</sup>



### A Tale from Aelian (175 - 235 CE)

“Three young men of the same city, having been sent to Delphi to consult the Oracle, fell among thieves. One of them ran away and escaped; the second having killed all the thieves but one, missed the last, and ran his sword through his companion by accident. To him that ran away the Pythia gave this Oracle:

“You allowed your companion to be slain: I will not answer you, leave my Temple.’

“To the other requesting an answer, the Pythia gave this:

“You slew your friend by accident in his defense: Clearer than ever is your Innocence.”<sup>20</sup>



### The End of the Oracle (Fourth-Fifth Centuries CE)

It is said that the Emperor Diocletian sent an emissary to Delphi in 302 CE to ask about his proposed persecution of the Christian sect, as he had earlier persecuted the Manichaeans. The Oracle’s response is reported in Eusebius:

“About that time it is said that Apollo spoke from a deep and gloomy cavern, and

through the medium of no human voice, and declared that the righteous ones on earth were a bar to his speaking the truth, and accordingly that the oracles from the tripod were fallacious. Hence it was that he suffered his tresses to droop in token of grief, and mourned the evils which the loss of the oracular spirit would entail for humanity.”<sup>21</sup>

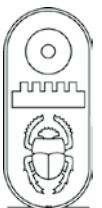
Diocletian then proceeded with his campaign against the Christians. It was so severe in Egypt that Coptic Christians still today number their calendar from the “Era of Diocletian.” Nevertheless, Christianity was tolerated in the Empire by Emperor Constantine I, and then grew rapidly in power and influence.

In 361 and 362, the Emperor Julian II, the last Imperial practitioner of the Old Religion, attempted a restoration, and is said to have consulted Delphi about reviving the Oracle. By legend, Delphi’s response was:

“Say to the King: My beautifully built house has fallen.

“No longer does Phoebus (Apollo) have his dwelling, his prophetic Daimon, or his oracular spring. The water is now dry.”<sup>22</sup>

In 389, persecutions of the Old Religion began under the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius I. In 391, Christianity was made the exclusive state religion, and older temples were closed. Delphi’s Pythia was silent; however, her tradition has survived the centuries.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> There are several excellent modern collections of the Delphic Oracles, and commentaries on them, including William J. Broad, *The Oracle: The Lost Secrets and Hidden Message of Ancient Delphi* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Joseph Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Roger Lipsey, *Have You Been to Delphi?* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 2 vv. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956); Myron Stagman, *100 Prophecies of the Delphic Oracle* (San Francisco: City State Press, 1999). Parke and Wormell contain the Greek texts, the others have English translations.
- <sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 1.36 (Thales), trans. by C.D. Yonge (London, H. G. Bohn, 1853), <http://classicpersuasion.org/pw/diogenes/dlthales.htm>.
- <sup>3</sup> Plutarch, "Consolation to Appolonius" 116D, in *Plutarch's Morals, Translated from the Greek by Several Hands. Corrected and Revised by William W. Goodwin, with an Introduction by Ralph Waldo Emerson*; 5 vols., (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1870), [http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1211&layout=html#chapter\\_91420](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1211&layout=html#chapter_91420)
- <sup>4</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 11.1.28, trans. in G.G. Ramsey, *Juvenal and Persius* (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/juvenal\\_satires\\_11.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/juvenal_satires_11.htm).
- <sup>5</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece: Book 1, Attica*, 1.43.3, trans. W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D.; and H.A. Ormerod, M.A.; 4 vols., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Paus.+1.43.1>.
- <sup>6</sup> Apollodorus, *The Library: Epitome*, 6.18., trans. Sir James George Frazer, Loeb Classical Library, vols. 121-122, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), <http://www.theoi.com/Text/ApollodorusE.html#6>.
- <sup>7</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translated by G. C. Macaulay, (London and New York: Macmillan, 1890), 6.34-36, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hh/hh1040.htm>.
- <sup>8</sup> *Aesop's Fables: A New Translation by V.S. Vernon Jones, with an introduction by G.K. Chesterton and illustrations by Arthur Rackham* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1912), <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/11339>.
- <sup>9</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.47, 53, 87, 90-91.
- <sup>10</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. A.H. Clough, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1902), 14.4, <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext96/plivs10.txt>.
- <sup>11</sup> Stagman, *100 Prophecies*, 47-48.
- <sup>12</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, 7.141, 178, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hh/>.
- <sup>13</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, book 1, chapter. 5, trans. in Richard Crawley, *The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/plpwr10.txt>.
- <sup>14</sup> Julian, "To Sallust," from W.C. Wright (trans.), *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, 3vv, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), vol. 2, 250C.
- <sup>15</sup> "The Collectanea adagiorum of Erasmus (1466-1536) is a collection of analects from the classical authors. Jung had acquired a 1563 edn. when he was 19." (Note from Jung letter source; see note 16.)
- <sup>16</sup> Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffé, eds., *C.G. Jung: Letters 1951-1961*, Bollingen Series, vol. 2, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973-75), 611.
- <sup>17</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244B, from *The Dialogues of Plato*, 5vv, translated into English with analyses and introductions by B. Jowett, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1871), <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/plato/phaedrus.htm>.
- <sup>18</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*, 7:3.3-5, 5.1-3.
- <sup>19</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses: Discourse Thirteen*, "In Athens, about his Banishment," 13.9-12, trans. J.W. Cohoon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 97-99, [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Dio\\_Chrysostom/Discourses/13\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Dio_Chrysostom/Discourses/13*.html).
- <sup>20</sup> Claudius Aelianus, *Various Histories* 3.44 (trans. in Thomas Stanley, *Claudius Aelianus, His Various History* (London: Thomas Dring, 1665), 63-99. This translation has been adapted for modern readers.
- <sup>21</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 2.50, translated in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 1, Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, eds., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1886), 512, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ecf/201/index.htm>.
- <sup>22</sup> Parke & Wormell, *Delphic Oracle*, vol. II, 194#476.



# JUST BENEATH THE SURFACE: A REPORT ON THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY FUME RESEARCH AT THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO AT DELPHI

*Elisa Cuttjonn, S.R.C.*

**I**n addition to all of the ancient traditions surrounding the Oracle at Delphi, modern science has recently verified the geological and chemical bases of this revered site. This study leads us through the modern developments that have astounded scientists and historians alike.

Just beneath the surface of everyday life lies something extraordinary, something magical. Perhaps nowhere has this been better demonstrated than in Delphi, home of the ancient Oracles—the women prophetesses.

Ancient historians reported that gases, wafting from the floor of the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Apollo, coincided with the Oracles' extraordinary abilities to see beyond the usual limits of time and space; however, European researchers in the early part of the last century put an end to such nonsense. The findings from the excavations at the newly uncovered temple showed no crevasses or fissures through which such gases could have escaped, casting doubt on the source and even the existence of the Oracles' abilities. This theory dominated academia for almost one hundred years.

Then, in the last years of the twentieth century, serendipity brought together researchers from various fields to vindicate the ancient sibyls. Their transdisciplinary research uncovered one of the most elusive secrets of the ancient world—one of the possible sources of the Oracles' ability to reach other states of consciousness. This synergistic collaboration between a geologist, archaeologist, geochemist, and health professional resulted in a convincing



Aegeus consults the Pythia, who sits on a tripod. From an Attic red-figured kylix by the Kodros painter, ca. 440-430 BCE.

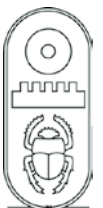
argument that overturned the prevailing theory that had misled and stifled researchers for almost a century.

## Who Were the Oracles at Delphi?

At least as far back as 1600 BCE, women in the area of Delphi demonstrated an unusual ability to see beyond the usual limits of time and space. Later, the newer Olympian-based religion appropriated Delphi as an important center dedicated to their god, Apollo. The Oracles then became priestesses who spoke on behalf of the god himself. The ancient writer Plutarch, a Delphic priest, among others, wrote about their prophetic sessions. He described gases wafting up from the floor of the Holy of Holies, the *adyton*, and a sweet smell that accompanied the Oracles' unique abilities.

## What Was Known Before?

Beginning in the late 1800s, French archaeologists excavated the temple area. Their reports stated that there was evidence of a spring, which as Pausanias had suggested, rose up in the Holy of Holies.



However, there were no fissures, no vaporous clefts, nor a bottomless abyss. The official report stated, "Thus, on the level where the Western foundations were established, the ground is virgin, without the remains of pottery, without a trace of upheaval. *There was never a crack in this part*, much less an artificial or natural excavation."

Several scholars, venturing outside their fields of expertise, perpetuated this theory until the possibility that there was a physical source for the Oracles' abilities or that they even possessed such abilities was generally disregarded. In 1904 a young English scholar, Adolph Paul Oppé, published a paper entitled, "The Chasm at Delphi." In it he stated that the foundations of the Temple showed no signs of an adyton or fissures, and there was no possible means for production of the fumes. He went on to present his own geological guesswork (he was an historian, not a geologist) that was erroneous in almost every way.

In 1907, Frederick Poulsen, a Danish scholar specializing in classical art, wrote in his influential book on Delphi, "The French excavations have not exposed any bottomless abyss from which strong and stupefying gases

could be supposed to rise. One does well to reject the physical and hold fast to mental causes, hysterical affections, which in every religion make women serviceable media."

The renewed interest in Delphi and its priestesses that began in the 1800s subsided. Now, officially certified as "hysterical" women, the Oracles would lie voiceless again for nine more decades.

### What Modern Researchers Discovered

The recent discoveries began with the work of Jelle de Boer, a geologist who grew up in seismically active Indonesia. In 1979 he was hired to assess the geology around Delphi. The Greek government was considering building nuclear power plants in the area to deal with their energy shortage and pollution problems. While exploring the area, de Boer saw a large fault running east-west through Delphi.

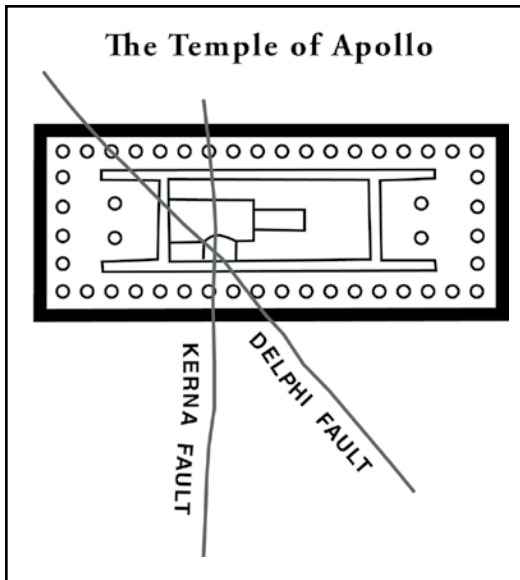
In 1995 he happened to meet John Hale, an archaeology teacher at the University of Louisville. Hale was working on an archaeological site in Portugal and had some questions that required the expertise of a geologist. One of Hale's colleagues told him that she knew of a geologist, de Boer, who happened to be in Portugal at the time. The two met and eventually de Boer shared his experience of seeing the fault at Delphi. Hale told him this was impossible, as researchers had ruled out this possibility. Thus began their collaboration.

Hale began researching original texts from ancient writers such as Plutarch, Strabo, Homer, and Euripides. He happened to come upon several important documents that proved to be especially helpful to de Boer's geological work. Hale wondered why this area in particular was so special, how did it set the conditions for the unique abilities of the Oracles?

In the late 1990s, the team needed a geochemist to analyze rock samples they took from the adyton, with special permission from the Greek government.



Entrance to the sanctuary of the goddess Gaia (Earth) and former spring. Underneath the Temple of Apollo. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.



Map showing the two faults that cross under the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Apollo.

The travertine rocks, a natural stone made of calcium carbonate, may have trapped ancient gases inside them as they formed. They chose Jeffrey P. Chanton with Florida State University in Tallahassee. Chanton found ethane and methane in the rocks, but neither of these would have caused the behavior or abilities of the Oracle.

De Boer asked Chanton if he found any ethylene, a colorless, flammable hydrocarbon gas known to ease pain and induce euphoria and dreamlike states. Chanton reported that no ethylene had been found, however this did not surprise him since it was lighter and evaporated much more quickly than the other gases that had been found. He suggested that water samples be taken from nearby springs (the main spring that ran through the Temple of Apollo had dried up centuries ago). Ethylene would not disappear as quickly in the water samples.

Not only did the water samples contain ethylene, Chanton found that the highest concentrations were in areas where two faults crossed. Now the researchers knew why this area in particular was so special. De Boer had previously discovered a second fault that intersects in Delphi, forming an X under the adyton in the Temple of Apollo.

In 2000, a fourth collaborator was brought in to explore the effects of ethylene on human beings. Rick Spiller, a toxicologist, was the director of the Kentucky Regional Poison Center in Louisville. Hale called on Spiller to provide information on the effects of inhaling ethylene. Spiller researched the history of ethylene, a sweet smelling gas that had been used as an anesthetic for many years. In 1882 William James, Harvard Professor and president of the Society for Psychical Research, wrote an essay on his experiments with ethylene. He stated, "The keynote of the experience is the tremendously exciting sense of an intense metaphysical illumination. Truth lies open to the view in depth beneath depth of almost blinding evidence. The mind sees all logical relations of being with an apparent subtlety and instantaneity to which its normal consciousness offers no parallel." In the 1970s ethylene was replaced by less volatile anesthetic gases, as ethylene is highly explosive.

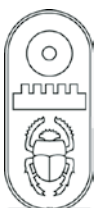
Spiller also led and even participated in an experiment in which he and two other subjects inhaled ethylene. This produced giddiness in all the subjects and an insensitivity to pain.

### Implications of Recent Findings

What are the implications of the recent findings?

It took the entire team to produce their results—more than a geologist, archaeologist, chemist, or health professional would have been able to accomplish alone. Their transdisciplinary expertise included such diverse areas as Greek history and religion, toxicology, academic validation, chemistry, volcanoes and earthquakes, continental drift, and much more.

Collaborating and sharing their knowledge and expertise may have solved one of the most intriguing mysteries from the ancient world. However, what may be even more important is what their research did not reveal. The Oracles at Delphi inspired Greeks for millennia. Surely, their



source of power was something more than getting high on ethylene.

The team's leader, de Boer, points out that "the team's discoveries said nothing about a range of oracular feats that were indisputably real. For instance, the chemical stimulus in no way explained the Oracle's cultural and religious power, her role as a font of knowledge, her liberation of hundreds of slaves, her encouragement of personal morality, her influence in helping the Greeks invent themselves, or—by extension—whether she really had psychic powers. Even if her prognostications were judged to have no basis in literal foreknowledge, it gave no explanation for how she reflected the underlying currents of ancient Greek society and how her utterances stood for ages as monuments of wisdom. It said nothing of how the priestess inspired Socrates or functioned as a social mirror, revealing the subconscious fears and hopes of those who sought her guidance, or of how she often worked as a catalyst, letting kings and commoners act on their dreams."

Research such as this inspires us to open our minds to other ways of knowing and to the wisdom of the mystics. William J. Broad, science writer for *The New York Times*, begins his book, *The Oracle: The Lost Secrets and Hidden Message of Ancient Delphi*, with the

following statement, "This book is about a voice from the remote past that has come back to question the metaphysical assumptions of our age, to urge us to look beyond the claims of science and reexamine our attitudes toward spirituality, mysticism, and the hidden powers of the mind. The Oracle of Delphi has prompted this kind of reassessment before, starting three millennia ago, and, as improbable as it seems, is doing so again. Her message challenges some of the most basic tenets of our day, suggesting that we have deluded ourselves into thinking we know more than we really do."

Perhaps, with humility, we can finally learn one of the secrets that lie just beneath the surface, in Delphi.

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# I WAS A PRIESTESS AT DELPHI: A HISTORICAL MEDITATION

*Defenstrix*

**T**his creative vignette comes from the author's meditations, and while not historically recorded, provides us with the vibrancy of the life of the Pythian priestesses at Delphi.

My name was Mnestra, and I was a priestess at Delphi in the fourth century BCE. When Aristotle was nineteen and he visited Delphi to ask for advice regarding his future life, I was thirty.

As Pythia-to-be, I was chosen by Poites, the high priest of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The lot fell upon me on the basis of a favorable prediction. Just then I was a young, childless widow, and I considered a chance like this to be a privilege. I was educated and I was aware of my own remarkable beauty.

When I arrived at Delphi by chariot, I was dressed in precious apparel and I wore an elegant hairstyle. All of it had to be removed. A designated priestess helped me to clothe myself in a modest "Delphic" dress. She formed my hair into a long braid. Now I came forward toward Apollo, accompanied

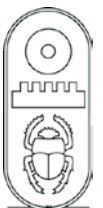
by the high priest. We entered the Temple of Apollo and went on to the middle of the adyton. Then I bowed in front of Apollo's statue and I waited. The god answered through an augural flash of light. He adopted me as his own prophetic.

"You will be interpenetrated by pythonic powers of Apollo. You will speak by his voice," Kleio, the chief Pythia told our group of four women. Her words were related to our future role as priestesses. Kleio taught us, preparing us to be Pythias. Before we took on this role, however, we had to make a vow of devotion to the God Apollo. We were crowned with laurel, and all of us kept at our hands a clay finger bowl. The high priest used water from the bowl to pour on our heads. This act symbolized purification and eligibility for duty as Pythias.

Future priestesses of Apollo did not pass through special training or practice, with the exception of the necessary basic preparation led by Kleio. Rituals and other procedures, were learned in the doing. Actually, some



Claude Lorrain, *Delphi with an Offering Procession*, seventeenth century.



Pythias already had transcendental abilities. Nevertheless, most of them developed these skills after years of living at Delphi and practice, if the god Apollo decided to bless them. Although prophetesses did not always visit a Delphic mystery school, some of them taught there, if they were competent.

I was very happy at Delphi. Usually I rose at dawn and I gave thanks to God. Pythias spent most of their days in the temple area engaged in common activities, namely in divine worship and work (care for laundry, and so on). Sometimes we set out to travel down to the nearby gulf coast where we bathed.

The preparation for “the day of Apollo,” the day when the Oracle answered questions from pilgrims by foretelling the future or by revealing the hidden present, was above all a collective experience. Each of the priestesses had to be in very good health. Pythias had no contact with the outside world, including residents of the temple area, during their preparation. They were charged to abstain from foods and beverages for at least a day before. At that time they drank only water from sacred Delphic springs. The Prophetesses then purified themselves in the holy waters. They prayed, they invoked, and they sang sacred choral songs as well. The allocation of each priestess and her role at the divination were determined by lot.

Generally, the Oracle’s prophecy to common people was much simpler and much briefer than to rich and powerful people. All supplicants were separated by a curtain from the adyton in the sanctuary of the Temple of Apollo. The Pythia sat on a tripod in the adyton and breathed the pneuma (vapors) rising from a cleft in the floor of the inner sanctum. A priest acted as a mediator between the petitioner (or petitioners) and the Oracle. He passed on their questions to her.

Then, in case of a common pilgrim, the Pythia rose to the supernal condition of consciousness. She identified with the petitioner

Pythias spent most of their days  
in the temple area  
engaged in common activities,  
namely in  
divine worship and work.

for a period of time, and she interpenetrated the petitioner’s personality. In this way, the Oracle recognized each petitioner’s intention and she knew what was most beneficial for them. She answered each question in terms of this intuition. The Pythias rotated after every consultation. The first prophetess left the adyton because she needed to rest and to breathe in fresh air. She was immediately replaced by another priestess.

The consultations for rich and powerful people were quite complicated. The Oracle’s prophecies included some rituals which differed according to the nature of the question. The Pythia had to sit on the tripod and breathe the pneuma much longer. In this way she rose to the most supernal condition of consciousness. In other words, she entered into ecstatic union with Apollo. In this condition, the Oracle saw tableaux or fragments of tableaux regarding future possibilities. That is why there were ambiguous prophecies at times. The Pythia was not able to make a definitive answer because, for example, she saw a ruined town, however she did not know if it was a “friendly” or “unfriendly” town for the petitioner. Of course, there were many cases when Apollo spoke unambiguously and the Pythia interpreted his voice only.

I spent almost three decades at Delphi. In the second half of my time there, I became chief Pythia for a few years. Then a younger woman succeeded me. During the last years of my life I retired to my own home. I died when I was about sixty-five years old. I remembered kindly the Oracle of Delphi up to the end of my life because Delphi was the true purpose of my life.



# SOCRATES

## IMPOVERISHED AND ENRICHED

*Roger Lipsey*

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**I**n this chapter from his retelling of several ancient encounters with Delphi, Roger Lipsey considers the relationship between the Oracle at Delphi and one of its most famous partisans, Socrates, and the impact it had on his life, and continues to have for us today.

I think of Socrates as more than a man, much as the followers of Pythagoras used to say of their teacher that there are three kinds of biped—human beings, birds, “and a third thing.”<sup>1</sup> One can almost see them pointing surreptitiously toward the odd person—the third thing—who had changed their lives. The key Delphic narratives are a long passage from Socrates’ defense before the people of Athens and the saga of King Croesus.

The first is modest in scope and intimate in means: Socrates scarcely leaves the city, and he does nothing more than engage his fellow men in conversation. The second is on quite another scale: it involves world-historical events, the movement of great armies across Asia, the rise and fall of empires. Yet as the saga of Croesus unfolds, it becomes little less

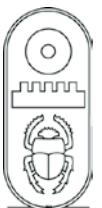
personal and inward than Socrates’ defense. We are offered not just the colorful portrait of a cunning ruler but the psychological drama of his conversion from arrogance to another condition of mind and heart, schooled by the oracle and by circumstance, humbled but now wise, genuinely touching in his humanity. This chapter and the next explore these great narratives.

Socrates was brought before an Athenian jury in the year 399 B.C.E. on charges of introducing strange gods into Athens and corrupting the youth of the city. The jury that he faced in his effort not so much to acquit himself as to unveil his motives in a valedictory statement, was nothing like the “twelve men strong and true” of American courtroom tradition; it was composed of some six hundred male citizens, among whom the strong and true were surely outnumbered.

As reconstructed with magnificent art by Plato, the passage in Socrates’ defense that bears on Delphi does not directly address



Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Socrates*, 1787.



the formal charges against him but speaks to what he took to be the real complaint: he had repeatedly humiliated the citizens of Athens through probing conversations that left them feeling foolish, uncertain, reduced.

Socrates' narrative begins with his report of a message from the Delphic oracle that he had not personally sought but could not ignore when it was made known to him. He speaks familiarly, as if without style, but one is riveted by his words at every new reading.

Plato's version of Socrates' defense, like the Book of Ecclesiastes and a handful of other ancient texts, addresses us with a simple eloquence that makes so much else seem overdressed—as if literature is essentially conversation, and the best of it, no matter how grand in theme, retains that flavor.<sup>2</sup>

### Socrates' Call

"I have gained [my] reputation, gentlemen, from nothing more or less than a kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom do I mean? Human wisdom, I suppose. It seems that I really am wise in this limited sense . . . . Now, gentlemen, please do not interrupt me if I seem to make an extravagant claim, for what I am going to tell you is not my own opinion. I am going to refer you to an unimpeachable authority. I shall call as witness to my wisdom, such as it is, the god at Delphi.

"You know Chaerophon, of course. He was a friend of mine from boyhood . . . . And you know what he was like, how enthusiastic he was over anything that he had once undertaken. Well, one day he actually went to Delphi and asked this question of the god—as I said before, gentlemen, please do not interrupt—he asked whether there was anyone wiser than myself. The priestess replied that there was no one. As Chaerophon is dead, the evidence for my statement will be supplied by his brother, who is here in court.

I think of Socrates  
as more than a man, much as  
the followers of Pythagoras  
used to say of their teacher  
that there are three kinds  
of biped—  
human beings, birds,  
“and a third thing.”

"Please consider my object in telling you this. I want to explain to you how the attack upon my reputation first started. When I heard about the oracle's answer, I said to myself, What does the god mean? Why does he not use plain language? I am only too conscious that I have no claim to wisdom, great or small. So what can he mean by asserting that I am the wisest man in the world? He cannot be telling a lie, that would not be right for him.

"After puzzling about it for some time, I set myself at last with considerable reluctance to check the truth of it in the following way.

"I went to interview a man with a high reputation for wisdom, because I felt that here if anywhere I should succeed in disproving the oracle and pointing out to my divine authority, You said that I was the wisest of men, but here is a man who is wiser than I am.

"Well, I gave a thorough examination to this person—I need not mention his name, but it was one of our politicians that I was studying when I had this experience—and in conversation with him I formed the impression that although in many people's opinions, and especially in his own, he appeared to be wise, in fact he was not.

“Then when I began to try to show him that he only thought he was wise and was not really so, my efforts were resented both by him and by many of the other people present. However, I reflected as I walked away, Well, I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of, but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know.

“After this I went on to interview a man with an even greater reputation for wisdom, and I formed the same impression again, and here too I incurred the resentment of the man himself and a number of others.

“From that time on I interviewed one person after another. I realized with distress and alarm that I was making myself unpopular, but I felt compelled to put my religious duty first. Since I was trying to find out the meaning of the oracle, I was bound to interview everyone who had a reputation for knowledge.

“And . . . gentlemen, for I must be frank with you, my honest impression was this. It seemed to me, as I pursued my

investigation at the god’s command, that the people with the greatest reputations were almost entirely deficient, while others who were supposed to be their inferiors were much better qualified in practical intelligence.

“I want you to think of my adventures as a sort of pilgrimage undertaken to establish the truth of the oracle once for all. After I had finished with the politicians I turned to the poets, dramatic, lyric, and all the rest, in the belief that here I should expose myself as a comparative ignoramus. I used to pick up what I thought were some of their most perfect works and question them closely about the meaning of what they had written, in the hope of incidentally enlarging my own knowledge.

“Well, gentlemen, I hesitate to tell you the truth, but it must be told. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that any of the bystanders could have explained those poems better than their actual authors. So I soon made up my mind about the poets too. I decided that it was not wisdom that enabled them to write their poetry, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers and prophets who deliver all their sublime messages without knowing in the least what they mean.

“It seemed clear to me that the poets were in much the same case, and I also



Reconstructed columns at the Temple of Apollo.  
Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.



observed that the very fact that they were poets made them think that they had a perfect understanding of all other subjects, of which they were totally ignorant. So I left that line of inquiry too with the same sense of advantage that I had felt in the case of the politicians.

“Last of all I turned to the skilled craftsmen. I knew quite well that I had practically no technical qualifications myself, and I was sure that I should find them full of impressive knowledge. In this I was not disappointed. They understood things which I did not, and to that extent they were wiser than I was.

“But, gentlemen, these professional experts seemed to share the same failing which I had noticed in the poets. I mean that on the strength of their technical proficiency they claimed a perfect understanding of every other subject, however important, and I felt that this error more than outweighed their positive wisdom.

“So I made myself spokesman for the oracle, and asked myself whether I would rather be as I was—neither wise with their wisdom nor stupid with their stupidity—or possess both qualities as they did. I replied through myself to the oracle that it was best for me to be as I was.

“The effect of these investigations of mine, gentlemen, has been to arouse against me a great deal of hostility, and hostility of a particularly bitter and persistent kind, which has resulted in various malicious suggestions, including the description of me as a professor of wisdom.

“This is due to the fact that whenever I succeed in disproving another person’s claim to wisdom in a given subject, the bystanders assume that I know everything about that subject myself. But the truth of the matter, gentlemen, is pretty certainly this, that real wisdom is the property of God, and this oracle is

his way of telling us that human wisdom has little or no value. It seems to me that he is not referring literally to Socrates, but has merely taken my name as an example, as if he would say to us, The wisest of you men is he who has realized, like Socrates, that in respect of wisdom he is really worthless.

“That is why I still go about seeking and searching in obedience to the divine command, if I think that anyone is wise, whether citizen or stranger, and when I think that any person is not wise, I try to help the cause of God by proving that he is not. This occupation has kept me too busy to do much either in politics or in my own affairs. In fact, my service to the God has reduced me to extreme poverty.”

Socrates speaks mightily for himself, with clarity that requires no interpretation, but it is often by searching back through a text—by holding it directly in our hands, so to speak, and sensing its texture—that we can best grasp its meaning.

For example, we have discussed in general and observed in Delphic tales that the oracle’s message is often enigmatic to the one for whom it is intended: he must interpret and act on the message in such a way that it yields fruit, not destruction.

Even great Socrates was not exempt from confusion when confronted with “his” Delphic message. “When I heard about the oracle’s answer, I said to myself, What does the god mean? Why does he not use plain language?”

Of course, the language *was* plain, nothing like the high-flown verse we have already come across in some tales. But in another sense, Socrates was right: its meaning was anything but plain and necessarily prompted him “to puzzle about it for some time.” He began, in other words, to work toward an interpretation.

His first act, as an interpreter of Delphi, was to eliminate the possibility that the

oracle was lying. He did so really as a person of faith: “[The god] cannot be telling a lie, that would not be right for him.” However, this assent put Socrates in a difficult position; he could not bring himself to agree with such an outrageous statement about his own person, nor could he deny that the oracle spoke the truth.

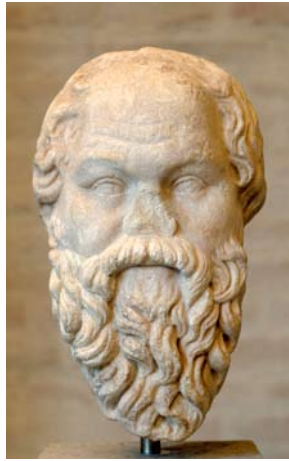
To resolve the dilemma, one side or the other had to give a little. Thus, Socrates decided “with considerable reluctance” to put the truth of the oracle’s words to the test. It is impossible to judge whether his reluctance had to do with the audacity of questioning the oracle’s truthfulness or with an intimation of the difficulties that lay ahead.

### Socrates’ Interview Technique

Whichever it was—perhaps both—his initial program to check the truth of the oracle was not especially ambitious. He decided to interview just one well-chosen individual who was widely admired for wisdom. If Socrates could establish to his own satisfaction that this fellow was wiser than himself, he would in one stroke eliminate a literal interpretation of the oracle’s words.

Briefly drawing on his consummate sense of theater, Socrates mimed for his audience the exchange that he had hoped to have, virtually man to man, with the “divine authority” at Delphi in which he would “point out” with tutorial pleasure that the message praising his wisdom had, after all, been mistaken.

Socrates goes on, with a studied naiveté that surely fooled no one, to recount that the political leader he had chosen for this experiment unfortunately proved to be unwise, “although in many people’s opinion, and especially his own, he appeared to be wise.”



Head of Socrates. Roman copy after a Greek original by Lysipp (ca. 320 BCE). Glyptothek Museum, Munich. Photo by Bibi Saint-Pol.

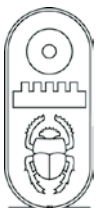
And when Socrates tried to show him the true state of affairs, not only the man himself, but also witnesses to the conversation became upset. In another writing, Plato vividly describes the difficulty of conversations with Socrates, of which this was the first, in the years after he received the message from Delphi:

“Anyone who is close to Socrates and enters into conversation with him is liable to be drawn into an argument, and whatever subject he may start, he will be continually carried round and round by him, until at last he finds that he has to give an account both of his present and his past life, and when he is once entangled, Socrates will not let him go until he has completely and thoroughly sifted him.”<sup>3</sup>

This sifting was, for many, a powerfully unpleasant experience. Continuing his recitation, Socrates described himself as walking away from this first effort to resolve his problem and muttering that he was clearly wiser than the politician “to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know.”

Here entered Western thought, with touching modesty, the concept of unknowing. Expressed earlier by Heraclitus in a grand abstraction,<sup>4</sup> it now comes fully to life in the person of a man no longer young, muttering.

He decided to try again, by interviewing “a man with an even greater reputation for wisdom,” and of course he was again disappointed and aware of the irritation of bystanders witnessing the conversation. At this point Socrates’ preliminary efforts to resolve his dilemma blossomed into a full-blown program constrained by no particular limits. “From that time on I interviewed one person after another.” He realized “with distress and alarm” that he was seriously



offending people, but he had come to regard these conversations as his “religious duty,” a “sort of pilgrimage” undertaken “at the god’s command.”

In truth, this bold idea of pilgrimage and religious duty represents his second interpretation of the Delphic message and a way of acting on it that someone else might not have conceived. Delphi had said nothing about launching a philosophical project among the people of Athens and with distinguished visitors whom he felt drawn to sift—or had all this, after all, been implied?

“Since I was trying to find out the meaning of the oracle, I had to interview everyone who had a reputation for knowledge.” There is no clearer example of *completing the oracle* through interpretations and actions that bear one’s own stamp and serve to intensify either strengths or weaknesses.

Socrates started at the top of society, according to his account, and worked his way down the ladder of prestige by first interviewing political leaders, then poets and playwrights, then craftsmen. One result of structuring his investigation in this way was to turn his perception of the social hierarchy upside down: he found that “the people with the greatest reputations were almost entirely deficient, while others who were supposed to be their inferiors were much better qualified.”

But the situation among artists and craftsmen was scarcely more satisfactory. As evoked more fully in Plato’s short dialogue, *Ion*, Socrates discovered that the poets and playwrights must have composed their works in a state of inspiration much like that of a prophet or seer because later, by the clear light of day, they proved unable to “explain” their works—and, like the politicians, were conceited enough to think that they understood “all other subjects,” although Socrates satisfied himself that this was not in the least true.

Among craftsmen, Socrates found impressive technical knowledge but, again,

the erroneous assumption that their technical knowledge fitted them to “claim a perfect understanding of every other subject.” “I felt that this error more than outweighed their positive wisdom.”

Having illuminated all this for the jurors, Socrates then reported a daring moment of role play that conveys an almost inexpressible trait of his character: a blend of humor, detachment, and relaxed intimacy with the divine. “So I made myself spokesman for the oracle, and asked myself whether I would rather be as I was—neither wise with their wisdom nor stupid with their stupidity—or possess both qualities as they did. I replied through myself to the oracle that it was best for me to be as I was.”

One is tempted to imagine Socrates rushing from chair to chair to carry out this conversation between himself as a solemn temple official and himself as Socrates “replying through himself,” in the manner of an oracle, in response to the oracle. What an irrepressible mind, playing deliciously when his life hung in the balance.

Socrates’ account of his relation with Delphi and its impact on him was now moving toward conclusion—and, curiously enough, he concluded with two fresh interpretations of the Delphic message that had set so much in motion.

“The truth of the matter, gentlemen, is pretty certainly this, that real wisdom is the property of God, and this oracle is his way of telling us that human wisdom has little or no value. It seems to me that he is not referring literally to Socrates, but has merely taken my name as an example, as if he would say to us, “The wisest of you men is he who has realized, like Socrates, that in respect of wisdom he is really worthless.” Through this interpretation, Socrates distanced the message and shucked the burden of taking it personally. Even the message itself he now described as addressed to “us” rather than to himself.

But that is not quite the end. He went on to describe himself as permanently

engaged in trying “to help the cause of God” by unmasking those who pass for wise in society but are not so. “That is why I still go about seeking and searching in obedience to the divine command.”

The oracle’s message may have been depersonalized, but Socrates’ service to “the cause of God” called for total engagement of his person, even to the point of courting death at trial by apologizing for nothing and, instead, insisting on the piety and goodness of his enterprise. Helping the cause of God represented the final interpretation and action called forth by the Delphic message.

Readers who turn back to the full text of the defense and to the *Phaedo*, Plato’s account of Socrates’ last hours, may experience—for the first time or again—that a space hollows out inside where something of Socrates thereafter dwells; soon forgotten, of course, but not altogether. One becomes, if only a little and from time to time, “of the party of Socrates.”

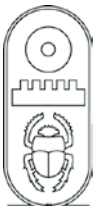
And Socrates was of the party of the Delphic oracle. One could argue that Socrates’ professed dedication was merely or mainly a ruse to legitimize, in the eyes of his conventionally pious fellow citizens, the philosophical project in which he would

in any event have engaged. But his tone throughout the defense argues otherwise.

As in the Bible, the prophet is called into action, he does not call himself; and he is sustained in his prophetic task by a sense of intimacy with the divine source that first summoned him and now oversees his fulfillment of the task. That great irrational temple at Delphi was Socrates’ partner in bringing to his community, and thereafter to all, a special sort of rationality—relentlessly logical, filled with goodness, ready at the appropriate moment to yield to prayer or silence.<sup>5</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, chap. 28, 76.
2. The translation that follows, by Hugh Tredennick, will be found in Hamilton/Cairns, *Socrates’ Defense (Apology)*, 20D-23C.
3. Plato, *Laches*, 188A, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues*, Hamilton/Cairns.
4. “You could not discover the limits of soul even if you traveled every road to do; such is the depth of its meaning.” Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*, fr. 42, p. 58. For discussion, see Roger Lipsey, *Have You Been to Delphi?* SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), chap. 12.
5. Lipsey, *Have You Been to Delphi?* chap. 5, 87-94.



# ORACLES OF DELPHI

*The Ancient Mystery Schools Working Group: Olga Deulofeu, S.R.C., M.A.; Jeannine Klos, S.R.C.; Ronda Mitchell, S.R.C.; Terry Orlikoski, S.R.C., B.S.; Rebecca Richards, S.R.C.; and Lisa Spencer, S.R.C., B.A., M.A.O.M.*

**T**his article was created as a special project in Grand Master Julie Scott's Ancient Mystery Schools Online RCUI Classes. Here we learn about the layers of tradition and history that are part of the tradition of Oracles at Delphi.

The origins of the site of the Delphic Oracle are shrouded in a mysterious cloud of history. The sacred women who gave the now-famous prophecies were called *Pythia*, named for the slain protector of the Oracle. According to legend, prior to historical times, a mythic sybil presided at Delphi. Her title, "Sibyl," means prophetess or "one who sees," and comes from the Greek word *sibylla*.

The sibyls were known throughout ancient Greece for their prophetic insights and profound knowledge. The divine source of prophecy and knowledge changed with each invasion that occurred in this area. As we peer through the veil of time, we see the struggle for power played out in the replacement of the original Earth Goddess

worship by the well-known Olympian gods of ancient Greece, with Dionysus and Apollo being the most popular at the site of Delphi.

## Gaia/Earth Goddess Worship

Delphi has long been considered a sacred spot in Greece. Delphi was originally dedicated to the Earth Goddess, or Gaia, by the Mycenaeans, who settled in the Delphi area on Mount Parnassos, near the Gulf of Corinth. They maintained care of the shrine to Gaia for more than five hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

Originally the site was called *Pytho*, being named after Python, the great serpent which guarded it. Python was the son of Gaia and highly revered in the goddess worship. This may be why serpents were used so prevalently at the shrines, temples, and effigies. The serpent was the symbol of rebirth and regeneration for early Gaia worshippers.

Gaia was highly revered during the pre-Olympian era. Stories of Gaia's creation of the world—along with other female goddesses such as Themis, Aphrodite, Artemis, Leto, Pandora, Selene, Hera, Athena, Demeter, Persephone, and Rhea—abound in the myths, prior to invasions from the north by rival groups. These goddesses were associated with order, wisdom, protection, and the life-giving processes of fertility, which were intimately tied to seasonal changes.<sup>2</sup>

The goddess myths were originally an oral teaching handed down through the creation myths of the goddesses. Many of the tales of the goddess worship were wiped out or retold, when patriarchal societies invaded and took over the sacred places of the local peoples. Because they had no written language, they were easily restructured, intermingled,



Olga Deulofeu, S.R.C., *Delphi Oracle*,





Michelangelo, *Delphic Sibyl*, Sistine Chapel.

and rewritten by the invading peoples' patriarchal creation myths and written language. The writings of Hesiod and Homer, in the ca. eighth-seventh century BCE, tell of the classical myths of Zeus and the other Olympian gods and goddesses, after the fall of the Gaia worship.<sup>3</sup>

### Interpreters of the Gods

There is a legend that tells of the original founding of the site of Delphi. A shepherd noticed his goats jumping about and emitting strange sounds as they roamed through fumes arising from a fissure in the earth. He told his neighbors and friends about the behavior, and the stories spread. Hearing of the tales, people traveled from all around to see the spectacle.

As people would walk into the fumes, some would go into a trance and start talking strangely, even prophetically; while others were so overcome by the fumes that they threw themselves into the chasm to

their deaths.<sup>4</sup> The deaths prompted priests to consecrate the site to Gaia and build a wall around the fissure. They appointed a young woman of honorable or noble birth to become the prophetess. She would act as the connection between the oracle and inquirers.

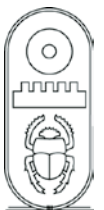
The priestesses appointed came to be known as the *Pytho*, after the sacred serpent Python. They did not inherit this appointed position through aristocratic birth as most other Greek priests and priestesses. They were appointed because of their prophetic abilities.<sup>5</sup> What we know of the mythic sibyls of ancient times and the Pythia priestesses of Apollo comes from the writings of several well-known Greek authors, such as Heraclitus, Chryssippus, Pausanias, and Plutarch.<sup>6</sup>

### Sibyls

The sibyls were mythic prophetesses who existed during legendary times and are believed to have been semi-Divine. Pausanias claimed that the sybil was "born between man and goddess, daughter of sea monsters and an immortal nymph."<sup>7</sup> He also writes of the first sibyls in Greek history. The first sibyl to chant the oracles was said to be the daughter of Zeus by Lamia, who was the daughter of Poseidon. She was given the name Sibyl by the Libyans.

Pausanias also writes of a woman named Herophile and with the title Sibyl, who would stand on a rock rising above the ground and chant the oracles. Herophile, said to be born before the Trojan War, prophesized in her oracles that Helen would be raised up in Sparta and would be the ruin of Asia and Europe, and that the Greeks would capture Troy for her sake.

Delphians remember a hymn Herophile composed to Apollo. In her poem she calls herself Herophile, but also Artemis, and the wedded wife of Apollo. She also states that she is his sister, and sometimes his daughter. These statements were made in her poetry when in a frenzy and possessed



by the god. Elsewhere in her oracles, she states that her mother was an immortal, one of the nymphs of Ida, while her father was a human.<sup>8</sup>

The sibyls were thought to live nine hundred to one thousand years. Their long life is attributed to a legend about the Cumaean Sibyl who was granted a wish by Apollo. She took a handful of sand and asked to live for as many years as the grains of sand she held.

Because she refused to have sex with Apollo, he granted her wish, but allowed her body to wither with age. As she grew older, her body grew smaller, and eventually was kept in a jar called an *ampulla*, and only her voice was left.<sup>9</sup> The writings of Heraclitus, a Greek writer during the fifth century BCE, tell how the voice of the sibyl would reach through a thousand years by aid of the god.<sup>10</sup>

The Pytho sibyls were renowned for their prophecy for more than five hundred years until the tale of their destruction comes to us through Greek legend when the Olympian god, Apollo, came down from the north and killed the sacred serpent, Python.<sup>11</sup> It is thought that this coincided with the invasion from the north by the Ionians, Achaeans, and Dorians, who are thought to have invaded Greece from around 2500-1000 BCE

## Apollo at Delphi

We have no evidence for the worship of Apollo at Delphi before the eighth century BCE, when according to tradition the cult of Apollo Delphinios was introduced by priests from Knossos.<sup>12</sup> Delphi received its name from *Delphis*, which is the Greek word for dolphin, because Apollo is said to have appeared in the form of a dolphin.

Delphi is also the Greek word for womb, which distinguishes the dolphin as being a mammal and different from other sea creatures. In Crisa, the coastal port near Delphi, Apollo transformed himself into a handsome youth with long hair and various attributes including a wreath and branch of laurel, bow and quiver, raven and lyre.<sup>13</sup>

According to the Delian tradition, he was born on the seventh day of the month of Thargelion. The seventh and twentieth days of the month, the day of the new moon and the full moon, were held sacred to him. The receiving of an oracle was steeped in ceremony on these sacred days. Apollo was considered the god of sunlight, oracular prophecy and vision, as well as divination, healing, law, order, music, archery, sciences, medicine, moderation, writing, and the god of the Muses in the arts.<sup>14</sup> Apollo is also associated with purification and truth.

After defeating the serpent at Mt. Parnassus, Apollo had to atone for his crime by spending eight years in menial service. After purifying himself, he returned to Delphi and erected his own oracular temple on the place where he had killed the serpent.

One legend says that a stone, called an *omphalos*, was set in the ground to mark the spot where the serpent was killed. The original stone was believed to be a large meteorite from deepest antiquity. The omphalos, which represented the center of the earth for the ancient Greeks, later became the center of the inner sanctum of the shrine of the Delphic oracle.<sup>15</sup>



Jeannine Klos, S.R.C., *Underground Oracle*.



Diana Bovée Salyer, *The Oracle of Delphi*, 1950s. Original watercolor painting, 11 x 16.5 in.

## The Pythias of Apollo

Apollo thus claimed Delphi for himself and dispersed the Pytho priestesses, replacing them with his own oracles.<sup>16</sup> They became known as *Pythia*, which comes from the Greek word *pythein* meaning “to rot.” This was thought to be from the stench of Python’s body as it decayed in the fissure Apollo had thrown the slain serpent into.

The Pythias are described as a historical caste of priestesses of Apollo at Delphi and were fully human. This is the main distinction between the sibyls and the Pythia. Originally they were young, virgin girls of honorable or noble birth. The Pythia was educated for a long and intense period to condition her, and the Pythia had a sisterhood of Delphi women who supported her and cared for the temple’s sacred area and eternal flame.<sup>17</sup>

After an incident of abduction, the young virginal Pythias were replaced by

older mature noble women who began their term of priestess at around the age of fifty. These women still wore the white robes and dressed in the tradition of the original virginal Pythia. Eventually, in later periods, the women chosen to be Pythias came from all social classes and were of all ages and levels of maturity. The one consistent requirement was that she had to be a citizen of Delphi.<sup>18</sup>

## Apollo, Pneuma, and the Pythias

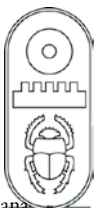
Plutarch (46-120 CE) left an extended eyewitness account of the workings of the Oracle. His writings are considered to be accurate, as he was an active member of the priesthood that oversaw the Oracle of Delphi.

He described the relationships among god, woman, and the gas by likening Apollo to a musician, the woman to his instrument, and the *pneuma* to the plectrum with which he touched her to make her speak. *Pneuma* is translated to mean breath, but is also understood in Greek to be a metaphor describing a non-material being or influence, in this case being Divine.<sup>19</sup>

However Plutarch emphasized that the *pneuma* was only a trigger. It was really the preconditioning and purification, which included sexual abstinence and fasting, which made her capable of responding to the exposure of the *pneuma*. An ordinary person could detect the smell of the gas without passing into an oracular trance.<sup>20</sup>

The Pythia priestess would sit on a tripod situated over the vent above the vapors from below while she inhaled burning bay leaves. She responded to the questions of visitors while in trance. She is said to have spoken in a way that could only be understood and interpreted by the Pythian priests.<sup>21</sup>

In earlier times, her replies would be interpreted and written in hexameter verse, and later they were written in prose.<sup>22</sup> These writings were then given to the inquirer to ponder their meaning, and to consider the



creed inscribed on the wall of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, which announced, “Know Thyself.” This phrase has been contemplated and its meaning disputed throughout time by many inquirers and seekers.

Oracles were originally given only on the seventh day of the month as per tradition.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, oracles were given every day, to fulfill the increasing pressure and numbers of inquiries. The exception would be if a bad omen were received during purification by the inquirer or during the purification and sacrificing of the animal prior to the prophetic session.<sup>24</sup>

The number of priestesses was also increased from one to three to accommodate the increased inquiries. Two of the priestesses would alternate receiving the oracle, while the third was to fill in as needed. In the traditions associated with Apollo, the oracle gave prophecies only between spring and autumn. During the winter months, Apollo was said to have deserted his temple, his place being taken by his divine half-brother, Dionysus.<sup>25</sup>

## The Origins of Dionysus

The most common story-myth of Dionysus, as found in the eighth- through fifth-century BCE writings of Homer and Euripedes, states that he was the son of Zeus and Semele, the daughter of Cadmus of Thebes, who was a mortal woman.<sup>26</sup> Semele was another name for Gaia.

Dionysus was born on December 25 in the calendar we use today. Hera, Zeus’s wife, was jealous and discovered Zeus’s affair with Semele while she was still pregnant with Dionysus. Hera appears to Semele as either an old crone or as a nurse (depending on which story is being told) and befriends Semele. Hera plants seeds of doubt in Semele that Zeus is not a god, and Semele demands that Zeus prove himself to be a god. Zeus eventually comes to Semele clothed in lightning bolts, and since mortals cannot look upon a god without dying, Semele dies in the blazing fire that surrounds Zeus.

Zeus then rescues the fetal Dionysus by sewing him into his thigh. Dionysus is born a few months later. Dionysus is, in essence, borne by two mothers—Semele and Zeus. The epithet of being “twice-born”—*dimetor* meaning two mothers—is connected with Dionysus.

Multiple versions of the early life of Dionysus exist. A legend says that Zeus gave the infant Dionysus to Hermes, who took the boy to King Athamas and his wife Ino, Dionysus’s aunt. Hermes told the couple to raise Dionysus as a girl in order to shield him from Hera’s anger.

Another version says that Dionysus was taken to the rain-nymphs of Nysa, who raised him through childhood and were rewarded by Zeus by placing them as the Hyades among the star clusters. Other variations of the tale say that Zeus gave Dionysus to Rhea, or to Persephone to raise in the Underworld, away from the wrath of Hera.

## Characteristics of Dionysus

Dionysus discovered the culture of the vine and the manner to extract the precious juice as he grew up. At this time, Hera found him and struck him with madness, which made him a wanderer through the many lands of Earth. In Phrygia, the goddess Cybele (Rhea) cured him and taught him her religious traditions, which Dionysus carried with him and shared through Asia, teaching



*Dionysus and a Panther*, second century CE. Ancient Roman mosaic. Domus dell’Ortaglia, Brescia, Italy. Photo by Stefano Bolognini.

these people how to cultivate the vine. Dionysus's expedition to India lasted several years, from which he returned to Greece and began sharing this worship there.<sup>27</sup>

Much diversity of opinion exists regarding the native place of Dionysus. According to the common myth, Thebes is said to be where he originated. In the many traditions, ancient writers were driven to the supposition that there were originally several divinities, which were afterward identified under the one name of Dionysus.<sup>28</sup>

Maria Gimbutas continues this theory in *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, by stating that Dionysus is a god of great antiquity in the pre-Indo-European cultures—Dionysus was “the God” to “the Goddess” in ancient myth. Dionysus's origin is immaterial, since all of the lands making claim to him belonged to the same Mother Culture.<sup>29</sup> The Greek Dionysian cult can be traced back to the fifteenth century BCE on the island of Keos.<sup>30</sup>

According to the Orphic tradition, Dionysus was killed and dismembered where he remained as a seed in the dark earth. This seed was the Omphalos stone that was placed in the Delphic Temple of Apollo. Women found the seed and reawakened Dionysus with Zeus, then placing Dionysus in the care of Apollo at Delphi. The Omphalos marked the holy place where Dionysus rested at Delphi, the center of the Greek world, until Apollo—the light bringer—revived Dionysus by using his healing ability.<sup>31</sup>

The temples and statues of Dionysus were numerous in the ancient world. Many ancient writers have tried to put the mythology of Dionysus into a timeline of chronological order. The stories were a loose collection of localized cult myths, which still remain today, and the more ancient the writing, the closer to the meaning and truth it is said to be.<sup>32</sup>

Ancient Greek writers such as Homer (850 BCE), Euripides, Heraclitus, and Herodotus (fifth century BCE), Apollodorus

(second century BCE), and Plutarch (first century CE) all wrote of the myth of Dionysus.

From the fifth century BCE, Euripides tells of a Dionysus that is a productive power of nature while Apollo is an ethical god. Wine is called the “fruit of Dionysus” that can carry a person away from the usual sober manner of living. Ancient worshippers claimed that Dionysus affected miracles with wine on holy days.<sup>33</sup> Dionysus was the god of wine, the instructor of plants and cultivation, along with the giver of joy, and of grief and sorrow.<sup>34</sup>

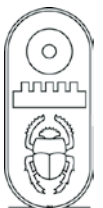
### Dionysus at Delphi

Dionysus had as great a share in the Delphic Oracle as Apollo, according to the accounts of Euripides, by sharing prophetic power and the healing arts attributed to Delphi.<sup>35</sup> He is the protector of trees in general, which is alluded to in the various names given him by the priests of antiquity.<sup>36</sup>

Euripides continued the character description of Dionysus by including the qualities of being the promoter of civilization, a lawgiver, and a lover of peace.<sup>37</sup> His area of influence is extended to be the god of tragic art and the protector of theaters, since the Greek drama grew out of the festivals of Dionysus.<sup>38</sup>

William J. Broad's research in *The Oracle* states that Apollo was at Delphi from March till November, and Dionysus was at Delphi alone from November through February each year. The coexistence of these two deities and their cults was unique to Delphi. Apollo was the god of order with daytime worship by his followers, while Dionysus loosened the bonds of order with night devotions by his followers.

It is not clear when the duality of worship at Delphi began, but Plutarch indicates that this had existed since at least the fifth century BCE.<sup>39</sup> In the first century CE, Plutarch's friend, Clea, was both a high priestess of Apollo, while also being a leader of the Dionysiac rituals.<sup>40</sup>



The dual existence of these two brother deities—Apollo representing light and reason and life, while Dionysus was darkness, ecstasy, and rebirth—was very powerful, both in ancient and even in modern times.<sup>41</sup> Euripedes' *The Bacchae*, tells of the horror when Apollonian restraint denies the primal urges of Dionysian human nature.

The recent discovery by archeologists of iconography at Delphi indicates that the Greeks saw Dionysus as the alter ego of Apollo—his other half; the two gods were actually one.

Great importance was placed on the design and layout of the temple. The temple's surviving parts faced eastward, so the rays of the rising sun could illuminate the entrance, which is the part of the temple dedicated to Apollo, the god of prophecy and the sun.

The west area of the temple was dedicated to Dionysus, a god who in some ways was the antithesis of Apollo. Dionysus devoted himself to wine, animal impulses, and demanded his followers perform acts of worship that centered on orgiastic frenzies. The Dionysiac side of the temple faced the setting sun, welcoming the night.<sup>42</sup>

The Pythia served both gods and gave prophecy from Dionysus during Apollo's absence. The festivals celebrated in honor of Dionysus were also called the Bacchic festivals, in which the orgiastic celebrations would last through the night.

The aspects of day and night, light and dark were highly celebrated and symbolized by the dual ruling gods Apollo and Dionysus at Delphi. The ceremonies and rituals were steeped in symbolic meaning.

The duality of day and night is prevalent in religions, rituals, and ceremonies around the world, even today. We do not celebrate or re-enact these ceremonies today as was once done in ancient Greece. However, it is by coming to know the aspects of each that we come to know them within ourselves. In

learning to balance and accept these internal aspects and urges, we come to develop our own sense of identity.

Thus the creed "Know Thyself" above the entrance to the temple of Apollo in Delphi reaches through time, and shows us our greatest gift and also our greatest obstacle.

## Demise of the Pythia

For almost two thousand years, from 1500 BCE to the fourth century CE, the power of prophecy from Delphi guided the societies and cultures of Mycenaeans and Greeks—serving first a goddess- and then a god-based religion equally.

The *Delphic Oracle* was established in the eighth century BCE. Its last recorded response was given in 393 CE with the imposition of Christianity. During the period of Christianity after Constantine, the Oracle finally became silent, when in 392 CE, the emperor Theodosius I ordered pagan temples to cease operation and prohibited the cult of Apollo and the celebration of the Pythian games in honor of Apollo.<sup>43</sup>

## Renewed Interest

The prestige and mystery of the Delphic Oracles continues today, especially with the new discovery of converging fault lines directly under the temple of Apollo and the gases that can be found within. This has prompted a renewed interest, with expanded and updated information in many websites and books.

You can even find the power and popularity of the Oracle of Delphi in computer software called *Oracle* and another called *Delphi*.

## Conclusion

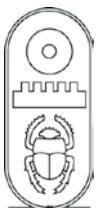
History is written by the conquerors. Virtually all of the information we have about Delphi comes from the writings of the Greek conquerors that destroyed many of the temples and writings of preceding cultures at Delphi. The sibyls were mythic

semi-divine women of pre-Olympian times, and the Pythia priestesses held an important role during the Apollonian/Dionysian worship. Both were the voice that spoke of the future as determined by the gods and brought wealth and power to Delphi. During its height of popularity the

Delphic Oracle was the most prestigious and authoritative oracle in the Greek world. While the Pythias were silenced in 394 CE, their voices and messages still reverberate in ancient memories, calling to us even in the twenty-first century. They have taken on a new form, yet the message is the same.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> W.J. Broad, *The Oracle: The Lost Secrets and Hidden Message of Ancient Delphi* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 24.
- <sup>2</sup> Charlene Spretnak, *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece: A Collection of pre-Hellenic Myths* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 17.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.
- <sup>4</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 21.
- <sup>5</sup> Spretnak, *Lost Goddesses*, 18.
- <sup>6</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 10.
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.crystalinks.com/delphi.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> <http://students.ou.edu/M/Carmen.D.Miller-1/>.
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/LX/CumeanSibyl.html>.
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.crystalinks.com/sybil.html>.
- <sup>11</sup> Roger Lipsey, *Have You Been to Delphi?* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 60-61.
- <sup>12</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 25.
- <sup>13</sup> Joseph Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
- <sup>14</sup> Lipsey, *Delphi*, 43.
- <sup>15</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 25-28.
- <sup>16</sup> Lipsey, *Delphi*, 19.
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/booktalk/stories/s1091403.htm>.
- <sup>18</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 32-33.
- <sup>19</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pneuma>.
- <sup>20</sup> [http://geology.about.com/cs/odds\\_and\\_ends/a/aa081901a.htm](http://geology.about.com/cs/odds_and_ends/a/aa081901a.htm).
- <sup>21</sup> <http://www.ancient-greece.org/history/delphi.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> Lipsey, *Delphi*, 77-78.
- <sup>23</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/ark/stories/s1266794.htm>.
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/ark/stories/s1266794.htm>.
- <sup>25</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 40-43.
- <sup>26</sup> *Homeric Hymns*, 56.6. 8th-4th cent., BCE.
- <sup>27</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysus>.
- <sup>28</sup> Lipsey, *Delphi*, 27.
- <sup>29</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 227.
- <sup>30</sup> Gimbutas, *Goddesses and Gods*, 228.
- <sup>31</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *The Living Goddesses* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2001), 162.
- <sup>32</sup> <http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Dionysos.html>.
- <sup>33</sup> Marvin W. Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 94-95.
- <sup>34</sup> Euripides, *The Bacchae*, 403 BCE; see also the works of Pindar.
- <sup>35</sup> Euripides. *The Bacchae*, 300.
- <sup>36</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2nd cent. CE. Euripides, *Bacchae*. 420.
- <sup>38</sup> <http://www.hermetic.com/sabazius/dionysus.htm>.
- <sup>39</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 40-43.
- <sup>40</sup> Lipsey, *Delphi*, 68-69.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.
- <sup>42</sup> Broad, *Oracle*, 5.
- <sup>43</sup> T. Dempsey, *The Delphic Oracle: Its Early History, Influence and Fall* (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc, 1972).
- <sup>44</sup> A review of Broad's *Oracle* may be found in the *Rose Croix Journal*: Julie Scott, "Review of *The Oracle: The Lost Secrets and Hidden Message of Ancient Delphi* by William J. Broad" *Rose+Croix Journal* 3 (2006): 139-140. [http://www.rosecroixjournal.org/issues/2006/book\\_reviews/vol3\\_139\\_140\\_review\\_scott.pdf](http://www.rosecroixjournal.org/issues/2006/book_reviews/vol3_139_140_review_scott.pdf).



# ACROSS THE MILLENNIA

## *Applying “Know Thyself” to Daily Life*

*Antonietta Francini, M.D., with Benefactor Taciturnus, F.R.C.*

**B**oth pre-historical and historical traditions deal with the art of understanding oneself. This essay examines the Delphic concept that by knowing ourselves we also come to know God. Modern science and quantum problems associated with the persistence of the genetic code are also aspects of this ancient dialogue from the point of view of the Noble Prize Laureate, physicist Erwin Schrödinger. We are invited to ponder how the ancient philosophical teachings about knowing ourselves are applicable to our modern life.

The task of understanding ourselves is the most important and the most difficult in our lives. However, if we do not know ourselves we go through darkness, uncertainty, and despair—our life lacks value and meaning. A human life without worth appears to be insignificant; people feel that

they are powerless victims of a pitiless fate, alone and abandoned as an autumn leaf in the storm of events.

When we finally make the effort of working on our inner selves, according to the ancient injunction, we become, all at once, the investigator, the process of investigation, and the object of observation. What a task!

What is the real meaning of the verb “to know” in this elevated context?

I am not trying to solve the riddle, for that is the personal task of each one of us. However, we are presented with the opinions of mystics across millennia of historic wisdom. May their words illuminate our hearts and understanding.

### **Most Ancient Wisdom**

It is impossible to establish the epoch when, for the first time, the evolving human consciousness asked the question, “Who am I?” However, we can assume that it was more than 5,000 years ago, since an answer to that inquiry is engraved in stone in the ancient temple of Luxor (built about 1500 BCE) in Thebes, Egypt:

“The human body is the house of God. That is why it is said: Know Thyself!”

In the same temple, we also find the advice:

“The best and shortest road toward the knowledge of Truth is Nature.

“Your body is the temple of knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

From these sage sayings, we can deduce the teaching that the universal truth can be found both in nature and in the human body; therefore, by understanding nature and ourselves we can know God. Martinists today still refer to this as studying the Book of Humanity and the Book of Nature. How has this been seen across ages and cultures?



H. Spencer Lewis, *Priestess in Egypt*.



## Ancient Egypt

For the Egyptians, order and harmony were the true manifestations of the Divine, therefore, we can infer that by finding and maintaining order and harmony in ourselves, we can illuminate our divine essence. We can admire order and harmony in nature and in the whole universe: humans are part of nature, part of the universe, we cannot be different, nor can we be separated.

We must search for the correct and essential aspects of ourselves and not be distracted by the apparent confusion, doubt, and guilt that seizes our superficial ego when we feel separated from God. We should not confuse ignorance with knowledge. The ancient mystics were very precise in their teachings, as in this timeless Egyptian proverb: “The way of knowledge is narrow.”<sup>2</sup>

## Ancient Vedic Traditions

In India, approximately during the same pre-historic period, the Vedic tradition was teaching: “Thou art THAT,” meaning that the Real Self of each human being is identical with the Divine Universal Self of All.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, according to the most ancient Sanskrit tradition, each human is essentially a pure, immortal soul that is permanently related to the One Cosmic Intelligent Power, called *Brahman*.

The [Bhagavad-Gita](#) says:

“With the self unattached to external contacts, they (the knowers of Brahman) find happiness in the Self, with the self engaged in meditation on Brahman they attain to endless happiness . . . . They attain absolute freedom—whose sins have been destroyed, whose perception of dualities are torn asunder—who are self-controlled and intent on the welfare of all beings . . . . With the senses, the intellect ever controlled, having liberation as their supreme goal, free from desire, fear, and anger—the sage is verily liberated forever.”<sup>4</sup>

From the [Yajur-Veda](#) derives the teaching of the [Isa Upanishad](#).

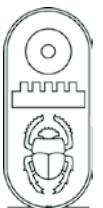


Bathing in the Sacred Ganges at Hardwar (India), from William Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-Love of Northern India*, 1896.

“All is perfect, so perfectly perfect!  
Whatever being lives, moves  
And breathes on Earth  
At every level from atom to galaxy  
Is absolutely perfect in its place  
Precise and choreographed.  
Because ‘That’ flows from the Glory  
of God,  
The Lord,  
The Self,  
Consciousness,  
The Source,  
Awareness, Peace, and Love,  
And is therefore Perfect.  
When you have surrendered your ego  
To ‘That,’  
You will find true happiness.  
Never ever envy the place of  
Any other man or woman.”<sup>5</sup>

A modern exponent of the Upanishads recently emphasized these points in lectures on Vedic philosophy at the Ottawa Hindu Temple:

“Whether I say thank you or not, the sun shines, the wind blows, the rain rains and the earth moves, but by saying ‘Thank you’ for their functions in this creation, and by expressing my deep sense of gratitude to them, I realize the true nature of my own self and my own function in this creation.



“The moment I realize myself as One with the entire creation, I find new zest, a new joy and a new enthusiasm in life. I realize that, to make others happy is also my happiness; to serve others and to help them to achieve their life’s fulfilment is also my fulfilment.

“All existence is Divine. This means that our essential nature is Divine. Life lived without the consciousness of one’s Divine nature is indeed trivial. It is a life of darkness, of ignorance, sorrow and distress. It is a life of spiritual blindness. Those who let themselves live in such a spiritual blindness are really hurting themselves, they are called by the Upanishad ‘spiritual suicide.’

“One is always seeking happiness—why? Because one’s very nature is Happiness. One is always seeking freedom—why? Because one’s very nature is Freedom. One wishes to live a longer and longer life—why? Because one’s very nature is Immortality.

“In other words, what one really wants in life is only to be oneself—nothing more, nothing less. If so, what is that One-Self? That, one has to discover for oneself, by oneself, through enquiry. That is indeed the overriding purpose of life—so say the Upanishads. One’s real teacher is always The Self I, already in oneself.”<sup>6</sup>

### Classical Greece and Rome

In central Greece, in the sacred Temple of Apollo at Delphi, built between the two peaks of Mount Parnassus, the words “Know Thyself” were engraved in stone. This famous Sanctuary where the Oracle prophesized, was first built around 800 BCE and was an important spiritual center for the Greeks and the Romans.

However, not everyone understood the subtly transcendent meaning of the injunction, “Know Thyself.” For example, the Roman poet Juvenal (first-second centuries CE), in one of his brilliant Satires, quotes the phrase in Greek and suggests that the precept descended from heaven, because

to understand oneself is to understand others as well.

In addition, he goes on to demonstrate that the saying may also refer to more personal considerations, such as knowing one’s own habits, customs, character, ability to control emotions, and other aspects of our behavior. He shows its importance even for mundane things, such as shopping and dining:

“Rightly do I despise a person who knows how much higher Atlas is than all the other mountains of Africa, and yet knows not the difference between a purse and an iron-bound money-box.

“The maxim ‘Know Thyself’ comes down to us from the skies; it should be imprinted in the heart, and stored in the memory, whether you are looking for a wife, or wishing for a seat in the sacred Senate . . . . If you are preparing to conduct a great and difficult cause, take counsel of yourself and tell yourself what you are—are you a great orator, or just a spouter . . . ?

“Let people take their own measure and have regard to it in things great or small, even in the buying of a fish, that they set not their heart upon a mullet, when they have only a gudgeon in their purse. For if your purse is getting empty while your maw is expanding, what will be your end when you have sunk your inheritance and all your



The Treasury of Athens at Delphi. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

belongings in a belly which can hold capital and solid silver as well as flocks and lands?”<sup>7</sup>

The different opinions and interpretations of this injunction show that humans have different levels of understanding and evolution. Nevertheless, the statement “Know Thyself” is useful for all. Some try to purify their personal ego, others transcend to the knowledge of God. Nevertheless, these two processes are fundamentally related, as without full dominion over the mundane, personal ego, it is not possible to proceed effectively on the spiritual path.

### Philosophers and Orphic Initiates

Several ancient Greek philosophers, such as Thales of Miletus (625-546 BCE), Pythagoras of Samos (569-ca. 475 BCE), Socrates (470-399 BCE), and Plato, (427-347 BCE), as well as the Orphic Initiates, interpreted the injunction in the highest spiritual sense and stated “Human, know thyself, and thou shalt know the universe and the Gods.” They also pondered the questions, “What should we do, in order to know ourselves and God?” and “Is there a secret method available to accomplish this?”

The pre-historic hero Orpheus was believed to be the musician who perfected the use of the lyre. Orpheus received this musical instrument directly from the god Apollo in the Temple of Delphi. The beautiful god Apollo was the leader of the Muses and patronized the arts and music. Orpheus, being his disciple, could charm wild beasts with the sound of his lyre and with the magic of his singing voice he could coax trees and rocks into dance.

In addition to this legend, Orpheus was also said to be the originator of the adaptation of Greek religion known as Orphism. This philosophy understood human nature to be in part divine, a spark from Dionysus, the ancient Thracian god, and in part mundane, taken from the flesh of the Titans, the ancient world rulers who had murdered Dionysus.

Orphism stressed a strict standard of ethical and moral conduct involving ascetic practices and purification. Coming to know itself as Divine, the divine human soul could be liberated from its Titanic inheritance through initiation into the Orphic mysteries and through a divine identification now, and also through the process of reincarnation to fully return to its divine origin. Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato were all influenced by the Delphic and Orphic traditions of what it meant to “Know Thyself.”<sup>8</sup>

Many methods practiced by the Greek mystical tradition are very useful in attaining knowledge of self and of the Divine. Silence, serenity, purification, order, harmony, discipline, music, meditation, chanting, and expansion of consciousness are methods which have proven very useful for human evolution. Personal intense aspiration, firm desire and perseverance of the seeker are essential components for attaining real success in the task.

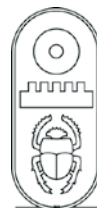
This spiritual way of life can be experienced today in many contexts. The modern Rosicrucian and Martinist traditions reflect this same goal. The Fire is still burning, and the Flame will never die.

### Modern Wisdom and Quantum Physics

The quest for the “knowledge, wisdom, and understanding” of our life and of the



Gold stater issued by the city of Lampsacus, ca. 360–340 BCE, Dionysos-Priapos crowned with an ivy wreath. Musée de Louvre. Photo © Marie-Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia Commons, used with permission.



mystery of the universe has changed aspects across millennia, yet remains as elusive as it always was.

In our day science tells us that the building blocks of our physical being are our genetic code. According to modern science, all living beings are the manifestation of their inherited genetic codes. Therefore, humans are the physical expression of certain types of amino acids and proteins related to each other in a specific fashion in the cellular nucleus. However, it is not clear how such delicate interactions persist, unchanged across millennia.

In recent times, a Nobel Prize winner in physics, Erwin Schrödinger, asks the relevant question:

“The mere fact that we speak of hereditary properties indicates that we recognize the permanence to be almost absolute. For we must not forget that what is passed on by parents to the child . . . is the whole (four dimensional) pattern of the phenotype . . . which is reproduced without appreciable change for generations, . . . and borne at each transmission by the material structure of the nuclei of the two cells which unite to form the fertilized egg cell.”<sup>9</sup>

“. . . a gene contains certainly not more than about a million, or a few million atoms. That number is much too small . . . to entail an orderly and lawful behavior according to statistical physics.”<sup>10</sup>

“How are we to understand that it has remained unperturbed by the disordering tendency of the heat motion for centuries?”<sup>11</sup>

“. . . the laws of physics are statistical laws. They have a lot to do with the natural tendency of things to go over into disorder. But, to reconcile the high durability of the hereditary substance with its minute size, we had to evade the tendency to disorder by inventing the molecule . . . life seems to be orderly and lawful behavior of matter, not based exclusively on its tendency to go over from order to disorder, but based

partly on existing order that is kept up . . . living matter is likely to involve ‘other laws of physics’ hitherto unknown . . .”<sup>12</sup>

These unknown laws of physics must exist because the precise manifestation of living matter is expressed in the genetic code which does not “go over into disorder across ages,” argues Schrödinger.

Schrödinger speaks about the importance of what he calls “negative entropy” for maintaining life and health. “. . . entropy, taken with the negative sign, is itself a measure of order.”<sup>13</sup>

“To reconcile the high durability of the hereditary substance with its minute size, we had to evade the tendency to disorder . . . It is by avoiding the rapid decay into the inert state of ‘equilibrium’ that an organism appears so enigmatic; so much so that. . . some supernatural force (*vis viva, entelechi*) was claimed to be operative in the organism.”<sup>14</sup>

“How does the living organism avoid decay? . . . a living organism continually increases its (positive) entropy . . . and thus tends to approach the dangerous state of maximum entropy, which is death. It can only keep . . . alive by continually drawing from its environment negative entropy—which is something very positive . . .”<sup>15</sup>

Schrödinger further develops his hypothesis by saying that “. . . the living organism feeds upon negative entropy, attracting as it were a stream of negative entropy upon itself to compensate the entropy increase it produces by living.”<sup>16</sup>

### Cosmic Energy

This is theoretically logical, and clear, but from where does this “negative” entropy, or “free energy” come? A brief answer is: cosmic energy.

Nevertheless, here we must abandon the complex discussions of the scientist Schrödinger to express in a few words what we already know. The same energy that promotes the life-giving phenomenon of



Border Stele of Akhenaten and Nefertiti showing the Cosmic Energy of the Aten.

photosynthesis is the “free energy” that we absorb from the “Light that gives Light to the Stars.”

As Einstein explained,  $E = mc^2$ , that is, Energy equals mass times the speed of light-squared. In Hermetic terms, we could say: Conscious, Eternal, Infinite Light is the Source of All.

Linking science to the ancient wisdom, we learn that our conscious physical interaction with nature will help us “Know Ourselves” and also to stay healthy, as we actually are THAT, the Conscious “I AM.”

As Schrödinger finally concludes, “Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in physical sciences, for this barrier does not exist.”<sup>17</sup> Schrödinger does not actually speak about “knowing God,” but he comes closest here.

### Practical Application in Daily Life

These teachings are very ancient, but perfectly applicable to our modern life. We must grasp the reality that humans are Divine, that there is no other happiness but the profound, constant communication and attunement with the Cosmic. The Self that we must know is the superior Self and not a list of negativities related to the personal ego. We are not the body.

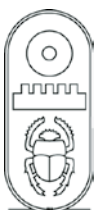
### Rosicrucian Traditions Concerning Knowing Oneself

Former Imperator Ralph M. Lewis writes, “Self-analysis . . . : It is because of an intense urge to look upon ourselves, to analyze ourselves and our environment, that we learn to do many exceptional things. Otherwise we would contribute very little to the advancement of humanity and the progress of society.

“Our natural attributes are mostly within us. Therefore, we are not fully aware of them. We accomplish certain things in life with these powers but whence we derived them, we are not quite certain . . . .

“Self-analysis does more than disclose our attributes. It also reveals our limitations, the things not yet possible of accomplishment by us. It shows how far we are behind those ideals that we recognize as a state of perfection. It points definitively where we need to improve ourselves.

“But there is still a second quality . . . and that is aspiration. Aspiration consists of those sensations and desires and wants of the self as distinguished from the passions of the body. Aspiration finds its gratification in the realizing of a need or some ideal which we have set for ourselves. Though reason in self-analysis may disclose our lack of something, it is aspiration that causes us to seek to fulfil



the need and to lift ourselves up and beyond our present status.”<sup>18</sup>

If we analyze this, five truths emerge:

1. Self-analysis is a natural urge
2. It reveals our attributes and limitations
3. It makes us aware of an ideal and desirable state of “perfection”
4. An innate “aspiration” helps us lift ourselves out of routine
5. It consists of the gratification of a higher ideal

The secret method to know God and our selves is no longer a secret. Harmony, sacred music, meditation, inner silence, and vowel chanting are tools that help us clear our vibrations from all imperfections. The basic methods of the Rosicrucian path are related to these practices that help our personal evolution.

With loving performance of these techniques, we will modify our mundane vibrations into more and more subtle ones. We will finally attune to the Divine vibrations and gain the certainty of our real essence. We will merge into great joy, beauty, and profound peace.

Nevertheless, we must remember that, according to the literal meaning of the verb “to know,” the human soul, incarnated in an earthly body, is unable to transmit to human consciousness the tremendous brilliancy of cosmic powers.

Incarnated humans cannot fully “know God.” However, we can certainly “know” the God of our heart, with loving, longing, and pure desire.

With persistent practice, by refining our vibrations and by liberating ourselves from useless worries, we may be able to calm the chatting of the brain, and in the absolute silence of a meditation “without an object” we may have a glimpse of the eternal splendor that is our real being. This wonderful experience may happen only a few times during a given life; however, it is sufficient to give us the “certainty” of our Divine ground and of our true eternal life.

Such experience is described in sacred text as “illumination” and is a wonderful gift by the grace of God to the sincere, persistent, and passionate seeker, as revealed to us by the many great mystics of human history.

We are grateful to the sages of ancient times for having uncovered this supreme secret in order to give us the opportunity to “know ourselves,” to grow, and to evolve.

*We exist in the eternal now.  
The future constantly converts itself into now,  
Then instantly becomes the past,  
Like a stream rushing down a mountainside.*<sup>19</sup>



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> These three proverbs are found in Isha Schwaller de Lubicz, *Her-Bak: The Living Face of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Inner Traditions, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See “Tat Tvam Asi” in *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tat\\_Tvam\\_Asi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tat_Tvam_Asi).

<sup>4</sup> *The Bhagavad-Gita, Fifth discourse, 21-25-28*, trans. Sri Swami Sivananda (Durban, South Africa: The Divine Light Trust Society, 2003), 76-77.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Jacobs, *The Principal Upanishads* (New York: O Books Publishing Co., 2003), 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Srinivas Sourirajan, “Lectures on the Upanishads” (Lecture, Ottawa Hindu Temple, Spring 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Juvenal, *Satire 11*, trans. in G.G. Ramsey, *Juvenal and Persius* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1918). The whole very enjoyable Satire is available at [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/juvenal\\_satires\\_11.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/juvenal_satires_11.htm).

<sup>8</sup> W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, (New York: Norton, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> Erwin Schrödinger, *What Is Life? Mind and Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 30

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 47

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 68

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 73

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 70

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 70-71

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 73

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 137

<sup>18</sup> Ralph M. Lewis, *Sanctuary of Self* (San Jose: Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, 1948), 201.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Lee, *Practical Mysticism* (San Jose: Grand Lodge of the English Language Jurisdiction, AMORC, 2005), 58.

# KNOW THYSELF

*Michael Shaluly, F.R.C.*

**K**now Thyself can be an easy phrase to repeat, and it may suffer from over-familiarity, so that we miss its true depths. Grand Councilor Michael Shaluly considers the journey that humanity has traveled with this injunction, and how it has guided us, and still does today.

A Seeker glanced eastward to the rising sun and found awe and mystery and love in one moment. This cosmic work of divine inspiration was feeding the soul a full dissertation. Whispering wordlessly from the depths, consciousness had realized itself.

The above expression defines a moment when one is touched from within to follow the way of the heart. For centuries the mystery schools have been a place for mystics to study and follow these urges of their inner voice. Historians relate that in the ancient mystery schools of Greece, above the portal of Apollo at Delphi was inscribed the injunction “Know Thyself.”

These two words travel through time and give us pause even to this day. What might the author of this directive have meant to convey to the world at the time? Was this philosopher aware that these two

simple words would travel to all corners of the world, and survive to make us ponder their meaning so many centuries later? Pause for a moment now, and observe what these words create within you.

## The Quest for Self Discovery

From our first moments of the recognition of self and the beginnings of our conscious existence, to the present day, we have shown a ceaseless and continual desire for self-discovery. What drives this desire? Where does it come from?

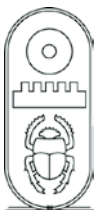
From the beginning of our first attempts at civilization to the modern day, we have demonstrated a powerful yearning to understand our relationship with all things, and indeed, with ourselves. It doesn't matter that we may have been wearing white robes in an ancient desert village, or a suit in the middle of a glistening modern city. Each of us has experienced, and continues to experience, the urge to advance towards a greater “something.”

Legend has it that when humanity first became self-aware, one of our predecessors raised his or her arms in adoration to the rising sun, giver of all life. Turning to watch the life-giving rays advance upon the firmament, there before our seeker was his or her shadow, which formed a cross. Thus, our Rose Cross was born, as was humanity's quest to understand, not only creation, but also the movement of our consciousness within it.

Centuries later the sages of old passionately labored to assist humanity to see beyond our difficult physical existence. In so doing, they promoted an exploration of self in conjunction with scientific inquiry, for they knew that the contemplation of consciousness was vital to our existence. They knew that humanity is interconnected with all things.



Partially reconstructed Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.



Long before the masses would accept it, these mystics understood that our planet elegantly spun through space in rhythm with our vast universe, and that consciousness had become aware of, and was a part of, this grand movement and unity. They were keenly aware of the harmonious balance of give and take that breathes animation into all things. Through these mystics, the ancient mystery schools were born into a world that, to this day, thirsts for knowledge that will lead to Peace Profound.

These mystics of old continue to reach down through time to give us more than contemplative statements for us to peruse. Their remaining works speak to us now as they did then, and allow us to observe the advancement of consciousness through the history of humanity.

Think about what life must have been for human beings when we first experienced an awareness of self. All that surrounded us must have been mysterious and beyond comprehension. For the first time, we would have asked ourselves “Why am I here? How am I here?”

The great mysteries of birth and death, and of our temporal existence, came into our consciousness. Natural occurrences such as night and day, thunder and lightning—all these may have been viewed as terrifying, inexplicable events. Perhaps to make sense of the strange world that surrounded us, we attempted to explain these phenomena through fanciful tales, a multiplicity of gods, or by other means. But the power of thought is a driving force behind our conscious evolution and comprehension of all things, and therefore, over time, science and understanding began to develop. As our understanding of physical phenomena increased, so also did our knowledge of, and answers to questions about, physical phenomena. As we freed ourselves from some of our fears and physical distractions, we gradually developed more time for reflection upon our conscious existence.



Spiral Galaxy M101, NASA and ESA

## Development of the Mystery Schools

The great mystery schools, of which our present-day Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, is an integral part, developed around this evolution of conscious understanding. These schools were a natural progression born of love and the desire *to be*, or *to know*. Many great scientific discoveries were a direct or indirect result of the workings of these mystery schools, but all who crossed their portals shared a common purpose: to pursue the inner urge to communicate with God, and to unveil those great mysteries of our conscious existence—the mysteries of life and death.

Unlike research of a physical nature, however, where there is provable and measurable data, the quest for inner unfoldment was not so easily defined. Much of this work focused upon individual experiences, inspiration, and intuition. How does one define the invisible? Even though each of us can realize that our thoughts are invisible, we also know with certainty that they exist, and we know they are powerful. In fact, we know that while we are conscious, we cannot escape thought.

Yet, there have been many forces throughout time that wanted to tell others how to think, why to think, and desired to exert control over the masses. As a result, mystical work was often consigned to a fringe element in many societies and was



shunned by many. For this reason, the mystics of the past and the mystery schools themselves often had to function secretly to avoid persecution. For those ready to embark upon this path, this did not matter, for the desire to be aware of the greater, invisible self within was an unavoidable certainty.

Though often functioning at great risk, the mystery schools consequently served an invaluable purpose throughout history, just as they do today. Even in the present, many individuals are impelled by the great whisperings of self, but know not how to pursue the answers. Hence, many conceal the most beautiful part of themselves with outer stimulation to keep the mind occupied. When the time comes, the consciousness of these individuals will pause and listen as the quiet, calm power of the small voice within reveals itself. They will then follow the path pursued by our mystic ancestors.

### The Journey of Humanity

This is our journey, the journey of humanity, and though filled with the harshness that stems from misunderstanding and ignorance, it is nonetheless a beautiful voyage towards a reunion with the God of our Hearts. It is a journey to indeed know ourselves, for only from ourselves can we attain true peace and true joy. If we are unhappy, it comes only from within ourselves.

Conversely, if we are joyous, this too comes from within us. What greater good can we do than to learn the ways of God, that breath of life that inspires each and every moment that gives us life? The spark of life within us comes from our breath and contains all that we need for a fulfilling life. The quiet, sweet, and calm urgings of the subtle voice from within are now stronger in our world than they have ever been.

Humanity's quest continues to define itself, and there is a realization among many that there is more to life than our outer surroundings. The journey to find inner growth has begun, and great questions and



Overlooking the Delphi theater and Temple of Apollo. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

their answers rest upon *you*, the seeker. Driven by conscience, the voice of self, calm and unwavering, will remain strong and unmoved as your guide.

With a glimpse of this inner beauty through communion with self, darkness will be dispelled, and a greater light will be seen. Through this effort, you will find others of like mind who can be strong arms to lean on for support and guidance. Just as when the words "Know Thyself" were first inscribed in ancient Greece, the mystery schools are alive as an avenue for us to find spiritual and mystical understanding.

Your eyes are the eyes of the beholder, and as you journey inward, it is the human soul that will become brighter as an awe-inspiring wonder. The hand of the architect of time is absent there. Age will be replaced by wisdom; darkness replaced by understanding. In the face of adversity, words of inspiration will greet you.

We are the seekers, all of us, and we are now at the Portal of the Temple, guided by the sweet voice of conscience. Just as the sages of old, we also are building a grand and beautiful temple for others to pursue. May we go hand in hand gracefully and with loving thoughts, and present to the world that eternal request that leads to self mastery: Know Thyself.





# THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

1902

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

**R**osicrucian poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919) enjoyed great popularity in the United States and throughout the English-speaking world. The spirituality in her works shows clearly the Rosicrucian Tradition: "As we think, act, and live here today, we build the structures of our homes in spirit realms after we leave earth, and we build karma for future lives, thousands of years to come, on this earth or other planets. Life will assume new dignity, and labor new interest for us, when we come to the knowledge that death is but a continuation of life and labor, in higher planes."<sup>1</sup>

Man has explored all countries and all lands,  
And made his own the secrets of each clime.  
Now, ere the world has fully reached its prime,  
The oval earth lies compassed with steel bands,  
The seas are slaves to ships that touch all strands,  
And even the haughty elements sublime  
And bold, yield him their secrets for all time,  
And speed like lackeys forth at his commands.

Still, though he search from shore to distant shore,  
And no strange realms, no unlocated plains  
Are left for his attainment and control,  
Yet is there one more kingdom to explore.  
Go, know thyself, O man! there yet remains  
The undiscovered country of thy soul!<sup>2</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *What I Know About New Thought* (1905), cited in [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella\\_Wheeler\\_Wilcox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella_Wheeler_Wilcox).

<sup>2</sup> Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Power* (Chicago: W.B. Conkey, 1902). Editor's Note: The title, "The Undiscovered Country" is found in two other places in literature. Shakespeare uses it in *Hamlet's soliloquy* (3.1.76-82) to refer to Death, while in the film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), it refers to a newly achieved Peace between two warring peoples, widely believed to be a metaphor for the ending of the Cold War.

# GNOTHI SEAUTON (Know Thyself)

1831

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

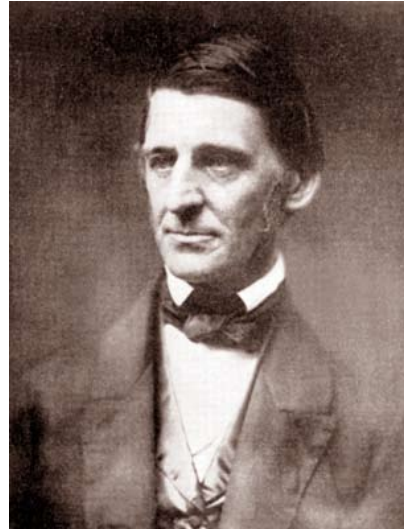
**B**oston-born Emerson (1803-1882) was the leader of the Transcendentalist movement in the United States during the early- to mid-nineteenth century, and through his essays, poetry, and philosophical writings, exerted considerable influence on the New Thought and related movements. Inspired by the saying "Know Thyself" above the portal of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, in this excerpt he poetically describes the astounding reality of what will be discovered by following this ancient axiom, so central to the Rosicrucian Tradition.

## I

If thou canst bear  
Strong meat of simple truth  
If thou durst my words compare  
With what thou thinkest in my soul's  
    free youth,  
Then take this fact unto thy soul,—  
God dwells in thee.  
It is no metaphor nor parable,  
It is unknown to thousands, and to thee;  
Yet there is God.

## II

He is in thy world,  
But thy world knows him not.  
He is the mighty Heart  
From which life's varied pulses part.  
Clouded and shrouded there doth sit  
The Infinite  
Embosomed in a man;  
And thou art stranger to thy guest



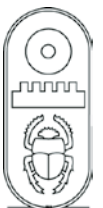
And know'st not what thou doth invest.  
The clouds that veil his life within  
Are thy thick woven webs of sin,  
Which his glory struggling through  
Darkens to thine evil hue.

## III

Then bear thyself, O man!  
Up to the scale and compass of thy guest;  
Soul of thy soul.  
Be great as doth beseem  
The ambassador who bears  
The royal presence where he goes.

## IV

Give up to thy soul—  
Let it have its way—  
It is, I tell thee, God himself,  
The selfsame One that rules the Whole,  
Tho' he speaks thro' thee with a stifled  
    voice,  
And looks through thee, shorn of his beams.  
But if thou listen to his voice,  
If thou obey the royal thought,  
It will grow clearer to thine ear,  
More glorious to thine eye.  
The clouds will burst that veil him now  
And thou shalt see the Lord.



# THE CHARIOTEER OF DELPHI

Collected from the writings of Pausanias, Albinia Wherry, Edward T. Cook, and Richard G. Geldard, Ph.D., by the *Rosicrucian Digest* Staff

**O**ne of the great prizes of late nineteenth century excavations was the bronze statue of a charioteer found at Delphi. Poise, grace, and dynamism flow from the piece even after more than two millennia, and commentators for over a century have marveled at this vibrant connection with life at Delphi. The *Rosicrucian Digest* has assembled thoughts on this sculpture from various sources as a tribute to this remarkable work of the human spirit.

“A most valuable addition to our knowledge of early Greek sculpture is the Charioteer,” commented Albinia Lucy Cust Wherry in 1896, “. . . a beautiful bronze figure, perfect except for the left arm, which is broken off above the elbow.”<sup>1</sup>

“The bronze statue of a charioteer—a masterpiece of early Greek art and in nearly perfect preservation—is one of the finds which have rewarded the French excavations at Delphi,” wrote Edward T. Cook in 1903. “It was unearthed in 1896 . . . . The statue seems to have belonged to a chariot-group, and to have been dedicated at Delphi to commemorate a victory in the games.”<sup>2</sup>

Pausanias, the second-century CE Greek geographer and writer, described the scene: “Nearby is a bronze chariot with a man mounted upon it; race-horses, one on each side, stand beside the chariot, and on the horses are seated boys. They are memorials of Olympic victories won by Hiero, the son of Deinomenes, who was tyrant of Syracuse after his brother Gelo. But the offerings were not sent by Hiero; it was Hiero’s son, Deinomenes, who gave them to the god, Onatas the Aeginetan, who made the chariot, and Calamis, who made the horses on either side and the boys on them.”<sup>3</sup>



*The Charioteer of Delphi.* Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

In another description of the famed statue, Cook and Wherry comment, “The figure affords an admirable example of the transition work of the time of Calamis. His long Ionic chiton<sup>4</sup> is arranged in perfectly simple folds curved on the body and arms, but falling perpendicularly from the girdele to his bare muscular feet, while the toes, drawn up, slightly indicate how he preserved his balance during his rapid course.

“His right arm is still extended as when he guided his fiery steed to victory, and his short hair, though confined by a fillet, curls delicately above his small ears, and strays softly down his cheeks. His eyes . . . are composed of colored enamel.”<sup>5</sup> The charioteer . . . only precedes the best period by a very short time.”<sup>6</sup>

## Travelers' Key to Ancient Greece

In more recent times author Richard G. Geldard described the statue in the following manner: “The final room of the [Delphi] museum houses its greatest treasure, the bronze Charioteer, whose grace and poise represent the best of human achievement and spiritual aspiration. There is an interesting legend about the Charioteer, which is often told by guides to the visitors to Delphi:

“It seems that during the 1890s before the start of excavations, when the French were in the process of clearing the town of Kastri off the site of the sanctuary, one matriarch in particular would not leave her little house to relocate to the new town then under construction. Her refusal was holding up the whole relocation project.

“One morning she arrived at the house where the archaeologists were gathered and announced that she was ready to leave her house. When asked why she had so suddenly changed her mind, she reported a dream from the previous night. In her dream a boy who seemed to be trapped beneath the green sea called to her, ‘Set me free! Set me free!’ The dream frightened her and she thought it was an omen. When the excavations began, the Charioteer was discovered beneath the old woman’s house.

“This magnificent bronze was produced in 470 BCE as a monument to a victory in the Pythian Games. The group included four horses and a chariot. A separate group

in front pictured a groom leading a single horse. The intent was to honor the victor and to demonstrate Plato’s definition of mastery: control of four horses running in perfect synchrony drawing a chariot.

“This figure depicts the exquisite control under pressure and the human achievement and perfection that were the Greek ideal of human life. The style is early Classical, sometimes referred to as the Severe Style. Still evident is the idealized form of the Archaic Period, which we see in the *kouroi*.

“What is yet to come is the so-called naturalism of the later Classical style and the still later decadence of the Hellenistic. Here is the human being inspired by spiritual attributes pictured in the moment of victory in one of life’s most demanding exercises. Surely it is how the Greeks envisioned Apollo arriving at his sanctuary, drawn by four of Poseidon’s finest horses.”<sup>7</sup>



*The Charioteer of Delphi.* Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Albinia Lucy Cust Wherry, *Greek Sculpture with Story and Song* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1898), 66.

<sup>2</sup> Edward T. Cook, *A Popular Handbook to the Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1903), 116-117.

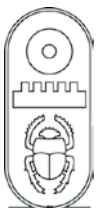
<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, *A Description of Greece* 6.12.1. Translation in W.H.S. Jones, and H.A. Ormerod, *Pausanias' Description of Greece with an English Translation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). See also Oliver M. Washburn, “The Charioteer of Amphion at Delphi,” *American Journal of Archaeology* (Second Series) 12:2 (1908) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1908), 198-209.

<sup>4</sup> “The characteristic costume of a charioteer.” Cook, *Popular Handbook to Antiquities*, 116.

<sup>5</sup> Wherry, *Greek Sculpture*, 66, cited in Cook, *Popular Handbook to Antiquities*, 116-117.

<sup>6</sup> Cook, *Popular Handbook to Antiquities*, 117. This description is of a plaster cast “presented to [The British] Museum in 1898 by the French Minister of Public Instruction.”

<sup>7</sup> Richard G. Geldard, *The Traveler's Key to Ancient Greece* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2000), 294-295, © 2000, reproduced by permission of Quest Books, the imprint of the Theosophical Publishing House ([www.questbooks.net](http://www.questbooks.net)).



# AN ECHO OF DELPHI: THE PYTHIAN GAMES ANCIENT AND MODERN

Steven Armstrong, F.R.C., M.A.

Perhaps less well known than today's Olympics, the Pythian Games at Delphi, named after the slain Python of Delphi and the Prophetesses, were a manifestation of the "the beautiful and the good," a hallmark of the Hellenistic spirituality which comes from the Mystery Schools.

The Olympic Games, now held every two years in alternating summer and winter versions, were the first and the best known of the ancient Greek religious and cultural festivals known as the Pan-Hellenic Games. In all, there were four major celebrations, which followed one another in succession. That is the reason for the four year cycle of the Olympics, observed since the restoration of the Olympics in 1859.



Silver tetradrachm issued by the city of Myrina, ca. 160-150 BCE. Apollo wearing a diadem and a laurel wreath. Photo ©Marie-Lan Nguyen/Wikimedia Commons, used with permission.

## The Beautiful and the Good

The concept of athletic and cultural competitions in connection with a religious observance is not exclusive to the Greek world, however, the Hellenic spirit raised this conjunction to a fine art. This is not surprising, since one of the Hellenistic ideals which eventually spread from Spain

to Northern India, and from Rus' to Egypt, was that of *kaloï k'agathoi*, the Beautiful and the Good, certainly part of the tradition of Apollo.

Essentially, since the Gods loved that which was Good—and for the Athenians in particular, what was good was beautiful—this maxim summed up Hellenic piety. It was no great leap then to wish to present to the Gods every four years the best of what human beings could offer—in the arts, and in athletics. When these were coupled together with their religious rites, the three lifted up the human body, soul, and spirit, and through the microcosm of humanity, the whole cosmos, to be Divinized. The teachings of the Mystery Schools were played out on the fields and in the theaters of the games.

## The Pan-Hellenic Games

Collectively, these Pan-Hellenic Games began with the Olympic Games, whose historical beginning can be traced to 776 BCE, and whose legendary continuation involves Delphi. One story has it that King Iphitos of Elis consulted the Oracle at Delphi for help in restoring order to Greece after the Dorian Invasions or Migrations sometime in the legendary eighth century BCE. He was told to restart the Olympic Games, and this proved so successful that they continued until either Roman Emperor Theodosius I in 394 CE or his grandson Theodosius II in 435 CE suppressed them.

Following the Olympic Games, held at Olympia near Elis and Pisa in honor of Zeus, in importance were:

- The Pythian Games, held every four years near Delphi in honor of Apollo

- The Nemean Games, held bi-annually near Nemea, in honor of Zeus
- The Isthmian Games, held bi-annually near Corinth, in honor of Poseidon

Collectively, although there were many smaller competitions elsewhere, these four were the Pan-Hellenic Games. During each four-year Olympiad, the Olympic Games would be conducted in year one, while the Nemean and Isthmian Games would be conducted at different times during year two. In year three, the Pythian Games would be held, and then in year four, the Nemean and Isthmian Games would once again be held. This was very much like modern international athletic and cultural competitions, scheduled so that leading athletes and stars could attend all of them.

### The Pythian Games at Delphi

The Pythian Games distinguished themselves from the others, not only in that they were second in importance only to the Olympic Games, but also because they included the full artistic and cultural components, which actually preceded the athletic competitions there.

According to legend, the God Apollo proclaimed the beginning of the Games at Delphi after having slain the old guardian of the sanctuary of Gaia, Python, the great serpent.

Since the serpent itself often represents the basic energy of creation, and Apollo is the god of the arts, particularly poetry and music, it is no surprise that the first two competitions were for these disciplines, and later, the field was expanded to include athletic competitions as in the other Pan-Hellenic Games.<sup>1</sup>

In historic times, the Pythian Games at Delphi can be traced to 582 BCE. At that time, the running of the games was entrusted to a twelve-person Delphic Council, known as the *Amphiktyonia*, which represented the Greek tribes or peoples. The games' celebrations were fixed at every



Virgil Solis, *Apollo Slays Python*, 1563. Illustration for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from *Ovid Illustrated*.

four years, two years after each Olympics, and between the years for the Nemean and Isthmian Games.

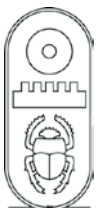
### The Arts First at Delphi

In the beginning, the first competitions were for music, and then later singing with the Kithara. This instrument—similar to a Lyre and a favorite of Apollo—is the ancestor of the modern guitar. It was also regularly associated with the Greek poet Sappho. Even as late as the Italian Renaissance, woodcuts by Boccaccio show her playing the instrument.<sup>2</sup>

Singing accompanied by the flute, and then solo flute performances, joined the roster of Pythian competitions. As Roger Lipsey mentions, “. . . eventually theatrical troupes, painters, and perhaps artists in other media had their competitions.”<sup>3</sup> One of the ways in which Rosicrucians manifest this Delphic arts tradition today is the continuation of the late nineteenth century [Salons de la Rose+Croix](#),<sup>4</sup> which are now held in the Rosicrucian [Espace Saint-Martin](#) in Paris,<sup>5</sup> as well as the series of Salons which have been held at [Rosicrucian Park](#) in San Jose, California.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, athletic games were added, including the same contests as in the Olympics, such as chariot racing, wrestling, boxing, *pankration*, *stadion*, other foot races, and the pentathlon.

Lipsey also points out that the Greek name for these types of Games was *Agones*, struggles, whence our word *agon*. Although not meant in its tragic sense, *agon* is also a key term in spirituality as the spirit within



struggles for perfection and reintegration with its source. He recalls that Antiphon (fifth century BCE) remarked, “Olympic and Pythian victories and all pleasures are apt to be won by great pains.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Holy Peace of Delphi

Significantly, this struggle of competition at the games was accompanied by a truce, and a cessation of conflict during this sacred occasion. “During the Delphic Games, which lasted three months, the Holy Delphic Peace was announced. The ceasefire guaranteed the people—participants and spectators—to travel without risk to the games and back to their homeland.”<sup>8</sup> Sadly, neither in ancient nor modern times, has humanity yet learned the Divine lesson that the energy put into warfare could be permanently transmuted into higher and more productive pursuits.

Aristotle describes some of the activities of the games, combining the arts and athletic aspects of the competitions. The entire period of the Delphic Games lasted about three months, as competitors and spectators safely journeyed to and from the games. The core of this celebration was approximately eight days. It started with a ritual drama, a “Holy Game,” reenacting the slaying of Python by Apollo, which culminated in a festive procession to the Temple of Apollo, where a sacrifice was offered. Then four days of feasting followed.

After the fourth day, the musical, theatrical, dance, and other artistic competitions took place in the Delphic Theater, while the athletics were held in the Stadium. Due to the mountainous topography of Delphi, the chariot races took place nearby on the plain of Krisa.<sup>19</sup>

### All for Honor

Unlike at the other Games, the winners of the competitions at Delphi received honor only. A statue was erected in their honor, as the well known Bronze Charioteer of

Delphi attests. Winners were also crowned with a laurel wreath created especially from leaves brought from the Vale of Tempe in Thessaly in Northern Greece, bordering on the Aegean Sea. In Homeric times, Thessaly was known as Aeolia, and the Vale of Tempe was a favorite haunt of Apollo and the Muses. It was here that Apollo came to purify himself after slaying Python.<sup>10</sup> This river gorge was formed by the Pineios River, where Aristaeus pursued Eurydice, the wife of Orpheus, to her death. In the thirteenth century, a church built in this area was dedicated to St. Paraskevi, a holy woman whom Greeks and other Orthodox still venerate as a miraculous healer.

According to an ancient Greek myth, as retold by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, when Apollo was purifying himself in the Vale of Tempe, he spied Daphne, the daughter of the River God Pineios. She was instantly his first love, and he pursued her, despite her refusals. Finally, as the God was on the verge of catching her, she cried out to her father, and he transformed her into the laurel tree. Apollo then honored her by making her leaves the token of victory in all contests, even to our own day.<sup>11</sup>

It is no wonder, then, that the laurel from this vale, sacred to Apollo, Orpheus, and later Christians, would have been highly appropriate for the Delphic victors’ crowns, as it is the origin of the laurel itself!

A modern Delphic arts connection to the Vale of Tempe may be found in the world famous concert hall, [Grady](#)



Daphne becomes the Laurel, from Micyllus's edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1582. Leipzig.



**Gammage Auditorium.** This was the last public commission of renowned American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, on the campus of Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, a city named for the ancient Greek Vale.<sup>12</sup> Thus the spirit of the Muses of Delphi continues to manifest in another Tempe across the ocean, which has, over the years, become a progressive arts and cultural center for central Arizona.

The role of the arts at the Pythian Games (and at Delphi in general) is perhaps most clearly shown in the person of Pindar (ca. 522-443 BCE), who was a “poet in residence” at the shrine. “They say that an iron throne was kept for him near the eternal hearth in Apollo’s Temple. When he came to Delphi—we glimpse here the archetype of the traveling bard, welcome everywhere—he occupied the throne to sing in Apollo’s honor.”<sup>13</sup>

Sadly, as with so many other institutions of the old ways, the Delphic Games came to an end in 394 CE by the decree of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, who was solidifying the status of official Christianity in the empire. Nevertheless, the spirit of Delphi, of its Pythias, and of the games did not entirely fade into oblivion.

## The First Revival

In 1927, Angelos Sikelianos, the well known Greek poet and playwright, a Nobel Prize nominee, together with his wife, American Eva Palmer, sponsored the first revival of the Delphic Games. It included “Olympic contests, a concert of Byzantine music, an exhibition of folk art, as well as a performance of *Prometheus Bound*. It became very successful and despite lack of state assistance, it was repeated the following year. The revival was then permanently abandoned due to the excessive costs of organizing it. In honor of the memory of Angelos and Eva Sikelianos, the European Cultural Centre of Delphi bought and restored their house in Delphi, which is today the Museum of Delphic Festivals.”<sup>16</sup>

Although Sikelianos’s two consecutive festivals did not continue, it would not be long until the Delphic spirit found manifestation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

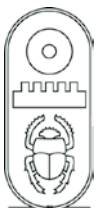
## The *Amphiktyonia* Is Restored

In 1994, exactly 1,600 years after Emperor Theodosius suppressed the Delphic Games, and one hundred years after the restoration of the Olympic movement, J. Christian B. Kirsch invited people from all over the world to Berlin to the founding Congress of the International Delphic Council.<sup>15</sup> Representatives from eighteen nations from five continents<sup>16</sup> attended the Congress, and proclaimed their mission to the world, inspired by the Delphic spirit across the millennia:

“In today’s times of globalization, dialogue between people, nations, and cultures has become more important than ever before. We must not fail to support and promote the creative potential and new forms of expression of young artists if we wish to sustain social development. Therefore, culture, as an engine of social development, must be moved into focus.”<sup>17</sup>



Modern photograph of the Delphic stadium. Photo from the Rosicrucian Archives.



The governing Delphic Games board has adopted the ancient name of *Amphiktyonia*, to demonstrate its continuity with the ancient ideals. The two manifestations of this movement have been a series of modern Junior Delphic Games and Delphic Games, now alternating in two year cycles, reminiscent of the ancient games. In 1997, the first Junior Delphic Games were held in Tbilisi, Georgia, and patrons included former Georgian President Edward Shevardnadze; the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Daniel Tarschys; and the Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor.

The first modern Delphic Games under this administration took place in 2000 in Moscow, under the patronage of President Putin and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II. In 2003 the second Junior Delphic Games were held in Düsseldorf, Germany, where the primary patron was Dr. Walter Schwimmer, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The year 2005 saw the second Delphic Games in Kuching, Malaysia. Baguio City in the Philippines hosted the 2007 Junior Games, and the third modern Delphic Games are scheduled for September 5-9, 2009, in Jeju, South Korea.<sup>18</sup>

### **Pan-Hellenic Delphic Games Return to the Source**

In addition to this global manifestation of the Delphic spirit, there have been independent Delphic arts festivals held at Delphi itself. Perhaps the best known of these was the Pan-Hellenic Delphic Games, June 4-11, 2005, led by the remarkable and historic Isadora Duncan International Institute, and co-sponsored by the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition (publishers of *Parabola Magazine*), and the City of Delphi itself.<sup>19</sup> The IDII is a “global organization committed to the enhancement of education through movement and the arts, drawing from the ideals and principles

of Isadora Duncan”<sup>20</sup> (the San Francisco born dancer who is credited by many as “the Mother of Modern Dance”).<sup>21</sup>

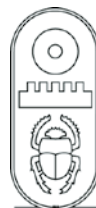


Dancers from the Isadora Duncan Institute at the 2005 revival of the Pythian Games at Delphi. Photo by Stuart Orenstein, ©2005 [Isadora Duncan International Institute](#).

The event was held over eight days, and included presenters such as the storyteller and scholar of mythology, Michael Meade, and the dance performer and lecturer Jeanne Bresciani, Ph.D. A keynote address was given by Richard G. Geldard, Ph.D., [whose reflections on the Bronze Charioteer at Delphi can be found elsewhere in this \*Rosicrucian Digest\* issue](#). He also conducted sessions on the power of healing in Greek Drama. Inspiring films were shown from the Parabola collection, and the Isadora Duncan Dancers graced the event with performances keyed to the ancient setting.<sup>22</sup> In all of these ways, the echoes of Delphi and the Pythian Games sound louder today than they have for 1600 years. The spirit of the Prophetesses of the historic Oracles, and the power of the legendary Sibyls both call modern women and men to enter into communion with the Divine through beauty and the good, and in this way, come to know themselves as truly divine sparks enjoying the wonders of a human experience of body, soul, and spirit.<sup>23</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of the Pythian (Delphic Games), see Joseph Fontenrose, "The Cult of Apollo and the Games at Delphi" in Wendy J. Raschke, ed. *The Archaeology of the Olympics: The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 121-140.
- <sup>2</sup> "Women's History" at <http://www.about.com>. Image of Sappho with Kithara, woodcut, 1473, from Boccaccio's *De Cleris Mulieribus*: <http://womenshistory.about.com/od/sappho/ig/Sappho/Sappho-Boccaccio.htm>.
- <sup>3</sup> Roger Lipsey, *Have You Been to Delphi?* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 16.
- <sup>4</sup> For the history of the nineteenth-century Parisian Salons de Rose-Croix organized by Sar Péladan, see Christian Rebisse, *Rosicrucian History and Mysteries* (San Jose: English Grand Lodge of AMORC, 2005), 137-143; and also "Joséphine Péladan et les Salons de Rose-Croix" at [http://www.rosecroix.org/histoire/salon\\_rose-croix\\_1.html](http://www.rosecroix.org/histoire/salon_rose-croix_1.html).
- <sup>5</sup> [http://www.rosecroix.org/activites/expo\\_salon\\_paris.html](http://www.rosecroix.org/activites/expo_salon_paris.html).
- <sup>6</sup> For more information about the Book Salons at Rosicrucian Park, see <http://www.rosicrucian.org/park/library>.
- <sup>7</sup> Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 150, cited, with the general discussion of *agon*, in Lipsey, 16.
- <sup>8</sup> "Pythian Games," *Wikipedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythian\\_games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythian_games).
- <sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythian\\_Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythian_Games).
- <sup>10</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.568-587.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.438-567.
- <sup>12</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gammage\\_Auditorium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gammage_Auditorium) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempe,\\_Arizona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempe,_Arizona).
- <sup>13</sup> Lipsey, 16, based on Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, 10.24.4.
- <sup>14</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelos\\_Sikelianos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelos_Sikelianos).
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.delphic.org>.
- <sup>16</sup> The Founding members in 1994 were China, Germany, Ecuador, France, Ireland, Greece, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Libya, Mexico, Nigeria, Austria, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, United States of America, and Cyprus. Since then other countries have joined: Albania (1998), Armenia (1998), Azerbaijan (1998), Belarus (1996), Bulgaria (2003), India (2002), Georgia (1996), Japan (1997), Korea (2005), Malaysia (2004), Moldova (2000), South Africa (2001), Ukraine (2003), Venezuela (2003). See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Delphic\\_Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Delphic_Council).
- <sup>17</sup> [http://www.delphic.org/index.php?id=4&no\\_cache=1&L=1](http://www.delphic.org/index.php?id=4&no_cache=1&L=1).
- <sup>18</sup> [http://www.delphic.org/index.php?id=80no\\_cache=1&L=1](http://www.delphic.org/index.php?id=80no_cache=1&L=1).
- <sup>19</sup> See deTraci Regula, "Pan-Hellenic Delphic Games Return to Delphi" <http://gogreece.about.com/od/citiestowns/a/delphicgames.htm> and [www.idii.org/delphicgames.html](http://www.idii.org/delphicgames.html).
- <sup>20</sup> <http://www.idii.org/history.html>.
- <sup>21</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isadora\\_Duncan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isadora_Duncan).
- <sup>22</sup> <http://www.idii.org/delphicgames.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> Resources for this article were found at the following sources, in addition to those specifically mentioned in the Notes: "International Delphic Council," "Kithara," "Olympic Games," "Pan-Hellenic Games," "Pythian Games," at <http://en.wikipedia.org>; Myron Stagman, *100 Prophecies of the Delphic Oracle* (San Francisco: City-State Press, 1999).



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