

REVISITING DELPHI

Revisiting Delphi speaks to all admirers of Delphi and its famous prophecies, be they experts on ancient Greek religion, or students of the ancient world, or just lovers of a good story. It invites readers to revisit the famous oracle of Apollo at Delphi along with Herodotus, Euripides, Socrates, Pausanias and Athenaeus, offering the first comparative and extended enquiry into the way these and other authors force us to move the link between religion and narrative centre stage. Their accounts of Delphi and its prophecies reflect a world in which the gods frequently remain baffling and elusive despite every human effort to make sense of the signs they give.

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REVISITING DELPHI

Religion and Storytelling in Ancient Greece

JULIA KINDT



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for
Sophie Huber (1906–1997)
Sophie Christ (*11.3.2013)

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---------|
| <i>List of Illustration</i> | page ix |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i> | xi |
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i> | xiii |
| 1 Introduction: Revisiting Delphi | 1 |
| 2 Herodotus: Delphi, Oracles and Storytelling in the <i>Histories</i> | 16 |
| 3 Euripides: Ironic Readings of Apollo and his Prophecies | 55 |
| 4 Plato: Socrates, or Invoking the Oracle as a Witness | 87 |
| 5 Pausanias: What's the Stuff of Divinity? | 113 |
| 6 Athenaeus: Encountering the Divine in Word and Wood | 131 |
| 7 Conclusion: Religion and Storytelling in Ancient Greece | 153 |
| <i>Appendix: Plutarch – A Philosophical Enquiry into an Enigmatic Divine Sign</i> | 169 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 185 |
| <i>Index</i> | 211 |

ILLUSTRATION

1. Roman coin, second century CE.
Front: portrait of Faustina Senior (wife of Antoninus Pius) Reverse: front view of the temple of Apollo at Delphi featuring the E Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18249069

page 171

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My fascination with Delphi and its prophecies goes back a long time. In my second semester as an undergraduate student at the University of Munich, I took a seminar on ‘Future and Prognosis as a Historical Problem’ taught by Professor Christian Meier. The seminar was targeted at doctoral students and I was very fortunate to be allowed to audit it despite only just having started my studies. In many ways the seminar proved decisive with regard to my own future: I became Professor Meier’s last research student, completing an M.A. thesis under his supervision in 2000; the seminar also gave me the opportunity to think, for the first time, about what the responses from Delphi can tell the student of ancient history.

A few years later, I returned to Delphi and its prophecies for my doctoral research. I had just moved to Cambridge where I pursued my PhD under Professor Robin Osborne in the Department of Classics at the University of Cambridge. My PhD thesis (‘Futures’ Past: The Delphic Oracles between History, Literature, and Religion’) investigated the role of oracle stories in ancient Greek thought and literature from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period from a comparative perspective. Even though writing (and thinking) in another language at first proved quite challenging, my research benefited greatly from the intellectual environment at Cambridge and the broadening of perspectives that the opportunity of living and studying in another country provides.

Since its submission, the thesis has undergone fundamental changes. In particular, the overall framework of the book and the way in which it fitted into the field more broadly needed further thinking. In the meantime I have made predictions myself (e.g. regarding future research in the field); I have also myself received numerous prophecies, words of encouragement

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and other inspiration from my family, friends and other wise advisors, above all from Robin Osborne, Peter Garnsey, Mary Beard and Hugh Bowden. Before finding the time and patience to revisit the book, I wrote another one (*Rethinking Greek Religion*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2012), started a family and moved continents three times to take up academic appointments at the universities of Chicago and Sydney and, most recently, a one-semester research fellowship at the Max Weber Kolleg of Advanced Studies at the University of Erfurt.

The book in its current and final form contains only one chapter (as well as the appendix) that was part of the original thesis. A differently framed version of this chapter (3) was published as an article and I thank the editors of *Ancient Narrative* to allow me to reprint some of the material. A differently framed version of chapter 6 appeared in *Rethinking Greek Religion* and in *Classical Philology*. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 are new. All chapters have been updated and reflect my thinking about the nature of oracular prophecy as it has evolved over the last few years.

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ABBREVIATIONS

General

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>ap.</i> | <i>apud</i> ('in the writings of') |
| app. | appendix |
| <i>c.</i> | <i>circa</i> |
| cat. | catalogue |
| cent. | century |
| <i>cf.</i> | <i>confer</i> ('compare', 'consult') |
| ch./chs. | chapter/chapters |
| diss. | dissertation |
| ed./eds. | editor/editors |
| edn. | edition |
| fig. | figure |
| fr./frr. | fragment/fragments |
| f., ff. | and following |
| <i>ibid.</i> | <i>ibidem</i> ('in the same work') |
| n./nn. | note/notes |
| no./nos. | number/numbers |
| pl. | plate |
| repr. | reprinted |
| suppl. | supplement |
| <i>s. v.</i> | <i>sub verbo</i> ('under the word') |
| vol./vols. | volume/volumes |

Authors and Works

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>ANRW</i> | <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (1972–). |
| <i>FGrH</i> | Jacoby, F. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (1923–). |

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>IDélos</i> | Dürrenbach, F. (ed.). <i>Inscriptions de Délos</i> (1923–37). |
| <i>IG</i> | <i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (1873–). |
| <i>OCT</i> | <i>Oxford Classical Texts</i> |
| <i>RE</i> | Pauly, A. and G. Wissowa. <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (1893–1978). |
| <i>SEG</i> | <i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> (1923–). |
| <i>ThesCRA</i> | <i>Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum</i> (2004–12). |

Journal Abbreviations

| | |
|------------------|--|
| <i>A&A</i> | <i>Antike und Abendland</i> |
| <i>AC</i> | <i>L'Antiquité classique</i> |
| <i>AHB</i> | <i>Ancient History Bulletin</i> |
| <i>AJA</i> | <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> |
| <i>AJAH</i> | <i>American Journal of Ancient History</i> |
| <i>AJPh</i> | <i>American Journal of Philology</i> |
| <i>AncSoc</i> | <i>Ancient Society</i> |
| <i>AW</i> | <i>Antike Welt</i> |
| <i>BCH</i> | <i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i> |
| <i>BICS</i> | <i>Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies</i> |
| <i>CA</i> | <i>Classical Antiquity</i> |
| <i>CB</i> | <i>Classical Bulletin</i> |
| <i>CJ</i> | <i>Classical Journal</i> |
| <i>ClassStud</i> | <i>Classical Studies</i> |
| <i>CPh</i> | <i>Classical Philology</i> |
| <i>CQ</i> | <i>Classical Quarterly</i> |
| <i>EASTM</i> | <i>East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine</i> |
| <i>GB</i> | <i>Grazer Beiträge</i> |
| <i>G&R</i> | <i>Greece and Rome</i> |
| <i>GRBS</i> | <i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i> |
| <i>HSPH</i> | <i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i> |
| <i>H&T</i> | <i>History and Theory</i> |
| <i>HThR</i> | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i> |

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>ICS</i> | <i>Illinois Classical Studies</i> |
| <i>JASO</i> | <i>Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford</i> |
| <i>JDAI</i> | <i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts</i> |
| <i>JHPh</i> | <i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i> |
| <i>JHS</i> | <i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> |
| <i>LCM</i> | <i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i> |
| <i>LIMC</i> | <i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zurich, 1981–99) |
| <i>OSAPh</i> | <i>Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy</i> |
| <i>PAA</i> | <i>Πρακτικά τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν</i> |
| <i>PCPhS</i> | <i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i> |
| <i>P&P</i> | <i>Past and Present</i> |
| <i>PhilosQ</i> | <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> |
| <i>QUCC</i> | <i>Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica</i> |
| <i>RhM</i> | <i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i> |
| <i>SEJG</i> | <i>Sacris erudiri</i> |
| <i>SemRom</i> | <i>Seminari romani di cultura greca</i> |
| <i>SJPh</i> | <i>Southern Journal of Philosophy</i> |
| <i>SMSR</i> | <i>Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni</i> |
| <i>SO</i> | <i>Symbolae Osloenses</i> |
| <i>TAPhA</i> | <i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i> |
| <i>WJA</i> | <i>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</i> |
| <i>YCIS</i> | <i>Yale Classical Studies</i> |
| <i>ZPE</i> | <i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> |