
The Devil's Tabernacle

THE PAGAN ORACLES IN EARLY MODERN THOUGHT

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Delos ubi nunc, Phoebæ, tua est, ubi Delphica Pytho?

Tibullus, *Elegies* II.3, l. 27

WITH THE REVIVAL OF PAGAN antiquity came a revival of interest in its religions. The humanist movement, in full swing at the outset of the sixteenth century, put itself to setting out and interpreting the classical and patristic sources on the many aspects of these religions, among which the oracles of ancient Greece held a prominent place. By this process the oracles became an object of historical knowledge: in context, individual sources could contribute to the rounded picture of an institution with its own cultural contours.

With the reading of the Church Fathers, however, the pagan oracles could also be incorporated into the narrative of Christianity, a narrative in which they stood as symbolic antagonists. Two things above all marked out the oracles to the humanist scholar. First, as was obvious from Cicero and the Greek historians, their answers had been ambiguous and deceitful. ‘Among the ancients’, one writer noted, ‘nothing was more trite than the ambiguity of the oracles’.¹ It was not for nothing that Apollo had been called ‘Loxias’, the crooked one. To a mind impressed with the virtue of clarity in language, this was a grave fault, and stood in diametric contrast to the perspicuity of Christian prophecy. Since the nineteenth century, the famous riddling oracles have been largely rejected as literary or mythical, in favour of more prosaic instances. Before this, only a few had looked past the traditional examples. Sir Thomas Browne, carefully examining a range of oracles from Herodotus, acknowledged the variety of Delphic utterance:

¹ Claude Guilletmet Berigard, *Circulus Pisanus, De veteri et Peripatetica philosophia in priores libros Phys[icorum] Arist[otelis]* (Oldenburg, 1643), p. 133: ‘De ambagibus autem oraculorum nihil magis tritum est apud antiquos.’ See also n. 52 below.

Sometimes with that obscurity as argued a fearful prophecy; sometimes so plainly as might confirm a spirit of difficulty; sometimes morally, deterring from vice and villany; another time *vitiously*, and in the spirit of bloud and cruelty.²

For most, however, oracular ambiguity was assumed. The second fact about the oracles, of still greater significance, was their *cessation*—an idea spanning pagan as well as Christian literature of antiquity. The humanists knew, of course, that the cessation of the oracles had occurred with the miraculous dawn of their own faith. The false, obscure, and immoral had given way to the true. It was an excellent image for the poet, popular well into the seventeenth century, and again among the Romantics of a later age. Painters had long depicted the Nativity in the ruins of a pagan temple, but verse, an oral medium, favoured the silencing of the Pythia, herself a poet—even the inventor of poetry.³ Students of English literature best know the motif from Milton:

The Oracles are dumm,
No voice or hideous humm
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.⁴

It was already present, however, in a snatch of lines from Joannes Baptista Mantuanus:

The gods, who, deprived of majesty,
Now yielded their altars to our own rites,
And, bearing Christ's yoke on their unwilling necks,
No longer gave oracles openly.⁵

²Thomas Browne, 'Of the Answers of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphos to Croesus King Of Lydia', *Miscellany Tracts* (1684), in *Works*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 4 vols. (London, 1928), IV, p. 119.

³Pausanias, *Periegesis* V.7; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* VII.205.

⁴John Milton, *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* XIX, ll. 173–175. Milton's ode has been the occasion for much scholarly source hunting on this subject; see, primarily, Albert S. Cook, 'Notes on Milton's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity', *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 15 (1909), 307–368, at p. 337; C. A. Patrides, 'The Cessation of the Oracles: The History of a Legend', *Modern Language Review*, 60 (1965), 500–507; and Blossom Feinstein, 'On the Hymns of John Milton and Gian Francesco Pico', *Comparative Literature* 20 (1968), 245–253.

⁵Joannes Baptista Mantuanus, *Secunda Parthenice* (Bologna, 1489), sig. A2r–v (ll. 21–24):

. . . Deos: qui maiestate relicta
Iam sua cedebant nostris altaria sacris
Invitaque iugum christi cervice ferentes
Nulla dabant responsa palam. . . .

Beyond these two points—deceptive ambiguity and cessation—lay specialist knowledge and theology. As the full richness of ancient sources, and especially the Greek, came into view, the oracles could be situated with more precision in developing genres of learned endeavour: history, religious ethnography, demonology, scholastic philosophy, and so on. Scholars could begin to debate exactly how the oracles had worked, or *if* they had worked at all. But for this to occur, the sources had to be identified, edited, translated, published. This chapter deals with those sources, and with their transmission from antiquity to early modern thought; the foundations will thus be laid for the more sophisticated discussions of the next two hundred years.

If an early modern reader wanted to know about the pagan oracles, he could pick up a book like Conrad Gesner's enormous encyclopaedia of commonplaces, the *Pandectae*, and rummage around for its section on that topic.⁶ There the sources on the oracles were laid out neatly, and the reader was directed in turn to the earlier miscellanies of the Italian humanists, especially those of Alessandro Alessandri and Caelius Rhodiginus.⁷ With these the range of available material had become standard, and they continued to be cited until the eighteenth century.

In conversation, Alessandro and Rhodiginus would have disagreed about little relating to Delphi and the other oracles, but in print they presented different aspects of the subject. Alessandro was more interested in pagan lore, neutral with respect to Christianity, while Rhodiginus included patristic material and drew parallels with the religious phenomena of his day. In each case, the debts are not always clear, and mediaeval tradition is occasionally substituted for reliable classical data, which itself was often already commonplace in antiquity. Thus, when Alessandro describes Delphi as *totius orbis umbilicus*, he could have had

⁶Conrad Gesner, *Pandectarum sive partitionum universalium libri XXI* (Tiguri, 1548), fols. 258vb–259rb (XV.11), 'de oraculis'. A similar function would be performed by Matthias Zimmermann, *Florilegium philologico-historicum*, 2 vols. (Meissen, 1687–89), II, p. 584, and Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca*, 14 vols. (Hamburg, 1708–28), I, pp. 108–110 (I.17.4). Other works of a commonplace nature include Jules César Boulenger, 'De oraculis et vatibus', in his *Opusculorum systema*, 2 vols. (Lyon, 1621), I, pp. 261–298, an array of ancient quotations on the subject, and Theodor Zwinger, *Theatrum vitae humanae* (Basel, 1565), pp. 147–152, listing oracular responses, arranged according to clarity.

⁷Alessandro Alessandri, *Genialium dierum libri sex*, 2 vols. (1522: Basel, 1542), II, VI.2. Ludovicus Caelius Rhodiginus, *Lectionum antiquarum libri XXX* (Basel, 1542), in which the chapters on oracles—II.12 and VIII.16—have been slightly expanded from their counterparts in his *Lectionum antiquarum libri XVI* (Basel, 1517). The revised edition was complete by the author's death in 1525. On Rhodiginus and the genesis of his *Lectiones*, see Michela Marangoni, *L'Armonia del sapere: I Lectionum Antiquarum Libri di Celio Rodigino* (Venice, 1997), especially pp. 6–13.

it from anywhere, while his claims that Parnassus was in Boeotia, and that its two peaks were dedicated to Dionysius and Apollo, are incorrect and suppositious respectively.⁸ His sources, however, must have included Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Pausanias, Plutarch, and Justinus.⁹ Rhodiginus drew openly on Plutarch, Cicero, and Diodorus Siculus, but his key source, Eusebius, is unnamed.

Both compilers chose a moment to break off from paraphrasing their pagan sources and sound instead a note of Christian censure. Of Delphi, Alessandro comments:

When wicked religion, by which men's own vanity ruined them, had been instilled, important men, eminent in dignity, frequently came here for counsel from all over the world, and these oracles were held to be true and by far the most famous of all.¹⁰

Alessandro's reader would have thought nothing of his remark about *prava religio*—it was obvious. Obvious too was Rhodiginus's opinion of Delphi that

the oracle was conducted there by the vain superstition and ignorance of men, and much more by the cunning of unclean spirits.¹¹

From the beginning, Christians had thought of pagan religion as an evil perpetrated both by supernatural spirits or demons, and by human credulity and immorality. Delphi was no different. The problem for Rhodiginus's early modern readers came in another passage:

⁸Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex*, II, p. 398: 'Erat autem Parnassus Phocidis mons in Boeotia, in duos divisus colles, Thitorea et Hyampeum, quorum alter Libero, Apollini alter dicati fuere.' Alessandro may have found this lore in Boccaccio's *De montibus*, sv. 'Parnasus'. The attribution is not found in ancient Greek sources and may have its origin in Servius's conflation (at *Aeneid* X.163) of Parnassus with the mountains of Helicon and Cithaeron, sacred to Apollo and Dionysus. Isidore, *Origines* XIV.8.11, followed Servius. The names *Thitorea* and *Hyampeum*, finally, are from Herodotus, *Histories* VIII.32 and VIII.39.

⁹The last finds a verbal echo in Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex* II, p. 398: 'hiatus, ex quo ventus et acer spiritus manans, mentes vatium in vecordiam vertit', emphasis mine. See Justinus, *Historiae Philippicae* XXIV.6.8.

¹⁰Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex* II, p. 401: 'Huc ex omni orbe prava religione incussa, qua se hominum vanitas confundebat, viri principali dignitate insignes, frequentes consultum ibant, eaque ex omnibus vera et longe clarissima oracula habita sunt.'

¹¹Rhodiginus, *Lectionum antiquarum libri XXX*, p. 304 (VIII.16): 'Oraculum superstitione vana, et hominum inscitia, multoque amplius immundorum vafriicii spirituum illuc vectum est'.

I seem to have discovered, by continual reading, that [the oracles] were not established and propagated by gods or demons, but founded from the start by crafty profiteers.¹²

When later scholars came to blows over whether the oracles had been the work of demons or only of cunning priests, this passage proved contentious. Both sides understood Rhodiginus to have espoused the latter idea, although both acknowledged his ambiguity—an oracular fault.¹³ This indicates the dangers of humanist practice, heaping up sources without clear arrangement. Rhodiginus in this passage was paraphrasing Eusebius, who in turn was quoting a Cynic named Oenomaus. The interaction between the Church Father and the pagan, intrinsically unstable as an analysis of the oracles, would resonate through the early modern discourse on that subject, as we shall see. The distinction between human and demonic cunning was not so apparent to Rhodiginus or his contemporaries as it would be to his later readers. The principal fact for him, as for Alessandro, was that the oracles were part and parcel of a false religion. Both read the pagan sources through Christian lenses more than a thousand years old. We may now examine how those lenses came to be fashioned—that is, how the oracles were established as a major battleground between the old and new religions competing in antiquity.



To early modern Christians, the authority of Apollo was worth nothing.¹⁴ But in ancient Greece, Apollo, via his oracular mouthpiece at Delphi, was the very highest authority, at least in theory, and his arbitration was accepted by kings, generals, and colonists in the most important matters of state. As the traveller Richard Chandler later put it,

The influence of [Delphi's] god has controlled the councils of states, directed the course of armies, and decided the fate of kingdoms. The antient history of Greece is full of his energy, and an early register of his authority.¹⁵

¹²Rhodiginus, *Lectioinum antiquarum libri XXX*, p. 48 (II.12): 'Videor lectione iugi comperisse [sc. oracula], non ab diis, non ab daemonibus instituta, vel propagata, sed ab vaftris quibusdam, et quaestuariis initio inchoata.'

¹³Georg Moebius, *Tractatus philologico-theologicus de oraculorum ethnicorum origine, propagatione et duratione* (Leipzig, 1657), pp. 14, 28, 31; Antonie van Dale, *De oraculis ethnicorum dissertationes duae* (Amsterdam, 1683), p. 224.

¹⁴Marc-Antoine Muret, *Orationes* (Venice, 1575), p. 95: 'apud nos, qui vera religione imbuti sumus, nihil Apollinis valere debet auctoritas'.

¹⁵Richard Chandler, *Travels in Greece: Or an Account of a Tour Made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti* (Oxford, [1776]), pp. 260–261.

This authority was embodied in the adages Erasmus collected from Athenaeus and Theocritus.¹⁶ It was also reflected in the pagan histories; neither Livy nor Herodotus, for instance, shows any doubt that Delphi was a genuine institution of Apollo. This is not to say that it could not be corrupted at a human level, as we learn from occasional stories.¹⁷ The oracle itself, however, was certainly divine. One of the best-known stories in Herodotus, that of Croesus, is representative. According to the tale, Croesus, the king of Lydia, sent out messengers to all the famous oracles in Greece and Africa, instructing each to wait exactly one hundred days before asking the god what Croesus was then doing. The words brought back from Delphi proclaimed that the king was boiling a lamb and a tortoise in a bronze cauldron—the improbable but correct answer. Croesus did reverence to Apollo and plied Delphi with costly gifts. Subsequently, when Croesus wanted to know the outcome of his projected war against Persia, he inquired of the oracle and was told that if he crossed the river Halys, demarcating their borders, a great empire would fall. Croesus crossed, and a great empire did fall. It was his own.¹⁸

Various legends of the oracle's origin have been handed down,¹⁹ but the account in Diodorus Siculus has been the most influential—it is repeated by Plutarch and Pausanias, and included by Rhodiginus in his *Lectiones*. Diodorus tells us that a herd of goats stumbled upon a vaporous chasm

¹⁶ Erasmus, *Adagia* I.vii.90 ('Ex tripode'), IV.x.80 ('Oracula loqui').

¹⁷ See, e.g., Herodotus, *Histories* V.63, on the Alcmaeonides, or VI.66, on Cleomenes and Perialla, on whom see also Pausanias, *Periegesis* III.4.3–4. Plutarch, *Malice of Herodotus*, 23, objects to the historian's suggestion of imposture at Delphi.

¹⁸ Herodotus, *Histories* I.46–52; in the catalogue of H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1956), II, the oracles are nos. 52 and 53, respectively. The latter, used by many later writers as evidence that the oracles were demonic or fraudulent, entails no such conclusion for Herodotus. As William Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 120–121, observes, 'it was generally not until later days that [the ambiguity of oracles] was regarded with reproach. Usually it was defended as a necessary condition of a god's utterance, and far from being a cloak for deceit was believed to be a shelter for unswerving truth.' Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407a39–b2 (III.5), cites the Halys oracle as an example of the deceitful ambiguity (*amphibolon*) a good orator should avoid; it was evidently a commonplace and would be picked up, via Chrysippus, in Cicero, on which see n. 52 below. Lucian, *Jupiter Confutatus* 13–14, has Zeus suggest that Apollo made the Halys oracle deliberately ambiguous as a punishment for being tested by Croesus.

¹⁹ The three principal myths can be found in *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, ll. 277–374; Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, ll. 1–11; and Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ll. 1235–1282. On these three, see Parke and Wormell, *Delphic Oracle*, I, pp. 3–13. Later versions are in Apollodorus, *Library* I.4.1; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 140; Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 414b; Aelian, *Varia historia* III.1; and Pausanias, *Periegesis* X.5.5–7, derivative of Aeschylus and Diodorus. See also Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae* 16, on which see Fontenrose, *Python*, p. 86. Pausanias, *Periegesis* X.5.9–13, describes the five successive temples of Delphi.

and began leaping and braying abnormally; when the herdsmen investigated, they grew frenzied and foretold future events. The spot was soon deemed divine, but many in their frenzy fell into the chasm, so the locals decided to establish a single priestess there and mounted her, for health and safety reasons, on a tripod fixed over the chasm's mouth.²⁰

That the priestess's inspiration came from the earth, and was therefore rooted to a particular place, distinguished her from the roaming Sibyls; as Cicero noted succinctly, 'the Pythia of Delphi was stirred by a power of the earth, the Sibyl by a power in her nature'.²¹ The specific idea of exhalations at Delphi would be developed in the next century by Strabo, whose succinct description of the oracle was much cited in early modernity:

They say that the seat of the oracle is a cave that is hollowed out deep down in the earth, with a rather narrow mouth, from which arises breath that inspires a divine frenzy; and that over the mouth is placed a high tripod, mounting which the Pythian priestess receives the breath and then utters oracles in both verse and prose, though the latter too are put into verse by poets who are in the service of the temple.²²

Pliny the Elder offered a similar account, ascribing the prophetic vapours to a *numen* inherent in nature and bursting from the earth—an immanent divinity.²³ Iamblichus, later, wrote of a fiery divine spirit possessing the Pythia from below.²⁴ The Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, finally, applied

²⁰Diodorus Siculus, *Library* XVI.26. Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 414b, specifies that the first goatherd to discover the phenomenon was named Coretas.

²¹Cicero, *De divinatione* I.36.79: 'terrae vis Pythiam Delphis incitabat, naturae Sybyllam'. Auguste Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1879–82), II, pp. 231–233, argues that the rootedness of the oracles was stipulated in response to the belief in a universal distribution of mantic power.

²²Strabo, *Geography*, trans. H. L. Jones, 8 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1927), IV, pp. 352–353 (IX.3.5):

Φασί δ' εἶναι τὸ μαντεῖον ἄντρον κοῖλον κατὰ βάθους, οὐ μάλα εὐρύστομον, ἀναφέρεσθαι δ' ἐξ αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα ἐνθουσιαστικόν, ὑπερκεῖσθαι δὲ τοῦ στομίου τρίποδα ὑψηλόν, ἐφ' ὃν τὴν Πυθίαν ἀναβαίνουσαν δεχομένην τὸ πνεῦμα, ἀποθεσπίζειν ἔμμετρά τε καὶ ἄμετρα· ἐντένειν δὲ καὶ ταῦτα εἰς μέτρον ποιητάς τινας ὑπουργούντας τῷ ἱερῷ.

²³Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* II.208, and see II.232, on the oracle of Colophon. On Pliny and nature, see Jean Céard, *La nature et les prodiges: L'Insolite au XVIe siècle, en France* (Geneva, 1977), p. 18.

²⁴Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* II.7.11, and see Crystal Addey, 'Consulting the Oracle: The Mantic Art and Its Causation in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*', in *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Times*, ed. John Finamore and Robert Berchman (New Orleans, 2007), 73–87.

Peripatetic exhalation theory to the oracles of Delphi and Lebadeia.²⁵ For Diodorus, Strabo, and *De mundo* the vapours caused a ‘frenzy’ (*enthousiasmos*, *pneuma enthousiastikon*), while Pliny describes oracular diviners as *temulenti*, ‘drunk’. These associations—divination, madness, intoxication—were old. Plato, in the *Phaedrus* (244a–b), had praised oracular prophecy both as a ‘madness’ (*mania*) and as ‘a divine gift’ (*theia dosis*). Another Pseudo-Aristotelian work of uncertain date, the *Problemata*, in a passage much discussed in the Renaissance, treats divination as a melancholic effect: an overheating of black bile in the body disrupts the intelligence and causes the sicknesses that make us ‘mad or inspired’ (*manikoi heu enthousiastikoi*), just like the Sibyls and diviners (*Bakides*), whose condition derives from a natural temperament.²⁶

All of these passages constitute naturalistic rationalisations of the oracle.²⁷ Other devices were later forthcoming: the idea, for instance, that the Pythia’s divinatory power was contained in the laurel, sacred to Apollo, which she chewed before consultation.²⁸ By these means, philosophers sought to explain the oracle’s efficacy and traditional authority. Pliny associated oracles with age, wisdom, and tradition.²⁹ Strabo’s approach was more complex. His description of Delphi is prefaced with the words ‘They say’, indicating its traditional nature, but he was keenly aware of the problem of reliable testimony, and *especially* in relation to the oracle. Ephorus, acknowledged as his principal source, is found to be untrustworthy despite his own claims:

[A]fter censuring those who love to insert myths in the text of their histories, and after praising the truth, [Ephorus] adds to his account of this oracle a kind of solemn promise, saying that he regards the truth as best in all cases, but particularly on this subject; for it is absurd, he says, if we always follow such a method in dealing with every other

²⁵ Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo* 395b; on exhalations, see Aristotle, *Meteorologica* I.3.

²⁶ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata physica*, 954a (no. XXX.1). On this *problema*, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (London, 1964), pp. 29–41, where it is attributed, un influentially, to Theophrastus.

²⁷ On the vapour theory as a late rationalisation, see Walter Burkert, *Homo necans: Interpretationen alt-griechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Berlin, 1972), p. 139; Parke and Wormell, *Delphic Oracle*, I, p. 20.

²⁸ The manucation of laurels at Delphi is implied by Oenomaus, *apud* Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* V.28; see Parke and Wormell, *Delphic Oracle*, I, p. 2. The Delphic laurel later excited some peculiar theories about the operation of the oracle—notably, that the tripod itself was a species of laurel, or in some way fashioned from it. See Lactantius Placidus, *Interpretatio in Thebaidos* I.509; Giovanni Boccaccio, *De genealogia deorum* II.9; and Carolus Paschalius, *Coronae* (Paris, 1610), pp. 555–559 (VIII.13).

²⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XVIII.25.

subject, and yet, when speaking of the oracle which the most truthful of all, go on to use the accounts that are so untrustworthy and false.³⁰

But as Strabo observes, Ephorus pours out every old wives' tale on the oracle: he has confounded myth and history in his account. To use an early modern word, he is insufficiently *critical*. The oracle, for Strabo a model of truth and authority, deserves better.

At the same time, the image of the oracle became fixed in literature, above all by Vergil and Lucan. Well before they graduated to philosophical sources, Renaissance schoolboys would have had the Roman poets' depiction of oracular prophecy burned into their memories. Vergil never describes the Pythia but transfers her attributes instead to the Delian oracle, and to the Cumaean Sibyl, in the third and sixth books of the *Aeneid*: here we see laurel and tripod, frenzy and possession, not naturalised into vapours, but given to the divinity himself.³¹

One of the most important beliefs about the oracles, at least from the first century BC, was that they were in the process of falling silent or degenerating in some way. The idea is first noted in Cicero, and would feature as a trope of Roman poetry, before being discussed at length by Plutarch around AD 100. There was evidently a nostalgia, in the quiet order of the empire, for an age when the gods had spoken to men more clearly, or more beautifully.³² It was a natural mood: the Jews, another religious community then in submission, had mourned the loss of their own prophetic ability since the Second Temple period.³³

³⁰Strabo, *Geography* IV, pp. 364–365 (IX.3.11):

ἐπιτιμήσας γοῦν τοῖς φιλομυθοῦσιν ἐν τῇ τῆς ἱστορίας γραφῇ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐπαινέσας προστίθησι τῷ περὶ τοῦ μαντείου τούτου λόγῳ σεμνήν τινα ὑπόσχεσιν, ὡς πανταχοῦ μὲν ἄριστον νομίζει τάληθές, μάλιστα δὲ κατὰ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ταύτην. ἀτοπον γάρ, εἰ περὶ μὲν τῶν ἄλλων τὸν τοιοῦτον αἰεὶ τρόπον διώκομεν, φησί, περὶ δὲ τοῦ μαντείου λέγοντες, ὃ πάντων ἐστὶν ἀψευδέστατον, τοῖς οὕτως ἀπίστοις καὶ ψευδέσι χρησόμεθα λόγοις.

On Ephorus and mythology, see G. L. Barber, *The Historian Ephorus* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 144–148, and on Strabo's critique, p. 147.

³¹Vergil, *Aeneid* III.90–92, VI.77–80, 98–102.

³²Lucan, *Pharsalia* V.112–113, 131–140; Statius, *Thebaid* VIII.196; Juvenal, *Satires* VI.554. Tibullus, *Elegies* II.3, ll. 21–27, quoted above, had imagined the silence of the oracles as a result of Apollo's consuming love for Alcestis. Cicero and Plutarch are discussed below. Strabo, *Geography* IX.3.8, notes that the Delphic temple, once rich, was now poor; this passage would commonly be cited alongside classical remarks on the decline of the oracle itself. See also Saul Levin, 'The Old Greek Oracles in Decline', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. W Haase, II.18.2 (Berlin and New York, 1989), 1599–1649, and Aude Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon: Pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive (IIe–VIe siècles)* (Leiden, 2005), p. 26.

³³The cessation of Jewish prophecy is controversial, but see Benjamin D. Sommer, 'Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996), 31–47.