

希羅多德 (Herodotus) 公元前5世紀的古希臘作家，他把旅行中的所聞所見，以及波斯阿契美尼德帝國 Achaemenid Empire 的歷史紀錄下來，著成《歷史》一書，成為西方文學史上第一部完整流傳下來的散文作品。

THE HISTORY, By Herodotus, VOL. I

46. So having formed this design he began forthwith to make **trial of the Oracles**, both those of the **Hellenes** and that in **Libya**, sending messengers some to one place and some to another, some to go to Delphi, others to Abai of the Phokians, and others to Dodona; and some were sent to the shrine of Amphiaraos and to that of Trophonios, others to Branchidai in the land of Miletos: these are the Oracles of the Hellenes to which **Croesus** sent messengers to seek divination; and others he sent to the shrine of Ammon in Libya to inquire there. Now he was sending the messengers abroad to the end that he might try the Oracles and find out what knowledge they had, so that if they should be found to have knowledge of the truth, he might send and ask them secondly whether he should attempt to march against the Persians.

47. 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."*

53. To the Lydians who were to carry these gifts to the temples Croesus gave charge that they should ask the Oracles this question also,—whether Croesus should march against the Persians, and if so, whether he should join with himself any army of men as his friends. And when the Lydians had arrived at the places to which they had been sent and had dedicated the votive offerings, they inquired of the Oracles and said: "Croesus, king of the Lydians and of other nations, considering that these are the only true Oracles among men, presents to you gifts such as your revelations deserve, and asks you again now whether he shall march against the Persians, and if so, whether he shall join with himself any army of men as allies."

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 should destroy a great empire*: and they counselled him to find out the most powerful of the Hellenes and join these with himself as friends.

54. So when the answers were brought back and Croesus heard them, he was delighted with the oracles, and expecting that he would certainly destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he sent again to Pytho, and presented to the men of Delphi, having ascertained the number of them, two

stater of gold for each man: and in return for this the Delphians gave to Croesus and to the Lydians precedence in consulting the Oracle and freedom from all payments, and the right to front seats at the games, with this privilege also for all time, that any one of them who wished should be allowed to become a citizen of Delphi.

55. And having made presents to the men of Delphi, Croesus consulted the Oracle the third time; for from the time when he learnt the truth of the Oracle, he made abundant use of it. And consulting the Oracle he inquired whether his monarchy would endure for a long time. And the Pythian prophetess answered him thus:

*"But when it cometh to pass that a mule of the Medes shall be monarch
Then by the pebbly Hermos, O Lydian delicate-footed,
Flee and stay not, and be not ashamed to be callèd a coward."*

斯特拉波 (Strabo)，公元前 1 世紀古希臘歷史學家、地理學家，生於現在土耳其的阿馬西亞（當時屬羅馬帝國），著有《地理學》17 卷。書中的評論透露了它是提庇留在位時期成書的。他遊遍各地，曾遊歷埃及、庫施等地方。

The Geography of Strabo, Volume I

10. Phænomena, similar to these, and such as take place throughout Sicily, are witnessed in the Lipari Islands, and especially in Lipari itself.—These islands are seven in number, the chief of which is Lipari, a colony of the Cnidians. It is nearest to Sicily after Thermessa. It was originally named Meligunis. It was possessed of a fleet, and for a considerable time repelled the incursions of the Tyrrheni. The islands now called Liparæan were subject to it, some call them the islands of Æolus. The citizens were so successful as to make frequent offerings of the spoils taken in war to the **temple of Apollo at Delphi**.

15. Next in order is Metapontium, at a distance of 140 stadia from the sea-port of Heraclea. It is said to be a settlement of the Pylians at the time of their return from Ilium under Nestor; their success in agriculture was so great, that it is said they **offered at Delphi a golden harvest**.

普魯塔克 (Plutarchus)，約公元 46 年—125 年於羅馬克勞狄一世 (Claudius I) 執政時期，生於希臘中部的喀羅尼亞 Chaeronea。並在德爾斐的阿波羅神廟擔任祭師，該職位為終身制，他是兩位之一。

Plutarch's Morals, On the Failure of Oracles (De Defectu Oraculorum)

1) There is an old story, friend Terentius Priscus, that heretofore **eagles** or swans, flying from the opposite bounds of the earth, met together where now stands the **temple of Apollo Pythius**, in the place now called the **Navel**; and that some while after, Epimenides the Phaestian, willing to satisfy his curiosity, enquired of the oracle of Apollo with regard to this story, but received such an answer as made him never a jot the wiser; upon which he said:

*"No navel is there of the earth or sea:
Tis known to Gods alone, if one there be."*

Thus fitly did the God chastise this bold enquirer into ancient traditions.

13) To which purpose Xenocrates, one of the familiar **friends of Plato**, was wont to allege the example of **triangles**, which agree very well with the subject; for that triangle which has *equal sides and equal angles* he compared unto the divine and immortal nature; and that which has all *three unequal*, to the human and mortal nature; and that which has *two equal and one unequal*, to the nature of Daemons, which is endued with the passions and perturbations of the mortal nature, and the force and power of the divine.

50)As for my part, I believe the **exhalation** itself which comes out of the ground is not always of the same kind, being at one time slack, and at another strong and vigorous;

51)And before she (**Pythia**) goes to the oracle, they are used by **certain marks to examine** whether she be fit or no, believing that the God certainly knows when her body is disposed and fit to receive, without endangering her person, this enthusiastical inspiration.

52)But these things, said I, I must advise you and myself often and seriously to consider of, they being liable to many disputes and objections, which our leisure will not suffer to particularize; and therefore we must **remit them**, together with the questions which Philippus proposes touching Apollo and the sun, **to another opportunity**.

保薩尼亞斯 (**Pausanias**) 生活在公元二世紀羅馬時代的希臘地理學家、旅行家，著有《希臘志》十卷，書中內容多為後世考古學發現所引證。

PAUSANIAS, DESCRIPTION OF GREECE, VOTIVE OFFERINGS AT DELPHI

[10.9.2] The athletes and competitors in music that the majority of mankind have neglected, are, I think, scarcely worthy of serious attention; and the **athletes** who have left a reputation behind them I have set forth in my account of Elis. There is **a statue** at Delphi of Phaylus of **Crotona**. He won no victory at Olympia, but his victories at Pytho were two in the pentathlum and one in the foot-race. He also fought at sea against the Persian, in a ship of his own, equipped by himself and manned by citizens of Crotona who were staying in Greece.

[10.9.11] The Athenians refuse to confess that their defeat at Aegospotami was fairly inflicted, maintaining that they were betrayed by Tydeus and Adeimantus, their generals, who had been bribed, they say, with money by Lysander. As a proof of this assertion they quote the following **oracle** of the Sibyl:—

*And then on the Athenians will be laid grievous troubles
By Zeus the high-thunderer, whose might is the greatest,
On the war-ships battle and fighting,
As they are destroyed by **treacherous tricks**, through the baseness of the captains.*

[10.10.1] X. On the base below the wooden horse is an inscription which says that the statues were dedicated from a **tithe of the spoils** taken in the engagement at **Marathon**.

THE SIBYLS, MYTHICAL HISTORY

[10.12.1] XII. There is a rock rising up above the ground. On it, say the Delphians, there **stood and chanted the oracles** a woman, by name Herophile and surnamed Sibyl. The

former Sibyl I find was as ancient as any; the Greeks say that she was a daughter of Zeus by Lamia, daughter of Poseidon, that she was the first woman to chant oracles, and that the name Sibyl was given her by the Libyans.

[10.12.3] These statements she 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. These are the verses:—

*I am by birth **half mortal, half divine**;
An immortal nymph was my mother, my father an eater of corn;
On my mother's side of Idaean birth, but my fatherland was red
Marpessus, sacred to the Mother, and the river Aidoneus.*

[10.14.5] The Greeks who fought against the king, besides dedicating at Olympia a bronze Zeus, **dedicated also an Apollo at Delphi**, from spoils taken in the naval actions at **Artemisium and Salamis**. There is also a story that **Themistocles** came to Delphi bringing with him for Apollo some of the Persian spoils. He asked whether he should dedicate them within the temple, but the **Pythian priestess** bade him carry them from the sanctuary altogether. The part of the oracle referring to this runs as follows:—

*The splendid beauty of the Persian's spoils
Set not within my temple. Despatch them home speedily.*

[10.14.6] Now I greatly marveled that it was from Themistocles alone that the priestess refused to accept Persian spoils. Some thought that the god would have rejected alike all offerings from **Persian spoils**, if like Themistocles the others had inquired of Apollo before making their dedication. Others said that the god knew that Themistocles would become a **suppliant of the Persian king**, and refused to take the gifts so that Themistocles might not by a dedication render the Persian's enmity unappeasable. The expedition of the barbarian against Greece we find foretold in the oracles of Bacis, and Euclus wrote his verses about it at an even earlier date.

[10.12.10] Phaennis, daughter of a king of the Chaonians, and the Peleiae (Doves) at **Dodona** also gave oracles under the inspiration of a god, but they were not called by men Sibyls. To learn the date of Phaennis and to read her oracles . . . for Phaennis was born when Antiochus was establishing his kingship immediately after the capture of Demetrius. The Peleiaes are said to have been born still earlier than Phe-monoe, and to have been the first women to chant these verses:—

*Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be; O mighty Zeus.
Earth sends up the harvest, therefore sing the praise of earth as Mother.*

[10.12.11] It is said that the men who uttered oracles were Euclus of Cyprus, the Athenians Musaeus, son of Antiophemus, and Lycus, son of Pandion, and also Bacis, a Boeotian who was possessed by nymphs. I have read the oracles of all these except those of Lycus.

These are the women and men who, down to the present day, are said to have been the **mouthpiece by which a god prophesied**. But time is long, and perhaps similar things may occur again.

8th century BC

Lycurgus, the semi-legendary **Spartan lawgiver**:

"There are two roads, most distant from each other: the one leading to the honorable house of freedom, the other the house of slavery, which mortals must shun. It is possible to travel the one through manliness and lovely accord; so lead your people to this path. The other they reach through hateful strife and cowardly destruction; so shun it most of all."

-As a result Lycurgus built a constitution for the Spartans that combined features of a monarchy with two kings, of a land-owning aristocracy and a democracy.

594 BC

Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, in framing his famous constitutional reforms for Athens, sought the advice of the oracle who told him:

"Seat yourself now amidships, for you are the pilot of Athens. Grasp the helm fast in your hands; you have many allies in your city."

- As a result Solon refused the opportunity to become a revolutionary tyrant, and created a constitution for which he, and Athens, were justly honoured.

560 BC,

Croesus of Lydia, the trial of oracles

480 BC

When **Xerxes**, the son of Darius the Great of Persia, returned to finish the job of conquering the Greeks in which his father had failed, the **Athenians** consulted the oracle. They were told:

"Now your statues are standing and pouring sweat. They shiver with dread. The black blood drips from the highest rooftops. They have seen the necessity of evil. Get out, get out of my sanctum and drown your spirits in woe."

When persuaded to seek advice a second time, the oracle gave a way for the Athenians to **escape** their doom. When Athena approached her father to help her city, Zeus responded that he would grant that

"a wall of wood alone shall be uncaptured, a boon to you and your children."

The oracle again advised the Athenians to flee:

*"Await not in quiet the coming of the horses, the marching feet, the armed host upon the land. Slip away. Turn your back. You will meet in battle anyway. O holy **Salamis**, you will be the death of many a woman's son between the seedtime and the harvest of the grain."*

440 BC

The Oracle is said to have said that there was no one wiser than **Socrates**, to which Socrates said that either all were equally ignorant, or that he was wiser in that he alone was aware of his own ignorance ("what I do not know I do not think I know").

One version of the claim stated :

*"Sophocles is wise, Euripedes is wiser, but of all men **Socrates** is wisest"*

431 BC

At the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War the **Spartans** send a delegation to Delphi inquire whether it would be wise to go to war against Athens. According to Thucydides,

*"It is said that the god replied that if they fought with all their might, victory would be theirs, and that he himself would **be on their side**, whether they invoked him or not."*

359 BC

Philip II of Macedon consulted the Oracle and was told:

"With silver spears you may conquer the world"

The king then sought to control the **silver mines** in the neighbouring Thracian and Illyrian kingdom, and using them to bribe his way to early victories, playing one Greek state off against the others, and isolating his enemies by bribes to potential allies.

83 BC

Cicero, Pompey's ally, consulted the Oracle as to how he should find greatest fame and was told:

"Make your own nature, not the advice of others, your guide in life."

- Cicero cultivated his **oratory and his skills in the courts** in preserving Rome from the Catilinarian conspiracy, earning undying fame.

67 AD

In 67 AD, **Emperor Nero**, who was just 30 years old and had killed his own mother in 59 AD, when visiting the Oracle was told:

*"Your presence here outrages the god you seek. Go back, **matricide!** The **number 73** marks the hour of your downfall!"*

- He was angered and had the **Pythia burned alive**. Nero thought he would have a long reign and die at 73. Instead his reign came to a short end after a revolt by **Galba who was 73 years** of age at the time.

362 AD

On behalf of his **emperor Julian the Apostate**, Oribasius visited the Delphic oracle, now in a rather desolate state, offering his emperor's services to the temple and, in return, receiving one of the **last prophecies by the Delphic Pythia**:

*"Tell the emperor that my hall has fallen to the ground. Phoibos no longer has his house, nor his mantic bay, nor his prophetic spring; the water has **dried up.**"*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_oracular_statements_from_Delphi