

CULTS, CREEDS AND IDENTITIES
IN THE GREEK CITY
AFTER THE CLASSICAL AGE

edited by

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ORACLES AND CIVIC IDENTITY IN ROMAN ASIA MINOR*

Aude BUSINE

What was the impact of oracles on the post-Classical city? To what extent could and did mantic revelation contribute to the construction of civic identity? This article will examine the oracular cults in Roman Asia Minor in their relation to the *polis*, and focus on the role played by the key participants in oracular activity, that is to say the pilgrims as well as the priests.

THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL ORACLES?

Oracular activity in post-Classical Greece is known principally through the existence of the so-called ‘theological oracles’¹ like the divine revelation quoted by Lactantius, which was attributed to the Apollo of Klaros:²

Apollo is seen as divine, and especially as oracular, more than all other gods; when he spoke at Kolophon (where he went from Delphi because, I suppose, of the charm of Asia Minor), upon being asked who or what god really was, he replied in twenty-one verses. Here are the first three:

*‘He is self-born, untaught, unmothered, unaffordable,
unnameable by any word, dwelling in fire,
god thus, and we his messengers are a little fraction of him.’*

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1 Nock 1928; Robinson 1981; Lane Fox 1988, 201-208; Pricoco 1989; Busine 2005, 195-208.

2 Lact. *Diu. Inst.* 1.7.1 (trans. A. Bowen and P. Garnsey):

Apollo enim, quem praeter ceteros diuinum maximeque fatidicum existinant, Colophone respondens, quo Delphis credo migrauerat amoenitate Asiae ductus, quaerenti cuidam quis aut quis esset omnino deus, respondit uiginti et uno uersibus, quorum hoc principium est:

αὐτοφυής, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
οὔνομα μηδὲ λόγῳ, χωρούμενος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων,
τοῦτο θεός· μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.

From the second century AD onwards, similar oracular texts circulated in which Apollo gave answers to pilgrims about theological matters such as the identity of the supreme deity, the rank of the traditional gods, and their role in the divine hierarchy. These oracular questions and answers developed alongside contemporary ideas about the supreme deity: at the time, it was thought that humans could not tackle the truth about the divine world without intervention from the divine itself. This conception lay at the origin of ready-made collections, like the Chaldaean Oracles,³ which provided revelations about the divine. At the same time, people continued to visit the traditional oracular institutions with these new questions. In this context, Apollo was considered as Zeus' prophet, as he was in the Classical period. The traditional Apollo was thus entitled to play a new role of messenger between humanity and the god-father.⁴ One easily understands that Christian authors enthusiastically welcomed these revelations, which supported the idea that their God had inspired some pagan prophets in order to prepare the Gentiles for the coming of Christ.⁵

However, this peculiar feature of Apollo's oracles should not overshadow the fact that other traditional and 'polytheistic' oracles were still produced, especially in Roman Asia Minor.⁶ As in earlier periods, the production of oracles in the Roman period was linked to a civic institution, namely the oracular sanctuary, which was dependent on a city. The civic aspect of this cult has often been neglected by modern scholars. Traditionally, they have paid little attention to civic cults during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and have stressed the decline of both the civic life and Classical religion from the fourth century BC onwards: the post-Classical city, deprived of true autonomy, supposedly became an empty shell in which every feature of civic life had degenerated; and as a consequence traditional religion, which was closely linked to political life, would also have decayed. The alleged disuse or inefficiency of Classical cults presumably led people to turn to other religious expressions, such as elective and mystery cults, ruler cults and, finally, to Christianity.⁷

In recent decades however, specialists have repeatedly claimed that the Greek cities under Rome's control were not in decline; on the contrary, it has been shown that post-Classical *poleis* continued to function in ways similar to their functioning in the Archaic and Classical periods, and that,

3 Lewy 1956; Lane Fox 1988, 208-212; Athanassiadi 1999.

4 Veyne 1986; Busine 2005, 110-126; Belayche 2007, 176-179.

5 Busine 2005, 362-373.

6 Busine 2005, 89-100; Belayche 2007.

7 For an overview, see Harland 2006, 22-39.

as earlier, the civic cults played an important role in the social and political organization of the city.⁸

As regards the oracles, a common view has also supposed a decline of oracular practice in the post-Classical world.⁹ However, despite Plutarch's complaint about the worsening of the Delphic oracle,¹⁰ Greek oracular sanctuaries still displayed a vibrant activity during the first three centuries AD.¹¹ For this period, two Ionian shrines, Klaros and Didyma, each housing an oracular temple dedicated to Apollo, are of particular significance as regards both their importance at the time and the wealth of surviving evidence today.¹²

THE PILGRIMS AND THEIR CITY

We shall first examine how the arrival of pilgrims coming to the oracle to consult the deity could affect their city. Epigraphic and literary evidence shows that the way of questioning Apollo differed strikingly depending on the context of the oracular consultation. Indeed, as far as we know, visiting pilgrims harboured very different expectations depending on whether they interrogated the god in the context of public life or of their private life.¹³

In a civic context, Apollo was mainly consulted with a view to protecting citizens from natural disasters or from plague. Two oracular texts reproduced at the end of this paper will suffice here to illustrate the truth of this.

The first example (Appendix I) is an oracle given to the *polis* of Kaisareia Troketta, in Lydia, west of Sardis, by the Apollo of Klaros. The text, inscribed on the base of a statue, was published in 1889 by Karl Buresch and has been dated to the second century AD on paleographic grounds. The inscription tackled the raising of a statue of Apollo Soter following an oracle of Apollo from Klaros (Appendix I, l. 2-3 κατὰ χρησμὸν Κλαρί[ου] | Ἀπόλλωνος). On another block a twenty-eight verse oracular answer was engraved. According to the oracle, people from Troketta came to Klaros 'amazed' (Appendix I, v. 3) and in search of the truth (v. 4)

8 See Millar 1993; Beard et al. 1998, 339-342; Dignas 2002.

9 See Levin 1989.

10 See Plutarch *On the obsolescence of oracles; the oracles at Delphi no longer given in verse*.

11 Already noted by Latte 1939, col. 860.

12 See Parke 1985; Johnston 2008, 76-95.

13 For the issues of private consultation, see Busine 2005, 100-126.

because they were exposed to a ‘mighty calamity’ (v. 6), also called ‘inexorable plague (*loimos*)’ (v. 7), holding a ‘avenging sword’ (v. 8), which ‘leaps to earth’ (v. 6) ‘and makes the mortals perish’ (v. 11).

The second example (Appendix II) is an inscription found in Pergamon, which has also been identified as an oracle from Klaros: the identification has been made possible as the text mentions the initiation of two men named Claudius (l. 4-5: $\mu\upsilon\eta\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ ‘having been initiated and having entered’ (probably the adyton), using then a terminology that shows exact parallels with some inscriptions found at Klaros.¹⁴ Moreover, the Apollonian verses look like other oracles explicitly made in Klaros.¹⁵ In the introduction, the title ‘twice *neokoros*’ (l. 8) dates the inscription between Trajan and Caracalla.¹⁶ In the oracle, Apollo also refers to a ‘painful disease’ (Appendix II, v. 11) that affected the people of Pergamon and the god promises to remedy it if his prescriptions are fulfilled.

The pilgrims from Kaisareia Troketta and Pergamon thus expressed their intention to find a solution to tragic issues threatening their civic community. The threat, often expressed by the Greek word *loimos*, was considered as a form of divine revenge. Evidence shows that the pilgrims tried to appease Apollo with hymns and sacrifices (Appendix I, v. 22-24; Appendix II, v. 17-29).

This kind of oracular demand refers to Apollo’s attributes during the Archaic and Classical periods. In these cases, the god consulted was a traditional Apollo, a healer/poisoner as described in the *Iliad*, as well as a music lover.¹⁷ Other oracular questions asked in a civic context concerned cultic matters, such as the placing of a new altar, or the naming of a god.¹⁸ This classical *scenario* of oracular consultation was used as a reason to travel to the sanctuary and to ask the god. Besides the resolution of their problems, the official pilgrimage to the oracular shrine could also serve to integrate the citizens into their community.

We can learn more about these consequences if we consider a unique corpus of inscriptions. In Klaros, more than four hundred inscriptions were found recording the visits of pilgrims to the oracle, mostly during the second century AD.¹⁹ These texts were inscribed everywhere in the

14 Picard 1922a, 303-305; 1922b. For the association of oracular consultation with mysteries, see Graf 2002.

15 For example, *CIG* II 2012 = *I.Sestos* 11 (oracle from Callipolis). See Buresch 1889, 81-86; Busine 2005, 33-34.

16 Burrell 2004, 22-30.

17 Burkert 1977, 230-232; Belayche 2007, 185; Monbrun 2007.

18 Busine 2005, 94-98.

19 See Ferrary 2005.

sacred site, e.g. on walls, on steles, on columns, and even on the steps of the temple. They consist of lists of the delegations sent by various cities in order to consult the oracle on their behalf (Figure 1 shows the wide geographic distribution of the cities that consulted the oracle). After mentioning the Klarian personnel, a detailed composition of the team sent by the cities seeking to receive Apollo's sacred words is given and this reveals the composition of the clientele of the oracle of Klaros.

Suffice it to refer here, as an example, to an inscription recording the people coming from Herakleia under Salbake, in Karia, who dispatched an embassy to Klaros during the year 155/156 (Appendix III).²⁰ The inscription records first the *theopropos*, i.e. the citizen responsible for the delegation. As far as we know, the *theopropoi* held important positions in their city, such as a priesthood or magistracy.²¹ With the *theopropos* (Appendix III, l. 6) are eight young boys performing in choirs honouring the deity (ὕμνήσαντες τὸν θεὸν) (l. 6-12). The first of these boys, the 'priest of the children' (l. 8: ὁ ἱερεὺς τῶν παίδων), is the son of the *theopropos* and seems to have held a particularly important position. Other boys also seem to have belonged to the same family. In addition, some of the children who took part in choirs and sang hymns to Apollo were to appear as *theopropoi* or *choregoi* in later lists²². Visiting the oracle seems to have allowed citizens to reinforce their familial status so that father, sons, daughters and cousins were gathered for the occasion and would subsequently have enjoyed the prestige that stemmed from their involvement.

The young choristers, often identified by the term *hymnodoi* were in some cases split into two groups: *kouroi/korai*; *paides/parthenoi*.²³ It should be pointed that our example unusually names the boys by ἡῖθεοι, a poetic word which can also have a technical connotation, as shown by Aristoteles who designated young choristers chosen by the Athenian archons and sent to Delos with the word *theoroi*.²⁴ The term was most probably retrieved from the wording of the twenty-ninth verse of the Klarian oracle found at Pergamon (Appendix II, v. 25), conceivably in order to please the god.

20 Robert and Robert 1954, 210 no.146. For the date of the seventy-ninth prytany of Apollo, see Busine 2006, 300.

21 We have one attestation of two *theopropoi* at Didyma, a poet and a priest, who came from Rhodes to consult the oracle, I.Didyma 83 = SGOst I 1998, no.01/19/20, l. 9-11.

22 Robert 1954, 381 no.194; 382 no.196; 204 no.133; 205 no.135.

23 See Busine 2005, 73.

24 Arist. *Ath.* 56, 3.

Other local officials also accompanied the *theopropoi* and young choristers. In this case, one sculptor (*laotupos*) and two *choregoi*, coming for the sixteenth time, are listed (Appendix III, l. 12-13). Elsewhere we learn that numerous education specialists came with these children as well (*paidagogos, kathegetes, paidonomos, choregos, didaskalos, hymnodidaskalos, chorodidaskalos, ephebarchos*).²⁵ The participation of the youth in these processions thus reveals the significance of these rituals for the education of future citizens.

While these lists of people are of particular significance for our knowledge of the various delegates sent to consult Apollo's oracle on behalf of the city, they also tell us about the manner in which these *poleis* sought to be represented in Klaros. Coming to Klaros provided the cities with an opportunity to display on stone their honorific titles: Pergamon proudly displays that the city was the first to be *metropolis* of Asia and twice *neokoros* (Appendix II, l. 8-9).²⁶

In the same way, Apollo's words conferred on the cities a confirmation of their mythical origins and prestigious antiquity. For instance, Apollo's words recalled that the inhabitants of Kaisareia Troketta were 'honoured by Bromios and the mighty son of Kronos' (Appendix I, l. 2-3, v. 2). The laconic description of Troketta's past can be explained by the fact that the small Lydian city had no ancient Hellenic roots. In contrast, the Klarian god detailed at great length the local history of Pergamon (Appendix II, v. 1-9), an old Greek city which had a rich mythical tradition concerning its foundation by Telephos and its gods. These expressions of historical and mythological traditions can be seen as part of a general process of reformulation of traditional religion within the new historical context of the Roman Empire.²⁷ The display of Hellenistic culture was a way for elites to emphasize their involvement in the Roman Empire. In that context, some 'new Greeks' who came from less Hellenized regions used their pilgrimage to the oracle in order to claim their Greek identity.

Recent studies emphasize the fact that the operation of Greek sanctuaries during the Roman period does not seem to have been affected by changes in the central power,²⁸ although it should also be added that the traditional religious institutions were ascribed a new role in the Eastern Roman provinces, thanks to the particular attention paid to them by the

25 See Busine 2005, 76-79.

26 Cities competed with each other for such titles and privileges. See Robert 1977; Sartre 1997, 174-181; Burrell 2004; Heller 2006.

27 Lane Fox 1988, 74; Rogers 1991; Price 2005.

28 See Millar 1993; Beard et al. 1998, 339-342; Dignas 2002.

Roman authorities.²⁹ Prestigious Greek sites like Klaros and Didyma were places visited by Romans who donated money and granted privileges. It is worth mentioning that many statues of powerful Roman politicians, such as Cicero's brother, Pompey, and Octavian, were erected on the sacred way to Klaros.³⁰ In addition, numerous Romans, including some from colonies such as Corinth, Iconium or Pisidian Antioch,³¹ are recorded as pilgrims. Later, emperors also contributed to the glory of Klaros and Didyma by financing impressive buildings.³² It is also highly probable that the Klarian shrine hosted the imperial cult, and that the emperor's image was placed next to Apollo's inside the temple.³³

We can conclude that people consulted the oracles within the framework of post-classical civic life, and in so doing maintained civic traditions and institutions, resolving the various crises threatening their cities through the intervention of Apollo. The pilgrims reproduced ancestral rituals and this revival of 'authentic Greekness' in a religious environment can be understood within the wider phenomenon that was the Second Sophistic.³⁴

Recourse to the oracle allowed pilgrims to ingratiate themselves with their local communities and the referencing of traditional religion helped to give both authority and lustre to these practices which encouraged the continuity of the tradition through to future generations.³⁵ This may not have been exactly an 'invented tradition', but it was certainly a 'developed tradition', functioning to bind together communities, establish authorities, bring prestige to the oracles, and embed religious activities within the histories and world views of the participants and their communities. Furthermore, the Romans lend their authority to the great oracular centres of Asia Minor, which thus were a point of contact between Rome and the Greek world. Being seen at Klaros and Didyma was undoubtedly an important event for members of provincial elite, who could hope by the same occasion to promote both their homeland and their personal career.

29 See Salmeri 2005; Dignas 2005.

30 Ferrary 2000.

31 Colons from Corinth: Macridy 1912, 54-55 no.27; colons from Iconium: Macridy 1905 168 n.IV 2 and an unpublished text mentioned in Robert 1938, 149-150; colonies from Pisidian Antioch: Robert and Robert 1954, 216.

32 de la Genière 1993; 1998.

33 Price 1984, 254; Ferrary 2000.

34 See Swain 1996 and König 2009 for a similar revivalism in a literary sphere.

35 See Whitmarsh 2001; Chaniotis 2003.

THE PRIESTS AND THEIR CITY

We now turn to the impact of oracular activity on the civic life of those working in Klaros and Didyma, that is to say the religious officials. Indeed, oracular sanctuaries provided priests working in them with the opportunity to fill highly regarded posts which augmented the glory of the city. In those cities which sustained an oracular centre, religious officials enjoyed additional prestige because they played an important role not only in running the sanctuary but also in providing a link between the god and pilgrims, as interpreters of Apollo's message.

Oracular activity required temple staff specialized in receiving Apollo's inspiration and turning divine inspiration into intelligible texts. For this reason, oracular sanctuaries acquired specific kinds of priests, with clearly distinct functions. At Didyma, the main characters were Apollo's prophet, the *hydrophoros* or 'water-bearer', i.e. the priestess in the service of Artemis Pythie, and the *tamias* or treasurer.³⁶ These were appointed annually. Secondary religious officials working in the sanctuary are also attested: we learn from inscriptions that there were a *hypochrestes*, who may have been the prophet's assistant, a *paraphylax* as well as *grammateis* or secretaries, *neokoroi*, 'all those around the oracle' (οἱ περὶ τὸ μαντεῖον πάντες) and 'the residents of the sanctuary' (οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν τῷ ἱερῶι).³⁷

In Klaros, inscriptions of delegations generally begin with the mention of the prytany, which was the eponymous magistracy at Kolophon, followed by an account of the various Klarian officials. The records usually mention three functioning officials: the *hierous* or priest, the *thespiodos* and the prophet, together with one or two *grammateis* (Appendix III, l. 3-6). The post of priest was held for a long time, theoretically for life, while the functions of prophet and secretary seem to have been exercised for annual terms. As regards the *thespiodoi*, they appear to have been appointed for longer terms, very likely for life too.³⁸

As in other sanctuaries, members of Klaros' and Didyma's clergy had to take care of worship (e.g. sacrifices, banquets) and organize festivities.³⁹ In addition, oracular officials had to provide pilgrims with interpretation of the oracle.

Being a priest in Klaros and Didyma was an occupation for the elite: in Roman Didyma, it appears that most members of the clergy belonged to

36 Busine 2006, 281-285.

37 Busine 2006, 282.

38 Busine 2006, 285-292.

39 See Chaniotis 2003.

the Milesian elite. Prophets also often held important posts in Miletos (see below). The *hydrophoroi* were very often the daughters of a prophet.⁴⁰ Milesian families which produced generations of male and female temple officials might have been drawn from a traditional and closed group, in a system of hereditary succession. At least three Milesians are described as being prophets 'through their *genos*' (*dia genous*).⁴¹ Carrying out a religious office in Didyma provided the officials with an effective medium by which to display their titles and affiliation. They could also recall titles and benefactions of their relatives. All this clearly highlighted the existence of Milesian family networks linking together the Didymean religious officials.⁴²

In Klaros, it is hard to determine the origin of religious officials: in contrast to the abundance of names in Klarian inscriptions, epigraphic evidence for Roman Kolophon is extremely poor; therefore, we lack the means to connect the people known from the Klarian material with Kolophonian society. Following the example of Didymean officials, however one might suppose that many of those who are recorded as clergy members in Klaros were at least (more or less) prestigious citizens of Kolophon.

Interestingly, two *thespiodoi*, one of them a Roman citizen, claimed to belong to a very old and famous local dynasty with illustrious ancestors: Asklepidēs, son of Demophilos,⁴³ and his son Ti. Claudius Ardys proudly claimed descent from a branch of the Heraklids which included Ardys (τῶν ἀπὸ Ἄρδυος Ἡρακλειδῶν), a semi-mythological king of the illustrious Lydian dynasty before Gyges.⁴⁴ The same *thespiodoi* also referred to themselves by the obscure term '*patrogenides*'.⁴⁵ This asserted kinship, albeit historically unlikely, conforms with the practice of several Greek families during the Roman period who boasted of legendary ancestors in public records. This conspicuous claim of the *thespiodoi* reflects a desire

40 See van Bremen 1996, 90-95, 324-327.

41 *I.Didyma* 179, l. 11-14: τῶν διὰ τῶν γένους | προφητῶν Οὐλπιανῶν Ἥγη|σάνδρου καὶ Ἀνδρέα καὶ Αἰλι|ανοῦ Ποπλᾶ. See Robert 1960, 441-442; Robert 1968, 574; Busine 2006, 292-293.

42 Busine 2006, 293-294.

43 For Asklepidēs, see *OGIS* 530 = Macridy 1905, 170 no.V 4; Macridy 1905, 167 no. III 2; 168-170 no.IV 3; 165 no.II 2; no.II 4; Robert and Robert 1954, 212; Şahin 1987, no.20 = *SEG* 37, 1987, 966; Robert and Robert 1954, no.139; Macridy 1912, no.22 = Robert and Robert 1983, 32; Şahin 1987 no.8 = *SEG* 37, 1987, 964; Macridy 1905, 167-168 no.III 3; 168 no.IV 2.

44 For Ardys, see Şahin 1987, no.6 = *SEG* 37, 1987, 975; Robert and Robert 1954, no.196; no.27; Macridy 1912, no.28; *SEG* 15, 1958, 715; Macridy, 1912, no.6; Robert and Robert 1954, no.133; Macridy 1912, no.2; no.5; no.7; no.8; no.11; no.9; no.10; Robert and Robert 1954, no.135; no.30; Macridy 1912, no.3. On the king Ardys, see Herodotus 1.7; Nicolaos of Damas *FGrHist* 90 F 44, and Högemann 1996. The name Ardys is attested only once elsewhere in the epigraphic documentation, in Athens (*IG* II² 2065, 11; 3687, 10; 3742, 1)

45 Talamo 1973, 345 suggested a 'philo-Lydian' dynasty.

to display ancient local religious traditions alongside their Roman citizenship. In such ways, members of the elite perpetuated family networks that established civic memory.⁴⁶

Oracular priesthods were integrated into a political career. In their commemorative inscriptions, Didymean prophets recorded other offices, such as being the Milesian eponymous magistrate, the *stephanephoria*, and other prestigious offices such as the *gymnasiarchia*, the priesthood of the imperial cult, the *strategia*, or the *agonothesia*.⁴⁷ The prestigious office of prophet in Didyma appears to have been achieved only at the end of a political career. Nothing is known about the career of Klarian officials outside the sanctuary. Nevertheless, the inscriptions of delegations indicate a kind of internal hierarchy between the several priestly offices in Klaros. There is a difference between the positions of priest and *thespiode*, appointed for a long period and listed in first position, and those of prophet and secretary, rotating each year and listed later. We can conjecture that both short- and long-term religious offices in the oracular sanctuaries of Klaros and Didyma were performed within the framework of a kind of *cursus honorum*, in the sense that the most prestigious priestly posts (priest and *thespiodos* in Klaros, and prophet in Didyma), were usually occupied subsequent to other political and/or religious charges in the city and/or in the sanctuary.⁴⁸

Many oracular officials carried the *tria nomina* and had thus been granted Roman citizenship (e.g. Appendix III, l. 3-6). Working in a prestigious sanctuary was therefore a means to display one's integration in the Roman system.

Religious offices constituted a context for benefactions.⁴⁹ Priests and prophets appear to have become involved in the complex relationships between prestige and compulsion, which was one aspect of civic life of the elite in Graeco-Roman cities.⁵⁰ There is no evidence about the precise financial outlay required by priestly functions, but it seems that Klarian and Didymean priesthods must have entailed great expenses, connected to the many aspects of the performance of the cults of the gods, the organization of festivals and mysteries and other possible duties. In return, the priests took advantage of these costly religious posts in order to display their piety as well as the extent of their generosity. At Didyma, prophets and *hydrophoroi* acted, and were represented, as benefactors.⁵¹

46 Schmitt-Pantel 1982; van Nijf 2000.

47 Busine 2006, 298-299.

48 Busine 2006, 300. Compare with Sartre 1997, 128-129; Dignas 2003.

49 Busine 2006, 301-304.

50 See Schmitt-Pantel 1982; Sartre 1997, 132-150; Zuiderhoek 2009.

51 Compare with Lane Fox 1988, 84-88; Kron 1996; Dignas 2006.

Unlike other priests, those in oracular shrines were also supposed to produce intelligible translations of the divine responses. These oracles, which are preserved in both epigraphic and literary sources, can offer an original perspective on priestly activity. In terms of style, the oracles often display a high literary quality: for instance, the responses of the oracle of Troketta are characterised by shifts in metrical structure and a refined and sophisticated vocabulary.⁵² Oracular officials attempted to create an archaic language suitable to Apollo's divine discourse. Such archaism finds echoes in contemporary Second Sophistic literature and displays *paideia*; education functioned as a means of self-definition for the Greeks in post-Classical poleis, but also established a timeless quality to Greek learning (and the divine wisdom it was expressing) and showed prestige for its exponents.⁵³ Further, the interpretation of divine word offered an opportunity to intervene in civic matters. Prophets could act in the internal politics of the sanctuary by giving oracular answers about questions of worship or about the nomination of new officials.⁵⁴ These matters were issues for both religious and civic authorities. Oracular officials had the opportunity to oppose the decisions of the civic body by, for instance, refusing the nomination of a candidate on Apollo's behalf. Yet, this power was often latent and instead prophets appear to act in accordance with, rather than in opposition to, their civic community.⁵⁵

When people came from abroad to take Apollo's advice in his shrine, the situation for oracular officials was perhaps rather more complex. From Klarian oracular texts whose inscriptions were found in the pilgrims' place of origin, we see how oracular priests influenced other *poleis*. For instance, in his oracle to the Pergamenes, Klarian Apollo urged the delegates to form choirs of ephebes who were to sing special hymns and offer sacrifices to four specified deities, namely Kronos, Dionysos, Athena and Asklepios (Appendix II, v. 13-19). Further, as they did in other responses, Klarian officials suggested to the citizens of Pergamon that they erect statues of *Apollo Propulaios* in front of the city gates in order to stave off plague (Appendix II, v. 26). In the oracle found at Troketta, the Clarian god asked the citizens to dedicate a statue to *Apollo Soter* (Appendix I, v. 2).⁵⁶ Sometimes Apollo expressed his willingness to become an ally of

52 See Robinson 1981, 195-202; Merkelbach and Stauber 1996, 3-4.

53 Whitmarsh 2001; Borg 2004.

54 Busine 2006, 304-306.

55 For dissimilar conclusions, see Dignas 2002 where the author asserts a substantial independence of the sanctuaries from the secular.

56 For the statues erected following the prescriptions of Apollo from Klaros, see Busine 2005, 172-180.

other local deities. The Pergamon oracle emphasized Apollo's kinship with the deities he supported: Asklepios was said to be Apollo's beloved son (Appendix II, v. 19). For Klarian officials, this could be a way of asserting the influence of their Apollo.

Furthermore, some Klarian oracles expressed a desire to establish customer loyalty: the oracle found in Pergamon recommended that pilgrims returned to Klaros, and described the rites to be performed on this subsequent occasion (Appendix II, v. 13-19). It should not be forgotten that the arrival of pilgrims must have had an important economic impact on the finances of the sanctuary.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

Summing up, when we look at the oracular officials in their relation to their own civic community, it appears that priests took advantage of their activity of oracle-making in order to increase their personal and their family's fame. At the same time, they also appear to have constantly contributed to the building of a political and cultural identity for their own city. Again, the literary activity of the priests must be understood in the historical context of the Second Sophistic. However, it has been shown that this cultural (i.e. not purely literary) phenomenon had broader implications: the cultural activities of the Greek elites of the Roman East fit into a system which aimed to uphold the workings of an aristocratic establishment.⁵⁸ In this system, the display of authentically Greek culture and religion helped justify the real power structure. For pilgrims and priests, there seems to be neither contradiction nor conflict between these different levels of action. Evidence suggests that both oracles' questioners and producers identified themselves with their city and that the oracular activity merged in most cases with civic identity.

If we look at this cultic life from the inside, we observe no break between the Archaic, Classical and the post-classical city: as for other cults organized in the context of the city, oracular activity provided the Greeks of the Roman period with an opportunity to participate in the civic life of their community and to perpetuate civic ideals. Asking, receiving and making oracles was a convenient way for the elites to promote their *polis*, for, in the Eastern Roman Empire, the intellectual and cultural

57 Compare with Debord 1982; Sinn 1996; D'Hautcourt 1999; Rosenberger 1999; Dignas 2005.

58 Anderson 1993; Schmitz 1997; Swain 1996; van Nijf 2001; Borg 2009.

habitus of the civic elite guaranteed both a high social status and political and economical power for wealthy citizens as well as major advantages for their hometowns in interpolis competition.

What is new then is that the city itself was no longer the only framework in and for which religious practices were performed. The civic structure, and hence the cults performed in the city, were used and adapted by elites seeking integration into a new political context, that is the Roman Empire. But these new uses of religious performance have nothing to do with an alleged decline or degeneration of civic life and civic cults.

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APPENDIX I. IGR IV 1498

1		θεοῖς σεβασ[τοις]
2		κατὰ χρησμόν Κλαρί[ου]
3		Ἀπόλλωνος Καισαρεῖ[ς]
4		Τροκεττηνοὶ καθιέρωσα[ν]
5		Ἀπόλλωνα Σωτήρα, χαρ[ι-]
6		σαμένου τὸ ἀγρύριο[ν]
7		εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὴν βά-
8		σιν Μειλήτου τοῦ Γλύ-
9		κωνος Παφλαγόνος
10		τοῦ ἱερέως αὐτοῦ, ὑπο-
11		[σ]χομένου τὴν ἐργεπ[ι-]
12		[σ]τασίαν Ἑρμογένους το[ῦ]
1		χρησμός
2-3	v. 1	οἱ νεμέσθε Τρόκεττα πα[ρ]αὶ νιφόντι Τυμώλω
3-5	v. 2	τειό[μ]εμοι Βρομίω καὶ ὑπερμενεί Κρονίωνι,
5-6	v. 3	τί δὴ νύπερ τεθηπό[τ]ες βηλῶ προσοιμέεσθε,
6-8	v. 4	ἐελ[μ]ένοι νημερτῆν ἐς οὐάδας πελάζειν;
8-9	v. 5	οἴσιν μεμηλόσιν φά[τι]ν πανατρική βοήσω.
9-11	v. 6	φεῦ φεῦ, κραταῖον πῆμα προσηρώσκει πέ[δ]ω,
11-12	v. 7	λοιμὸς δυσσεξάλυκτος, ἧ̄ μὲν ἀμπαφῶν
12-13	v. 8	ποιναῖον ἀοπ χειρὶ, τῆδ' ἀνηρμένος
13-14	v. 9	νεουτά[των] ἴδωλα δυσπενθῆ βροτῶν.
15-16	v. 10	τρύει δὲ πάντη [δ]άπεδον ἐν[πο]λεούμενον,
16-17	v. 11	ἀμαῖ νεογνὸν - πᾶσα δ' ὄλλυται φύτλη -
17-18	v. 12	φύδρην δὲ τείρειν φώτας ἐκβιάζεται.
19-20	v. 13	καὶ τὰν ποσὶν μὲν τοῖα μῆδεται [κακά]
		— — — — —
1-2	v. 20	[ἀ]τὰρ ἐσ<σ>ύμενοι τῶνδ' ὑπά[λ]υξιν, φῶτες, κατὰ τεθμὸν ιδέσθαι,
3-5	v. 21	οἱ μάλα δῆθ' εἰς ἐπ' ἐμὴν πελάειν πάνυ μερμ<ηρ>αῖτ' ἀρ[ω]γήν,
5-7	v. 22	ἀπὸ μὲν λιβάδων ἐπτά ματεῦειν καθαρὸν ποτὸν ἐν[τ]ύνεσθαι,
7-9	v. 23	ὃ θεειῶσαι πρόσσω[θεν] ἐχρῆν καὶ ἐπεσ<σ>υμένους ἀφύσθαι,
9-11	v. 24	ῥῆγαι τε δόμουσιν αὐτίκα νύμφαις, αἱ θ' εἰμερταὶ γε[γ]άασιν,
11-12	v. 25	ὡς ἀνούττητοι γε φῶ[τε]ς ἐνλελειμμένοι πέδω
13-14	v. 26	ἐκ παλινβίων ὀφελμῶν κάλλι[μα] ρέζωσι ἄδην.
14-16	v. 27	αὐτὰρ ἐντ[ύ]νεσθε Φοῖβον μέσσον ἰδρῦναι πέδου,
16-17	v. 28	τῆ μὲν ἀμπαφῶντα [τόξον] — — — — ⁵⁹

To the divine Augusti. According to an oracle of Klarian Apollo, the people of Caesarea Troketta dedicated (an image of) Apollo Soter; while his priest Meiletos, the son of Glykon, the Paphlagonian, gave the money for the god and the statue base and Hermogenes, the son of ..., took responsibility for the supervision of the work ...

59 Buresch 1889, 8-9 = IGR IV 1498 = Robinson 1981, C-14 = Merkelbach-Stauber 1996, no.8 = SGOst I 1998, no.04/01/01.

The oracle

You who inhabit Troketta by snowy Tmolos,
 Who are honored by Bromios and the mighty son of Kronos,
 Why now, amazed, do you approach the threshold
 Restrained from drawing near to the ground of truth?
 To you who attend I shall shout forth an infallible oracle.
 Alas, alas, a mighty calamity leaps to earth
 An inexorable plague, wielding with one
 Hand and avenging sword, with the other raising
 Bitterly lamented phantoms of recently-struck mortals.
 It distresses on every side the plowed ground.
 It mows down the seedlings – the whole race perishes;
 By oppressing men with pollution, it drives them out.
 And such are the evils at hand that it contrives...
 But as you earn to see an escape, as is lawful, from these things, o
 mortals,
 Who are now so very anxious to approach for my aid,
 From seven springs seek to prepare for yourselves a pure drink,
 Which you ought to sulphur from a distance and quickly draw out,
 And sprinkle (your) houses at once with the nymphs (water), who
 are lovely,
 That at least those mortals left untouched on earth
 May without end accomplish excellent things from their revived
 increase.
 Moreover, prepare to set up (an image of) Phoebus in the midst of
 the land,
 In one hand wielding (the bow) ...
 (trans. T.L. Robinson, slightly modified)

APPENDIX II. CIG 3538 = I.PERGAMON 324:

- 1 [- - - - -]λα-
 [- - - - -]Κ]λ[α]ύδιος
 [- - - - -] και Κλαύδιος
 [- - - - -]μυ]ηθέντες και ἔμβα
 5 [τεύσαντες ἐχρήσαντο και παρέλαβον τ]ὸν ὑπογεγραμμένον
 - - - - -]αῖον χρησμὸν
 [θ]ὸν χρησμὸν ἔδοξεν τῇ βουλῇ και τῶι δήμῳ
 τῆς μητροπόλεως τῆς Ἀσίας και δις νεωκόρου πρῶ-
 τῆς Περγαμηνῶν πόλεως ἐν στήλαις ἀνα[γ]ράψαντας ἐπὶ
 10 τε τῆς ἀγορᾶς και τῶν ἱερῶν ἀναστήσαι.
 v. 1 Τηλεφιδαις, οἱ Ζηνὶ πλέρον Κρονίδῃ βασιλῆϊ
 ἐξ ἄλλων τεισκόμενοι Τευθρεντίδα γαῖαν
 ναίουσιν και Ζηνὸς ἐρισμαράγοιο γενέθλη
 ἤμην Ἀθηναίῃ πολεμηδόκῳ ἀτρυτώνῃ
 15 v. 5 ἠδὲ Δι<ω>νύσῳ λαθικηδέι φυσιζῳίῳ
 ἠδὲ και εἰητῆρι νόσ<ω>ν παιήονι λυγρῶν·
 οἴσι πάρ' Οὐρανοῦ νῆες ἐθηήσαντος Κάβειροι
 πρῶτοι Περγαμῆς ὑπὲρ ἄκριος ἀστεροπη<τ>ῆν
 20 v. 10 τικτόμενον Δία, μητρώῃην ὅτε γ<α>στ[έρα] λύσεν·
 φαῖην κε ἀτρεκέως ἀψευδέσιν ἄλκαρ <ἐ>π' ὄμ[φαίς],
 <ώ>ς μὴ δηρὸν ὑπ' ἀργαλέῃ <τ>ρύοιτό γε νούσῳ
 Αἰακίδης λαός· τὸ δ' ἐμῶι κεχαρισμένον ἔσται
 νίει· τ<ῶ> κέλομαι σε, θεαρίδος ἡγέτα ὄδοιο,
 25 v. 15 τέτραχα μὲν διακρεῖναι ἐφηβητῆρας ἅπαντας,
 ὅσσοι ὑπὸ ζαθέην τύρσιν χλαμυδηφόροι εἰσίν,
 και πίσυρας στιςάδεσσι ἐφ' ἡγεμονῆ[ας] ὀπάσσαι·
 τῶν ἢ μὲν Κρονίδην ὕμνωι {μνωι}, μία δ' Εἰραφιώτην,
 ἢ δ' ἑτέρη κούρην δορυθαρσέα Τρειτογένειαν,
 ἢ δ' Ἀσκληπιὸν ἄλλη {ι}, ἐμὸν φίλον νίεα, [...]ΙΗΙ.
 30 v. 20 ἑπτὰ γεραρόντων εἰς ἡματα μῆρα ἐπὶ βωμῶν
 Παλλάδι μὲν μόσχου διετήρονος ἄζυγος ἀγνοῦ
 Δαίοντες, τριένου δὲ βοῶς Διὶ και Διὶ Βάκχῳι,
 ὡσαύτως και παιδι Κορωνίδος ἠθαλέοιο
 ταύρου μῆρια ῥέζοντες προτιτύσκετε δαῖτα,
 35 v. 25 ἠίθειοι χλαμύδεσσι ἀμφέμμενοι ὀππόσοι ἐ[σ]τε,
 μὴ σφετέρων νόσφιν πατέρων· λοίβῃ δ' ἐφ' ἐκάστη
 σπένδοντες [λοιμο]ῖο παρ' ἀθανάτων ἄκος ἐσθλὸν
 αἰτέετε, <ώ>ς τηλουρὸν ἐς ἐχθοδαπῶν χθόνα φωτῶν
 ἐκτόπιος προνόειτο[...] εἰ ρ[⁶⁰

Claudius and Claudius (who, when they had been initiated and had entered (the adyton), consulted the oracle and received the oracle ... which is inscribed below. Which oracle the Council and People of the

60 CIG II 3538 = Kaibel, Epigrammata Graeca 1035 = I.Pergamon 324 = IGR IV 360 = Robinson 1981, C-16 = Merkelbach-Stauber 1996, no.2 = SGOST I 1998, no.06/02/01.

first metropolis of Asia and twice neokoros, the city of the Pergamenes, resolved to inscribe on steles and to erect both in the market place and in the temples.

1 To the children of Telephos, who, honored by King Zeus, son of Kronos,
More than others, inhabit the land of Teuthras,
and also (honored by) the family of the thundering Zeus,
4 Athena, who is warring and inexorable,
And Dionysos, who banishes care and gives life,
And also the Physician, savior from baneful diseases;
Among whom Ouranos' sons, the Kabeiroi, first
8 kept watch on the heights of Pergamon over the new-born
Zeus the lightener, when he opened the maternal womb;
I would accurately tell a defense with truthful words,
Lest for too long the people of Aiakides be born out
12 by painful disease; it shall be that which is pleasing to my
son. Therefore I urge you, o leader of the delegation to the oracle,
to divide into four parts under leaders all those
who beneath the sacred tower wear the chlamys (ephebes),
16 and to make them follow the four leaders in columns.
The first of these (will sing) of Kronos 'son with a
Hymn, the next of (Dionysos) Eiraphiotes,
Another of Triton-born (Athena), a maiden bold in war,
The other of Asklepios, my dear son.
20 For seven days let them offer thigh-bones on the altars,
burning to Pallas those of a pure, unmated, two-year-old
calf, those of a three-year-old ox to Zeus and Zeus Bacchus;
Likewise also sacrificing to Koronis' son (Asklepius) the thigh-bones
24 of a domesticated bull, prepare a sacrificial meal,
you youths who wear the *chlamys*, as many of you as are
not without your own fathers. But with each libation
as you pour, request from the immortals a noble remedy
for the plague, that into a distant land of hostile men
it might go far away...

(trans. T.L. Robinson, slightly modified)

APPENDIX III. ROBERT AND ROBERT 1954, 210 NO.146:

- Ἡρακλεωτῶν ἀπὸ Σαλβάκης,
 ἐπὶ πρυτάνεως Ἀπόλλωνος τὸ οὐθ',
 ἱερέως Κλ. Ρούφου, θεσπιφδοῦντος
 Γναίου Ἰουλίου Ῥηγείνου Ἀλεξάνδρου,
 5 προφήτου Κλ. Κριτολάου, γρ(α)μματεῦον-
 τος Γναίου Ἰουλίου Ἀλκίμου· θεοπρόπος
 Τατιανὸς Ἀπολλωνίου· ἤϊθειοι οἱ ὑμνήσαντες
 τὸν θεὸν Ἀπολλώνιος Τατιανοῦ ὁ ἱερεὺς τῶν παίδων,
 Τατιανὸς β' Ἀπολλωνίου, Διονύσιος Φιλώτου Διονυσίου,
 10 Ἀπολλώνιος γ' τοῦ Ἰππάρχου, Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀθηνίωνος,
 Τατιανὸς Ἀθηνίωνος, Τρύφων Τροφίμου Παπίου Γλύκωνος,
 Ἑρμογένης β'· Διονύσιος Ἑρμογένους λαοτύπου·
 χοραγοὶ Μοσχᾶς καὶ Διογενιανὸς τὸ ζι'.

(Delegation) of citizens from Heraklea under Salbake:
 when Apollo was *prytanis* for the seventy-ninth time (155/156 AD),
 Klaudios Roufos (= Claudius Rufus) was priest, Gnaios Ioulios (= Cn. Iulius)
 Rheginos Alexandros was *thespiodes*
 Klaudios (= Claudius) Kritolaos was prophet, Gnaios Ioulios (= Cn. Iulius)
 Alkimos was secretary:
theopropos: Tatianos son of Apollonios; young choristers having song in hon-
 our of the god:
 Apollonios son of Tatianos, priest of the children;
 Tatianos the second son of Apollonios; Dionysios son of Dionysios son of
 Philotas,
 Apollonios the third son of Hipparchos; Apollonios son of Athenion;
 Tatianos son of Athenion; Tryphon son of Glykon son of Papias son of Tro-
 phimos,
 Hermogenes the second; Dionysios son of Hermogenes, stone-cutter;
choregoi: Moschas and Diogenianos for the sixteenth time.



Figure 1. Cities having sent an embassy to Klaros during the second and third centuries AD (in dark grey: area of regular clientele).

1 Tauric Chersonnesos	24 Prusias ad Hypium	47 Laodicea on the Lykos
2 Tomis	25 Creteia Flaviopolis	48 Hierapolis
3 Dionysopolis	26 Corinth	49 Heraclea under Salbake
4 Odessos	27 Kydonia	50 Sebastopolis
5 Marcianopolis	28 Lappa	51 Oinoanda
6 Anchialos	29 Hierapytna	52 Apollonia
7 Deultum	30 Abonoteichos	53 Pisidian Antioch
8 Philippopolis	31 Amisos	54 Sagalassos
9 Stobi	32 Amaseia	55 Iulia
10 Macedonian <i>koinon</i>	33 Neoclaudiopolis	56 Iconion
11 Charax = Charakôma?	34 Neocaesarea	57 Vasada
12 Thasos	35 Pergamon	58 Hyde
13 Plotinopolis	36 Phoecea	59 Caesarea in Cappadocia
14 Ainos	37 Kyme	60 Acmonia
15 Perinthos	38 Smyrna	61 Yalnisaray
16 Callipolis	39 Chios	62 Aizanoi
17 Parion	40 Thyateira	63 Miros Megale
18 Kyzikos	41 Caesarea Troketta	64 Dorylea
19 Apamea Myrleia	42 Ephesos	65 Syedra
20 Caesarea Germanike	43 Bargasa	66 Antioch on the Orontes
21 Kios	44 Tabai	
22 Nicea	45 Amyzon	
23 Nicomedia	46 Aphrodisias	