

## Two Late Sources in the Lycurgan Delphic Oracular Tradition: a Herodotian Scholion and a Cyriacan Inscription

This paper examines two often-overlooked sources that quote the legendary Delphic oracle given to Lycurgus as a precursor to the Great Rhetra. Both sources vary from the canon versions of the oracle in Herodotus (1.65.3 sqq.) and Diodorus Siculus (*Bib. Hist.* 7.12.1 sqq.) and represent two very different aspects of the oracle's literary tradition. Through an analysis of the grammar, vocabulary, structure, and content of these sources and applying Fontenrose's (1978) work on Delphic oracular responses, this paper attempts to place both sources in the literary tradition of Lycurgus' oracle.

The first source is a fragment of Theseus' *Bioi* (*Suda* (Θ363), Jacoby 1954, Corcella 1996) recorded in a scholion on the margin of Herodotus' *Histories* 1.65.3 sqq. in the manuscript Flor. Laur. 70.3. Theseus combines and compresses the content of Herodotus' and Diodorus Siculus' versions of the oracle, while employing a unique oracular structure, grammatical number, and vocabulary. Ultimately, this suggests that Theseus invented his version of the oracle.

The second source is a lost inscription of unknown date found in Delphi and recorded by Cyriacus of Ancona in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Haussoullier 1881). The inscription records an oracle in the Herodotian tradition but with philological markers that place it later in the oracle's literary tradition. The inscription shares variant spellings and vocabulary choices that are introduced in versions of the oracle starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E. with Arsenius and Eusebius, and continuing with Theodoretus, Choricus, Elias, and Michael Psellus. Based on this philological evidence, the inscription likely originates

from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E, which may suggest that the inscription was used to claim Delphi's authority over the oracle even into late antiquity.

Plutarch states "there is so much uncertainty in the account which historians have left us of Lycurgus, the lawgiver..." (*Lyc.* 1.1). The two ancient sources examined in this paper contribute further to the uncertainty and discrepancies in Lycurgus' biography. By exploring the motivations of the sources and the conventions of the Lycurgan oracular tradition, this paper attempts to critically analyze the relevance and importance of these two understudied sources in Lycurgan scholarship.

#### Bibliography

Corcella, Aldo. "A New Fragment of the Historian Theseus." *The Classical Quarterly*

46.01 (1996): 261-66.

Fontenrose, Joseph. *The Delphic Oracle, Its Responses and Operations, with a Catalogue of Responses*. Berkeley: U of California, 1978.

Haussoullier, Bernard. "Inscriptions De Delphes : Inscriptions Gravées Sur Le Mur

Pélasgique." *Bulletin De Correspondance Hellénique* 5.5 (1881): 397-434.

Jacoby, Felix. *Die Fragmente Der Griechischen Historiker*. Leiden: Brill, 1954.