

Apollo, the Greek god of the Sun, Delphi, the temple of prophecy, and the last Christmas in honor of Sol Invictus 274-362 AD



-CONSTANTIN VS P F AVG; -FELICITAS PERPETVA SAECVLI [FELICITAS PERPETVA SAECVLI]
"Constantine the Pious and Happy Augustus," "Perpetual Blessing of the Age."

The Narmer Palette

The Narmer Palette, found at Hierakonpolis in Lower Egypt, in the city founded by Horus and named the city of the Falcon in his honor, is where the first proto-state centers emerged in the Nile Valley, such as Hierakonpolis, Naqada, and Abydos (Naqada II, 3400–3200 BC). The precursors of primitive temples, imitating the humble huts of the Nile Valley inhabitants, have been found in the Hierakonpolis area. The Narmer Palette already displays hieroglyphics, although the earliest known texts written in hieroglyphics were engraved in Abydos.

The Egyptians themselves believed that their first kings had been gods and that these divine rulers were succeeded by a lineage of semi-divine kings known as the followers of Horus, the myth of the contest between Horus and his uncle Seth as narrated by Plutarch in his work on Isis and Osiris tells a romantic version of the struggle that would end with the numerous predynastic city-states united under a single king, this being Narmer or Menes, the first Egyptian pharaoh, to whom Apollo or Horus cedes the Egyptian throne after unifying Egypt.





«'Sun, Horus, Osiris, king, son of Zeus, Apollo, steward of the times and seasons, of the wind and rain, guiding the reins of dawn and night with their many constellations, ruler of the blazing star and of eternal fire.'»

On the Philosophy of Oracles, Porphyry.



CARLOS HANS MANCHEGO VITE

My birth, October 22, date of the fire at the temple of Apollo at Daphne in Turkey, 362 AD during the lifetime of the last pagan emperor of Rome, shortly after consulting Delphi believing that with a prophecy from Delphi he could disprove the Christian religion, it is then that Delphi says goodbye wishing the good fortune of the spirit of Christ setting fire to the temple with lightning that consumed the temple and its statue dedicated by Seleucus in 300 BC, successor of Alexander, in the same way that the emperor Augustus was foretold by lightning in the house of Romulus, first founder of Rome, that he should build the temple of Apollo Palatine in 28 BC, a year before founding the Empire, also burned down during the lifetime of Julian the Apostate. Similarly, October 22nd marks the inaugural date of the two main celebrations of the cult of Sol Invictus in the year of its inauguration: the Ludi Solis on October 22nd, commemorating the triumphal procession for the reunification of the Empire by Emperor Aurelian, as evidenced by the Philocalus calendar; and December 25th, the date of the establishment of the temple to Sol Invictus by the emperor, called the Natalis Solis Invicti, or the birth of the Unconquered Sun, in homage to the Sun and its personification, the god Apollo, it is in October 362 that the last prophecy of Apollo or Delphi takes place, 15th century BC - 362 AD.

The winter solstice marks the arrival of winter and is also the longest night of the year, which would be understood as the birth of the Sun for those who could appreciate such a phenomenon. The ancient Romans charted the sun's annual movement in relation to the earth. They observed that in late autumn the days shortened and the sun sank lower in the sky. To them, the sun seemed to be dying. On December 21, when "the sun stood still," the ancients believed that the sun had "died" and that darkness would engulf the earth. For the next three days—the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th—the sun seemed to have paused precariously (meaning that the sun's declining path would change direction in three days). The nights didn't last longer, but neither did the days. On December 25, the sun rose a little earlier and climbed a little higher in the sky than the day before. Ah! The sun had been reborn.



The Delphic Sibyl, or Sibyl of Delphi, is a fresco by the Italian Renaissance painter Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. It dates from 1509.



Constantine, (306-337 AD) Medallion, Ticinum mint, issued in 313. In this jugate of the emperor, both figures Constantine and Sol hold the whip, in a clear parallel that both are the leaders of the Empire.

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THE NARMER PALETTE

This is the Narmer Palette, which features this pharaoh who founded the first dynasty of Egypt and Horus, the Egyptian name for Apollo. The first documented period of Apollo worship was as Horus the Falcon, god of Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) in southern Upper Egypt. Horus was the patron deity of the Hierakonpolis monarchy, which became the historical pharaonic state, hence the first known national god, the god of kingship. Horus the Falcon was predominantly a sky god and a sun god; like the former, his eyes are the sun and moon, like the latter, he has a solar disk on his head and is syncretized with the solar deity Ra, most often as Ra-Harakhty. Horus the Falcon had the epithet "Great God, Lord of the Sky, Speckled with Plumage." It is associated with King Narmer (also known as Menes), who is credited with the unification of Egypt. Evidence of this is that the pharaoh wears both the Red Crown of Lower Egypt and the White Crown of Upper Egypt. The piece is dated to around 3200–3000 BC. Discovered in 1897, it is the world's earliest historical document.

The Narmer Palette, also known as the Great Hierakonpolis Palette or the Narmer Palette, is a significant Egyptian archaeological find, dating from around the 31st century BC, belonging, at least nominally, to the category of cosmetic palettes. It contains some of the earliest hieroglyphic inscriptions ever found. Some believe the tablet represents the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under King Narmer. Together with the Scorpion King's mace head and the Narmer mace head, which are also found together in the main deposit at Nekhen, the Narmer Palette provides one of the earliest known depictions of an Egyptian king. On one side, the king is depicted wearing the bulbous White Crown of Upper (southern) Egypt, and the other side depicts the king wearing the Red Crown of Lower (northern) Egypt, making it the earliest known example of a king wearing both types of headdress. The Palette displays many of the classical conventions of ancient Egyptian art, which must have already been formalized by the time of the Palette's creation.

The Palette, which has survived five millennia in near-perfect condition, was discovered by British archaeologists James E. Quibell and Frederick W. Green in what they called the Main Depository at the Temple of Horus at Nekhen during the 1897–98 excavation season. Also found in this excavation were the mace head of King Narmer and the mace head of the Scorpion King.

The exact location and circumstances of these finds were not clearly recorded by Quibell and Green. In fact, Green's report placed the palette in a different layer one or two yards from the depository, which is considered more accurate based on the original excavation notes. It has been suggested that these objects were royal donations made to the temple. Nekhen, or Hierakonpolis, was one of the four centers of power in Upper Egypt that preceded the consolidation of Upper Egypt at the end of the Naqada III period. The religious importance of Hierakonpolis continued long after its political role had declined. Palettes were typically used for grinding cosmetics, but this palette is too large and heavy (and elaborate) to have been created for personal use and was likely a ritual or votive object, specifically made for donation or use in a temple. One theory is that it was used to grind cosmetics to adorn statues of deities.

OBVERSE

As on the other side, two bovine heads with human faces, believed to represent the patron cow goddess Bat, flank the serekhs. The goddess Bat is, as she often was, shown in portrait, rather than in profile as is traditional in Egyptian relief carving. Hathor, who shared many of Bat's characteristics, is often depicted similarly. Some authors suggest that the images represent the king's vigor as a pair of bulls.

The largest relief on this side depicts Narmer, who raises a royal mace in his right hand while with his left he lifts a kneeling captive by the hair. In contrast to the verso representation of Narmer, where he is shown wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, on this side he wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt. His pose reflects the ancient Egyptian convention of showing an important figure from multiple perspectives at once. His feet, legs, and head are shown in profile, while his torso and hips are slightly rotated and his shoulders face forward. An eye, although not normally visible if it were a head in profile, is also shown from the front. The purpose was to provide the most complete information possible about a person on a flat surface. The palette also displays the Egyptian canon of body proportions. Based on an established unit that correlates to the distance across the knuckles of the human fist, this conventional form of measurement was a means of standardizing the proportions of important figures in Egyptian art. The standard measurement, already evident on the palette, was 18 fists from the ground to the hairline on the forehead. Minor figures in active poses, such as the king's captive, corpses, and the handlers of the serpent beasts, are much more freely depicted.

Attached to the belt worn by Narmer are four beaded tassels, each crowned with an ornament in the shape of the head of the goddess Hathor. These are also the same heads as those adorning the top of each side of the palette. A long stripe representing a lion's tail is attached to the back of the belt.

To the left of the king is a man wearing the king's sandals, flanked by a rosette symbol. To the right of the king is a kneeling prisoner, who is about to be struck by the king. A pair of symbols appear next to his head, perhaps indicating his name (Wash) or the region from which he originated. Above the prisoner is a falcon, representing Horus, perched on a cluster of papyrus flowers, the symbol of Lower Egypt. In its talons, it holds a rope-like object that appears to be attached to the nose of a man's head also emerging from the papyrus flowers.

REVERSE

Below the bovine heads is what appears to be a procession. Narmer is significantly larger than any other person in that register, an artistic convention variously known as hierarchical proportion, hierarchical scale, or hierarchy of scale. As on the obverse, his disproportionate size reinforces ideas of conquest and political power as a divine leader. He wears a Red Crown of Lower Egypt, symbolized by a papyrus. He holds a mace and a flail, two traditional symbols of kingship. To his right are the hieroglyphic symbols for his name, although they are not contained within a serekh. Behind him is his sandal bearer, whose name may be represented by the rosette next to his head, and a second rectangular symbol that has no clear interpretation, but which has been suggested to represent a city or citadel.

Immediately in front of the pharaoh is a long-haired man, accompanied by a pair of hieroglyphs that have been interpreted as his name: Tshet (this suggests that these symbols

had the same phonetic value used in later hieroglyphic writing). Before this man are four standard-bearers, holding aloft an animal skin, a dog, and two falcons. On the far right of this scene are ten decapitated corpses, their heads at their feet, their genitals severed and protruding from their mouths. These figures are generally understood to be victims of Narmer's conquest. Above them are the symbols of a ship, a falcon, and a harpoon, which may indicate the names of the cities that were conquered.

Below the procession, two men hold ropes tied to the outstretched and intertwined necks of two serpopards facing each other. The serpopard is a mythological creature, a mixture of a snake and a leopard. The circle formed by their curved necks is the central part of the Palette, which is the area where cosmetics would have been ground. Upper and Lower Egypt worshipped lioness war goddesses as protectors; the entwined necks of the serpopards may thus represent the unification of the state.

At the bottom of the reverse, a bull is seen tearing down the walls of a city while trampling a fallen enemy. With his head lowered, Narmer is shown here as a stylized, two-dimensional beast that will vanquish his enemies. Bulls had an ideological connection with Egyptian kingship. "Bull of his Mother," for example, was a common epithet given to an Egyptian king as the son of the patron cow goddess. This bovine posture carries the meaning of "strength" in later hieroglyphics.



CHRONOLOGY

3200-3000 BC – Unification of Lower and Upper Egypt by Narmer or Menes, and also the date of the world's first historical document, the Narmer Palette.

26th Century BC – The three Pyramids of Giza are built.

26th Century BC – The Great Sphinx of Giza is sculpted.

15th Century BC – At Delphi, Greece, there were already a significant number of inhabitants near Mount Parnassus.

Approximately 1401 BC – The Dream Stele or Sphinx Stele is erected on the forelegs of the Great Sphinx of Giza, after its restoration by Thutmose IV.

13th Century BC – Construction of the Flaminian Obelisk during the reign of Seti I and Ramses II at Heliopolis.

13th-12th Century BC – Life and apotheosis of Heracles, one generation before the Trojan War.

13th-12th century BC – Trojan War

13th-12th century BC – Dorian invasion of the Peloponnese and return of the Heraclids to reclaim their rightful throne of Argos and Mycenae, among other Greek cities. One generation after the Trojan War.

750-730 BC – Homer writes his poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey.

8th century – Hesiod writes the Theogony and Works and Days.

7th century BC – The Homeric Hymns begin to be composed; their composition would continue until the Hellenistic Age.

597 BC – Deportation of the Jews to Babylon.

562 BC – Nebuchadnezzar dies after reigning since 604 BC. The great dream of the statue, which represented the kingdoms that would arise from the Babylonian kingdom, must have occurred before this date. This dream was interpreted by Daniel.

547 BC – Croesus, who reigned from 560 to 546 BC, is defeated at the Siege of Sardis in December 547 by Cyrus of Persia. Thus, Lydia becomes a vassal state of Persia.

539 BC – Cyrus captures Babylon, ending the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The Jews are liberated from Babylon.

538 BC – In the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel prophesies the Messiah Prince.

490 BC – Battle of Marathon, the Persians are defeated by the Greeks under Miltiades and Themistocles.

486 BC – Death of Darius I, succeeded by his son Xerxes.

480 BC – Battle of Thermopylae and immolation of Leonidas. Battle of Salamis ends in a decisive Greek victory.

479 BC – Battle of Plataea and end of the Second Persian War.

399 BC – Death of Socrates, recorded in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*.

356 BC – Birth of Alexander the Great at Pella, between July 20 and 21.

338 BC – Battle of Chaeronea, Macedonian victory over the Greeks, end of the city-states.

336 BC – Death of Philip II, succeeded by his 20-year-old son, Alexander.

331 BC – Battle of Gaugamela, Alexander becomes great king of Media and Persia.

323 BC – Death of Alexander the Great in Babylon at the age of 32.

312 BC – Oracle of Didyma to Seleucus, predicting his future greatness and ordering him to consecrate the suburb of Daphne to Apollo.

301 BC – Battle of Ipsus, Antigonos' army is defeated by the combined forces of Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus. The Wars of the Diadochi end, and Syria is annexed to Seleucus's dominion.

300 BC – Founding of Antioch on the Orontes, and dedication of a temple to Apollo in the suburb of Daphne by Seleucus I Nicator.

216 BC – Second Punic War, the Romans, at the beginning of the crisis following Hannibal's invasion of Italy, consult the Oracle of Delphi and the Sibylline Books, where the oracle predicts their victory. After the war, they send a reward to Delphi and finally fulfill the prescriptions of the Sibylline Books.

146 BC – Roman victory over the Achaean League at the Battle of Corinth. Rome conquers Greece and completes the destruction of Carthage.

44 BC – Assassination of Julius Caesar.

40 BC – Date of composition of Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*. The piece was written around 40 BC – During a period of brief stability following the Treaty of Brundisium; it was later published around 39-38 BC.

31 BC – Octavian's victory over Mark Antony at Actium, Greece. End of the civil wars in Rome and beginning of the Pax Romana.

29/19 BC – Date of composition of the *Aeneid* by Virgil.

28 BC – Dedication of the Temple of Apollo Palatine in Rome by Augustus, having been promised after the victory over Sextus Pompey in 36 BC. and later by the victory over Mark Antony in 31 BC.

27 BC – The Roman Republic becomes an Empire when Augustus becomes the first emperor of Rome and establishes an autocracy that his descendants would inherit.

1 BC/1 AD – Christ is born.

14 AD – Augustus dies.

33 AD – Crucifixion of Christ.

70 AD – Destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

197 AD – First coinage of Sol, under Septimius Severus.

218/222 AD – Elagabalus introduces Sol Invictus of Emesa as the principal deity in Rome and attempts to abolish Roman religion, seeking to make Sol the sole deity worshipped.

270 AD – Aurelian succeeds Claudius Gothicus as emperor of Rome.

273 AD – Aurelian conquers Palmyra, defeating Zenobia.

274 AD – Aurelian conquers the Gallic Empire. Triumphal march in Rome, where games in honor of Sol were held from October 19 to 22, establishing October 22 as the principal religious festival of the Empire in honor of Sol Invictus. Dedication of the Temple of Sol in Rome on December 25, becoming the second most important festival in the Roman calendar.

275 AD – Death of Aurelian, who was assassinated in September or October.

284 AD – Diocletian becomes emperor.

293 AD – Beginning of the Tetrarchy, power is divided among Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius Chlorus.

306 AD – Constantius Chlorus dies. His legions acclaim his son Constantine as his successor, giving him the titles of Caesar and Augustus.

310 AD – Composition of Panegyric VI, which recounts Constantine's vision of Trier in Gaul, where Apollo predicted a 30-year reign for him.

312 AD – Battle of the Milvian Bridge, vision of the cross on the eve of the battle, Constantine as sole emperor in the western Roman Empire,

316 AD – Battle of Cibalis, confrontation between Constantine and Licinius, where the latter cedes all his European provinces, except Thrace, to Constantine.

321 AD – Promulgation of the Day of the Sun as a day of rest and veneration of God.

324 AD – Battle of Chrysopolis, on September 18, Constantine defeats Licinius near Constantinople and becomes sole emperor of Rome. On November 1, Constantine marks the boundaries of Constantinople, his new city, and orders the Serpentine Column of Plataea to be moved from Delphi to Constantinople.

325 AD – Most likely in April, Constantine gave his oration to the Assembly of Saints, and in June he was present at the Council of Nicaea, which lasted from May to August.

324/330 AD – Dedication of the Column of Constantine in the Forum of Constantinople, topped by a Colossus of the Sun/Apollo holding a globe and spear.

337 AD – Death of Constantine on May 22, shortly after his baptism.

353 AD – Constantius becomes sole ruler of the Roman Empire.

354 AD – Year of the creation of the Philocalus Calendar or Chronograph of 354.

361 AD – Civil war between Constantius and Julian. Constantius dies, leaving Julian as his successor and sole emperor of the Roman Empire.

362 AD – The final prophecy of the Oracle of Delphi, recorded in Philostorgius, the main source for it, at the same time announcing its own end when the oracle pronounces on Christ. The

Temple of Apollo at Daphne burns on October 22, caused by Christians, or as it was said, by a lightning bolt.

363 AD – The Temple of Apollo Palatine in Rome burns on March 19. Julian II dies on June 26, near Ctesiphon, in present-day Iraq.

392 AD – Theodosius issues an Edict of Constantinople prohibiting all non-Christian practices.

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(26*) / The Century of Louis XIV - Will Durant

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(27*) / Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age (Jonathan Bardill)

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(28*) / Delphi: A History of the Center of the Ancient World (Michael Scott)

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PROLOGUE:

During the height of the Roman Empire, when the Empire was unified under the first emperor of Rome, Augustus, Christ was born. At this time, the emperors and people of Rome had the Sun god as their main deity. Just as 300 years later, under the Emperor Constantine, the Sun was personified in the god Apollo. The gods were never an invention or imagination of the Greeks. It was the story of the Angels who once inhabited heaven. The most notable and prominent of them was Apollo, the Angel who lived in Eden and who, due to his excessive ambition, left heaven, just as Isaiah and Ezekiel recite. An Angel or god who wanted to give his own interpretation of the Bible and invented the story of the devil under the name of the Morning Star. There is no mention of him before the 7th century BC when he composed the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel.

According to evidence, Apollo continued to contemplate the mortal world from the underworld, as evidenced by the Oracle of Delphi, the only reliable proof of the immortality of the gods. Western mythology begins in Egypt, where Horus or Apollo defeats Typhon and becomes the patron god of Egyptian monarchs, 3000 years before Christ. The existence of Delphi dates back to 1600 BC. with the founding of the Greek city-states, it is said that it was founded in the same place where the monster Typhon died, which would be the Python serpent, this would be defeated by Apollo and the corpse of the monster rotting under the rays of the sun would be called "Pytho", which means "I make rot" (name from which the Pythia derives), that is why Delphi since the Iliad would be known as the "Rocky Pito" as Achilles mentions in that work, the monster Python was the same Seth with whom he disputed the throne of Egypt in 3000 BC that with his victory gave rise to the Egyptian state and bequeathed the sovereignty of Egypt to the pharaohs, since as Herodotus narrates in his 9 books of History, the Egyptian Seth would be the same Greek Typhon and the god Osiris would be Dionysus, and even before that in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo dating from the 7th century BC, Typhon is Python.

The Greek heroic age reaches its peak with the Trojan War, 1200 BC where Apollo is mentioned as the builder of the walls of Troy, after the sack of Troy the survivors by order of the god Apollo went to Italy and settled shortly after founding Rome, since it was from there that Dardanus, son of Zeus, emigrated and whose grandson Ilus would found Ilion at the foot of Mount Ida, that is, Troy. The Romans would be the descendants of Troy, since the descendants of Ilus, Priam, Paris and Hector would not survive Troy, but their first cousins led by Aeneas would establish the proto cities that later with their descendants would found Rome. This story would be remembered by Augustus in Virgil's book entitled the Aeneid, where Aeneas, during his travels, decides to stop in Crete after being instructed by Apollo on the island of Delos to settle in the land of his ancestors, in Italy, the original homeland of Dardanus, who four generations earlier had arrived at Mount Ida, where Troy would be founded and where he would marry the daughter of Teucer, whose grandson founded Ilium.

Ilus upon arriving at Mount Ida according to an oracle, the king of this city gave him a speckled cow, instructing him to found a city where the cow lay down. So he followed the cow, and when it reached a hill called Phrygian Athe, the cow lay down. Then Ilus founded a city there and called it Ilium, this parallel of following a cow and founding a city by order of Delphi is found with Cadmus and Thebes, so it could be deduced that the only one who gave oracles at that time was Apollo, although Apollodorus in his mythological library does not mention it. The son of Ilus, King Laomedon is the one who when Poseidon and Apollo fulfilling a punishment

from Zeus must work for the king as atonement, he asks them to build the walls of Troy, which would make the city impregnable.

After the fall of the city, Aeneas arrives in Italy and founds a new homeland carrying the relics of Troy, as narrated by Virgil, the most famous Roman poet, this same Virgil is the one who quotes the Sibyl of Cumae in the fourth Eclogue, which is remembered by the orator of Trier to Constantine in the vision of 310 when mention is made of Apollo and this poem with: "the divine songs of the bard" by which "all the kingdoms of the world were due to him by right", as long as he fulfilled the promise that this poem narrates later when he cries out to the immortal gods, "When you will grant the day in which this benevolent deity has established peace everywhere" in reference to Apollo, and as proof of the veracity of this event the speaker emphasizes that Apollo would promise Constantine 30 years of happy reign, which would be fulfilled with the 31 years of Constantine's reign, 306-337 AD.

To understand the era in which the gods lived, one must understand the Theogony, which describes the different ages of humanity. This is the era of Saturn, when cities were just being founded around the world, such as Egypt, where Saturn was known as Geb, father of the five gods: Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Osiris and Isis had a son, Horus, known as Apollo. He won the battle against his uncle Seth and claimed sovereignty over Egypt. Proof of his existence is the oldest historical document in history, the Palette of Menes or Narmer, the first Egyptian pharaoh. It was found in Hierakonpolis, the capital of Lower Egypt before its unification, which gave rise to the First Dynasty in 3000 BC. It depicts Apollo as the falcon god and celebrates the event that established the precedent for Horus to become the protector of royalty.

Apollo ends his adventure at Delphi where he kills the earth-born beast Typhon, which leads to the founding of the oracle and the colonization of Greece. Before the first two Greek cities, Athens or Thebes, Delphi already existed and gave oracles about its founding, very similar to Troy where it tells Cadmus where to found Thebes. Cadmus wanted to find his sister Europa, where such adventures led him to Greece, but he gave up on finding her on orders from Delphi. It is from this legend that the European continent receives its name, Europe. Delphi would also be present at the founding of Athens, which due to his mediation, it was decided that Athens should belong to Athena and not Poseidon, and that is why the oldest city in Europe is named after him, Athens. Another notable event in which Apollo participated was the founding of democracy with Cleisthenes, who asked Delphi for approval of his great political reform in 508 BC.

This is how Apollo and the oracular center of Delphi becomes the mediator of gods and men, as told in the Homeric hymn to Apollo dating back to 700 BC, the same time in which the Iliad was written, the oldest Western literary work in existence, from such a time dates the theogony where the 5 ages that narrates the age in which Zeus after overthrowing Cronus tries to control men and civilize them, but achieves it with the demigods in the heroic age, with many of the other gods and their children, such as Perseus, Hercules and Theseus, among others, but when all these heroes died in the epic of Troy and because the kingdoms of Troy and Mycenae would fall due to this war (11th century BC) and the Dorian invasion of the sons of Hercules, it is then that the dark age comes where the gods abandon the human world and the Iron Age comes, 400 years later in the 7th century BC, the age in which literature and writing is reborn in Greece in the absence of their gods, when this happens colonization begins in the Mediterranean and in the East the birth of the Persian Empire, as a result of the confrontation of earthly interests between different factions of Angels, it is then that Greece is miraculously saved from total destruction and with it the entire way of thinking of the West

thanks to a prophecy of Delphi in the Peloponnesian Wars (480 BC), the first large-scale conflict in history, to commemorate such a feat is that Apollo intervenes in Jewish tradition and becomes known as the Angel Gabriel, being prudent that the fate of the world should be hidden from the eyes of men until the time came when the rediscovery of this history buried in the dust took place, 2000 years later, because the Roman Empire and its destiny to fall in 476 AD. and the formation of the kingdoms from which the European nations would be born was prophesied by the book of Daniel, and that the gods would leave the earth until then.

It is then that to remember the existence of the participation of the God Apollo in those transcendental events in the history of humanity, from being the Angel Gabriel and giving the Quran to Muhammad, or being the protector of Louis XIV and obtaining for his grandchildren the Spanish Empire, at that time the largest monarchy in the world, to commemorate his devotion to the deity who gave him his guidance and protection, he created the Palace of Versailles, a sumptuous palace, the most magnificent of its time where all the charm of Greece and Rome was venerated. In the 17th century, the descendants of Louis XIV, the kings of the Spanish Empire and the Kingdom of France are the ones who finance and make possible the independence of the United States of America that would culminate in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris, leaving as a commemorative seal the eye of providence with the motto of the Fourth Eclogue.

This entire story represents the most faithful reminder of the immortality of the gods and their relationship with the human world, which gave rise, in its final manifestation, to the cult of Sol Invictus and the farewell from Delphi with the last pagan emperor of Rome, Julian the Apostate, whose task was to reform the religion and reestablish the pagan religion. However, due to the intervention of Delphi, Christian doctrine would prevail, as narrated in his last prophecy recorded by the ecclesiastical historian Philostorgius in the 4th century AD, in which he speaks respectfully of Christ and explains why he was the reason for the end of Delphi and his departure.

When the past memory of the gods had subsided and the Iron Age was being lived, when what kept the flame of hope alive had been forgotten, in the same way that the 9 muses illustrated with their wisdom the intelligence of civilization, virtues such as justice, truth, freedom, peace, solidarity, humility, among others, were the only ones that could perpetuate the light of reason in the soul of the collective conscience of society regardless of the passage of centuries, the 9 muses could have been an instrument to improve people's lives to a more evolved concept of contemplating life, but those virtues and what Christ taught were the concept for the flame of hope to last as long as the memory of the message that Christ bequeathed existed, and the true value that the message learned from the soul of God should mean for men.

The god Apollo is better known as the oracular god and the sun god in Greece than as Sol Invictus in Rome. It was in this role from Delphi that he interpreted the will of Zeus and gave advice on everything from war and colonization to private dilemmas about marriage and family. Apollo's role as the god of prophetic inspiration was closely intertwined with other aspects of his character, including his interests in purification, poetry, and music. The only Olympian to possess a musical instrument, the lyre, as an attribute, it regularly appears in poetry with the Muses and other divine choirs.

For the Dorian Greeks of the Peloponnese and their overseas cousins, the summer festival of Apollo Karneios (of the Ram) was the most important of the year, as their kings would be

descendants of the sons of Heracles, conquerors of Sparta 50 years after the Trojan War in the 11th century BC, who would achieve victory by following the instructions of the Delphic oracle. The Spartans took seriously the prohibition of combat during the Carneia, a celebration created by Delphi dating back to the mythical time of the sons of Heracles and their conquest of Greece, which is why the Spartans missed the Battle of Marathon and sent only a token force to Thermopylae, where Leonidas sacrificed himself following an oracle from Delphi. Apollo was the one who led the Greeks in the Persian invasion and made possible the cradle of democracy in the world, that is, Greece, through his victory at the Battle of Salamis where the Delphic prophecy resulted in the Greeks following guidelines determined by the oracle on what best to take in such desperate circumstances and unlikely odds, which led them to victory in the Persian Wars, fulfilling the oracle's dictates and allowing Greece to prevail over the Persian Empire founded by Cyrus the Great.

That war was a turning point in the history of Western civilization, as its cradle was close to extinction. Western civilization would never have flourished, and forms of government such as Democracy (508 BC) would not have been remembered, while the Romans and their Republic (509 BC) were just beginning to exist.

Delphi, perched on a rocky slope of Mount Parnassus, has a breathtaking view and a "numinous quality" noted by all visitors. A thriving Mycenaean village and cult area were abandoned at the end of the Bronze Age, but by the mid-9th century, people had returned to this beautiful site and resettled it. Fifty years later, Delphi had become a regional gathering place for the worship of Apollo. Fueled by the oracle's popularity, its fame grew to become the foremost sanctuary of Apollo in the Greek world, exerting a unique influence on Greek colonization and interstate relations. Its only rival in this regard was the Panhellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. During the Archaic period, a mythical pedigree was established for the sanctuary of Apollo to cement its claim to be the most important Greek oracle. Before Apollo's arrival, the oracle was said to belong to Gaia. Although Gaia had ancient oracles like the one at Olympia, the lack of archaeological or literary evidence for Gaia's presence at Delphi before the 5th century makes it difficult to accept the historicity of this tradition. What attracted so many visitors to Delphi was the opportunity to consult Apollo, god of divination and prophecy.

In myth, Apollo often foretold future events, such as Oedipus's murder of his father. In reality, he more frequently advised petitioners on the best course of action to address their problems, specializing in ritual solutions that invoked the aid of the gods. If a city suffered a plague or a poor harvest, perhaps the citizens had forgotten to make the proper sacrifices or purifications. If a land shortage resulted in civic discord, or if new trade connections were needed, Apollo might recommend that colonists settle in likely areas abroad. The oracle could be consulted on virtually any major undertaking contemplated by a city, from legal reform to military conquest. The congregation of delegates from many cities also ensured that Delphi remained a valuable resource for intelligence gathering and diplomatic exchange. Delphi's political importance meant that it was not to be under the control of any one state. After a series of wars, the sanctuary was overseen by a federation of states known as the Delphic Amphictyony. In the Classical period, however, the oracle was consulted primarily on matters related to religious practice and procedure. Purification was an important Delphic specialty, although there is surprisingly little evidence of purification rituals (e.g., cleansing from bloodguilt) performed at Delphi itself.

At the center of all this activity was the Pythia, the priestess who acted as the medium for Apollo's voice. Consultation with the Pythia was limited to one day per month during the nine-

month season when Apollo was believed to be "in residence," and this helps explain why consultations in the early centuries of the oracle were dominated by important matters of state rather than by individual concerns as at Dodona. Before an oracle session, the Pythia was purified, probably with water from the Castalian spring. She entered the inner room of the temple and sat on a covered tripod cauldron, clutching a laurel branch. There she received the petitioners' questions and answered them. Many reconstructions of the oracle have described the process as one of violent possession, in which the Pythia raved incoherently while the priests translated her answers into verse oracles. Certainly, the Pythia experienced a form of religious ecstasy, and its cause has been the subject of much speculation through the centuries. According to various theories, she owed her inspiration to a drink from the Cassotis spring, to bay leaves she chewed while sitting on the tripod, to a mediumistic trance that required no artificial stimulants, or to intoxicating vapors rising from a chasm in the earth.

The Homeric Hymn to Apollo gives the legend of the sanctuary's founding, which tells how he defeated the enormous serpent Typhon for possession of the site and oversaw the construction of the first temple, which archaeologists date to the late 7th century BC. At the Pythian festival, held every four years, one of the most important competitions was the music competition, in which musicians presented their interpretations of Apollo's combat with the serpent. The Pythian games originally focused on artistic contests of lyre playing and flute singing, although sporting events soon began to gain popularity as the festival became more inspired by the Olympic Games.

The entire Aegean coast was dotted with oracular sanctuaries of Apollo. The Eastern Greeks had rich Apollonian traditions influenced by their non-Greek neighbors and were far enough removed from Delphi to require their own oracle centers. The most famous was Didyma, but she never achieved the prominence of Delphi in Greek affairs because her interests were too closely aligned with those of nearby Miletus. There are over 500 alleged oracular statements that have survived from various sources that refer to the Delphic oracle. Many are anecdotal and have survived as proverbs. Some are ambiguously worded, apparently to portray the oracle in a positive light, regardless of the outcome. Such prophecies were admired for their skillful writing. The most significant or those that had a historical significance worth remembering appear in the book.

The oracle was respected by kings, philosophers, statesmen, and mythological heroes because they believed it was the primary means of communicating with the gods. It would be an oracle in Trier, Gaul, with the same prophetic attributes as Delphi and Daphne, where Constantine receives the promise of a 30-year happy reign and begins his affiliation with the cult of Apollo or Sol Invictus. It is also found in his coinage of Sol Invictus, or in his speeches, such as the speech to the Assembly of Saints, where he places in the mouth of the Erythraean Sibyl, a prophetess of Apollo, a prophecy of Christ and his ministry. It would be in Daphne where the last pagan emperor of Rome, Julian the Apostate, would receive his last prophecy and the reason for his farewell: the good fortune of the doctrine of his brother, Christ.

Another important fact to address would be that Apollo would use the mask of the Angel Gabriel to make known his prophecies and the purpose of his intervention in the Bible through the Book of Daniel, as revealed in his intervention in the Medical Wars when the prophecy of Xerxes and his attempt to conquer Greece is discussed, and that it is through Gabriel's intervention that such an event is avoided. It is through this parallel, among others, that we can recognize Apollo's participation or authorship in this book, since he was the main divine entity that watched over Greece's interests in that war.

The Book of Daniel explains how the Greeks would defeat the Persians through Alexander the Great, the goat, and that a kingdom would eventually arise after him and subjugate the other nations. This would become the Roman Empire. At that time, the Messiah Prince, would come to be sacrificed. This announcement was made 538 years in advance, and Alexander the Great was announced 182 years before his birth. At the same time, the book emphasizes that no one would help Gabriel against the Angel Prince of Persia, but only the Angel of Daniel's people, that is, Michael or another name given to Christ. This implies that the conflict between these two factions in heaven would continue even after the Persian Empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great.

However, to fully understand how this story fits into the Bible, we must go back to the 7th century BC, the date when the Iliad and the Book of Isaiah were composed. One was the matrix of Greek and Western literature, the other was the most recognized book during the Persian Empire and the people of Israel. At the time when Isaiah (lived approx. 765-695 BC and wrote his book sometime during his ministry, approx. 740-701 BC) was writing his book, Homer (lived in the mid-8th century BC, and wrote his poems approx. 750-730 BC) and Hesiod (lived in the second half of the 8th century BC and wrote his work approx. 700 BC) were writing the epics of Greece and their Theogony, it is possible to judge which was richer, because the works of the last two were forgotten because the Christian religion was chosen to replace the pagan one, but which highlighted the book of Daniel as a precursor to what was instilled with Christianity, while the book of Isaiah was perpetuated because the Old Testament was incorporated as a supporter of the new one.

The book continues with a detailed description and chronology of the numismatic tradition honoring Sol, the main deity in the Late Roman Empire, its relationship with emperors such as Septimius Severus, from whom its first coinage arose in 197 AD, its subsequent attempt to return the cult as the only one in the Roman Empire by Elagabalus in 219 AD, as well as the peak it had thanks to Aurelian in 270-275 AD, and that this coinage would have its end through Constantine who minted it from 310-323 AD over a period of 13 years.

We continue with a brief biography of Aurelian, an emperor who was acclaimed as the restorer of the world after returning the empire to its original cohesion, after a period of fragmentation in which it was divided into 3, with Zenobia in Egypt and Palmyra, and with the Gallic empire that from 260, occupied Gaul, Britain and initially Hispania, and which would end up succumbing under Tetricus at the hands of Aurelian in 273. Aurelian attributed his victories to Sol Invictus, a deity who according to Augustan history was the one who helped him in his battles and who recognized him again when he entered the temple of Sol in Emesa, Syria. This is why Aurelian would coin the name Sol Invictus throughout almost his entire reign, and why he would finally dedicate a temple to the sun in Rome on December 25, 274, but not before celebrating the sun games, most likely following his triumphal procession from October 19 to 22, with October 22 being the most important date.

Since the founding of the cult in 274 AD. until 310 in the vision of Apollo, after the establishment of the cult of Sol Invictus as the main precedent of the celebration of December 25, initially to Sol Invictus, and which would later be dedicated to Christmas, the cult of Sol Invictus and Christianity would merge, since Constantine did not prohibit the pagan religion, nor did he impose his new religion by force, it was by persuasion and based on rewards to those who demonstrated their devotion to their new god, that is why this cult would survive until the time of Julian, nephew of Constantine, the last pagan emperor of Rome, who tried to reestablish the pagan cult and not by force, but by cunning to suppress the Christian cult, but

as this at the same time had a great inclination towards the cult that his uncle professed in the first years of his life, to that of Sol Invictus and that of Apollo, at the same time it gives the meaning behind the festivity of December 25, a festivity instituted by Aurelian in honor of Sol Invictus two months after the establishment of his cult on December 25, 274 AD, but whose cult was inaugurated by this emperor on October 22, 274 AD, and whose celebration was the most important, followed only by that of December 25, as evidenced by the 36 chariot races in the Circus Maximus for the Ludi Solis on October 22, this celebration being the most celebrated of the year, followed only by the 30 chariot races of the Natalis Solis Invicti on December 25.

The circus was the largest venue in Rome for holding ludi, public games connected to Roman religious festivals. The ludi, plural of ludus, meaning "sport" or "game" in Latin, were sponsored by illustrious Romans or by the Roman state for the benefit of the Roman people and the gods. Most of them were held annually or at annual intervals according to the Roman calendar; others were held to fulfill a religious vow, such as the games celebrating a triumph. From 274 AD to 362 AD. The 36 chariot races were held on October 22nd for the establishment of the cult of Sol Invictus by Aurelian followed by December 25th, date of the consecration of the temple to Sol Invictus by Aurelian the same year of 274 AD, such celebrations would continue to be celebrated until the time of the Emperor Julian as the festival of the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" and later known as Christmas, and that according to the Emperor Julian, would be celebrated having as its main cause the winter solstice, as collected since ancient times the ancient Roman celebrations and rites, it was in honor of the Sun, a divine entity with which Apollo, the god of light, music and prophecy, was identified, just as Venus was identified with its own planet in the solar system, Apollo was personified with the Sun which was the main celestial body.

This event, together with the burning of the temple of Apollo in Daphne, in Antioch on October 22, 362 AD. (I was born on October 22), an event that occurred by non-human work, in the same year in which the oracle of Delphi prophesied its own end while exalting the role of Christ and the Christian religion in the last prophecy, is the most symbolic commemorative event with which it was attempted to perpetuate the prophetic and civilizing role of Apollo, and his work that he did for Western civilization, so that in due time the slogans of who made those great feats and deeds possible would be revealed, from the victory in the medical wars by the Greeks against the Persian Empire, the conquests of Alexander the Great to the Persian Empire, the victory in the Punic Wars of the Romans against the Carthaginians, the establishment of the Roman Empire, and finally the establishment of Christianity in Rome through the Emperor Constantine, and ultimately in the event that marked a turning point in history that was the reign of Julian, where the revival of pagan worship or the prevalence of the Christian religion was at stake, it was at such an event that Apollo manifested himself, leaving a milestone in history to show that it was his intervention that made the difference in favor of Christianity, enabling it to survive for the following 17 centuries.

We continue with the biography of Constantine and the tetrarchy that preceded his reign, as well as a brief mention of the great persecution of Diocletian in 303. The book continues with the Anonymous Panegyric on Constantine from 310, better known as the Latin 6 panegyric 'Incipit secundus', by an anonymous author whose work was delivered to the imperial court of Trier in 310 on the occasion of the Quinquennialia of Constantine I the Great (fifth anniversary of his accession to the imperial throne) and the celebration of the day of the founding of the city of Trier. It contains a description of an apparition of the sun god Apollo to Constantine, which

has often been seen as a model for the Christian evocation that Constantine later had before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The speech also promulgates the legend that the deified Emperor Claudius II was an ancestor of Constantine. It was from this vision that Constantine would begin minting Sol Invictus from 310 to 323, thus identifying the Unconquered Sun god with Apollo.

The book continues with Constantine's consecration of the Dies Solis, the day of the Sun, on Sunday, as a day of rest and veneration of God in 321, thus further emphasizing the relationship between the Sun and Christianity. Just as in 324, just six weeks after Constantine's victory over Licinius at Chrysopolis and now the sole emperor of the Roman Empire, he would move the Delphic Serpentine Column from Delphi to the Hippodrome of Constantinople, the same offering made by the Greeks in gratitude for Apollo's help on behalf of the Greeks in the Persian Wars, at that time 800 years old, thus imperceptibly emphasizing Constantine's association with his ancient patron deity, Apollo, and in 330 AD. in the final years of his life, after the dedication of the new Rome, the city that would bear his name, Constantinople, he would build a monumental Colossus of Apollo in the forum of that city, even larger than the Roman Colosseum, which would be the largest column and statue erected in the Roman Empire up to that time.

The book also narrates the main versions of what happened in the fire at the Temple of Apollo of Daphne in Antioch, on October 22, 362, the same year in which the last prophecy of the Delphic Oracle was given to Julian, through the mouth of Saint Artemius. It also gives a precise explanation of how the oracle came to an end for favoring Christianity and how the god of Christians inadvertently expelled Apollo from his sanctuary, all recorded in the *Artemii Passio* (The Passion of Saint Artemius) by Philostorgius, a writer who lived from 368 to 439 AD. Julian blamed the Christians for the fire, but various other sources claimed it was the work of lightning or fire that fell from the sky, as recorded in pagan as well as Christian sources.

Just as December 25th is the most celebrated religious holiday in the modern era, October 22nd was the most celebrated holiday in the late Roman Empire, commemorating the games established by Aurelian in honor of Sol Invictus. The exception was that it was only celebrated once every four years, unlike December 25th, or the birth of Sol Invictus on the winter solstice, a date that Christians adopted after Constantine's conversion to identify with the birth of Christ, all recorded in Philocalus' calendar.

The three most important temples of Apollo in the Roman Empire, that of Delphi which existed since the 15th century BC, that of Daphne in Antioch on the Orontes, founded by Seleucus, the greatest successor of Alexander the Great in 300 BC, and that of Apollo Palatine founded in 28 BC. in Rome by Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, these three temples would be destroyed consecutively after the last prophecy, although that of Delphi would simply stop giving prophecies and would simply be forgotten, that of Daphne would be destroyed by fire or by non-human work on October 22, 362 AD, and that of Apollo Palatine on March 19, 363 AD, March 19 celebrating the birth of Athena, as recorded in the *Fasti* of Ovid, both events would happen while still in live of Julian, the last pagan emperor of Rome, these coincidences would precisely have the design of symbolically marking the end of the pagan religion in Rome as the will of the god of prophecies, for the benefit of the Christian religion, while they were the slogans to make known that my birth would be on October 22, slogans such as December 25 which meant the winter solstice, according to what is attested by Julian in his hymn to King Helios in December 362 AD.

"Did not Apollo, who reigns with him, deliver his oracles to every corner of the earth, grant men divine wisdom, and adorn their cities with religious and civil laws? He civilized most of the inhabited earth by means of the Greek colonies, facilitating submission to the Romans, who are not only of Greek race, but who have also established and kept divine laws and trust in the gods from beginning to end as something Greek; moreover, they were not inferior to any of the best-governed cities in regard to the organization of their city, not to say that they were superior to all other systems used, at least until now. For this reason, I believe that Apollo recognized this city as having a Greek origin and constitution..."

...

Do you wish me to mention yet another proof of this, I mean the work of King Numa? In Rome maiden priestesses guard the undying flame of the sun at different hours in turn; they guard the fire that is produced on earth by the agency of the god. And I can tell you a still greater proof of the power of this god, which is the work of that most divine king himself. The months are reckoned from the moon by, one may say, all other peoples; but we and the Egyptians alone reckon the days of every year according to the movements of the sun. If after this I should say that we also worship Mithras, and celebrate games in honour of Helios (The quadrennial games are the Ludi Solis from October 19 to 22) every four years, I shall be speaking of customs that are somewhat recent. But perhaps it is better to cite a proof from the remote past. The beginning of the cycle of the year is placed at different times by different peoples. Some place it at the spring equinox, others at the height of summer, and many in the late autumn; but they each and all sing the praises of the most visible gifts of Helios. One nation celebrates the season best adapted for work in the fields, when the earth bursts into bloom and exults, when all the crops are just beginning to sprout, and the sea begins to be safe for sailing, and the disagreeable, gloomy winter puts on a more cheerful aspect; others again award the crown to the summer season, since at that time they can safely feel confidence about the yield of the fruits, when the grains have already been harvested and midsummer is now at its height, and the fruits on the trees are ripening. Others again, with still more subtlety, regard as the close of the year the time when all the fruits are in their perfect prime and decay has already set in. For this reason they celebrate the annual festival of the New Year in late autumn. But our forefathers, from the time of the most divine king Numa, paid still greater reverence to the god Helios. They ignored the question of mere utility, I think, because they were naturally religious and endowed with unusual intelligence; but they saw that he is the cause of all that is useful, and so they ordered the observance of the New Year to correspond with the present season; that is to say when King Helios returns to us again, and leaving the region furthest south and, rounding Capricorn as though it were a goal-post, advances from the south to the north to give us our share of the blessings of the year. And that our forefathers, because they comprehended this correctly, thus established the beginning of the year, one may perceive from the following. For it was not, I think, the time when the god turns, but the time when he becomes visible to all men, as he travels from south to north, that they appointed for the festival. For still unknown to them was the nicety of those laws which the Chaldaeans and Egyptians discovered, and which Hipparchus and Ptolemy perfected: but they judged simply by sense-perception, and were limited to what they could actually see.

But the truth of these facts was recognised, as I said, by a later generation. Before the beginning of the year, at the end of the month which is called after Kronos, we celebrate in honour of Helios the most splendid games, and we dedicate the festival to the Invincible Sun.

And after this it is not lawful to perform any of the shows that belong to the last month, gloomy as they are, though necessary. But, in the cycle, immediately after the end of the Kronia (Saturnalia, celebrated from December 17 to 23) follow the Heliiaia. (Hymn to King Helios, Julian)

Once the Saturnalia was over, the festival of "Invincible Helios" was celebrated shortly afterward. Julian, who reports that the celebration of December 25th dates back to the time of King Numa Pompilius (the second king of Rome, successor to Romulus, reigned from 716 to 674 BC, and the founder of the Roman religion, as attested by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives*), attempts to explain why the ancient Romans believed that this festival was the winter solstice.

The winter solstice marks the arrival of winter and is also the longest night of the year, which would be understood as the birth of the Sun for those who could appreciate such a phenomenon. The ancient Romans traced the annual movement of the sun in relation to the Earth. They observed that in late autumn the days became shorter and the sun sank lower in the sky. To them, the sun appeared to be dying. On December 21, when "The sun stood still," the ancients believed the sun had "died" and that darkness would take over the earth. For the next three days—the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th—the sun seemed to have stopped precariously (meaning the sun's downward trajectory would reverse direction in three days). The nights lasted no longer, but neither did the days. On December 25, the sun rose a little earlier and climbed a little higher in the sky than the day before. Ah! The sun was born again!

This was according to the last pagan philosopher Emperor of Rome's version of the mystical meaning behind the Roman Christmas, before Constantine made it Christian, this account would be given 2 months after the last prophecy and 5 months before the death of the emperor, Julian who reigned from 361 to 363, attempted to reverse the success of Christianity achieved by Constantine and his sons. It was Julian's wish and design to deprive Christians of the advantages of wealth, knowledge and power, as at the same time most of the Christian officials were gradually removed from their employment in the state, the army and the provinces, and in the same way he attempted to attract the majority of his subjects to the old religion of Rome, giving preeminence to the philosophers and priests of his religion. It is told in the *Passion of Saint Artemius*, written by Philostorgius, that Artemius, Duke of Egypt and former companion of Constantius II, would reproach Julian for his actions against the Christians, announcing that Christ was the only true god, announced by the prophets, the sibyls and the Sibylline books, and at the same time making mention of the response brought from the oracle of Delphi by Oribasius, Julian's doctor, making known to Julian the last prophecy:

«Go tell the king the wondrous hall is fallen to the ground. Now Phoebus has a cell no more, no laurel that foretells, No talking spring; the water that once spoke is heard no more.»

and later continues:

"O would that you had never asked me at my very end,

Unhappy ministers of mine, about the holy god

And spirit holding cluster-like all things in its embrace:

The stars, the light, the rivers, Tartarus, the air and fire!

This spirit drives me all unwilling from this very shrine.

And now the day when I must yield my tripods!» is at hand.

O grieve for me, ye tripods, grieve: Apollo now departs;

Departs: a mortal man who is from heaven forces me;

He is the God who suffered, yet his godhead suffered not.”!

Five miles from Antioch, in the suburb of Daphne, the Macedonian kings of Syria had consecrated to Apollo one of the most elegant places of devotion in the pagan world. A magnificent temple was erected in honor of the god of light; his colossal figure almost filled the vast sanctuary, which was enriched with gold and gems and adorned by the skill of Greek artists. It is said to have been equal in size to the statue of Zeus at Olympia by Phidias, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

To fulfill the promise given by the Delphic oracle, the statue and temple of Apollo at Daphne, near Antioch, would be burned on October 22, 362 AD, by no human hand, or, as is said, by a flash of lightning, or by the action of God, as the Christians recounted. The emperor, faced with believing a miracle or the vengeance of the Christians, chose the latter.

That Apollo was the architect of the temple's destruction is demonstrated by the construction of the Temple of Apollo Palatine by Augustus, due to the indication of lightning as a sign of the god, as it was in the following circumstances: In 36 BC, a grateful popular assembly voted to grant Octavian a house at state expense. He had already purchased an expensive property at the southwest end of the Palatine Hill, but it was struck by lightning, and this omen persuaded Octavian to demolish the ill-fated building and replace it with a temple dedicated to Apollo. With his subsidy from the Senate, he purchased a house, or rather a group of houses, right next door. The site was carefully chosen, because Octavian wanted his residence to mark and express his role in the commonwealth. Nearby stood a hut, built on the natural tuff of the mountain, with a thatched roof and walls of reeds and mud. Said to have been the home of Romulus, the founder of Rome, it was carefully preserved in his honor. By associating himself closely with Rome's origins, Octavian was communicating to the Roman world that he represented traditional values, the *mos maiorum*, or ways of the ancestors.

Today, almost nothing remains of the temple, but in its time, a more splendid building could not have been designed. Unlike the walls of Roman temples, which were usually made of brick and concrete, covered with marble, the walls of the Temple of Apollo were made of solid, white, and gleaming marble. The doors were gilded with ivory inlays. On the roof was a chariot of the sun.

This would be the means by which I would come to know that my birth on October 22 coincided with the burning of the Temple of Apollo in Daphne in 362 AD, a reason that prompted me to thoroughly investigate the history behind the events described here. What is known with certainty about the devil is limited to a few verses in the Bible, but to understand them, one must delve deeper into the historical context. What generated or was the driving force of Christianity, scientifically and historically speaking, how the flow of the apostles' actions was condensed by the actions and sayings of one man, that is, Constantine. However, to understand the psyche behind his actions, one must investigate his entire life.

Apollo in the modern era would be known from Louis XIV, the Sun King, where at Versailles the official name of the throne room was the Salon of Apollo, which would be the ceremonial and throne room of the sovereign from 1683 onward, until the French Revolution in 1789. In 1713,

during the War of the Spanish Succession, Louis XIV obtained for his grandson Philip V, Duke of Anjou, the throne of the Spanish Empire, which was at that time the largest monarchy in the world and a traditional enemy of France until that event. It was then in 1779 that the Spanish Empire joined France in the American War of Independence, whose kings, Charles III and Louis XVI, both descendants of Louis XIV, through their alliance would tip the balance of victory in favor of the Americans.

It was as a result of this that in 1782, Charles Thomson, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States and the man responsible for designing its seal, chose the Eye of Providence atop the pyramid, which could be identified as the Eye of Horus, the Egyptian name for Apollo, along with the motto *Annuit Cœptis*, "He has favored our enterprise," and the motto *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, "New order of the centuries." He adapted it from a line in Virgil's *Eclogue IV*, a pastoral poem written by the famous Roman writer in 40 BC that expresses the longing for a new era of peace and happiness.

«"Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung

Has come and gone, and the majestic roll

Of circling centuries begins anew:

Justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign,

With a new breed of men sent down from heaven.

Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom

The iron shall cease, the golden race arise,

Befriend him, chaste Lucina; 'tis thine own

***Apollo reigns."*»**

The fourth eclogue would exist from 40 BC and would be reminded to Constantine in his vision of 310 by the orator of Trier in Gaul that historically would fulfill his promise of 30 years reign for Constantine and a possible proof of this event are the coins to Victory minted by Constantine in 313 and as late as 335 AD after 30 years of reign.

"Fortune herself so ordered this that the felicity of your situation reminded you to bring what you had vowed to the immortal gods, in the very place where you had already made a detour to the most beautiful temple in the whole world, or rather to the god who was manifest there, when you saw him. For you did I believe, Constantine, see your patron Apollo, and Victory accompanying him, offering you crowns of laurel, each of which represents a foretelling of thirty years. That is of course the length of human generations, which are certainly due to take you beyond the old age of Nestor. And yet why do I say 'I believe'? You did see him, and you recognized yourself in the image of the one to whom the sacred poems of bards prophesied that the kingdoms of the whole world were due by right (in reference to Apollo). That has now I think at last come to pass, seeing that you are, Emperor, like him, young, blessed, our savior and a most handsome one! So quite rightly did you adorn those most venerable temples with such offerings that they no longer miss their former ones, and now all temples seem to be calling you to them—and especially our Apollo, in whose boiling waters are punished perjurers, whom you above all have good cause to hate."

"Ye immortal gods, when will you grant the day that this most benevolent deity shall have established peace everywhere and may visit those groves of Apollo as well, and the sacred temple and steaming fountain springs? Their bubbling waters, warm and gently gushing, seem eager to smile upon your eyes, Constantine, and to flow into your lips. To be sure, you will marvel too at the shrine of your patron god there, and the waters heated without any indication of the ground boiling. There is no bitterness in their taste or appearance, but a clarity of flavour and aroma like that of cool springs. There too you will make donations, establish privileges, in short restore my own home country by worshipping that very place. That ancient noble city which once prided itself in its fraternal relations with Rome, is awaiting the assistance of your sovereignty, so that there too public buildings and splendid temples may be repaired by your generosity. In such a way I observe this happy city, whose foundation day is being commemorated by your gracious visit, reviving so much in every quarter that it may even yet rejoice to have once collapsed, since it has grown greater through your benevolence."

The ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome have had a lasting influence on Western culture. Artists and playwrights celebrated their stories in their triumphs and tragedies, and architects still imitate their building designs. Greek and Roman literature (both mythology and philosophy) provided models for understanding human nature, the human psyche, and reflections on our existence. From these two cultures, we inherited our alphabet, democracy, juries, tragedy, comedy, the Olympic Games, epic poetry, legal codes, philosophy, the gymnasium, the republican form of government, the veto, our modern calendar, the names of our planets, a welfare system, funeral rites, the keystone arch, aqueducts, amphitheaters, stadiums, road construction, cement, apartment buildings, and, last but not least, takeout fast food.

APOLLO, THE GREEK GOD OF THE SUN, DELPHI, THE TEMPLE OF PROPHECY, THE ROMAN
RELIGION OF SOL INVICTUS, THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE, ROME'S FIRST CHRISTIAN
EMPEROR, HIS INFLUENCE ON CHRISTMAS AND HIS AFFILIATION WITH SOLAR THEOLOGY AND
THE GREEK ORIGIN OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL IN THE BIBLE

The Oracle of Delphi was the religious institution that preceded the Catholic Church in Greece and the Roman Empire. The oracle existed from approximately the 15th century BC to 362 AD, renewing religious fervor in the various cults of the Greek Pantheon, while serving as an intermediary between gods and men. In the same way, it can be considered that to a certain extent the oracle and Apollo, the spirit by whom the prophecies were given, were co-participants in the institution of the Catholic Church, when its existence was called into question shortly after its founding by Constantine, by Julian the Apostate, the last pagan emperor of Rome, whose purpose was to suppress Christianity and restore pagan worship, is that the oracle would intervene giving its last prophecy, thus announcing its desire for the Catholic Church to prevail, while prophesying its own end. Western civilization prevailed thanks to the oracle in the Persian Wars, and as a result Alexander the Great would complete the task of bringing justice to the Greeks, who with his conquests gave rise to the Hellenistic Period, which laid the foundations upon which the Roman Empire was built, and was the one that contributed to Rome its religion, literature, philosophy, science, art, among others, and it would be in the Roman Empire where the seeds of the Christian faith would be sown.

At the time of Christ's birth, in 753 AD after the founding of Rome, the principal deity in the Roman Empire was Apollo, to whom Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, attributed his victory over Mark Antony, thanks to which he became the founder of Imperial Rome in 27 BC. At the same time, he initiated a period of peace throughout the Mediterranean known as the Pax Romana. This period of peace greatly helped the Apostles spread the good news of their faith, where approximately 300 years after the crucifixion of Christ, through the Emperor Constantine, it would become the main religion of the Roman Empire. But this was not always the case.

There was a tradition almost three millennia old, originating in ancient Egypt and already known even before the time of the unification of the Egyptian state, which gave rise to the first dynasty with Menes or Narmer, the first Pharaoh of Egypt.

At the oracle of Delphi, when Apollo was asked who he was, he replied:

"Sun, Horus, Osiris, king, son of Zeus, Apollo, steward of the times and seasons, of the wind and rain, guiding the reins of dawn and night with their many constellations, ruler of the blazing star and of eternal fire." (1*)

Apollo was already known under his Egyptian name of Horus on the Narmer Palette, the earliest recorded historical document, dating from 3000 BC, which depicts the union of ancient Egypt by showing Narmer wearing the red crown of Lower Egypt and the white crown of Upper Egypt, and accompanied by a falcon which was the representation of Horus. While it was believed that from the dream of the Sphinx of Thutmose IV in the 14th century BC (in the dream the Sphinx in a state of deterioration asks Thutmose to be its protector and clear it of the desert sands, and that in return he would become Pharaoh of Egypt, which happens shortly after), the great sphinx of Giza was a representation of Horus, more commonly known

as Horemakhet, "Horus on the horizon", it represented the sunrise and the dawn sun, and had a local cult.

The basic religious concept in ancient Egypt was universal harmony between people and the gods, emphasizing gratitude and based on what we would call magic, personified by Heka. This god participated in the act of creation and was the basic principle of Egyptian religion. It was the power that enabled the gods to perform their functions and the people to communicate with the gods. Religion permeated the lives of Egyptians, regardless of their social class, and shaped every aspect of daily routine. The gods of Egypt were perceived as lords of creation and as friends interested in helping and guiding the people. They were not seen as deities living in the skies, but as gods who lived with the people in their daily lives. Trees were considered the homes of the deities and were associated with maternal care, protection, and nurturing. The goddess Ma'at was one of the most important in the pantheon. Ma'at embodied the concept of harmony, and people were expected to honor and respect this principle and recognize that their actions affected others and the workings of the universe. By respecting the principle of Ma'at, or harmony, people stood with the gods and forces of good, against the forces of darkness and chaos, something important for the soul as it passed on to the afterlife.

In ancient Egypt, the afterlife was a certainty. Upon death, your soul traveled to another plane of existence and left the body, awaiting a merciful judgment and admission to eternal life in paradise, the Field of Reeds, which was an idealized version of life on earth. The principle of ma'at, so important during life, was also important after death. When you died, your soul traveled to the Hall of Truth and made a negative confession of all uncommitted sins before Osiris, Thoth, Anubis, and the 42 judges. Your heart was then weighed on the scales of justice with the white feather of truth, the feather of Ma'at. If your heart weighed less, you continued on to the Field of Reeds, but if it weighed more, it was thrown to the ground where it was devoured by the monster Ammyt, resulting in the "great death" of the soul, nonexistence. The threat of nonexistence was the Egyptians' greatest fear, and the best way to avoid such a fate was to have a heart lightened by gratitude. The sin that gives rise to others was believed to be the sin of ingratitude, which led to other negative thoughts and behaviors. By maintaining harmony and balance through gratitude, and a heart "light as a feather," they could enjoy a productive life in peace on earth and look forward to eternal paradise after death. As can be understood, religion played an important role in ancient Egyptian civilization, as it defined the social hierarchy, legitimized the king's rule, and formed the basis for social laws and interaction. It also created stability in life by fostering harmony and balance and provided security against mortality given the certainty of life after death.

This belief originated from the myth of Isis and Osiris, where Osiris, after being unjustly murdered by his brother Seth, becomes king of the dead, leaving the legacy of the Egyptian throne to his son Horus, who defeats his uncle and becomes the last god to reign among the Egyptians, ceding the throne to the first human king, Menes or Narmer.

The Greek writer Plutarch (circa 40–120 AD) compiled a volume called *Peri Isidos Kai Osiridos* (On Isis and Osiris), probably a few years before his death, and dedicated it to Clea, a priestess of Delphi, who appears to have been a devotee of Isis. The following account of the kingship myth, using the Greek names of the gods, is preserved thanks to Plutarch.

“Here follows the story related in the briefest possible words with the omission of everything that is merely unprofitable or superfluous:

They say that the Sun, when he became aware of Rhea's intercourse with Cronus, invoked a curse upon her that she should not give birth to a child in any month or year; but Hermes [equivalent to the Egyptian Thoth], being enamoured of the goddess, consorted with her. Later, playing at draughts with the moon, he won from her the seventieth part of each of her periods of illumination, and from all the winnings he composed five days, and intercalated them as an addition to the three hundred and sixty days. The Egyptians even now call these five days intercalated and celebrate them as the birthdays of the gods. They relate that on the first of these days Osiris was born, and at the hour of his birth a voice issued forth saying, «The Lord of All advances to the light.» But some relate that a certain Pamyles, while he was drawing water in Thebes, heard a voice issuing from the shrine of Zeus, which bade him proclaim with a loud voice that a mighty and beneficent king, Osiris, had been born; and for this Cronus entrusted to him the child Osiris, which he brought up. It is in his honour that the festival of Pamyliia is celebrated, a festival which resembles the phallic processions. On the second of these days Arueris was born whom they call Apollo, and some call him also the elder Horus. On the third day Typhon [equivalent to the Egyptian Seth] was born, but not in due season or manner, but with a blow he broke through his mother's side and leapt forth. On the fourth day Isis was born in the regions that are ever moist; and on the fifth Nephthys, to whom they give the name of Finality and the name of Aphroditê, and some also the name of Victory. There is also a tradition that Osiris and Arueris were sprung from the Sun, Isis from Hermes, and Typhon and Nephthys from Cronus. For this reason the kings considered the third of the intercalated days as inauspicious, and transacted no business on that day, nor did they give any attention to their bodies until nightfall. They relate, moreover, that Nephthys became the wife of Typhon; but Isis and Osiris were enamoured of each other and consorted together in the darkness of the womb before their birth. Some say that Arueris came from this union and was called the elder Horus by the Egyptians, but Apollo by the Greeks.

One of the first acts related of Osiris in his reign was to deliver the Egyptians from their destitute and brutish manner of living. This he did by showing them the fruits of cultivation, by giving them laws, and by teaching them to honour the gods. Later he travelled over the whole earth civilizing it without the slightest need of arms, but most of the peoples he won over to his way by the charm of his persuasive discourse combined with song and all manner of music. Hence the Greeks came to identify him with Dionysus.

During his absence the tradition is that Typhon attempted nothing revolutionary because Isis, who was in control, was vigilant and alert; but when he returned home Typhon contrived a treacherous plot against him and formed a group of conspirators seventy-two in number. He had also the co-operation of a queen from Ethiopia who was there at the time and whose name they report as Aso. Typhon, having secretly measured Osiris's body and having made ready a beautiful chest of corresponding size artistically ornamented, caused it to be brought into the room where the festivity was in progress. The company was much pleased at the sight of it and admired it greatly, whereupon Typhon jestingly promised to present it to the man who should find the chest to be exactly his length when he lay down in it. They all tried it in turn, but no one fitted it; then Osiris got into it and lay down, and those who were in the plot ran to it and slammed down the lid, which they fastened by nails from the outside and also by using molten lead. Then they carried the chest to the river and sent it on its way to the sea through the Tanitic Mouth [in the Nile Delta]. Wherefore the Egyptians even to this day name this mouth the hateful and execrable. Such is the tradition. They say also that the date on which this deed was done was the seventeenth day of Athyr, when the

sun passes through Scorpion, and in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Osiris; but some say that these are the years of his life and not of his reign.

The first to learn of the deed and to bring to men's knowledge an account of what had been done were the Pans and Satyrs who lived in the region around Chemmis, and so, even to this day, the sudden confusion and consternation of a crowd is called a panic. Isis, when the tidings reached her, at once cut off one of her tresses and put on a garment of mourning in a place where the city still bears the name of Kopto. Others think that the name means deprivation, for they also express "deprive" by means of "koptein." But Isis wandered everywhere at her wits' end; no one whom she approached did she fail to address, and even when she met some little children she asked them about the chest. As it happened, they had seen it, and they told her the mouth of the river through which the friends of Typhon had launched the coffin into the sea. Wherefore the Egyptians think that little children possess the power of prophecy, and they try to divine the future from the portents which they find in children's words, especially when children are playing about in holy places and crying out whatever chances to come into their minds.

They relate also that Isis, learning that Osiris in his love had consorted with her sister through ignorance, in the belief that she was Isis, and seeing the proof of this in the garland of melilote which he had left with Nephthys, sought to find the child; for the mother, immediately after its birth, had exposed it because of her fear of Typhon. And when the child had been found, after great toil and trouble, with the help of dogs which led Isis to it, it was brought up and became her guardian and attendant, receiving the name of Anubis, and it is said to protect the gods just as dogs protect men.

Thereafter Isis, as they relate, learned that the chest had been cast up by the sea near the land of Byblus [in Lebanon] and that the waves had gently set it down in the midst of a clump of heather....

As they relate, Isis proceeded to her son Horus, who was being reared in Buto, and bestowed the chest in a place well out of the way; but Typhon, who was hunting by night in the light of the moon, happened upon it. Recognizing the body he divided it into fourteen parts and scattered them, each in a different place. Isis learned of this and sought for them again, sailing through the swamps in a boat of papyrus. This is the reason why people sailing in such boats are not harmed by the crocodiles, since these creatures in their own way show either their fear or their reverence for the goddess.

The traditional result of Osiris's dismemberment is that there are many so-called tombs of Osiris in Egypt; for Isis held a funeral for each part when she had found it. Others deny this and assert that she caused effigies of him to be made and these she distributed among the several cities, pretending that she was giving them his body, in order that he might receive divine honours in a greater number of cities, and also that, if Typhon should succeed in overpowering Horus, he might despair of ever finding his true tomb when so many were pointed out to him, all of them called the tomb of Osiris.

Of the parts of Osiris's body the only one which Isis did not find was the male member, for the reason that this had been at once tossed into the river, and the lepidotus, the sea-bream, and the pike had fed upon it; and it is from these very fishes the Egyptians are most scrupulous in abstaining. But Isis made a replica of the member to take its place, and consecrated the phallus, in honour of which the Egyptians even at the present day celebrate a festival. Later, as they relate, Osiris came to Horus from the other world and exercised and

trained him for the battle. After a time Osiris asked Horus what he held to be the most noble of all things. When Horus replied, "To avenge one's father and mother for evil done to them," Osiris then asked him what animal he considered the most useful for them who go forth to battle; and when

Horus said, "A horse," Osiris was surprised and raised the question why it was that he had not rather said a lion than a horse. Horus answered that a lion was a useful thing for a man in need of assistance, but that a horse served best for cutting off the flight of an enemy and annihilating him. When Osiris heard this he was much pleased, since he felt that Horus had now an adequate preparation. It is said that, as many were continually transferring their allegiance to Horus, Typhon's concubine, Thueris, also came over to him; and a serpent which pursued her was cut to pieces by Horus's men, and now, in memory of this, the people throw down a rope in their midst and chop it up.

Now the battle, as they relate, lasted many days and Horus prevailed. Isis, however, to whom Typhon was delivered in chains, did not cause him to be put to death, but released him and let him go. Horus could not endure this with equanimity, he laid hands upon his mother and wrested the royal diadem from her head; but Hermes put upon her a helmet like unto the head of a cow.

Typhon formally accused Horus of being an illegitimate child, but with the help of Hermes to plead his cause it was decided by the gods that he also was legitimate. Typhon was then overcome in two other battles. Osiris consorted with Isis after his death, and she became the mother of Harpocrates, untimely born and weak in his lower limbs.

These are nearly all the important points of the legend, with the omission of the most infamous of the tales, such as that about the dismemberment of Horus and the decapitation of Isis. There is one thing that I have no need to mention to you: if they hold such opinions and relate such tales about the nature of the blessed and imperishable (in accordance with which our concept of the divine must be framed) and if such deeds and occurrences actually took place, then

«Much there is to spit and cleanse the mouth,»

as Aeschylus has it. But the fact is that you yourself detest those persons who hold such abnormal and outlandish opinions about the gods. That these accounts do not, in least, resemble the sort of loose fictions and frivolous fabrications which poets and writers of prose evolve from themselves, after the manner of spiders, interweaving and extending their unestablished first thoughts, but that these contain narrations of certain puzzling events and experiences, you will of yourself understand. Just as the rainbow, according to the account of the mathematicians, is a reflection of the sun, and owes its many hues to the withdrawal of our gaze from the sun and our fixing it on the cloud, so the somewhat fanciful accounts here set down are but reflections of some true tale which turns back our thoughts to other matters; their sacrifices plainly suggest this, in that they have mourning and melancholy reflected in them; and so also does the structure of their temples, which in one portion are expanded into wings and into uncovered and unobstructed corridors, and in another portion have secret vesting-rooms in the darkness under ground, like cells or chapels; and not the least important suggestion is the opinion held regarding the shrines of Osiris, whose body is said to have been laid in many different places. For they say that Diochites is the name given to a small town, on the ground that it alone contains the true tomb; and that the prosperous and influential men among the Egyptians are mostly buried in Abydos, since it is the object of

their ambition to be buried in the same ground with the body of Osiris. In Memphis, however, they say, the Apis is kept, being the image of the soul of Osiris, whose body also lies there. The name of this city some interpret as "the haven of the good" and others as meaning properly the "tomb of Osiris." They also say that the sacred island by Philae at all other times is untrodden by man and quite unapproachable, and even birds do not alight on it nor fishes approach it; yet, at one special time, the priests cross over to it, and perform the sacrificial rites for the dead, and lay wreaths upon the tomb, which lies in the encompassing shade of a persea-tree, which surpasses in height any olive.

Eudoxus says that among the many tombs mentioned in Egypt, his body rests in Busiris; for this is precisely the homeland of Osiris; however, Taphosiris needs no justification, since the name itself means tomb of Osiris. I pass over the felling of the forest, the scything of the flax, and the pouring of libations, for numerous mystical explanations are connected with these customs. And not only of these, but also of the other gods, as many as are neither unbegotten nor incorruptible, the priests say that their bodies, exhausted, are buried beside them and receive their honors, while their souls shine in the sky like stars. The soul of Isis is called "Dog" by the Greeks, and Sotis by the Egyptians; that of Horus is called Orion, and that of Typhon "Bear." And for the construction of the tombs of the animals that are the objects of veneration, the other Egyptian peoples pay the established tribute; Only those who inhabit the Thebaid do not contribute, for they recognize no mortal god, but the one they call Knef, who is unbegotten and immortal.

Those who believe, because there are many tales and representations of this kind, that they commemorate the extraordinary and magnificent actions and experiences of kings and tyrants who, due to their outstanding virtue, power, or dignity, arrogated to themselves the glory of divinity, only to later suffer the whims of fortune, are practicing a very easy way of avoiding the true explanation and, not without skill, transferring the dishonorable nature of the gods to men, and have support from tradition. Indeed, the Egyptians tell us that Hermes had a body with short arms, that Typhon had red skin, Horus white, and Osiris black, as if they were of human nature. Furthermore, they give the title of general to Osiris and that of helmsman to Canopus, from whom, they say, the star receives its name, and that the ship that the Greeks call Argo, a replica of the boat of Osiris, placed among the stars in his honor, makes its course not far from that of Orion and the "Dog", which the Egyptians consider sacred, one to Horus and the other to Isis." (On Isis and Osiris, Plutarch)(2)*

For the Egyptians, the Pharaoh was the reincarnation of Horus, son of the god Osiris and the goddess Isis, and his task was to mediate between men and divinities. The term pharaoh means "great home" and refers to the place where the spirit of the god Horus lived, one of the most venerated in all of Egyptian mythology.

Egyptian religious doctrines included three ideologies for the afterlife: the belief in a nether world, eternal life, and the rebirth of the soul. The underworld, also known as the Duat, had a single entrance, which could be reached by traveling through the tomb of the deceased. The initial image a soul encountered upon entering this realm was a corridor lined with a series of fascinating statues, including a variation of the famous falcon-headed god Horus. The path to the underworld may have varied among kings and common people. After the entrance, the spirits were presented to another prominent god, Anubis, who determined the virtue of the deceased's soul and granted those deemed worthy a peaceful afterlife. The Egyptian concept of "eternal life" was often considered to be reborn indefinitely. Therefore, souls who had lived their lives virtuously were guided to Osiris to be reborn. To achieve the ideal of life after death,

many practices had to be performed during life. This may have included acting justly and following the beliefs of the Egyptian creed.

The pyramids at Giza are a reminder of the ancient Egyptian glorification of the afterlife, and indeed, the pyramids were built as monuments to house the tombs of the pharaohs. Death was seen simply as the beginning of a journey to the next world. In this society, each individual's eternal life depended on the continued existence of their king, a belief that made the pharaoh's tomb the concern of the entire kingdom.

The Pyramid Texts tell the story of the deceased as he ascends to heaven to join the sun god. This is the oldest epigraphic source of Egyptian mythology, and one of its recitations goes like this:

“Be great, O king! Cross the shore, O king! May your name be made known to Osiris. Your foot is great, your foot is powerful, so that it crosses the Great Bed (the sky); the gods of the earth will not catch you, the starry sky will not oppose you. The gates of heaven will open for you, so that you may go forth through them like Horus and like the jackal that goes beside him, who hides his form from his enemies, [for] there is no father of yours among men who can beget you, because there is no mother of yours among men who can give birth to you.”

Using mythical, historical, and linguistic arguments, one can affirm the influence of Egypt and Phoenicia as fundamental elements in the formation of Greek culture. In Greece, Apollo was present at the founding of its first cities, after the so-called flood of Deucalion (who would become the Greek Noah). The Greek gods, whose names were already known and worshipped in Egypt since ancient times, taught the new inhabitants of Greece laws and customs through their children, the demigods, just as they taught them agriculture with the arrival of the goddess Demeter to Attica, and how to cultivate wine during Dionysus' voyage from Egypt to Greece. Thoth, the Greek Hermes, is credited with inventing Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.

After the so-called flood of Deucalion, he and his wife Pyrrha decided to consult the oracle at Delphi, which at that time belonged to the goddess Themis, about how to repopulate the earth. The roof was covered with seaweed and the altar was cold. They were told to "throw their mother's bones over their shoulders," but the couple failed to understand the oracle. After much pondering, Deucalion finally understood that "his mother" was none other than Gaia, the mother of all living beings, and that the "bones" were the rocks. Therefore, they stooped with their heads covered, lifted the rocks, and perhaps threw them over their shoulders. The rocks became men or women depending on whether Deucalion or Pyrrha had thrown them, and thus humanity was renewed. Not long after, the oracle was ceded to Apollo, since by the time of Ion, Deucalion's great-grandson, the oracle presided over by Apollo would have been in operation, as recorded by Euripides in his tragedy *Ion*.

Even the name of the European continent is due to Greek mythology, as recounted in the myth of Europa, whose story is said to have originated in Crete, the birthplace of Zeus. Europa, according to the myth, was a Phoenician princess of Argive origin. Infatuated with Europa, Zeus transformed himself into a white bull and mingled with the cattle kept by the girl's father. While Europa and her entourage were picking flowers near the beach, she saw the bull, stroked its flanks, and, noticing that it was tame, mounted it. Zeus seized this opportunity: he ran to the sea and swam to the island of Crete, carrying Europa on his back. Once on Crete, Zeus revealed his true identity, and Europa became the island's first queen. The existence of the Minoan culture dates back to 2000-1900 BC, as evidenced by the Palace of Knossos in Crete.

Cadmus was the younger brother of Cilix and Phoenix, as well as Europa, whom Zeus abducted. With his brothers and their mother, Telephassa, they set out in search of their sister at the command of Agenor, their father, with orders not to return to the kingdom, under penalty of death, without first finding Europa. Together they began a long sea voyage westward, following the direction the bull had taken. Cadmus continued the search, crossed to the mainland, and arrived at Delphi, for he wanted to consult the oracle of Apollo. The oracle at Delphi told Cadmus not to worry about Europe anymore, to let himself be guided by a cow, and to found a city where it stopped. Cadmus did so, and after crossing Phocis and reaching Boeotia, he founded Thebes where the cow lay down.

Cadmus is credited with bringing the Phoenician alphabet to the Greeks, so the Oracle of Delphi is indirectly responsible for the introduction of writing to Greece. Developed around the 9th century BC, based on the Phoenician consonantal alphabet, the Greeks adopted the first complete alphabet in history, understanding it as a script that expresses the individual sounds of the language, meaning that virtually every vowel and consonant corresponds to a distinct symbol. Greek contact with the indigenous peoples of the Italian peninsula gave rise to numerous Italic alphabets. Since the Etruscans were the most advanced civilization in Italy during this period, it is assumed that all of these derive from the Etruscan alphabet. This alphabet was based on a variant of the archaic Greek alphabets different from the classical Greek alphabet: the Euboean variant used in the Greek colonies of Ischia and Cumae, in the Bay of Naples.

It is generally held that the Latins adopted the western variant of the Greek alphabet in the 7th century BC. from the Greek colony at Cumae. They didn't do so directly, but rather through the ancient Etruscan alphabet, from which they adopted 21 of the original 26 Etruscan letters. The expansion of the Roman Empire first, and then the Christianization of the peoples of Europe, successively expanded its use throughout the Mediterranean, Northern and Central Europe, and later the European colonial empires brought it to all five continents.

This process of acculturation, which dates back to the Mycenaean civilization (1650–1050 BC), the first civilization in Greece with reliable records of a developed culture, ended with the Trojan War. This was followed by the Dark Ages, during which all records of what happened between the Dorian invasion and the destruction of Mycenae (1050 BC) and 800 BC were lost. This was the date by which the main Greek epics, as well as their mythology, were recorded in writing by Homer and Hesiod. From then on, the Archaic Age began, lasting until the Persian Wars in 480 BC. The Classical Age continued until the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, and the Hellenistic Age began until the conquest of Greece by Rome in 146 BC.

According to legend, Belus, the mythical king of Egypt, had twin sons, Danaus and Egyptus, who in turn had fifty daughters and fifty sons respectively. King Egyptus ordered his sons to marry his nieces, but the nieces fled with Danaus to Greece, where their suitors followed them. They were eventually married, but the young men were killed on their wedding night, except for one, from whom the hero Perseus is descended.

The oracle at Delphi had existed since the time of Perseus's grandfather, Chryses, who consulted the oracle and was told that if his daughter Danae became pregnant, his grandson would kill him. The prophecy was miraculously fulfilled despite Chryses' attempts to prevent it, since Perseus's father was Zeus. The mythical founder of Mycenae was Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae. Perseus, after exchanging lands with his uncle Megapenthes, founded and walled

Mycenae with the help of the Cyclopes to establish his capital there and inaugurate the Perseid dynasty.

Herodotus, writing between 440 and 20 BC, mentions the origin of the names of the Persians and Medes, but says that these people existed before they were given those names, namely:

“61. ...The Persians... Now these were called Cephenes by the Hellenes in ancient times; but when Perseus, son of Danae and Zeus, came to Cepheus, son of Belus, and took his daughter Andromeda as his wife, a son was born to them whom he named Perses, and this son he left there, because it happened that Cepheus had no male issue: therefore this race was named after him.

62. The Medes... These in ancient times used to be generally called Aryans; but when Medea the Colchian came from Athens to these Aryans, they also changed their name. Thus the Medes themselves report themselves.” (The Nine Books of History, Herodotus)(3*)

Herodotus also gives an earlier reference to the Persians as descendants of Perses when he records (Book VII. 220) that the Spartans had consulted the oracle at Delphi shortly before the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC. The Pythoness is recorded as saying:

“Hear your fate, O inhabitants of Sparta of the wide spaces; your famous great city must be sacked by the sons of Perseus. Or, if not, the whole land of Lacedaemon will mourn the death of a king from the house of Heracles. For neither the strength of lions nor the strength of bulls will be able to overcome him. Strength against strength; for he has the power of Zeus, and he will not be stopped until he has consumed one of these two.” (The Histories, Herodotus)(3*)

Herodotus makes a third reference to Perses (Book VII, 150 and 152), saying that Xerxes of Persia claimed ties to the Argives. However, he warns that this story comes from a dubious source (not the Argives, but he doesn't say who).

“150. This is all that the Argives relate concerning this matter; but there is another story circulating in Greece, namely, that Xerxes, before setting out on his expedition against them, sent a herald to the city of Argos, who, arriving there, spoke to them as follows: “Gentlemen of Argos, let King Xerxes command me to tell you the following from him: We Persians understand that Perses, from whom we are descended, was the son of Perseus, the son of Danae, and that Perses had for mother Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus; from whom we are descended from you. If this is the case, it will be unreasonable for us to make war against our ancestors, nor for you, in confederation with the rest, to be our enemies. Your duty will be to remain quiet and neutral, for if the matter turns out as I wish and hope, know that I intend to grant greater favors to no one than to you.” It is said, then, that the Argives did not hear such a proposal with reluctance, nor did they find it worthy of contempt; although they did not agree at the time with the Persian, nor did they enter into any pretensions; but when the Greeks asked them for a league, well convinced that the Lacedaemonians would not agree to grant them command of the troops, they then claimed part of the same pretext that they used to remain quiet and neutral.” (The Histories, Herodotus)(3*)

The implication of the quotations is that the kings of Persia were believed to be descended from Perses (rather than from the entire population itself), just as the kings of Sparta claimed descent from Heracles, and the kings of Argos from Heracles and Perseus.

Heracles was the great-grandson of Perseus and lived a generation before the Trojan War. According to tradition, 60 years after the Trojan War, Mycenae was destroyed by the Heraclids. The formation of the Mycenaean kingdoms is estimated to have occurred between 1650 and 1550 BC, according to archaeology based on funerary structures and tombs found in Mycenae. Their destruction is dated to 1050 BC.

After impregnating Alcmene, Heracles' mother, Zeus proclaimed that the next son born to the house of Perseus would become king of Mycenae. Upon hearing this, the jealous Hera, Zeus's wife, arranged for her hated stepson Heracles, who through Alcmene was Perseus's great-grandson, to be born three months late; and at the same time she arranged for Eurystheus, Alcmene's cousin and Perseus's paternal grandson, to be born two months early and seven months old. When Zeus realized what had happened, he flew into a rage; but he nevertheless stood by his rash proclamation, and so Eurystheus was crowned king of Mycenae.

Many years later, Hera provoked the now-adult Heracles into a fit of madness, prompting him to kill his wife, his children, and two of his nephews with his own hands. When he regained his senses and realized what he had done, he isolated himself from the world and went to live alone in the wilderness. There he was found by his half-brother Iphicles, who convinced him to visit the oracle at Delphi. In penance for this heinous act, the Pythoness asked him to perform a series of labors imposed on him by Eurystheus, the very man who had usurped her rightful claim to the Mycenaean crown, and whom she hated the most. Eurystheus began to worry that he might decide to seize the throne in the future, so he decided to get rid of him by entrusting him with twelve labors, each one more complicated than the last.

1. Kill the Nemean lion. / 2. Kill the Lernaean Hydra. / 3. Capture the Erymanthian boar alive. / 4. Capture the Ceryneian hind. / 5. Drive out the Stymphalian birds. / 6. Tame the Cretan bull. / 7. Clean out the Augean stables. / 8. Steal the mares of Diomedes. / 9. Steal the girdle of Hippolyta. / 10. Steal the cattle of Geryon. / 11. Steal the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. / 12. Kidnap Hades' dog Cerberus.

In this way, as commanded by the oracle at Delphi, Heracles would gain immortal fame by completing all of Eurystheus's labors, and many other adventures would follow. Finally, according to Diodorus, after Heracles had been burned by Nessus' shirt (which was poisoned with the blood of the Lernaean Hydra, which had no cure), he sent Licymnius and Iolaus to consult the oracle at Delphi on how to end his sufferings, and the Pythia instructed them to take Heracles to Aeta, build a great pyre, and leave the rest to Zeus. Thus, even Heracles' apotheosis was linked to the Pythian Apollo. After that, Zeus immortalized him, catasterizing him and turning him into the constellation of Hercules, the summer grouping of stars.

After the death of Heracles, his sons, after many wanderings, found refuge at the court of Theseus in Athens. Eurystheus, seeing his demands for surrender refused, attacked Athens but was defeated and killed. Hyllus and his brothers then invaded the Peloponnese, but after a year of rule were forced to withdraw by a plague. They retreated to Thessaly, where Aegimius, the mythical ancestor of the Dorians, whom Heracles had aided in his war against the Lapiths, adopted Hyllus and ceded a third of their territory to him.

After Aegimius's death, two of his sons, Pamphilus and Dymas, voluntarily submitted to Hyllus (who was, according to the Dorian tradition recorded by Herodotus, actually an Achaeon), who thus became ruler of the Dorians. The three branches of the Dorians are named after these three heroes, in their honor. Wishing to regain his paternal inheritance, Hyllus consulted the oracle at Delphi, who told him to wait for the "third fruit" (or harvest) and then enter the

Peloponnese by "a narrow sea passage." Thus, three years later, Hyllus marched across the Isthmus of Corinth to attack Atreus, Eurystheus's successor, but was killed in battle against Echemus, the king of Tegea. This second attempt was followed by a third by Cleodeus and a fourth by Aristomachus, both of which also failed.

In the end, Temenus, Chrephontes, and Aristodemus, sons of Aristomachus, complained to the oracle that his instructions had proved fatal to those who had followed them. They received the reply that by "third fruit" he meant "third generation" and that the "narrow passage" was not the Isthmus of Corinth but the Strait of Rio. Thus, they assembled a fleet at Naupactus, but before setting sail Aristodemus was struck by lightning (or shot by Apollo) and the fleet destroyed, because one of the Heraclids had killed a soothsayer inspired by Apollo.

The oracle, consulted again by Temenus, offered to make an expiatory sacrifice and banish the murderer for ten years, and to find a man with three eyes to serve as their guide. On his return to Naupactus, Temenus encountered Oxylus, an Aetolian who had lost one eye, riding a horse (making him three-eyed) and immediately forced him into his service. According to another version, the mule on which Oxylus was riding was the one who had lost an eye. The Heraclids repaired their fleet, sailing from Naupactus to Antirius, and from there to Rio, in the Peloponnese. They fought a decisive battle with Tisamenus, son of Orestes, ruler of the peninsula, whom they defeated and killed. This conquest was traditionally dated sixty years after the Trojan War.

The Heraclids, who thus became virtual masters of the Peloponnese, proceeded to distribute its territory among themselves by lot. Argos went to Temenus, Lacedaemon to Procles and Eurysthenes, the twin sons of Aristodemus, and Messene to Cresphontes. The fertile district of Elis had been reserved by agreement for Oxylus. The Heraclids ruled Lacedaemon until 221 BC, but disappeared long before that in other cities.

The Heraclids also established dynasties in Macedonia, calling themselves the Argead dynasty, from which Alexander the Great would be a descendant, in Corinth in the Bacchiad dynasty, and, as Herodotus mentions, also in Lydia, until the accession of Gyges to the throne, who would establish the Mermnada dynasty, of which Croesus would be the last descendant. In this way, the descendants of Heracles, who worshipped their ancestor as a god after his deification by the oracle at Delphi, would become the masters of almost all of Greece.

The kings who claimed to be descendants of Zeus and the heroes of old, and whose feats would perpetuate the legacy of martial virtue of the heroic age, and whose memory made it possible for Alexander, Caesar, and Augustus to attempt to rival the exploits of their ancestors, who were the sons of Zeus, Heracles, and the Heraclids, from whom Leonidas of Sparta and Alexander the Great would descend, whose mother Olympias claimed descent from Neoptolemus, the only son of Achilles. Dardanus would also be the son of Zeus, ancestor of Anchises, who with Venus would be the parents of Aeneas, the ancestor of the kings of Rome and of the Julian Gens, from whom Caesar and Augustus would descend.

The kings of Greece would be those who would perpetuate Greek mythology since they legitimized their ancestry by sharing the stories of their ancestors, the most prominent of whom had Heracles as their main ancestor and therefore Zeus, while the Romans claimed to descend from Aeneas, son of Venus and whose ancestor Dardanus was also the son of Zeus, while in historical times both peoples, although mainly the Greeks, received updates of what happened in the past through the oracles once given in antiquity, whose main origin came

from Delphi, while the other myths, legends and traditions had remained rooted in popular folklore and in the wisdom of the priests.

The kings of these cities would continue in their respective dynasties without any change in their government until the time of Gyges (reigned from 680 to 644 BC), who deposed the Heraclids in Lydia. In their dispute, after the death of King Heraclid, his supporters and those of Gyges decided to leave the solution to the matter to the oracle at Delphi. The Pythia confirmed Gyges as the legitimate king of Lydia, although she did not fail to add that she reserved her satisfaction and revenge for the Heraclids, which would reach the fifth descendant of Gyges. A prophecy that neither the Lydians nor the kings themselves later paid any attention to, until it was eventually realized by the fourth descendant of Gyges, Croesus, who lost his kingdom as a result of his attack on the Persian Empire of Cyrus the Great.

King Croesus of Lydia (reigned 560–546 BC), seeing his kingdom threatened by the growing power of the Persians, sent emissaries to the major oracles of Greece and Egypt in 560 BC, instructing them to ask the same question on the same day and at the same time, 100 days after the embassies had departed. The goal was to determine which oracle was the most reliable, and then to ask it again on an important question. The Pythoness replied:

"I know the measure of the sea, and how to count its sand. There is no deaf person whom I do not understand, and I hear him who does not speak. I smell the fragrance that comes from the tortoise cooked in the bronze vessel, with the lamb's flesh, having bronze below, and bronze above." (3*)

The Lydians, taking these verses from the prophetic mouth of the Pythia, wrote them down, and returned with them to Sardis. Meanwhile, the answers from the other oracles arrived, none of which satisfied Croesus. But when he found the one from Delphi, he received it with veneration, convinced that there resided only one true deity, for no one else but he had found the truth. The fact was that when the appointed day arrived for the commissioners to consult the gods, Croesus thought of something difficult to predict, and cutting a tortoise and a lamb into several pieces, he began to boil them in a bronze vessel, covering it with a lid of the same metal.

Croesus, impressed by this response, sent large offerings to Delphi, such as no other monarch had done until then, and one of the main questions he asked the oracle after that event was whether he should make war on the Persians. The answer was:

"If Croesus crosses the Halys (the river that formed the border between Lydia and Persia), he will destroy a great empire." (3*)

Convinced by what he took as approval of his campaign, he attacked, and sure enough, an empire was destroyed: his own. Croesus, once captured, was led to a pyre to be executed, but at the last moment Cyrus pardoned him, and after a pleasant conversation with him, in which Croesus found favor, they had the following exchange:

'Cyrus - "Your actions and words show themselves worthy of a royal spirit; ask me, then, for whatever favor you wish, confident of obtaining it immediately." "I, my lord," he replied, "will be very grateful if you give me permission to present these shackles to the god of the Greeks and ask him if he thinks it right to deceive those who serve him and mock those who dedicate offerings in his temple." Cyrus then wanted to know the reason for his complaints, and Croesus told him of his plans, the answers given by the oracles, and especially of his

magnificent gifts, and how he had waged war against the Persians under the influence of flattering predictions. Once again, when he asked permission to confront the god who had caused them with his misfortunes, Cyrus smiled and said, "Do as you please, Croesus, for I will refuse you nothing." With this permission, he then sent some Lydians to Delphi, instructing them to place their shackles on the very threshold of the temple and ask Apollo if he was not ashamed of having enticed him with his oracles to wage war against the Persians, giving him to understand that by doing so he would put an end to Cyrus's empire. Afterwards, they presented their shackles as the first fruits of the war and asked him if it was the law of the Greek gods to be ungrateful.

The Lydians, as soon as they arrived at Delphi, did as they had been commanded, and are said to have received this reply from the Pythia: "What fate has decreed cannot be averted by the gods themselves. Croesus is paying for the crime committed by his fifth grandfather, who, while a guard of the Heraclides, and, being led astray by the perfidy of a woman, took the life of their monarch and seized upon an empire that did not belong to him. The god of Delphi has diligently sought to ensure that the fatal ruin of Sardis should not be brought to the harm of Croesus, but rather to one of his sons; but he has not been able to overturn the course of fate. Nevertheless, his efforts have enabled him to delay the conquest of Sardis for three years; and Croesus knows that he has been taken prisoner three years after the time decreed by fate. And to whom does he also owe the succour he received when he was about to perish in the flames? As far as the oracle is concerned, Croesus has no reason to complain." Apollo foretold that if he made war on the Persians, he would ruin a great empire; and anyone in his case would have asked again which of the two empires it was, his own or Cyrus's. If he did not understand the answer, if he would not consult a second time, let him lay the blame on himself. Nor did he understand or try to suppress what was told him in the last oracle about the mule, for this mule was Cyrus himself, who was born of parents different in race and condition, his mother being a Mede, daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes, and superior in lineage to his father, who was a Persian, a vassal of the king of Media, and a man who from the lowest class had the good fortune to ascend to the marriage bed of his own mistress. The Lydians took this answer to Croesus, who, upon hearing it, confessed that the whole blame lay with him, and not with Apollo. This is what happened to the empire of Croesus." (The Histories, Herodotus) (3)*

The Spartans, who had confederated with the Lydians, upon learning that Sardis had fallen, decided not to send an expedition to aid Croesus because it was too late. During the interval between the fall of Sardis and the Ionian Revolt, a period of great change would follow in Greece, especially in Athens.

In 594 BC in Athens, the nobles and the people agreed to entrust Solon with a new political organization: he abolished debt slavery, distributed lands and limited their possessions, but, above all, he gave Athens a constitution. He laid the foundations for a new system of government, a democratic one; nothing would be done in Athens without the will of all, expressed in the "Assembly." Solon's efforts, however, did not completely solve the problem; then tyrants would appear (perhaps Pisistratus was the most famous), who would awaken in the demos a feeling of "equal political rights."

Already in the Classical Period (5th century), Cleisthenes dismantled the last and most dangerous aristocratic remnants: he created 10 new tribes, not based on blood ties, to replace the old four, thus further integrating the demos politically. He also established "ostracism":

when a citizen threatened to become too powerful or disrupted the social order, the assembly could decide that he be banished from Athens.

One of Cleisthenes' reforms was to organize the Athenians into ten tribes, each named after an Athenian hero. In 508-507 BC, Cleisthenes sent the names of one hundred Athenian heroes to the oracle at Delphi, and the Pythia chose ten. The oracle of Apollo thus endorsed Cleisthenes' civic reforms with its authority.

Life continued in Greece until this form of life was threatened by Persian hegemony, which emerged as a consequence of the conquests of Cyrus the Great, who defeated Croesus and annexed Lydia in 546 BC, and later captured Babylon in 539 BC and freed the Jews from captivity. His son Cambyses annexed Egypt in 525 BC. Not long after, he died childless, and the throne was inherited by Darius I, who married Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, from whose union Xerxes would be born.

In 499 BC, the Ionian cities rebelled against the Persian yoke, aided by Athens. The rebellion failed, but the event represented a grave offense to Darius I, as Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was reduced to ashes. In 490 BC, a punitive expedition was launched against Athens to avenge this offense, but they were defeated at Marathon by an inferior Athenian force. Darius would then gather forces from all over the empire for a new expedition against the Greeks, but he died in 486 BC, his son Xerxes would be in charge of gathering the largest expeditionary force ever assembled, much larger than the 100,000 Greek men who went to Troy, as Herodotus compares and much larger than any force that had been gathered until then, and thus he would gather a huge army to annex all of Europe to his domains.

Xerxes' speech to the nobles of Persia before the campaign is recorded by Herodotus:

"Xerxes – ...the borders of the Persian empire will no longer be other than those that divide the firmament from the earth in the air. From that point, the sun itself will no longer see another empire bordering ours, because I, at the head of my Persians, and in your company, marching victorious throughout all of Europe, will make all its states one, and this one mine; for as far as I know, once the aforementioned provinces are broken and leveled, there will no longer be any state, city, or people capable of coming to blows in the open field with our troops. Thus, in the end, we will succeed in bringing under our dominion both those who have offended us and those who have not caused us any harm." (3*)

That war was a turning point in the history of Western civilization, since its cradle was close to extinction. Western civilization would never have flourished, and forms of government like Democracy (508 BC) would not have been remembered, while the Romans and their Republic (509 BC) were just beginning to exist.

After crossing the Hellespont on a pontoon bridge, Xerxes' great army would have reached Macedonia, where the kings of Thessaly and Macedonia would submit to him despite their reluctance. But while the Greeks were still deliberating on how to conduct the war, Leonidas and 300 Spartans, along with 700 Thespians and a few other Greeks who retreated before the final battle, would defend the pass of Thermopylae against the entire Persian army (480 BC). According to Herodotus, 20,000 Persians died there, and Xerxes' personal guard had to be employed to achieve victory. Even then, the victory would not have been possible if a traitor had not revealed a way through the mountains to surround the Spartans. According to Herodotus, Leonidas sacrificed himself following the orders of an oracle at Delphi, where he

was prophesied that either all of Sparta would fall, or the Lacedaemonians would mourn the death of a king from the lineage of Heracles:

"Hear your fate, O inhabitants of Sparta of the wide spaces; your famous great city must be sacked by the sons of Perseus. Or, if not, the whole land of Lacedaemon will mourn the death of a king from the house of Heracles. For neither the strength of lions nor that of bulls will be able to overcome him. Strength against strength; because he has the power of Zeus, and he will not be stopped until he has consumed one of these two." (3*)

After the Battle of Thermopylae, Herodotus tells us that the Athenians sent an embassy to Delphi, and after performing the customary temple rites, when they entered the hall and sat down, the Pythia, whose name was Aristonica, pronounced the following oracle:

"Why are you sitting there, you fools? Leave, flee to the ends of the earth! Abandon your homes, and the towering heights that ring your city! For neither the head nor the body stays securely in its place, Nor do the feet below, nor the hands, nor anything in between Endure. Everything is doomed, everything brought crashing to the ground By flames and passion-filled Ares, as he lashes on Syrian-bred steeds. Nor is yours the only towered city he will obliterate.' Many temples of the gods as well will he hand over to fierce fire, Which stand even now, surely, streaming with the sweat of their terror, And shuddering with dread, while down from the very tops of the roofs There pours, portending evils inescapably to come, black blood. Go! Leave my sanctum! Shroud your spirits beneath the pall of your woes!" (3*)

The two Athenian ambassadors, when they heard this oracle, regarded the situation as very grave. They might as well. Delphi had never made such a crushing pronouncement of disaster. It allowed no resistance, only flight, and promised no relief. The Pythia also seems to have taken the unusual course (more often depicted in legend than in history) of delivering the oracle before the investigators had spoken. The Athenians were debating their next step together when Timon, the son of Androbulus, advised them to adopt the position of supplicants and approach the oracle a second time in that guise. They did so, begging Apollo:

"Pallas Athena cannot favor Olympian Zeus, even if she begs him with many words and sound wit, but I tell you one thing, it is strong, made of iron. When the other is captured, that which is enclosed between Mount Cecrops and holy Cithaeron, Zeus will give Tritogenia a wall of wide-spreading wood, which will be indestructible, for the benefit of you and your children." So you must not wait or fight against horsemen or foot soldiers who attack you; withdraw your forces from the mainland. Turn to Notus, for later you will have to face them. O Salamis of the god! You will kill the children of women when Demeter sows or when she reaps her wheat."(3*)

Themistocles, the commander of the Athenian fleet, would interpret the "wooden wall" in this prophecy as referring to the combined Greek fleet. Therefore, the Athenians abandon Athens, which is subsequently burned by Xerxes, and settle on the island of Salamis, along with their families, where the fleet would decide its next tactic. Amidst the disputes over what course of action to take, Themistocles achieves his goal of keeping the fleet united and giving battle at Salamis, where the Athenians, according to the oracles' promise, should outnumber their enemies. When the day arrived, they were surrounded by the Persian fleet, where in desperate circumstances and against unlikely odds the Greeks defeated the Persians (480 BC), marking a turning point in the war. Xerxes, fearing a total defeat and the destruction of the pontoon bridge linking Asia to Europe, while the supply line of his vast army had also been cut off by the loss of the fleet, decided to leave 300,000 picked men, the best of the Persian army,

on the Greek mainland, under the command of Mardonius, who would wait out the winter in Thebes (a city that had submitted to the Persians) and renew the campaign the following year.

Under such circumstances, the Greek army mentioned by Herodotus, consisting of 110,000 men, mostly composed of Spartans, achieved victory against the numerically superior Persian army at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BC. In gratitude for this success, they sought advice from Delphi on what to do after the battle. The Delphic oracle ordered them to extinguish all fires because they had been contaminated by the invading Persian fire, and asked them to take a fire from Delphi, from the common hearth, and thus illuminate all of Greece again.

After the Battle of Plataea, the last battle of the Persian Wars, the Greeks built a bronze column with three intertwined serpents, whose bodies formed the column, to commemorate the participation of the 31 Greek city-states in the battle. According to Herodotus, the bronze column was constructed using melted Persian weapons. These weapons were also used to construct a golden tripod. The monument was dedicated entirely to Apollo and stood next to the god's altar at Delphi, on a stone base (an inverted Byzantine capital). This offering remained at Delphi until Constantine moved it to his new capital, Constantinople, in 324 AD. It is still in the same location in Constantinople, present-day Istanbul, Turkey. It remained intact until 1700 AD, when it was accidentally broken into fragments, although much of the original column remains.

When the Peloponnesian War broke out in 431 BC, the Spartans sent a delegation to Delphi to ask if it would be wise to go to war against Athens. According to Thucydides, "the god is said to have 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."

Around the same time, the most famous Delphic oracular response concerning a philosopher would be given, to Chaerephon about Socrates. Plato, in the *Apology*, puts the story in the mouth of Socrates. The excited and enthusiastic disciple on a visit to Delphi actually asked the Pythia if there was any man wiser than Socrates, and received the reply that no one was wiser. Chaerephon's brother bore witness to this response at Socrates' trial, and it is impossible to doubt the facts, however difficult they may be to explain. In the *Apology*, Socrates makes his entire way of life depend on this oracle. Puzzled by the god's claim, for which he felt no warrant within himself, he proceeded, so the story goes, to investigate his fellow citizens to discover whether they were not really wiser than he. Finally, discovering that all their supposed wisdom was self-deception, he decided that Apollo was right, for whereas all men thought they knew something and did not, Socrates knew that he knew nothing. But when he was condemned to take hemlock for impiety and corrupting the young in 399 BC, Socrates would delight in continuing such a search among the men of the past and those who lay among the dead, to seek among them whether there really was a man who was wise. Certainly, the answer served to alter the course of Socrates' life, as Plato has him say, it was probably more important as a contribution to human thought than any other word that emanated from the Pythia.

After the Persian Wars, the Greeks forged a military discipline unparalleled in their time, which was achieved thanks to the various wars they fought from then on, the Peloponnesian War, where Sparta emerged victorious, defeating Athens in 404 BC, only to be defeated at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC, which marked the end of Spartan hegemony by the new Theban hegemony. Under such circumstances, Philip II of Macedon was raised as a hostage in Thebes where he learned the military innovations of the Thebans, which was at that time the most

influential city in all of Greece, and at the same time acquired a feeling for Greek unity, something very rare in his time. When the Third Sacred War began, Philip, after his military innovations such as the implementation of the sarissa in the army, and after becoming Apollo's champion by defeating the Phocians (who plundered the treasures of the temple of Delphi to hire a mercenary army to defend their cause), Macedonia became the most powerful state in Greece, and the final outcome would be in Chaeronea in 338 BC, where the Greek cities of Thebes and Athens were defeated, marking the end of the city-states. As a consequence, the League of Corinth would be created, a pan-Hellenic league that had in its vision to convince the Greeks that the true enemy was Persia.

The Pythia would support Philip throughout his political career, and even through a prophecy foretold his assassination. The story that follows is quite well known: Alexander, his son, at the age of 20, would take over the government of Greece and would begin an expedition against the Persians just 2 Years later, but not before having asked for the approval of Apollo at Delphi, where the Pythia would spontaneously respond when he forced her to give a prophecy (since there were only 9 days a year, the seventh day of each month, except for the 3 winter months), "boy, you are invincible", and he would respond that he already had the prophecy he was looking for... After 10 years of consecutive victories, he would bring the form of government, thought, letters and the Greek language to the confines of Asia, from then on Greek would become the lingua franca in the eastern Mediterranean.

“Philip's Dream - Some time after his marriage (to Olympias, Alexander's mother), Philip had a dream in which he thought he was sealing his wife's womb, and that the seal bore the image of a lion. The other seers believed that this vision meant nothing else, only that Philip needed to be more vigilant in his marriage. But Aristander Themisseus said that this meant that Olympias was pregnant, for what is empty cannot be sealed; and that she was pregnant with a brave child, similar in nature to lions. A dragon was also seen, which, while Olympias was asleep, coiled around her body. This is said to have caused Philip's love and affection to weaken, as he was unable to rest with her; either because he feared that she would use some enchantments and spells against him, or because he was wary of sleeping with a woman who had consorted with a being of a higher nature. It is said, however, that Philip, having sent Cheron the Megalopolitan to Delphi after the dream, brought him an oracle from the god, by which he prescribed him to sacrifice to Amun and venerate him especially among the gods; and it is also said that he lost an eye for having seen, applying himself to a crack in the door, the god displeasing himself with his wife in the form of a dragon. (Historically, Philip lost an eye at the siege of Methone in 354 BC, a few years after the birth of Alexander.)” (Parallel Lives, Plutarch)(4*)

It is because of this oracle at Delphi that Alexander always believed that Amun-Ra, the Egyptian name for Zeus, was his father. Upon his arrival in Egypt, Alexander was welcomed as a liberator by the Egyptians, who granted him the title of Pharaoh. While in Egypt, before his victory at Gaugamela (October 331 BC) over Darius, which would seal the end of the Persian Empire, it is said that Alexander would receive an embassy from the oracle of Apollo at Didyma (believed to have the same prophetic gift as Delphi and whose temple Alexander ordered to be rebuilt during his conquest of Miletus in 334 BC, after having been inactive since its destruction by Darius I in 494 BC) predicting his victory in that battle, while confirming that he was the son of Zeus, which Alexander would also confirm on his visit to the oracle of Amun at Siwa (February 332 BC), where the temple priest informed him that the empire of the world had been reserved for him and that all the murderers of Philip of Macedon had been punished. The

Oracle of Amun was believed to be one of the oldest oracles of Zeus, having been visited by Perseus and Heracles in mythical times.

The following narrative details Alexander's plans following his successful campaign in the Persian Empire and India and his dealings with the most eminent Hindus he met on his campaign.

“As soon as Alexander arrived at Pasargadae and Persepolis, he was seized with an ardent desire to sail up the Euphrates and the Tigris to the Persian Sea, and to see the mouths of both rivers as he had already seen those of the Indus, as well as the sea into which they flow. Some authors have also recorded that he was meditating a voyage around the greater part of Arabia, the country of the Ethiopians, Libya, and the part of Numidia beyond Mount Atlas as far as Gadeira, entering our sea; thinking that after having subdued Libya and Carthage, he might justly be called lord of all Asia. For he said that the kings of the Persians and the Medes called themselves great kings without any right, since they ruled only a comparatively small fraction of Asia. Some claim that he was meditating an expedition from there to the Euxine Sea, to Scythia, and to Lake Maeotis; While others claim that his intention was to go to Sicily and Cape Iapygia, because the fame of the Romans had spread far and wide in that region, and aroused his suspicions.

I cannot guess with reasonable accuracy what his plans were, and I am not inclined to guess them. But this, I believe, I can confidently assert: that he contemplated nothing small or meager, and that he would never be satisfied with any territorial acquisitions he had made, even if he had added Europe to Asia, or the islands of the Britons to Europe; still, he would have gone in search of unknown lands beyond those mentioned. Truly, I believe that if he had not found anyone else to fight with, he would have ended by fighting with himself. And for this reason I commend certain wise men of India, whom, it is said, Alexander met while they were walking in the open meadow where they were accustomed to spend their time. At the sight of him and his army, they did nothing but stamp their feet on the ground on which they stood. When he asked them through interpreters what the meaning of their action was, they answered as follows:

«O King Alexander, every man possesses only a piece of land like this on which we have taken a few steps. And you, being only a man like the rest of us, except as an upstart and arrogant, have come wandering across a large part of the world from your own land, making trouble for yourself and others. And yet you too must soon die, and then you will possess only enough land for your body to be buried in.»

On this occasion, Alexander praised these words and the men who had spoken them, and yet he did the very opposite of what he himself praised. When on the Isthmus he came across Diogenes of Sinope basking in the sun, he stood near him surrounded by the Hypaspists and the Foot Companions, and asked him if there was anything he desired. Diogenes replied that he desired nothing, except that he and his companions would step aside to let the sunlight in. Alexander is said to have expressed his admiration for Diogenes' conduct. From this it is evident that Alexander was not lacking in noble feelings, but he was a slave to his insatiable ambition. On another occasion, when he arrived at Taxila and met the Gymnosophists of India, he was very desirous that one of these men would come and live with him, for he admired their powers of endurance. But the most senior of these philosophers, named Dandamis, of whom the others were disciples, refused to accompany Alexander and would not allow any of the others to do so. The latter, it is said, replied that he himself was also a

son of Zeus, as was Alexander, and that he wanted nothing from him, for he was content with what he had. He further added that he saw his men wandering all over the land and sea to no avail, and that there was no end in sight to their many wanderings. He had, therefore, not the slightest desire that Alexander should give him anything that was in his possession, nor was he, on the other hand, afraid of being excluded from any benefit that Alexander might dispose of. For as long as he lived in the country of India, this land, which produced its fruits in its season, was sufficient for him; and when he died, he would be released from his body, a most unsuitable partner. At that time, Alexander did not try to force him to go with him, for that man was free to do as he pleased. However, Megasthenes has written that Calanus, one of the philosophers of this region, who had very little control over his desires, was persuaded to accompany him, and that the other philosophers reproached him for having deserted the happiness he enjoyed among them, to serve another lord instead of God.

I have included what I am writing because in a history of Alexander it is also necessary to speak of Calanus, whose health failed while he was in Persia, although he had never suffered from any illness before. Consequently, he was unwilling to live the life of a man in failing health; he told Alexander that under the circumstances he believed it best for him to end his existence, rather than undergo the experience of an illness that might force him to change his former way of life.

For a long time the king tried to dissuade him; but when he saw that he would not be persuaded, but that he would find some other way of deliverance if the one he sought was not granted, he ordered a funeral pyre to be raised for him at the place indicated by the philosopher, and he ordered the royal escort Ptolemy, son of Lagus, to take charge of it. They say that a solemn procession, composed of horses and men, advanced before Calanus; Some of these were in full armor, while others carried incense of all kinds for the pyre. It is also said that they carried gold and silver cups and garments worthy of a king, and since the Indian was now unable to walk due to his illness, a horse was prepared for him. But he was unable to ride either; so he was carried stretched out on a stretcher, crowned with a garland in the Indian fashion, and singing in the language of his homeland. The Indians say that he sang hymns to the gods and praises of his countrymen.

Before mounting the funeral pyre, he presented the horse he was to ride, a royal stallion of the Nisian breed, to Lysimachus, one of those who had come to him to learn his philosophy. He distributed among his disciples the cups and cloaks that Alexander had ordered to be placed on the pyre as a tribute to him. He then ascended the pyre and lay down upon it with a dignified expression, allowing his body to be visible to the entire army. To Alexander, the spectacle seemed unseemly, since it was being carried out at the expense of a friend, but to the rest, it was a source of astonishment that he did not move a muscle in his body when he began to burn. As soon as the men who had been entrusted with the duty set fire to the pyre, Nearchus says that the trumpets sounded, in accordance with Alexander's directive, and the entire army raised a war cry, as they used to shout when advancing into battle. The elephants also intervened with their strident and warlike trumpeting in honor of Calanus. Authors who should be trusted have recorded these and similar things, facts of great importance to those who are eager to learn how firm and immutable the human mind can be in what it desires to achieve." (Anabasis of Alexander the Great, Flavius Arrian)(5)*

To understand Alexander's spirit, it is enough to read the last recorded speech he gave, at Opis, Babylon, shortly before his death:

"When he arrived at Opis, he called the Macedonians to form up and announced to them that he intended to discharge from the army those who were no longer fit for military service, either because of age or because they had become crippled, and added that he was going to send them back home. He also promised to give those who returned so many gifts that they would be the envy of their countrymen and would inspire other Macedonians to take on similar dangers and labors. Alexander undoubtedly said this with the intention of pleasing the Macedonians; but, on the contrary, they were offended by his speech, not without reason, interpreting it as meaning that they were now despised by their king and considered unfit to serve as soldiers. In fact, throughout this expedition, they had already been upset about many other things, especially his adoption of Persian dress, which demonstrated the monarch's contempt for the opinions of his men, which had caused them grief, as did his inclusion of foreign soldiers called Epigoni among the Macedonian troops, and the admission of foreign horsemen into the ranks of the Companions.

Therefore, they could no longer remain silent and restrain themselves, but replied that he should dismiss them all from his army and advised him to continue the war in the company of his father, mocking Amun with this remark. Hearing this, Alexander—who at that time was more prone to anger than before, and no longer, as in the past, indulgent with the Macedonians regarding their entourage of foreign officials—leapt down from the platform with his officers around him and ordered the arrest of the most conspicuous of the men who had tried to stir up the crowd. He himself pointed with his hand at those whom the Hypaspists proceeded to arrest—about thirteen men—and then ordered them to be taken away for execution. When the rest had fallen silent out of fear, he mounted the rostrum and spoke as follows:

«I must deliver this speech not to quash your desire to go home, for, as far as I'm concerned, you can go wherever you wish, but because I want you to know what kind of men you were at first and how you have changed since you came into our service. First of all, naturally, I will begin my speech by recalling my father Philip. He found you wandering and very poor, most of you wearing animal skins for clothing, depending for your sustenance on a few sheep grazing on the mountainsides, for the preservation of which you had to fight with few successes against the Illyrians, Tribalians, and the Thracians on the border. Instead of furs, Philip gave you chlamys to cover you, and from the mountains he led you down to the plains, and made you men capable of fighting the neighboring barbarians, so that you would no longer be forced to seek safety by relying on the protection of inaccessible ramparts but on your own courage. He made you settlers in numerous cities, to which he provided useful laws and customs.»

«From being slaves and subjects, he made you lords of those same barbarians at whose hands you yourselves had previously been liable to harassment and deprivation of your property. He also added most of Thrace to Macedonia, and by seizing suitable positions on the sea coast, he brought abundance to these lands through trade and made labor in the mines an occupation safe from attack. He made you rulers of the Thessalians, whom you had previously held in mortal fear, and by humbling the nation of the Phocians, he opened a broad and easy route to Greece for you, instead of the narrow and complicated one. He humiliated the Athenians and Thebans, always lying in wait to destroy Macedonia, to such an extent that, instead of you paying tribute to the former and being vassals of the latter, both states sought our aid for their protection, and in this I lent my personal assistance in that campaign. He invaded the Peloponnese, and, after putting his affairs in order, was

publicly declared commander-in-chief of all Greece for the expedition against the Persians, a glory not so much for himself as for the entire Macedonian community.»

«Such were the benefits that my father Philip obtained for you; they are, indeed, noble and great deeds in themselves, but they pale in comparison with what you have obtained from me. Although I inherited from my father only a few gold and silver cups, and there were not even sixty talents in the treasury, and I found myself owing five hundred talents from Philip, and I was forced to borrow another eight hundred talents besides these, part of a country that could hardly maintain you all decently, and I immediately opened the passage of the Hellespont for you, although at that time the Persians were masters of the sea. Defeating the satraps of Darius with my cavalry, I annexed to your empire all Aeolia, the two Phrygias and Lydia, and I took the city of Miletus by storm. All the other nations sided with me by voluntary surrender, and I granted you the privilege of appropriating the treasures they accumulated. The riches of Egypt and Cyrene, which I had acquired without a single battle, I gave to you. Coele-Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia are your property. Babylon, Bactria, and Susa are also yours. The heritage of the Lydians, the treasures of the Persians, and the riches of the Indians are yours, and so is the ocean that surrounds them. You are satraps, you are generals, you are taxiarchs.»

«What, then, have I reserved for myself after all this labor, apart from this purple robe and this diadem? I have appropriated nothing for myself, nor can anyone point out what treasures I have, except your possessions or the things I guard in your name. But, personally, I have no reason to reserve them for myself, for I eat the same food you eat, and I sleep the same number of hours as you. No, I do not believe my food is as good as that of those of you who live luxuriously, and, moreover, I often sit up at night watching over you, so that you may sleep peacefully.»

«Some may say that while you endured hard work and hardship, I have acquired these things for myself as your leader without having shared in the hard work and hardship. But who among you boasts that he has made a greater effort for me than I have for him? Let him go ahead!” Whoever of you has wounds, let him uncover himself and show them, and I will show mine, for there is no part of my body, the front in any case, that is free from wounds, nor is there any kind of weapon used either for hand-to-hand combat or for throwing at the enemy, of whose traces I do not bear memories on my person. For I have been wounded with a sword in man-to-man combat, riddled with arrows, and struck by missiles launched from war machines. And, although many times I have been struck with stones and pieces of wood for your life, your glory, and your wealth, I am still leading you like conquerors across all the land and sea, all the rivers, and mountains and plains.»

«I have celebrated your marriage with mine, and the children of several of you will be related to mine. I have also settled the debts of all those who owed them without inquiring too deeply into the purpose of their demand, even though you receive such a high salary and take so much plunder every time booty is obtained after a siege. Most of you have golden crowns, eternal symbols of your valor and the honors you have received from me. He who has died has come to a glorious end and has been honored with a splendid funeral. Bronze statues of most of our dead have been erected in their homelands, and their fathers are treated with honor; they are freed from all compulsory service and from paying taxes. Not one of you has been killed in flight while I was in command.»

«And now it was my intention to send back those of you who have become unfit for the army, the envy of those at home. But since you all want to return, go all of you!" Go, and say that you have abandoned King Alexander, the conqueror of the Persians, Medes, Bactrians, and Sacians; the man who subjugated the Uxians, Arachosians, and Drangians, who acquired the empire of the Parthians, Chorasmians, and Hyrcanians as far as the Caspian Sea; who marched through the Caucasus, through the Caspian Gates, crossed the rivers Oxus and Tanais, and the Indus too, which had never been crossed by anyone else except Dionysus; who also crossed the Hydaspes, the Acesines, and the Hydraotes, and would have crossed the Hyphasis had you not drawn back in alarm; who entered the Indian Ocean by the mouth of the Indus and marched through the Gedrosian Desert, where no one ever marched with an army; that on his way he acquired possession of Carmania and the land of the Orites in addition to his other conquests; that he has a fleet that skirted the coast of the sea that stretches from India to Persia. Tell them, when you returned to Susa you abandoned it and left, giving it over to the protection of the conquered foreigners. Perhaps this tale of yours will be both glorious in the eyes of men and pious in the eyes of the gods. Go!» (Anabasis of Alexander the Great, Flavius Arrian)(5*)

It is said that Alexander was repeatedly warned of his death, but he did not heed those warnings. One such anecdote was that of the Indian philosopher who accompanied him on his journey to Babylon:

"The following anecdote has also been recorded concerning Calanus, the Indian philosopher: as he was about to sacrifice himself on the funeral pyre, he greeted all his friends farewell, but refused to approach Alexander to greet him, saying that he would join him in Babylon and greet him there. At the time, his remark was received with indifference, but later, when Alexander died in Babylon, it resurfaced in the memory of those who had heard it, and they were then convinced that it had indeed been a divine warning about Alexander's imminent end.

...

The Royal Ephemerides also narrates that Peithon, Attalus, Demophon, and Peucestas, as well as Cleomenes, Menidas, and Seleucus, kept vigil at the temple of Serapis and consulted the god whether it would not be better and more desirable for Alexander to be brought to this temple as a suppliant, to be cured. The voice of the god replied that he should not be taken to the temple, but that it was better for him to remain where he was. This response was spread by the Companions, and shortly afterward Alexander died, as if this were truly the best thing for him. Neither Aristobulus nor Ptolemy has given a version that differs greatly from the one cited. Some authors, however, have written that his Companions asked him to whom he would leave his kingdom, and that he replied: "To the strongest." And according to others, in addition to this comment, he told them that he foresaw great funeral games being held in his honor.

...

Alexander died in the year of the 114th Olympiad, during the reign of Hegesias in Athens. According to Aristobulus's account, he had lived thirty-two years, and the eighth month had passed in his thirty-third year. He had reigned for twelve years and eight months. He was very handsome in appearance and greatly fond of exertion, very active in mind, possessed of heroic courage, very tenacious in regard to honor, very given to incurring dangers, and a zealous observer of his obligations to the gods. Regarding bodily pleasures, he had perfect

self-control, and regarding those of the mind, praise was the only thing he was never satisfied with. He was very intelligent in recognizing what was necessary to do, even when it was still unnoticed by others, and very perceptive in conjecturing from an observation of facts what was likely to happen. In the tactical deployment, equipment, and leadership of an army, he was highly skilled, and famous for knowing how to awaken the courage of his soldiers, filling them with hopes of triumph, and for dispelling their fear in the midst of danger by being himself free from fear. Therefore, even what he had to do in secret, he did with the greatest bravery. He was also very ingenious in staying ahead of his enemies and stealthily depriving them of their advantages by anticipating them before anyone even glimpsed what was about to happen. He was equally very responsible in fulfilling the pacts and agreements he made, as well as impossible to be ensnared by deceivers. And finally, he was very frugal in spending his wealth for the satisfaction of his own pleasures, but very generous in spending it for the benefit of his associates. (Anabasis of Alexander the Great, Flavius Arrian)(5*)

Alexander would die leaving the largest empire that had ever existed. Of his successors, the most famous was Seleucus, who claimed that his true father had been Apollo, as revealed to him by his mother, as recorded by Justin in his epitome of Pompey Trogus's "Philippian Histories" (6*):

"The merit of Seleucus was well known, and his birth had been attended by extraordinary circumstances. His mother Laodice, being married to Antiochus, a man of eminence among Philip's generals, seemed to herself, in a dream, to have conceived from a union with Apollo, and, after becoming pregnant, to have received from him, as a reward for her performance, a ring, on the stone of which was engraved an anchor, and which she desired to give to the child she would bear. A similarly engraved ring, found the next day in the bed, and the figure of an anchor, which was visible on Seleucus's thigh at his birth, made this dream extremely remarkable. This ring was given by Laodice to Seleucus when he went with Alexander to the Persian war, informing him at the same time of his paternity. After Alexander's death, having secured dominion in the east, he built a city, where he established a memorial of his double origin; for he called the city Antioch from the name of his father Antiochus, and dedicated the plains near the city to Apollo (the suburb of Daphne). This mark of his paternity continued also among his descendants; for his sons and grandsons had an anchor on their thigh, as a natural proof of their extraction."

In the same way, Seleucus managed to consolidate the largest empire of those that succeeded Alexander, which encompassed all of what had been the Persian Empire, except for Turkey and Egypt. In 312 BC, when he was only satrap of Babylon, a position of almost no importance, Seleucus consulted the oracle of Apollo at Didyma, where, after announcing his future greatness, the oracle instructed Seleucus to consecrate the suburb of Daphne to Apollo, near Antioch. This he would do after founding Antioch on the Orontes in Syria as the capital of his empire in 300 BC. He also dedicated a great temple to Apollo at Daphne, along with a large statue, which would survive until 662 years later, where they were burned during the reign of Julian the Apostate. Having already told the story of Apollo in Greece until his final manifestation, from Croesus, the Persian Wars, Philip, Alexander the Great, and Seleucus, we will continue with his relationship with the city of Rome in its early days as a monarchy and his role there once it became an empire.

During the time of the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus (reigned 534–509 BC), lived Lucius Junius Brutus, who would later found the Roman Republic after the expulsion of the

Tarquins. Tarquinius, in order to secure his power in Rome, had murdered all the prominent men in Rome, including Brutus's father, a man who, due to his merits, was among the most illustrious. Brutus had married Tarquinia, daughter of King Tarquinius Priscus (reigned 616–578 BC).

“Brutus, being still young and completely destitute of any help from his family, undertook to follow the most prudent of all courses, which was to feign a stupidity that was not his own; and he continued from that time to maintain this pretense of madness from which he acquired his surname, until he thought the proper time had arrived to throw it off. This saved him from suffering any harm at the hands of the tyrant at a time when many good men were perishing.

When Tarquin sent two of his sons, Aruns and Titus, to consult the oracle at Delphi about the plague (for during his reign a rare disease had descended upon maidens and children, and many died from it, but it fell most grievously and without hope of cure upon pregnant women, destroying mothers in labor along with their children), desiring to know from the god both the cause of this disease and the remedy for it, he sent Brutus along with the boys, at their request, that they might have someone to laugh at and abuse. When the young men arrived at the oracle and received answers about the matter for which they had been sent, they made their offerings to the god and laughed heartily at Brutus for offering a wooden rod to Apollo; in reality, he had secretly hollowed it out to its full length like a tube and inserted a golden rod into it. After this, they asked the god which of them was destined to succeed to the sovereignty of Rome; and the god replied, "the one who kisses his mother first." The young men, therefore, not knowing the meaning of the oracle, agreed together to kiss their mother at the same time, desiring to possess the kingship in common; but Brutus, understanding what the god meant, as soon as he landed in Italy, bowed down to the earth and kissed it, regarding it as the common mother of all mankind.” (Roman Antiquities, Dionysius of Halicarnassus)(7*)

According to tradition, Tarquin the Proud was dethroned in 509 BC by a palace coup sparked when Tarquin's son, Sextus Tarquin, raped Lucretia, a young patrician woman, who subsequently committed suicide. Among the leaders of the revolt were the king's nephew, Lucius Junius Brutus; Lucretia's husband, Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus; and the young woman's father, Spurius Lucretius, along with his powerful friend Publius Valerius Publicola.

Tarquin quickly returned to Rome, but in his absence, he lost the support of the army and was forced into exile in Etruria. There, after several attempts to reconquer Rome, he was defeated and never returned to power. It was Brutus who designed and established the principles of the form of government that would be called the Republic, of which he was the founder. Along with Collatinus, they would be the first two consuls of Rome (in the early days of the Republic, they were called praetors) in 509 BC. It was decided that anyone who tried to reinstate the monarchy would be punished with death. Brutus would die fighting for the freedom of Rome and defeating Tarquin at the Battle of the Ardia Forest, where in a single-handed duel with Arruns Tarquin (his cousin with whom he had gone to consult at Delphi), they would both kill each other, as recorded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his Roman Antiquities. It is said that Marcus Junius Brutus, the assassin of Julius Caesar, was descended from Lucius Junius Brutus, from whom he inherited his hatred of the monarchy.

The Delphic oracle was also present during the Second Punic War, the most uncertain period in Rome's history. After the disaster at Cannae, the Senate ruled that a mere consultation of the

Sibylline books would not be sufficient, so it sent an embassy to Delphi. After issuing a list of gods and goddesses to whom a solemn festival of supplications was to be addressed in the prescribed manner, the Pythia gave the following oracle:

"If you do these things, Romans, your affairs will be better and easier. Your republic will advance more in accordance with your purpose, and victory in war will fall to the Roman people. To the Pythian Apollo, when your republic has prospered and been preserved, send a gift of the profits you have earned, and honor him from the booty and its revenues. But keep senseless indulgence far from you."(8*)

Before setting out on his expedition to Africa, Scipio and the Senate commissioned an embassy to Delphi with the spoils of the recently defeated Hasdrubal (Hannibal's brother) at the Battle of Metaurus in 207 BC. Marcus Pomponius Mato and Quintus Cato were sent to Delphi to make an offering there of selected spoils from Hasdrubal's camp. It consisted of a gold crown weighing two hundred pounds, along with copies of the loot made in silver, weighing a total of one thousand pounds (65.4 kg of gold and 327 kg of silver).

In the oldest work of Western literature, the Iliad (written between 750 and 700 BC), Apollo is portrayed as the builder of the walls of Troy alongside Poseidon, as well as the protector of Aeneas and Hector, two of the greatest Trojan heroes:

"So she spoke. The white-armed Hera smiled. And then King Poseidon, the earth-shaker, said to Apollo:

"Phoebus! Why do we not fight too? It is not fitting to refrain from fighting once the others have begun. It would be shameful if we returned to Olympus, to Zeus's bronze dwelling, without having fought. You begin, for you are the youngest, and it would not seem seemly for me, who was born first and has more experience, to begin. Oh fool, how thoughtless is your heart! You no longer remember the many evils we two suffered around Ilium, alone among the gods, when, sent by Zeus, we worked for a whole year for proud Laomedon; who, with the promise of giving us the agreed wages, ruled us as lord. I surrounded the city of the Trojans with a wide wall and most beautiful, to make it impregnable; and you, Phoebus, used to herd the flexible, curved-horned oxen in the woods and forests of Ida, in the abundant valleys. But when the joyful hours brought the settlement to an end, proud Laomedon refused to pay us our wages and dismissed us with threats. He threatened to sell you, bound hand and foot, to distant islands; he also promised that with bronze he would cut off both our ears; and we went away grieved and angry because he did not give us the wages he had promised. And yet you are grateful to him, favoring his people, instead of trying with us to see that all the Trojans, along with their children and chaste wives, perish in a miserable death.

...

Thus the gods conversed. Diomedes, valiant in battle, closed with Aeneas, though he understood that Apollo himself was stretching out his hand upon him; for, driven by his desire to destroy the hero and strip him of his magnificent armor, he no longer even respected the great god. Three times he attacked Aeneas with the intention of killing him; three times Apollo waved his shining shield. And when, godlike, he attacked a fourth time, Apollo, the striker from afar, rebuked him with terrifying cries: "Tydides, think again and retreat! Do not seek to be like the deities, for never were the race of the immortal gods and the race of men who walk the earth alike." Thus he spoke. Tydides drew back a little so as

not to incur the wrath of Apollo, the striker from afar. And the god, taking Aeneas from the battle, brought him to his temple in sacred Pergamum. Inside, Leto and Artemis, who loves to throw arrows, healed the hero and increased his strength and physical beauty. Meanwhile, Apollo, who carries a silver bow, formed a form of Aeneas in his armor; and around it, Trojans and godly Achaeans clashed their oxhide shields and winged bucklers that protected their bodies.

Thus did the long-haired Achaeans labor; and the gods, sitting beside thunderbolt Zeus, beheld the great work of the bronze-coated Achaeans. And Poseidon, who shakes the earth, began to say to them: "Father Zeus! Which of the mortals on the vast earth will consult with the gods about his thoughts and plans?" Do you not see that the long-haired Achaeans have built a wall and a ditch in front of their ships, without offering perfect hecatombs to the gods? The fame of this wall will spread as far as the light of dawn; and the one he built by Phoebus Apollo and I, when with great labor we built the city for the hero Laomedon, will be forgotten." (The Iliad, Homer)(9*)

In the Aeneid he is known as Aeneas after the fall of Troy, being in the temple of Apollo in Delos, which was believed to be the birthplace of Apollo, he would receive while in the temple from a supernatural voice the order to seek the land of his ancestors, this after the fall of Troy, when the Trojans in a fleet commanded by Aeneas were looking for a new home, approximately in the 12th century BC, as would be recorded by Virgil from the documents that probably at that time would survive:

"I sail there: it welcomes us peacefully, weary as we are, to its safe harbour. Landing, we do homage to Apollo's city. King Anius, both king of the people and high-priest of Apollo, his forehead crowned with the sacred headband and holy laurel, meets us, and recognises an old friend in Anchises: we clasp hands in greeting and enter his house. I paid homage to the god's temple of ancient stone: "Grant us a true home, Apollo, grant a weary people walls, and a race, and a city that will endure: protect this second citadel of Troy, that survives the Greeks and pitiless Achilles. Whom should we follow? Where do you command us to go? Where should we settle? Grant us an omen, father, to stir our hearts. I had scarcely spoken: suddenly everything seemed to tremble, the god's thresholds and his laurel crowns, and the whole hill round us moved, and the tripod groaned as the shrine split open. Humbly we seek the earth, and a voice comes to our ears: "Enduring Trojans, the land which first bore you from its parent stock, that same shall welcome you, restored, to its fertile breast. Search out your ancient mother. There the house of Aeneas shall rule all shores, his children's children, and those that are born to them." (The Eneid, Virgil)(10*)

After long adventures, Aeneas would fulfill Apollo's command, settling in Latium, the central-western region of Italy. His descendants would produce the brothers who founded Rome in 753 BC, Romulus and Remus.

Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, who, in his own words, "found a Rome made of clay and bequeathed a city of marble," had a close relationship with Apollo, beginning with his campaign against Sextus Pompey in 36 BC, as well as the Battle of Actium between Mark Antony and Augustus in 31 BC, a victory Augustus attributed to the intercession of the god Apollo. In commemoration of this battle, he dedicated a temple to Apollo on the Palatine Hill, right next to the Domus Augusti (the House of Augustus) in 28 BC. It is said that he chose the spot to build the temple where a lightning bolt had struck, which was believed to be a sign of the god's approval. The Roman Empire would be founded just a year after this event.

The Palatine Hill was the most central of the seven hills of Rome, and it was on the Palatine Hill that Rome was founded. Emperor Augustus began the transformation of the Palatine Hill into the exclusive residence of the Roman emperors in 32 BC by acquiring the house of Quintus Hortensius on the western side of the hill. The so-called Domus Augusti held a high symbolic value for Augustus, as it stood next to the House of Romulus, the supposed original home of Romulus, the founder of Rome. To further emphasize its divine symbolism, on the western slope near the House of Romulus, Augustus rebuilt the Temple of Cybele (Magna Mater), which had been burned in a fire in 38 BC. This temple reinforced Augustus's and Rome's connection with Troy, where the cult of Cybele originated, while Aeneas, the Trojan hero, was the ancestor from whom Augustus claimed descent.

One of the few sources that attests in detail to the reverence that Augustus had for his protector Apollo, and how he was believed to have granted him victory at Actium against Mark Antony, is in the Elegies of the Roman poet Sextus Propertius, a contemporary of Augustus:

"The priest makes the sacrifice: let silence aid it, and let the heifer fall, struck down before my altars. Let Rome's wreath compete with Philetas's ivy-clusters, and let the urn provide the waters of Cyrene. Give me soft costmary, and offerings of lovely incense, and let the loop of wool go three times round the fire. Sprinkle me with water, and by the new altars let the ivory flute sing of Phrygian jars. May Fraud be far from here, may Injury depart for other skies: let purifying laurel smooth the priest's fresh path.

Muse, we will speak of the Temple of Palatine Apollo: Calliope, the subject is worthy of your favour. The song is created in Caesar's name: while Caesar's sung, Jupiter, I beg you, yourself, to listen. There is a secluded harbour of Phoebus' Athamanian coast, whose bay quiets the murmur of the Ionian Sea, Actium's open water, remembering the Julian fleet, not a route demanding of sailors' prayers. Here the world's forces gathered: a weight of pine stood on the water, but fortune did not favour their oars alike.

The enemy fleet was doomed by Trojan Quirinus, and the shameful javelins fit for a woman's hand: there was Augustus's ship, sails filled by Jupiter's favour, standards now skilful in victory for their country. Now Nereus bent the formations in a twin arc, and the water trembled painted by the glitter of weapons, when Phoebus, quitting Delos, anchored under his protection (the isle, uniquely floating, it suffered the South Wind's anger), stood over Augustus's stern, and a strange flame shone, three times, snaking down in oblique fire.

Phoebus did not come with his hair streaming round his neck, or with the mild song of the tortoise-shell lyre, but with that aspect that gazed on Agamemnon, Pelop's son, and came out from the Dorian camp to the greedy fires, or as he destroyed the Python, writhing in its coils, the serpent that the peaceful Muses feared.

Then he spoke: 'O Augustus, world-deliverer, sprung from Alba Longa, acknowledged as greater than your Trojan ancestors conquer now by sea: the land is already yours: my bow is on your side, and every arrow burdening my quiver favours you. Free your country from fear, that relying on you as its protector, weights your prow with the State's prayers. Unless you defend her, Romulus misread the birds flying from the Palatine, he the augur of the foundation of Rome's walls. And they dare to come too near with their oars: shameful that Latium's waters should suffer a queen's sails while you are commander. Do not fear that their ships are winged with a hundred oars: their fleet rides an unwilling sea. Though their prows carry Centaurs with threatening stones, you'll find they are hollow timber and painted terrors. The cause exalts or breaks a soldier's strength: unless it is just, shame downs his

*weapons. The moment has come, commit your fleet: I declare the moment: I lead the Julian
prows with laurelled hand.'*

*He spoke, and lent the contents of his quiver to the bow: after his bowshot, Caesar's javelin
was next. Rome won, through Apollo's loyalty: the woman was punished: broken sceptres
floated on the Ionian Sea. But Caesar his 'father' marvelled, and spoke from his comet
released by Venus: 'I am a god: and this shows evidence of my race.'*

*Triton honoured all with music, and the goddesses of the sea applauded, as they circled the
standards of freedom. The woman trusting vainly in her swift vessel headed for the Nile,
seeking one thing only, not to die at another's order. The best thing, by all the gods! What
sort of a triumph would one woman make in the streets where Jugurtha was once led!*

So Apollo of Actium gained his temple, each of whose arrows destroyed ten ships.

*I have sung of war enough: Apollo the victor now demands my lyre, and sheds his weapons
for the dance of peace. Now let guests in white robes enter the gentle grove: and let lovely
roses flow round my neck. May wine from Falernian wine presses be poured, and Cilician
saffron three times bathe my hair. Let the Muse fire the mind of drunken poets: Bacchus you
are used to being an inspiration to your Apollo.*

*Let one tell of the slavery of the Sycambri of the marshes, another sing the dark-skinned
kingdoms of Cephean Meroe, another record how the Parthians lately acknowledged defeat
with a truce. 'Let them return the Roman standards, for they will soon give up their own: or if
Augustus spares the Eastern quivers for a while, let him leave those trophies for his
grandsons to win. Crassus, be glad, if you know of it, among the dark dunes: we shall cross
the Euphrates to your grave.'*

*So I will pass the night with drinking, so with song, until daylight shines its rays into my
wine." (The elegies, Propertius)(11*)*

As recorded by John Malalas, a 6th-century Byzantine chronicler who drew his wisdom from
texts that survived from his time in Constantinople and is the only source on the matter, he
records that the Emperor Augustus would visit Delphi and the oracle would answer him:

*"-Augustus Caesar Octavian in the 55th year of his reign, in the month of October-
Hyperberetaios, visited the oracle. He offered a hecatomb in sacrifice and asked: "Who will
reign over the Roman state after me?" The Pythia gave him no answer. - Then he made
another sacrifice, and asked the Pythia why she had given him no answer, but the oracle
remained silent. The Pythia gave him the following answer: 'A Hebrew child commands (he
who rules as god among the blessed) to leave this house and go to Hades. Go, then, from our
halls and do not tell anyone in the future.' Augustus Caesar left the oracle and came to the
Capitol where he placed a large and high altar, on the who wrote in Roman letters: "This is
the altar of the firstborn god." This altar is in the Capitol to this day, as the scholar Timothy
has written." (Chronography, Malalas)(12*)*

The most famous expression of Delphic wisdom was not in oracular form, but in the prayers
that appeared over the entrance to the Alcmaeonid temple. These inscriptions consisted of the
three maxims 'Know thyself', 'Nothing in excess', and 'Go on bail and destruction is near', and
according to the oldest traditions, they had been dedicated by the Seven Sages of Greece, a
legendary group of contemporary sages, who flourished in the early 6th century. If any of them
did in fact dedicate an aphorism at Delphi, it must have been in the pre-Alcmaeonid temple,

but such a direct connection is highly unlikely. The only certain fact is that these three inscribed phrases were prominently visible on the building in the 5th century, and were probably part of the structure rebuilt by the Alcmaeonids. Of the three, 'Know thyself' claimed the greatest reputation and is constantly cited by later authors as the quintessence of Delphic wisdom. "Nothing in excess" is also often cited, but the third maxim was too specific in its application and too archaic in its outlook to be normally classified with the other two. It is cited relatively rarely. Later moralists provided each of the Seven Sages with a separate saying of their own by adding four more to the original three. But there was no agreement on assigning each to its author: just as the list of the Seven Sages was subject to many variations.

The idea of setting moral sayings as instructions in a temple of Apollo was not limited to Delphi: by the fourth century at the latest, Delos also contained a famous quatrain on the best goals for mortals. "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess" remained among the guiding thoughts of Hellenistic prudence.

Delphi also contained a more enigmatic dedication from the Seven Sages of Greece: a wooden E. This letter was supposed to contain great symbolic wisdom and, as such, was imitated in a bronze E dedicated at a later date by the Athenians and a golden E presented by Empress Livia, wife of Augustus, the first emperor of Rome.

A saying has also been found above the Castalia fountain that could equally apply to a Christian:

"A drop is enough for a good pilgrim; as for the wicked, not even the ocean would wash away their stain."

For one should not believe that temples pronounced oracles solely for the sake of profit and riches. For Plutarch, for example, Apollo was not the light of the sun, but a spiritual and eternal clarity.

And when Apollo Pythius (of Delphi) was asked how the gods could best be worshipped, he replied: "According to the customs of your country." And if there were several customs, he would reply: "Choose the best." He sought spirituality, not fanaticism, and urged the Greeks not to make religion an excuse for cruelty.

He even predicted the destruction of his own sanctuary: ***"...and so, on a day long prepared by fate, the beauty of Delphi will wither and fade; its fame will crumble along with its stones under the blinding lashes of celestial fire."***

The religion of Rome would follow its traditional course until the arrival of the cult of Sol Invictus, probably imported from Syria, which would reach its peak under the Emperor Aurelian. Just as Apollo was known as Horus in Egypt, he would be known as Sol in the Late Roman Empire.

Like Akhenaten in Egypt, Aurelian sought to reform religion in Rome by instituting the eastern cult of Sol Invictus, which some believe was indigenous to Rome, and that the eastern cult only strengthened its establishment in Rome. This cult would be intermittently remembered on the coinage of the Roman Emperors.

The coinage of Sol Invictus began in 197 AD. during the reign of Septimius Severus (reigned 193-211 AD), whose wife Julia Domna was born in Emesa, present-day Homs in Syria, to a Syrian Arab family of priests of the god El-Gabal. Her name, Domna, is an archaic Arabic word

meaning "black", referring to the nature of El-Gabal, which took the form of a black stone. Her great-nephew was Elagabalus, who after the assassination of Caracalla (son of Septimius Severus) in 217 AD, became emperor from 218 to 222 AD.

The family of Elagabalus had hereditary rights to the priesthood of the sun god El-Gabal, of whom Elagabalus was high priest in his native Emesa. The name El-Gabal originally referred to the patron deity of the emperor's birthplace. "El" refers to the principal Semitic deity, while "Gabal," meaning mountain, is his Emesa manifestation.

The god was later brought to Rome and assimilated with the sole solar god, who was known as Sol Indiges during the Republican era, and later Sol Invictus during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Thus, Varius Avitus Bassianus (his real name) adopted the god's name, calling himself "Elagabalus." Since the reign of Septimius Severus, the cult of the sun god had spread throughout the empire. Elagabalus saw this as an opportunity to make his god, El-Gabal, the principal deity of the Roman pantheon. The god was renamed Deus Sol Invictus (Unconquered Sun God).

The coinage of Sol Invictus continued under Elagabalus's cousin, Alexander Severus, who reigned from 222 to 235 AD. Although he continued the coinage of Sol Invictus, the cult would not have the same importance that Elagabalus once gave it. Coinage continued intermittently from 235 AD until the reign of Aurelian, where it reached its peak. He reigned from 270 to 275 AD.

Upon the death of Gallienus, who reigned from 253 to 268 AD, one of his generals, Claudius II Gothicus (nicknamed for his victory over the Goths), ascended to the throne in 270 AD. When, on campaign against an incursion by the Goths who threatened the Balkans, she fell ill with a plague brought by the Goths and died, she was succeeded to the throne by Aurelian, who managed to defeat the Goths and after facing and defeating Quintillus, the emperor elected by the Senate, arrived in Rome, where the Senate recognized him as emperor.

At that time, the Roman Empire was fragmented into three empires: the Palmyrene Empire (existed from 260 to 273 AD), which included the Roman provinces of Syria-Palestine, Arabia Petraea, Egypt, and parts of southeastern Asia Minor; and the Gallic Empire (existed from 260 to 274 AD), which came to control all of Gaul, parts of Germania, Hispania, and Britain.

Aurelian's troops had been inspired by a "divine form" at the Battle of Emesa against Zenobia in 272 AD (Historia Augusta, Aurelian). Victorious, he entered the city and went to the Temple of Elagabalus, where the apparition appeared to him again. Aurelian returned triumphantly to Rome two years later, having recovered the Gallic Empire, and was acclaimed as Restitutor Orbis, "Restorer of the World." A magnificent temple to Sol was erected on December 25, 274 AD (recorded in the Chronicle of St. Jerome 13*), to which large quantities of gold and jewels were dedicated, and a new college of pontiffs was established to serve the god, who was to be the supreme deity of Rome. He would likewise mint Sol Invictus throughout his reign, and a rare issue of his coins would bear the legend 'SOL DOMINVS IMPERI ROMANI,' meaning 'Sol Lord of the Roman Empire.'

Games were also instituted, which are recorded in the Chronograph of 354 AD (14*) (the first historical document recording the Christmas festival, probably the most important document to be considered in bibliography), an illustrated codex (the first in Western art) compiled that year in Rome as a gift to a Christian aristocrat. The Chronograph, Chronographia, or Calendar of 354 is a collection of chronological and calendrical texts produced in 354 AD for a wealthy

Roman Christian named Valentinus by the calligrapher and illustrator Furius Dionysius Philocalus. The original illustrated manuscript is lost, but several copies have survived. It is the earliest known codex to have full-page illustrations. The name Philocalus' Calendar or Philokalian Calendar is sometimes used to describe the whole collection, and sometimes only part six, which is the Calendar itself. The text and illustrations are available online. (14*)

Among other historically important information, the work contains the earliest reference to the celebration of Christmas as an annual festival or feast, on December 25, although Hippolytus of Rome had mentioned specific historical dates much earlier, during 202–211. The original volume has not survived but is believed to have still existed in the Carolingian period, between the 8th and 9th centuries. Numerous copies, with and without illustrations, were made at that time, which were in turn copied during the Renaissance.

The most complete and faithful copies of the illustrations are the pen drawings from a 17th-century manuscript in the Barberini collection (Vatican Library, cod. Barberini lat. 2154). This was carefully copied, under the supervision of the great antiquarian Nicholas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, from a Carolingian copy, a Codex Luxemburgensis, which itself was lost in the 17th century. These drawings, although twice separated from the originals, show the variety of sources that early illuminators used as models for manuscript illustration, including metalwork, frescoes, and floor mosaics. The Roman originals were probably fully painted miniatures.

In the section known as the Calendar of Philocalus (14*) (after the calligrapher whose name appears on the dedication page), VIII Kal. Ian. (December 25) is noted N INVICTI CM XXX. Although the dedication is uncertain (since there is no name attached to the epithet), the presumption is that Natalis Invicti refers to the birthday of the Invincible Sun, who is mentioned in the games of August 28, and the founding date of his temple. Thirty races (circenses missus) were run in the circus on that day, making it the second most celebrated festival of the entire year, surpassed only by the ludi solis of October 22. Every four years, thirty-six races were dedicated to Sol on the last day of the games, which ran from 19 to 22 October, preceding the celebration of 25 December by little more than two months and believed to be the date of the inauguration of the cult of Sol Invictus instituted by Aurelian, possibly to commemorate his earlier triumphal procession. These quadrennial games are mentioned by Julian (ruled 361-363 AD) in his Hymn to King Helios (23*), who refers to them as a "very recent" institution.

Both celebrations are also recorded by Saint Jerome in his Chronicon (13*) or Temporum liber (Book of Times). This was a universal chronicle written by Jerome. It was composed in 380 AD in Constantinople. It is a Latin translation of the chronological tables that make up the second part of Eusebius' Chronicon, with a supplement covering the period from 325 to 379. It records the first Sun Games instituted by Aurelian in 274 AD. He does not mention October 22, but emphasizes that the temple consecrated to Sol was built in the same year on December 25, as mentioned by Julian and the chronography of 354 or the calendar of Philocalus. In another section of Philocalus's 354 Chronography commemorating the laying of the martyrs to rest (Disposition of the Martyrs, the oldest record of the Roman calendar), the liturgical year begins on December 25, and the VIII Kal. Ian. is inscribed natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae ("Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea"). In a section listing the consuls, there is also a note for the year 1 AD: dominus Iesus Christus natus est VIII kal. Ian. These are the earliest references to December 25 as Jesus' birthday. Since no martyrs are mentioned after 336 AD, it is presumed that the first celebration of Christmas observed by the Roman church in the West dates from that year.

Just as today the main religious festival of Christians is Easter followed by Christmas on December 25, in the time of the Late Roman Empire, October 22 and the Games of the Sun (Ludi Solis) were the main ones, followed by December 25 or the festival of the birth of the Unconquered Sun (Dies Natalis Solis Invicti).

The Egyptians were the first of all mankind to discover the year, and they claimed to have discovered it from the stars, as Herodotus recounts in the Nine Books of History. In Egyptian mythology, Thoth was the creator of the Heru Renpet (the five epagomenal days), removing them from the light of Khonsu, the moon. These new days allowed Nut to give birth to four children: Osiris, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys; Ra had prevented her from having them on any day of the year. Later, when Osiris had to be rebuilt but was unable to conceive, Thoth taught Isis the spell that allowed the conception of Horus.

The invention of the Egyptian civil calendar dates back to the beginning of the third millennium BC, and there is evidence of its use during the time of Shepsekaf, pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty of Egypt. The Egyptian civil year consisted of 365 days, divided into three seasons of 120 days, plus five additional days, which did not constitute a separate month.

These days were called heru renpet, "those above the year," by the ancient Egyptians. They were also known as the days of the birth of the gods, as they celebrated the births of five Egyptian deities: Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys.

Thoth, originally a lunar god, was associated with the measurement of time and its division into periods, created from the observation of the phases of the moon. These cycles were fundamental to Egyptian rituals; consequently, Thoth was associated with the measurement and regulation of time, with the organization of civilized life, and with the writing that allowed for the preservation of that order.

Over time, he came to be considered the god of wisdom, inventor of articulate language and hieroglyphic writing. As such, he was the scribe of the gods, who documented divine decrees in the Hall of the Two Truths and corroborated in writing the results of the "weighing of souls" during the so-called Judgment of Osiris.

The tutelary deity of scribes, as well as of the arts and sciences, Thoth was celebrated as the divine architect, knowledgeable in the perfect designs of all things. He was therefore the god of wisdom, both in terms of skills and techniques, and respect for moral law.

Since it must be deduced that Horus was born in the days of the birth of his parents and his uncles, as Plutarch relates in "Isis and Osiris", it can be deduced that the Egyptian calendar, where the last days of the year after 360 days, and the 5 sacred days dedicated to the birth of the gods that began on August 24, dedicated to Osiris, Isis, Nephtis and Seth, the third day would be the birth of the son of Isis and Osiris, the epagomenal days that were from August 24-28, the third day of the Egyptian year, was dedicated to Horus, with the epithet of "The glorious Falcon who is in his nest."

For the Egyptians, the most sacred days of the year were the epagomenal, which were like celebrating Christmas, 5 days before the new year.

The rise of the cult of Sol Invictus would reach its peak under Emperor Aurelian, who succeeded in reuniting the Empire and laying the foundations for the end of the crisis of the third century, which extended the Empire's existence by another 200 years. The crisis of the third century refers to a historical period of the Roman Empire, lasting almost fifty years, between the death of Emperor Alexander Severus in 235 AD and the accession of Diocletian to the throne of the Empire in 284 AD. This was a period of profound crisis, during which there was strong pressure from peoples outside the Empire and an acute political, economic, and social crisis within the Empire. In both Italy and the provinces, ephemeral powers emerged without legal basis, while economic life was marked by uncertain production, difficult transportation, and the collapse of the currency, among other factors. This period ended with the Tetrarchy of Diocletian.

The Tetrarchy was the system of government instituted by the Roman Emperor Diocletian in 293 to rule the Roman Empire by dividing it between two senior emperors, the Augustuses, and their designated subordinates and successors, the Caesars.

Initially, Diocletian chose Maximian as his Caesar in 285, elevating him to Augustus the following year, and dividing the government of the state between them: Maximian would be in charge of the western provinces and Diocletian of the eastern ones. Galerius and Constantius Chlorus were appointed Caesars in March 293. Diocletian and Maximian retired on May 1, 305, elevating Galerius and Constantius to the rank of Augustus. Their places as Caesars were in turn taken by Severus II and Maximinus Daia.

The orderly system of two major and two minor emperors lasted until Constantius died in July 306, and his son Constantine the Great was unilaterally acclaimed Augustus and Caesar by his father's army. Constantine inherited rule of Hispania, Gaul, and Britain from his father. Maximian's son Maxentius contested Severus's title, styled himself princeps invictus, and was appointed Caesar by his father in 306, even though his father had been retired the previous year. Severus surrendered to Maximian and Maxentius in 307. That same year, Maximian recognized Maxentius and Constantine as Augustuses in the western part of the Empire. Maxentius would rule over Italy and North Africa. Galerius, meanwhile, appointed Licinius Augustus for the west in 308 and elevated Maximinus to Augustus in 310.

Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 left him in control of the western part of the Empire, while Licinius took control of the east after Maximinus's death. The Tetrarchal system ultimately lasted until 324, when mutually destructive civil wars eliminated most contenders for power. Licinius resigned after losing the Battle of Chrysopolis, leaving Constantine in control of the entire Empire.

But before his future greatness, Apollo would be present in his early years, predicting a prosperous reign. In the Anonymous Panegyric on Constantine of 310, better known as the Latin 6 panegyric 'Incipit secundus', by an anonymous author whose work was presented at the imperial court in Trier in 310 on the occasion of the Quinquennialia of Constantine I the Great (the fifth anniversary of his accession to the imperial throne) and the celebration of the founding day of the city of Trier. The speaker of the panegyric relates that it was in a temple at Trier in Gaul in 310 (two years preceding Constantine's vision of the cross and conversion shortly before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312), that Apollo and Victory appeared to him, as recounted in the panegyric:

"Fortune herself so ordered this that the felicity of your situation reminded you to bring what you had vowed to the immortal gods, in the very place where you had already made a

detour to the most beautiful temple in the whole world, or rather to the god who was manifest there, when you saw him. For you did I believe, Constantine, see your patron Apollo, and Victory accompanying him, offering you crowns of laurel, each of which represents a foretelling of thirty years. That is of course the length of human generations, which are certainly due to take you beyond the old age of Nestor. And yet why do I say 'I believe'? You did see him, and you recognized yourself in the image of the one to whom the sacred poems of bards prophesied that the kingdoms of the whole world were due by right (in reference to Apollo). That has now I think at last come to pass, seeing that you are, Emperor, like him, young, blessed, our savior and a most handsome one! So quite rightly did you adorn those most venerable temples with such offerings that they no longer miss their former ones, and now all temples seem to be calling you to them—and especially our Apollo, in whose boiling waters are punished perjurers, whom you above all have good cause to hate." (Pan. Lat. VII)(15*)

Those 30 years would be fulfilled, since Constantine would reign for 31 years, from 306 to 337 AD, and where at the same time a reference is made to the fourth eclogue with "the divine songs of the bard." Later the speaker continues:

"Ye immortal gods, when will you grant the day that this most benevolent deity shall have established peace everywhere and may visit those groves of Apollo as well, and the sacred temple and steaming fountain springs? Their bubbling waters, warm and gently gushing, seem eager to smile upon your eyes, Constantine, and to flow into your lips. To be sure, you will marvel too at the shrine of your patron god there, and the waters heated without any indication of the ground boiling. There is no bitterness in their taste or appearance, but a clarity of flavour and aroma like that of cool springs. There too you will make donations, establish privileges, in short restore my own home country by worshipping that very place. That ancient noble city which once prided itself in its fraternal relations with Rome, is awaiting the assistance of your sovereignty, so that there too public buildings and splendid temples may be repaired by your generosity. In such a way I observe this happy city, whose foundation day is being commemorated by your gracious visit, reviving so much in every quarter that it may even yet rejoice to have once collapsed, since it has grown greater through your benevolence." (15*)

It was from that event that Constantine coined the term Sol Invictus, like Aurelian, for 13 years of his life, from 310 to 323 AD, thus associating the cult of Sol Invictus, established by Aurelian as the principal religion of the Roman Empire following his religious reforms in 274 AD, with that of Apollo.

On March 7, 321, Constantine consecrated Dies Solis (Day of the Sun), Sunday, as a day of rest and veneration of God, thus further emphasizing the relationship between the Sun and Christianity. Just as on November 1, 324 AD, just six weeks after Constantine's victory over Licinius at Chrysopolis and already the sole emperor of the Roman Empire, he would transfer the serpentine column at Plataea from Delphi to the Hippodrome of Constantinople, the same offering made by the Greeks in gratitude for Apollo's aid to Greece in the Persian Wars, in the spring of 478 BC (a year after the Battle of Plataea), thus imperceptibly emphasizing Constantine's association with his ancient patron deity, Apollo.

Most likely in April 325 AD, shortly before the Council of Nicaea (the Council where Constantine ordered the creation of a doctrine that would be called the "Nicene Creed," which synthesized the faith of the Catholic Church and established the date of Easter), which lasted

from May to August of that same year, Constantine would give his Address to the Assembly of Saints. In a very long discourse, which still exists, the royal preacher discourses in great detail on the various trials of his religion; but he dwells with peculiar complacency on the Sibyl Line verses, and the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil. In the Sibyl Line verses, he puts into the mouth of the Erythraean Sibyl, priestess of Apollo, who according to her own words would live in the eighth generation after the Flood, a prophecy of the coming of Christ and his passion, , which had the form of an acrostic whose initial letters spelled "ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΕΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ" ("Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, Cross"):

"Judgment! Earth's oozing pores shall mark the day;

Earth's heavenly king his glories shall display:

Sovereign of all, exalted on his throne,

Unnumbered multitudes their God shall own;

Shall see their Judge, with mingled joy and fear,

Crowned with his saints, in human form appear.

How vain, while desolate earth's glories lie,

Riches, and pomp, and man's idolatry!

In that dread hour, when Nature's fiery doom

Startles the slumb'ring tenants of the tomb,

Trembling all flesh shall stand; each secret wile,

Sins long forgotten, thoughts of guilt and guile,

Open beneath God's searching light shall lie:

No refuge then, but hopeless agony.

O'er heaven's expanse shall gathering shades of night

From earth, sun, stars, and moon, withdraw their light;

God's arm shall crush each mountain's towering pride;

On ocean's plain no more shall navies ride.

Dried at the source, no river's rushing sound

Shall soothe, no fountain slake the parched ground.

Around, afar, shall roll the trumpet's blast,

Voice of wrath long delayed, revealed at last.

In speechless awe, while earth's foundations groan,

On judgment's seat earth's kings their God shall own.

Uplifted then, in majesty divine,

Radiant with light, behold Salvation's Sign!

*Cross of that Lord, who, once for sinners given,
Reviled by man, now owned by earth and heaven,
O'er every land extends his iron sway.
Such is the name these mystic lines display;
Saviour, eternal king, who bears our sins away."*

...

Many, however, who admit that the Erythræan Sibyl was really a prophetess, yet refuse to credit this prediction, and imagine that some one professing our faith, and not unacquainted with the poetic art, was the composer of these verses. They hold, in short, that they are a forgery, and alleged to be the prophecies of the Sibyl on the ground of their containing useful moral sentiments, tending to restrain licentiousness, and to lead man to a life of sobriety and decorum. Truth, however, in this case is evident, since the diligence of our countrymen has made a careful computation of the times; so that there is no room to suspect that this poem was composed after the advent and condemnation of Christ, or that the general report is false, that the verses were a prediction of the Sibyl in an early age. For it is allowed that Cicero was acquainted with this poem, which he translated into the Latin tongue, and incorporated with his own works. This writer was put to death during the ascendancy of Antony, who in his turn was conquered by Augustus, whose reign lasted fifty-six years."
*(Oration of Constantine to the Assembly of the Saints)(*16)*

The Cumaean Sibyl, another prophetess of Apollo as famous as the Erythraean, also remembered by Constantine with the Fourth Eclogue, identified by many as the old woman who gave her prophecies from the cave of Cumae, who met Aeneas, and prophesied that her destiny was to be the one who would lead the Trojans to Latium (Italy) where Rome would be founded in the near future (her soul inspired by Apollo, which conveyed the future through words, like the Pythoness at Delphi), would be the supposed real author of what is known as the Fourth Eclogue, composed or rather transcribed in 40 BC when Pollio was consul. Pollio was the one who helped Octavian and Mark Antony sign the peace in Brundisium, that is, when Virgil was 30 years old, becoming famous for the work.

Apollo was the god who inspired the prophecies of the Sibyls, and he promised to grant the Sibyl of Cumae a wish. She scooped a handful of sand and asked to live as many years as the number of particles of earth she had picked up; but she forgot to ask for eternal youth, so over the years she began to waste away so much that she had to be locked in a cage, which was hung from the Temple of Apollo at Cumae. One of the most famous stories about this prophetess is the one that narrates her encounter with the last king of Rome, Tarquinius the Proud:

"It is said that during the reign of Tarquinius another very wonderful piece of good luck also came to the Roman state, conferred upon it by the favor of some god or other divinity; and this good fortune was not of short duration, but throughout the whole existence of the country it has often saved it from great calamities. A certain woman who was not a native of the country came to the tyrant wishing to sell him nine books filled with Sibylline oracles; but when Tarquinius refused to purchase the books at the price she asked, she went away and burned three of them. And not long afterwards, bringing the remaining six books, she offered to sell them for the same price. But when they thought she was a fool and mocked at

her for asking the same price for the smaller number of books that she had been unable to get for even the larger number, she again went away and burned half of those that were left; then, bringing the remaining books, she asked the same amount of money for these. Tarquinius, wondering at the woman's purpose, sent for the augurs and acquainting them with the matter, asked them what he should do. These, knowing by certain signs that he had rejected a god-sent blessing, and declaring it to be a great misfortune that he had not purchased all the books, directed him to pay the woman all the money she asked and to obtain the oracles that were left. The woman, after delivering the books and bidding him taking great care of them, disappeared from among men. Tarquinius chose two men of distinction from among the citizens and appointing two public slaves to assist them, entrusted to them the guarding of the books; and when one of these men, named Marcus Atilius, seemed to have been faithless to his trust□and was informed upon by one of the public slaves, he ordered him to be sewed up in a leather bag and thrown into the sea as a parricide.□Since the expulsion of the kings, the commonwealth, taking upon itself the guarding of these oracles, entrusts the care of them to persons of the greatest distinction, who hold this office for life, being exempt from military service and from all civil employments, and it assigns public slaves to assist them, in whose absence the others are not permitted to inspect the oracles. In short, there is no possession of the Romans, sacred or profane, which they guard as carefully as they do the Sibylline oracles. They consult them, by order of the senate, when the state is in the grip of party strife or some great misfortune has happened to them in war, or some important prodigies and apparitions have been seen which are difficult of interpretation, as has often happened. These oracles until the time of the Marsian War, as it was called, were kept underground in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in a stone chest under the guard of ten men. But when the temple was burned after the close of the one hundred and seventy-third Olympiad, either purposely, as some think, or by accident, these oracles together with all the offerings consecrated to the god were destroyed by the fire. Those which are now extant have been scraped together from many places, some from the cities of Italy, others from Erythrae in Asia (whither three envoys were sent by vote of the senate to copy them), and others were brought from other cities, transcribed by private persons. Some of these are found to be interpolations among the genuine Sibylline oracles, being recognized as such by means of the so-called acrostics. In all this I am following the account given by Terentius Varro in his work on religion.” (Roman Antiquities, Dionysius of Halicarnassus)(7)*

According to Roman tradition, the oldest collection of Sibylline Books appears to have been formed during the time of Solon and Cyrus on Mount Ida in the Troas; it was attributed to the Hellespontine Sibyl and preserved in the Temple of Apollo on Mount Ida. From there, the collection passed to Erythrae, where it became famous as the oracles of the Erythraean Sibyl. It seems that this same collection reached Cumae through the Cumaean Sibyl and from Cumae to Rome.

In particular, the guardians of the Sibylline Books were responsible for overseeing the cult of Apollo, the "Great Mother" Cybele or Magna Mater, and Ceres, which had been introduced following recommendations interpreted from the Sibylline Books. The Sibylline Books motivated the construction of eight temples in ancient Rome, in addition to those cults that have been interpreted as mediated by the Sibylline Books simply because of the Greek nature of the deity. Thus, an important effect of the Sibylline Books was their influence on the application of Greek cult practice and Greek conceptions of deities to the indigenous Roman religion, which was already indirectly influenced by Etruscan religion. Since the Sibylline Books

had been compiled in Anatolia, near Troy, they recognized the gods and goddesses and the rites observed there and helped introduce them into the Roman state cult, a syncretic amalgamation of national deities with the corresponding deities of Greece, and a general modification of Roman religion.

From the Capitol, they were transferred by Augustus as pontifex maximus in 12 BC to the Temple of Apollo Palatine, after having been examined and copied; there they remained for most of the remainder of the imperial period until approximately 405 AD. According to the poet Claudius Rutilius of Namatius, General Flavius Stilicho (died 408 AD) burned them, as they were being used to attack his government during the attack by Alaric I. In 410 AD, after Stilicho's death, Rome was sacked by Alaric after having remained unconquered since 387 BC, when it was sacked by the Gauls. The last known consultation prior to the aforementioned was in 363 BC by Emperor Julian the Apostate in preparation for marching against the Sassanids. The response sent from Rome "clearly warned him not to abandon his own territories that year."

Already familiar with the work of the Cumaean Sibyl, the final manifestation of her message would be present in Virgil's work with the Fourth Eclogue, which we will return to later on the seal adopted by the Congress of the newly founded nation of the United States:

"Muses of Sicily, essay we now

A somewhat loftier task! Not all men love

Coppice or lowly tamarisk: sing we woods,

Woods worthy of a Consul let them be.

Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung

Has come and gone, and the majestic roll

Of circling centuries begins anew:

Justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign,

With a new breed of men sent down from heaven.

Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom

The iron shall cease, the golden race arise,

Befriend him, chaste Lucina; 'tis thine own

Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate,

This glorious age, O Pollio, shall begin,

And the months enter on their mighty march.

Under thy guidance, whatso tracks remain

Of our old wickedness, once done away,

Shall free the earth from never-ceasing fear.

He shall receive the life of gods, and see

Heroes with gods commingling, and himself
Be seen of them, and with his father's worth
Reign o'er a world at peace. For thee, O boy,
First shall the earth, untilled, pour freely forth
Her childish gifts, the gadding ivy-spray
With foxglove and Egyptian bean-flower mixed,
And laughing-eyed acanthus. Of themselves,
Untended, will the she-goats then bring home
Their udders swollen with milk, while flocks afield
Shall of the monstrous lion have no fear.
Thy very cradle shall pour forth for thee
Caressing flowers. The serpent too shall die,
Die shall the treacherous poison-plant, and far
And wide Assyrian spices spring. But soon
As thou hast skill to read of heroes' fame,
And of thy father's deeds, and inly learn
What virtue is, the plain by slow degrees
With waving corn-crops shall to golden grow,
From the wild briar shall hang the blushing grape,
And stubborn oaks sweat honey-dew. Nathless
Yet shall there lurk within of ancient wrong
Some traces, bidding tempt the deep with ships,
Gird towns with walls, with furrows cleave the earth.
Therewith a second Tiphys shall there be,
Her hero-freight a second Argo bear;
New wars too shall arise, and once again
Some great Achilles to some Troy be sent.
Then, when the mellowing years have made thee man,
No more shall mariner sail, nor pine-tree bark
Ply traffic on the sea, but every land
Shall all things bear alike: the glebe no more

Shall feel the harrow's grip, nor vine the hook;
The sturdy ploughman shall loose yoke from steer,
Nor wool with varying colours learn to lie;
But in the meadows shall the ram himself,
Now with soft flush of purple, now with tint
Of yellow saffron, teach his fleece to shine.
While clothed in natural scarlet graze the lambs.
"Such still, such ages weave ye, as ye run,"
Sang to their spindles the consenting Fates
By Destiny's unalterable decree.
Assume thy greatness, for the time draws nigh,
Dear child of gods, great progeny of Jove!
See how it totters- the world's orb'd might,
Earth, and wide ocean, and the vault profound,
All, see, enraptured of the coming time!
Ah! might such length of days to me be given,
And breath suffice me to rehearse thy deeds,
Nor Thracian Orpheus should out-sing me then,
Nor Linus, though his mother this, and that
His sire should aid- Orpheus Calliope,
And Linus fair Apollo. Nay, though Pan,
With Arcady for judge, my claim contest,
With Arcady for judge great Pan himself
Should own him foiled, and from the field retire.
Begin to greet thy mother with a smile,
O baby-boy! ten months of weariness
For thee she bore: O baby-boy, begin!
For him, on whom his parents have not smiled,
Gods deem not worthy of their board or bed."

(The Bucolics, Virgil)(17*)

The myth of the Ages of Man, in which the Fourth Eclogue is staged, with 'the times in which Saturn reigned', would be the following:

"Well and expertly, and lay it up in your mind and preserve it—

Namely, the common origin shared by immortals and mortals.

First, the immortals who dwell high up on the top of Olympus

Fashioned the firstborn race of articulate men, which was golden,

And it is said that they lived when Cronus was ruling in heaven.

Godlike, they lived like gods, and their hearts were entirely carefree,

Distant strangers to labor and suffering; neither did wretched

Age overtake them; instead, their members intact and unchanged, they

Took much pleasure in banquets and parties, apart from all evils

Till they died as if sleep overcame them. And everything worthwhile

Came to their hand, as the grain-growing earth bore fruit without tilling,

Plenty of good food crops unbegrudged; so they lived at their pleasure,

Peacefully minding their own business, amid numerous good things.

Wealthy in flocks were they and beloved of the blessed immortals.

After this whole first gold generation was finally buried,

Even today they are called pure spirits inhabiting earth and

Noble protectors of mankind, warding off evils from mortals,

Givers of wealth, which royal prerogative still is their business.

Afterward, those that inhabit Olympus fashioned a second,

Silver race, which was very inferior, worse than the first one,

For they did neither in growth nor intellect equal the golden.

Children were then brought up by their diligent mothers a hundred

Years and engaged in sheer infantile child's play there in their own homes.

But when maturing at last they came to the measure of manhood

They lived only the tiniest time, and moreover they suffered

Much in their folly; they could not keep themselves back from their wicked

Violence on one another; nor were they willing to serve the immortals

Or make sacrifice using the Blessed Ones' sacrosanct altars,

*As it is lawful for humans to do and according to custom.
Thereupon, Zeus, son of Cronus, suppressed them all in his anger,
Seeing they did not worship the gods who inhabit Olympus.
And when this generation of silver in turn was interred
Under the earth, they were termed blessed spirits although they were mortal,
Second in time, yet everywhere honor is also their portion.*

*Zeus manufactured a new third race of articulate mankind,
But this bronze generation in no way equaled the silver,
For they were offspring of ash trees, mighty and frightful, and Ares'
Noisy employment concerned them and violent deeds. They ate no
Bread and appeared tough-minded as adamant, wholly unpolished;
All too great was their strength and their hands were invincible, growing
Out of their mighty shoulders to hang at the end of their stout limbs.
Bronze was their armor and brazen their arms, brass-bound were their dwellings;
Bronze were the tools which they worked with, as iron had not been invented.
Dying by each other's hands, they went down to the underworld's cold rot,
Leaving no names to posterity. Black death took them despite their
Physical strength, and they quit altogether the luminous sunlight.
But when this bronze generation, however, was finally buried,
Zeus, son of Cronus, created a whole new fourth generation
Here on the fertile earth who were better and fonder of justice;
This was a godlike race of heroic men who were known as
Demigods, last generation before our own on the broad earth.
Horrible war with its frightening war cries wholly destroyed them,
Some who fought in the kingdom of Cadmus below seven-gated
Thebes where they strove in vain with each other for Oedipus's rich flocks,
Others transported across the immense deep gulf of the sea on
Shipboard to Troy after well-coiffed Helen, the fairest of women.
Some of them their death's ending completely enveloped in darkness.
Others, however, the son of Cronus decided to grant a*

*Dwelling place far from men at the furthestmost ends of the earth, and
There they continue to live, their consciousness perfectly carefree,
There in the Isles of the Blessed, beside deep-eddying Ocean,
[Distant from the immortals; and Cronus was king of that kingdom
After the father of gods and of men freed him from his bondage;
Now from those heroes he gets high honor as is most befitting.]
Fortunate heroes! Their plowlands are so fertile they yield a
Crop more delicious than honey that flourishes three times yearly.
Zeus then created a fifth and last generation of mankind
Such as to this day also inhabit the bountiful green earth.
How I would wish to have never been one of this fifth generation!
Whether I'd died in the past or came to be born in the future.
Truly of iron is this generation, and never by day will
They intermit hard labor and woe; in the night they will also
Suffer distress, for the gods will give them unbearable troubles.
Nevertheless, there will always be good mixed in with the evil.
Zeus will destroy this race of articulate mankind, however,
When they have come to exhibit at birth gray hairs at their temples
And when fathers will differ from children and children from fathers,
Guests with their hosts will differ and comrades will differ with comrades.
And no more will a brother, as previously, be beloved.
When they grow old, people will show no respect to their elders;
Harshly upbraiding them, they use words that are horribly cruel,
Wretches who don't acknowledge the face of the gods and who will not
Pay back ever the cost of their upbringing to their old parents,
Thinking that might means right; and they devastate each other's cities.
There will be nothing like gratitude for oath-keepers and just men,
Nor for the good man; rather, they'll only respect evildoers,
Monsters of violence. Might will be right, all shame will be lost and
All inhibition. The wicked will try to ruin the good man,
Shamelessly uttering falsehoods, wickedly bearing false witness.*

**Noisy, discordant Envy, malicious, delighting in mischief,
 Hateful-faced will accompany all us unfortunate humans.
 Self-respect and upright Indignation will go on their way to Olympus,
 Quitting the broadly trod earth and concealing their beautiful forms in
 Mantles of white, preferring the company of the immortals,
 Wholly abandoning mankind, leaving them sorrow and grievous
 Pain for the human condition, till there's no ward against evil."**

(Works and Days, Hesiod)(18*)

Continuing with Constantine, the emperor who made the Fourth Eclogue famous to the Christian public, once master of the entire empire after the victory over Licinius at Chrysopolis on September 18, 324 AD, Constantine began the construction of Constantinople on the site of ancient Troy (Ilium), to glorify the mythical past of the Romans who in their most ancient offspring descended from that city, but for strategic reasons he decided on ancient Byzantium, located in front of Troy, where on November 1, 324 he delimited the extension of his new city, and had the serpentine column of Plataea (the offering in reward for Apollo's help in the Medical Wars) brought to be dedicated in the middle of the Hippodrome to his new city. Constantine thus attributed his victory and the inspiration for his new city to Apollo, just as eight centuries earlier the serpentine column had symbolized the offering for the freedom of Greece, attributed to the same god, and remained there until the end of the 17th century. In this way, Constantine symbolically left, what would be imperceptible to Christians, his close relationship with his first patron, already from 310 until the confirmation of that affiliation, most likely shortly before the Council of Nicaea, in most likely April 325, in his Oration to the Assembly of Saints, where he legitimized the existence of Apollo through the use of his prophetic gift and longevity.

Finally, even after the Council of Nicaea, in the period of the beginning of the construction of the city of Constantinople in November 324 AD, and the dedication of Constantinople on May 11, 330 AD, Constantine ordered the erection of a colossal statue of Sol/Apollo atop the Column of Constantine in the Forum of Constantinople, which had a seven-rayed crown, a globe in its left hand and a spear in its right (just like the Sol Invictus coins). In this way, Constantine would demonstrate that his association with his ancient patron Apollo did not end with his minting of the Sol Invictus coins in 323 AD, but would continue even after the Council of Nicaea and the founding of Constantinople.

Not much is known about the statue. Sources agree that the head was adorned with a crown of seven solar rays, perhaps an attempt by Constantine to create a syncretism between sun worship and Christianity. However, some sources also claim that the head had been replaced with one representing the emperor himself, which would be in line with the inscription: To Constantine, who shines like Helios (another name given to Apollo, or the sun)...

This is how it appears on the Tabula Peutingeriana, where it is depicted alongside an image of the Tyche of Constantinople. The height of the column alone reached 23.40 meters, while the estimated height of the monument, including the statue, must have been around 37-40 meters. Including the base, the total height would have been close to 50 meters, making it the

largest statue built in the Roman Empire up to that time (roughly the height of the Colosseum in Rome). It was built from porphyry brought from Heliopolis, present-day Egypt.

The column was located in the Forum of Constantine, which marked the center of the new city and was a focal point along the Mese, the main ceremonial route through the city, and therefore one of the stopping points for imperial processions. It was circular and had two monumental gates to the east and west. In the center of the square was erected the Column of Constantine, which still stands today and is known in Turkish as Çemberlitaş. The statue stood, with some modifications over time, until 1106 during the Byzantine period, when a thunderstorm toppled it.

In this way, Constantinople became the cultural and economic center of the East and the center of the ideals of Christianity and Classical Greece. Its importance would take on a new dimension with the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 AD and the final fall of the city to Odoacer in 476 AD. During the Middle Ages, the city would be a refuge for ancient Greek and Roman texts.

After Constantine's death in 337 AD, his son Constantius II succeeded him to the throne, reigning as Augustus from 337 to 361 AD. Upon his death, Constantine's nephew Julian, better known as Julian the Apostate, succeeded him to the throne. Julian, who reigned from 361 to 363 AD, attempted to reverse the success of Christianity achieved by Constantine and his sons. It was Julian's wish and design to deprive the Christians of the advantages of wealth, knowledge, and power, as at the same time the greater part of the Christian officials were gradually removed from their employments in the state, the army, and the provinces, and in the same manner he attempted to win over the greater part of his subjects to the old religion of Rome, by giving pre-eminence to the philosophers and priests of his religion. It is told in the passion of Saint Artemius, written by Philostorgius, that Artemius, Duke of Egypt and former companion of Constantius II, would reproach Julian for his actions against Christians, stating that Christ was the only true god, announced by the prophets, sibyls and sibylline oracles, and at the same time mentioning the response that brought from the oracle of Delphi, Oribasius, Julian's doctor, making known to Julian the last prophecy of Delphi, through this evidence it is undeniable that the intervention of the God Apollo is what saves Christianity and makes it prevail, at the same time it is evidence of Apollo's farewell to manifest himself at the end of time, emphasizing that he would be the god who would return from the dead and that he adopted the doctrine of Christianity to be used as his tool to fulfill the promises of Christ or the ideal that meant for the Romans the times in which Saturn reigned, while exalting Christ for his great work for the benefit of justice, virtue and truth, which is what his last words would be embodied in, "the God who suffered, although his divinity did not suffer," implying that regardless of the circumstances, his legacy would remain intact:

"[Artemius speaks to Julian] Know therefore that the strength and power of Christ is invincible and unconquerable. You yourself are certainly convinced of this from the oracles that the physician and quaestor Oribasius recently brought you from the Apollo in Delphi. But I will repeat the oracle to you, whether you wish to hear it or not. It runs as follows:

«Go tell the king the wondrous hall is fallen to the ground.

Now Phoebus has a cell no more, no laurel that foretells,

No talking spring; the water that once spoke is heard no more.»

...

Julian summoned the saintly Artemius and spoke to him: "By your presumption you have forced me to dishonor your race, to disgrace your former high position, and to assault your very body. So let yourself be persuaded, Artemius, and come and sacrifice to the gods, especially to Apollo of Daphne, my especially beloved and sacred god; and I will absolve you of the guilt of my brother's blood, and restore you to a greater and more honorable state. I will make you prefect of the Praetorians and high priest of the great gods, and I will name you my father, with the second place in my empire, and you will be with me for the rest of my life and administration. For you yourself know, Artemius, that my brother was murdered by Constantius without cause, and that envy destroyed him, together with that most impious of all men, the eunuch Eusebius, who unjustly obtained the position of Prepositor of the Cubicle which he did not deserve, even though that utterly wicked individual has paid the penalty for his sacrilegious act.

...

[Julian speaks:]. "...I renounced Christianity and went over to the Greek way of life, since I knew well that the most ancient way of life of the Greeks and Romans, with its fine customs and laws, included worship of those gods, belief in whom was grounded in reality. For who can be of doubtful mind who sees the sun riding through the sky and the moon being drawn on a golden-railed chariot by a yoke of bulls? The one makes the daytime bright and rouses people to their work. The other illumines the night and beautifies the stars and with its unsleeping beams urges people to their sleep. Thus do the Greeks and Romans teach about the gods, Artemius, and not wrongly, but fittingly and with sound judgment. For what is there that is brighter than the sun? Or more radiant than the moon? What more delightful and comelier than the chorus of the stars? These are the beings the Greeks and Romans regard as divine and worship and upon whom they fix their hopes. They call the sun Apollo, the moon Artemis, and the greatest stars, which they call planets and which occupy the seven heavenly spheres, they name Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and Venus. These govern the whole world, and by their powers the whole earth under heaven is administered. People therefore put up images of them that they revere and honor, at the same time making up certain fables for the fun of it. But they do not honor the images as gods, far from it! Only the simplest and most uncultured people suppose so. Those who embrace philosophy and investigate the divine realm carefully know to whom they accord honor and to whom the worship of the divine statues is extended."!?

[Artemius speaks]. "But why do I say these things? The prophets originally predicted Christ, as you yourself know quite well. The testimonies concerning his advent abound: among them are the prophecies from the gods you worship and the oracles, as well as the Sibylline books, and the poetry of Virgil the Roman that you call "bucolic."! Apollo himself, the soothsayer you so admire, uttered the following words about Christ. Responding to a question put by his ministers, he replied,

"O would that you had never asked me at my very end,

Unhappy ministers of mine, about the holy god

And spirit holding cluster-like all things in its embrace:

The stars, the light, the rivers, Tartarus, the air and fire!

This spirit drives me all unwilling from this very shrine.

And now the day when I must yield my tripods!» is at hand.

O grieve for me, ye tripods, grieve: Apollo now departs;

Departs: a mortal man who is from heaven forces me;

He is the God who suffered, yet his godhead suffered not.”!

(Ecclesiastical History, Philostorgius)(19/13*)*

The city of Antioch on the Orontes in present-day Syria served as the capital of the Seleucid Empire and later as a regional capital of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Antioch was called "the cradle of Christianity" as a result of its longevity and the pivotal role it played in the emergence of early Christianity. It was founded by Seleucus in 300 BC, and he dedicated the nearby suburb of Daphne to Apollo, as recounted by the sophist Libanius, known as the greatest pagan orator of his time and a friend of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, a native of that city:

”Seleucus settled this much renowned suburb of Daphne too, to be the temple’s portion, and granted the place to the god once he found the legend to be a fact. The story is that Apollo fell in love with Daphne but could not win her, and began to pursue her: she, because of her prayer, was changed into a tree, and he then used his love to form his crown. So runs the tale. The truth of it was revealed to Seleucus while he was hunting. He was on horseback and with his hounds in pursuit of his quarry, and when he came by the tree which once had been the maiden, his horse shied and stamped upon the ground with its hoof, and a golden arrowhead appeared from the earth. This was engraved with the name of its owner Phoebus. In grief at the maiden’s transformation, I presume, he had thrown down his arrows and the head of one of them had come off and lay hidden in the ground, and was kept as a warning to Seleucus to revere the place and to think it - as it was - the temple of Apollo. Now the sudden appearance of the fountain on Helicon was a miracle, so they say, resulting from Pegasus striking the rock with his hoof. This even there is all the more miraculous for it is so much more plausible for a fountain than for an arrow-head to appear. Seleucus had no sooner picked this up than he saw a snake coming face to face with him and hissing with uplifted head. As he approached, the snake gazed calmly at him and vanished. This appearance of the snake in addition to the objects which appeared from the earth, was even more convincing proof that the god haunted the spot. An enclosure was marked out forthwith, with trees and temples therein and very soon the grove flourished and was protected by solemn imprecations. Daphne was Seleucus’ pride and joy, for besides the apparitions he had actually seen, he was also guided by an oracle which he had received from Miletus to cheer him in a time of despondency. This promised him his future greatness and bade him, when he became ruler of Syria, to dedicate Daphne.

After thus fulfilling all his religious obligations and with this auspicious commencement, he built upon foundations which gave expectations of success, namely divine favour and our city; he tamed the wilderness and made the best of his land teeming with towns. It was certainly with no idea of luxurious ease that he founded our city; it was to be a source of other cities, in such numbers that wayfarers were served by cities, not inns. While other kings take pride in the destruction of existing towns, his glory has been that he made cities rise which had not before existed. He sited so many of them over the land that there were

enough of them to be named after Macedonian cities and also to have names derived from the titles of his relations. There were several with the same name, derived from some family name either of his male or female line. Moreover, if you wish to make a comparison with the Athenians and Milesians who are agreed to have despatched more colonies than anyone else, he would clearly appear as the founder of more cities than they were, so excelling them in the size of each one that any single one was worth ten of theirs. As you enter Phoenicia, you can see cities of his; as you enter Syria here you can see cities of his even greater in number and size.

This one practice he extended as far as the Euphrates and the Tigris: he girt Babylonia about with cities, and settled them even in Persia. In short, no place fit to receive a city he left without one, but he continued his work of hellenizing the natives. Yet though he founded many cities after ours, it cannot be said that he preferred any other to it. Here he established his capital himself, and gave it its due in other respects, as though he built the others to be handmaids to our city, and never saw a more fitting place for his palace."

(The Antiochikos, in praise of Antioch, Libanius)(20)*

The myth of Daphne is as follows: Apollo, god of the arts and music, was punished by the young Eros, god of love, after he mocked him for playing with a bow and arrows.

"«Tell me, effeminate youth: what do you intend to do with that weapon more suited to my hands than to yours? I know how to launch the sure arrows against wild beasts and savage enemies. [...] Be content to fan with your candles a game that I know, and do not pretend to compare your victories with mine.»

The irascible Eros took two arrows, one of gold with a diamond tip and another of iron with a lead-coated tip. The gold one incited love, the iron one incited hatred. With the iron arrow, he shot the nymph Daphne, and with the gold one, he shot Apollo in the heart. Apollo was inflamed with passion for Daphne, and in return, she hated him. In the past, Daphne had rejected many potential lovers and, in return, had shown a preference for hunting and exploring the forests. Her father, a river god whom one tradition believes to be Ladon and another, Peneus, asked her to marry him so that she would bear him grandchildren. However, she begged her father to leave her unmarried, like Apollo's twin sister, Artemis. Despite this, her father warned her that she was too beautiful to keep all her suitors away forever.

Apollo constantly harassed her, begging her to stay with him, but the nymph kept running away until the gods intervened and helped Apollo catch her. Seeing that Apollo would catch her, Daphne called upon her father, the god Ladon. He suddenly transformed her; her skin became the bark of a tree (a bay tree), her hair into leaves, and her arms into branches. She stopped running as her feet became rooted in the earth. Apollo embraced the branches, but even they shrank and contracted. Since he could no longer take her as his wife, he promised that he would love her eternally as his tree and that her branches would crown the heads of heroes and champions of the Olympic Games. Apollo used his powers of eternal youth and immortality to ensure that she would always be green. Daphne means bay tree in Greek."
(Metamorphoses, Ovid)(21)*

According to Philostorgius (368-439 AD), an ecclesiastical historian who lived a generation after the events, in the same city where they happened, in Antioch on the Orontes, the events

that happened at the temple of Apollo, being the most immediate and reliable account that happened of the facts, were the following:

"At a distance of five miles from Antioch, in the suburb of Daphne, the Macedonian kings of Syria had consecrated to Apollo one of the most elegant places of devotion in the pagan world. A magnificent temple was erected in honor of the god of light; and his colossal figure almost filled the spacious sanctuary, which was enriched with gold and gems, and adorned by the skill of Greek artists. It was said to be equal in size to the statue of Zeus at Olympia by Phidias, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The statue of Apollo had been made in the following way. The body was fashioned from a vine trunk which was very skillfully fitted together to form a coherent whole. The robe surrounding it was all covered with gold, and together with the exposed, ungilded parts of the body, it shone with indescribable beauty. The statue stood with a lyre in its hands as if conducting a choir; its hair and laurel wreath shone with intermingled gold. in a manner designed to be more attractive to spectators. The eyes were represented by two large stones, hyacinths, in honor of Amyclas's child, Hyacinthus. The beauty and size of the stones always gave the statue its greatest brilliance, as its creators had set them in a way that added immeasurably to its dignity, in order to mislead as many as possible who saw it, inciting them by the supreme beauty of its appearance to worship it.

...

As for Julian, he prepared many sacrifices and offerings, intending to go up with them to Daphne the next day with every hope now of receiving a reply, if not from the others, at least from Apollo. For upon him was fixed all his intense and anxious expectation, since the matter at hand belonged to him more than to any other, given his connection with oracular art and the fact that the region of Daphne was sacred to him; Julian thought that he would probably be more powerful in his own place than any other demon. But Eusebius and the so-called priests and the multitude of temple ministers were much bewildered as they waited for the emperor and worked through the night around the idol, doing their utmost to ensure that when he arrived he would find it speaking, as there was no excuse for delay. But when the night was far advanced, fire suddenly fell from heaven and smote the temple; it spread at once everywhere and burned it down along with the idol and the offerings. The whole being engulfed in flames and fire shooting up, a great shout instantly arose around the temple and a tumult like no other. Many strove to fight the flames, but no one proved equal to the challenge. Some ran into the city to inform Julian, the governor of the east, while the rest of the multitude stood aghast, looking at the incredible disaster that had befallen them. Now the fire did not spread anywhere else, even though so much wood was growing so thickly there; it attacked and burned only the temple with those within, so that the idol and all the offerings were destroyed once and for all. Only some of the foundations of the buildings remained as a record of the incident; they still bear quite clearly the mark of the fire sent by God." (Ecclesiastical History, Philostorgius)(19*)

When the existence of the newly founded Catholic Church (founded by Constantine at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD) was called into question and a crusade was planned to eradicate Christianity, the Oracle of Delphi intervened, giving its final prophecy. Apollo, to symbolically seal his farewell and fulfill the promise given, is that the statue and temple of Apollo at Daphne, near Antioch, would burn down on October 22, 362 AD, by non-human agency or as it was said by a lightning bolt or the action of God as the Christians reported, coinciding with the

date of the inauguration of the cult of Sol Invictus by Aurelian on October 22, 274 AD... and the Emperor Julian, when faced with believing a miracle or the revenge of the Christians, chose the latter (recorded by Libanius in 'A Monody on the Daphnic Temple of Apollo', Philostorgius in his 'Ecclesiastical History', Theodoret in his 'Ecclesiastical History', Sozomen in his 'Ecclesiastical History', Cedrenus in his 'Compendium Historiarum', John Chrysostom in his 'Homily on the Blessed Babylas', Ammianus Marcellinus in his 'Rerum Gestarum' and by the Emperor Julian himself in his 'Letter to Libanius of March 363 AD').

A few months later, the most important temple of Apollo in Rome, the Temple of Apollo Palatine dedicated by Augustus in 28 BC, would burn down on March 19, 363 AD, as recounted by the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who participated in Julian's campaign in Persia:

"1. Leaving this place with a heavy heart, he marched with great speed, and arrived at Carrhæ, an ancient town notorious for the disasters of Crassus and the Roman army. From this town two royal roads branch off, both leading into Persia; that on the left hand through Adiabene and along the Tigris, that on the right through the Assyrians and along the Euphrates.

2. There he stayed some days, preparing necessary supplies; and according to the custom of the district he offered sacrifices to the moon, which is religiously worshipped in that region; and it is said that while before the altar, no witness to the action being admitted, he secretly gave his own purple robe to Procopius, and bade him boldly assume the sovereignty if he should hear that he had died among the Parthians.

3. Here while asleep his mind was agitated with dreams, and foresaw some sad event about to happen; on which account he and the interpreters of dreams considering the omens which presented themselves, pronounced that the next day, which was the nineteenth of March, ought to be solemnly observed. But, as was ascertained subsequently, that very same night, while Apronianus was prefect of Rome, the temple of the Palatine Apollo was burnt in the Eternal City; and if aid from all quarters had not come to the rescue the violence of the conflagration would have destroyed even the prophetic volumes of the Sibyl."

(Res gestae, Ammianus Marcellinus)(22*)

This fire, also on March 19, would coincide with the festival of Quinquatria, recorded in Ovid's Fasti, a festival believed to be the birthday of Athena, firstborn daughter of Zeus and patron deity of Athens, the cradle of democracy. A deity strongly associated with Apollo, she is mentioned in the prophecy given by the Oracle of Delphi a few days before the Battle of Salamis during the Persian Wars, implying that Apollo, Athena, and Zeus were all present on the Greek side against the Persian invasion. She also had her own sanctuary at Delphi called the Temple of Athena Pronaia. The sanctuary was named Pronaia because it is the first site encountered by visitors arriving at Delphi on foot from the eastern road, hence its name. Excavations have shown that an earlier cult existed at this site, possibly dedicated to the goddess Gaia (Earth). Most of the Mycenaean figurines displayed at the Delphi Archaeological Museum, including the remarkable figure seated on a tripod, were found there.

The festival of Quinquatria on March 19th would coincide with what would later be known as the feast of St. Joseph, the father of Jesus, implying that those who had adopted Christianity for their people were the same ones who had once been the beloved children of Zeus, Athena, the personification of justice, and Apollo, the god of prophecy and reason.

The celebration of the goddess Minerva, called Quinquatria, traditionally took place on March 19th during the height of the Roman Republic. It was so named because it fell on the fifth (quinqu-) day after the Ides. Drunken, masked revelers and musicians roamed the streets of Rome and gathered at night in front of the goddess's temple. On the frieze decorating the Forum of Nerva, you can still see a scene depicting the activities of Quinquatria and Minerva, accompanied by her retinue. The Feast of Minerva was a day dedicated to creativity and the arts. It was a special day for artists and artisans, a day to let their muse truly shine.

The main day of celebration was the first day, March 19, which served as the feast day of the goddess Minerva. Festus claims that the reason Minerva's feast day fell on March 19 was because that was the day her temple on the Aventine Hill was consecrated (263 BC). Religious law dictated that no blood could be shed on March 19. Therefore, there were no hunts, no slaughter of animals, no preparation of meat, no gladiatorial fights, and no physical harm to anyone. However, gladiatorial games were held during the following four days.

It was Julian's wish to receive a prophecy from the oracle of Apollo at Daphne regarding his campaign against Persia, as Daphne was believed to have the same prophetic gift as the one at Delphi, which is why he held the temple and its statue in such high regard. According to legend, the Emperor Hadrian (reigned 117–138 AD), when he was a private citizen, received a prophecy of his future greatness there. Once he was proclaimed emperor, he ordered the oracle to be closed so that no one else could achieve such a prodigy. It remained closed until the time of Julian. Although Julian did not receive a prophecy, he did have a dream while in the temple, as recorded by John Malalas:

"During his reign, Saint Domitius was martyred. Julian began a campaign with a powerful army against the Persians and on his way reached Antioch. Climbing the mountain known as Kasios, he offered a hecatomb there as a sacrifice to Zeus Kasios. Descending from there, he reached Daphne and also offered a sacrifice to Apollo. He lay down there to sleep and saw in a dream a young man with blond hair who said to him: "You are destined to die in Asia."

Julian intended to set out the next day with his senate and army for Babylon and capture it during the night. While he slept, he saw in a dream an adult man dressed in a breastplate approaching him in his tent in a city known as Asia, near the city of Ctesiphon; The man struck him with a spear, the emperor became frightened and awoke with a cry, the eunuch cubicularii and spatharii and the soldiers who guarded the tent arose and entered him with imperial lamps. The emperor Julian, observing that he had been mortally wounded in the armpit, asked them: "What is the name of the town where my tent is?" They told him that it was called Asia, Immediately he cried out: "O Helios (Sun in other translations, the name given to Apollo), you have destroyed Julian!" And, bleeding profusely, he expired at the fifth hour of the night of the year 411 according to the calendar of Great Antioch." (Chronographia, Malalas)(12*)

Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman historian contemporary of Julian and participant in his campaign, narrates the most faithful version of the events, which include the destruction of the Temple of Apollo in Daphne, and later the destruction of the Temple of Apollo Palatine, but his most important contribution are the last moments of Julian's campaign in Persia and his last words, attached to the text of the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' by the 18th century English historian Edward Gibbon:

"The first words Julian uttered after his recovery from the fainting fit into which he had been thrown by loss of blood were expressive of his martial spirit. He called for his horse and his

weapons, and was impatient to hasten to the battle. His remaining strength was exhausted by the painful exertion; and the surgeons, who examined his wound, discovered the symptoms of approaching death. He employed the horrible moments with the steady temper of a hero and a sage; the philosophers who had accompanied him on this fatal expedition compared Julian's tent to the prison of Socrates; and the spectators, who, out of duty, or friendship, or curiosity, had gathered around his couch, listened with respectful sorrow to the funeral oration of their dying emperor.

«Friends and fellow soldiers, the seasonal period of my departure has arrived, and I discharge, with the joy of a ready debtor, the demands of nature. I have learned from philosophy how much more excellent the soul is than the body; and that separation from the noblest substance should be an object of joy rather than affliction. I have learned from religion that an early death has often been the reward of piety; and I accept, as a favor from the gods, the mortal blow which protects me from the danger of dishonoring a character hitherto sustained by virtue and fortitude. I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my private life; and I can confidently affirm that the supreme authority, that emanation of Divine Power, has been preserved in my hands pure and immaculate. Detesting the corrupting and destructive maxims of despotism, I have considered the happiness of the people as the end of government. Subjecting my actions to the laws of prudence, justice, and moderation, I have entrusted the event to the care of Providence. Peace was the object of my counsels, so long as peace was consistent with the public welfare; but when the imperious voice of my country summoned me to arms, I exposed my person to the perils of war, with the clear foreknowledge (which I had acquired from the art of divination) that I was destined to fall by the sword. I now offer my tribute of gratitude to the Eternal Being, who has not suffered me to perish from the cruelty of a tyrant, from the secret dagger of conspiracy, or from the slow tortures of lingering sickness. He has given me, in the midst of an honorable career, a splendid and glorious exit from this world; and I deem it equally absurd, equally base, to solicit, or decline, the stroke of fate. This is what I have endeavored to say; but my strength fails me, and I feel the approach of death. I will cautiously abstain from any word that may tend to influence your suffrages in the choice of an emperor. My choice may be rash or injudicious; and if it should not be ratified by the consent of the army, it could be fatal to the person whom I am to recommend. Only, as a good citizen, will I express my hopes that the Romans may be blessed with the rule of a virtuous sovereign.»

After this speech, which Julian delivered in a firm and gentle tone of voice, he distributed, by a military testament, the remains of his private fortune; and, making some inquiries as to why Anatolius was not present, he understood, from Sallust's reply, that Anatolius was assassinated; and he lamented, with amiable inconsistency, the loss of his friend. At the same time, he reproved the immoderate grief of the spectators; and conjured them not to dishonor, by unmanly tears, the destiny of a prince, who in a few moments would be united with heaven and the stars. The spectators fell silent; and Julian entered into a metaphysical discussion with the philosophers Priscus and Maximus, on the nature of the soul. The efforts he made, both of mind and body, probably hastened his death. His wound began to bleed with renewed violence; his breathing was ashamed of the swelling of her veins; he asked for a draught of cold water, and as soon as he drank it, he expired without pain, about the hour of midnight. Such was the end of that remarkable man, in the thirty-second year of his age, after a reign of a year and about eight months, commencing from the death of Constantius. In his last moments he displayed, perhaps with some ostentation, the love of virtue and

fame, which had been the ruling passions of his life. " (Res gestae, Ammianus Marcellinus)(History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon)(22*/23*)

Constantine did not suppress pagan worship (as Theodosius would do with the Edict of Constantinople in 392 AD), but rather granted freedom of worship to Christians through the Edict of Milan in 313 and encouraged the Roman population to convert to this new cult, highlighting the negative aspects of paganism while also using features of the cult of Sol Invictus in his new religion, as this was the most prominent and recent expression of pagan worship.

This cult would continue to have a strong presence in Rome even after Constantine's conversion, with a blending of traditions between pagan and Christian celebrations, but without the extinction of paganism, as evidenced by the Philocalus calendar. This blending of traditions would last until the time of Julian the Apostate, who in his Hymn to King Helios of 362, celebrates that the festivities in honor of Sol Invictus were still being celebrated. In such a Hymn, Julian would quote Homer: "May I be honored as Athena and Apollo are by Zeus, surely, who is the same as Helios," believing he identified Helios (the name Julian gives to Aurelian's Unconquered Sun) with Apollo. However, he also believed that Apollo was someone who ruled alongside him, although they were not the same deity. In the same speech, he speaks of the festivals of Helios recorded in Philocalus' calendar, as evidenced by the hymn to King Helios of 362 AD:

"Did not Apollo, who reigns with him, deliver his oracles to every corner of the earth, grant men divine wisdom, and adorn their cities with religious and civil laws? He civilized most of the inhabited earth by means of the Greek colonies, facilitating submission to the Romans, who are not only of Greek race, but who have also established and kept divine laws and trust in the gods from beginning to end as something Greek; moreover, they were not inferior to any of the best-governed cities in regard to the organization of their city, not to say that they were superior to all other systems used, at least until now. For this reason, I believe that Apollo recognized this city as having a Greek origin and constitution..."

...

Do you wish me to mention yet another proof of this, I mean the work of King Numa? In Rome maiden priestesses guard the undying flame of the sun at different hours in turn; they guard the fire that is produced on earth by the agency of the god. And I can tell you a still greater proof of the power of this god, which is the work of that most divine king himself. The months are reckoned from the moon by, one may say, all other peoples; but we and the Egyptians alone reckon the days of every year according to the movements of the sun. If after this I should say that we also worship Mithras, and celebrate games in honour of Helios (The quadrennial games are the Ludi Solis from October 19 to 22) every four years, I shall be speaking of customs that are somewhat recent.

But perhaps it is better to cite a proof from the remote past. The beginning of the cycle of the year is placed at different times by different peoples. Some place it at the spring equinox, others at the height of summer, and many in the late autumn; but they each and all sing the praises of the most visible gifts of Helios. One nation celebrates the season best adapted for work in the fields, when the earth bursts into bloom and exults, when all the crops are just beginning to sprout, and the sea begins to be safe for sailing, and the disagreeable, gloomy winter puts on a more cheerful aspect; others again award the crown to the summer season, since at that time they can safely feel confidence about the yield of the fruits, when the

grains have already been harvested and midsummer is now at its height, and the fruits on the trees are ripening. Others again, with still more subtlety, regard as the close of the year the time when all the fruits are in their perfect prime and decay has already set in. For this reason they celebrate the annual festival of the New Year in late autumn. But our forefathers, from the time of the most divine king Numa, paid still greater reverence to the god Helios. They ignored the question of mere utility, I think, because they were naturally religious and endowed with unusual intelligence; but they saw that he is the cause of all that is useful, and so they ordered the observance of the New Year to correspond with the present season; that is to say when King Helios returns to us again, and leaving the region furthest south and, rounding Capricorn as though it were a goal-post, advances from the south to the north to give us our share of the blessings of the year. And that our forefathers, because they comprehended this correctly, thus established the beginning of the year, one may perceive from the following. For it was not, I think, the time when the god turns, but the time when he becomes visible to all men, as he travels from south to north, that they appointed for the festival. For still unknown to them was the nicety of those laws which the Chaldaeans and Egyptians discovered, and which Hipparchus and Ptolemy perfected: but they judged simply by sense-perception, and were limited to what they could actually see. But the truth of these facts was recognised, as I said, by a later generation. Before the beginning of the year, at the end of the month which is called after Kronos, we celebrate in honour of Helios the most splendid games, and we dedicate the festival to the Invincible Sun. And after this it is not lawful to perform any of the shows that belong to the last month, gloomy as they are, though necessary. But, in the cycle, immediately after the end of the Kronia (Saturnalia, celebrated from December 17 to 23) follow the Heliia.

That festival may the ruling gods grant me to praise and to celebrate with sacrifice! And above all the others may Helios himself, the King of the All, grant me this, even he who from eternity has proceeded from the generative substance of the Good: even he who is midmost of the midmost intellectual gods; who fills them with continuity and endless beauty and superabundance of generative power and perfect reason, yea with all blessings at once, and independently of time! And now he illumines his own visible abode, which from eternity moves as the centre of the whole heavens, and bestows a share of intelligible beauty on the whole visible world, and fills the whole heavens with the same number of gods as he contains in himself in intellectual form. And without division they reveal themselves in manifold form surrounding him, but they are attached to him to form a unity. Aye, but also, through his perpetual generation and the blessings that he bestows from the heavenly bodies, he holds together the region beneath the moon. For he cares for the whole human race in common, but especially for my own city, even as also he brought into being my soul from eternity, and made it his follower. All this, therefore, that I prayed for a moment ago, may he grant, and further may he, of his grace, endow my city as a whole with eternal existence, so far as is possible, and protect her; and for myself personally, may he grant that, so long as I am permitted to live, I may prosper in my affairs both human and divine; finally may he grant me to live and serve the state with my life, so long as is pleasing to himself and well for me and expedient for the Roman Empire!"

(Hymn to King Helios, Julian)(24)*

Saturnalia was the most popular festival of the Roman year. Catullus describes it as "the best of days," and Seneca complains that "the whole multitude was carried away by pleasures." During the festival, restrictions were relaxed and the social order reversed. Gambling was

permitted in public. Slaves were allowed to use dice and were not required to work. Instead of the toga, colorful dinner clothes were permitted in public, as was the pileus, a felt cap typically worn by freed slaves that symbolized the freedom of the season.

Slaves were treated as equals, allowed to wear their masters' clothes, and were served at mealtimes in remembrance of an earlier golden age thought to have been ushered in by the god. In the Saturnalia, Lucian has the god himself declare:

"I have inherited power on conditions: my entire reign lasts seven days, and when that term is up, I will immediately become a private individual and, in a sense, one of the common people. During my week, seriousness is forbidden; no business is permitted. Drinking, noise, games and dice, naming kings and slave revels, naked singing, frenzied applause, occasionally even diving headfirst into cold water with my face smeared with soot: such are the functions I preside over."

Once the Saturnalia was over, the festival of "Invincible Helios" was held shortly afterward. Julian relates that the celebration of December 25th dates back to the time of King Numa Pompilius (the second king of Rome, successor to Romulus, reigned from 716 to 674 BC), who founded the Roman religion.

The winter solstice marks the arrival of winter and is also the longest night of the year, which would be understood as the birth of the sun for those who could appreciate such a phenomenon. The ancient Romans traced the annual movement of the sun relative to the Earth. They observed that in late autumn the days became shorter and the sun sank lower in the sky. To them, the sun appeared to be dying. On December 21, when "The sun stood still," the ancients believed the sun had "died" and that darkness would take over the earth. For the next three days, the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, the sun seemed to have stopped precariously (meaning the sun's downward trajectory would reverse direction in three days). The nights didn't last longer, but neither did the days. On December 25th, the sun rose a little earlier and climbed a little higher in the sky than the day before. Ah! The sun was born again!

On the same day that Aurelian instituted the Ludi Solis in honor of Sol Invictus (as a possible festival of his triumphal procession, but more likely as the main date of the inauguration of the cult) on October 22, 274 AD. (the main festival in the cult of Sol, second only to December 25, such priority would be evidenced by the greater number of chariot races that were run to celebrate them, 36 with October 22, 30 with December 25), is that the temple of Apollo in Daphne would burn down, in the 23rd edition of such celebration (October 22, 362 AD), this coincidence would mark a prodigious association between the cult of Sol Invictus, which through its second festival (the Natalis Solis Invicti of December 25) would be the possible origin of the Christian Christmas (its first celebration being in 336 AD, still during the lifetime of Constantine), with the cult of Apollo through the burning of his temple. This would be one of the events that marked the symbolic end of paganism (since after Julian there was no other emperor who was not Christian, which led to the prohibition of paganism by Theodosius about 20 years later), along with the death of Julian, who, when wanting to demonstrate to the Oracle of Delphi as proof of the existence of the gods, as well as the veracity of the prophetic gift, only received as a response from the oracle through his last prophecy the announcement of his own end, shortly before October 22, 362 AD.

Such events would have the design of associating the cult of Sol Invictus with Christianity, and that of Apollo with that of Sol Invictus, which like the establishment of the Ludi Solis and the burning of the temple of Apollo in Daphne coinciding on the same day (October 22, marking the main festival to Sol Invictus that would start his cult in 274 AD and the event that symbolized the end of the cult of Apollo in Rome in 362 AD, respectively, as well as it being my birthday, of me who writes this story), Constantine would decide to associate Apollo with Sol Invictus, since after his vision of Apollo in 310, he would mint the Sol Invictus coins for 13 years of his life. Such coins would express that the emperor's protector would be the Invincible Sun (Apollo). This relationship would accompany Constantine throughout his life and did not end with his conversion to Christianity. Instead, whenever he had the opportunity, he would associate his former patron, Apollo, with Christ, to synchronize the ideal that both brothers pursued for Western culture. That they were brothers can only be deduced from the mention of the Angels and their exploits in the Book of Daniel, where Apollo was Gabriel and Christ was Michael.

But to fully understand how this story fits into the Bible, we must go back to the 7th century BC, the date when the Iliad and the Book of Isaiah were composed. One was the foundation of Greek and Western literature, the other was the most recognized book during the Persian Empire and the people of Israel.

At the time when Isaiah (lived approx. from 765 to 695 BC and wrote his book sometime during his ministry, approx. between 740 and 701 BC) was writing his book, Homer (lived in the middle of the 8th century BC, and wrote his poems approx. between 750 and 730 BC) and Hesiod (lived in the second half of the 8th century BC and wrote his work approx. in 700 BC) were writing the epics of Greece and their Theogony, it is possible to judge which was richer, because the works of the last two were forgotten because the Christian religion was chosen to replace the pagan one, but this doctrine highlighted the book of Daniel as a precursor to what was instilled with Christianity, while the book of Isaiah was perpetuated because the Old Testament was incorporated as a supporter of the new and because of the mentions that it is made of that book in the New Testament, while Daniel is only mentioned twice, in reference to the abomination of desolation and the circumstances in which such events would occur (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14), such would be the only references if we except what the book of Revelation tries to incorporate as inspiration based on Daniel.

Homer's Iliad, composed in the 8th century BC, tells a Mycenaean legend set in the 13th century BC, a heroic age dominated by military aspects, unbridled individualism, and the pursuit of wealth and glory. Hesiod's Theogony (from the Greek theogonia, meaning "the generations of the gods") is an epic poem of 1,022 lines of hexameter that describes the birth of the gods in the Greek pantheon. In these poems, Apollo appears as one of the main protagonists and is supported by the authority of the father of the gods, Zeus, of whom the Iliad refers to him as his favorite son. In Isaiah, the rebellion of Apollo and his fall are judged with the enigmatic name of

"How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn!"

In the Book of Isaiah (7th century BC) and in Ezekiel, mention is made of

"You were in Eden, in the garden of God; your clothing was of every precious stone: emerald, topaz, jasper, chrysolite, beryl, and onyx; of sapphire, carbuncle, emerald, and gold; the workmanship of your tambourines and flutes was prepared for you in the day you were created. I set you, O great cherub who covers, on the holy mountain of God; you were there;

you walked among the stones of fire. You were perfect in all your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you",

making the tacit mention that he was the one who had the Garden of Eden as his home, not being possible that he was the devil who tempted Adam and caused the expulsion of man, but as the Greeks and Romans believed, they never accepted his fall, but always had him present in Delphi, since as history showed 7 centuries after Isaiah, this same Angel or protective cherub is the one who founded the Roman Empire in the time of Augustus, this stratagem would be made with the purpose of hiding information from the common reader of the Bible and confront the infallibility of the writings of the Bible with the events of reality, but that would be understood only by those who had a deep knowledge of the order of historical facts and what is narrated at the same time in the Bible, an example of this is that Alexander, one of the main protagonists of the book of Daniel, would claim all his life to be the son of Zeus and would follow the confirmation that the oracle of Delphi would make in this regard in the message that was given to his father after of his birth (that he would pay homage to Amun-Ra and that for having witnessed such an event he would lose one of his eyes, as is historically documented to have happened) and that later Alexander the Great with his visit to the oracle of Amun in Siwa when he heard the priest call him my son, that he was the son of Zeus and that he had been granted rulership of the world.

In the same way, like Alexander, Apollo would be present at the birth of Christ, as the Angel Gabriel, announcing his birth and future ministry, and having prophesied it in the book of Daniel 500 years ago and the outcome and purpose of his ministry.

"In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." She was greatly troubled at this and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God." Your relative Elizabeth also has conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is now six months old, for with God nothing will be impossible." Mary answered, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel left."
(Gospel of Luke)

It is for this reason that it can be deduced that Greek mythology is the genuine history of the lineage of the gods who civilized humans or of the Angels who in their day transmitted the laws of God to the world, and the Jewish tradition the history of the link of a single god, the main one of them, who chose a people so that with this he could give a divine law to the other nations, especially to Greece, Egypt and Rome and the nations that these conquered later, since although in a remote past they could feel the presence of the gods, where in the Heroic Age virtue and justice were instilled in them through the demigods, but whose rites and festivities in the time of the Roman Empire were outdated and far from the rigorous moral character with which the Jews were formed since their departure from Egypt, from which it can be assumed that one of their main festivals, the day of the Passover feast, was solemnly

celebrated by the Jews in memory of their freedom and departure from servitude in Egypt, from where in their journey in the desert and under Moses' guidance they acquired the law that governed their lives.

The purpose for which the Jewish people was established was cut short by the conflicts that arose in the most militarily developed and civilized world of that time, which was the Middle East, in these conflicts the Jewish people were almost conquered by the Assyrians, but a precedent was set, where since the time of David, the supposed God of Israel presents himself as someone who exercised justice and punished his people for their disobedience, and granted his anointing to a Persian foreigner whom he describes as his anointed, such an epithet would only be used previously by Saul and David, all this not without first having established an empire and a precedent, that by the will of God peoples could now be subjugated, and through their descendants, if possible, erase the religion or cultural identity of those peoples, just as Cambyses tried in Egypt after murdering the Apis Bull, whom the priests of Memphis worshipped, and subsequently ordering the murder of anyone who was mourning for this. In 484 BC, Xerxes I had subdued Egypt, and his armies marched toward Babylon. There, he undertook the destruction of the Babylonian religion. He did so systematically, to the point of ordering the dismantling of the great golden statue of Marduk, whose cult disappeared forever, and with it the greatness of Babylon. The city entered a process of decline from which it never recovered. Xerxes sought to do the same in Greece, destroying all the temples his armies laid waste in their path, including the Acropolis of Athens itself and the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, which was miraculously saved. However, his intentions toward Europe and the rest of the free world were thwarted by the resistance offered by the city-states and their determination to live freely, defending their way of life.

But all these events would be predicted by the book of Daniel, since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, to understand this story in more detail, one must know more precisely the prophetic and enigmatic message of the book of Daniel, and what can be understood is that from this first prophecy the destiny of the known world was fixed, even during the life of Nebuchadnezzar, as I have been able to transcribe it:

("DANIEL - 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2:2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

2:3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

2:4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

2:6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

2:7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

2:8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

2:9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

2:10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

2:11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

2:12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

2:13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

2:14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

2:15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

2:16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

2:17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

2:18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

2:19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

2:22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

2:23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

2:24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

2:25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

2:27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

2:29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

2:30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

2:32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

2:36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

2:37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

2:38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

2:41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

2:42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

2:46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

2:48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

2:49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.)

The interpretation of dreams is already described in St. Jerome's commentary on the Book of Daniel during the Roman Empire, dating from 405 to 420 AD, where it is still not clear which kingdoms of iron and baked clay would be the kingdoms of the nations that would invade and subsequently emerge as successors to the Roman Empire. As described in the dream, the first kingdom of gold would be that of Nebuchadnezzar, followed by the silver kingdom of the Medes and Persians founded by Cyrus II the Great, the third kingdom would be that of bronze that would represent the Macedonians having as founder Alexander the Great, the fourth kingdom of iron would be that of the Romans, having as founder Augustus, and the nations that would rise from this last kingdom would be those that would settle in Europe after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, these nations would be the Franks, Visigoths, Anglo-Saxons, Ostrogoths and later the Saxons who would rise as an independent nation from the heirs of the kingdom of Charlemagne. This dream is reported to have been in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, so it should be dated from 605, when Daniel was sent as a present to Babylon, but it was certainly before 561 when Nebuchadnezzar died.

Now that we know about the certainty of the oracular gift evidenced in the Book of Daniel, we will now discuss the role of the Greek god Apollo in the Bible. Due to the obscurity of understanding among people who only study the Bible and not the historical facts that shaped the history of that book, he is misunderstood as the Devil. However, few know that he had 17 centuries of history as a prophet in Greece through the Oracle of Delphi. One way to exalt this gift of seeing the future is through his intervention in the Book of Daniel.

Apollo, in order to make his prophecies known, would be revealed in the Bible through the Book of Daniel as the Angel Gabriel, just as he tacitly revealed his purpose in intervening

therein, and how the power of seeing the future could determine the fate of the known world, as demonstrated by the prophecies.

(DANIEL - 10:12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

10:14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.)

(DANIEL - 10:18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

10:19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.)

The mention of the 21 days during which the Prince of Persia opposed Gabriel is very likely the duration of the Persian Wars, from the Ionian Revolt in 499 BC to the Battle of Plataea in 479 BC, which ended the conflict. Gabriel after explaining that he would return to fight against the prince of Persia, an event that took place during the medical wars, explains how the fourth king, that is Xerxes, would begin his great expedition against Greece, and that after having finished with them, as historically happened with the medical wars, Alexander the Great would come to cut off the earthly power that had acquired that unknown prince of Persia and his empire, who was none other than the Angel of Isaiah or the 'god' who inspired his prophecies, so that later the faction of the god Apollo after having consummated the earthly victory in the known world of his time, through the race of the Romans (who would be the descendants of the Trojans) with the emperor Augustus, the Romans had in the same way as the Greeks of Alexander the Great to Zeus as the father of gods and men, and his two main children were Apollo, god of light, music and prophecy, and Athena, goddess who was the personification of justice. Under those circumstances after the Roman Empire was established, the Prince Angel of Israel would come, that is, Michael or Christ to establish a pact with humans, because the conflict between these two factions of heaven would continue indefinitely, but with the intervention of Michael a turning point would be created by punishing the prevarication of that faction of heaven and establish the pillars on the world in which that kingdom would rise that would never be destroyed, in addition to that Israel with its prince was not below the jurisdiction of the Angel of Persia, who was responsible for the victories of Cyrus the Persian and its subsequent expansion into Israel to claim the honors of God that boasts in the book of Isaiah as if he were God, being an Angel among many others who held earthly and divine power, as well as Apollo in the Roman Empire being the tutelary god of Augustus, of Cyrus the Angel of Persia and of Israel Christ who decides to leave as a legacy of his heirs his message

and his doctrine to perpetuate to eternity, rather than fight for the freedom of a people who were rebellious to their god and in this way fulfill the original purpose of the people of Israel as prophesied to Isaac,

"By your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,"

this blessing was to strengthen the virtue of divine laws, put an end to idolatry, overcome the corrosion of time with his message, atone for sin and redeem humans by giving them the possibility of returning to God's grace, and at the same time the magnitude of the promises given, to materialize the kingdom of God on earth and preach justice, peace, humility, freedom from fear, which is the most exalted of all freedoms, so much so that his followers would despise death to preach his message, truth, and virtue. This is what Christ taught and gave magnanimity to his message.

(DANIEL - 10:18 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

10:19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

...

11:1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

11:2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

11:3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

11:4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.)

That is why the mention ***"For now I must return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I have finished with him, the prince of Greece will come"*** is a clear connection of wanting to identify that the one who fought against Xerxes was Gabriel, when the only divine actor recognized by historical sources who was present in such conflict was Apollo and the oracle of Delphi so it can be affirmed that the Angel Gabriel is the same Greek god Apollo, then the parallelism continues with ***"and when I have finished with him, the prince of Greece will come"*** and in this way the book of Daniel establishes a connection of the verse of the prince of Greece with ***"Then a mighty king will arise who will rule with great power and do his will"***, that is, Alexander the Great, who puts an end to Persian rule, but his kingdom would be distributed to the four winds, these would be the kingdoms of the diadochi that rose after his death, but the mention that ***"and no one helps me against them, but Michael your prince."*** is

that Christ and Gabriel were always united in the same ideal, which was to convert this world in a paradise and the joint work of both managed to put a limit to the pretension of other factions of heaven to want to subjugate the world.

The purpose of Daniel's prophecies after illustrating the different revolutions that would occur in the power of the known world, beginning with the revelation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that the first kingdom to rise would be that of Babylon, then that of Persia, continued by that of Macedonia and followed by that of Rome, and that even Rome would dissolve into those kingdoms that would unite among alliances, but would not mix, this is a mention of the kingdoms that were heirs of Rome, as well as the Byzantine Empire and the peoples and kingdoms that settled in the Roman Empire after its fall, but the purpose of the prophecies would be described in the verse ***"and in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to other people; it will break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever,"*** such verses would be the main precedent of the Kingdom of heaven announced by Christ.

(DANIEL - 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

...

2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.)

So far, one can get an idea of who was responsible for the conflict between Persia and Greece, and how the tutelary gods, described as Angel Princes, clashed for dominion over the known world. Greece prevailed over Persia and then put an end to that empire. However, the person responsible for announcing this was Gabriel. According to what has been explained, it can be understood that he was the same god who sided with the Greeks in the Persian Wars, that is, Apollo, who was known as the prophet-god par excellence of the Greeks and the main interpreter of their religion.

Just as the Roman Empire achieved its greatness and splendor under the tutelage of a god, and thanks to him, Western civilization would be formed in a process that began with the Persian Wars and ended with the founding of the Roman Empire, this god is Apollo, whose intervention in the Persian Wars will be studied later. Just as Alexander the Great's conquests paved the way for the conquests of the Roman Republic, the latter would not have reached its peak without Augustus, who attributed his victory over Mark Antony to Apollo, thus founding the Roman Empire. But Apollo was not the only god, and proof of this is the splendor achieved by the Persians thanks to Cyrus, whose patron god was the same one who prophesied their

existence and power: the Angel who is known as Jehovah in Isaiah. Almost 150 years before Cyrus's birth, the prophet Isaiah foretold his birth, his name, and the tasks that the Creator God had predetermined for him to carry out.

(ISAIAH - 44:26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

...

45:1 Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, Jehovah, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

45:5 I am Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 45:6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else.

45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Jehovah do all these things.)

The Jehovah of Isaiah is the one who receives the title of Angel Prince of Persia in the Book of Daniel, being compared through the mention of being an angel to Alexander, the Angel of Greece, or Christ, the Angel of Israel, undoubtedly something notable, but not comparable to God, as the Book of Isaiah attempts to present.

Among Cyrus's exploits was the conquest of Babylon and the liberation of the Jews from their captivity. Such a feat would serve as inspiration for the Book of Revelation to compare Babylon to the woman who sits on seven mountains (the seven mountains on which Rome was founded), a tacit reference to Rome, to which the Book of Revelation attributes all the evil on earth. The person responsible for her power, Apollo, is likened or compared to the devil.

(REVELATION - 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.)

The mention of the abyss to equate the devil who rose from the abyss with Apollo, and not returning to life after death as it is indisputable that Christ did, while it is the only mention made of Greece in the book of Revelation, would be the following, in clear reference to whom such verse was dedicated:

(REVELATION - 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon.

...

11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.)

The way of understanding that the book of Revelation is a satire and a tool consciously left behind to be used in its day against the memory of the mystical and divine past left by the Egyptian cultures (comparing Egypt with Sodom), the Greek (with the name Abaddon or Apollyon as a qualifier for the devil, Apollo being the archangel **GABRIEL** and not the invention of John in 90 AD, Apollo, a god of the most venerated and who in no way had a parallel been created with the stigma of the devil and all that he embodies, what was his rebellion against God and being the tempter of the first man, and finally the mention of Rome in its comparison with Babylon and inspiring hatred towards this city, which was the crucible of human civilization in the West for centuries.

The book of Revelation attempts to extract inspiration for its structure from all the prophetic books, among them Daniel, wanting to proclaim itself the authorship of the book of Daniel and overlooking that this would be propitiated by the antithesis of Isaiah, that is Apollo, but he mentions a particular prophecy of Daniel, which is the one that mentions **"and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth"**, clearly inspired by Daniel:

(REVELATION - 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.)

This prophecy attempts to create a connection between the **"red dragon,"** a term used for the devil, and Daniel's prophecy of **"a king of fierce countenance and understanding of mysteries."** From this, we can assume that Apollo was the Angel Gabriel. It can be deduced that he wanted to mention his coming to earth in carnal form through a prophecy by Daniel. This prophecy, directed to Apollo, mentions **"some of the host and of the stars he cast to the earth and trampled underfoot."** This prophecy, which the Apocalypse uses as a reference to create its association with the **"red dragon,"** whose **"tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth."** The mention of "and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down," is a mention that by its own will, the oracle of Delphi prophesied its own end and destruction, but not before giving its prophecy for the happiness of Christianity.

(DANIEL - 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

8:10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down.

8:12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

8:13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

8:14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.)

With the destruction of the temple, the last vestige of the association of the Angel Prince of Persia (the Jehovah of Isaiah) with the Jewish people was ended, since they rebelled with the hope that the Messiah they believed would rise among the Jews would free them from the Roman yoke, but as it would later be understood, in the end the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel was imposed, along with the purpose mentioned there that the Messiah would execute, which was **"to finish the transgression, and to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting justice, and to seal the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy,"** among these purposes would be to put an end to the transgression initiated by the Angel Prince of Persia, whose actions would be wanting to assume the character of God through the book of Isaiah and Ezekiel, deceiving the Jewish people, wanting to subjugate the known world through the Persian Empire, although his attempt failed due to the Greeks, and wanting to assume the character of Christ through the gospel and letters of John, and the book of Revelation confronting Christianity with who at that time had the guardianship of the Roman Empire, that is Apollo, but the lie did not prevail and Constantine together with the Roman Empire would adopt the faith instilled by the Apostles 300 years

after it began following the crucifixion of Christ with the assent of the main interpreter of the pagan religion, that is Apollo.

(DANIEL - 8:21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

8:22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

8:24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

8:25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

8:26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.)

"And at the end of their reign, when the transgressors have reached their fullness," moves the prophecy to the end of time and to the scene of the conflict that would occur between the king **"who will honor those who acknowledge him and divide the land for a price,"** before the verse in Daniel 12:1, **"At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people,"** showing the similarity of the scenarios in which this **"king of haughty countenance and understanding puzzles"** would be revealed, implying that in those circumstances the synthesis of Christian doctrine would be put into execution, which are the responsibilities it embodies and all the promises that would be expected to be tangibly fulfilled.

The meaning of **"his power will be made strong, but not by his own power,"** can only be understood as being achieved through the power of hope transmuted into the faith instilled in the Christian religion, and **"by his shrewdness he will make deceit prosper in his hand,"** is to be recognized by the attributes of a religion that it did not belong to him, but through his intervention he would be the one who catalyzes all the goods of this doctrine and turns it into law since through Constantine it would become the main faith of the Roman Empire, but the precise mention of "but it will be broken, although not by human hand" refers to that even at the end of time, the Angel Prince of Persia would be present to confront him, and proof of this is the instrumentalization of the book of Revelation to confront him with Christ or with as many as he could seduce with such deception, since the book of Revelation is proof of the existence of that Angel Prince of Persia (the Jehovah of Isaiah) along with his hatred towards Rome and its tutelary god, that is Apollo.

To demonstrate such an idea of wanting to confront Christianity with whom they identify as the devil, there would be the following mention about Michael, trying to distort the Bible and attributing to himself the virtue of Michael in order to have the recognition of having been the architect of the fall of the devil in which "Michael and the dragon" faced each other, attributing such a feat to Christ and not to his failed attempt to replace the divine order that reigned over the West from 3000 BC from Egypt until the time of the Roman Empire, this would be a feat that would not last all eternity, because one could return from the dead, which

Christ made an undeniable belief along with the certainty of the immortality of the soul, the other memorable feat that they achieved was the destruction of Babylon and the temporal power that the Persian Empire managed to achieve, such a feat is celebrated in Isaiah and the book of Revelation as follows:

(ISAIAH - 14:1 For Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

14:2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

14:3 And it shall come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

14:4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

14:5 Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

14:6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

14:7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

14:8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

14:9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

14:10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

14:11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, son of the Dawn! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

14:16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

14:17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

14:18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

14:19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

14:20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

14:21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

14:22 For I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith Jehovah.

14:23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts.)

In these verses an attempt is made to show a rebellion that has no historical evidence, beyond the supposed punishment given by Babylon to Israel by its people, as evidenced by Daniel in the following verses, as if it had been a deserved punishment and not an injustice, such as confronting the new religion with the dominant established power that was Rome, as the book of Revelation tries to stage, it is as if the religion of Christians and Jews were confronted in their time with the Greek and Roman religion, who later accepted this religion, but which even before that had a permanent influence in other parts of the Empire.

(DANIEL - 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Xerxes, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

9:7 O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

9:16 O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.)

In this reference to the Angels that Isaiah boasts of having defeated would be none other than in the western region of the world, that is, Europe, and not only in the Middle East where these events developed at the same time as the culture of Media was developing, which would later be absorbed by Persia or the kingdoms of Israel that date from the time when it reaches its maximum splendor with the united monarchy of Saul and David (10th century BC), at that time there were already the great cities of the West that were watched over by their angels or gods, and even so always in competition among themselves, since after the Trojan War and the invasion of the sons of Hercules to the Peloponnese (10th century BC) these kingdoms lived a dark age until their thought and literature flourished at the same time that the Greek colonies expanded throughout the Mediterranean, these city-states would have Olympus as tutelary gods, but their religion and rites would exist since 1500 BC until it was reinvented in writing in the 7th century with Homer's epics, the Homeric hymns, and Hesiod's Theogony, what is narrated in the Apocalypse about some rebellion differs from historical facts in that Apollo always abstained from creating discord among the gods and defended the interests of

his followers in Greece and Rome, and sought to bring the fruits of civilization to the ends of the world.

(REVELATION - 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.)

The book of Revelation would be written when the Roman Empire was at its peak and Olympus at its greatest veneration, this other family of Angels would have interest in the new Christian doctrine to use it to distort the historical legacy of the most lasting civilization of the classical world, of those gods who would choose Christ and his doctrine as champion of their ideals, to leave as testimony 2000 years later that his message embodied all the most sublime longings of that family of Gods of the West that once veiled over Western culture.

(EZEKIEL - 28:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

28:2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

28:3 Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

28:4 With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:

28:5 By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

28:6 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;

28:7 Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

28:8 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

28:9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

28:10 Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

28:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

28:18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

28:19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.)

But as a final way to make it impossible to deny all the sublime attributes and magnanimity of the God Apollo, who even for Isaiah is a figure of great prestige, he decides to convince the world that it would be his excessive ambition that led to his downfall, always wanting to hide that he ruled the world from the deepest mystery from the afterlife, through many other historical figures who continued his work of creating notions and ideals so lofty that they would serve as a rule for all work that continued the work begun from the noblest ambitions to create a better world, and that gradually made this world an optimizable collective mind with each renewal of the meaning of the passion for truth, virtue and harmony.

Among these ideals was the vision of America's Founding Fathers to replace the excesses and limitations of the monarchy with democracy and its highest values, summarized in the following words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

But to understand this story, one must go back to the time of Louis XIV, the Sun King, another fervent believer in Apollo, and another demonstration that Apollo was always present, immortal, from the afterlife, even after his departure from Delphi. It was Louis XIV and even before, as demonstrated by the cultures of Latin America and their empires, the Inca and Aztec, that the Sun god was present, being the architect of the cultural and religious development of those two cultures, guiding their emperors who believed themselves to be descendants of the Sun god.

The Inca culture dates from the 12th century until its conquest by the Spanish in the early 16th century. The existence of this Empire would have begun with the founding of Cusco by order of the Sun god, Inti, who sent his sons, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, from Lake Titicaca to civilize humanity and found a great city. He gave them a golden rod and instructed them that wherever it sank into the ground, there they would found the capital of the empire. These bars ended up sinking into the Cusco Valley, where they remained to grow a small lordship. Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo then dedicated themselves here to teaching all the crafts, techniques and other works necessary so that, just as in Egyptian, Greek and Roman culture, some demigods by order of the Sun god would create the cradle of a new empire to civilize men. In the same way, a culture prior to the Inca on the coast of Peru would be Chavín, where the Sun would similarly be worshipped from 1200 BC until its end in 400 AD.

Similarly, in North America, the sun god was present in the Mayan culture, dating from the 4th century BC to the 9th century AD. In the Aztec Empire, from its founding in the 14th century until its fall to the Spanish in 1521, Huitzilopochtli was worshipped as the founding god and principal god of the Empire. The founding of Tenochtitlán has its roots in Aztec mythology. According to legend, the Aztec people, also known as the Mexica, were guided by their god Huitzilopochtli to abandon Aztlán, their homeland, in search of a new place to settle. They were instructed to build their city where they would see an eagle perched on a cactus, devouring a serpent. This sign, a fulfillment of the prophecy, was sighted on an island in Lake Texcoco, where they later founded Tenochtitlán.

Apollo would be known in the modern era from the reign of Louis XIV, the Sun King. Born in 1638, Louis XIV succeeded his father, Louis XIII, as king at the age of five. He ruled for 72 years, until his death in 1715, making his reign the longest of any European monarch.

In the past, French kings had ruled from Paris, but the Sun King decided to move the capital of France to Versailles. This is where he would rule the French and become a symbol of his Absolute Monarchy. The Palace of Versailles became the most lavish and famous palace in the world in the 17th century. Themes from mythology and the great deeds of the classical world would live alongside Louis XIV throughout the Palace. At Versailles the official name of the throne room was the Salon of Apollo, suggesting that the Sun King chose to publicly reign in a room that would remind all who saw him there of his resemblance to the Greek sun god, and it would be the sovereign's ceremonial and throne room from 1683 onwards (Louis XIV made Versailles his official residence in 1682) until the French Revolution in 1789. Peter the Great would later model the Kremlin on Versailles.

"Louis XIV, forming a maritime power never surpassed by any state, had to fight with the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, the two maritime powers: England and Holland, which had become more terrible under a single king (William III of England); Savoy and almost all of Italy. A single one of these enemies, such as the English and the Spanish, would once have been enough to destroy France; but all together they could not overcome it now. The king

had 450,000 men under arms, counting the naval troops. The Turkish Empire, so powerful in Europe, Asia and Africa, never had an equal number; the Roman Empire never had more, and at no time was it necessary to wage so many wars at once. Those who censured Louis XIV for having made so many enemies admired him for having taken so many measures to defend himself, and even to prevent him from them." (The Century of Louis XIV) (26*)

When the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) arrived, the largest ever fought by Louis XIV, which pitted the major European powers against each other for the right to the throne of the Spanish Empire, the largest empire of its time, which included all of Spain, the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium and Luxembourg), Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, the Duchy of Milan, the present-day southwestern United States, Florida, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, most of South America, and the Philippines, Louis XIV would defend the rights to the throne of his grandson, Philip V, the Duke of Anjou, who inherited the right of succession to the Spanish Empire from Charles II, the last emperor of the House of Habsburg in Spain.

Thus, on September 7, 1701, the Treaty of The Hague was signed, giving birth to the Grand Alliance, formed by Austria, England, the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire, who declared war on Louis XIV and Philip V in May 1702. The Kingdom of Portugal and the Duchy of Savoy would join the Grand Alliance in May 1703. In Spanish territory, Catalonia and Valencia would join the alliance not long after, the supporters of Archduke Charles of Austria or known as Charles III of Spain, also a pretender to the Spanish throne.

The war continued with victories and defeats on both sides until Louis XIV decided to stop supporting his grandson militarily in 1709. After major military setbacks, the French coffers were empty, and the battles began to be fought on French soil after the loss of all of Italy and the Spanish Netherlands. Even with such adversity, it became clear that the Spanish population preferred Philip V as their king.

On April 17, 1711, the Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph I of Habsburg, died. His successor was his brother, Archduke Charles, the other pretender to the Spanish Empire. Three days earlier, Louis of France, nicknamed the "Grand Dauphin" and father of Philip V, had died. This placed Philip V even closer to the succession of Louis XIV, still facing his older brother, the Duke of Burgundy, and his son, a weak boy whose early death everyone predicted. He was named Louis, then Duke of Anjou, after Philip left the duchy vacant, and who would ultimately reign as Louis XV.

The other European states, and especially England, accelerated negotiations for a possible peace as soon as possible, now that the situation was favorable to them, and began to see the advantages of recognizing Philip V as Spanish king. Fortunately for them, France was exhausted, which made it more open to negotiations. In February 1712, the Duke of Burgundy died, leaving only Louis, whom everyone considered incapable. Louis XIV wanted to appoint his grandson Philip as regent, but the English made the separation of the crowns of Spain and France an indispensable condition for peace. Whoever occupied one of the kingdoms was forced to renounce the other.

Finally, Philip V made his decision public. On November 9, 1712, he announced his renunciation of his rights to the French throne before the Courts, while the other French princes did the same regarding the Spanish throne before the Parliament of Paris, thus eliminating the last obstacle to peace.

In 1713, when all nations were exhausted by the war, peace was signed between the Monarchy of Great Britain and other allied states and the Monarchy of France. This resulted in the partition of the states of the Spanish Monarchy, which Charles II and his advisors had so desperately sought to avoid. The Catholic Netherlands (roughly corresponding to present-day Belgium and Luxembourg), the Kingdom of Naples, Sardinia, and the Duchy of Milan remained in the hands of the then Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI. In the same treaty, Louis XIV's representatives, in exchange for recognition of Philip V as King of Spain, had to cede to Great Britain extensive territories in what was to become Canada (Saint Kitts, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson's Bay Territories).

Louis XIV managed to secure victory in this war, where his grandson Philip V obtained the Spanish Empire at the cost of the loss of the Spanish Netherlands and Naples. But the Bourbon influence in the New World would grow significantly with the acquisition of Spain's American colonies, which would be crucial to victory in the American War of Independence.

Louis XIV died in 1715, leaving his heirs the Spanish Empire and the Kingdom of France along with its colonies, the largest of which was in the Americas and was known as New France. It was divided into five colonies, each with its own administration: Canada, Acadia, Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, and Louisiana (named in honor of Louis XIV). It extended from Newfoundland to the Canadian prairies and from Hudson's Bay to Louisiana (Gulf of Mexico), including all the Great Lakes of North America.

Although the balance of power in Europe was tilted toward the English, in the Americas it was in favor of the Bourbon kings, until the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), considered the first global conflict in history, which had repercussions in the French colonies. By prioritizing the war in Europe and due to major setbacks in the Old Continent, as it faced Great Britain, Prussia, and Hanover, France neglected its sparsely populated colonies in North America, which were overwhelmed by the reinforcements sent by the English to the 13 colonies. As a result, France lost Quebec and Montreal in Canada.

The Seven Years' War ended on February 10, 1763, with the Treaty of Paris. The so-called French and Indian War, or Seven Years' War, brought new territories under the control of the English crown, but the costly conflict led to new and unpopular taxes. The British government's attempts to raise revenue by taxing the colonies (notably the Stamp Act of 1765, the Townshend Acts of 1767, and the Tea Act of 1773) were met with heated protest among many colonists, who resented their lack of representation in Parliament and demanded the same rights as other British subjects.

At the end of this war, American colonists felt the colonies had gained nothing for their wartime sacrifices. The British increased their taxes to help pay for England's lost revenue and expenses fighting on European soil. The British blocked western settlement of Indian lands to maintain peace with the Indians. This meant that the Ohio River Valley, which the colonists had fought for, belonged only to hostile Indian tribes and the British. This felt like a betrayal to the American colonists.

After unsuccessfully petitioning for the repeal of these measures, the colonists began an independence movement, which culminated on July 4, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, proclaimed the independence of the United States with the famous phrase:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

From 1776, the war would continue without a definitive victory for either side, until the Battle of Saratoga (September-October 1777), which marked a turning point in the war, as the victory strengthened the possibility of triumph for the citizen militias over a regular army, while an entire army was taken prisoner (6,000 redcoats). Thus, after a few months of hesitation, France openly entered the war, signing an alliance with the colonists in February 1778.

Before beginning the 1779 campaign, Washington arrived in Philadelphia and learned that the Continentals' currency had been devalued to half of what it had been in 1776, and that almost everything now cost twice as much. France had 64 ships of the line that could sail in 1779, but Great Britain could sail 90. The United States didn't have a single heavy warship.

It was then, in June 1779, that the Spanish Empire joined France in the American War of Independence. Through their alliance, the kings of France, Charles III and Louis XVI, both Bourbons and descendants of Louis XIV, would tip the scales of victory in favor of the Americans. With Spain's entry, the Allies would have enormous naval superiority: 121 ships of the line compared to Great Britain's 90 in 1779.

With the opening of new fronts in the Mediterranean in Gibraltar and Menorca, the English Channel (as the Allies tried unsuccessfully to invade England), Florida and the English colonies in the Caribbean, England's forces were overwhelmed, and seeing that the defeat in the 13 colonies was irreversible after the Siege of Yorktown (September-October 1781), a battle won by the intervention of the French army under the command of Count Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Count of Rochambeau, since it represented almost half of the Allied army, together with the French fleet of 29 warships under the command of Admiral de Grasse, who maintained the blockade of the port of Yorktown, preventing any British resupply operation by sea. As a result, on October 19, General Cornwallis surrendered, handing over 7,087 officers and men, 900 sailors, 144 cannons, 15 galleys, one frigate, and 30 transport ships. Claiming illness, he did not attend the surrender ceremony, but his second-in-command, General Charles O'Hara, carried Cornwallis's sword to the American and French commanders.

The British still had 30,000 men in North America, occupying the seaports of New York, Charles Town, and Savannah. But the demoralizing loss at Yorktown diminished British resolve to continue fighting the rebels. Although the war persisted on the high seas and in other theaters, the Patriot victory at Yorktown ended the fighting in the American colonies. After the Battle of Yorktown and the British losing a third of their expeditionary force, the British Parliament passed a resolution in March 1782 calling on the nation to end the war.

On September 3, 1783, the Revolutionary War officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. England would recognize the independence of the United States of America and grant the new nation all territory north of Florida, south of Canada, and east of the Mississippi River. England would retain Gibraltar and Canada, and Spain would regain Florida.

French aid in that war was a remarkable achievement. Without mutual aid from beginning to end, the victory ultimately achieved would not have been possible; otherwise, it would have been only a conditional peace. The United States would have obtained only a percentage of the 13 colonies, which in turn would have put them under the pressure of being surrounded on two hostile fronts (Canada and the southern colonies still in English possession before

Yorktown). They would not have been able to expand as they later did into the rest of the American continent. Proof of this was the war against England in 1812.

But all these fortunate events would not have taken place if, in 1713, the balance of power between the two main colonial powers in the Americas (Spain and France) had not fallen to heirs of the same dynasty. In this way, France would turn its defeat in the Seven Years' War into a victory, gaining an ally that would remain at its side throughout its history. Its existence would mark a turning point in the balance of power in Europe in favor of France, following its intervention in the World Wars. But none of this would have existed if Louis XIV had not obtained the Spanish Empire and its colonies for his dynasty, which marked a turning point in the balance of power in the Americas. Alone with France, the United States would never have been independent, nor would the fate that gave rise to such events have existed, such was the struggle for dominance of North America.

Influenced by the Bourbons' association with Apollo and in gratitude for their assistance, on June 13, 1782, after three committees, the final design for the United States seal was chosen by Charles Thomson. Thomson drew on elements from the three previous committees and submitted a new design that provided the basis for the final seal.

He chose the Eye of Providence at the top of the pyramid, which could be identified as the Eye of Horus, the Egyptian name for Apollo, and which was called "Wadjet" ("wholeness or restored unity"), an amulet that personified harmony in ancient Egypt, along with the motto *Annuit Coeptis*. "*Annuit Coeptis*" comes from the *Aeneid*, Book IX, line 625, which reads, "*Iuppiter omnipotens, audacibus adnue coeptis.*" It is a phrase by Ascanius, the son of the hero Aeneas, which translates as "Almighty Jupiter, favor [my] daring undertakings." According to the ancient Roman State Report, properly called the *Cultus Deorum Romanum*, Jupiter headed the pantheon of gods. Another translation is "has favored our undertaking," a clear reference to Jupiter and the Eye of Providence.

The motto *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 'New Order of the Ages'. He adapted it from a line in Virgil's *Eclogue IV*, a pastoral poem written by the famous Roman writer in 40 BC that expresses the longing for a new era of peace and happiness, and which would also be used by Constantine in his Address to the Assembly of Saints in 325 shortly before the Council of Nicaea, and reads as follows:

"Now the last age of the Cumaean prophecy begins: the great roll-call of the centuries is born anew: now Virgin Justice returns, and Saturn's reign: now a new race descends from the heavens above. Only favour the child who's born, pure Lucina, under whom the first race of iron shall end, and a golden race rise up throughout the world: now your Apollo reigns."

In the same way, the establishment of Christianity was a turning point in the history of Western civilization, as it strengthened the cohesion of the European states that emerged from the Roman Empire, and which made Europe survive all external threats until the Renaissance and the discovery of the New World, where at that time Europe became the most distinguished part of the world in the arts, weapons and learning, and would expand that influence, as well as its religion throughout the world.

WHAT IS MYTHOLOGY?

The myths of ancient Greece and Rome have provided inspiration for literature, theater, poetry, and art throughout the centuries of Western tradition. The exploration of the human psyche as reflected in these stories continues to motivate the questions of philosophers, psychologists, and social scientists.

We do not have an ancient equivalent of the sacred scriptures for the gods of Greece and Rome, nor was there an authoritative institution like the Vatican responsible for assembling such a collection. Rather, we have stories of the gods that were recited and passed down for millennia. However, the stories come to us in various forms and through different vehicles. Homer and Hesiod presented archaic visions of the gods that were once compiled as epic poetry. Bards and lyric poets popularized hymns to various deities, priests included some details in their prayers, educated men related their own interpretations, and playwrights added different versions. Individual aspects of the divine were included in domestic cults, religious rituals, and religious festivals, while art and architecture visualized popular images and actions of the gods.

Modern students are often confused because the gods and goddesses have so many different versions of their tales. One reason for this is that local towns and cities contributed their own versions of the lives and roles of the divine actors. This was particularly true of stories about the founding of a town or city; all ancient peoples wanted to claim the ancestry of one of the gods or the golden age of heroes. Scholars try to separate older stories from later ones, and archaeology sometimes helps, but it remains a difficult task. Conflicting stories about the same god or hero did not seem to be a problem for the ancients.

Very often, ancient myths arose not as a systematic or historical account of facts, but as attempts to explain the meaning of events. In simpler terms, and for our purposes, a myth is a traditional story that explains the origins, practices, and beliefs and creates a worldview for a people. In addition to teaching about the gods, myths were used to promote and validate society's ideals and institutions and to ensure that social codes were in conformity with divine will.

Origin myths contain stories of the primordial beginnings of things such as the cosmos, the gods, animals, and human beings, or they recount the founding of an ancestral lineage, a sacred site, and the founding of a town or city. Myths contain etiologies, or explanations of how and why things came to be, such as agriculture. Etiologies are always relevant: they reflect the contemporary world of the group and explain many elements of the social order. Scholars use the term "alienation myths" to classify stories that explain how and why evil exists, or to explain the fallen state of humans from an original utopian existence. Some of these stories also explain sexual alienation, such as the story of Eve in Genesis or Pandora's box.

In the myths of the ancient world, the gods were always described as human beings, but much more beautiful, stronger, and taller. They married and had children, lived adventures, and enjoyed the good life, which included music, poetry, and entertainment. The divine food was ambrosia; they drank nectar, and a liquid called ichor flowed through their veins instead of blood.

The gods also exhibited the human emotions of jealousy, anger, fear, love, and revenge. They appeared to humans in dreams, in the flesh, as animals, and sometimes in disguise. There are numerous instances in which male gods had sexual relations with human women (particularly Zeus), producing a child who usually grew up to be a hero or a demigod. But the major difference between humans and gods was their immortality. Although some gods were wounded in the stories and died temporarily, they were always restored to eternal life.

In the beginning...

Using a concept shared throughout the ancient world in creation myths, Hesiod began with chaos, or a formless mass that produced the cosmos and the gods. From the 8th or 7th century BC, we have two major works by Hesiod, *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. They provide accounts of the beginning of the cosmos, the succession of the gods, the origin of sacrifice, and the evolutionary stages of man. It was important to establish the succession and means by which Zeus became the head of the gods, along with the mated pairs of personified powers that established the fertility of the cosmos and the earth. Subsequent poets, playwrights, and other writers added further details over time.

Chaos, a formless mass, produced Nyx (night), Erebus (darkness), Tartarus (abyss), Eros (sexual desire), and Gaia (earth). Nyx and Erebus produced Aether (upper air) and Hemera (day). Alone, Nyx produced Thanatos (death), Hypnos (sleep), Moros (perdition), Nemesis (divine retribution), and the Fates. Gaia alone gave birth to Uranus (sky), Ourea (mountains), and Pontus (sea). She then mated with her son Pontus and produced several sea gods and sea serpents. Gaia married her son Uranus, who became the ruler of the universe, and they produced the Titans and the Cyclopes. The Titans were immortal giants, and the Cyclopes were one-eyed giants who were craftsmen and shepherds. Some of the most well-known Titans were Oceanus, Cronus, Helios, Selene, Eos, Atlas, and Prometheus.

Uranus disliked some of the Titans and Cyclopes and imprisoned them in Tartarus, the lowest part of Hades. He feared that one of his children would usurp his rule of the sky. Gaia turned to her sons to get rid of him, but only Cronus volunteered for the job. He castrated his father with a sickle (cutting off his testicles) and thus eliminated his power. The testicles landed in the sea near Cyprus, and the semen produced sea foam to create Aphrodite. The blood that fell to the ground produced the Erinyes (Furies).

Cronus was now ruler of the universe and married his sister Rhea. Against his mother's wishes, he did not release all the Titans and Cyclopes from Tartarus. In what became a common theme in mythology, Gaia predicted that, like his father, a son of Cronus would usurp his throne. Cronus eliminated the problem by swallowing the children he shared with Rhea (Demeter, Hestia, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon). The youngest and last child, Zeus, was in hiding, and Rhea gave Cronus a stone wrapped in a blanket as a substitute, which he promptly ate. As an adult, Zeus tricked Cronus into drinking a drug that made him vomit up his siblings. Led by Zeus, these siblings helped him wage war against the Titans, who supported Cronus, and this lasted 10 years. Zeus and his allies defeated the remaining Titans, who were again chained in Tartarus (as recounted in the *Titanomachy*). One Titan, Atlas, was uniquely punished by having to hold the world on his shoulders (near the Atlas Mountains in Morocco).

Once again, Gaia was unhappy that not all her children were free, so with Tartarus she produced the monster Typhon. Later ornaments describe Typhon as part man, part beast, taller than any mountain and with dragon heads in his armpits and serpent coils under his thighs. Typhon fathered several monstrous or hybrid beings: Cerberus, the Chimera, the Hydra, the Nemean lion, and the Sphinx. Zeus eventually defeated this monster and caged it under Mount Etna in Sicily. Typhon's dragon fire was one explanation for the volcanic eruptions on the island.

To conclude with some of the myths that explain origins, we have conflicting stories about the creation of humans. In one, Cronus created humans because he thought they might be interesting and fun. Another version claimed that the Titan Prometheus created humans from the clay of the earth, and then Athena gave them life. Zeus ordered Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus to provide gifts for the created beings. Epimetheus wanted to start first and gave gifts to the animals of the earth: beauty, agility, strength, and speed. Compared to animals, humans were helpless, so Prometheus gave them reason, fire, and his own knowledge. Zeus was particularly angered by the gift of fire to humans (this could make humans more like gods) and punished Prometheus. Prometheus was chained to a rock, and an eagle ate his liver every day (at the end of which it grew back).

Zeus was still angry and wanted to eliminate the human race, so Prometheus taught humans how to sacrifice to Zeus. However, Prometheus divided the offerings into two types: the good meat (disguised) and the skin and bones with the fat, and told Zeus to choose. Zeus chose the fat and bones, which infuriated him, but it became a tradition in ritual sacrifices. This was a myth to explain why offerings to the gods contain the less desirable portions, while humans were allowed to eat the meat.

Zeus ordered his son Hephaestus to fashion a woman out of clay, to whom all the gods and goddesses contributed some traits, and he named her Pandora ("all gifts"). This creation was meant to punish and weaken humans. Pandora was given to Prometheus's brother, Epimetheus. Prometheus warned his brother about Zeus's gifts, but Epimetheus loved her. Pandora had a box, an urn, or a jar, depending on the version and translation. Hesiod stated that Zeus had two jars, one filled with all good things and the other with all evil. Apparently, the latter was the one given to Pandora. Unable to resist her curiosity, Pandora opened the box and released evil; only hope remained.

Humans now acted upon evil. An Arcadian leader, Lycaon, sacrificed a baby and gave it to Zeus to eat (who turned out to be disguised as a laborer). In his rage, Zeus sent a flood to wipe out the human race, and Poseidon assisted with his waves. Once again, Prometheus saved the humans. His son, Deucalion, and his brother's daughter, Pyrrha, were married and considered a godly couple. Prometheus warned them of the impending disaster, and they built a boat (or chest in other versions). The rain and floods wiped out the rest of humanity, but the couple survived and landed on Mount Parnassus (or several other mountains).

Realizing they were alone in the world, they first sacrificed to Zeus in gratitude for their survival, and then prayed to Thetis, the sea nymph, for advice on how to repopulate the world. He instructed them to place their mother's bones on their shoulders. Perplexed at first, they eventually realized the stones were the bones of Mother Earth and proceeded accordingly. From Deucalion's efforts came men, and from Pyrrha, women. The couple later had children of their own, including Hellen, the eponymous founder of the Hellenes, or Greeks.

HISTORY OF GREECE

The history of ancient Greece is divided into established periods, using both archaeological evidence and later literary descriptions.

The Bronze Age in Greece saw the beginning of agriculture, pottery, a writing system, a centralized form of government, legal codes, organized warfare, international trade, taxation, and social hierarchies that included slavery. As its name suggests, the Bronze Age is notable for the development of the bronze alloy (a mixture of copper and tin), which required organized mining and produced improved weapons and tools. The nature of Greek geography dictated that hills be built into fortified city-states, with farming communities in the valleys.

(1) Early Bronze Age: 2900-2000 BC, (2) Minoan Age (2000-1600 BC), (3) Mycenaean Age: 1600-1100 BC, (4) Dark Age: 1100-800 BC, (5) Archaic Age: 800–500 BC, (6) Classical Age: 500–323 BC, (7) Hellenistic Age: 323-146 BC.

The Minoans, based in Crete, dominated the Aegean islands and the coastal areas of the eastern Mediterranean, as well as parts of mainland Greece. However, in 1600 BC, the Minoans suffered a collapse (due to famine, the dissolution of trade, or a volcanic eruption on the island of Thera), and the region was conquered and dominated by the Mycenaean civilization.

The Mycenaean Age (1600–1100 BC) is named after the city of Mycenae in the Peloponnese, southern Greece. During this period, society became more hierarchical, with a king and his advisors at the top controlling most of the wealth. Most of the lower classes supported a central administrative structure through their work as artisans and farmers. Stone palace complexes and citadels were vital to this warrior culture, and the structures also emphasized the status of the king and his circle. The Mycenaeans prided themselves on warfare, and this period is often referred to as "the Age of Heroes." Many of the later legends and myths of ancient Greece were based on this older culture. According to Homer, the Mycenaean king Agamemnon led the coalition of Greek city-states against Troy.

The Mycenaeans invented a written form of script known as Linear B (a derivative of the Minoan language known as Linear A), although surviving artifacts are few. We have no body of literature from this period, and little is known about religion during this era. Some texts mention the names of gods, with Poseidon being a popular deity. Some of the major Olympians (Zeus, Hera, Ares, Athena, Artemis, Dionysus) are mentioned. The few temple remains do not provide sufficient information about the worship of these deities.

An older theory about the end of Mycenaean civilization posited an invasion by the Dorians, tribal peoples originally from the north. However, there is growing evidence that the Dorians were already settled in Greece at this time. Another theory is that an internal social uprising took place, motivated by the impoverished lower classes. In any case, by the end of this period, Mycenae and other city-states had been destroyed.

Extensive and prolonged damage to all the major Mycenaean sites resulted in the period known in Greek history as the Dark Ages. It was labeled this way because the Greeks appear to

have adopted earlier livestock-herding lifestyles (understood as regressive), and we have no literature from this period. However, around 800 BC, writing was rediscovered or relearned, although instead of Linear B, the Greeks adopted the alphabet of the Phoenicians (who had inserted vowels), the precursor to the English alphabet. In this later period, the Olympic Games were established, and we have the earliest sources for Homer's epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. *The Iliad* recounts a few weeks in the last year of the Trojan War, while *The Odyssey* recounts the adventures of Odysseus as he tries to make his way from Troy to his home in Ithaca.

Hesiod, originally from Boeotia in central Greece, produced two poems, *Works and Days* and *Theogony* (ca. 700 BC). *Works and Days* includes an agricultural manual, and *Theogony* describes the creation of the gods and the ages of humanity (golden, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron). Hesiod placed himself in this latter era, with pessimistic descriptions of the fallen state of humankind and society because the old virtuous traditions were no longer practiced. The works of Homer and Hesiod became standard literature for all Greeks (and Greek colonies) for centuries.

The Archaic Age (800-500 BC) saw population increases and the political organization of what would become the classical city-state (polis), which included citizens, metics (resident foreigners), and slaves. The rights and duties of these classes in Athens were codified through constitutional reforms by Solon (638-558 BC) and Cleisthenes (570-508 BC). The end of this period saw the emergence of democracy in Athens, or "rule by the people," to curb any attempts at tyranny. During this period, Greek colonization extended to Anatolia and Phoenicia, the Black Sea region, North Africa (Libya), southern Italy, Sicily, southern France, and Spain.

Classical Greece (500–323 BC) is recognized as the apogee of Greek literature, philosophy, art, drama, science, architecture, and politics, with the city-state of Athens providing most of our information. The Parthenon, the temple dedicated to Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, was built on the Acropolis between 447 and 438 BC. Philosophy originated in Miletus (Anatolia) in the 7th century BC, but many of the different philosophical schools materialized in Classical Greece.

One of the enduring legacies of Classical Greece in the Western tradition is the art of politics, or the elements involved in governance. Derived from Aristotle, good government included the art of rhetoric (persuasion) and social control for the good of the community. Athenian democracy was limited to free adult male citizens who completed their military training as ephebes (adolescents). Democratic voters probably constituted less than a third of the population of ancient Athens.

The Persian Wars

Cyrus the Great established the Achaemenid Empire of Persia in what had been the Neo-Babylonian Empire and in 547 BC conquered Ionia, a region of western Anatolia long inhabited by Greeks. Following his usual policy, he appointed tyrants in the cities to collect tribute and maintain peace. In 499 BC, the Ionians rebelled against Persian rule, convincing most of their neighbors to do so as well. Athens and other Greek city-states supported the rebellion, and

this began the Persian-Greek Wars that would last until 449 BC. Darius the Great (the next Persian ruler) effectively suppressed the rebellion but decided to punish Athens and its allies by invading the Greek mainland.

In 490 BC, the first Persian invasion took place, resulting in the conquest of Thrace and Macedonia. However, the Athenians decisively defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon, which temporarily halted the Persian plans. (Modern athletic races, called marathons, take their name from the legendary story of the messenger who ran from the battlefield to Athens to announce the victory, a distance of 26 miles.) The second invasion was in 480 BC under Darius's son, Xerxes I, with the largest armies ever assembled. He was only temporarily halted at the Battle of Thermopylae with the famous last-ditch effort of the 300 Spartans and 700 Thespians. After winning that battle, he proceeded to sack and burn Athens. The Persians then suffered a devastating loss to the Greeks at the naval Battle of Salamis.

In 478 BC, the Delian League (based on the island of Delos) was formed as a naval alliance to stop future Persian incursions. However, the Delian League also served as Athens' maritime monopoly on eastern Mediterranean trade, provided naval support to colonies in the western Mediterranean, and contributed to the spread of Greek culture. In the decades that followed, alliances rose and fell, battles were won and lost, and the Greco-Persian Wars essentially ended in 449 BC. The tribute from these overseas endeavors and the profits from trade helped rebuild Athens and contributed to its golden age.

The city of Sparta led the Peloponnesian League, an alliance of states mostly from the Peloponnese (the southern part of the Greek peninsula) that feared Athenian dominance. This distrust led to the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC, and the other city-states chose sides. Sparta had stronger armies, but Athens had a larger navy, and these two factors served to balance each power so that the war lasted until 404 BC. After suffering a devastating plague, Athens finally surrendered to Sparta.

Although militarily victorious, Sparta lacked Athens' leadership experience. This problem was resolved when Philip II of Macedon conquered Athens and the other city-states in 338 BC. Macedonia was located north of Greece but shared many cultural elements with that nation. Philip's ambition was to unite all of Greece and then invade Persia in revenge for the Persian Wars. After his assassination in 336 BC, the throne of Macedonia passed to his son, Alexander the Great.

The Hellenistic Age

Alexander was as ambitious as his father, although he was more charismatic and militarily skilled, and greatly admired by his soldiers because he placed himself at the forefront of battle. He conquered Anatolia, Syria, the Persian Empire, Israel, Egypt, Afghanistan, and even reached India. It was the largest empire to date, and his conquests resulted in the Hellenization of all these lands. Hellenization, and Hellenistic, is a descriptor that refers to Alexander's alteration of local customs and cultures to include Greek concepts and practices (Hellen was the mythological founder of Greece). Alexander introduced Greek religion, philosophy, science, medicine, art, literature, government, and education to all the areas he conquered. The Greek

language became the lingua franca of the entire eastern Mediterranean, or the language shared by the diverse ethnic groups in the conquered territories.

In 323 BC, Alexander died of fever at the age of 32. He had no legal heir, and this created a situation in which his generals fought over the remnants of his empire for the next few decades. Ultimately, Antigonus ruled Macedonia, Thrace, and parts of northern Anatolia, Seleucus ruled Syria and parts of the Persian Empire, and Ptolemy ruled Egypt from the city of Alexandria. Alexander himself created this city, and it quickly rose to prominence under Ptolemy as a commercial center and intellectual hub. Ptolemy dedicated a learning center to the Muses (the deities who inspired learning and the arts), and thus created the "museum" and library in Alexandria that housed all scholars and schools of philosophy. Alexandria also boasted one of the later wonders of the ancient world, the Pharos lighthouse.

Rome conquered Greece in 146 BC and eventually most of the lands previously conquered by Alexander (with the exception of Persia). Athens and a coalition of city-states under King Mithridates VI of Pontus rebelled against Roman rule, but were crushed by the dictator Sulla in 88 BC. Rome had always admired Greek culture, and with the conquest of Greece, thousands of statues and artifacts were brought to Rome and adorned public buildings, temples, and private homes. Greece became the province of Achaea in 27 BC under the rule of the first Roman emperor, Augustus.

History of Rome

While the history of Greece is measured in Ages, the history of Rome is traditionally remembered through important events.

The city of Rome began as a small village on the Tiber River in central Italy, where the river reached its last safe navigation stage. The center of this village was a marsh that was eventually drained and became the Roman Forum. Surrounding this marsh were several hills (tradition claims seven, although there are more), and the plain surrounding this site was known as Latium. The first inhabitants consisted of some Latin tribes who may have migrated from the Alba Hills in the south and were later joined by the Sabine and other polyglot tribes. From that small village, Rome conquered its neighbors and all the countries bordering the Mediterranean and some beyond (Great Britain, parts of Germany, the Balkans).

The Etruscans

By their own admission, many elements of Roman customs were borrowed from the Etruscans. The Etruscans flourished from approximately 800 to 100 BC in the areas of Tuscany, Umbria, the Po River Valley of the Eastern Alps, Lazio, and parts of Campania. They often dominated the area surrounding Rome itself; many of Rome's early kings were Etruscans. Through trade and the hiring of Greek artisans from Magna Graecia, or Greek colonies established in southern Italy (from 800 BC), the Etruscans absorbed Hellenic culture and art. The Etruscan language has not survived in a corpus of texts; we only have some inscriptions on

items found in tombs. The history of Etruscan culture was written by later Roman writers, so we have many loan words that have survived in Latin.

(1) 753 BC: According to legend, the city of Rome was established by Romulus and Remus. (2) 715–673 BC: The reign of King Numa Pompilius, legendary founder of the Roman religion. (3) 509 BC: Overthrow of the kings and creation of the Roman Republic. (4) 390 BC: The Gauls invade Rome and sack the city. (5) 264–146 BC: The Three Punic Wars against Carthage. (6) 204–202 BC: Scipio Africanus defeats the Carthaginian general Hannibal at the Battle of Zama in North Africa. (7) 146 BC: Carthage destroyed; Greece conquered. (8) 110 BC: The first of several invasions by German tribes, finally defeated by Gaius Marius, who reforms the army. (9) 90–88 BC: Social War, the last rebellion of the Italian peoples against Rome. (10) 88–66 BC: Wars against King Mithridates VI of Pontus (northern Anatolia), Rome conquers the province of Asia (Anatolia), Syria, Israel, and Armenia. (11) 60–54 BC: The first triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus. (12) 58–50 BC: Caesar's Gallic Wars. (13) 49 BC: Caesar crosses the Rubicon: civil war against Pompey and the Republicans. (14) 48–45 BC: Pompey defeated at Pharsalus and killed in Egypt; Republican forces defeated in North Africa. (15) 44 BC: Caesar assassinated; Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus form the Second Triumvirate. (16) 31 BC: Octavian defeats Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium. (17) 27 BC: Octavian declared Augustus; end of the Republic and beginning of the Roman Empire. (18) 14–68 AD: Emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero. (19) 69–96 AD: Emperors of the Flavian dynasty: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian. (20) 98–117 AD: Trajan, 101–107, Dacian Wars. (21) 117–138 AD: Hadrian. The building of Hadrian's Wall in Britain. (22) 161–180 AD: Marcus Aurelius. (23) 212 AD: Emperor Caracalla offers Roman citizenship to all free men and women in the Empire. (24) 250–300 AD: The Empire suffers foreign invasions, plagues, inflation, and military coups. (25) 284–306 AD: Emperor Diocletian restores the Empire; he divides the Empire into East and West with a hierarchy of Augustuses and Caesars. (26) 312/313 AD: Constantine, the first Christian emperor; the Edict of Milan proclaims Christianity as the recognized religion of the Roman Empire. (27) 330 AD: The center of the Roman Empire moves from Rome to Constantinople. (28) 381 AD: Theodosius bans all forms of paganism; Christianity becomes the sole religion of the Empire. (29) 410 AD: Alaric and the Goths sack Rome. (30) 476 AD: The last Roman emperor is defeated by the Germanic leader Odoacer. The Roman Empire ceases to exist in the West, but continues for the next thousand years in Constantinople and Byzantium.

The way to know the will of the gods was revealed to the Etruscans by Tages, a child-like figure who emerged from the tilled earth. His teachings were written down, preserved in sacred books, and passed on to each generation of priests. All natural phenomena (lightning, organs of sacrificed animals, flight patterns of birds) were an indication of the immanence of divine will, which could be interpreted by specialists known as haruspices and augurs. The Romans would later refer to this tradition as the Etruscan discipline and trained their own priests in its foundations.

Etruscan influence on ancient Rome is found in art, architecture, engineering (domes, arches, sewers, urban planning), the hierarchical structure that became the model for the Roman Republic (including the Senate), the toga, and the symbol of power and authority, the fasces (bundles of rods surrounding an axe, carried by lictors or bodyguards). The Etruscans

contributed the idea of the tripartite Capitoline Temple (Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, from the Etruscans Tinia, Uni, and Menerva). Gladiator games in Rome may have originated from Etruscan funeral rites, where slaves of the dead fought to the death in the grave.

The City of Rome

According to legend, the city of Rome was founded in 753 BC by the twins Romulus and Remus. Using a plow, Romulus marked out the area around seven hills, with a valley in the middle that was originally the city's marketplace. This demarcation line was the pomerium, or sacred zone of the city. The sacred zone was associated with imperium, or the power of command, and certain magisterial offices were imbued with sacred duty. Romulus killed his brother and became Rome's first king. The Romans also claimed that their ancestors were descended from Aeneas, a son of Venus and a refugee from Troy, who had settled at the foot of Mount Alba, in Alba Longa, from where many ancient religious concepts reached Rome. The two stories were reconciled by having Aeneas as an ancestor of Romulus and Remus.

Numa Pompilius, of the Sabine tribe, was the legendary second king of Rome (reigned 715–673 BC) and, according to tradition, established the institutions of Roman religion and ritual. His inspiration supposedly came from the nymph Egeria. He authored sacred books of divine teachings that established the hierarchy and function of the priesthods. He also brought the cult of the Vestal Virgins to Rome from Mount Alba (and some traditions claimed that his daughters were the first Vestals).

The early Romans held the concept of numen, a Latin term for divinity or divine presence, understood similarly to the Etruscan belief in divine immanence. This was an invisible power found everywhere. The Lares and Penates were the numina guardians who protected everything that happened within the boundaries of their location, beginning with the home. The Roman writer Plutarch (46-120 AD) claimed that King Numa forbade the Romans from depicting any of these powers in the form of humans or beasts. This lasted for about 170 years until Greek influence dominated Roman religious depictions.

In 509 BC, the Romans overthrew the last of the Etruscan kings and established the Roman Republic. The republican system was based on the election of individuals to represent the interests of the general population. There was a Senate of nobles (the patricians) and assemblies where freeborn citizens voted for several magistrates each year. For the next two centuries, the non-noble citizen class (plebeians) successfully campaigned for a share of political power and noble status. They also gained access to the priesthods in Rome. A position as a magistrate and in a priesthood ennobled their families and their descendants.

In 390 BC, the Cisalpine Gauls under the leadership of Brennus attacked and occupied Rome. The only obstacle in the city was Capitoline Hill, where the defenders were alerted by Juno's sacred geese. The Gauls demanded a ransom, but while negotiations were taking place, the Romans had time to regroup and eventually drove the enemy out. This event caused tremendous damage to the Roman psyche, and fears of another invasion from the north lasted for centuries. It was the first and last time a foreign army would conquer the city of Rome until 410 AD.

From the beginning of the Republic until the third century BC, Rome focused on conquering various Italian tribes and the Greek settlements of Magna Graecia. By 290 BC, Rome controlled most of the peninsula. In doing so, Rome absorbed indigenous Italian deities, as well as the Greek influences now attributed to them, and included these elements in the city's traditional religious festivals.

The Punic Wars (264–146 BC)

Rome's main rival in the western Mediterranean was the Carthaginian Empire, which was headquartered in the North African city of Carthage (present-day Tunisia). Rome referred to these people as Punics because they were Phoenicians who had migrated to the western Mediterranean in the 9th century BC. The Carthaginians had settled throughout North Africa and Spain and controlled most of the region's trade. The Punic Wars consisted of three wars from 264 to 146 BC, and began because Carthage controlled most of the island of Sicily. Rome was determined to include Sicily as part of the Italian peninsula because Rome needed control of the large grain fields located there.

Carthage was the dominant naval power, although this changed after Rome realized it needed to build ships and create a navy. The First War ended in a draw, but the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC, nearly destroyed Roman ambitions. The Carthaginian general Hannibal led his troops from Spain across the Pyrenees and the Alps and descended upon the Italian plains. He successfully defeated the Roman legions at the Battle of Lake Trasimene and the Battle of Cannae, where Rome lost 80,000 men.

Rome was able to recruit and enlist more men for the legions, although they adopted Fabian tactics (named after Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, who rejected a pitched battle with Hannibal in favor of a war of attrition). Hannibal became less threatening because he did not receive supplies and reinforcements from Carthage, where the ruling Council did not favor Hannibal's family. In the later stages of the war, Rome attacked settlements in North Africa, forcing Hannibal to return to Carthage and mount a defense. He was defeated by Scipio Africanus at the Battle of Zama in 201 BC.

In 149 BC, Numidia, a Roman ally in North Africa, claimed to be under attack from Carthage, and Rome came to its defense. By 146 BC, Carthage was completely destroyed. During the Punic Wars, Rome simultaneously waged war in Spain, Macedonia, Greece, and Syria. With victories in these areas and the destruction of Carthage, Rome became the ruling power in both the western and eastern Mediterranean.

The Social War (90-88 BC)

When Rome conquered the Italian tribes, most were granted the status of allies or client states, but without the privilege of Roman citizenship. Rome jealously guarded this privilege, and the Senate refused to compromise. However, all Italian states were obliged to fulfill the duties of citizens, such as taxation and enlistment in the Roman armies. Impatient with this discrimination, nearly all Italian states declared their independence from Rome and went to

war with the Republic in 90 BC. After two years of slaughter and exhaustion on both sides, with the Italians defeated, the Senate capitulated and granted citizenship rights. The Social War also contributed to a growing resentment among the lower classes against the rich and powerful, who claimed that nobility of birth gave them the right to rule over the majority. Many of the assemblies (composed of citizens, including plebeians) turned into riots, and factions appealed to powerful individuals to defend their demands. A sort of peace was established when Sulla marched on Rome with his legions (an unprecedented event) and assumed the office of dictator in 88 BC. He restructured the constitution in favor of the nobility while eliminating almost all power of the lower classes. However, after his death, many of his changes were rescinded, and the plebeians regained their rights.

The End of the Republic

Although Caesar was popular with the masses, one did not succeed in Rome without a military reputation. Between 58 and 50 BC, Caesar fought his Gallic Wars (in France and Belgium), eventually defeating all the tribes combined. However, the Senate refused to renew his imperium (magisterial power), and in 49 BC, he invaded Italy (crossing the Rubicon River, the northern border of Italy proper). Caesar and Pompey had fallen out, and Pompey convinced the Senate to flee Italy for Greece, where he could raise more troops. Pompey and the Republicans were defeated in 48 BC at the Battle of Pharsalus (central Greece), and Pompey was later assassinated in Egypt. Finally, Caesar defeated the remnants of Pompey's army in North Africa in 45 BC, essentially eliminating the Old Republic.

Caesar, who had been voted dictator for life by the Senate, was assassinated in 44 BC by a coalition of disaffected senators. The Second Triumvirate was formed shortly after this by Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus to handle the crisis of a power vacuum. Octavian was Caesar's great-nephew and adopted heir, Antony had been Caesar's Master of the Horse (second in command), and Lepidus controlled the armies in North Africa. They hunted down and executed the assassins, eventually defeating the last two, Brutus and Cassius, at the Battle of Philippi (northern Greece) in 42 BC. Not long after this, Octavian and Antony fell out, and Antony attempted to build his own empire in the east with the help of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. Rome's navies defeated the navies of Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, and Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Previously, Lepidus had been overpowered and eliminated by being sent to North Africa, where he was eventually convicted of treason. This left Octavian as the sole ruler of the Roman world.

In 27 BC, the Senate honored Octavian with the title Augustus (venerable or esteemed) and instituted a new form of government, the Roman Empire. He said he was simply the princeps civitatis (First Citizen), but he controlled the Senate, the armies, the treasury, and soon assumed the highest religious authority in Rome, that of the pontifex maximus (13 BC). Augustus claimed that he finally brought peace, or the pax romana. Because Augustus had been legally adopted as the son of Julius Caesar, he added the name to his own. Thus, the name Caesar came to be associated with the highest imperial power in the term "emperor." All of Augustus's successors would use the name as their official title. (We find the same use of this title in Germany (Kaiser) and in Russia (Tsar).

Augustus promoted Roman benefits to the empire through his religious reforms. He restored many abandoned temples and revived older religious festivals, including those of foreign cults. He believed that a revival of traditional religion would promote the traditional values and morals of contemporary Romans. He instituted marriage and divorce laws, encouraging marriage (and the procreation of children) and punishing those who did not comply. He made divorce more difficult to obtain, made adultery a civil offense, and imposed taxes on unmarried men over 38. Augustus presented himself as the ideal *paterfamilias* (“head of the family”), but in this case, a father figure for the entire Roman Empire.

Later Centuries

Imperial Rome, under Augustus's leadership, maintained a degree of success during the second century AD. Augustus's successors were often adopted (since no living sons survived) and were drawn from the Julio-Claudian lines of Augustus and Livia. While some of his successors often ruled in the style of dictators (particularly Caligula and Nero), the imperial system nevertheless became the norm. By the 3rd century, a series of disasters (inflation, plague, barbarian invasions) began to expose the system's weaknesses. Between 250 and 300 AD, there were approximately 25 emperors, most of whom died in battle or were assassinated. In 284, Diocletian took the throne (reigned 284–305) and divided the empire between East and West, with Augustus ruling each area. However, individuals remained ambitious for total control, which was achieved when Constantine defeated his rivals in 312 in the West and in 324 in the East. Constantine became a Christian in 312, which ended the persecution of Christians in the empire. His successor, Theodosius I, declared Christianity the only legal religion and banned all forms of native worship.

In 410, Rome was sacked by the Goths, and in 476, the Western Roman Empire fell to invading Germanic tribes. However, Roman rule continued in the East in the city of Constantinople (later known as Byzantium) until it was conquered in 1453 by the Ottoman Turks and renamed Istanbul.

Epic Poetry, Drama, History, and Philosophy

The literary heritage of ancient Greece and Rome is quite extensive. The works of Homer (*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*) and Hesiod (*Theogony* and *Works and Days*) provide detailed descriptions of religious practice, as well as cosmology and genealogies of the gods. The Homeric Hymns were composed by anonymous bards to celebrate individual deities. The lyric poetry of Pindar (522–443 BC) and others describes the gods as above human moral judgment. The Roman poet Horace (65–8 BC) speculated on moral philosophy, Ovid (43 BC–18 AD) described Roman religious beliefs and festivals (*Metamorphoses*, *Fasti*), and Virgil (70–19 BC) created an epic poem about the founding of Rome by Aeneas, *The Aeneid*.

The literary world of drama sheds light on religious viewpoints, some serious, some comic. The earliest plays in Athens probably arose from the Dionysian festivals there, which became competitions for the best plays. The tragedies of the three best-known playwrights, Aeschylus

(525–455 BC), Sophocles (497–406 BC), and Euripides (480–406 BC), often dealt with the relationships between humans and gods, while the comedies of Aristophanes (446 BC–386 BC), such as *The Clouds*, served as critiques of both the religion and political life of Athens. Very little Roman tragedy has survived, but we do have the comedies of Plautus (254–184 BC), which featured stock characters of both gods and men.

Many ancient historians described religious or cultural practices. For Greece, we have Herodotus, Thucydides (460–395 BC), and Xenophon (430–354 BC), and for Rome, Polybius (200–118 BC), Strabo (63 BC to 24 AD), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60–7 BC). The study of philosophy began in the 7th century BC in Miletus (modern-day Turkey), but by the 5th century BC, many schools of philosophy were centered in Athens. Philosophy focused on reason as the way of understanding both the cosmos and the nature of human beings, but it shared affinities with religious beliefs in that each school taught a way of life. Philosophers criticized and reinterpreted traditional religious beliefs, while also offering their own moral and spiritual understanding.

AUGUSTUS

The future emperor Augustus was born into an equestrian family like Gaius Octavius in Rome. Once emperor, he received the name Augustus, by which he is better known. His father, Gaius Octavius, was the first in the family to become a senator, but died when Octavian was only four years old. It was his mother who had the most distinguished connections. She was the daughter of Julia, sister of Julius Caesar.

He was short, handsome, and well-proportioned, possessing that commodity so rare in rulers: grace. However, he suffered from bad teeth and was generally in poor health. His body was covered with blemishes, and he had many birthmarks scattered over his chest and stomach.

As for his character, he is said to have been cruel when he was young but became gentler later. This, however, could be because, as his position became more secure, the need for brutality diminished. He was still prepared to be ruthless when necessary. He was tolerant of criticism, possessed a good sense of humor, and had a particular fondness for playing dice, but he often provided his guests with money for betting.

Octavian served under Julius Caesar on the Spanish expedition of 46 BC despite his delicate health. He was also due to take a high military command on Caesar's planned Parthian expedition of 44 BC, although he was only 18 years old at the time.

However, Octavian was with his friends Marcus Agrippa and Quintus Salvidienus Rufus in Apollonia in Epirus, completing his academic and military studies, when he received news of Caesar's assassination.

He immediately returned to Rome, learning along the way that Caesar had adopted him in his will. This undoubtedly only increased his desire to avenge Caesar's murder.

However, when he arrived, Octavian found power in the hands of Mark Antony and Aemilius Lepidus. They urged compromise and amnesty. But Octavian refused to accept this attitude. With his determined stand he soon managed to win over many of Caesar's supporters, including some of the legions.

Although he failed to persuade Mark Antony to hand over Caesar's assets and documents, Octavian was therefore forced to distribute Caesar's legacies to the Roman public with the funds he was able to raise himself. Such efforts to see Caesar's will carried out helped to considerably elevate Octavian's standing with the Roman people.

Many of the senators also opposed Antony. Octavian, regarded as Antony's main rival by then, was granted senatorial status, even though he was not yet twenty years old.

During the summer of 44 BC, the leader of the senate, Cicero, delivered a series of infamous speeches against Mark Antony, which came to be known as the "Philippics." Cicero saw the young Octavian as a useful ally. So, when Antony left Rome in November 44 BC to take command in northern Italy, Octavian was sent with the Senate's blessing to wage war against Antony. Mark Antony was defeated at Mutina (43 BC) and forced to retreat to Gaul.

But it was now clear that Cicero had definitively lost control of the young Octavian. The two reigning consuls had been killed in battle in August 43 BC. Octavian marched on Rome and forced the Senate to accept him as consul. Three months later, he met with Antony and Lepidus in Bologna, and the three reached an agreement, the Triumvirate. This agreement

between the three most powerful men in Rome completely cut off the Senate from power (November 27, 43 BC).

Cicero was assassinated in the proscriptions that followed. Brutus and Cassius, Caesar's chief assassins, were defeated at Philippi in northern Greece (42 BC).

Octavian and Mark Antony, the victors at Philippi, reached a new agreement in October 40 BC in the Treaty of Brundisium. The Roman Empire would be divided between them: Antony would take the east, Octavian the west. The third man, Lepidus, was no longer an equal partner. He therefore had to settle for the province of Africa. To further strengthen their agreement, Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia. But it wasn't long before Antony abandoned her to return to his mistress, Cleopatra.

Meanwhile, Octavian's own position had been strengthened by the deification of Julius Caesar in early 42 BC. He was no longer to be addressed as 'Octavian' but insisted on being called 'Caesar' and now referred to himself as 'divi filius' – 'son of the divine'.

He used the following years to strengthen his control over the western provinces. Also during this time, Marcus Agrippa, Octavian's most loyal friend, freed Italy from the threat of the fleet of Sextus Pompey, a son of Pompey the Great, in 36 BC.

Since Lepidus fell by the wayside during the conflict with Sextus Pompey, this left Antony and Octavian the rulers of the Roman world. Antony lived openly with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Octavian's apparent modesty and moral rigor contrasted sharply with Antony's life as an Eastern monarch at the luxurious Egyptian court. Therefore, Rome's sympathies clearly lay with Octavian.

By 32 BC, the agreement made at Tarentum (a four-year extension of the Treaty of Brundisium) had strictly speaking run its course, and the Triumvirate ceased to exist. Octavian tried to maintain the pretense that he was not actually exercising any power. When Antony divorced Octavia, Octavian lashed out by publicly reading Antony's will, which had illegally entered his possession.

This will not only promised large inheritances to his children from Cleopatra, but also demanded that, if he died in Italy, his body be returned to Cleopatra in Egypt. Antony's will was the final straw. Because in the eyes of all Rome, this could never be the will of a true Roman. The Senate declared war.

In Actium, on the west coast of Greece, on September 2, 31 BC, the fateful battle took place. Once again, it was Agrippa who commanded the forces on behalf of his friend Octavian and was victorious.

In the first century BC, things were very quiet. Actium was a pearl-fishing center and, being a small town on the cape, was a convenient stopover for travelers. Nearby, on the shore, stood an ancient temple erected five hundred years earlier and a grove consecrated to Apollo.

Octavian's army had fewer soldiers than his enemy's: 80,000 versus 100,000. The difference was due primarily to the number of Antony's auxiliaries or light troops. Octavian's legions were less experienced than the troops recruited by Antony in the East, who had gained experience in the Illyrian campaign.

Logistically, Antony was outmatched by Octavian for a post that cut off supplies from Greece to Actium. In the summer, the troops were afflicted by an epidemic, and many of the nobles

accompanying Antony began to desert. In these circumstances, with demoralized troops, Antony planned an escape by both sea and land. However, Octavian learned of Antony's plans and decided to forestall his escape and engage in a naval battle.

Antony decided to flee with Cleopatra, finding himself outmatched, leaving more than 50,000 men adrift, who later negotiated peace with Octavian.

Both Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Egypt's vast treasures fell into Octavian's hands, and Egypt itself became a new Roman province.

The victory at Actium had given Octavian undivided dominion over the Roman world. But this position had once been held by Julius Caesar. Octavian was not one to forget the fate that had befallen Caesar. To avoid a similar demise, he needed to create a new constitution.

Thus, on January 16, 27 BC, Octavian, in the so-called "First Settlement," underwent a bizarrely orchestrated ceremony in which he "surrendered" all his power to the Senate, thus restoring the Republic. It was a purely symbolic sacrifice, as he received most of the same power back.

The entire effort was meticulously planned and overseen by his supporters and associates. Octavian received, for ten years, the vitally important provinces of Egypt, Cyprus, Spain, Gaul, and Syria under his personal control. He was also reappointed as consul from 31 to 23 BC.

Furthermore, he now received the name "Augustus," a slightly archaic term meaning "sacred" or "revered." Augustus apparently preferred the term "princeps" (first citizen) that had been granted to him, although he also retained the title *imperator* to denote his position as military chief of staff. Octavian's great achievement was persuading the Senate to accept him as head of the Roman state, while giving the senators room for their political ambitions.

Augustus left Rome for Gaul and Spain to wipe out the Cantabrian and Asturian tribes in the summer of 27 BC and did not return until 24 BC. Then, in 23 BC, Augustus fell so seriously ill that he thought he was dying. This brush with death seemed to have been another turning point in his life. For when he recovered, he once again set about changing the Roman constitution.

In the "Second Settlement," Augustus resigned the consulship and was instead awarded tribunician powers (*tribunicia potestas*) for life by the Senate.

These tribunician powers gave him the right to call the Senate to meetings, propose legislation in the popular assembly, and veto any enactment. His command over "his" provinces was also renewed.

Then, in 19 BC, he was also granted not only the consulship (which lasted one year), but consular power for life. His power was from then on unassailable. Augustus had the same power as the most powerful politicians in Rome, yet even greater power in the provinces of the empire.

Upon the death of Lepidus (12 BC), the failed third triumvir, who had been sidelined by the conciliatory position of the *pontifex maximus*, Augustus assumed the highest of all religious positions for himself.

Perhaps the high point came in 2 BC, when the Senate granted Augustus a new honor. He was henceforth *pater patriae*, the father of the country.

Augustus was undoubtedly one of the most talented, energetic, and skillful administrators the world has ever known. The far-reaching reorganization and rehabilitation work he undertook in every branch of his vast empire created a new Roman peace with unprecedented prosperity.

Following in the footsteps of Julius Caesar, he won genuine popular support by organizing games, erecting new buildings, and other measures for the general good. Augustus himself claimed to have restored 82 temples in a single year. But beyond that were great new buildings such as the Theater of Apollo, the Horologium (a giant sundial), and the great Mausoleum of Augustus.

Augustus's right-hand man, Agrippa, also embarked on several major construction projects. Among them was the Pantheon, later rebuilt by Hadrian. Agrippa also repaired the city's water system and added two new aqueducts, the Aqua Julia and the Aqua Virgo.

However, one building is clearly missing from Augustus's reign: a palace. He lived in a spacious house on the Palatine Hill, evidently avoiding any symbol of the monarchy. And although he continued to call himself 'divi filius,' son of the deified Caesar, he clearly avoided any form of personal worship, as was the case in the Eastern world, where rulers were frequently worshipped as gods.

Above all, Augustus seemed to appreciate that his personal position and security benefited from ruling in the public interest.

Augustus was not a great military commander, but he possessed enough common sense to recognize that this was so. And so he relied on Agrippa to fight for him. After Actium, Augustus only once took command of a campaign (the Cantabrian War of 26-25 BC) in Spain. But even there, he ultimately had to rely on one of his generals to bring the war to a successful conclusion. Despite his lack of military skill, Augustus achieved great gains in imperial territory, as well as in the position of Rome.

The most important was undoubtedly the conquest of Egypt in 30 BC. Then, in 20 BC, he recovered the legionary standards captured by the Parthians at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC, simply by threatening Parthia with war. He also made the Danube the frontier in eastern Europe, after his forces had fought harsh campaigns conquering the Alpine tribes and occupying the Balkans.

But his attempts to make the Elbe River the northwestern border of the empire ended in the disaster of Varro, and it became clear to all that the Rhine was to be the future frontier.

Augustus transformed the chaotic Roman Republic into an orderly imperial autocracy. He founded a Rome made of clay and bequeathed a city of marble.

He worked diligently on his political project, rebuilt Rome, and transformed it into a powerful metropolis and one of the most important political and artistic centers of the ancient world. Thanks to Augustus, Rome consolidated its transition from a city-state to a global empire, laying the foundations for the future of Europe.

Imperator Caesar Augustus, to give him his true name, was one of the most influential men in history. As the first emperor of Rome, he transformed the chaotic Roman Republic into a rigid imperial autocracy. His consolidation of the Roman Empire two thousand years ago laid the foundations upon which Europe was later built as a territory and as a culture. If anyone can be described as the founding father of European civilization, it is Augustus.

He died in Nola on August 19, 14 AD, just one month shy of his 76th birthday, childless, leaving his adopted son Tiberius in command of the Empire. He was deified on September 17 of the same year.

The month of July is named after Julius Caesar after his death in 44 AD, having been born in the month formerly known as Quintilis. The month of August was consecrated in honor of Augustus in 24 BC, giving the latter his name when he was previously called Sextilis.

Augustus and Apollo

The Twelve Caesars, Suetonius.

Julius Marathus states that a few months before his birth, another public miracle took place in Rome announcing that nature would give birth to a king for the Roman people, and that the Senate, terrified, decreed that no child born during that year should be allowed to live.

But, he goes on to say, those citizens whose wives were pregnant—since everyone was taking advantage of that hope—were concerned that this decree from the Senate would not reach the treasury. I also read in the books *On the Nature of the Gods* by Asclepiades of Mendes that Acia, who had gone at midnight to the sacred ceremonies in honor of Apollo, when her litter was placed inside the temple while all the other matrons were asleep, she too fell asleep, and suddenly a snake crawled into her litter and emerged shortly after. He goes on to say that, suddenly awakening, she washed herself as if she had just copulated with her husband; but that a stain immediately appeared on her body, in the form of a serpent tattoo, which she was never able to remove, so that from then on she abstained from public baths for the rest of her life; that Augustus was born exactly ten months after birth and was therefore considered the son of Apollo. Before giving birth, Acia herself dreamed that her womb was transported to the heavens and that it spread throughout the entire earth and the heavens. Her father Octavian also dreamed that the rising sun emerged from the womb of his wife Acia.

The Temple of Apollo Palatine

In 36 BC, a grateful popular assembly voted to grant Octavian a house at state expense. He had already purchased an expensive property at the southwest end of the Palatine Hill, but it was struck by lightning, and this omen persuaded Octavian to demolish the ill-fated building and replace it with a temple dedicated to Apollo. With his subsidy from the Senate, he purchased a house, or rather a group of houses, right next door.

The site was carefully chosen because Octavian wanted his residence to mark and express his role in the commonwealth. Nearby stood a hut, built on the natural tuff of the mountain, with a thatched roof and walls of reeds and mud. Said to have been the home of Romulus, the founder of Rome, it was carefully preserved in his honor. By associating himself closely with the origins of Rome, Octavian was communicating to the Roman world that he represented traditional values, the *mos maiorum*, or customs of the ancestors.

Today, almost nothing remains of the temple, but in his time, a more splendid building could not have been designed. Unlike Roman temple walls, which were typically made of brick and concrete, covered with marble, the walls of the Temple of Apollo were solid, white, and gleaming marble. The doors were gilded with ivory inlay. The roof featured a chariot of the sun. The temple was surrounded or connected by a portico of giallo antico, a mottled yellow marble from the quarries of Numidia.

The Sibylline Books were removed from their traditional location in the basement of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill and housed beneath a colossal statue of Apollo that stood in front of the new temple. The books belonged to a highly valued collection of divinatory formulas in Greek hexameters that were consulted in times of trouble, not to predict the future, but to learn how to avoid the wrath of the gods. Their presence in Octavian's house was a powerful emblem of his unique role within the state.

CONSTANTINE I "THE GREAT"

Constantine I, also known as Constantine the Great, was Roman Emperor from 306 to 337 AD. Realizing that the Roman Empire was too large for one man to rule adequately, Emperor Diocletian (284-305 AD) divided the empire in two, creating a tetrarchy, or four-man government. While he ruled the east from Nicomedia as an "augustus" with Galerius as his "caesar," Maximian and Constantius Chlorus ruled the west. It was Constantius's son, Constantine, who would one day rise to defeat all challengers to the throne and reunite the divided empire, moving the capital from old Rome and building a new eastern capital—a capital that would one day bear his name, Constantinople.

Early Years

Although sources vary on the exact year of his birth, Constantine (Gaius Flavius Valerius Constantinus) was born in Naissus, in present-day Serbia, as early as 272 AD or as late as 285 AD. Since his father was not only a military commander but also the Caesar of the West, Constantine lived his entire early life at the imperial court, eventually serving as a high-ranking official for Diocletian. Even in his youth, those around him viewed Constantine as a man of boundless energy. Under the emperor's tutelage, he learned that a ruler's job was to defend the empire from any outside forces and create a just and orderly society, something Constantine would put into practice when he became emperor.

In May 305 AD, the leading emperors Diocletian and Maximian abdicated their thrones to Galerius in the east (with Maximinus Daia as Caesar) and Constantius in the west (with Flavius Valerius Servius as Caesar). These appointments were not popular with everyone. Maximian's son Maxentius and Constantine felt betrayed, each believing he deserved the appointment as Caesar. This omission would not be forgotten and would eventually lead to a long and bitter battle for control of both halves of the empire. After Diocletian abdicated, Galerius (in an attempt to assuage bitter feelings) allowed the disappointed Constantine to return to the west in 306 AD to serve under his father. Before Constantius succumbed to leukemia (the reason he was called "the Pale") in July 306 AD. In York, Constantine had the opportunity to campaign with his father in Britain against the Picts. It was in Britain that the newly appointed Augustus earned the title "Britannicus Maximus" for the second time. After his father's death, Constantine continued to build a reputation as a man capable of swift and decisive action when, in 307 AD, he attacked the Franks and gradually earned the respect of the army, showing his men, even the older and more experienced, that they could trust him.

With the death of Constantius and the success of the war in Britain, many expected Constantine to be named the new Western Emperor; however, Severus (Caesar and a close friend of Galerius) was promoted to the position, despite the claim that Constantius had named his son Augustus on his deathbed. Regardless of the official decree, Constantine was declared Augustus by his men. Galerius, however, refused to recognize this declaration, naming himself Caesar instead. Not to be overlooked, Maxentius, who had also been passed over in 305 AD, ignored both Galerius and Constantine and declared himself Augustus in October 307 AD. With the support of the people of Rome and the Praetorian Guard, he controlled Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and parts of North Africa. Eventually, as many as six different people would claim control in the west.

Because of his friendship with Galerius, Severus was distrusted by both Constantine and Constantine's brother-in-law, Maxentius, and in order to defeat the new Augustus, they allied with the former Augustus Maximian and joined forces against Severus. Unfortunately for Severus, who had been ordered to arrest Maxentius, his army deserted him (after being bribed by Maxentius). Fearing for his life, he fled to Ravenna, only to be captured and killed outside Rome. His death prompted Galerius to unsuccessfully invade the west with an army. In 308 AD, a new tetrarchy was formed (on the advice of Diocletian) with Licinius (an Illyrian army officer and friend of Galerius) as the new Augustus and Constantine retaining his position as Caesar. To add to the confusion, Maximian (who had been living at Constantine's court as an advisor) emerged from retirement in 310 BC, announcing himself as the new Augustus, claiming that Constantine was dead. Constantine, who had been away fighting the Franks, pursued him out of Marseille (the city had refused to grant him aid), and in despair, Maximian hanged himself.

Meanwhile, Maxentius's rule in Rome was waning. He had lost his popularity among the citizens of Rome, demanding too much of them to build a new basilica and a large statue of himself. His contempt for the people had led to a series of riots that only ended with the massacre of several thousand Romans. Constantine waited patiently and watched as the empire in the west began to self-destruct, then, gathering an army of 40,000, he crossed the Alps and invaded Italy.

Constantine Becomes Emperor

With little support in the city, Maxentius left Rome to meet Constantine in a final and crucial battle: the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 AD. The night before the battle, he received a dream in which Jesus Christ appeared to him, telling him to bear the sign of the cross into battle. The next day, the old standards were replaced with new ones displaying the Christian symbol. Although outnumbered, Constantine easily defeated Maxentius, who fled back to Rome; however, before reaching the city, he fell into the river and drowned. Constantine's conversion to Christianity is seen by historians as a turning point in history, a fusion of church and state. Constantine immediately assumed complete control of the West. As the new Augustus in the West, he marched on Rome; one of his first acts was to issue the Edict of Milan, a tolerance of all religions (later to be co-signed by Licinius).

Galerius served as Eastern Emperor, with Maximinus Daia as Caesar. After Galerius died of cancer (on his deathbed, he rescinded all anti-Christian edicts), Maximinus and Licinius fought for control of the east, eventually dividing that part of the empire between them: Licinius obtained the Balkans, while Maximinus obtained Asia Minor and the eastern provinces. This arrangement was not to last, and in 313 AD, the two fought on the plains of Thrace. Like Constantine at the Milvian Bridge, Licinius fought under the sign of the cross; however, he did so not for his faith, but only to gain the support of the Christians; his opponent, Maximinus, had promised to eradicate them. Despite inferior numbers, Licinius was victorious, and after Maximinus's suicide, he took control of the east. To secure his right to the throne, he immediately executed the sons of Galerius and Severus, Maximinus's family, and even Diocletian's daughter.

An uneasy truce existed between Licinius and Constantine, partly because Licinius had married Constantine's half-sister, Constantia. In their first battlefield encounter in October 316 AD,

Constantine defeated him at Cibalis. A second battle near Adrianople ended with Constantine ceding lands in the Balkans. In the following years, Licinius's attitude toward Christians changed, with both executions and the destruction of several Christian churches. This was enough to prompt Constantine to assemble an army and defeat Licinius in a second battle at Adrianople. The defeated commander fled the battlefield, escaping against the Bosphorus. In September 324 AD, Licinius was finally defeated at Chrysopolis and surrendered. Constantine's victory would reunite the empire.

Byzantium

Constantine, of 52 years old, was now the empire's sole emperor, and with him, a sense of stability returned. Constantine realized that Old Rome was not the city he wanted for a capital, and despite several of the building projects he instituted, it was in decline. Rome was no longer practical (Constantine even disbanded the Praetorian Guard), and Nicomedia was never considered, as it had been Diocletian's capital. A new capital was needed, and although he considered the site of ancient Troy, Constantine ultimately saw what he wanted: Byzantium. The ancient city was strategically located on the European side of the Bosphorus Strait, so it would control traffic to and from the Black Sea. It also provided an excellent port (the Golden Horn) and could therefore be easily defended.

To rebuild the city he envisioned, he brought in artisans and resources from all over the empire. He rebuilt the walls, built cisterns, Christian churches (Hagia Irene), and pagan temples. It was a Christian capital that remained classical at the same time, as a statue of Apollo was also built, brought from Troy, which would later become known as the Column of Constantine. In 330 AD, the city was finally dedicated.

Constantine and Christianity

During his years of war in the West, he had always demonstrated religious tolerance toward both pagans and Christians (he claimed to be a Christian since 312 AD). His mother, Helena, was a devout Christian, and after Constantine became emperor, he sent her on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he had built the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Although he had been a worshipper of the sun god in his youth, and although some claim he was not baptized until his deathbed, he still gave every indication that he was a devout Christian. Many historians even credit him with making Christianity the official religion of the empire (although others attribute this to Emperor Theodosius), despite the fact that the pagan symbols of Sol Invictus and Mars appeared on his coins. While he tolerated certain pagan religious practices, religious freedom had its limits: pagan sacrifices were prohibited, temple treasures were confiscated, gladiatorial contests ended (Christians disliked them), crucifixions were abolished, and laws against sexual immorality and ritual prostitution were enacted.

In 325 AD, Constantine invited clergy from across the empire to the Council of Nicaea, where he made a plea for unity. The outcome of the conference was not only a condemnation of Arianism, but also the Nicene Creed, a definition of what it meant to be a Christian.

Death

Constantine the Great maintained his role as military commander, fighting the Alamanni in 328 AD with the help of his son Constantius II, defeating the Goths in 332 AD by starving them into submission, and finally capturing lost territories from the Dacians (territories that were later lost after his death). His last wish was to conquer neighboring Persia after its king Shapur II had invaded Armenia. However, it was not to be. In 337 AD, Constantine fell ill and died. He had ruled for 31 years. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, leaving his empire in the hands of his three sons: Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans. Constantius II eventually defeated his brothers and ruled the entire empire himself.

1 I would act, most saintly Emperor,¹ as a while ago many people urged me to, since your majesty had given me in my mediocrity this day the most solemn in this city² to make my speech, and base my speech's introduction on that very fact, were it not that a two-fold reason dissuaded me from doing so, when I reflect that a man in middle age ought not to display a sudden oratorical ability, and that nothing not written at length and often revised should be brought before the hearing of such a divine presence. 2. Anyone who improvises a speech before the emperor of the Roman people does not realise how great the empire is. 3. Added to this is the fact that plenty of people think I will speak for too long, and they make this judgement, I suppose, not because of my intellect which is limited, but because of the copious supply of your laudable qualities. I shall fail to meet their expectations, albeit unwillingly, with the brevity of my speech. Indeed I had planned a longer speech, but I prefer my speech to be short than to be rejected through tedium. 4. So first I shall make this abridgement because, although I look upon all of you, invincible rulers whose majesty is harmonious and unified, with the veneration that is due to you, yet I shall devote this little speech only to your divinity, Constantine. 5. For just as with the immortal gods themselves, though we worship them all in our hearts, sometimes we venerate them individually in their own temple and home, so too I think it is right for me to remember all leaders in pious respect, but to adorn with my praises the one who is present.

2 I shall begin with the first deity in your ancestry, which most people are perhaps still ignorant of, though those who love you know very well. 2. For you are joined by ancestral relationship to that divine Claudius³ who was the first to restore the lax and ruinous discipline of the Roman empire,⁴ and who destroyed on land and sea⁵ the vast hordes of Goths⁶ who had burst through the straits of the Black Sea and the mouth of the Danube. Would that he had stayed longer to revitalise mankind than passed too soon to join the gods! 3. Although that most happy day which we have recently commemorated is counted as the anniversary of your emperorship, since it first saw you decorated with that honour, yet it was from Claudius the founder of your family that the destiny of empire descended upon you. 4. Moreover that ancient prerogative of the imperial family elevated your own father, so that you too would stand in the highest rank above human necessities, as the third emperor following two others in your family. 5. Among all the factors which contribute to your sovereignty, Constantine, I avow, is especially the fact that you were born an emperor, and such is the nobility of your ancestry that the emperorship added no honour to you, nor could fortune attribute to your divinity that which is yours already, without the need for canvassing or electioneering.

3 It was no accidental agreement among men nor any sudden wind of favour that made you emperor, but you deserved the emperorship by your birth. 2. Indeed it seems to me to be the first and greatest gift from the immortal gods, to enter upon life blessed from the start, and to accept as a family heirloom those things which others scarcely achieve by a lifetime of hard work. 3. Certainly a considerable felicity, worthy of admiration, is shown by those who serve out appointments in succession, and step up the ranks of the military and reach the top rung of command, and depending only on the supports of virtue have the strength to reach the very height of power. Indeed you too followed this path, as soon as you were old enough, and although fortune had placed you beyond all obstacles to the acquisition of glory, you chose to advance through military service, and by facing the dangers of war and joining battle with the enemy even in single combat, you made yourself more notable to all peoples, though you

could not have been more noble. It is, as I say, a great achievement to set out relying on oneself and attain the heights of power. 4. But it is one thing to struggle up the steep slopes and reach the mountain ridges from the plain, and quite a different thing to find the peak of fortune resting on the very eminence of one's birth and to own, rather than yearn for, the position at the top.

4 You entered that sacred palace not as a candidate for the emperorship, but as emperor-elect, and straightaway your father's Lares saw you as the legitimate successor. 2. For without doubt the inheritance belonged to the first son that the fates had given to the emperor. For it was you that the great emperor on earth, and god in the sky, had fathered in the first flower of his manhood, while he was still at the height of his physical powers and possessed of that dynamism and valour which so many wars witnessed, especially on the fields of Vindonissa. 3. That is why such a physical resemblance passed from him to you that it seems impressed on your features by nature's own mark. 4. For it is the same countenance that we venerate a second time in you, the same dignity on your brow, the same tranquillity in your eyes and voice. In the same way your complexion is a sign of your reserve, and your conversation evidence of your integrity. 5. Accept, Emperor, this ambivalent avowal of our sensibilities: we are sorry that Constantius has left us but, so long as we see you, we cannot believe that he has left us. 6. And yet why do I say that 'he has left', when his immortal achievements live on and are commemorated on the lips and in the eyes of all mankind?

5 Who is there that—I won't say doesn't remember—but doesn't still see in some way the achievements with which Constantius enlarged and embellished the empire? 2. When he was granted his first command, by his very arrival he barred access to the Ocean which was seething with an enormous enemy fleet. That army which had occupied the coast of Boulogne he hemmed in both by land and sea at the same time, after obstructing the ebb and flow of the tides by placing dams among the waves, with the result that where previously the water had washed against their gates, they now had lost access to the sea which they neighboured. 3. He captured that army by his valour and spared it through his mercy, while preparations were made for the reconquest of Britain by building fleets. He purged of every enemy the land of Batavia which was occupied by various Prankish tribes under a former inhabitant. Not content to have defeated them, he transported the very tribes into Roman territory so that they would be obliged to lay down not only their arms but also their savagery. 4. What can I say about the recovery of Britain? He sailed there with such a calm sea that it seemed the Channel, amazed at such a traveller, had lost its power to move. And his journey was such that Victory did not accompany him, but awaited him there.

6 What am I to say of the clemency whereby he spared the vanquished? Or of the justice whereby he restored what they had lost to the plundered? Or of the foresight with which he acted as judge among the allies on his side, so that those who had suffered subjection were cheered by the recovery of liberty, while those with a guilty conscience were brought to repentance by their pardon? 2. What need is there to mention again those tribes deep in Prankish territory which were torn, not now from the areas once invaded by the Romans, but from their own original locations, from the furthest shores of the barbarian world, and established in empty regions of Gaul, so as to contribute to the peace of the Roman empire by their agriculture and to provide recruits for the army? 3. Why should I recall the victory at Lingonica which was made famous by the wound received by the emperor himself? 4. Or the fields of Vindonissa filled with slaughtered enemies and to this day strewn with bones? Why recall that huge multitude of different peoples of Germany? The frozen Rhine had enticed

them to dare to cross to an island, surrounded by a fork in the river, with a force of infantry. Suddenly the river melted and shut them off. At once boats were despatched and they were blockaded and forced to surrender, and, all the more awkwardly, by a lottery which involved them all to choose whom they would hand over to captivity. So they would return with their remaining troops and the ignominy of betrayal of their own people.

7 The day would finish before my speech did, if I were to enumerate all the achievements of your father even as briefly as so far. That final expedition of his was not in search of mere trophies from Britain, as was commonly believed; but now that the gods were summoning him to them, he advanced to the furthest outpost of the earth. 2. After so many magnificent achievements he did not deign to conquer the woods and marshes of the Caledonians and other Picts, I am sure, nor yet Hibernia close at hand, nor distant Iceland nor even the Isles of the Blest, if indeed they exist. But, though he would admit it to nobody, as he was now about to go to the gods, he intended to look upon that father of the gods who rekindles the fiery stars of heaven: the Ocean. As he was about to enjoy the everlasting light above, he intended now to see on earth the almost never-ending daylight. 3. Truly, the temples of the gods opened for him and he was admitted into the assembly of the immortals, as Jupiter himself offered a welcoming hand. Moreover straightaway when asked his opinion as to whom he would declare emperor, he spoke as befitted Constantius the Pious. 4. Most clearly you were elected by the declaration of your father, O Emperor. Truth bids us state this, while it is also most appropriate to your own filial piety, I consider. But why pay homage only to your personal attachments, when that was the declaration of all the gods, who had long since signified their authority, even though only now was it confirmed by their full council? 5. For you were first summoned by divine decree to save the empire, at the time when your father was sailing for Britain, and as the fleet was setting sail, your sudden arrival gave them splendour. It seemed you had not travelled by public means of transport, but had flown in on some chariot of the gods.

8 No Persian or Cretan arrow has ever reached its target with so sure an aim as your timely arrival to join your father when he was about to depart this earth. By the assurance of your presence you soothed all the anxieties which quietly troubled his watchful intellect. 2. Ye gods, what happiness you granted Constantius the Pious even at his hour of departure! The emperor, ready to make his journey to Heaven, saw the heir he was leaving behind. For, the moment he was released from earthly life, the whole army gave its approval to you, the minds and eyes of all marked you out, and even though you had consulted the senior authorities as to their decision about the leadership, everyone else's enthusiasm anticipated the subsequent considered approval of those authorities. 3. The first time your presence gave an opportunity, the soldiers threw the imperial purple upon you, despite your tears, ministering to public interest rather than your own feelings. For it was not right to weep any longer for an emperor who had been consecrated as a god. 4. It is reported, invincible Emperor, that you tried to escape that enthusiasm of the army which claimed you, by spurring onwards your horse. This was, to tell you the truth, an error of youth. 5. No Centaur or Pegasus could have rescued you whom empire was attending. That sovereignty, I say again, which was granted by the will of Jupiter, and not entrusted to Iris the messenger goddess but to the wings of Victory, descended on you as easily as the messages from Heaven swiftly reach the earth. 6. And so your modesty and piety were demonstrated by your attempt to postpone the emperorship, but overwhelmed by the good fortune of the State.

9 How happy is Britain, and more blessed now than all other countries, that first saw Constantine as Caesar! 2. Deservedly did Nature bestow on you all the advantages of climate and soil. There is neither excessive chill in winter nor heat in summer. The crops are fertile enough to supply the two-fold gifts of Ceres and Bacchus. There are no monstrous beasts in the forests, or deadly snakes on the ground, but on the contrary an immense profusion of tame animals with udders full of milk, or loaded with fleeces. 3. The main reason why life is loved is that the days are very long and no nights are without a little light, as the level extremity of those shores does not throw up shadows, and a view of the sky and its stars overcomes the limit of the night, so that whereas the sun itself seems to us to set, over there it appears to pass along the horizon. 4. Gods above, why is it that always from some furthestmost boundary of the earth come new manifestations of the gods to be venerated by the whole world? Thus did Mercury from the river Nile, whose source is not known, and thus did Bacchus from India, practically the place where the sun rises, present themselves as powerful gods to mortals. 5. Assuredly, places neighbouring the sky are more sacrosanct than areas in the middle of the lands, and from there, closer to the gods, where the earth ends, was sent our emperor.

10 So then, as son of an emperor, and such a great emperor, and you yourself having attained the emperorship so felicitously, how did you set about defending the State? A band of barbarians had despicably, in my opinion, made trial of the first stages of your rise to power by a sudden attack and unexpected banditry, and you imposed on them the penalty for their audacity. 2. The actual kings in Frankish territory had taken advantage of the absence of your father to violate the peace, but you did not hesitate to punish them with the severest penalties, dreading neither the everlasting hatred nor the inexpiable wrath of that nation. 3. For why should an emperor worry about any offence caused by a warranted severity, when he can maintain his actions? 4. It is folly to show clemency by sparing one's enemies and considering one's own position rather than showing genuine pardon. Whereas the enemy may hate you, Constantine, as much as they want, provided they tremble. True valour is to ensure that those who do not like you are peaceful. Perhaps it is more circumspect to keep one's enemies chained by pardoning them, but it is braver to trample them down when they are vexed. 5. You restored, Emperor, that former loyalty to the Roman empire established by exacting the death penalty from captive enemy leaders. 6. For in former times captive kings attended to embellish the processions of generals in triumph all the way from the gates to the Forum, but as soon as the general had turned his carriage towards the Capitol, the captives were taken off to prison and executed. 7. Only ever one man, Perseus, when Paullus himself who had accepted his surrender vouchsafed for him, avoided that severe law. All others were enchained and executed, and gave other kings a lesson to prefer to cultivate friendship with Rome than to provoke her justice. Inflicting the proper penalty on one's enemies also brings the advantage that not only do one's foes never dare to rebel, but also one's friends show more serious respect.

11 So that is the source, Emperor, of the peace which we now enjoy. No longer are we protected by the currents of the Rhine, but by the terror inspired by your name. Whether the Rhine dries up in the heat of summer, or solidifies with ice, in neither case will the enemy dare to make use of the crossing. 2. In fact there is no insuperable barrier erected by nature that cannot be scaled by audacity, if someone hopes still to achieve something by the attempt. But an insurmountable wall is built by a reputation for valour. 3. The Franks know they can cross the Rhine, and you would gladly let them come to their destruction, but they can hope for neither victory nor clemency. They can gauge the fate awaiting them from the penalties

inflicted on their kings, and so far from planning a crossing of that river, they are instead full of despair because of the bridge that has been started. 4. Where now is that ferocity? Where is your constantly treacherous inconstancy? Now you dare not dwell even at a distance from the Rhine, and hardly feel safe when you drink the waters of the rivers within your territory. 5. Whereas on our side the forts placed at intervals serve more to adorn than to protect the frontier. That once fearsome bank is ploughed by weaponless farmers, and our cattle bathe in all the 'two-pronged river'. Thanks to the punishment of Ascaricus and Merogaisus this victory of yours, Constantine, lasts for today and all time, and takes pride of place before all earlier military successes. A single victory is won by battle, but an example lasts for ever. 6. Most people take no notice of their own defeat, however many people die, so the shortest route to subdue the enemy once and for all is to do away with their leaders.

12 You carried devastation into the land of the Bructeri, and so brought it about that the savagery of the barbarians would be shattered in every way, and that the enemy would lament not only the punishment of their own kings. 2. Invincible Emperor, the first purpose in this plan of yours was to convey the army across suddenly and attack them unawares, not because you lacked confidence in open warfare (since you would have preferred a pitched battle), but so that this tribe, which often avoided fighting by taking refuge in woods and marshes, would lose the opportunity for flight. 3. And so countless enemy were slaughtered, and very many captured. All their cattle were seized or butchered, all their villages burnt. The adult men who fell into your hands, because their treachery made them unfitted for military service, and their ferocity made them unsuited to subservience, were made to pay the penalty in a public show, and exhausted by their very numbers the bloodthirsty wild beasts. This is what it means, Emperor, to rely on one's valour and fortune, this means not purchasing peace by clemency, but seeking victory by endeavour.

13 Furthermore by building the bridge at Agrippinensis, you defy the remnants of that defeated tribe, and compel them never to abandon their fears, but to be in constant terror, and to keep outstretched their hands in submission. However, you are doing this more for the glory of your empire and to embellish the frontier, than to create an opportunity to cross into enemy territory whenever you wish. For the whole of the Rhine is equipped with warships and all its banks as far as the North Sea are garrisoned by troops ready to strike. 2. Yet it seems to you a splendid idea—and indeed it is most splendid—that this Rhine not only in its higher reaches, where it is either fordable by its width or narrow because of its proximity to its source, but also at the place where it is at its fullest, should be straddled by a new bridge. Here it has absorbed many tributaries brought in by the great river on our side and by the Neckar and the Main on the barbarian's side, and surging along with its vast current and unable to contain itself within one channel, it bursts irrepressibly into its two branches. 3. To be sure, Constantine, nature herself serves to enhance your divine purpose, since in that depth of water foundations of such size must be laid that they will have a reliable and secure stability. 4. Perhaps the all-powerful king of Persia did once link the straits of the Hellespont by stringing his fleet across; but that crossing was temporary. With a similar chain of ships the second Caesar after Augustus traversed the bay of Baiae; but that crossing was a mere whim of a decadent emperor. Whereas this structure is both difficult to build and will be used for all time to come. 5. Certainly it brought you at its inception the submission of the enemy, who came in supplication for peace and offered well born hostages. So no one can doubt what they will do when the bridge is complete, if they are so servile when it is only just started.

14 While you were involved in these operations to benefit and enhance the empire, your attention was distracted by the rebellious manoeuvres of a man who above all should have regarded your successful achievements with favour. I am still not at all sure how to speak about this man, and I am awaiting advice by a gesture from your divinity. 2. For however much he is deservedly convicted on charges of neglecting his duty towards you, yet the voice of an individual should exercise restraint, especially since even though he is a man who has remained ungrateful to you after such great kindnesses and such favourable treatment by your family, nevertheless consideration for you compels us to respect him, however angry we may be. 3. What can I do then to handle delicately such deep wounds? Forsooth I shall make use of that familiar vindication of all crimes which is generally accepted even by the philosophers, that no man sins except by destiny, and that the very misdeeds of mortals are acts of fate, while on the other hand their virtues are gifts of the gods. 4. Give thanks, Constantine, to nature and to your own character that you were sired by Constantius the Pious, and fashioned by the will of the stars, so as not to have it in your power to be cruel. 5. Whereas he, I can scarcely believe, when he was about to come to being and faced the choice of life that he would lead, fell upon a lot that he should have shunned and which would bring wrongful death to many men, and at the last his own death, self-willed upon himself. 6. For, to pass over the other points, wasn't it inevitable fate that brought it about that he owed this obligation to your sense of duty, when, expelled from Rome, exiled from Italy and banished from Illyricum, you had sheltered him in your provinces, among your troops and in your palace?

15 What did he want, I ask you? What did he hope for? To obtain something greater than what he had acquired from you? You had given him the greatest and most contrasting gifts: the leisure of a private citizen and the wealth of a king. When he went out he had mules and carriages from the court, and you had instructed us to service his requirements even more urgently than your own. You had determined to obey all his orders so much so that the accoutrements of empire were with you, while he had the real power. 2. So what was that enormity—not a passion for power, for what power did he not have while you were emperor?—but an aberration of advancing senility, which inspired him at such a great age to undertake the most troublesome burden of a civil war? 3. The truth is that no benefactions of fortune satisfy men whose lusts are not limited by reason, and their good fortune flows by without appreciation, so they remain always full of hope but bereft of pleasures, and miss the present while anticipating the future. 4. Whereas that divine individual, who was the first both to share and to lay aside the emperorship, does not regret either his decision or his deed, and does not consider he has lost that which he voluntarily transferred. He is happy and truly blessed in that your respects and those of great leaders attend him even now he is retired. 5. He relies on an empire with many supports and is happy to be protected by your aegis, when he knows you have grown from his stock, and he rightfully claims your glories for himself. 6. The other one who had been accepted as a brother by him, did not see fit to imitate him, but regretted having sworn the oath to him in the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. I am not surprised that he also forswore his son-in-law.

16 So much for his word, and so much for his oath sworn in the sanctuary of the sacred Palatine. He completed his journey slowly and tentatively, already no doubt with those plans of war in mind, and emptying the supplies of the staging posts so that no army could follow him. Then suddenly he established himself within four walls, clothed in imperial purple, and for a third time took up the emperorship that he had twice laid aside. He sent letters to allure the armies, and tried to undermine the soldiers' loyalty by a display of bribes—no doubt he thought he would have safe use of an army that he had taught corruption! 2. In fact the only

thing demonstrated by his aberration, Emperor, was the strength of your soldiers' affection towards you. They preferred you to all the gifts that he had promised, and all his proffered honours. 3. That rare virtue of restraint has been preserved with difficulty, but at times, by a few practitioners of philosophy; but because of you, Constantine, it has become a common virtue among all men. Not only men mellowed by their reason, their education or their quiet life, but even valiant military hearts have scorned gain through their respect for you. 4. Maybe there have been other armies comparable to yours in mobility and strength, but only you have been privileged to have an army of wise men. 5. Perhaps in the past many degenerate leaders with inferior armies have competed by means of bribery, but their popularity was brief and fleeting, and any imitator easily vanquished them. 6. The strong and lasting guardian of the State is the one whom the soldiers love on his own account, and who enjoys not a feigned or purchased adulation, but a straightforward and genuine devotion. 7. Your gifts, Constantine, are manifestly welcome to the soldiers, but all the more welcome because they are yours. 8. Anything offered by your hand becomes more acceptable. No one can hope to compete with you in popularity! It is an unbeatable type of largesse, when the emperor himself is the soldier's reward. 9. And so you award your armies more than they desire, but what gives you greater approval is your name, your authority which derives from your father's memory, the appeal of your age, and above all your captivating appearance.

17 For it is a splendid and heaven-sent miracle, by the gods, to have a young emperor whose valour is at its height but is still increasing, and whose brilliant gaze and majestic appearance, equally admirable and attractive, both dazzle and draw everyone's attention. 2. I imagine that great king was like that, and the Thessalian hero, whose supreme valour is renowned to have matched their beauty. 3. For scholars are right to claim that nature herself allots to great souls bodies worthy to accommodate them, and that from a man's appearance and physical attractiveness one can assess the type of divine spirit that has entered to dwell there. And so as soon as the soldiers see you approaching, they admire you and love you, they follow you with their eyes, keep you in their minds, and think they are obeying a god whose presence is as fine as his divinity is assured.

18 So the moment they had heard about that dreadful crime, of their own accord they asked you for the signal to depart. While you were giving them their provisions, they said that it was causing them delay, and that they already had more than enough from your generosity. 2. Then they seized their arms and made for the gates, and completed a journey of so many days from the Rhine all the way to the Saône without any rest: their bodies tireless, their hearts aflame, their passion for vengeance growing each day the closer they approached. 3. Next, your concern, Emperor, in providing boats from the harbour at Chalon to replenish their strength, almost failed to please them in their haste. That sluggish and loitering river seemed never to have been slower; as their vessels glided silently along and the banks receded slowly, they shouted that they were standing still, not moving. 4. Then they began to use their hands instead of feet and fell upon the oars, and by their effort overcame the nature of the river. 4. When at last they had surmounted the delays of the Saône, they were hardly happy with the Rhône itself: it seemed to them to be flowing with little urgency and to be advancing towards Arles with less haste than usual. 5. Well, to be brief, I must confess, Emperor, that for all your bodily vigour and all your mental energy you struggled at times to keep up with the army that you were supposed to be leading. 6. For they were all carried along with such momentum that, when they found out that he had left Arles and gone off to Marseilles, they immediately flew out of the ships and in headlong haste outstripped no longer the currents of the Rhône, but even the very blasts of the wind. 7. Such an affection for your divinity had inflamed them that

although they knew they had to assault a very well-fortified city, they thought it was enough to arrive there.

19 For Marseilles, so I gather, juts out into a deep sea, and is equipped with a well-fortified harbour, where the sea to the south flows in by a narrow passage. It is joined to the land by an isthmus of only 1,500 yards, which is protected by a very solid wall with many towers. 2. Indeed the Greeks and Italians, who were the original settlers there, despite their technological and intellectual prowess, were taught by the place itself how to arrange more profitably in the part which was accessible the requirements for defence, since nature had spared them the expense of fortifications in the other places. 3. And so at the time when the city, to its detriment, closed its gates to Caesar on behalf of the elder leader, siege engines were brought up by land and sea, earthworks were constructed, and it was attacked in frequent naval engagements without any alarm being caused; barely did an inordinately long siege force the city to open its gates, after a few Greek officials had repulsed both Caesar himself and then his generals and their forces, not so much by their own strength as by their walls. 4. But on this occasion at your first approach, Emperor, and at the first attack of your army, neither the height of the walls of this self same Marseilles, nor its serried towers, nor yet the character of the place caused you any delay in capturing both the harbour and the city straight away after, if you wanted. 5. In fact the soldiers had attacked all along the wall with such confidence that they would beyond doubt have immediately climbed it, if while preparing the ladders to bring up to it they had not guessed the wrong height when observing it. 6. But even so, many of them, though deceived by the inadequate height of their ladders, tried to cover the remaining distance to climb by stretching out their bodies, and by stepping on the shoulders of the men behind them they had just reached the gaps in the battlements with grasping hands. In carrying out their plan of vengeance they feared no danger, with the result that they thought they were not climbing a wall, but fighting on level ground.

20 What extraordinary probity you showed, Constantine, by observing the proprieties even in the thick of battle. By giving the signal for withdrawal you deferred your victory so that you would have the opportunity to pardon them all, and so that no soldier would commit in anger an atrocity out of keeping with your natural clemency. 2. Although by doing so you showed the concern of an excellent emperor, that soldiers who had been led astray should obtain a period of contrition and voluntarily sue for pardon, yet we who observe your gentler sensibilities—and there is nothing more manifest than the virtue in your heart—we realise that you spared that man, whom, if the first offensive had reached him, no one could have saved from the sword. 3. And so, as far as your own piety is concerned, Emperor, you preserved both him and all his band of followers. 4. It was his own fault if anyone refused to take advantage of your kindness and deemed himself unworthy to live, when you had given him permission to live.³⁸ For your part, which satisfies your conscience, you spared even those who were undeserving. But, please pardon my phrase, you cannot do everything: the gods avenge you despite yourself.

21 Indeed we must always hope that you will meet with successes even beyond your own prayers. For we place all our hope in the bosom of your sovereignty and we seek everywhere your presence, as if it could be granted. 2. For example, during the short period of your absence from the frontier, what alarms were spread abroad by the treachery of the barbarians! No doubt they were asking themselves: 'When will he get there? When will he win? When will he bring back his weary army?' But when they heard of your sudden return,

they subsided as if shocked, so that anxiety did not disturb your devotion to the State for longer than one night.

3. For, the day after you had heard that news and doubled the daily route-march, you learnt that all the waves of rebellion had calmed, and all the tranquillity you had left there had returned. Fortune herself so ordered this that the felicity of your situation reminded you to bring what you had vowed to the immortal gods, in the very place where you had already made a detour to the most beautiful temple in the whole world, or rather to the god who was manifest there, when you saw him.

4. For you did I believe, Constantine, see your patron Apollo, and Victory accompanying him, offering you crowns of laurel, each of which represents a foretelling of thirty years. That is of course the length of human generations, which are certainly due to take you beyond the old age of Nestor.

5. And yet why do I say 'I believe'? You did see him, and you recognised yourself in the image of the one to whom the sacred poems of bards prophesied that the kingdoms of the whole world were due by right.

6. That has now I think at last come to pass, seeing that you are, Emperor, like him, young, blessed, our saviour and a most handsome one! So quite rightly did you adorn those most venerable temples with such offerings that they no longer miss their former ones, and now all temples seem to be calling you to them—and especially our Apollo, in whose boiling waters are punished perjurers, whom you above all have good cause to hate.

22 Ye immortal gods, when will you grant the day that this most benevolent deity shall have established peace everywhere and may visit those groves of Apollo as well, and the sacred temple and steaming fountain springs? Their bubbling waters, warm and gently gushing, seem eager to smile upon your eyes, Constantine, and to flow into your lips. 2. To be sure, you will marvel too at the shrine of your patron god there, and the waters heated without any indication of the ground boiling. There is no bitterness in their taste or appearance, but a clarity of flavour and aroma like that of cool springs. 3. There too you will make donations, establish privileges, in short restore my own home country by worshipping that very place. 4.

That ancient noble city which once prided itself in its fraternal relations with Rome, is awaiting the assistance of your sovereignty, so that there too public buildings and splendid temples may be repaired by your generosity. In such a way I observe this happy city, whose foundation day is being commemorated by your gracious visit, reviving so much in every quarter that it may even yet rejoice to have once collapsed, since it has grown greater through your benevolence. 5. I see a Circus Maximus to rival the one in Rome, I warrant, and I see basilicas and a forum, royal edifices and a courthouse rising to such heights that they promise to be worthy neighbours of the stars in heaven. 6. Without doubt these are all benefactions due to your presence. For all the places that your divine presence most frequently dignifies expand in population, settlements and munificence. Indeed new flowers spring forth from the ground where Jupiter and Juno have lain no more quickly than cities and temples arise around your footprints, Constantine. And so my prayers are only that your piety may inspire you to visit my home city, because it will be restored the moment you do so. But it is a question whether someone of my age is entitled to such happy fortune.

23 In the meantime, through your favour I have achieved the highest of my prayers, to devote to your hearing this poor voice of mine, practised in various private and official duties. So I give your divinity my heartfelt thanks. It remains for me to commend to you my children, and

especially the one who is now engaged in the highest offices of the imperial treasury. My devotion has made me completely dependent on him, and if you ever notice him, his happy service will most accord with your requirements. 2. In fact, as I have spoken about all my children, my ambition is far-reaching, Emperor. For besides my five sons I count also as my own those that I have nurtured to the guardianship of the forum, and to official duties. Many distinguished tributaries, as it were, flow from me, and many of my former charges are even administrators of your provinces. I rejoice at their successes, and count all their honour as my own; and if perhaps today I have spoken below what was expected of me, I trust that I have given satisfaction at least through them. 3. But if your gracious divinity may also grant that from this speech I may win a reputation, not for my eloquence, which would be too much, but for a little common sense and a devotion to you, then let all trivial concerns with private matters cease: the everlasting subject of my speech shall be, if he grants me his approval, my emperor.

Whatever symptoms of Christian piety might appear in Constantine's speeches or actions, he persevered until nearly forty years of age in the practice of the established religion; and the same conduct that at the court of Nicomedia could be imputed to his fear could only be attributed to the inclination or policy of the sovereign of Gaul. His liberality restored and enriched the temples of the gods; the medals issued from his imperial mint are impressed with the figures and attributes of Jupiter and Apollo, Mars and Hercules; and his filial piety augmented the Council of Olympus by the solemn apotheosis of his father Constantius. But Constantine's devotion was more peculiarly directed to the genius of the Sun, the Apollo of Greek and Roman mythology; and he was pleased to be represented with the symbols of the God of Light and Poetry. The unerring axes of that deity, the brightness of his eyes, his laurel wreath, his immortal beauty, and his elegant accomplishments, seem to point him out as the patron of a youthful hero. The altars of Apollo were crowned with Constantine's votive offerings; and the credulous multitude was taught to believe that the emperor was permitted to behold with mortal eyes the visible majesty of his tutelary deity; and that, whether walking or in a vision, he was blessed with the auspicious omens of a long and victorious reign. The Sun was universally celebrated as Constantine's invincible guide and protector; and the pagans might reasonably expect that the insulted god would pursue with relentless vengeance the impiety of his ungrateful favorite.

While Constantine exercised a limited sovereignty over the provinces of Gaul, his Christian subjects were protected by the authority, and perhaps by the laws, of a prince, who wisely left to the gods the care of vindicating his own honor. If we may credit Constantine's own statement, he had been an indignant spectator of the savage cruelties inflicted, by the hands of the Roman soldiers, on those citizens whose religion was their only crime. In the East and in the West, he had seen the different effects of severity and leniency; and as the former was rendered still more odious by the example of Galerius, his implacable enemy, the latter was recommended to his imitation by the authority and advice of a dying father. Constantius's son immediately suspended or revoked the edicts of persecution, and granted the free exercise of its religious ceremonies to all those who had already professed themselves members of the church. They were soon encouraged to depend on the favor, as well as the justice, of their sovereign, who had absorbed a secret and sincere reverence for the name of Christ and for the God of the Christians.

About five months after the conquest of Italy, the emperor made a solemn and authentic declaration of his sentiments by the celebrated Edict of Milan, which restored peace to the Catholic Church. In the personal interview of the two Western princes, Constantine, by the ascendancy of his genius and power, obtained the immediate concurrence of his colleague, Licinius; the union of their names and authority disarmed the fury of Maximinus; and after the death of the Eastern tyrant, the Edict of Milan was received as a general and fundamental law of the Roman world.

The wisdom of the emperors provided for the restitution of all civil and religious rights of which Christians had been so unjustly deprived. It was promulgated that confiscated places of worship and public lands should be restored to the Church, without dispute, without delay, and without expense; and this stern injunction was accompanied by a gracious promise that if any of the purchasers had paid a just and adequate price, they should be compensated from the imperial treasury. The wholesome regulations protecting the future tranquility of the

faithful are framed within the principles of enlarged and equal toleration; and such equality must have been construed by a recent sect as an advantageous and honorable distinction. The two emperors proclaim to the world that they have granted free and absolute power to Christians, and to all others, to follow whatever religion each individual thinks he prefers, to which he has addicted his mind, and which he may deem best adapted to his own use. They carefully explain every ambiguous word, remove every exception, and require from the governors of the provinces strict obedience to the true and plain meaning of an edict designed to establish and secure, without any limitation, the claims of religious liberty. They condescend to assign two weighty reasons which have induced them to allow this universal toleration: the human intention of consulting the peace and happiness of their people; and the pious hope that, by such conduct, they may appease and propitiate the Deity, whose seat is in heaven. They gratefully acknowledge the many tokens of divine favor they have received; and they trust that the same Providence will forever continue to protect the prosperity of the prince and the people. From these vague and indefinite expressions of piety, three suppositions may be deduced, of a different, but not incompatible, nature. Constantine's mind might fluctuate between the pagan and Christian religions. In accordance with the loose and compliant notions of polytheism, he might recognize the God of the Christians as one of the many deities composing the hierarchy of heaven. Or perhaps he might embrace the philosophical and pleasing idea that, despite the variety of names, rites, and opinions, all sects and all nations of humanity are united in the worship of the common Father and Creator of the universe.

But the advice of princes is more frequently influenced by points of view of temporal advantage than by considerations of abstract and speculative truth. Constantine's partial and increasing favor may naturally be referred to the esteem he had for the moral character of Christians; and to the persuasion that the propagation of the gospel would inculcate the practice of private and public virtue. Whatever latitude an absolute monarch may assume in his own conduct, whatever indulgence he may claim for his own passions, it is undoubtedly his interest that all his subjects respect the natural and civil obligations of society. But the operation of the wisest laws is imperfect and precarious. They seldom inspire virtue, they cannot always restrain vice. Their power is insufficient to prohibit all that they condemn, nor can they always punish the actions they forbid. The legislators of antiquity had summoned to their aid the powers of education and opinion. But all the principles that had once maintained the vigor and purity of Rome and Sparta were long since extinguished in a decadent and despotic empire. Philosophy still exercised its temperate sway over the human mind, but the cause of virtue derived very weak support from the influence of pagan superstition. Under these discouraging circumstances, a prudent magistrate might observe with pleasure the progress of a religion which diffused among the people a pure, benevolent, and universal ethical system, adapted to every duty and every condition of life; recommended as the will and reason of the supreme Deity, and enforced by the sanction of eternal rewards or punishments. The experience of Greek and Roman history could not inform the world how far the system of national manners might be reformed and improved by the precepts of a divine revelation; and Constantine could listen with some confidence to the flattering, and indeed reasonable, assurances of Lactantius. The eloquent apologist seemed to firmly hope, and almost ventured to promise, that the establishment of Christianity would restore the innocence and happiness of the primitive age; that the worship of the true God would extinguish war and dissension among those who regarded each other as the children of a common parent; that every impure desire, every angry or selfish passion, would be restrained by a knowledge of the gospel; and that magistrates would sheathe the sword of justice among

a people who would be universally actuated by the feelings of truth and piety, of equity and moderation, of harmony and universal love.

Passive, unresisting obedience, bowing under the yoke of authority, or even oppression, must have appeared, in the eyes of an absolute monarch, the most conspicuous and useful of the evangelical virtues. The early Christians derived the institution of civil government, not from the consent of the people, but from the decrees of Heaven. The reigning emperor, though he had usurped the scepter by treason and murder, immediately assumed the sacred character of viceroy of the Deity. To the Deity alone was he responsible for the abuse of his power; and his subjects were indissolubly bound, by their oath of allegiance, to a tyrant, who had violated all the laws of nature and society. The humble Christians were sent into the world as sheep among wolves; And since they were not allowed to employ force even in the defense of their religion, they should be still more criminal if they were tempted to shed the blood of their fellow men in disputing the vain privileges, or the sordid possessions, of this transitory life. Faithful to the doctrine of the apostle, who in the reign of Nero had preached the duty of unconditional submission, the Christians of the first three centuries preserved their consciences pure and innocent from the guilt of secret conspiracy, or open rebellion. While they experienced the rigors of persecution, they were never provoked to meet their tyrants in the field, or indignantly to retire to some remote and secluded corner of the world. The Protestants of France, Germany, and Great Britain, who asserted with such intrepid courage their civil and religious liberty, have been insulted by the odious comparison between the conduct of the primitive Christians and that of the Reformed. Perhaps, instead of censure, some applause may be due to the superior sense and spirit of our ancestors, who had convinced themselves that religion cannot abolish the inalienable rights of human nature. Perhaps the patience of the early church may be attributed to its weakness as well as its virtue.

A sect of unwarlike plebeians, without leaders, without weapons, without fortifications, must have met with inevitable destruction in a rash and fruitless resistance to the master of the Roman legions. But Christians, when they spurned the wrath of Diocletian, or solicited the favor of Constantine, could plead, with truth and confidence, that they held to the principle of passive obedience, and that, in the space of three centuries, their conduct had always been in conformity with its principles. They might add that the throne of the emperors would be established on a fixed and permanent basis if all their subjects, embracing Christian doctrine, would learn to suffer and obey.

In the general order of Providence, princes and tyrants are regarded as the ministers of Heaven, appointed to govern or punish the nations of the earth. But sacred history affords many illustrious examples of the more immediate interposition of Deity in the government of His chosen people. The scepter and the sword were committed to the hands of Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and the Maccabees; the virtues of these heroes were the motive or effect of divine favor; the success of their weapons was destined to accomplish the deliverance or triumph of the Church. If the judges of Israel were occasional and temporary magistrates, the kings of Judah derived from the royal anointing of their great ancestor a hereditary and unspeakable right, which could not be lost by their own vices or recalled by the caprice of their subjects. The same extraordinary providence, no longer limited to the Jewish people, could choose Constantine and his family as protectors of the Christian world; and the devout Lactantius announces, in prophetic tones, the future glories of his long and universal reign. Galerius and Maximinus, Maxentius and Licinius, were the rivals who shared the provinces of the empire with Heaven's favorite. The tragic deaths of Galerius and Maximinus soon gratified

the resentment and fulfilled the sanctimonious expectations of the Christians. Constantine's success against Maxentius and Licinius eliminated the two formidable competitors who still opposed the triumph of the second David, and his cause might seem to claim the peculiar interposition of Providence. The character of the Roman tyrant dishonored purple and human nature; and although the Christians might enjoy his precarious favor, they were exposed, with the rest of his subjects, to the effects of his unbridled and capricious cruelty. Licinius's conduct soon betrayed the reluctance with which he had consented to the wise and humane regulations of the edict of Milan. The calling of provincial synods was prohibited in his dominions; his Christian officers were ignominiously dismissed; and if he avoided the blame, or rather the danger, of a general persecution, his partial oppressions were rendered still more odious by the violation of a solemn and voluntary engagement. While the East, according to the animated expression of Eusebius, was enveloped in the hues of infernal darkness, auspicious beams of celestial light warmed and illumined the provinces of the West. Constantine's piety was admitted as an inexorable proof of the justice of his arms; and his use of victory confirmed the opinion of the Christians, that their hero was inspired, and driven, by the Lord of Hosts. The conquest of Italy produced a general edict of toleration; And as soon as the defeat of Licinius had invested Constantine with the sole dominion of the Roman world, he immediately, by circular letters, exhorted all his subjects to imitate, without delay, the example of their sovereign, and to embrace the divine truth of Christianity.

...

The assurance that Constantine's elevation was intimately connected with the designs of Providence instilled in the minds of Christians two opinions, which, by very different means, aided the fulfillment of the prophecy. Their warm and active loyalty exhausted in his favor all the resources of human industry; and they confidently expected that their strenuous efforts would be seconded by some divine and miraculous aid. Constantine's enemies have imputed to self-interested motives the alliance he insensibly contracted with the Catholic Church, which apparently contributed to the success of his ambition. At the beginning of the fourth century, Christians were still in a very inadequate proportion to the inhabitants of the empire; but among a degenerate people, who viewed the change of masters with the indifference of slaves, the spirit and union of a religious party could aid the popular leader, to whose service, from a conscientious beginning, they had dedicated their lives and fortunes. The example of his father had instructed Constantine to esteem and reward the merit of Christians; and in the distribution of public offices, he had the advantage of strengthening his government by the election of ministers or generals in whose fidelity he could place a just and unreserved confidence. Through the influence of these worthy missionaries, the proselytes of the new faith must have multiplied at court and in the army; the barbarians of Germany, who occupied the ranks of the legions, were of a careless temper, who consented without resistance to the religion of their commander; and when they passed over the Alps, it may be fairly presumed that a large number of the soldiers had already consecrated their swords to the service of Christ and Constantine. The habits of humanity and the interests of religion gradually diminished the horror of war and bloodshed, which had so long prevailed among Christians; And at the councils that met under Constantine's kind protection, the authority of the bishops was seasonally employed to ratify the obligation of the military oath and to inflict the penalty of excommunication on those soldiers who threw down their arms during the peace of the Church. While Constantine, in his own dominions, increased the number and zeal of his faithful adherents, he could depend on the support of a powerful faction in those provinces that were still possessed or usurped by his rivals. A secret disaffection spread among the Christian

subjects of Maxentius and Licinius; and the resentment, which the latter made no attempt to conceal, only served to involve them still more deeply in the interests of their competitor. The regular correspondence that connected the bishops of the most distant provinces enabled them to freely communicate their wishes and their designs, and to convey without danger any useful intelligence, or any pious contribution, that might promote the service of Constantine, who publicly declared that he had taken up arms for the liberation of the Church.

The enthusiasm which inspired the troops, and perhaps the emperor himself, had whetted their swords while satisfying their consciences. They marched to battle with the full assurance that the same God, who had formerly opened a passage for the Israelites through the waters of the Jordan, and cast down the walls of Jericho at the sound of Joshua's trumpets, would display His visible majesty and power in Constantine's victory. The evidence of ecclesiastical history is prepared to affirm that their expectations were justified by the conspicuous miracle to which the conversion of the first Christian emperor has been almost unanimously ascribed. The real or imaginary cause of so important an event deserves and demands the attention of posterity; and I shall endeavor to form a just estimate of Constantine's famous vision, by a distinct consideration of the standard, the dream, and the heavenly sign; separating the historical, natural, and marvelous parts of this extraordinary story, which, in the composition of a specious argument, have been cleverly confused into a splendid and brittle mass.

An instrument of torture inflicted only on slaves and strangers became an object of horror in the eyes of a Roman citizen; and the ideas of guilt, pain, and ignominy were closely united with the idea of the cross. Constantine's piety, more than his humanity, soon abolished in his dominions the punishment that the Savior of mankind had condescended to suffer; but the emperor had already learned to despise the prejudices of his upbringing and of his people before he could erect in the midst of Rome his own statue, carrying a cross in his right hand; with an inscription referring the victory of his arms, and the liberation of Rome, to the virtue of that salutary sign, the true symbol of strength and courage. The same symbol sanctified the arms of Constantine's soldiers; The cross shone on his helmet, was engraved on his shields, and entwined in his banners; and the hallowed emblems adorning the person of the emperor himself were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship. But the chief standard displaying the triumph of the cross was called the Labarum, an obscure, though celebrated, name which has been vainly derived from almost every language in the world. It is described as a long pike pierced by a transverse beam. The silk veil, which hung from the beam, was curiously adorned with the images of the reigning monarch and his sons. The summit of the pike supported a golden crown enclosing the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letters of the name of Christ. The safety of the labarum was entrusted to fifty guards of approved valor and fidelity; their station was marked by honors and emoluments; and some fortunate accidents soon introduced an opinion that, as long as the guards of the labarum were engaged in the execution of their office, they were safe and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy. In the second civil war, Licinius felt and feared the power of this consecrated standard, the sight of which, in the anguish of battle, animated the soldiers of Constantine with invincible enthusiasm, and dispersed terror and consternation through the ranks of the opposing legions. The Christian emperors, who respected the example of Constantine, displayed in all their military expeditions the standard of the cross; but when the degenerate successors of Theodosius had ceased to appear in person at the head of their armies, the labarum was deposited as a venerable but useless relic in the palace of Constantinople. Its honors are still preserved in the medals of the Flavian family. Their grateful devotion has placed the monogram of Christ in the midst of the ensigns

of Rome. The solemn epithets "security of the republic," "glory of the army," and "restoration of public happiness" are equally applied to religious and military trophies; and a medal of the Emperor Constantius still exists, in which the standard of the labarum is accompanied by these memorable words: "BY THIS SIGN YOU SHALL CONQUER."

On all occasions of danger and distress, it was the practice of the primitive Christians to strengthen their minds and bodies by the sign of the cross, which they used, in all their ecclesiastical rites, in all the daily events of life, as an infallible preservative against every species of spiritual or temporal evil. The authority of the church might have had sufficient weight alone to justify the devotion of Constantine, who in the same prudent and gradual progress recognized the truth, and assumed the symbol, of Christianity. But the testimony of a contemporary writer, who in a formal treatise has avenged the cause of religion, gives to the emperor's piety a more horrible and sublime character. He affirms, with the most perfect confidence, that on the night preceding the last battle against Maxentius, Constantine was admonished in a dream to inscribe the shields of his soldiers with the heavenly sign of God, the sacred monogram of the name of Christ; who executed the orders of Heaven, and that his courage and obedience were rewarded by the decisive victory at the Milvian Bridge. Some considerations might perhaps incline a skeptical mind to suspect the judgment or veracity of the rhetorician, whose pen, whether from zeal or interest, was devoted to the cause of the prevailing faction. He seems to have published his deaths of the persecutors at Nicomedia about three years after the Roman victory; but the interval of a thousand miles and a thousand days will allow ample liberty for the invention of declamations, the credulity of the party, and the tacit approbation of the emperor himself, who could listen without indignation to a marvelous tale that exalted his fame and promoted his designs. In favor of Licinius, who still concealed his animosity toward the Christians, the same author has furnished a similar view of a form of prayer that was communicated by an angel and repeated by the whole army before they engaged the legions of the tyrant Maximinus. The frequent repetition of miracles serves to provoke, where it does not subdue, the reason of humanity; but if Constantine's dream be considered separately, it may naturally be explained by the policy or the enthusiasm of the emperor. While his anxiety for the approaching day, which was to decide the fate of the empire, was suspended by a short and interrupted sleep, the venerable form of Christ, and the well-known symbol of his religion, might be forcibly offered to the active fancy of a prince who revered the name, and perhaps had secretly implored the power, of the God of the Christians. As easily as an accomplished statesman might indulge in one of those military stratagems, one of those pious frauds, which Philip and Sertorius had employed with such art and effect. The preternatural origin of dreams was universally admitted by the nations of antiquity, and a considerable portion of the Gallic army was already prepared to place its confidence in the salutary sign of the Christian religion. Constantine's secret vision could only be refuted by the event; and the intrepid hero who had passed over the Alps and the Apennines could view with careless despair the consequences of a defeat beneath the walls of Rome. The senate and people, rejoicing in their own deliverance from a hateful tyrant, acknowledged that Constantine's victory surpassed the powers of man, not daring to intimate that it had been obtained by the protection of the gods. The triumphal arch, which was erected about three years after the event, proclaims, in ambiguous language, that by the greatness of his own mind, and by an instinct or impulse from Divinity, he had saved and avenged the Roman republic. The pagan orator, who had seized a previous opportunity of celebrating the virtues of the conqueror, supposes that he alone enjoyed a secret and intimate intercourse with the Supreme Being, who delegated the care of mortals to his subordinate

deities; and thus assigns a very plausible reason why Constantine's subjects should not presume to embrace their sovereign's new religion.

...

The philosopher, who with calm suspicion examines the dreams and omens, the miracles and prodigies, of profane or even ecclesiastical history, will probably conclude that if the eyes of spectators have sometimes been deceived by fraud, the understanding of readers has been much more frequently insulted by fiction. Every event, or appearance, or accident, that seems to deviate from the ordinary course of nature, has been rashly attributed to the immediate action of Deity; and the astonishing fancy of the multitude has sometimes given form and color, language and movement, to the fleeting but uncommon meteors of the air. Nazarius and Eusebius are the two most celebrated orators who, in studied panegyrics, have labored to exalt the glory of Constantine. Nine years after the Roman victory, Nazarius describes an army of divine warriors, who seemed to fall from heaven: he marks their beauty, their spirit, their gigantic forms, the stream of light emanating from their celestial armor, their patience in suffering to be heard, as well as seen, by mortals; and their declaration that they were sent, that they flew, to the aid of the great Constantine. By the truth of this prodigy, the pagan orator appeals to the whole Gallic nation, in whose presence he was then speaking; and he seems to hope that the ancient apparitions will now derive credit from this recent and public event. The Christian fable of Eusebius, which, in the space of twenty-six years, could arise from the original dream, is cast in a much more correct and elegant mold. In one of Constantine's marches, he is said to have seen with his own eyes the luminous trophy of the cross, placed above the meridian sun and inscribed with the following words: BY THIS YOU SHALL CONQUER. This amazing object in the sky astonished the whole army, as well as the emperor himself, who was still undetermined in the choice of a religion: but their astonishment was turned to faith by the vision of the following night. Christ appeared before their eyes; and showing the same heavenly sign of the cross, he ordered Constantine to frame a similar standard and march, with the assurance of victory, against Maxentius and all his enemies. The learned bishop of Caesarea seems to be sensible, that the recent discovery of this marvelous anecdote would excite some surprise and distrust among the most pious of his readers. However, instead of ascertaining the precise circumstances of time and place, which always serve to detect falsehood or establish the truth; instead of collecting and recording the evidence of so many living witnesses who must have been spectators of this stupendous miracle, Eusebius contents himself with alleging one very singular testimony; that of the late Constantine, who, many years after the event, in the liberty of conversation, had related to him this extraordinary incident of his own life, and had attested to its truth by a solemn oath. The prudence and gratitude of the learned prelate forbade him to suspect the veracity of his victorious master; but he clearly intimates that, in a fact of such a nature, he ought to have refused his assent to any meaner authority. This motive of credibility could not survive the power of the Flavian family; and the heavenly sign, which infidels might afterwards ridicule, was ignored by the Christians of the period immediately following Constantine's conversion. But the Catholic Church, both East and West, has adopted a prodigy which favors, or appears to favor, the popular worship of the cross. Constantine's vision held an honorable place in superstitious legend until the bold and sagacious spirit of criticism presumed to depreciate the triumph, and to establish the truth, of the first Christian emperor.

...

Lactantius, who adorned the precepts of the Gospel with the eloquence of Cicero, and Eusebius, who consecrated the learning and philosophy of the Greeks to the service of religion, were received into the friendship and familiarity of their sovereign; and those able masters of controversy could patiently observe the gentle and productive moments of persuasion, and skillfully apply the arguments best adapted to their character and understanding. Whatever advantages might accrue from the acquisition of an imperial proselyte, he was distinguished by the splendor of his purple, rather than by the superior wisdom or virtue of the many thousands of his subjects who had embraced the doctrines of Christianity. Nor can it be considered incredible that the mind of an illiterate soldier should have yielded to the weight of evidence, which, in a more enlightened age, would have satisfied or subdued the reason of a Grotius, a Pascal, or a Locke. Amidst the incessant labors of his great office, this soldier employed, or was forced to employ, the night hours in the diligent study of the Scriptures and the composition of theological discourses, which he then delivered in the presence of a large and applauding audience.



1.1 - Apollo, wearing a laurel or myrtle wreath, a white peplos, a red himation, and sandals, sits on a lion-clawed diphrag. He holds a lyre and pours a libation. The scene depicted evokes the verse from the second hymn to Apollo, inscribed on the south wall of the Athenian Treasury: "Sing to the golden-haired Pythian, who aims far with his bow and arrow and plays well on the lyre." 480 BC.



1.2 -Rhea, Cronus and the Omphalos, the stone with which Rhea tricked Cronus into swallowing Zeus, was displayed in historical times at Delphi.



Map 1: The Lydian, Median (or Persian), Babylonian and Egyptian empires during the reign of Croesus of Lydia



Map 2: The Achaemenid Empire at its greatest extent during the reign of Darius I. Around 500 BC.



Map 3: The Greek world during the Persian Wars (500 – 479 BC)



1.3 – Leonidas at Thermopylae, by the French painter Jacques Louis David, completed in 1814, after 15 years of work, Louvre Museum, Paris.

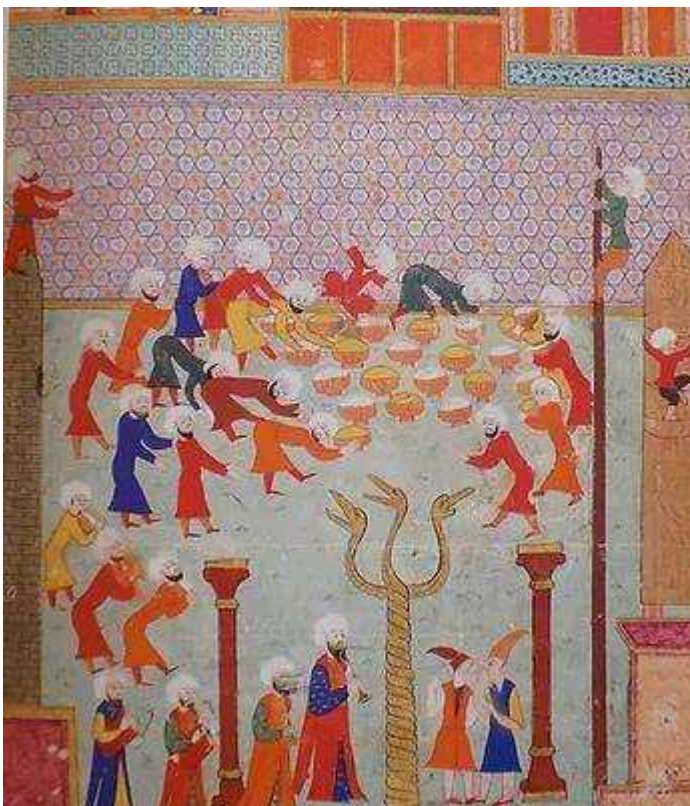


1.4 – The Serpentine Column of Plataea with one of its heads still surviving today in Istanbul, after 25 centuries, originally deposited in Delphi and in 324 moved by order of Constantine to adorn the Hippodrome of Constantinople.

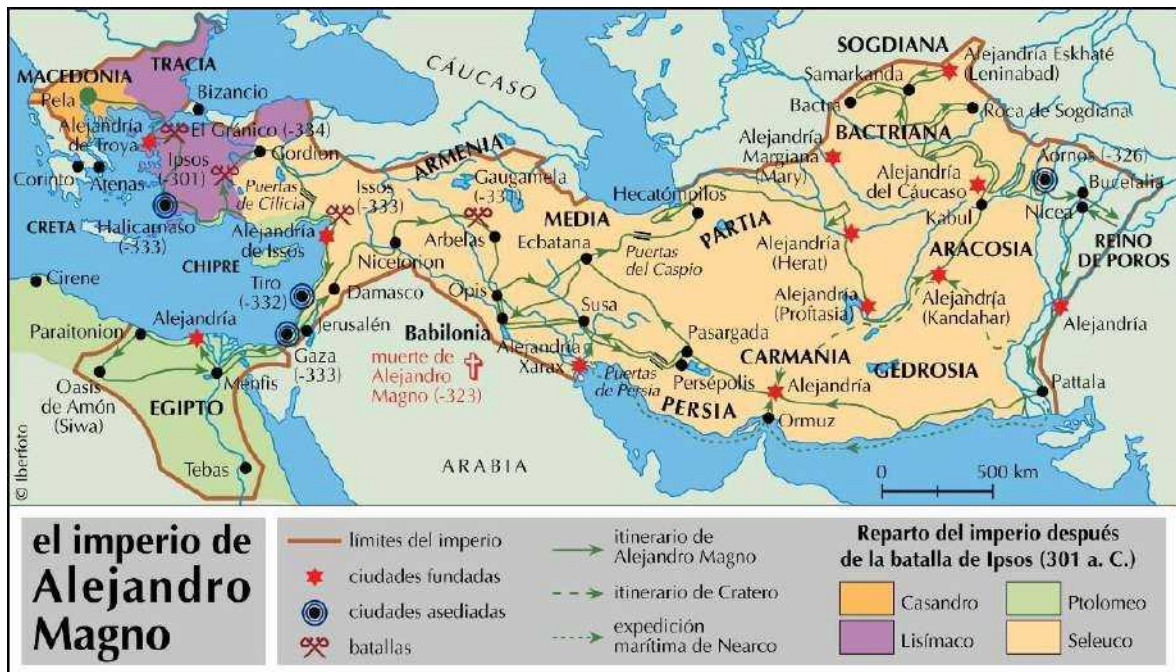




1.5 - Detail of a miniature of Istanbul from Matrakçı Nasuh, 1537 AD.



1.6 – The serpentine column of Plataea and Ottoman acrobats on the Hünernâme obelisks, 1530 AD.



Map 4: The Empire of Alexander the Great, 336-323 BC



1.7 - Bust of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), king of Macedonia and conqueror of Persia. Roman copy of a Greek original, marble sculpture. Capitoline Museum, Rome



1.8 - Kingdom of Macedonia, Alexander III Tetradrachm. Amphipolis mint, 323-320 BC. Head of Heracles to the left, wearing a lion-skin headdress / ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, Zeus seated to the right, holding an eagle and scepter; Phrygian helmet to the left.



1.9 - Alexander III Distater. Amphipolis mint, minted under Antipater, 330-320 BC. Head of Athena facing right, wearing a crested Corinthian helmet decorated with a serpent / ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, Nike standing left, holding a crown in her right hand.



2.0 - Athens, Attica, tetradrachm, ca. 119-118 BC. Helmeted head of Athena facing right, triple-crested helmet decorated with Pegasus just above the raised earpiece and horse protomes above the visor / Α-ΘΕ ΣΩΚΡ-ΑΘΗΣ ΔΙΟΝΥ-ΣΟΔΩ ΑΡΙΣ-ΤΩΣ, owl standing just above an overturned amphora on its side; Apollo standing facing right, holding the three Graces in his right hand, the bow in his left, flanked by two small dancing figures (or griffins?) at his feet; ΔΥΜΗ on amphora, ΣΩ below, all within an olive wreath.



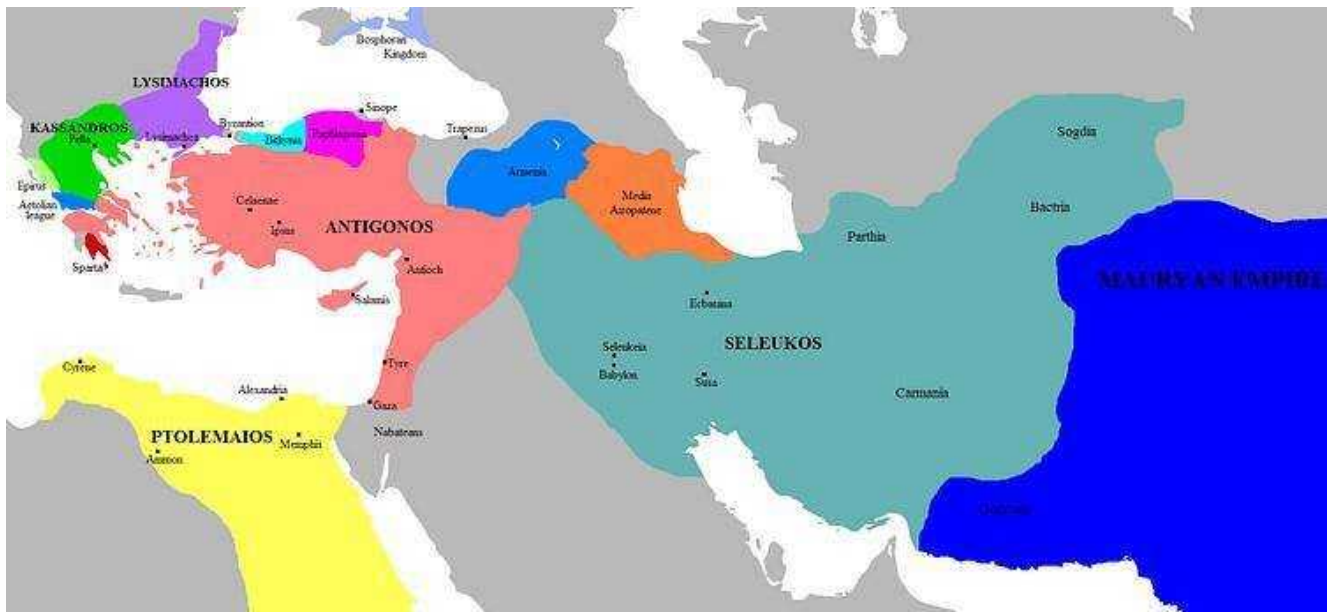
2.1 - Northeastern Gaul, the Parisii. Stater. Cast around 60-40 BC. Stylized head of Apollo at right; double volute in front, club(?) below the chin, [zigzag line with shot] below / Bridled horse galloping at left; ornamented 'wing' above, rosette and finial below.



2.2 – Mysia, Cyzicus. 5th-4th century BC. Stater. Two eagles standing facing each other on ornate omphalos (representing the founding of Delphi and the two eagles that came from the ends of the earth and met at Delphi); below, tuna on the right / Quadripartite incuse quadrate.



2.3 - Kingdom of Lydia, Croesus. Stater. Sardis, cast circa 564-39 BC. Facing foreparts of a roaring lion on the right and a bull on the left, each with its foreleg extended / Two incuse square strokes.



Map 5: The kingdoms of the Diadochi, Ptolemy in yellow, Cassander in green, Lysimachus in purple, Antigonus in pink and Seleucus in dark green.

Map 6: Extent of the Roman Empire under the reign of Augustus

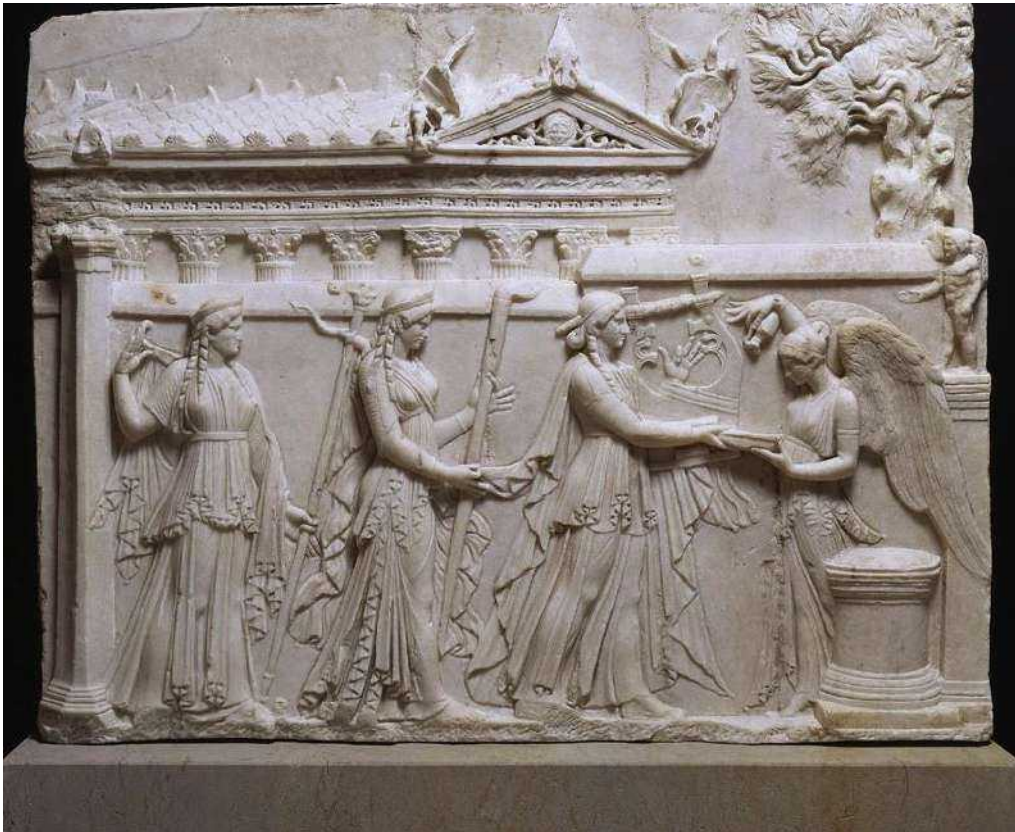




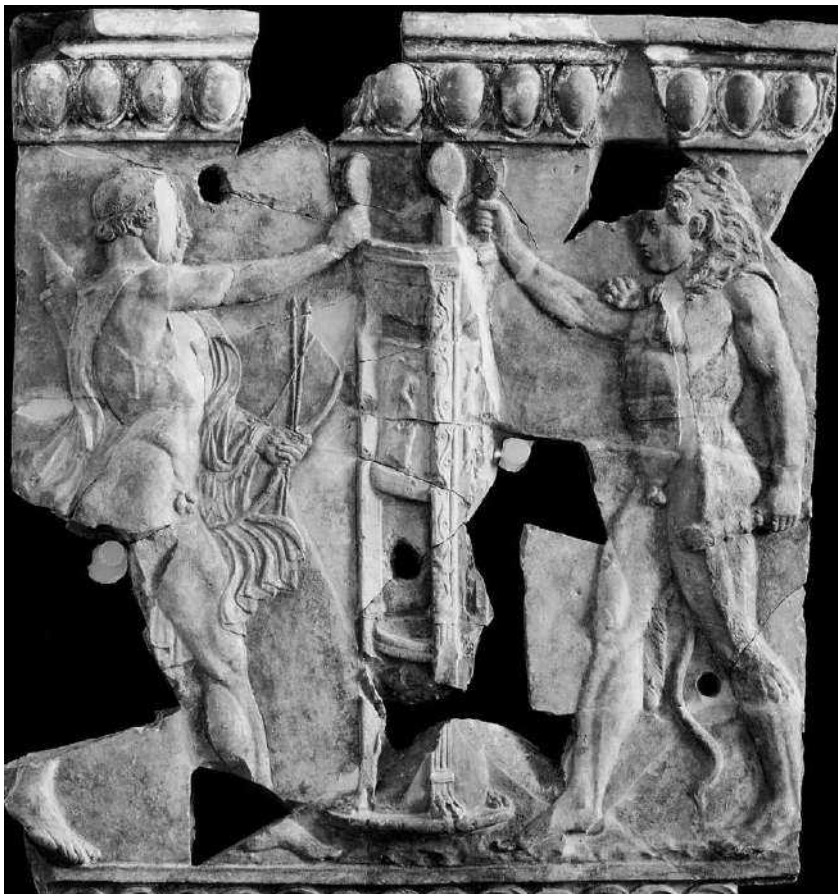
2.4 - Statue of Augustus Prima Porta, Vatican Museums. Marble with traces of polychromy, dated to 20 AD. It was discovered in 1863 in the Villa of Livia, also known as "Prima Porta." (Rome)

2.5 - Apollo Citharedos in a fresco preserved in the Palatine Museum in Rome, Augustan Age. Apollo, recognizable by the laurel wreath on his head, is depicted semi-nude, with a quiver slung over his shoulder and a zither in his left hand.

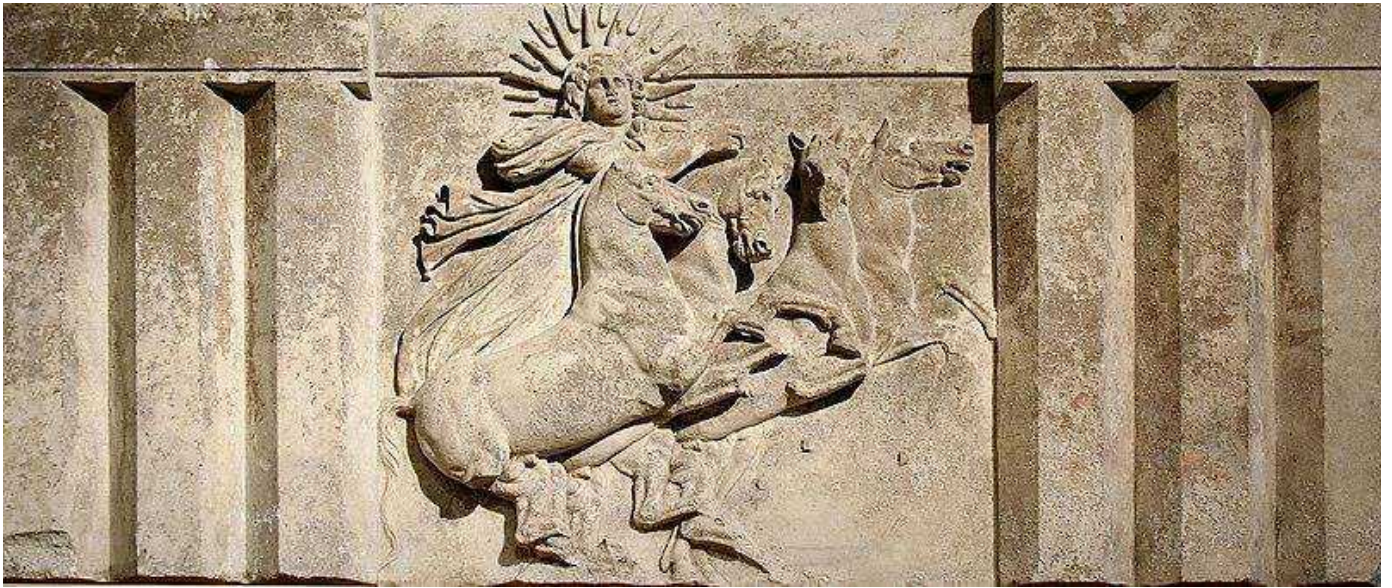




2.6 - Archaizing relief of Apollo, Diana and Leto from the Temple of Apollo Palatine, Rome, 28 BC.



2.7 - Terracotta plaque depicting the contest between Apollo and Heracles over the Delphic tripod, from the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill. Rome, Palatine Museum



2.8 - Relief of Helios. Northwest pediment of the Temple of Athena at Ilion, first quarter of the 3rd century BC. Pergamon Museum (Berlin)



2.9 - Mosaic, Sun within a zodiac; 3rd century AD Bonn, Rheinisches Landesmuseum.



3.0 - SOLI SANCTISSIMO SACRUM - A dedication to the Sun God in fulfillment of a vow made by Tiberius Claudius Felix, Claudia Helpis, and their son, Tiberius Claudius Alypus. The altarpiece depicts the Sun God riding (?) on the back of Jupiter's eagle. Capitoline Museums, Rome. Second half of the 1st century AD.



3.1 – Red-figure krater with Helios in his chariot, 5th century BC.



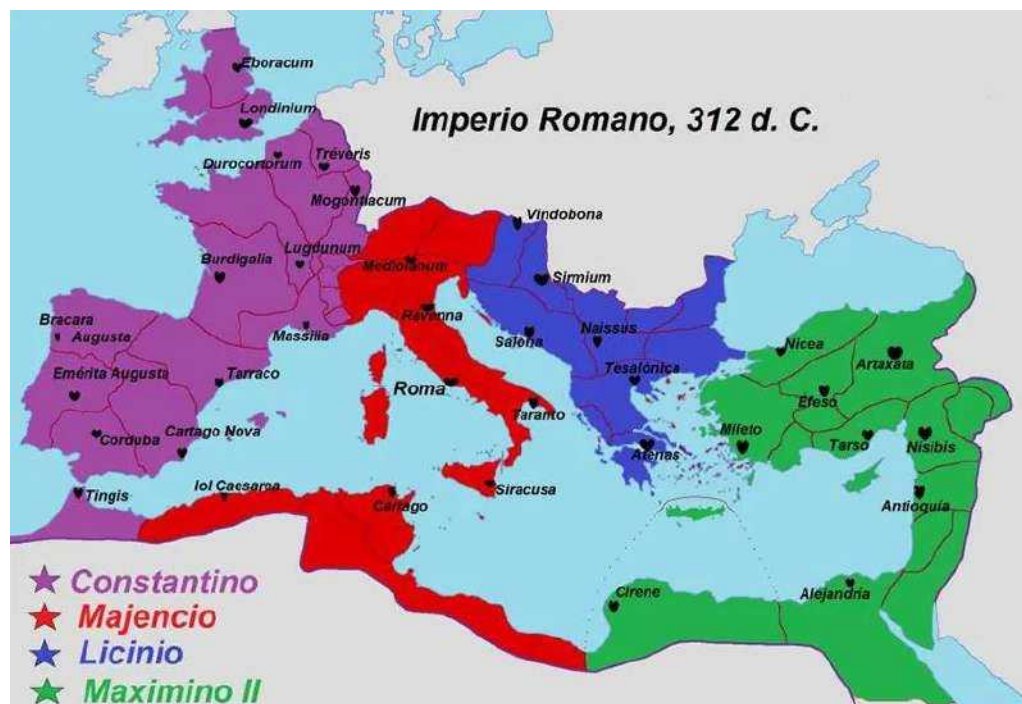
3.2 – Apollo Belvedere: The Apollo is now believed to be an original Roman creation from the time of Hadrian (c. 120–140 AD), albeit in a Hellenistic style. The distinctively Roman footwear is one of the reasons scholars believe it is not a copy of an original Greek statue.



3.3 – Possible statue of Aurelian, previously identified as Claudius Gothicus.



Map 7: The Roman Empire under Aurelian (271 AD), the Gallic Empire and Zenobia.



Map 8: The Roman Empire at the time of the vision of Apollo in Trier (310) and before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312).



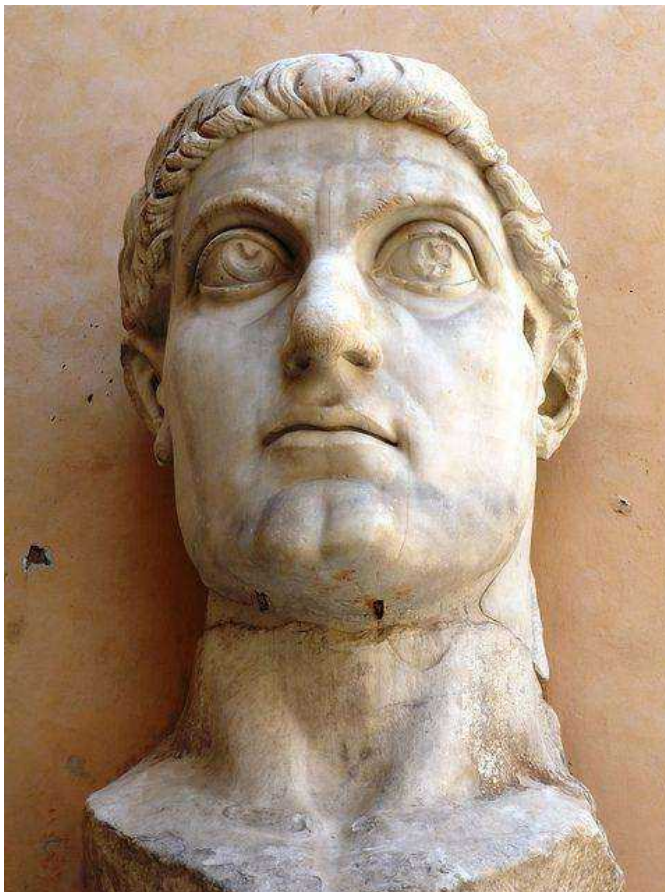
3.4 - The Battle of the Milvian Bridge, which pitted Constantine against his rival Maxentius, marked the defeat of the latter (depicted on the right as he is about to drown in the Tiber) and the victory of Christianity over the pagan world. The scene is set with topographical precision north of Rome, with Monte Mario and the Villa Madama (which Raphael built during the same years) on the left, and Saxa Rubra in the background. The initial design for this composition, as well as for the Vision of the Cross, is undoubtedly Raphael's, although its pictorial execution is materially due to his pupil Giulio Romano, who completed it after his death.



3.5 – Unknown artist, portrait of Emperor Constantine I (272 – 337 AD), 4th century AD. Marble, Vatican Museums.



3.6 - *The Vision of the Cross* is a painting executed between 1520 and 1524 by assistants of the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael. In the fresco, Emperor Constantine I is seen just before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312. According to legend, a cross appeared to Constantine in the sky, asking him to replace the imperial eagles on the soldiers' insignia with the Christian cross, so that by that sign he would win. After this dream or vision, Constantine adopted the Latin motto "In hoc signo vinces" ("By this sign you will conquer"). On the fresco, the words are written in Greek: "Εν τούτῳ νικά" ("By this, you will conquer").



3.7 - *The Colossus of Constantine* was a huge, early 4th-century AD acrolithic statue, many times life-size, depicting the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, commissioned by himself, which originally occupied the west apse of the Basilica of Maxentius on the Via Sacra, near the Roman Forum, in Rome. Eusebius further records the Latin inscription engraved beneath the statue, which can be translated as follows: By this sign of salvation, which is the true symbol of goodness, I rescued your city and freed it from the yoke of the tyrant, and by my act of liberation I restored to the senate and people of Rome their former fame and splendor.



3.8 - Philip II, King of Macedonia, (359-336 BC) Mint of Pella. Laureate head of Apollo on the right / ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ (of Philip), galloping biga on the right, the driver with goad and reins.



3.9 - Antiochus I Soter Tetradrachm. Sardis. Horned head and diadem of the deified Seleucus I on the right / ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ on the right and on the left Apollo, naked, sitting on the left on the omphalos, holding the bow with his outstretched right hand and resting his left hand on the omphalos.



4.0 - Seleucid Empire, Antiochus I Soter. Stater. Cast circa 266-261 BC. Diademed head facing right, with rejuvenated and idealized features / Apollo Delphios, nude, seated on the left on an omphalos, testing an arrow in his right hand, his left hand holding the point of a bow placed on the ground on his right; ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ on the right, ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ on the left, Δ on the inner left.



4.1 - Octavian as Augustus, 27 BC - 14 AD Aureus, Lugdunum 15-13 BC AVGVSTVS DIVI•F Naked head of Augustus facing right. IMP X / ACT Apollo Citarede of Actium standing front, head to the left, holding a plectrum in his right hand and a lyre in his left.



4.2 - Trajan, (98-117 AD). Aureus, issued in 114-117 AD. IMP CAES NER TRAIAN OPTIM AVG GERM DAC, Laureate, armored and draped bust of Trajan / PARTHICO PM TRP COS VI PP SPQR, radiate and draped bust of Sol.



4.3 – Hadrian, (117-138 AD) Aureus, issued in 124-125 AD. Mint of Rome. HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS, laurelled head to the right, light drapery on the shoulder / COS III, radiated Sun riding a chariot to the left.



4.4 – Hadrian, (117-138 AD) Aureus, issued in 118 AD. Roman Mint. IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG, laurelled, draped and armoured bust facing right / PM TR P COS around, ORIENS in exergue, radiated and draped bust of Sol.



4.5 – Antoninus Pius, (138-161 AD) Denarius, issued in 140-144 AD. ANTONINVS AVG PIVS P P TR P COS III, head uncovered to the right / APOLLINI AVGVSTO, Apollo standing to the left, holding a bowl and a lyre.



4.6 – Marcus Aurelius, (161-180) Aureus, issued under Antonius Pius in 157-158 AD. AVRELIVS CAES ANTON AVG PII F, bareheaded right / TR POT XII COS II, Apollo standing left, holding a bowl and lyre.



4.7 - Bust of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) armored, draped, with laurelled head and bearded, right. (obverse) Sol, radiated, standing left, raising his right hand and holding a whip in his left. (reverse) - Earliest appearance of Sol Invictus on Roman Imperial coinage (197 AD).



4.8 - Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) Aureus, cast in 206-207 AD SEVERVS PIVS AVG, laurelled head to the right / PACATOR ORBIS (Peacemaker of the world), radiated and draped bust of the Sun to the right.



4.9 – Caracalla, (198-217 AD) Denarius issued in 214 AD. ANTONINVS PIVS AVG GERM, laurelled head right / P M TR P XVII COS IIII P P, Apollo seated left, holding a branch and leaning on a lyre mounted on a tripod.



5.0 - Caracalla, (198-217 AD) Aureus issued in 215 AD, Rome. *ANTONINVS PIVS AVG GERM*, laurelled, the draped and cuirassed bust to the right, seen from behind. / *P M TR P XVIII COS IIII* P P, Sun, radiated, standing front, facing left, chlamys over his chest and left arm, holding a globe and raising his right hand.



5.1 - Elagabalus (218-222 AD) Aureus. Issued in 221 AD, Rome. *ANTONINVS PIVS AVG*, laurelled bust, draped and armoured, facing right. / *PM TR P IIII COS III PP*, Sun standing left, looking right, whip in hand and right hand raised. Star in left field.



5.2 - Elagabalus, (218-222 AD) Aureus. Struck between 218 and 219 AD. Antioch Mint. *IMP C M AVR ANTONINVS P F AVG*, laurelled bust, draped and armoured, facing left, seen from behind / *SANCT DEO SOLI*, *ELAGABAL* in exergue, quadriga to the right carrying the Emesa Stone on which there is an eagle; four parasols around.



5.3 – Alexander Severus, (222-235 AD) Denarius. Issued in 232 AD. IMP ALEXANDER PIVS AVG, laurelled, draped bust right / P M TR P XI COS III P P, Sun, radiated, standing left holding whip and raising right hand.



5.4 - Gordian, (238-244 AD) Aureus. Struck between 240 and 243 AD. Mint of Rome. IMP GORDIANVS PIVS FEL AVG, laurelled bust, draped and armoured to the right / AETER N ITATI AVG, Sol Invictus, radiated, nude except for the drapery over the shoulders and left arm, raising his right hand and holding the globe in his left hand.



5.5 - Gallienus, (253-268). Aureus, issued in 258 AD. IMP GALLIENVS P F AVG Laureate and armored bust / ORIENS AVGG Standing sun to the left, with his right arm raised, the left holding the globe.



5.6 – Aurelian (270-275). Bronze as, Serdica mint, issued April-November 274 AD. SOL DOMINVS IMPERI ROMANI (Sun Lord of the Roman Empire), draped bust of Sol facing right / AVRELIANVS AVG CONS, Aurelian standing left, holding a long sceptre in his left hand and sacrificing with a patera held in his right hand over an illuminated altar on the left.



5.7 – Aurelian, (270-275). Antoninianus, mint of Serdica. IMP AVRELIANVS AVG, radiant, breastplate bust (long neck) / ORIENS AVG, Sun walking to the left, holding a globe and raising his right hand, feet on one of the two captives at his feet.



5.8 – Aurelian (270-275). Antoninianus. Ticinum Mint. IMP C AVRELIANVS AVG, radiated, armored bust / SOLI INVICTO, Sun walking left between two captives, holding the globe and raised right hand. Star in the left field.



5.9 - Aurelian (270-275). Aureus, mint of Siscia. 270–275 AD IMP C AVRELIANVS AVG, laurelled, armoured bust, aegis on the left shoulder. / RESTITVTOR ORIENTIS, Sun standing slightly to the right, facing left, naked except for the chlamys over the shoulders and draped across the upper chest, holding the globe and raising his right hand.



6.0 – Aurelian, (270-275) Aurelius, IMP C AVRELIANVS AVG, laurelled, armoured bust. / RESTITVTOR ORIENTIS, Sun standing slightly to the right, looking left, whip in hand and right hand raised, with two captives at his feet.



6.1 – Aurelian, (270-275) Aureus, Ticinum mint, issued at the end of 274 AD. IMP C AVREL – IANVS AVG Laureate bust, draped and armoured / PRO – VIDEN D – EOR Providence standing to the right, holding two ensigns; in front, Sun standing to the left, holding a globe and raising his right arm.



6.2 – Florian, (July-September 276) Aureus, mint of Cyzicus, issued in 276 AD. IMP C M ANNIVS FLORIANVS AVG Laureate bust, draped and armored / CONSERVATOR AVG Sun in quadriga, reins in the right hand and whip.



6.3 – Probus (276-282). Antoninianus, mint of Cyzicus. IMP CM AVR PROBVS PF AVG, radiated bust to the left, wearing an imperial mantle, holding a scepter. / SOLI INVICTO, Sun, holding a whip, standing and looking out from an extended quadriga.



6.4 – Probus (276-282). Aureus, Roman mint. IMP PROBVS AVG, radiate, armored bust to the left, holding a spear and shield / SOLI INVICTO COMITI AVG, radiate, draped bust of the Sun to the right.



6.5 – Probus (276-282). Aureus, Ticinum mint. 276-282 AD IMP C M AVR PROBVS PF AVG, laurelled, armoured bust facing right / CONSERVAT AVG, Sun standing front, looking left, naked except for the chlamys draped over his shoulder, holding the globe and raising his right hand.



6.6 – Probus (276-282). Aureus, Siscia mint. Issued in 277 AD. IMP PROBVS INV AVG, united busts of Probus and Sol on the left; Probus is laurelled and armoured with a winged gorgoneion on his breastplate; Sol is radiated and covered / SECVRI TAS SAECVLI, Securitas seated on the left, holding a sceptre in her right hand, her left hand resting on her head.



6.7 – Constantine, (306-337 AD. Follis, cast in 310-313 AD. Trier. CONSTANTINVS PF AVG - Laureate bust armoured to the right. / SOLI INVICTO COMITI - Radiant sun, draped bust to the right.



6.8 – Constantine, (306-337 AD) Follis, cast in 313-315 AD. Trier. IMP CONSTANTINVS AVG, laurelled, armoured bust right. / SOLI INVICTO COMITI, Sun standing left, chlamys over left shoulder, holding globe, raising right hand. T-F across fields.



6.9 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Semissis, issued in 312 AD Rome. IMP CONSTANTINVS PF AVG - Laureate bust, draped and armored, facing right. / SOLI INVICTO COMITI, Sun standing left, raising his hand and holding the globe.



7.0 - Constantino, (306-337 d.C.) Sólido, emisión desconocida. Arles. CONSTAN-TINVSPF AVG [CONSTANTINVS P F AVG]; Busto laureado a derecha. / FELICITAS PERPETVASAECVLI [FELICITAS PERPETVA SAECVLI] (Bendición perpetua de la época); Emperador con traje militar, clámide sobre el hombro izquierdo, recibiendo la Victoria en el globo terráqueo de manos de Sol, manto desplegado; entre ellos un suplicante. SMT en exergo.



7.1 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Aureus, cast in 320 AD. Sirmium DN CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG - Laureate head right. / SOL IINVICTO COMITI, Sun standing right, crowning Constantine standing right, holding spear and globe left.



7.2 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Solidus, cast in 316, Ticinium. COMIS CONSTANTINI AVG Jugate busts of Sol, radiated, and Constantine, laurelled, draped, armoured, raising his right hand and holding the globe in his left, facing left. / LIBERALITAS XI IMP IIII COS P PP Liberalitas, draped, standing facing front, head left, carrying an abacus in his right hand and a cornucopia in his left.



7.3 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Medallion, Ticinum mint, issued in 313. In this jugate of the emperor, both figures Constantine and Sol hold the whip, in a clear parallel that both are the leaders of the Empire.



7.4 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Binius (double aureus), Antioch mint, issued in 326 AD (Last issue in its coinage bearing or accompanied by solar symbols by Constantine, such as the radiated crown.) DNCONSTANTINVS MAX AVG - Radiated, draped and armored bust to the left, raising his hand and holding the globe. / CONSTANTINVS ET CONSTANTINVS NOB CAESS - Laureate bust of Constantine II to the right, dressed in consular robes, holding a scepter with an eagle on top and a globe, looking to the left Laureate bust of Constantius II, dressed in consular robes, holding a scepter with an eagle on top and a globe.



7.5 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Aureus, cast in 310, Trier (Same date and place as the vision of Apollo). IMP CONSTANTINVS PIVS FELIX AVG, Laureate bust, draped and armored, facing right. / PRINCIPIVVENTVTIS (To the Prince of Youth), Constantine I standing right, holding a spear and a globe.



7.6 - Constantino, (306-337 d.C.) Áureo, emitido en 313, Sérdica. CONSTAN-TINVS P F AVG, cabeza laureada de Constantino I / IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG, Júpiter de pie mirando hacia la izquierda, desnudo excepto por la clámide sobre el hombro izquierdo, Victoria sobre el globo derecho en la mano derecha, cetro en la izquierda; águila en pie a la izquierda, cabeza a la derecha, corona en pico, alas extendidas, N en campo derecho, •SER• en exergo.



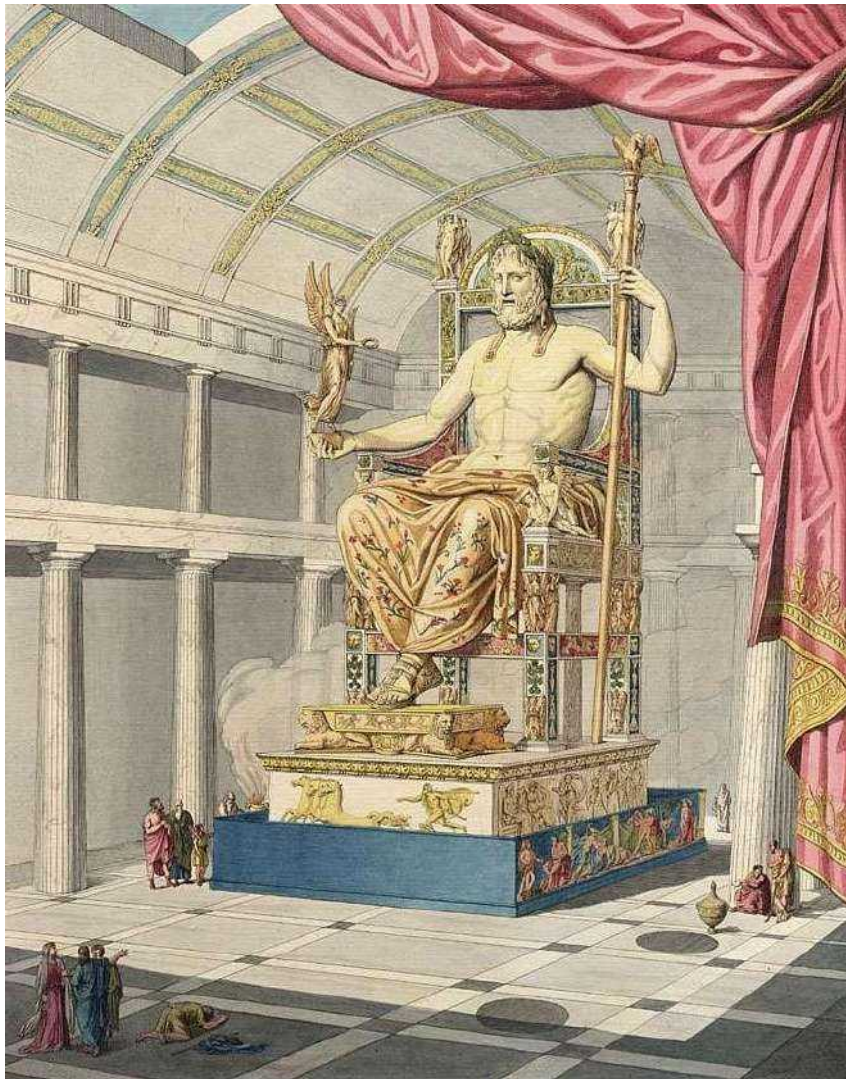
7.7 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Medallion, Constantinople mint, issued in 326 AD. *CONSTANTINVS AVG*, diademed head to the right, looking upwards / Constantine, raising his right hand and holding an eagle-tipped sceptre in his left, standing to the left in front of the quadriga.



7.8 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Medallion, Constantinople mint, issued around 11 May 330 AD. Head of Constantine right, with jewelled diadem / *D N CONSTANTINVS MAX TRIVM F AVG*, Constantinopolis, turreted and veiled, seated right, head facing, right foot on prow, holding short sceptre in right hand and cornucopia in left; *MCONSE*.



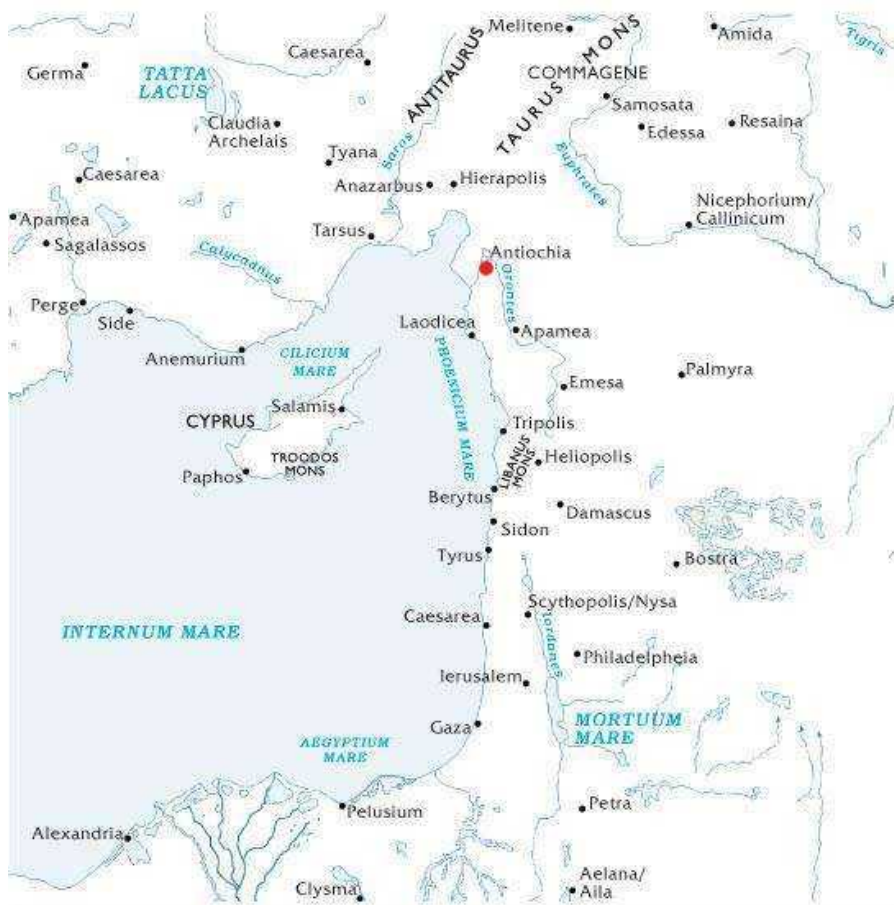
7.9 - Constantine, (306-337 AD) Aureus, cast in 313-315 AD, Trier. *CONSTANTINVS PF AVG*, laurelled bust, draped, armoured, facing right. / *VICTORIBVS AVGG NN VOTIS*, seated Victory to the right on breastplate and shield, inscribing *XXX* on the shield, supported by a small genie standing full-frontal, head to the left. The *XXX* may well signify the 30-year reign that Victoria and Apollo promised Constantine in 310. This edition was minted as late as 336 AD.



8.0 - The Olympian Zeus enthroned in the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Drawing by Quatremère de Quincy, 1814 AD. The statue in the Temple of Apollo at Daphne is believed to have been similar and of equal size to this statue, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



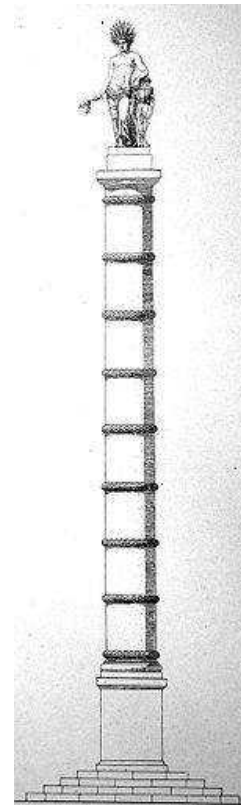
8.1 - Head of Zeus by Phidias, Roman coin, 133 AD. Berlin State Museums, Berlin. / 8.2 - The statue of Zeus at Olympia by Phidias, Greek coin. Archaeological Museum, Florence.



Map 9: Map of Antioch on the Orontes (capital of the Seleucid Empire) and the suburb of Daphne in present-day Turkey, where the temple and colossal statue of Apollo would have been located, which stood from 300 BC to 362 AD.



8.3 - Daphne was a suburb of Antioch and a recreational/residential area for Antioch's upper classes. It also contained the Sanctuary of Daphne, which housed a colossal cult statue of Apollo made by the artist Bryaxis in the 4th century BC. This tetradrachm of Antiochus IV is widely believed to show the statue as it would have appeared around 166 BC.



8.4 – The Colossus of Apollo/Sun in Constantinople, as it appears on the Tabula Peutingeriana and in a modern recreation. / 8.5 – Reconstruction of the imperial statue and porphyry column in the Forum of Constantine in Constantinople, 324–330 AD.





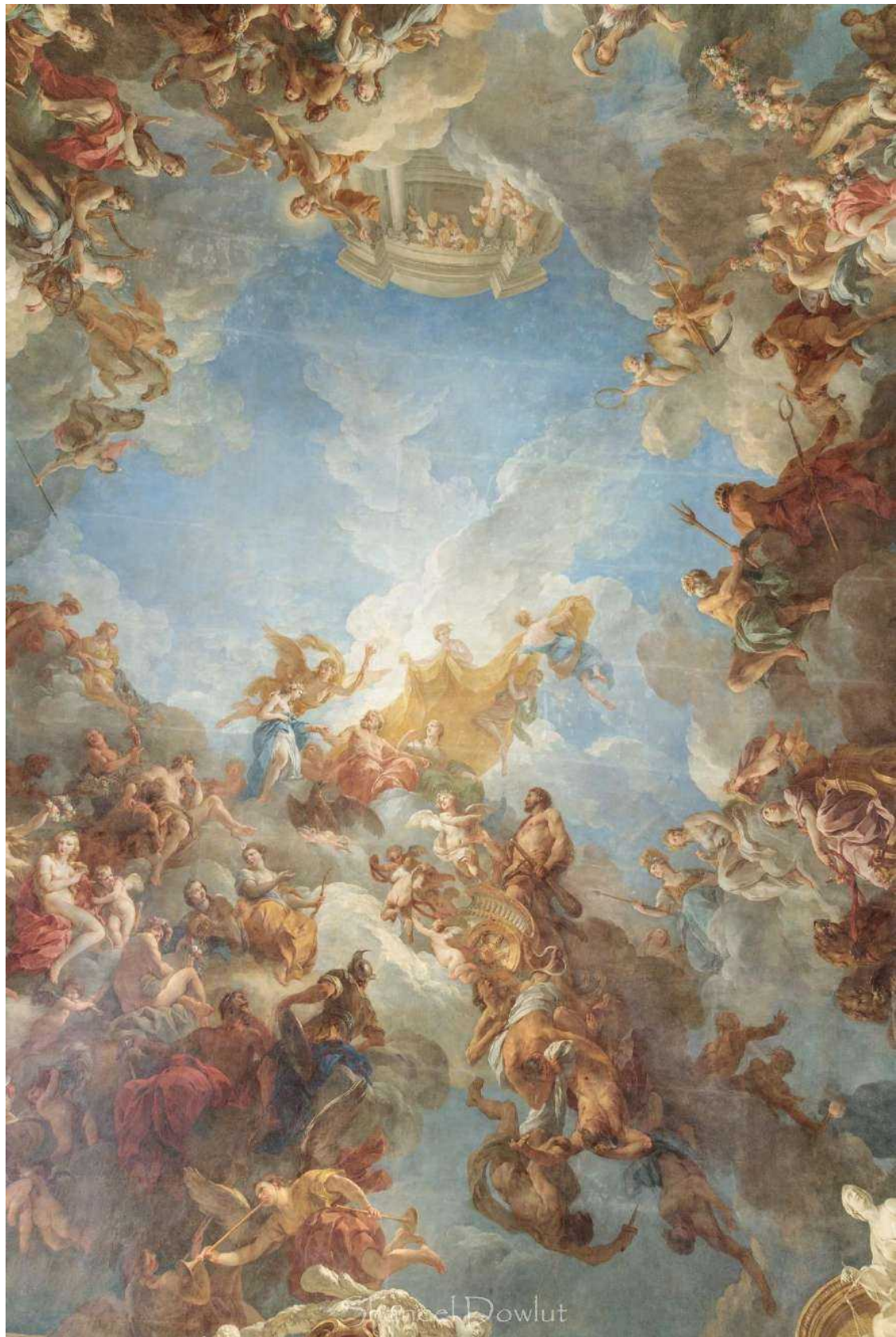
8.6 - The portrait of Louis XIV in his coronation robes was painted in 1701 by the French painter Hyacinthe Rigaud, commissioned by the king, who wanted to fulfill his grandson Philip V's wish to have a portrait of him in Spain. Louis XIV decided to keep it at Versailles in the Salon d'Apollo (Throne Room), and since then it has become the king's most famous portrait.



8.7 – Versailles by Pierre Patte, 1668.



8.8 - The Throne Room: Apollo in the chariot of the Sun accompanied by the personification of France and the Seasons.



8.9 - The Hercules Room was completed in 1736 with a painted ceiling called *The Apotheosis of Hercules* by François Lemoyne. The painting gave the room its name. Apotheosis implies the elevation of a human being to divine status. Here, the Gods and Goddesses of Olympus have gathered for the arrival of Hercules after his labors elevated him to the rank of god. In the center, Hercules, carrying a club, arrives in his chariot at Mount Olympus, where Jupiter offers him his daughter Hebe in marriage. This piece was seen as a metaphor for the French king's merits.



9.0 - La Sala de Hércules es la última sala construida por Luis XIV para exhibir la gran pintura de Veronese conocida como *La comida en la casa de Simón*. Encima se encuentra el techo más grande pintado en Europa que representa unas 140 figuras de los Dioses y Diosas del Olimpo.



9.1 - The "Fountain of Apollo" (1668-1670) was designed by Charles Le Brun and sculpted by John-Baptiste Tuby. Apollo emerges from the darkness of the night and the sea, and drives the chariot of the sun across the sky. Four valiant horses pull the chariot. Apollo is accompanied by the tritons, fish-tailed sea gods and sons of the sea god Poseidon and his wife Amphitrite. They blow conch shells announcing the sunrise.





9.2 - "Apollo Attended by Nymphs" (1668), by Francois Girardon (1628-1715). While Girardon was developing the seven figures, he made a trip to Rome to gain additional inspiration from the Greek Hellenistic sculptures there. Apollo's face and upper torso were based on the famous Hellenistic "Apollo Belvedere" (Roman copy from 120-140 AD) in the Vatican. The figures and robes of the nymphs are also Hellenistic. The seated Apollo is being bathed by nymphs.

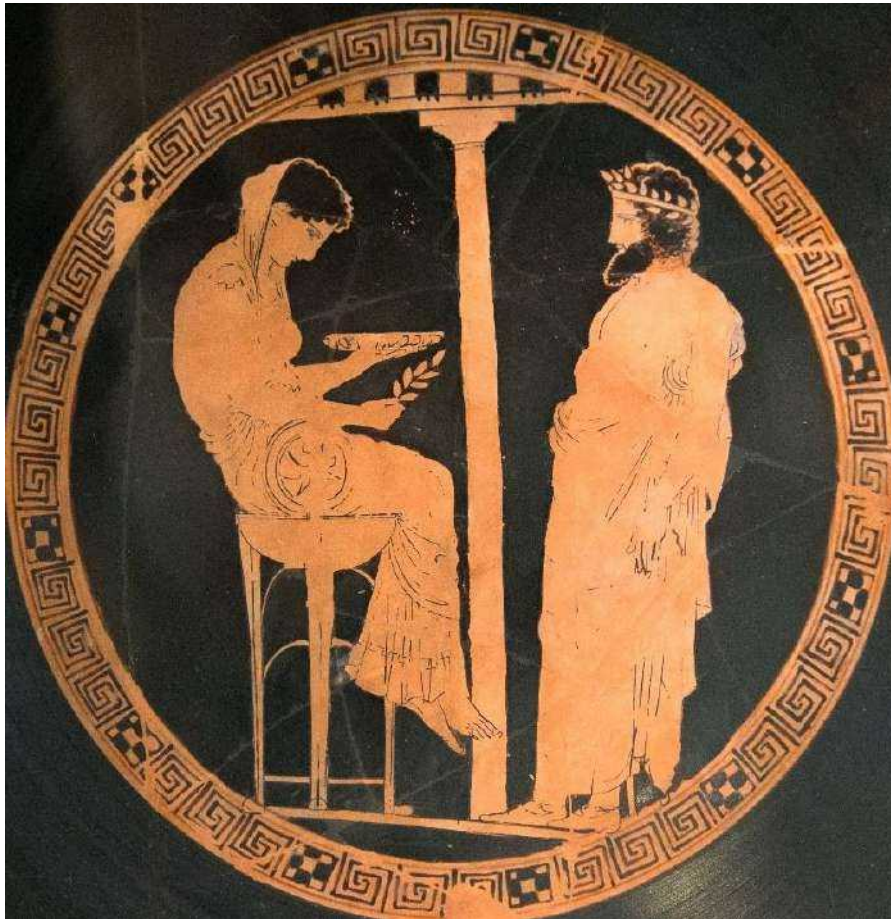




9.3 - Reverse of the United States seal, along with Charles Thomson's preliminary sketch of the obverse of the seal.



9.4 – The Honor Gate of the Palace of Versailles, where you can see the Sun, the symbol with which Louis XIV identified himself.



9.5 - Round painting from an Athenian red-figure cup, painted in 440-430 BC, found in Vulci, Etruria, depicting Aegeus consulting Themis/the Pythia.



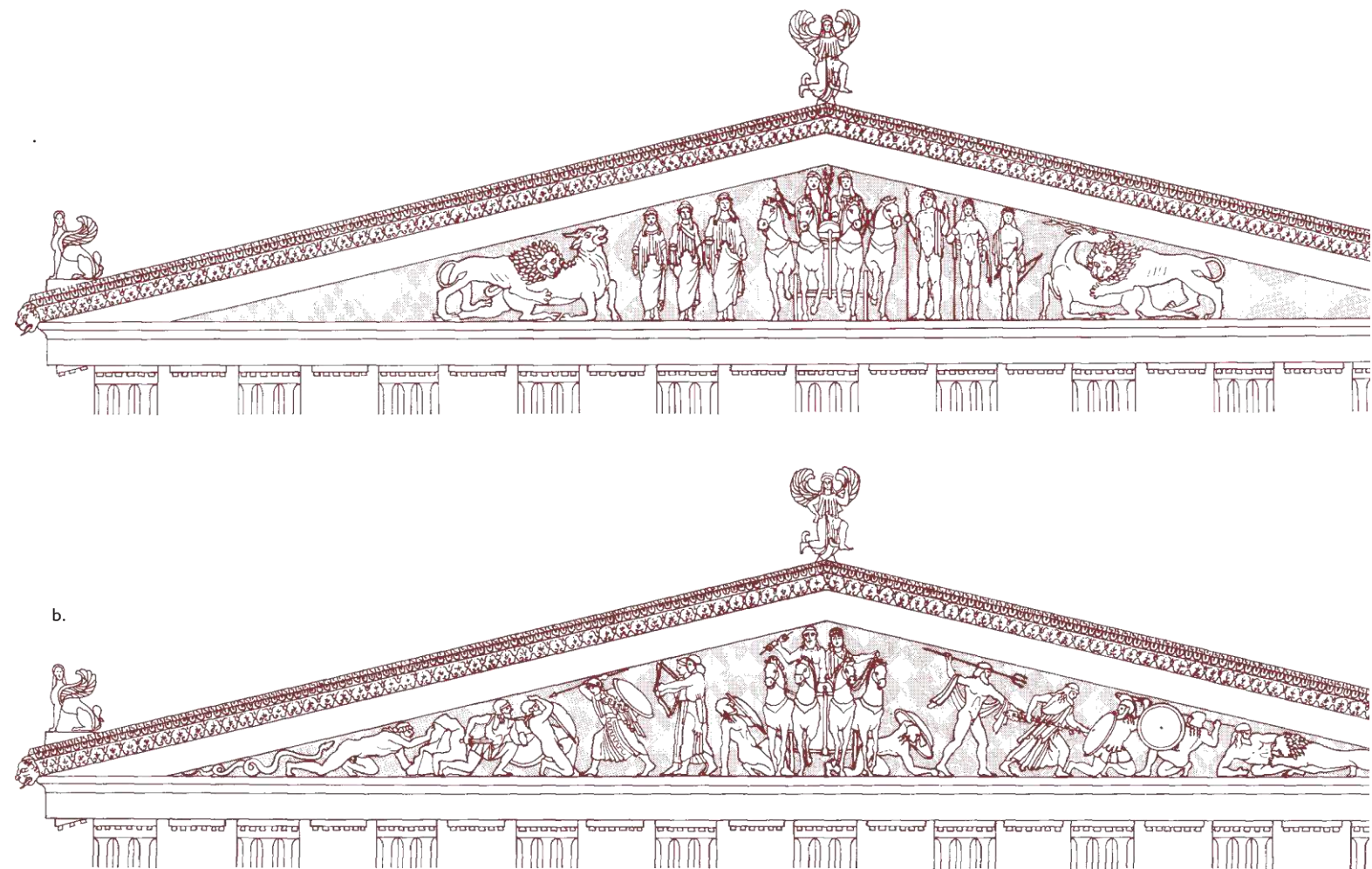
9.6 - Statues of the gods Apollo (left) and Dionysus (right), respectively, from the east and west pediments of the 4th-century BC Temple of Apollo in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (Delphi Museum).



9.7 - The Sphinx of Naxos, dedicated in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (Delphi Museum).



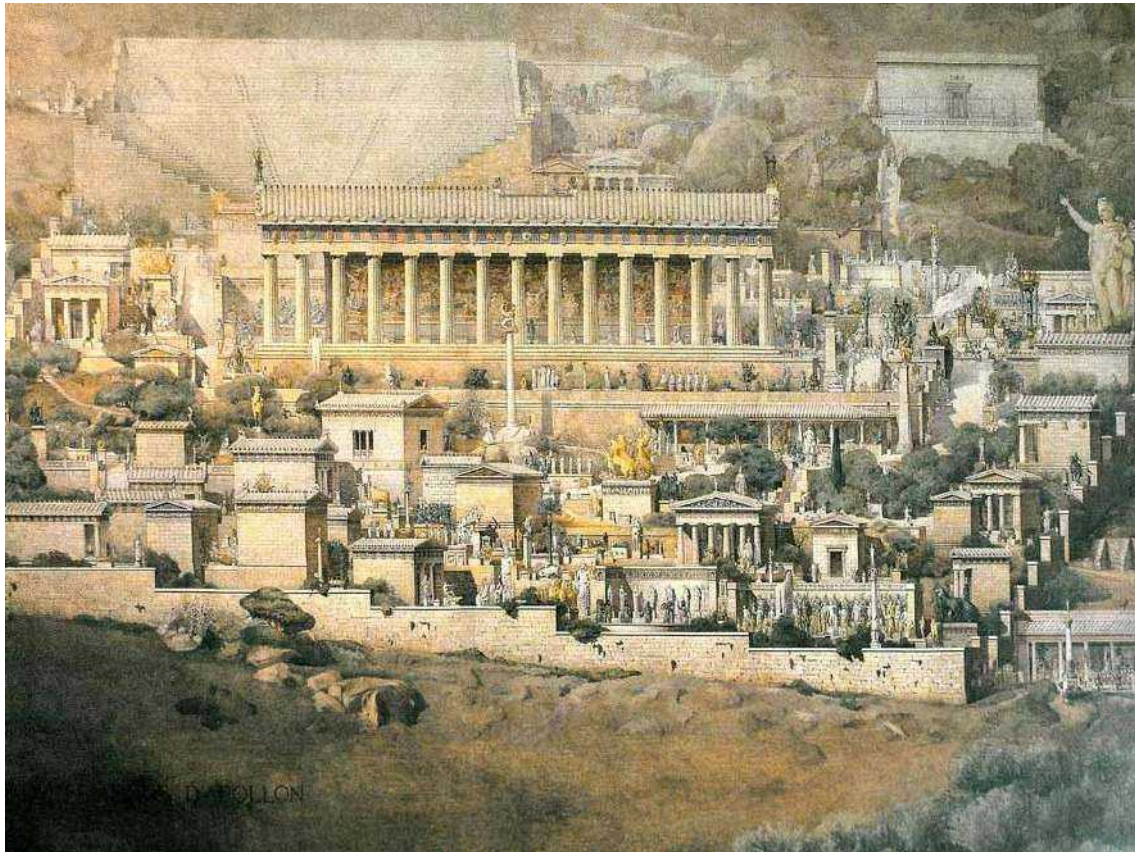
9.8 - *The Charioteer of Delphi* (Delphi Museum).



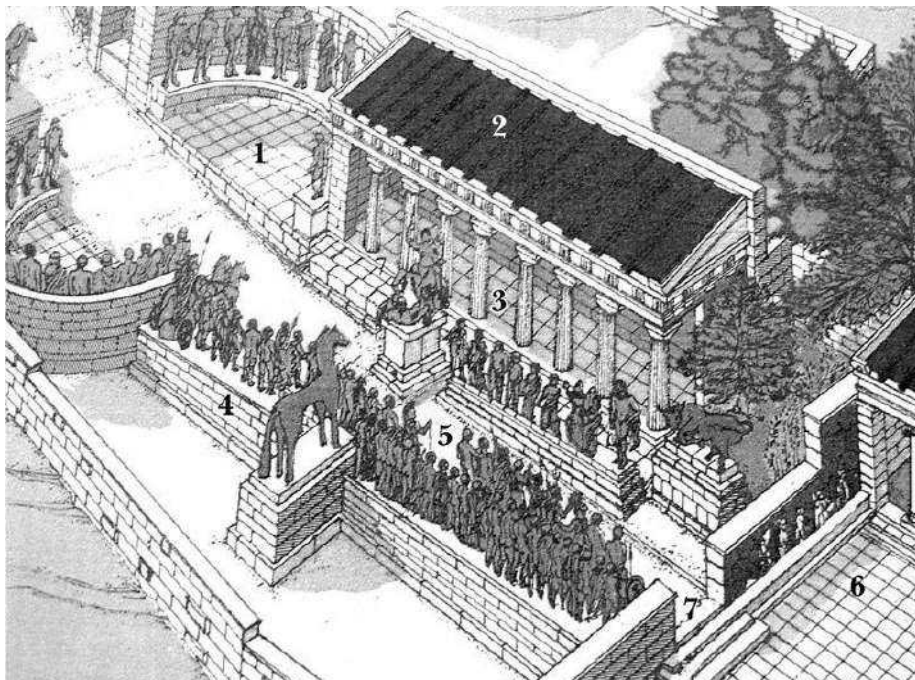
9.9 – Delphi, pediments of the Alcmaeonid Temple of Apollo, marble and limestone, dated 514 BC. (a) East pediment (marble): divine apparition of Apollo in a chariot. (b) West pediment (limestone): battle of the gods and giants.



10.0 - North frieze of the Siphnian Treasury, dated 530 BC, Sanctuary of Apollo, Delphi.



10.1 - Reconstruction of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, the Sacred Way and the various treasuries built by Greek cities to safeguard the offerings of their inhabitants.



10.2 - Reconstruction of the Athenian and Spartan offerings at the entrance to the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. 1-Argive semicircular dedication from the 4th century BC. 2-Spartan stoa from the late 5th century BC. 3-Arcadian offering from the 4th century BC. 4-Athenian dedication of a group of statues from the 5th century BC. 5-Spartan offering from the late 5th century BC for the victory at Aegospotami. 6-Later Roman Agora. 7-Entrance to the sanctuary of Apollo.



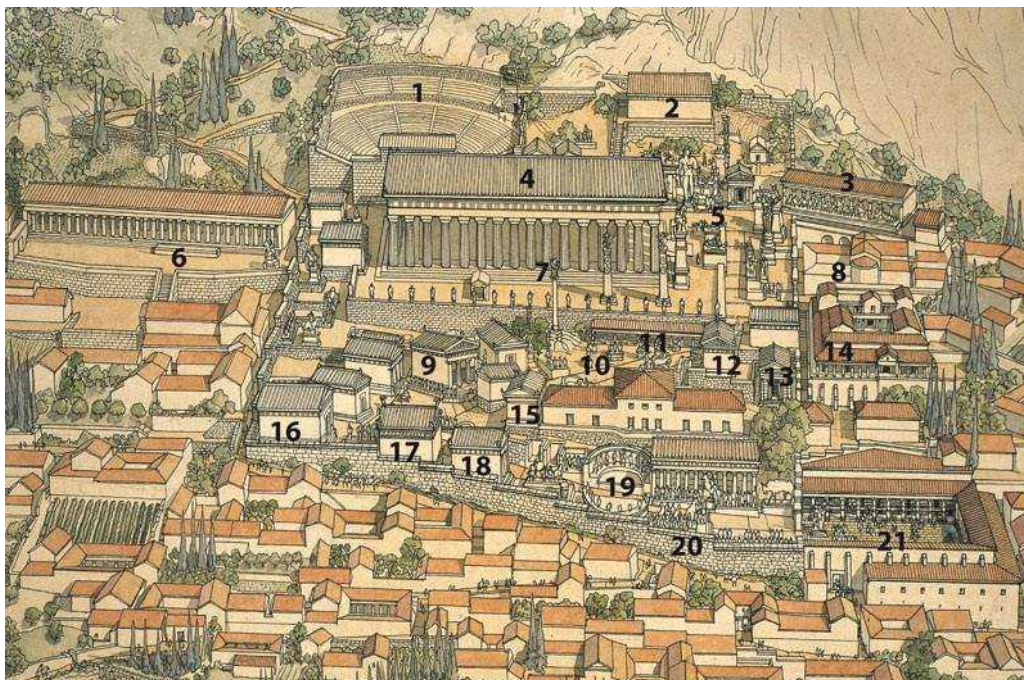
10.3 - Reconstruction of the temple terrace, the area in front of the Temple of Apollo in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, with indication of the main structures. 1-Charioteer from Delphi. 2-4th-century BC column with omphalos and tripod. 3-Stoa of Attalus. 4-Temple of Apollo. 5-Offering from Athens in the form of a palm tree. 6-Statues and columns of Sicilian rulers. 7-Column and statue of Aemilius Paullus. 8-Altar of Chios. 9-Apollo of Salamis. 10-Rhodian statue of Helios. 11-Statue of Attalus II and Eumenes II from Pergamon. 12-Access ramp for those coming from the lower part of the sanctuary of Apollo. 13-Serpentine Column of Plataea.



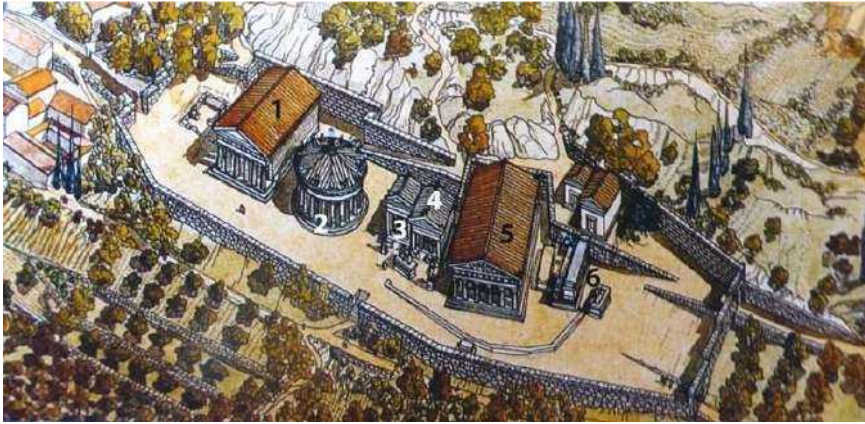
10.4 – The Omphalos. Delphi Archaeological Museum.



10.5 - An aquarelle reconstruction of the ancient city and sanctuaries of Delphi, indicating the main areas. 1-Mount Parnassus. 2-Stadium. 3-Sanctuary of Apollo. 4-City of Delphi. 5-Castalian Fountain. 6-Gymnasium. 7-Sanctuary of Athena.



10.6 - Aquarelle reconstruction of the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, indicating the main structures. 1-Theater. 2-Lesche of Cnidus. 3-Stoa of Attalus. 4-Temple of Apollo. 5-Temple terrace. 6-Western Stoa. 7-Sphinx of Naxos. 8-Roman baths. 9-Treasury of Athens. 10-Aire. 11-Stoa of the Athenians. 12-Corinthian Treasury. 13-Treasury of Cyrene. 14-Roman house. 15-Treasury of Cnidus. 16-Theban Treasury. 17-Treasury of Siphnos. 18-Treasury of Sicyon. 19-Argive statues. 20-Boundary wall of the sanctuary, after 548 BC. 21-Roman Agora.



10.7 - Aquarelle reconstruction of the sanctuary of Athena at Delphi, with indication of the main structures. 1-Temple of Athena, 4th century BC. 2-Tolos. 3-Massaly Treasury. 4-Doric Treasury. 5-Temple of Athena, 6th century BC. 6-Altars.



10.8/10.9 – Panoramic view of the ruins of Delphi.



11.0/11.1 – Panoramic view of the Temple of Apollo. / 11.2 – Panoramic view of the Sanctuary of Athena at Delphi.



Map 12 – Greece, its colonies in Asia and its main ethnic divisions.



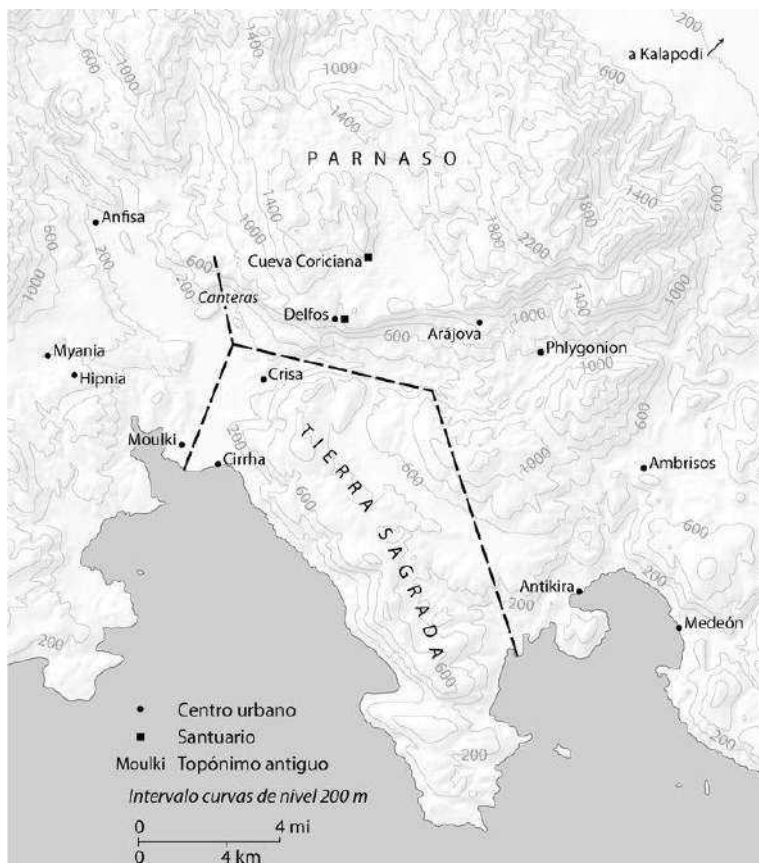
Map 13 – Magna Grecia (Greek colonies in Italy).

Greeks of the Northwest

Achaean

Doric

Ionic



Map 14 – Delphi and its surroundings.



11.2 - A section of a relief from a chapel in the Temple of Seti I, depicting Horus. Abydos, Egypt. 19th Dynasty (1292-1186 BC).

THE EYE OF HORUS

Horus was an ancient sky god whose eyes were said to be the sun and the moon. However, he soon became strongly associated with the sun and the sun god Ra as Ra-Horakhty ("Ra, who is Horus of the two horizons"), while Thoth was associated with the moon. An ancient myth describes a battle between Horus and Set in which Horus's right eye was gouged out and Seth lost his testicles. Thoth magically restored Horus's eye, at which point he was given the name "Wadjet" ("the restored wholeness or unity"). In this myth, it is specifically stated that it is Horus's left eye that was gouged out, thus the myth relates to the waxing and waning of the moon, during which the moon appears to have been torn from the sky before being restored once each lunar month.

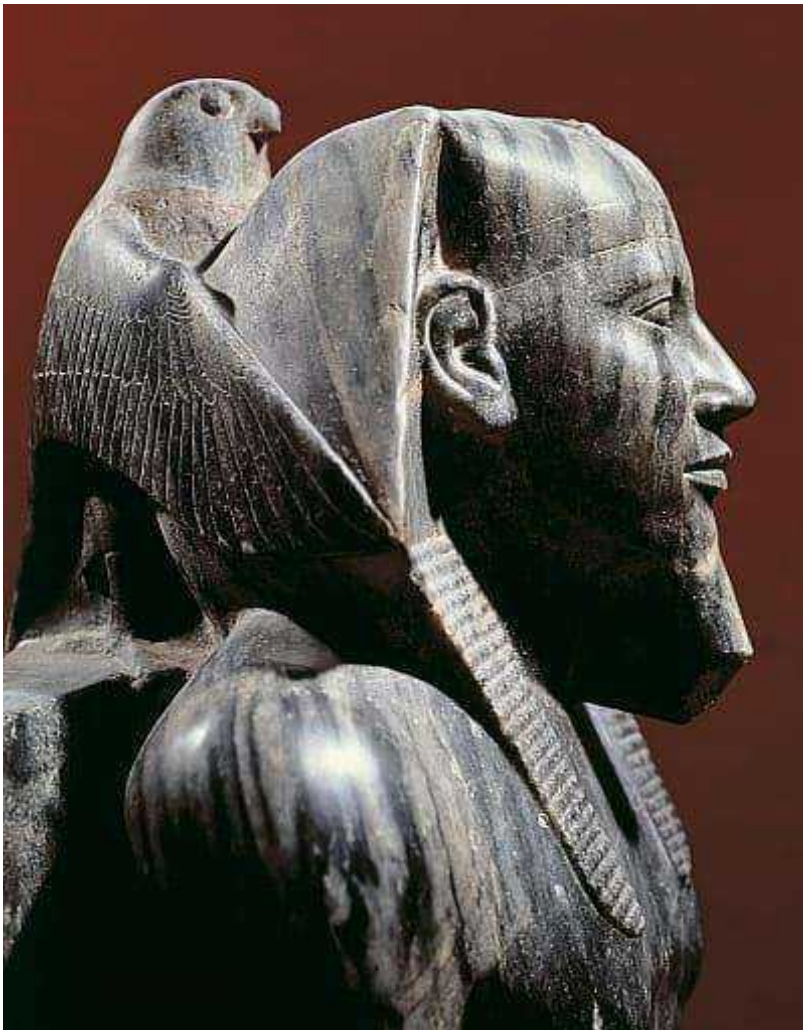
Thus, the eye became the symbol of the victory of the god Horus, a victory that represents the triumph of good over evil. The representation of the Eye of Horus is a cross between a human eye and a falcon's eye. Both symbolize an order that is in constant danger of extinction and must be restored to a new state. The presentation of the Eye of Horus by the pharaoh or priest had the same basic meaning as the presentation of Ma'at. This ritual gesture was visible proof that all threats to order had been eliminated, and that justice and harmony once again ruled. Thus, the Eye of Horus begins to intertwine with the idea of Ma'at, the Egyptian concept of cosmic order. Ma'at combines concepts of order, harmony, morality, and justice, and the Eye of Horus unites it all.

The Eye of Horus was believed to have healing and protective power and was worn as a protective amulet. It was also used as a measurement notation, particularly for measuring ingredients in medicines and pigments. The symbol was divided into six parts, representing the breaking of the Eye of Horus into six pieces by Seth. Each piece was associated with one of the six senses and a specific fraction. More complex fractions were created by adding the symbols together. It is interesting to note that if the pieces are added together, the total is $\frac{63}{64}$, not 1. Some suggestions mention that the remaining $\frac{1}{64}$ represents the magic used by Thoth to restore the eye, or illustrates the notion that nothing is truly perfect.

In addition to their mathematical significance, each part had a connection to a different sense. The right side of the eye is associated with the sense of smell because it is closest to the nose and resembles the organ. The pupil represents the sense of sight, while the eyebrow represents thought because it can be used to express our thoughts. The left side of the eye represents the sense of hearing because it points toward the ear and resembles a musical instrument. The curved tail corresponds to the sense of taste because it resembles a sprout from a planted stalk of wheat or grain.



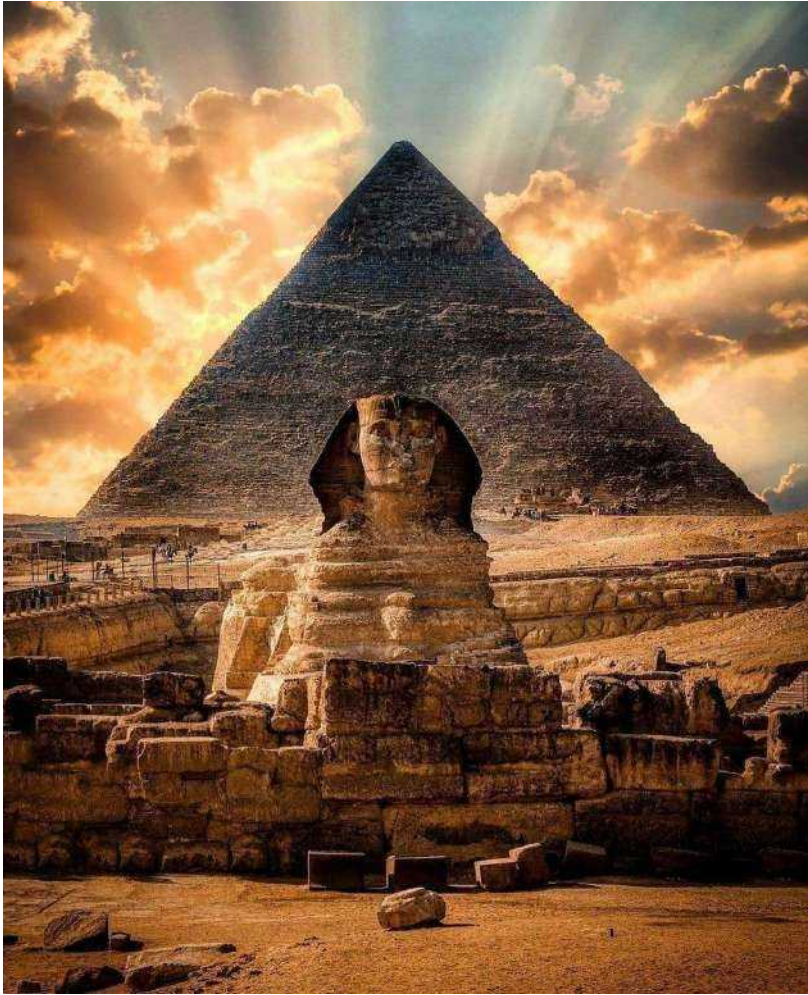
11.3 - Amulet from the tomb of Tutankhamun, 14th century BC, incorporating the Eye of Horus beneath a disc and a crescent symbol representing the moon.



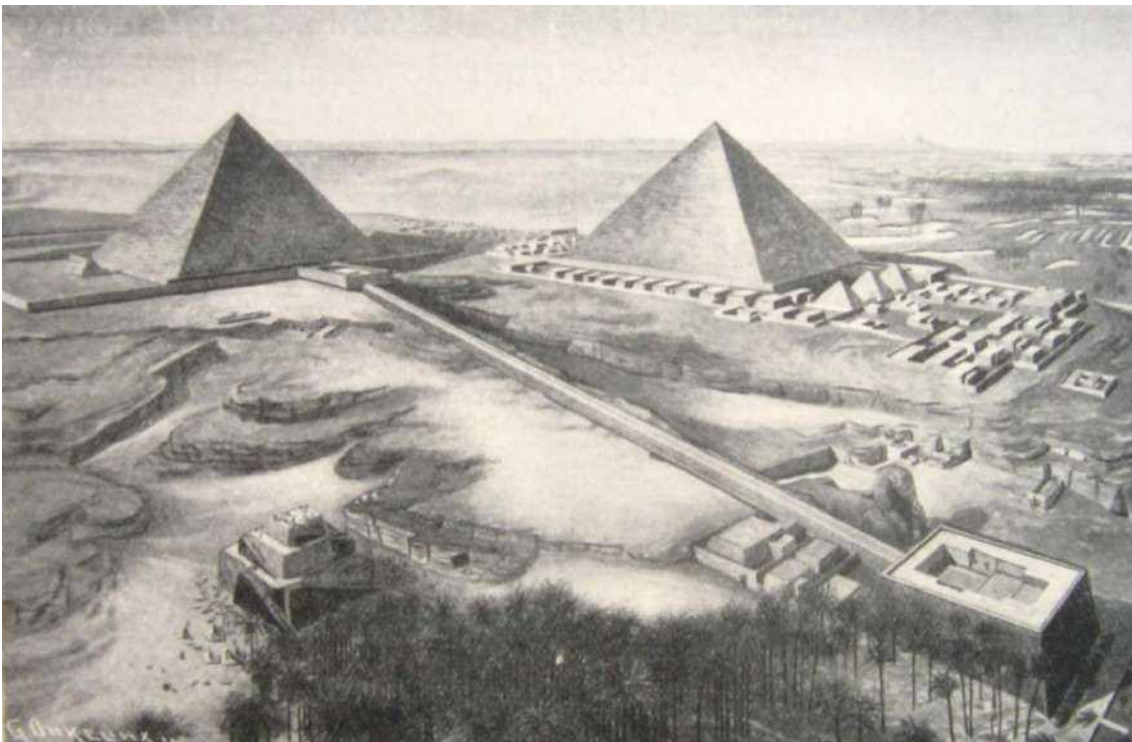
11.4 - Khafre Enthroned is a Ka-statue of the Pharaoh Khafre, who reigned during the Fourth Dynasty of ancient Egypt (ca. 2570 BC). It highlights Khafre's importance and power as a ruler. The statue was carved for the Pharaoh's valley temple near the Great Sphinx, a part of the necropolis (mortuary city) used in funerary rituals. The god Horus, depicted as a ringed falcon, protects the back of Khafre's head with his outstretched wings, another reference to a united Egypt. In addition to the sight of the falcon god (not seen from the front) resting behind his head, with a close connection to the reigning pharaoh being the embodiment of divinity, Khafre's feet rest on a flat platform carved with nine arches representing the king's and kingdom's rule over enemy tribes, the Nine Arches.



11.5 - Khafre appears seated on his royal throne, his gaze hieratic and infinite. His hands rest on each leg, his right hand formed into a fist, holding a scroll, a status symbol, and his left hand with his fingers extended in a gesture of acceptance, as if ready to receive offerings for his rebirth. This Old Kingdom statue plays an important role in Egyptian tombs as a substitute dwelling place for the pharaoh's ka, the life force that accompanied a person with a kind of other self. After death, the ka leaves the body for the afterlife, but it still needs a place to rest: the statue. It would represent an iconographic program of the funerary temple, as a synthesis of earthly and celestial power.



11.6 - The Great Sphinx of Giza and the Pyramid of Khafre, commissioned by Khafre himself to enhance the symbolism of the immortality of the soul, with the pharaoh's body residing within the pyramid for his journey to the world of the dead, along with the funerary complex of Khafre or Khafre, better known as the Valley Temple, now in ruins. It is worth noting that since the 14th century BC, during the time of Thutmose, the Great Sphinx of Giza was identified with Horus, as recounted on the Sphinx Stele.





11.7 - By then, in the 14th century BC, the pyramids at Giza were a thousand years old, and neglect had brought sand to large sections of the ancient Memphite necropolis, and the abundance of wild animals had turned it into a hunting ground. But ancestor worship was beginning to revive some of the complexes, and Thutmose's father, Amenophis II, had already built an ancestor temple next to the Sphinx. It was there that young Thutmose claimed to have had a dream during a hunting trip, in which the Sphinx promised him the throne in exchange for clearing it of the sand that was half-burying it. As fourth in line, he had little chance, but so it was. This is recounted on the Sphinx Stele.



THE DREAM OF THE STELE OF THE SPHINX: Horemakhet is the name of Horus.

Year I, third month of the first season, day 19, under the Majesty of Horus, the Mighty Bull, begetting radiance, (the Favourite) of the Two Goddesses, enduring in Kingship like Atum, the Golden Horus, Mighty of Sword, repelling the Nine Bows; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Men-kheperu-Ra, the Son of Ra, Thothmes IV, Shining in Diadems; beloved of (Amon), given life, stability and dominion, like Ra, for ever.

Live the Good God, the Son of Atum, Protector of Hor-akhty, Living Image of the All-Lord Sovereign, Begotten of Ra, Excellent Heir of Kheperi, beautiful of face like his father, who came forth equipped with the form of Horus upon him, a King who... favour with the Ennead of the Gods; who purifies Heliopolis, who satisfies Ra; who beautifies Memphis, who presents Truth to Atum, who offers it to Him who is South of his Wall (Ptah), who makes a monument by daily offering to the God who created all things, seeking benefits for the Gods of the South and the North, who builds their houses of limestone, who endows all their offerings, Son of Atum of His Body, Thothmes IV, Shining in Diadems like Ra, Heir of Horus upon His Throne, Men-kheperu-Ra, given life.

When His Majesty was a stripling, like Horus, the Youth in Khemmis, his beauty was like the Protector of His Father, he seemed like the God himself. The army rejoiced because of love for him, and he repeated the circuit of his might like the Son of Nut and all the princes and all the great ones...

Behold, he did a thing which gave him pleasure upon the highlands of the Memphite Nome, upon its southern and northern road shooting at a target with copper bolts, hunting lions and the small game of the desert, coursing in his chariot, his horses being swifter than the wind, together with two of his followers, while not a soul knew it.

Now, when his hour came for giving rest to his followers, it was always at the Setepet (Sanctuary of Hor-em-akhet), beside Seker in Rostaw, Rennutet in Iat-Ta-Mut(?)... in the desert (or necropolis), Mut of the Southern... (Neit?), Mistress of the Southern Wall. Sekhmet, presiding over the Mountain, the Splendid Place of the Beginning of Time, opposite the Lords of Kher-ahah (Babylon), the sacred road of the Gods to the Western Necropolis of Iwn (Heliopolis).

Now, the very great statue of Kheperi rests in this place the great in power, the splendid in strength, upon which the shadow of Ra tarries. The quarters of Memphis, and all the cities which are by him come to him, raising their hands for him in praise to his face, bearing oblations for his Ka.

One of those days it came to pass that the King's Son Thothmes came, coursing at the time of mid-day, and he rested in the shadow of this Great God. Sleep seized him at the hour when the sun was in its zenith, and he found the Majesty of this Revered God speaking with his own mouth, as a father speaks with his son, saying: 'Behold thou me, my son, Thothmes. I am thy father, Hor-em-akhet-Kheperi-Ra-Atum; I will give to thee my Kingdom upon earth at the head of the living. Thou shalt wear the White Crown and the Red Crown upon the Throne of Geb, the Hereditary Prince. The land shall be thine, in its length and in its breadth, that which the eye of the All-Lord shines upon. The food of the Two Lands shall be thine, the great tribute of all countries, the duration of a long period of years. My face is directed to you, my heart is to you;

Thou shalt be to me the protector of my affairs, because I am ailing in all my limbs. The sands of the Sanctuary, upon which I am, have reached me; turn to me in order to do what I desire. I know that thou art my son, my protector; behold; I am with thee, I am thy leader.'

When he finished this speech, the King's Son awoke, hearing this..., he understood the words of the God, and he put them in his heart. He said: 'Come, let us hasten to our houses in the city; they shall protect the oblations for this God which we bring for him (or that we shall protect... and that we may bring): oxen... and all young vegetables; and we shall give praise to Wennefer... Khafra, the statue made for Atum-Hor-em-akhet...'



11.8 - The Dream Stele, between the claws of the Great Sphinx of Giza.

11.9 - Polychrome relief showing the sun god Re next to the goddess Maat, wearing her characteristic ostrich feather.



1. While Julian was thus beginning to put Gaul into a better condition, and while Orfitus was still governor of the second province, an obelisk was erected at Rome, in the Circus Maximus, concerning which, as this seems a convenient opportunity, I will mention a few particulars.

2. The city of Thebes, in Egypt, built in remote ages, with enormous walls, and celebrated also for entrances by a hundred gates, was from this circumstance called by its founders ἑκατόμπυλος (Hecatompulos); and from the name of this city the whole district is known as Thebais.

6. In this city of Thebes, among many works of art and different structures recording the tales relating to the Egyptian deities, we saw several obelisks in their places, and others which had been thrown down and broken; which the ancient kings, when elated at some victory or at the general prosperity of their affairs, had caused to be hewn out of mountains in distant parts of the world, and erected in honour of the gods, to whom they solemnly consecrated them.

7. Now an obelisk is a rough stone, rising to a great height, shaped like a pillar in the stadium; and it tapers upwards in imitation of a sunbeam, keeping its quadrilateral shape, till it rises almost to a point, being made smooth by the hand of a sculptor.

8. On these obelisks the ancient authority of elementary wisdom has caused innumerable marks of strange forms all over them, which are called hieroglyphics.

9. For the workmen, carving many kinds of birds and beasts, some even such as must belong to another world, in order that the recollection of the exploits which the obelisk was designed to commemorate might reach to subsequent ages, showed by them the accomplishment of vows which the kings had made.

10. For it was not the case then as it is now, that the established number of letters can distinctly express whatever the human mind conceives; nor did the ancient Egyptians write in such a manner; but each separate character served for a separate noun or verb, and sometimes even for an entire sense.

11. Of which fact the two following may for the present be sufficient instances: by the figure of a vulture they indicate the name of nature; because naturalists declare that no males are found in this class of bird. And by the figure of a bee making honey they indicate a king; showing by such a sign that stings as well as sweetness are the characteristics of a ruler; and there are many similar emblems.

12. And because the flatterers, who were continually whispering into the ear of Constantius, kept always affirming that when Augustus Octavianus had brought two obelisks from Heliopolis, a city of Egypt, one of which was placed in the Circus Maximus, and the other in the Campus Martius, he yet did not venture to touch or move this one which has just been brought to Rome, being alarmed at the greatness of such a task; I would have those, who do not know the truth, learn that the ancient emperor, though he moved several obelisks, left this one untouched, because it was especially dedicated to the Sun-god, and was set up within the precincts of his magnificent temple, which it was impious to profane; and of which it was the most conspicuous ornament.

13. But Constantine deeming that a consideration of no importance, had it torn up from its place, and thinking rightly that he should not be offering any insult to religion if he removed a splendid work from some other temple to dedicate it to the gods at Rome, which is the temple of the whole world, let it lie on the ground for some time while arrangements for its removal were being prepared. And when it had been carried down the Nile, and landed at Alexandria, a ship of a burden hitherto unexampled, requiring three hundred rowers to propel it, was built to receive it.

14. And when these preparations were made, and after the aforementioned emperor had died, the enterprise began to cool. However, after a time it was at last put on board ship, and conveyed over sea, and up the stream of the Tiber, which seemed as it were frightened, lest its own winding waters should hardly be equal to conveying a present from the almost unknown Nile to the walls which itself cherished. At last the obelisk reached the village of Alexandria, three miles from the city; and then it was placed in a cradle, and drawn slowly on, and brought through the Ostran gate and the public fish-market to the Circus Maximus.

15. The only work remaining to be done was to raise it, which was generally believed to be hardly, if at all, practicable. And vast beams having been raised on end in a most dangerous manner, so that they looked like a grove of machines, long ropes of huge size were fastened to them, darkening the very sky with their density, as they formed a web of innumerable threads; and into them the great stone itself, covered over as it was with elements of writing, was bound, and gradually raised into the empty air, and long suspended, many thousands of men turning it round and round like a millstone, till it was at last placed in the middle of the square; and on it was placed a brazen sphere, made brighter with plates of gold: and as that was immediately afterwards struck by lightning, and destroyed, a brazen figure like a torch was placed on it, also plated with gold—to look as if the torch were fully alight.

16. Subsequent ages also removed other obelisks; one of which is in the Vatican, a second in the garden of Sallust; and two in the monument of Augustus.

17. But the writing which is engraven on the old obelisk in the Circus, we have set forth below in Greek characters, following in this the work of Hermapion:—

ΑΡΧΗΝ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΝΟΤΙΟΝ ΔΙΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΜΕΝΑ

ΕΧΕΙ

ΣΤΙΧΟΕ ΠΡΩΤΟΕ ΤΑΔΕ.

18. The first line, beginning on the south side, bears this interpretation—"The Sun to Ramestes the king—I have given to thee to reign with joy over the whole earth; to thee whom the Sun and Apollo love—to thee, the mighty truth-loving son of Heron—the god-born ruler of the habitable earth; whom the Sun has chosen above all men, the valiant warlike King Ramestes. Under whose power, by his valour and might, the whole world is placed. The King Ramestes, the immortal son of the Sun."

19. The second line is—"The mighty Apollo, who takes his stand upon truth, the lord of the diadem, he who has honoured Egypt by becoming its master, adorning Heliopolis, and having created the rest of the world, and having greatly honoured the gods who have their shrines in the city of the Sun; whom the son loves."

20. The third line—"The mighty Apollo, the all-brilliant son of the Sun, whom the Sun chose above all others, and to whom the valiant Mars gave gifts. Thou whose good fortune abideth for ever. Thou whom Ammon loves. Thou who hast filled the temple of the Phœnix with good things. Thou to whom the gods have given long life. Apollo the mighty son of Heron, Ramestes the king of the world. Who has defended Egypt, having subdued the foreign enemy. Whom the Sun loves. To whom the gods have given long life—the master of the world—the immortal Ramestes."

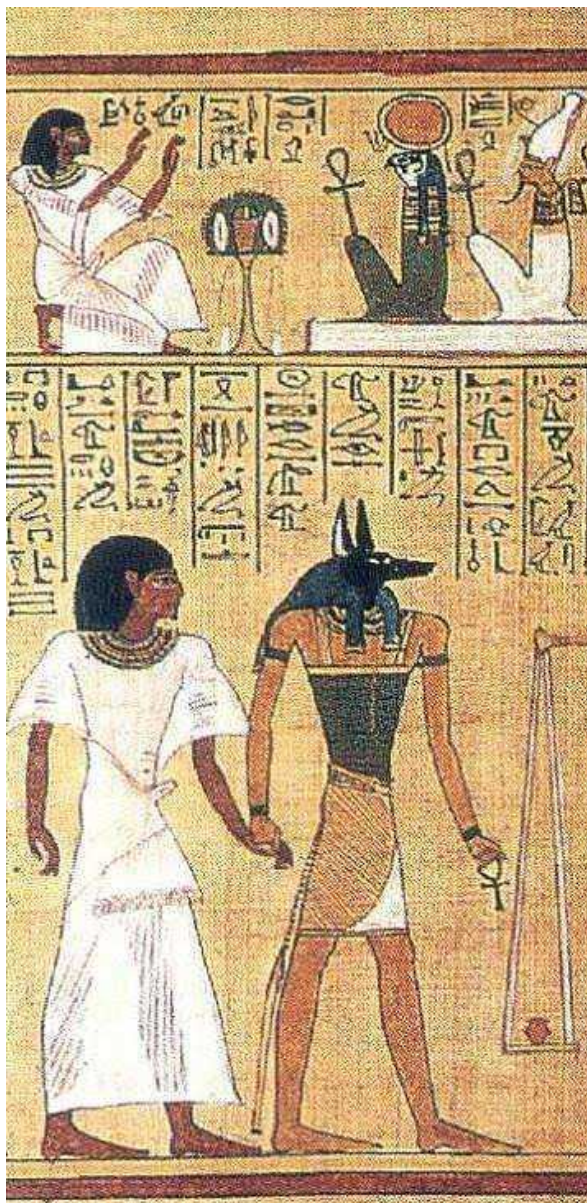
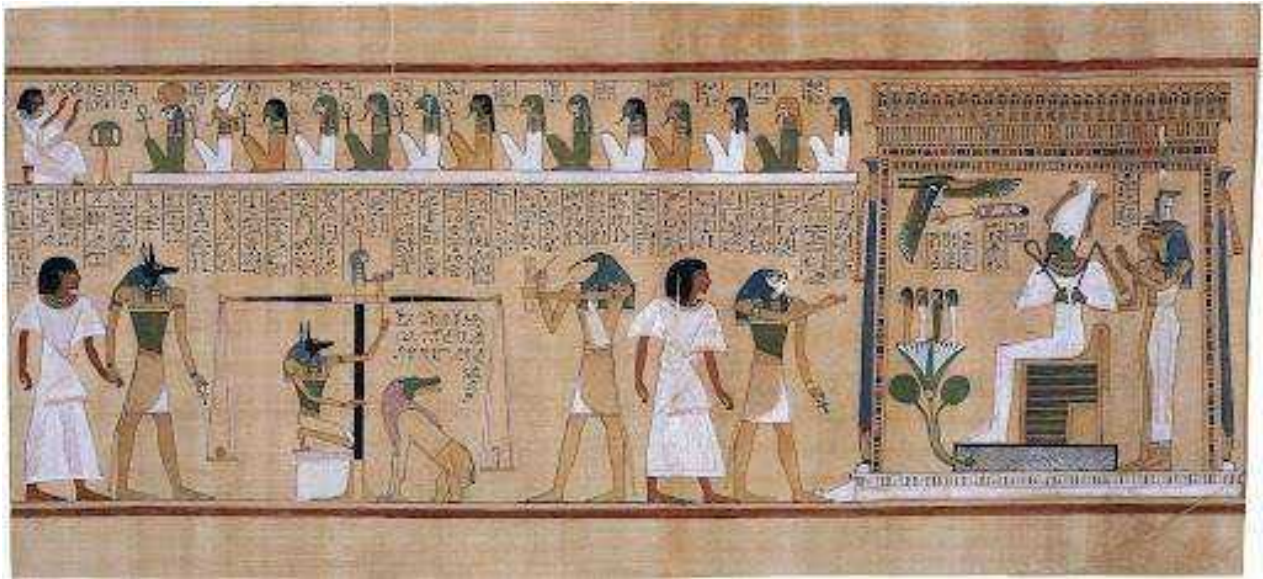
21. Another second line—"The Sun, the great God, the master of heaven. I have given unto thee a life free from satiety. Apollo, the mighty master of the diadem; to whom nothing is comparable. To whom the lord of Egypt has erected many statues in this kingdom. And has made the city of Heliopolis as brilliant as the Sun himself, the master of heaven. The son of the Sun, the king living for ever, has co-operated in the completion of this work."

22. A third line—"I, the Sun, the god, the master of heaven, have given to Ramestes the king might and authority over all. Whom Apollo the truth-lover, the master of time, and Vulcan the father of the gods hath chosen above others by reason of his courage. The all-rejoicing king, the son of the Sun, and beloved by the Sun."



23. The first line, looking towards the east—"The great God of Heliopolis, the mighty Apollo who dwelleth in Heaven, the son of Heron whom the Sun hath guided. Whom the gods have honoured. He who ruleth over all the earth: whom the Sun has chosen before all others. The king valiant by the favour of Mars. Whom Ammon loveth, and the all-shining god, who hath chosen him as a king for everlasting." And so on.

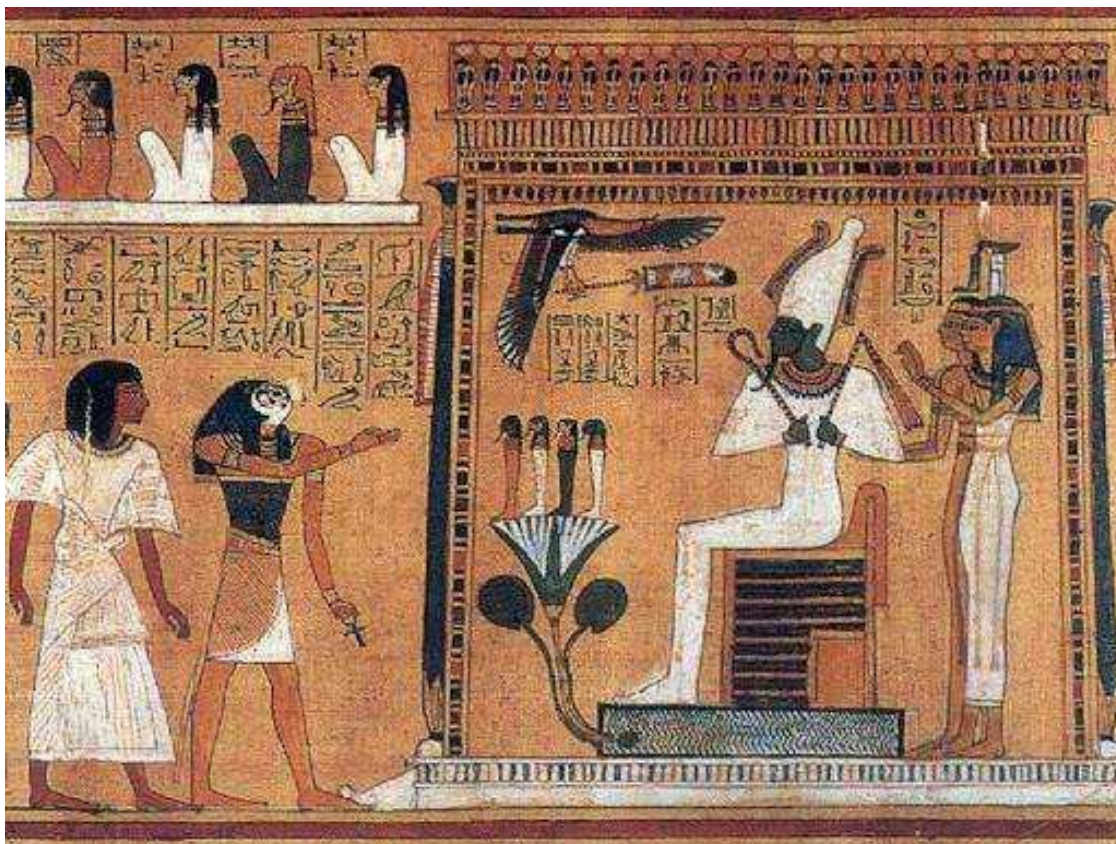
12.0 - The obelisk, known as the Flaminio Obelisk or the Popolo Obelisk is the second oldest and one of the tallest obelisks in Rome (about 24 meters high, or 36 meters including its plinth).



12.1 - Hunefer Papyrus. Weighing of the Soul. British Museum. (i) - Anubis, the jackal god, is in charge of leading the deceased to the Hall of the Double Maat or the Hall of the Two Truths. In the small upper register, Hunefer worships a group of 42 divinities. Before them, he recites a series of negative formulas by which he denies having performed a series of actions disapproved of in Egyptian society. These include murder, theft, religious transgressions, as well as certain norms of social coexistence such as gossip, destroying food, or slander. As we can see, good actions do not count, but those considered evil are not committed. 12.1 (ii) – In the lower register, Anubis himself performs a weighing on a scale. In one of the plates, he placed the heart of the deceased, which symbolized the actions he had performed in life, and in the other, an ostrich feather, symbolizing Maat, the goddess of truth. If the heart and Maat remain in balance, the test is positive, demonstrating that Hunefer had practiced correct behavior. If the balance had been unbalanced, the monster, a mixture of crocodile, lion, and hippopotamus, known as the Devourer of the Dead, would have swallowed him. This second death would have meant almost complete annihilation. The ibis-headed god Thoth records the result on a tablet.



12.1 (iii) - After the test, the deceased was triumphantly presented by the falcon-headed Horus to his father Osiris, the king of the dead. Osiris appears mummified and carrying the staff and whip, symbols of sovereign power. His throne rises above the lake of natron from which the lotus flower emerges with the four sons of Horus. Behind him are Isis and Nephthys.



Chronology

In the timeline from the Severan dynasty to the end of the third century, there is a gap in the minting of sun coins. The absence extends from Alexander Severus to the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, with a few exceptions. This fact defines a series of isolated moments whose characteristics allow us to establish a periodization. The following chart (reverse chronologically) based on Roman Imperial Coinage illustrates the period.

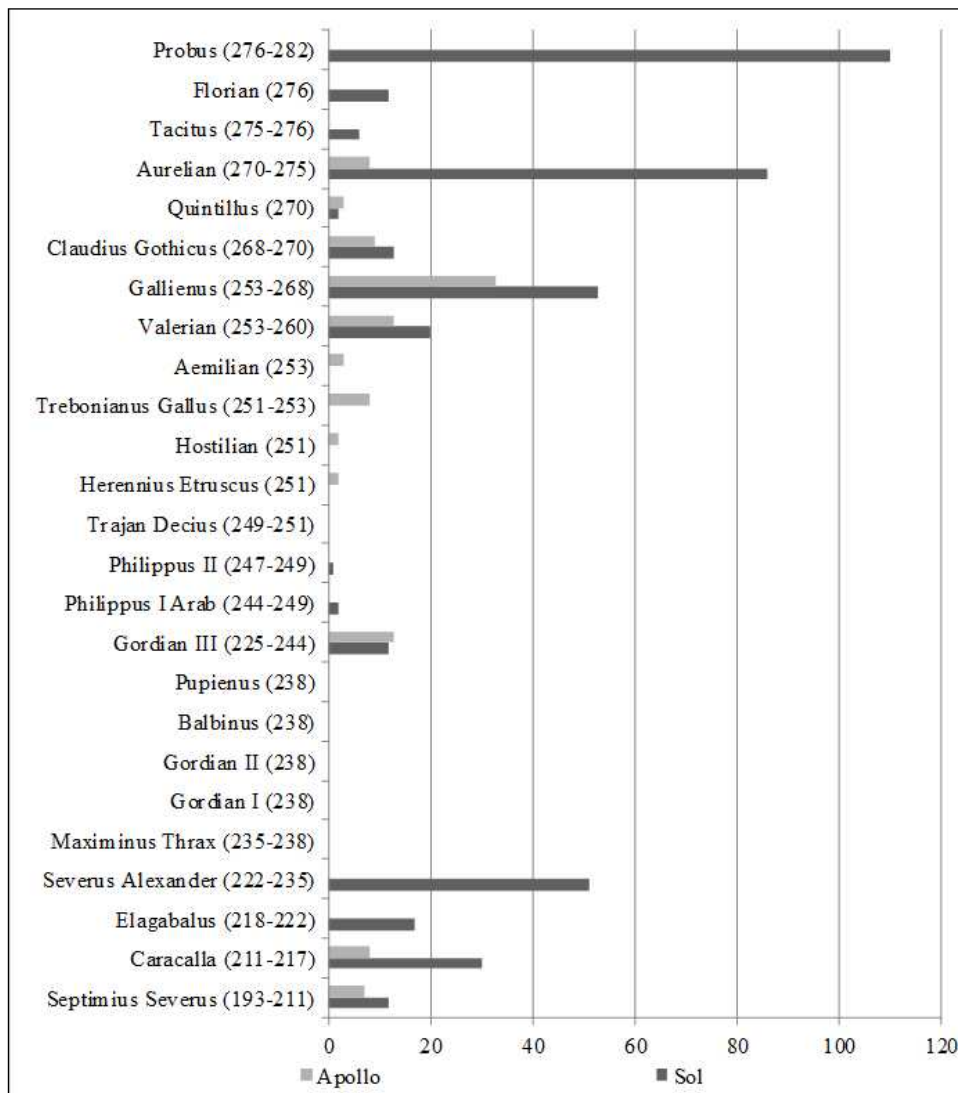


Table 1 – Apollo & Sun on coins of Roman Imperial Mintage.

Three exceptions can be noted in this "gap." First, regional coins that follow their own cycles depicting the sun god in cities such as Alexandria and Emesa under Verus Maximus (Caesar 236-238 AD). Second, the notable case of Gordian III (238-244 AD), whose propaganda about the *saeculum aureum* influenced later coinage with types referencing Rome's *aeternitas* alongside Sol. And third, there are some instances of Philip I revering the concept of *Aeternitas*. They follow Gordian's propaganda, with Sol depicted within the same framework of preservation (and regeneration) of the state.

It is worth noting that Jupiter, as well as Apollo and the Sun, disappeared from imperial coins twice: once just after the reign of Alexander Severus and then after Gordian III (or his immediate successors). However, it should be noted that this statement is based on corpuses such as the Roman Imperial Coin and does not apply to local mints. In any case, the disruption can be placed in the context of the period following the fall of the Severan dynasty. After the death of Alexander Severus (235 AD), confusion and fratricidal disputes had a negative impact on evergetism and public enterprises, including coinage.

Unlike the case of the second disruption, the first marked a radical break in religious monetary tradition after the fall of the Severan dynasty. This indirectly indicates a political shift underway and a possible change in propaganda after Alexander Severus. Three distinct phases can be identified: the Severan dynasty, Gordian III, and the second half of the third century. The second phase differs somewhat in the use of the concept *aeternitas* attached to Sol. Each of these phases places a different emphasis on imperial propaganda. The solar deity called Sol Invictus seems to refer to the third phase, combining traditional models, *aeternitas*, the use of *invictus* symbols on Sol coins, and martial symbols.

Contrary to the representation of Sol during the Severan dynasty, in the second half of the third century, the deity was represented with a more varied typology. Under the Afro-Syrian dynasty, the god was generally defined in legend by the traditional *cursus honorum* of the emperor or by the term *Oriens Aug.* In terms of iconography, the Severans standardized the semi-nude figure of Sol standing in a *chlamys* or *chiton*, carrying a whip (or globe) and with his hand raised. During the Severan dynasty, only the emperor Elagabalus used distinct legends mentioning the god Elagabal or Sol. Apart from Elagabalus, few variants exist. One of them is the bust of Sol-Helios under the legend *Pacator Orbis*, a new legend linked to ancient representations used during the Antonine dynasty.

Beginning in 235 AD, new forms were gradually incorporated into the iconography of the god. In the middle of the century, the legend of the *Aeternitas* appeared with the traditional Roman Sun (standing, radiated, naked, holding a globe). Later, more legends and iconographies were added: a solar-fronted quadriga (rare in earlier imperial iconography); linked to providence, bearing the legionary emblems; defeated enemies at the feet of the Sun; the god as the comes of the emperor; as the *claritas* of the emperors during the Tetrarchy... The traditional representation of the standing Sun, however, remains predominant. Most of the changes consist of a modification of the legend or the addition of new elements within the field or exergue.

The general tendency is for the representations to correspond to imperial propaganda. Although certain coinages merit specific analysis, the imperial message appears to be a legitimizing one of a martial nature, which gradually intensified in the third century. This evolution can be illustrated by the modifications to the military and provincial model that took place under Gallienus, the reunification of the *manu militari* under Aurelian, the multiple

internal wars, and the major reorganization undertaken by the Tetrarchy. Some of Aurelian's coinage can be understood in this context: *RESTITUT ORBIS* and *PACATOR ORBIS*. Regarding Gallienus (253-268 AD), the connection made by Lukas of Blois between the redistribution of imperial mints and military needs is particularly noteworthy. These changes triggered the decentralization of direct imperial control over coinage. This fact could be related to the subsequent situation of the Roman mint and the Emperor Aurelian's reaction to taking control of it in the early stages of his reign.

Regarding the different mints, reference should be made to the great disparity in the pace of minting between local and imperial centers. Regional coinage is clearly more dynamic, or at least varied, and in my opinion better reflects cultural trends than imperial coinage. In contrast, imperial mints provide superior information on propaganda policies and appear to be more attached to traditional usages. This can be clearly seen in Sol's imagery through the consistent use of the nude ephebic figure carrying a whip or a globe. In most cases, therefore, variation can be found in the interaction between legends and images within the framework of a specific point in time. The relationships between symbols and titles and chronology are crucial to understanding Sol's evolution in numismatics.

A significant percentage of known representations of Sol are found on coins, where he is depicted primarily between the late 2nd and early 4th centuries AD. Often, the inscription on the coins identifies him as *Sol Invictus*. Other representations are found in relief sculptures, frescoes, mosaics, and on products of various minor arts such as oil lamps, silverware, gems, statuettes, etc. In these media, including on coins, if a figure is explicitly identified as *Sol Invictus*, it invariably fits into this iconographic group in every respect. No full-length Roman statue of Sol has survived, but some busts have been found; cult statues certainly existed, and there is a relief showing a group placing offerings on an altar in front of a statue of a god who is almost certainly Sol.

Legends of Sol

Under the rule of Gordian III (238–244 AD), the legends on coins reveal a new policy of commemoration. Sol and other deities play an important role in the *saeculum aureum* proclaimed by the state. A rejuvenating Sun is represented in two forms: under the legend *AETERNITAS* or *ORIENS AVG*. While the latter is the traditional form used for Sol in earlier decades, the former denotes a new and stronger component of institutional propaganda. In the 2nd century, the goddess *Aeternitas* accompanied deified emperors and empresses. In relation to other gods, the term *aeternitas* is also often linked to Rome and Victory, revealing part of the ideology sponsored by the imperial administration. This feature of Gordian's policy had a notable impact on later emperors. The concept thus developed would become much more common than in earlier periods of the Roman Empire.

Legends such as *AETERNITAS AVG* began to be used under Gordian III as one of Sol's attributes. Except for a few cases in which the concept of *aeternitas* is deified (i.e., RIC V-2 Carinus 243–249), this legend is very rarely not represented by Rome itself or by Sol. Thus, the new formula becomes one of the defining features of coinage dedicated to the god from Gordian III onward. This connection could also be one of the reasons why other attributes were later attributed to the god. The perpetuity of Rome required association with concepts such as preservation and

protection; therefore, attaching the propaganda element of the deity to the emperors as champions of resistance was all that was needed to accelerate a tutelary relationship.

Sol and most of the gods worshipped by Gordian III disappeared after his reign. Among the major gods, only Mars remains on imperial coins. This, however, was not an abrupt break. Aeternitas continues to appear briefly alongside Sol on the coins of Philip I (a hybrid with those of Gordian) and Philip II under the legend AETERNIT IMPERI. Eventually, Sol disappeared until the co-emperors Valerian and Gallienus resumed regular coinage in 255 AD. At that point, a new period began that lasted until the end of the Tetrarchy.

Sol's presence was continuous from 255 AD onward, quickly acquiring the attributes that define Sol Invictus: greater emphasis on the martial world, a special relationship with the emperors, and the epithet invictus itself. After Valerian's death, the god is portrayed as "conservator" in the series under the solitary rule of his son Gallienus. In particular, five legends are linked to the image of the Sun under this emperor: ORIENS, AETERNIT AVG, COMITI AVG, CONS AVG, and SOLI INVIC. After Valerian's son, subsequent emperors followed or modified these criteria based on the numismatics of Sol Invictus. The process was not uniform; the variety and number of types depended largely on the different reigns. The uniqueness of some coin types was combined with a preference for a preexisting set of forms on the part of other emperors.

In any case, Sol's link to the emperor can already be seen on RIC V-1 Gallienus 296. On this coin, the reverse legend reads RESTITVT GENER HVMANI, depicting the emperor in exactly the same way as Sol, although clothed. The ruler's right hand is raised, and he holds the globe in his left. Furthermore, on that coin, the emperor is depicted radiating (reverse). The date RIC 255 is particularly significant, as it is the year in which new Sol mintages are recorded. This coin was also mentioned by John Yonge Akerman, who described an unidentified radiant man. Specifically, this type may be similar to another Valerian coin (RIC V-1 Valerian 220), dated to 254–255. Both emperors are depicted in a similar manner, constituting one of the earliest integrations of the archetypal Sol model by emperors in the 3rd century.

The reigns of Gallienus, Aurelian, and Probus are the most significant in the evolution of the god. These three emperors account for the minting of a large number of coins dedicated to the Sun (around 55, 90, and 100 respectively). In other words, they defined the imperial position regarding the god during the second half of the third century. Their policies triggered a process that resulted in the birth of a public Sol Invictus, whose full name was first used under Gallienus (RIC V-1 119).

The creation of the Sol Invictus cult is generally attributed to Aurelian (270-275 AD). The closeness of this ruler to the Sun god is a fact from a numismatic point of view; suffice it to mention the renowned coin bearing the legend SOL DOMINVS IMPERI ROMANI. Alaric Watson even argues that under Aurelian the legend "Oriens Augusti" refers to both the emperor and the Sun, which would be linked to the aforementioned coins of Gallienus and Valerian. There would thus be a parallel between the triumph of light over darkness on the one hand and that of the emperor over his enemies on the other. While these assertions may seem overly bold, the scholar maintains some noteworthy points. The captives on solar-type coins (ORIENS AVG among others) are dressed in oriental fashion, a fact quite understandable given the ruler's warlike-political background. It should be noted that the display of captives already existed on coins of other emperors, although not with such profusion, this being one of the most distinctive features of Aurelian, whose reign was marked by wars. However, it is more relevant

to note, as Watson does, that the formulas "Restitutor Orbis" and "Restitutor Orientis" demonstrate the role given to the deity in propaganda and the close relationship between the god and the emperor.

On the other hand, the case of Probus (276-282) is particularly noteworthy. A substantial variety of images linked to the protection of the state was deployed under his rule. While Jupiter appears with the legend CLEMENTIA TEMP or as conservator, Victoria is linked to Virtus Augusti and Restitutio Orbis. At the same time, Sol is sometimes linked to Providentia, Aeternitas, or is occasionally referred to as conservator or Sol Invictus. Both the emperor's policy and the role of the Sun among the public gods are quite obvious: they pursue the preservation of the state and the emperor himself. Later, however, the coinage of Sol under the emperors Carus (282-283), Carinus (283-285), and Numerian (283-284) was much more modest in number and variety and recovered under the Tetrarchy, playing a secondary role, reaching its final peak under Constantine.

As established so far, three phases can be clearly distinguished in the evolution of Sol. The "Severan" phase (from 193 to 235) could be placed first, between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Under the Severans, the iconographic archetype of the walking Sun carrying a whip or globe developed definitively. This representation and the use of traditional legends (formula "P M TR P COS") constituted a systematic pattern. The limited variation shown in the dedications ceased during the reign of Gordian III (238-244), when a second phase began. The concept of aeternitas was added to the role Sol played in iconography. Finally, the reappearance of Sol after Gallienus (253-268) marked the third phase, with the birth of Sol Invictus. This evolution was possible for two reasons: the flourishing of legends linked to the sun god and the absorption and replacement of Apollo.

Eastern Aspects of Sol

It is impossible to find criteria by which one can distinguish the supposedly Syrian Sol Invictus from the preceding Roman Sol. However, the dichotomy still persists, even in the two most recent studies on Sol Invictus, written by G. Halsberghe (1972, 1984). Halsberghe's work is valuable, as it provides the most extensive review of literary and epigraphic sources for Sol Invictus to date, but he interprets the material entirely within the framework of his predecessors, whose theories he accepts as proven. Thus, Halsberghe (1972, 34-37) offers a good deal of evidence, mostly epigraphic, dating from the first century AD, which, he claims, refers to the "indigenous" Roman Sol. He subsequently states simply that "when, from the second century AD onwards, the eastern sun cult began to influence Rome and the rest of the Empire, the rare traces of an ancient sun cult disappeared," without providing any evidence to support this conclusion. Halsberghe decisively identifies the new Sol Invictus as Elagabal, the Emesan Ba'al and sun-god, whose cult was spread throughout the Empire not only by converted Syrian soldiers and emigrants, but also through the proselytizing of the priests of Emesa. He partly attributes the success of the eastern cults to the fact that "(...) in the course of the second century Rome had become an undermined and weakened body, no longer able to resist the attacks and infiltrations of eastern religions." According to Halsberghe (1972, 45-48), the Severans therefore did not introduce the Syrian sun cult to Rome, but merely gave it their official support. Not only Elagabalus played a key role in this, but also Julia Domna, the

wife of Septimius Severus, who came from Emesa and was the daughter of a priest of Elagabalus.

Halsberghe (1972, 103-116) is the first to emphasize (rightly) that the cult of Sol Invictus did not disappear after the death of the Emperor Elagabalus in 222. He thus establishes a double link between Aurelian's Sol Invictus and Elagabal of Emesa. Aurelian's decision to elevate Sol as the supreme god of the Roman Empire was inspired by his experience at Emesa, according to Halsberghe, but the god himself was inspired by the more Romanized version of Elagabal, still present in Rome. This Elagabal was merely a starting point for Aurelian in the development of a new Sol, who would be *dominus imperii Romani*. The final product was a Roman sun-god inspired by the Syrian Elagabal, but also incorporating elements derived from Roman models; most notable among the latter, according to Halsberghe, is the iconography Aurelian chose for Sol Invictus. Halsberghe (1972, 162) attributes lasting success to this Roman sun cult of Aurelian, which he believes was a serious rival to Christianity. Even after Constantine's conversion, he feels the cult remained strong.

Halsberghe uncritically accepts the findings of his predecessors, even reaffirming the conviction that Rome in the second century was an "undermined and weakened body." He struggles with the abundant evidence for a sun cult or cults in Rome long before the reigns of the Severan emperors and finds it difficult to show the difference between Sol Invictus and the earlier sun-god. In the end, the evidence he adduces simply shows that the dichotomy between the Roman Sol Indiges and the "eastern" Sol Invictus is entirely unconvincing. Similarly, Halsberghe does not show how all references to Sol from the second century onward can suddenly refer only to Elagabal, as he claims. Nor does it provide an adequate explanation for the continued existence of the cult of Sol Invictus after the death of Elagabalus, although the sources clearly state that the cult of Elagabal was exiled from Rome. Why persist in the assumption that Sol Invictus was the same as Elagabal, if Sol Invictus was present in Rome long before the Severi, if he cannot be differentiated from the earlier sun gods in Rome, and if he remained present in Rome after the death of Elagabalus despite the disappearance of all explicit references to Elagabal? For Halsberghe, this assumption is essential, because he is convinced that Aurelian was inspired by Emesa to elevate Sol Invictus, that is, Elagabal in his opinion, to the level of supreme deity. Since Halsberghe is the first to fully acknowledge the abundant epigraphic and numismatic evidence of a continued presence of Sol Invictus in Rome after the death of Elagabalus, he is forced to reject Dio Cassius's claim that Elagabalus disappeared from Rome immediately afterward. Otherwise, he could not explain the relationship between this Sol Invictus, already present in Rome, and Aurelian's Sol Invictus, "imported" from the East.

Coins

Coins constitute the only non-literary sources frequently mentioned in studies of Sol Invictus. Unfortunately, coins are rarely considered systematically. Usually, some coins on which Sol appears are cited at random, without due consideration of their numismatic context and the limitations inherent to this source group.

Sol appeared sporadically on Republican coins from the second half of the 3rd century BC. After Mark Antony, however, no Roman coins bearing the sol were minted until the reign of

Vespasian. This gap was followed by another until the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, each of whom minted coins with a bust of Sol or Sol in a chariot. Under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, no Roman coins bearing the sol were minted, but some medallions did appear (Guarducci 1957–9). In 186 and 191, Commodus issued a series of coins depicting the sun, and from his reign until Constantine's, virtually all emperors did so.

Septimius Severus probably issued coins depicting suns annually from 196 to 211, and Caracalla issued several such coins in 215, 216, and 217. Elagabalus also issued a good number of coins depicting suns in 219 to 221. After a short break, Alexander Severus resumed minting coins depicting the Sun in 229, and continued until his death in 235. Of the soldier emperors, Maximinus Thrax (235–238), Gordian III (238–242), Philip I and Otacilia Severa (244–249), Valerian I (253–260), and Macrian all minted a good number of Sun coins. Gallienus (253–268) seems to have minted such coins annually, and Saloninus and Salonina minted Sun coins in the same period. Claudius Gothicus (268–270) issued a surprisingly large number of Sun coins, and even Quintillus (270) issued several such coins during the few months of his reign. Various usurpers in the West, including Postumus (259–268), Regalian (260), and Victorinus (268–270), also issued various coins with representations of Sol. None were minted by usurpers in the East, except Vaballat (271–274; I know of only 1 issue).

Obviously, Sol was a firmly established deity on Roman coinage by the time Aurelian became emperor (270–275). Aurelian, however, issued many more sol coins than his predecessors, and with greater iconographic variation. He was also the first (and only) emperor to call Sol dominus et deus imperii Romani on his coins. The special importance of the Sun to Aurelian is thus confirmed by his coinage. In the following decade, Jupiter was of similar importance to Diocletian, Hercules to Maximian, and Sol, again, to Constantine. There is absolutely nothing in Aurelian's coinage to suggest that Sol was new or oriental, any more than was Diocletian's Jupiter or Maximian's Hercules. From Aurelian to Constantine, all the emperors issued sol coins, but the frequency of these issues varied. Tacitus (275–276), Carus and Carinus (282–3), Diocletian (284–305), Maximian Herculus (286–305), Constantius Chlorus (293–306), and Severus II (305–307) issued only a few coins depicting the Sun. On the other hand, Florian (276), Probus (276–282), Numerian (283–284), Galerius Maximian (293–311), Maximinus Daya (305–313), and especially Constantine (306–337) issued a much larger number of coins depicting the Sun. This lasted until 317, when the number of issues per year began to decline. The last known Roman coin bearing the Sun was minted in Antioch shortly after 323.

From this review of coins depicting the Sun, several conclusions can be drawn. First, it is clear that the Sol coins issued by Elagabalus are part of a wider Roman tradition that shows no eastern influences. Despite this, Frey expresses a common view when he suggests that Sol on Elagabalus's coins refers to the Emesan god Elagabalus. I believe this is incorrect. The Roman Sol on Elagabalus's coins is almost invariably identical in all iconographic respects to the established types of Sol, which had been current in Rome for quite some time. There is nothing in the legends or iconography on these coins to suggest that Elagabalus considered this Roman sun to be identical with his own Elagabalus, as Frey believes. Indeed, during Elagabalus's reign, Elagabalus regularly appeared on Roman imperial coins in his normal appearance as an aniconic rock on a chariot, surmounted by an eagle. On these coins, the rock is identified as Sanctus Deus Sol Elagabal, or else he is called Conservator Augusti. Sol's coins, on the other hand, rarely have a descriptive legend, although once he is called Conservator Augusti, and another time Propugnator Sol. This is the only example of "propugnator" as an epithet for Sol, and on the Sol coin he has unique iconography: he bears Jupiter's thunderbolt rather than his

own whip or globe. Elagabal, of course, was a Ba'al, and Ba'alim were normally identified as Zeus/Jupiter. As we have seen above, there was some confusion about the identity of Elagabal himself in this regard. Was this adjustment to Sol's normal iconography made to bring Sol closer to the Ba'al of Emesa by giving him a Jupiterian attribute? If this were the case, then the fact that such a modification was considered is further evidence that the normal Roman sun was no closer to Elagabal of Emesa than to any other local solar deity of the Roman Empire. Indeed, with the death of Elagabalus in 222, the aniconic rock of Elagabal disappeared from Roman coins and never reappeared, while Sol remained and seems to have gained popularity.

It is especially interesting that Gallienus issued so many coins with a representation of Sol. Previous scholarship on Sol Invictus has virtually ignored this fact, however, in many respects, Gallienus's numismatic policy towards this god presages that of Aurelian. De Blois attempts to place Gallienus's coins in a wider context, and refers to a number of other emperors who also minted such coins in the period between Elagabalus and Aurelian. Accepting the general position that Sol was a Syrian deity, he suggests that these coins were part of these emperors' aggressive policy towards the Persians and Parthians in the East. In fact, however, the number of coins with representations of Sol that were issued between 229 and 268 suggests that practically every year there was at least one issue and that all emperors minted their share. Several of these emperors never campaigned in the East, and the fact that certain Western usurpers, such as Regalian and Postumus, also minted coins depicting the Sun makes it difficult to maintain that such coins were part of imperial war propaganda against the East.

On the other hand, the large number of coins bearing the Sun issued by Gallienus may imply that he had a special veneration of the sun. Perhaps they should be placed in the context of certain observations in the *Historia Augusta*, stating that Gallienus also commissioned a colossal statue depicting himself as Sol, that he sprinkled his hair with gold dust, and that he regularly wore a radiant crown. Whether or not Gallienus had a special veneration for Sol, it is certainly obvious from the number of coins depicting Sol issued by both himself and his successors Claudius Gothicus and Quintillus that Aurelian hardly needed to travel to Syria to find inspiration for "his" sun god, Sol Invictus.

However, this review of Roman coins containing the sun, however interesting, cannot help us determine the relative popularity of the sun more precisely. Roman coins constitute a very specific type of source. They are certainly not a direct reflection of Roman society and its religious views. Rather, coin depictions were the result of a complex interaction between Roman numismatic tradition, the themes of standard imperial propaganda, and, to some extent, specific religious or ideological messages communicated by the reigning monarch. Only Roman numismatic tradition, for example, can explain the fact that Sol Invictus appears on more Roman imperial coins than Mithras, Isis, Serapis, Cybele and Attis, Jupiter Dolichenus, and a few other Eastern deities combined. The latter are hardly represented on imperial coins, apparently because it went against Roman tradition (or imperial policy?) to give clearly non-Roman deities a prominent place on imperial coins. Sol Invictus, on the other hand, is present in at least 1,500 broadcasts from the second to the early fourth centuries. Obviously, we should be wary of any conclusions about Sol's relative popularity based on these data.

Similar caution must be exercised in any attempt to relate the chronology of Sol's coinage to the chronology of his cult. The striking gap between the Republic and the second century AD regarding Sol's coinage does not reflect an absence of Sol from Roman religious life during that period. It is sufficient to consider the two obelisks in Rome dedicated to Sol by Augustus, Nero's well-documented interest in the god, the evidence adduced by Halsberghe (1972, 34-

37), and the first-century AD archaeological material already discussed to realize this. The gap must therefore be explained within the framework of imperial coinage policy: such an explanation, which must be based on an analysis of the politics involved in the choice of religious coinage representations for the entire first and second centuries AD, is far beyond the scope of this article.

With this study of the iconographic evidence relating to Sol, some conclusions are already clear: we have established beyond doubt that the iconography of Sol Invictus had an uninterrupted history and development in the Greco-Roman world from the late 5th century BC to the 4th century AD and beyond. This tradition offers no support for the claim that Sol Invictus was introduced by the Severans from the East as a new deity, breaking with the Greco-Roman sun god (Helios or Sol Indiges). If Sol Invictus was Syrian, and if the difference between him and the Roman Sol Indiges was in any way important, one would expect an iconographic differentiation between the two to avoid confusion. No eastern god in the Roman Empire had a Latin name, clear Greek and Roman antecedents, a fully Greco-Roman iconography, and a substantial presence on Roman imperial coins. The names, iconography, and coinage of Isis, Serapis, Mithras, Attis, Cybele, Jupiter Dolichenus, etc. reveal a stark contrast. Seyrig furthermore points out that in the second century, the sun god was only a minor deity in Syria. The Ba'alim, supposed inspirers of the Roman sun cult, were at that time still invariably equated with Zeus or Jupiter, and had a cosmic, but not specifically solar, aspect. The idea that they were true solar deities is a 19th-century misconception, based on an uncritical reading of written sources. In fact, as Seyrig shows, the concept of the Ba'alim as solar deities probably originated in the West in the third century, under the inspiration of the solar cult, which was enjoying a growing popularity in Rome. We can therefore conclude that Sol Invictus was not a Syrian deity, imported to Rome by the Severans, but a Roman god, present in the city from its earliest history.

EMPEROR AURELIAN AND THE UNCONQUERED SUN

The world Aurelian knew was dominated by warfare that stretched the empire's resources to the limit. Repeated Germanic and Persian invasions penetrated deep into the empire along the entire length of its European and eastern borders. The empire, once the aggressor, found itself increasingly on the defensive. The military situation created impossible demands on the emperor's presence and exacerbated the underlying political instability. The political price of failure was high. If the emperor could not be available to deal with the barbarian threat in a particular region, the general in place who successfully repelled the invasions would often be invited to assume the imperial purple. Inevitably, this resulted in a multiplicity of mutually hostile emperors and precipitated a series of civil wars.

The cycle of civil and foreign wars not only exhausted the empire's resources but also led to an unsustainable disruption of the economic infrastructure of agriculture and trade. The situation was further aggravated by administrative corruption and the government's short-term expedient of debasing the coins, which led to a collapse of confidence in the monetary system, widespread fraud, and ultimately runaway inflation.

The series of military coups that followed Valerian's ignominious defeat and capture by the Persians in 260 set the stage for a new development that threatened the very integrity of the empire itself. While Gallienus managed to hold on and reestablish his authority over Italy and the Balkans, the Army of the Rhine and the western provinces remained loyal to their chosen emperor, Postumus. Meanwhile, the east increasingly came under the effective rule of Odaenathus, whose loyalty to Gallienus was merely nominal. For over seven years, responsibility for the defense of the empire was divided between these three individuals. Within a short space of time (perhaps as little as twelve months, from the spring of 268 to 269), all three were assassinated. Far from ending it, their deaths merely served to consolidate the effective tripartite division of the empire. In the west, a series of emperors were proclaimed by the Army of the Rhine. The east was ruled from Palmyra by Zenobia with an increasingly hostile autonomy.

It is in these critical circumstances that Aurelian first comes to our attention as a leading member of the cabal of Illyrian officers who conspired to remove Gallienus and replace him with one of their own. Claudius's brief reign was entirely occupied with repelling the Germanic invaders from northern Italy and the Balkans. He had neither the time nor the resources to deal with the tripartite division within the empire. When he succumbed to the plague two years later, the way was open for Aurelian to take the reins of state himself. It can fairly be said that Aurelian personified the new generation of military commanders, most of whom came, like him, from the peasant population of Illyria. In physical appearance, his coin portraits show the closely cropped hair and short beard typical of his species. They reveal a powerful and uncompromising countenance: the personification of 'grim-faced warfare'. Like many of his fellow soldiers and countrymen, his overall outlook was very conservative, and he remained staunchly loyal to the traditions and integrity of the Roman Empire. It was thanks to the courage, determination, and leadership of such men that the empire was saved from the threat of disintegration and left arguably more brutal but unquestionably better adapted to the hostile environment in which it found itself. None deserves more credit for this achievement than Aurelian himself. With his characteristic energy and determination, Aurelian systematically set about addressing the ills that beset the empire. In quick succession, he eliminated his immediate rivals, repulsed a series of dangerous Germanic invasions that

crossed the Danube, and quelled the most serious disturbances the city of Rome had experienced in the imperial era. By the early summer of 271, his position was secure enough to turn his attention to broader issues. From this point until his death just over four years later, Aurelian dedicated himself, both on and off the battlefield, to restoring the empire to something of its former glory. Aurelian was first and foremost a soldier; nowhere was he more at home than on campaign. He was an exceptionally capable military commander who won the total support and admiration of his troops. It was this special relationship that enabled him to seize power in a military coup and which allowed him, once emperor, to win such a spectacular series of victories. His inspirational leadership, his grasp of both strategy and tactics, and the impressive discipline he instilled in his troops are evident in the results of his campaigns. Nowhere were these qualities more clearly manifested than in his extraordinary victory over the Palmyrenes at Immae. His greatest achievement, and the one that would occupy most of his brief reign, was the reunification of the Roman Empire. By confronting and crushing first Zenobia and then Tetricus, he eliminated the rival powers that had divided the Roman world into three parts since Valerian's capture. It must have been a daunting task, but he accomplished it thanks to his unwavering determination, evident at least from the summer of 271. In this decisive action, he prevented the permanent disintegration of the empire and ensured its survival as a political entity for another 200 years. The significance of this achievement for the subsequent development of Europe and the Mediterranean is incalculable.

His military successes also extended to Rome's external enemies. In a tireless series of campaigns, he managed to restore a degree of security to the empire's shattered borders. From the perspective of his subjects in such turbulent times, this protection was the most crucial benefit the emperor could provide. By driving back and decisively defeating the Goths, Aurelian effectively ended their twenty-year rampage through the Balkan and Aegean lands. He also made the momentous decision to withdraw all Roman forces still stationed north of the Danube and evacuate a substantial number of civilians from the Dacian salient, resettling them south of the river. The primary objective of this move was to rationalize the strategic defense of the area while also allowing more space to relieve barbarian pressure. In this way, he hoped to make the new frontier along the river more easily defensible. After defeating the Carpi, he established a considerable number of them within the Roman Empire, thus setting an important precedent that would dramatically affect the course of Roman and European history in the following centuries.

One of his most significant decisions was to build defensive walls around the city of Rome to provide its inhabitants with some security against a possible renewed Germanic attack. The walls still bear his name to this day and largely remain standing, with later additions, wherever he erected them. They are both the most enduring monument of his time and the most eloquent statement of the changing military conditions the empire now faced.

His military training and bearing should not be interpreted as meaning that he was ipso facto especially hostile to the Senate or the senatorial elite. That this element of society had lost much of the political influence and importance it once wielded is a simple fact. To the extent that Aurelian chose not to yield to the antiquated ideals he represented, this was not unusual for his time. There is no doubt that he had his enemies among the senatorial aristocracy, and equally, that he had no qualms about eliminating them. The senatorial blood on his hands, excusable under the circumstances, was no worse than in the case of many highly regarded emperors who had acted similarly in such circumstances before him: Octavian, Hadrian, or

Septimius, for example. His reputation for cruelty, much touted in the literary sources, has received undue credit. As Malalas reminds us, he was capable of great magnanimity. Nowhere is this more dramatically illustrated than in his final treatment of his defeated rivals, Zenobia and Tetricus, whom he allowed to live in honorable retirement after their part in his magnificent triumph.

Aurelian also devoted himself to trying to find adequate solutions to the many economic problems the empire faced upon his accession to the throne. He implemented much-needed reforms to the thoroughly degraded and discredited imperial coinage. At the same time, he overhauled the coinage system. He not only expanded the number of mints and increased their output, but simultaneously imposed much greater central control over the entire operation. To the extent that these measures were not particularly effective in producing the stability he desired, the blame does not fall largely on Aurelian himself. The effects of the systematic abuse of the monetary system over the previous half-century and more, coupled with the impetus of inflationary pressures on the empire's economy, could not be controlled simply by introducing these much-needed reforms. The conditions that had led to these difficulties still persisted, and inflation, in fact, spiraled even further out of control in the following decades.

Aurelian also attempted to address some of the other economic problems of his time. He took steps to curb the corruption of provincial officials and paid off the considerable arrears of the public debt. He implemented measures to encourage the productive use of abandoned farmland. He also reformed the food supply system for the capital, making more goods available at subsidized prices and increasing the urban food subsidy.

He himself attributed his successes, especially in the field of warfare, to the support of his divine patron, the sun god Sol Invictus. He dedicated a magnificent new temple to this deity in Rome. The cult he established in Rome was specifically Roman in character and was served by a new, explicitly Roman priestly college of pontiffs. Although, under the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy and Christian doctrine, this sun cult took on an increasingly monotheistic aspect in the fourth century, there is no doubt that by Aurelian's time it was conceived in terms of an exalted place within the structure of traditional Roman polytheism. This does not deny that Aurelian was aware of its potential as a cohesive force within the empire. Like the imperial cult, it undoubtedly played a key role as a focus of unity across a broad spectrum of its subjects.

A particular group of his subjects conspicuously refused to participate in these two cults, or indeed in any other religious activity besides their own. Aurelian's decision to resume the persecution of Christians must be understood in the context of the disloyalty and social disruption implied by such a stubborn refusal, rather than as a clash between two monotheistic religions. On the other hand, Aurelian was the first emperor to whom the Church turned for help in resolving its own internal difficulties. Aurelian's intervention in the dispute over Paul of Samosata represents the dawn of a new era in the relationship between Church and State.

Two abiding, closely linked themes governed almost all the actions and policies of Aurelian's brief reign: his deep-rooted conservatism and his fierce loyalty to Rome. Both were common among men of his kind, as can be seen, for example, in Diocletian. In his representational style, in his monetary reform, in his desire for unity and prosperity in the empire, he seems to have looked above all to the era in which he was born. From the perspective of the 270s, the age of

the Severan dynasty must have seemed tinged with gold. In his religious reforms and in his adoption of more overtly autocratic insignia and titles, Aurelian seems to look toward the later empire and Byzantium more than toward Augustus. But this is largely an illusion: a trick of the light, or rather the lack of it. For in the dark 'tunnel' that is the middle of the third century, the contrast between the early empire and the late empire has been exaggerated at the expense of lines of continuity and gradual development. The traditional view underestimates the degree to which Augustus's rule was both autocratic and legitimized by divine sanction. It therefore fails to sufficiently take into account the extent to which the emperors of the third century saw themselves as continuing a tradition that stretched back to the founder of the empire. Just as Augustus had claimed a special affinity with Apollo and Sol, whom he repeatedly associated with his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, so Aurelian claimed an affinity with Sol Invictus, to whom he attributed the victory over the new Cleopatra, Zenobia. Similarly, Constantine would later depict first Apollo and then Sol Christ as his divine patron. There are very real distinctions between the ways in which these emperors at different times chose to represent their authority in relation to their divine patrons, but to insist on these distinctions is to miss the far more significant elements of continuity. The age of Aurelian must be taken not as a catastrophic break, but as a vital link in the development from Augustus to Constantine and beyond.

Aurelian was supremely a man of the moment. He was a man of action; a soldier in a world of soldiers. His approach to the problems he faced betrays his military mentality: his use of force to reunite the empire, rather than stabilizing the *modus vivendi* through negotiation; his tighter control over the operations of the mint; his decision to evacuate Dacia; his decision to surround Rome with fortified walls. Undoubtedly a man of steadfast determination, he had a great concern for order and discipline. He may have lacked finesse in his dealings with the Senate, but the accusations of extreme cruelty leveled against him in literary sources are undoubtedly exaggerated.

If literary tradition has occasionally been somewhat harsh on him, his achievements speak for themselves. In such a short time and against such odds, turning the tide of the empire's fortunes so dramatically is an achievement almost without parallel in the annals of imperial Rome. Without a hint of irony, the *Epitome* compared his achievements to those of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. When his splendid triumphal procession rolled through the streets of Rome in the autumn of 274, those who witnessed it could be forgiven for believing that at last there was an emperor who was truly the Restorer of his World. A year later he was dead. He died as he had lived, by the sword. Who can say what he might not have achieved were it not for the perfidy of a disaffected secretary and the credulity of his fellow officials? His brief but glorious reign lasted no more than five years and two months. In that brief span, he inspired renewed hope and vigor that gave the empire a new lease on life. For this, he earned the respect and affection of his subjects. The *Historia Augusta* states that Aurelian was loved by the people. Even if this was an idea added by that author, there may be considerable truth in it. He had certainly given them sufficient cause.

Aurelian and Sol

In the Roman world, just as military success was understood as proof of divine favor, the emperor's relationship with the divine was considered the key to his success. The

representation of that relationship, found on the coins, inscriptions, and monuments of the period, was thus fundamental to the legitimization of an emperor's power. Under Aurelian, these ideas reached new heights and particularly found expression in the association of the emperor with a new solar religion. This must be understood in the context of the conservatism of both Aurelian and his time, and in the context of the continued emphasis on the traditional Roman pantheon and the cult of the imperial ruler.

The Temple, the Priesthood, and the Games

Coins honoring Sol Dominus Imperi Romani were minted at the height of Aurelian's religious reform program. Exactly what that program meant and what it consisted of remains controversial. We know that it involved the construction of a new temple in Rome, with a new priesthood and the institution of elaborate games.

Preparations for the temple's construction probably began in early 274, following Aurelian's return from the east. The consecration ceremony appears to have taken place on December 25, 274, that is, on the feast of the winter solstice, henceforth known as the Dies Invicti Natalis. This day was significant in the Roman religious calendar and does not correlate with the sacred day of any known Syrian cult. The exact whereabouts of the temple is a matter of some dispute, as no remains have been identified with certainty. We are told that it was erected in the seventh region, in or near the Campus Agrippae, more or less adjacent to the new camp that Aurelian built to house the urban cohorts. The most likely location is not the large remains discovered under the Piazza San Silvestro, but a rather smaller complex to the north, just east of the Corso. This location would fit well with the probable location of the Ciconiae, the landing stage for the fiscal wine that, we are told, was stored in the portico of the Temple of Aurelian.

By all accounts, it was a splendid building, adorned with gold and precious jewels. It is likely that the materials for this luxurious temple were collected from various locations, including treasures taken from Palmyra. The building incorporated eight splendid porphyry columns that Aurelian may have transposed from another temple elsewhere, quite possibly in Palmyra. Such borrowings were not uncommon in the Roman world at the time, as evidenced by the Arch of Constantine, and the antiquity and possibly religious significance of the stones would most likely have added to their appeal. Similarly, we are told, these same porphyry columns were transported to Constantinople in the sixth century on Justinian's orders to adorn his new Church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia).

Aurelian inaugurated special games in honor of Sol, the Agon Solis, to be held every four years. They were first celebrated in 274, on October 22, and may have marked the beginning of the celebrations that followed Aurelian's triumph. The model Aurelian had before him was specifically Roman: the Agon Capitolinus inaugurated by Domitian.

Aurelian also founded a new priestly college to serve the religious and administrative needs of all aspects of the new cult, including the temple and the games. He may also have set aside large funds for the administration and maintenance of the cult and its buildings. The new priesthood was made up of pontiffs, pontifices dei Solis. The nomenclature is instructive and indicates very clearly that Aurelian considered the cult to be essentially Roman and traditional

in character. The new college was clearly intended to parallel the existing college of pontiffs, whose functions were particularly associated with Vesta and Jupiter Optimus Maximus. It neither supplanted nor openly challenged the older college: both priesthoods happily coexisted in Rome, and indeed, the same people were often proud members of both. Moreover, members of the older priesthood were designated *pontifices maiores*, a title that clearly demonstrates that the established state religion was not instantly relegated to the background. By the middle of the fourth century, the designation *pontifices Vestae* had come to replace the previous *pontifices maiores*, implying a change in their relative rank; but we must be careful not to carry this situation over to the third century. Aurelian himself did not take any special title related to the newly established cult. From then on, his title of *Pontifex Maximus* referred simultaneously to his office as head of both pontifical colleges, the old and the new. This also emphasizes how much he considered his new Sun cult to be within the framework of traditional Roman religion.

Homo claimed to detect three separate phases by which Aurelian established his new Sol cult: first, Aurelian installed Sol as the supreme state deity by decree; second, he arranged for the construction of a new temple and the inauguration of special games; and third, he created the new pontifical college. This three-phase scheme has been followed by most scholars ever since, but there is no real evidence to support it. Homo's first phase is, in fact, a fantasy based on an overinterpretation of coinage; and common sense dictates that the new priesthood must have been conceived and implemented at the same time as the temple and games, although the earliest attested epigraphic evidence of the new college comes from early in Probus's reign.

Aurelian's Religious Policies

Aurelian was a traditionalist who honored the Roman pantheon, most especially those deities, such as Mars and Jupiter, strongly associated with military victory and the destiny of Rome. In the latter part of his reign, he developed a personal devotion to Sol, which came to overshadow the other deities on his coins. The persistent production of solar coin types and the timing of their introduction, together with the symbolism of their iconography, suggest that Aurelian personally attributed his success against Palmyra to a close alliance between himself, *Imperator Invictus Augustus*, and his divine protector, *Deus Sol Invicto*. The exact identity of Aurelian's tutelary deity is unresolved, but it appears to have been at least partly his own creation, influenced by eastern solar cults but at the same time firmly rooted in the tradition of Imperial Roman solar iconography.

The relationship between Sol and Aurelian, as depicted on his coinage, is arguably the most remarkable of all the expressions of divine guardianship ever to appear on imperial coinage. But it must be understood in its proper context, both alongside other expressions of divine guardianship on the coinage of the period, particularly for Gallienus and Postumus, and alongside the other religious aspects of Aurelian's reign.

Aurelian elevated the status of his new solar religion to a level comparable with the existing state religion in Rome and placed it within the formal structures of that state religion. He built a magnificent temple to Sol in Rome worthy of this new status, which he adorned with the rich spoils of Palmyra and in which he placed cult statues of Sol and Bel side by side. He

consecrated this temple according to the appropriate Roman ritual and instituted quadrennial games and a new college of priests who, by their very title of pontifices dei Solis, emphasized the official Roman nature of the cult. By these measures, Aurelian ostentatiously acknowledged his debt of gratitude to his divine patron.

However, he did not impose the cult of Sol above the existing Roman state religion, as Emperor Elagabalus had attempted to do with the god of Emesa. The traditional college of pontiffs remained superior to the new college he created for Sol, and as Pontifex Maximus, he remained at the head of both. Nor did he attempt to overthrow the established religious order by imposing his new cult of the Sun as a kind of exclusive monotheism, along the lines of Christianity. On the contrary, it is clear that the new religion drew its strength from the place assigned to it within traditional Roman polytheism. In fact, Aurelian was apparently greatly disturbed by the Christians' stubborn refusal to participate in the traditional state religion or to honor the gods of Rome.

The success of Aurelian's achievement can be measured to some extent by the important status his cult continued to enjoy for more than a century after his death. Drawing, as it did, on ancient and deeply held ideas about the nature and representation of government, the solar theology that Aurelian did so much to foster continued to influence imperial ideology even after the emperors had found Christ and turned their backs on paganism. Indeed, partly as a result of this influence, it came to have a profound effect on representations of Christ himself, as well as on the subsequent royal ideology of both Byzantium and Christendom.

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[28] Meanwhile, over the course of time, almost all the peoples living west of the River Halys had been brought to submit to Croesus. The Lycians and the Cilicians excepted, all the others had ended up crushed by him, and absorbed into his empire: the Lydians, the Phrygians, the Mysians, the Mariandynians, the Chalybes, the Paphlagonians, the Thracians (both Thynian and Bithynian), the Carians, the Ionians, the Dorians, the Aeolians and the Pamphylians. In the wake of these conquests, and with Croesus still busy adding to the Lydian empire, Sardis stood at the very height of her prosperity.

[29] All the most learned Greeks of the age were drawn there, each one making the trip in his own way – and one of these visitors was Solon of Athens. He was the man who had been asked by the Athenians to draw up a law-code for them – and now, having completed that, he had gone abroad for ten years. The excuse he gave for embarking on his travels was that he wanted to see the world; but the truth was that he did not want to be pressured into having to repeal any of his recently issued laws. The Athenians themselves were unable to repeal the law-code that Solon had delivered to them, for the reason that they had all solemnly pledged themselves to give it a decade's trial.

[30] This, then – quite apart from any taste for sightseeing – was the reason for Solon's going abroad. In the course of his travels he paid a visit to King Amasis in Egypt, but his prime destination was Sardis, where he was put up by Croesus in the royal palace itself. Three or four days after his arrival, Croesus instructed some servants to give Solon a guided tour of the various treasuries and point out to him how splendid and sumptuous everything was. Then, after Solon had seen and inspected everything, Croesus took the opportunity to ask him a question. 'We have heard a good deal about you, my guest from Athens: you have a reputation as a wise and well-travelled man, as a philosopher indeed, one who has travelled the world and always kept his eyes wide open. So here is the question I would like to put to you: have you ever come across anyone whose state of contentment would rank head and shoulders above that of everyone else?' In asking this, of course, he was taking for granted that the answer would be himself; but Solon, rather than indulge in flattery, preferred instead to speak what he saw as the truth. 'Yes, my Lord,' he answered. 'An Athenian, by the name of Tellus.' The reply took Croesus aback. 'And why exactly,' he demanded in a heated tone, 'do you reckon this Tellus to have been so happy?' 'There are two reasons,' Solon answered. 'Firstly, he lived at a time when his city was particularly well off, he had handsome, upstanding sons, and he ended up a grandfather, with all his grandchildren making it to adulthood. Secondly, at a time when – by our standards – he was a man of considerable wealth, his life came to an end that was as glorious as its course had previously been happy. What happened was this: the Athenians were fighting a battle against their neighbours at Eleusis, when Tellus stepped into the breach of their crumbling line, and put the enemy to flight. It is true that he himself died, but his death was something beautiful, and the Athenians gave him a state funeral at the very spot where he fell, and awarded him splendid honours.'

[31] This discourse of Solon's, with its cataloguing of all the ways in which Tellus had been truly happy, had certainly served to pique Croesus' interest; and so it was, confident that he would be named the runner-up at least, he asked Solon for the name of the second happiest person

on his list. 'Cleobis and Biton,' Solon answered promptly, 'two young men of Argos, because they never lacked for means, and also because of their remarkable physical strength. Not only were they both prize-winning athletes, but there is also the following story told about them. The episode took place during an Argive festival in honour of Hera, when their mother urgently needed to be driven to the temple in their cart, but early in the day, before the oxen had been brought back in from the fields. There being no time to lose, the two young men shouldered the yoke themselves and pulled the cart, with their mother riding on top of it, for a full 45 stades, all the way to the temple. Everyone who had gathered for the festival was a witness to this exploit, and then, in its wake, the two young men died in the best way possible: a divinely authored proof that it is better to be dead than alive. The Argives kept crowding round them, congratulating them on their strength, and the women of the city kept telling their mother how fortunate she was in her children. In due course, such was the rapture of her joy at her sons' achievement and the fame they had won, that she went to stand before the statue of Hera, and prayed to the goddess that she would bestow upon her children, her Cleobis and Biton, who had brought her such great honour, the greatest blessing that it is possible for mortals to be granted. The mother finished her prayer; and then came the sacrifices and the feasting; and then the young men passed inside the temple and fell asleep, never to wake up again; and in this way their lives were brought to a close. The Argives made statues of them, which were then sent to Delphi – for it was clear that they had been the very best that men can be.'

[32] But Solon's nomination of these two young men for second place in his list of the happiest people known to him threw Croesus into a rage. 'And what of my own happiness, my Athenian friend?' he demanded. 'Is it so beneath contempt that it is not even to be mentioned in the same breath as that of men without rank or title?' 'Croesus,' Solon replied, 'your question was one that touched on the lot of humanity – and I answered it as someone who is all too well aware of how jealous the gods are, and how perplexing in their ways. The longer the span of someone's existence, the more certain he is to see and suffer much that he would rather have been spared. Say that the limit of a man's life is set at seventy years. If you exclude intercalary months, then those seventy years comprise 25,200 days – but if you add a month on to every alternate year, so that the seasons are properly calibrated, then seventy years will give us an additional thirty-five months which in turn will give us an additional 1,050 days. That means that your seventy years of life will give you 26,250 days in all – and not one of them will resemble the next in terms of what it brings. So you can see, Croesus, how human life is nothing if not subject to the vagaries of chance. Now, to be sure, I can recognize that you are fabulously rich and that you are the king of a great number of people – and yet for all that, I will not be able to say about you what you were anticipating that I would say until I have learned that you died contentedly. Great wealth, after all, is no more guaranteed to bring a man happiness than is daily subsistence – unless, that is, good fortune proves to be the rich man's constant companion, enabling him to keep all his blessings intact, and bringing his life to a pleasant conclusion. But just as there are many men of moderate means who enjoy the most wonderful luck, so are there many wealthy men who suffer repeated misfortune. Someone who is rich but unlucky is only really better off than a lucky man in two respects, whereas there are many ways in which a lucky man has the advantage of a rich man plagued by ill fortune. It is true that the millionaire is well placed to do whatever he likes and to ride out such disasters as befall him, while the man of moderate means is not; but the latter, if he is only lucky, is far more likely to avoid disasters in the first place, not to mention disfigurement, disease and a whole host of other evils, as well as enjoying parenthood and good looks. And if,

in addition to all these advantages, he dies as well as he lived, well, there you have the kind of man you are looking for: one who truly merits the epithet of “happy”. But until he is dead, do not go leaping to any conclusions: for he is not yet truly happy, only fortunate. The reality is, of course, that no one can really combine all these blessings, just as no country can produce everything that it needs, for no matter what resources a land may boast, it is bound to be deficient in some, and being the best is simply a matter of being better endowed than the rest. It is the same with mortals: flesh and bone can never be self-sufficient. The man who has one thing will lack another. Whoever is blessed with the most advantages in life, and retains them to the end and dies a peaceful death, that is the man, my Lord, who in my opinion best deserves the title. No matter what, you must always look to the end, look to how it will turn out: for the heavens will often grant men a glimpse of happiness, only to snatch it away so that not a trace of it remains.’

[33] Sentiments such as these were hardly designed to please Croesus, and so he dismissed Solon as a man unworthy of his further attention. Self evidently, he thought, anyone who told him to disregard the assets of the moment and look instead to the end of everything could only be an idiot.

[34] But after Solon’s departure, the noose of a divine and terrible anger began to tighten around Croesus – and this was clearly because he had presumed himself the happiest of men. Almost straightaway, as he slept, a dream laid him in its shadow, one that revealed to him a calamity soon to befall his son – a glimpse of the future destined to come true. Croesus had two sons: one of them was disabled, being both deaf and dumb, but the other, whose name was Atys, was the outstanding figure of his generation, a young man whose talents knew no bounds. It was Atys whom Croesus had seen in his dream, being killed by a blow from an iron spearhead. When the king woke up, a few moments’ reflection on what he had been shown put him into such a panic that he married off his son, and forbade him to go off on any further military expeditions – and this despite the fact that Atys was a commander in the Lydian army. Croesus also had any weapons that might be used in battle – javelins, spears, and so on – removed from the men’s quarters, where they had been kept hanging from the ceiling, and had them stashed away instead in the women’s bedrooms, so that there would be no risk of them dropping onto his son.

[35] Meanwhile, as he busied himself with the preparations for his son’s wedding, there arrived at Sardis a Phrygian, a man of royal descent but one who was nevertheless caught up in the toils of a terrible calamity – for he had blood on his hands. Heading for Croesus’ palace, the visitor begged the king to cleanse him of his blood-guilt in accordance with Lydian custom (the ceremony is very similar to the one that is practised in Greece); and Croesus duly set about the process of purification. Then, with the rites formally completed, he asked the man who he was and where he came from. ‘We are both of us human, after all,’ he said, ‘so please, tell me your name. Whereabouts in Phrygia did you live before you ended up here, an asylum-seeker at my hearth? Who did you kill, what man or woman?’ ‘My Lord,’ the stranger replied, ‘I am the son of Gordias, the grandson of Midas, and my name is Adrastus. The man I killed was my own brother, in an accident. Driven into exile by my father, and stripped of everything that I ever owned, I have ended up here.’ ‘Your family and mine have long been allies,’ responded Croesus, ‘so relax, you are among friends. For as long as you are here in my home, you will want for nothing. Try not to let the burden of your misfortune weigh down on you too heavily – that is the best approach.’

[36] So Adrastus came to live with Croesus. Simultaneously, in Mysia, a great monster of a wild boar appeared on Mount Olympus, and made its lair there, from where it was forever descending to trample the Mysians' crops. Repeated attempts were made to finish it off; but the Mysians' success was in inverse proportion to the damage that kept being inflicted on them by the boar. Finally, as a last resort, they sent a delegation to Croesus. 'My Lord,' the messengers said, 'a great monster of a wild boar has appeared in our country and is ruining our crops. Desperate though we are to capture the brute, the task is beyond us. Please, we beg you, send us your son and the pick of your young men, your dogs as well, so that we can drive the beast off our land.' Now Croesus, listening to this request, could not help but remember his dream. 'No more talk of my son,' he declared. 'I cannot possibly let him go with you. He has only just got married, and so he has his hands full with that. But you can certainly have the pick of Lydia's huntsmen, not to mention my entire pack of hounds, and I will give them strict instructions to do all they can to clear your lands of this beast.'

[37] This answer was good enough for the Mysians – but not for Atys, who at that very moment came bursting into the room. The young man had heard about the Mysians' request, and now, finding his father obdurate in refusing to let him join them, he wanted his say. 'Father, time was, out on the battlefield or on the hunt, when the fairest and noblest deeds imaginable would be credited to our family, and redound to our honour. Nowadays, however, you forbid me from engaging in either pursuit, even though there has never been any suggestion that I might be a coward or lacking in spirit. What kind of a figure must I cut, then, walking in and out of the city's public places? What will my fellow-citizens make of me? What will my new bride take me for? She must feel that she has been landed with a pretty miserable husband, that is for sure! So I beg you – either let me go on the hunt, or else give me just one reason why what you are doing is for my good!'

[38] 'My dear boy,' answered Croesus, 'my decision is certainly no reflection on you, for I have never detected so much as a hint of cowardice in you, nor any other failing, come to that. No, I had a dream, a vision which came upon me in my sleep, telling me that your time was almost up, and that your doom was fast approaching in the form of an iron spearhead. That is why I rushed you into getting married, and why I am refusing to let you go on the expedition: my vision. I am determined, for so long as I still have breath, to smuggle you past anything that fate might throw at you. But that requires taking precautions. You are my son! Indeed, my one and only son – for your brother, [deaf and] handicapped as he is, I scarcely count as my child.'

[39] 'Well, I can hardly blame you for trying to protect me, Father,' the young man replied, 'if that was your dream. But there is one thing you have failed to appreciate, one thing you have overlooked – and it is only proper that I point it out to you. You say that your dream revealed to you – and here is the detail which has thrown you into such a panic – that it is an iron spearhead which is destined to spell my end. But what kind of a boar possesses hands, let alone an iron spearhead? Had you been told that I would be gored to death by a tusk, or something like that, then, yes, you would have been perfectly justified in doing what you are doing. But it was a spear – a spear! It is not as though I am heading into a battle or up against men! So please – let me go!'

[40] 'My dear child,' answered Croesus, 'for some reason which I do not altogether understand, I find myself bowing to the force of your argument about my dream. You win. My mind is changed. You have my permission to go on the hunt.'

[41] The conversation now being over, Croesus sent for Adrastus, and when the Phrygian had come into his presence, said: 'Adrastus, it was to me you came for purification when you found yourself struck down by misfortune, and I have never held it against you. Not only that, but I took you into my house and I spared no expense in setting you up here. You are in my debt: I have shown you every kindness, and now it is your turn to do me a favour. I would like you to become my son's bodyguard on this hunt he is about to embark upon, in case any bandits or villains of that kind attack him while you are out on the road and try to do him harm. And besides, you owe it to yourself to go where you will have the chance to burnish your name: your family is a distinguished one, after all, and you are hardly lacking physically.'

[42] 'My Lord,' answered Adrastus, 'under normal circumstances I would have nothing to do with an exploit of this kind. It is hardly fitting for someone with my record of misfortune to associate with his more successful peers, nor is it something I would wish to do. There are so many reasons for me to show self-restraint. But you keep pressing me – and I can refuse you nothing, not when I reflect how much I owe you for all the kindnesses you have bestowed upon me. I am ready to do as you urge: to serve to the very best of my ability as your son's bodyguard. Rest assured, he will come back to you safe and sound.'

[43] Such was the promise he made to Croesus; and sure enough, not long afterwards, he and Atys set off with a train of hand-picked young men and dogs. On arriving at Olympus, they set to searching the mountain for the beast, and then, once they had tracked it down, they encircled it and let fly with their spears. And now it happened that the single foreigner among them – yes, Croesus' guest, the same man who had been cleansed by him of the stain of blood, the one known as Adrastus – took aim at the boar with his spear, missed, and hit Croesus' son. Struck by the spearhead, Atys fell to the ground – and the calamity foretold in the dream was fulfilled. The news of what had happened was immediately dispatched to Croesus. The messenger, having run all the way to Sardis, reported to the king how the boar had been fought, and how his son had met his doom.

[44] The death of his child left Croesus utterly prostrated; and what made his cries of anguish all the more terrible was the fact that he himself had cleansed the killer of the taint of bloodshed. Indeed, such was the violence of his grief at his misfortune that he called upon Zeus, as the god of purification, to witness what he had suffered at the hands of the stranger he had welcomed as a friend; and then a second time, but now as the god of hearth and companionship, he invoked the name of Zeus. Why as the god of the hearth? Because, by welcoming Adrastus into his home, Croesus had unwittingly been hosting the killer of his son. And why as the god of companionship? Because, by appointing Adrastus his son's bodyguard, Croesus had in effect recruited to his side a deadly foe.

[45] Time passed, and in due course the Lydians arrived bringing with them the dead body; and in their rear there followed the killer. He stood in front of the corpse, stretched out his hands to Croesus in a gesture of abject submission and told the king to end his life right there, over the body of his son. 'My earlier misfortunes were terrible enough,' he said, 'but now, after I have brought ruin down upon the head of the very man who purified me, why should I wish to live a moment more?' Croesus, when he heard this, was moved to pity, even in the midst of all his own sorrows. 'My friend,' he said, 'this sentence of death which you have pronounced upon yourself is all the justice I desire. You are not to blame for the horror which has overwhelmed me. No – you were nothing but the unwitting agent of some god, whose warnings of what was fated to happen were delivered to me long ago.' And thereupon, in a mighty barrow as befitted a prince, Croesus buried his child. But Adrastus – the son of Gordias,

the grandson of Midas, the man who had killed his own brother and dealt a murderous blow to the very man who had purified him – waited until the mourners were gone and the tomb was abandoned to silence; and then, in the firm conviction that of all the men who had ever lived there was no one more crushed by misfortune than himself, he climbed the grave and slit his own throat.

[46] For two years, Croesus sat paralysed by grief at the death of his child. But then, after the empire of Astyages, Cyaxares' son, was toppled by Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, the growing might of the Persians led Croesus to put his grief to one side, and begin instead to weigh up his likely prospects for nipping Persian greatness in the bud, and checking the spread of its power. No sooner had he started turning this over in his mind than he decided to test out the efficacy of an assortment of oracles, (mainly Greek, although there was one in Libya as well).

Emissaries were dispatched to various locations: to Delphi, to Abae in Phocis and to Dodona. Some were sent to Amphiaraus and Trophonius, and some to Branchidae in Miletus. These were the Greek oracles consulted by Croesus' servants; but he also sent men to pay their respects to the oracle of Ammon in Libya. His purpose in doing this was to test just how accurate these oracles truly were; and then, to those which had successfully demonstrated their authenticity, to send messengers a second time, and ask them whether or not he should go to war with Persia.

[47] The instructions he gave to the Lydians before sending them off to test the oracles were very precise. They were to keep a careful track of how many days had passed since their departure from Sardis, and then, on the hundredth day, they were to seek an oracular consultation and ask what King Croesus of Lydia, the son of Alyattes, was doing at that very moment. Each oracle was to give its response; and then, once the answers had been written down, they were to be brought back to him. Now, in every case bar one, we have no record of what the oracles actually said; but we do have the response of Delphi. For there, the moment that the Lydians stepped into the innermost sanctum of the shrine, looking to consult the god and to put the question they had been instructed to ask, the priestess – the Pythia – began to speak as follows, chanting in perfect hexameters:

'I can count an infinitude of grains of sand and I have the measuring of the sea, I understand the talk of the dumb, and I can hear what the voiceless say. A scent wafts through my senses, the scent of a hard-shelled tortoise, Boiling within bronze, bubbling with lambs' flesh, Bronze lies beneath it, and bronze is its covering too.'

[48] After the priestess had delivered this pronouncement, the Lydians wrote it down and returned home to Sardis. When the other emissaries too were back, all with their own messages, Croesus opened up the scrolls and looked over what he found written in them. None met his expectations. But then the message from Delphi was read out to him, and immediately he cried out in awestruck wonder, hailing its accuracy and declaring that only Delphi, of all oracles, had the true gift of prophecy – for it alone had identified what he had been up to. Croesus' scheme, you see, following his dispatch of the emissaries to the oracles, had been to arrive at some course of action that no one would ever find out or guess; and so, after keeping a careful track of the calendar for a hundred days, he had taken a tortoise and a lamb, cut them both up and boiled them in a cauldron made of bronze – as was its lid.

[49] So much, then, for the story of what was revealed to Croesus by Delphi. I have been unable to identify the message that was delivered by the oracle of Amphiaraus to the Lydians,

once they had completed the traditional rites at the temple: for no record of it has survived. All I will say is that this oracle too proved itself authentic – according to Croesus, at any rate.

[50] Croesus' next move was to propitiate with a magnificent sacrifice the god who speaks at Delphi. First he immolated three thousand animals, an offering of every conceivable breed that might be reckoned acceptable to the heavens, and then he raised a great pyre, heaping up couches overlaid with gold and silver, golden bowls and purple cloaks and tunics, before torching the lot – all in the expectation that this would give him a better chance of winning the god over to his side. He also instructed the Lydians to make their own sacrifices, each according to his means. Then, when these ceremonies had been completed, he melted down an enormous amount of gold and had it moulded into 117 ingots, all of the same size: six palms long, three palms wide and one palm high. Four of the ingots were made of pure gold, and weighed $2\frac{1}{2}$ talents each, while the other ingots were made of an alloy of gold and silver and weighed half a talent less. Croesus also ordered the image of a lion to be fashioned out of pure gold: its weight was 10 talents. (When the temple at Delphi burned down, this same lion fell off the ingots which had been serving as its pedestal, and three and a half talents' worth of its gold melted away: it now weighs $6\frac{1}{2}$ talents, and is to be found in the Corinthian treasury.)

[51] Once these offerings had all been made ready, Croesus sent them off to Delphi, along with a number of other gifts. There were two huge mixing bowls, one of gold, which was placed on the right-hand side of the temple entrance, and another of silver, which was placed on the left. (These also had to be moved when the temple burnt down: the gold one, which weighs $8\frac{1}{2}$ talents and 12 minae in all, now stands in the Clazomenaeae treasury, while the silver bowl is kept in the corner of the temple's entrance-hall. Its capacity is equivalent to 600 amphoras – a detail which derives from the Delphians' use of it to mix wine at the Festival of the Theophania. The Delphians identify it as the work of Theodorus of Samos – an attribution which I personally am quite content to accept, since it really does seem to me a most extraordinary piece of work.) Croesus also sent four rounded silver jars, which stand in the Corinthian treasury, and he dedicated two basins for the sprinkling of holy water to the service of the god, one of gold and one of silver. (The gold basin has an inscription on it, claiming that it was a votive offering presented by the Lacedaemonians; but this is untrue. Croesus donated it along with all his other gifts, and the inscription was only added later by a Delphian who wished to ingratiate himself with the Lacedaemonians: I could name the guilty person, but will keep my peace. Granted, the boy through whose hand the water trickles was indeed given by the Lacedaemonians – but not the bowls themselves.) Croesus also sent a host of other votive offerings at the same time which lacked inscriptions: these included some casts of silver poured into round moulds, and a gold statue of a woman three cubits high, which ranks as an item of particular interest, because – the Delphians say – it represents the woman who used to bake Croesus' bread. Croesus also made a dedication of his wife's ornamented belts, and of necklaces unclasped from her very throat.

[52] Such were the gifts Croesus sent to Delphi. He also sent votive offerings to the oracle founded by Amphiaraus (the story of whose valour and misfortunes he had come across during the course of his researches): a shield made entirely of gold and a spear likewise fashioned out of solid gold, from the shaft all the way to the tip. In my own lifetime, both these items were still on display in Thebes – in the temple of Ismenian Apollo, to be precise.

[53] The Lydians who were to take the gifts to the shrines were instructed by Croesus to ask the oracles whether he should go to war with the Persians, and also whether he should attempt to secure an alliance with some other leading military power. Arriving at their

destinations, the Lydians duly made a presentation of the votive offerings, and then approached the oracles with their enquiries. 'Croesus, the king of the Lydians and of many other peoples,' they said, 'in the firm conviction that yours are the only true oracles that mankind possesses, has sent you the gifts that your powers of divination merit. Now, here are the questions he wishes to put to you. Should he go to war with the Persians? And should he seek out an alliance with some other military power?' The two oracles, delivering their judgements in response to these questions, were in perfect agreement, for they both predicted that Croesus, if he did go to war with the Persians, would destroy a mighty empire, and they both advised him to identify the strongest military power among the Greeks, and to swear a treaty of friendship with it.

[54] When Croesus was informed of the prophecies that had been brought back to him, he was delighted with the oracles, and secure now in the firm conviction that he would indeed destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he made enquiries as to the size of Delphi's population, and then, dispatching his ambassadors there again, to the seat of the Pythia, he presented every Delphian with a gift of 2 gold staters. In exchange, the Delphians granted Croesus and the Lydians first place in any queue to put questions to the oracle, waived all consultation fees and reserved them front seats at each and every festival – not to mention the right, granted in perpetuity, of becoming citizens of Delphi if they so wished.

[55] Then, with his bounty duly scattered among the Delphians, Croesus consulted the oracle a third time – for the taste of an authentic prophecy had left him greedy to have his fill of more. On this occasion he asked the god if his reign would be a long one. This was the Pythia's answer:

'Only when a mule has become the ruler of the Medes Should you flee, Lydian, upon your soft-soled feet, without delay, By pebbly River Hermus, unashamed to play the coward.'

[56] This response, when it was delivered to Croesus, delighted him more than anything he had yet been told – for the Medes, after all, were hardly likely to replace their human kings with a mule! Confident now that he and his dynasty were destined never to lose power, Croesus next turned his attention to an investigation of the political scene in Greece, with a view to securing the most formidable states there as his allies. His enquiries soon revealed to him that the two leading powers – the first of Dorian stock, and the second of Ionian – were the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians: none ranked above them. The roots of both were ancient, for the Athenians were sprung from the race of the Pelasgians, and the Lacedaemonians from that of the Hellenes. Unlike the Pelasgians, who were indigenous, the Hellenes had for a long time been inveterate nomads. Back when Deucalion was their king, they dwelt in Phthia; but by the time of Dorus, Hellen's son, they had settled between Mount Ossa and Mount Olympus, in the land known as Histiaeotis. Next, after being driven out of Histiaeotis by the Cadmeians, they settled on Mount Pindus, where they were known as 'Macedonians' until in due course they set off on yet another migration, this time to Dryopis. Only once they had left there did they finally arrive in the Peloponnese, and come to be known as 'Dorians'.

[57] Working out what language was spoken by the Pelasgians is a problem which defies a definite solution. Perhaps, though – if one must posit an answer – it is reasonable to deduce it from those who have survived into the present day; for there are Pelasgians still living in Creston, in the land of the Tyrrhenians, and who were once the neighbours of the people now known as the Dorians (and who then lived in a land called Thessaliotis), as well as those who

were originally the compatriots of the Athenians, and founded Placia and Scylace in the Hellespont, not to mention a whole host of other settlements which once used to rank as Pelasgian, but have since changed their names. On the basis of this evidence, at any rate, it has to be concluded that the language spoken by the Pelasgians was not Greek; and if this is so – and if the inference is one that can be applied equally to all Pelasgians – then it is clear that the Athenians, as a people originally of Pelasgian stock, must at some point in the process of their Hellenization have learned a whole new language: Greek. Certainly, the fact that the Crestonians and the Placians both speak a similar tongue one which bears no relation to those spoken by their immediate neighbours – strongly suggests that, although they may have changed one homeland for another, they did not change their language, but instead zealously preserved it in its native form.

[58] As for the Greeks, it seems clear to me that they have always spoken the same language, right from their very beginnings. It is true that they were originally of little account at the time when they first established themselves as a people distinct from the Pelasgians, but since then they have come to encompass a great multitude of different nations, and have long since outgrown their humble beginnings. The Pelasgians themselves were the most notable example of a people who ended up being Hellenized, but there were numerous others as well, all of them originally non-Greek speaking. It is worth reflecting that for as long as the Pelasgians stuck with their own language, they never amounted to much at all.

(59-68) Political situation of Sparta and Athens immediately before the time when Croesus receives the Oracle's advice to ally himself with the most prominent Greeks.

[69] All this was duly made known to Croesus; and it prompted him to send heralds to Sparta, emissaries who took with them both gifts and a request for an alliance. 'Croesus, who is the king of the Lydians, and of many other peoples besides, sent us,' the heralds declared on their arrival, making sure to follow the precise script that had been issued to them by their master. 'This is his message to you: "Men of Lacedaemon, it was the divinely sanctioned advice of the oracle that I should make a friend of the Greeks. You, I have been informed, are the leading power among the Greeks. Accordingly, just as the oracle recommended, I extend to you the hand of friendship. Let us be allies – and may our dealings be free of all treachery and deception!"' Such was the message that Croesus delivered through the mouths of his heralds; and the Lacedaemonians, who in truth had already heard all about the oracle's advice to Croesus, were so delighted to receive the Lydians' overtures that they signed up to a treaty of friendship and alliance on the spot. The reason for this was that, some time previously, Croesus had done them certain favours, and so they owed him a debt of gratitude. There was the time, for instance, when the Lacedaemonians had needed gold for a statue of Apollo (the same one which now stands in the Laconian town of Thornax) and had sent agents to Sardis looking to make a purchase; but Croesus had given it to the would-be buyers for free.

[70] Partly for this reason, and partly also because Croesus had ranked them worthy of his friendship above all the other Greeks, the Lacedaemonians signed up to the proposed alliance. They then took two further measures. The first was to declare themselves ready to answer any call for help from Croesus that he might send; the second was to repay his generosity to them by taking him a gift of their own, a bowl made of bronze, lavishly decorated around the outside rim with tiny figures, and with a capacity equivalent to 300 amphoras. In the event, however,

the bowl never made it to Sardis – and for this, two conflicting reasons are given. The Lacedaemonian story is that, while the bowl was still on its way to Sardis, and passing through Samian waters, the Samians got wind of what was off their coast, sent out longships in pursuit and stole it. The Samians themselves, however, give a very different account: they claim that the Lacedaemonians responsible for escorting the bowl were overtaken by events, and that after learning of the fall of Sardis and the capture of Croesus, they sold the bowl in Samos to a group of private citizens, who then placed it as a votive offering in the temple of Hera. If that is indeed what happened, then the men who sold the bowl might very well have claimed on their return to Sparta that it had been stolen from them by the Samians.

[71] So much for the bowl. Meanwhile, because he had failed to grasp the true meaning of the oracle, Croesus was busy with his invasion of Cappadocia, convinced that he was bound to crush the power of Cyrus and the Persians. In the midst of these preparations for the campaign against Persia, however, he received some advice from a Lydian named Sandanis, a man who had always had a name among his countrymen for intelligence, but who now gave that reputation a great boost, such was the quality of his analysis. ‘My Lord,’ he said, ‘bear in mind the kind of men you are planning to attack. Men who wear leather wrapped around their legs indeed, who never wear anything except for leather. Men whose native land is so unforgiving that they do not consume, they merely subsist. Men who drink no wine but only water, who never so much as get to nibble on a fig, who possess nothing worth having at all. Nothing will come of nothing – so even if you defeat them, what is there in it for you? But should they defeat you, well then – just think how much you stand to lose! Give them a taste of how well we live, and see how they will seize upon the discovery, see how they will resist all our attempts to beat them off. Be grateful to the gods, I say, that they never put it into the Persians’ heads to launch a war of aggression against us!’ And Sandanis was right, for although Croesus did not take his advice, it is perfectly true that it was indeed the conquest of Lydia which provided the Persians with their first experience of those luxuries which together go to make up the good life.

[72] The Cappadocians are called ‘Syrians’ by the Greeks, and prior to the rise of the Persians to power, and their acknowledgement of Cyrus as their king, they had ranked as subjects of the Medes. The reason for this was that the frontier between the Median and the Lydian empires was the River Halys, which rises in the uplands of Armenia, flows through Cilicia and then continues with Matiene on its right bank and Phrygia on its left, before leaving those territories behind; it is now that its currents start to battle the gusting of the north wind, and to separate the Syrian Cappadocians from the Paphlagonians to the west. As a result, the Halys serves to demarcate virtually the whole of western Asia, from the shoreline opposite Cyprus all the way up to the Euxine Sea. It is very much the neck of the peninsula, and it would take a man who was travelling light five whole days to traverse it.

[73] So why did Croesus invade Cappadocia? Well, there was certainly his lust for territory, which had him itching to add to that portion of the world which was already his; but there was also the confidence he had placed in the oracle, and his desire to punish Cyrus for the downfall of Astyages. Astyages, you see, who was the son of Cyaxares, was also Croesus’ brother-in-law, and was the king of the Medes; and Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, had defeated him and taken him prisoner. Let me explain how it was that Astyages had ended up related by marriage to Croesus. It all began with a band of nomads, Scythians who been caught up in some tribal blood-feud, and came skulking into Median territory. Media at this point was ruled by Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, who in turn was the son of Deioces. He treated the Scythians

well at first, on the grounds that they had come to him asking for asylum. Indeed, such was the value he put on them that he entrusted some children to their care, so that the boys would pick up their language and their skills in archery. Time passed. Every day the Scythians would go out hunting, and every day they would bring back some trophy. Then one day they brought back nothing. When Cyaxares, who was evidently not the most even-tempered of men, saw that they had returned empty-handed, he had them roughed up and publicly humiliated. So indignant were the Scythians at this treatment, which they felt to have been thoroughly unjustified, that they put their heads together and decided that they would carve up one of their young pupils, dress him for the table exactly as they were accustomed to dress game and then serve the boy up to Cyaxares, as though he were indeed some catch they had hunted down, while they themselves, the moment the dish had been laid before the king, made off at breakneck speed for the court of Alyattes, the son of Sadyattes, in Sardis. All went exactly to plan. Cyaxares and his guests at the banquet tucked into the joint of meat – and the Scythians, their business done, claimed asylum from Alyattes.

[74] The aftermath of this was that Cyaxares demanded their extradition, but Alyattes refused, and so there was war between the Lydians and the Medes. For five years it raged, with the fortunes of battle favouring now the Medes over the Lydians, and now the Lydians over the Medes. On one occasion, they even fought what can only be described as a battle at night. Then, in the sixth year of a conflict that until that point had been thoroughly indecisive, there was yet another engagement, and this time it so happened that, right in the midst of the battle, the two sides suddenly found themselves fighting in the dark again, even though it was still the day. The Ionians had been forewarned of this eclipse by Thales of Miletus, who had pinpointed the date with such accuracy that he had identified the very year in which it did indeed eventually take place. When the Lydians and the Medes saw that the day was darkening into night, they not merely broke off the battle, but both actively committed themselves to securing a long-term peace. Syennesis, from Cilicia, and Labynetus, a Babylonian, were the two principal negotiators. Both were keen that a formal treaty should be signed, and that the two sides be bound by ties of marriage. Accordingly, it was decided that Alyattes would give the hand of his daughter, Aryenis, to Astyages, the son of Cyaxares – for everyone knew that treaties rarely endure unless they are framed by lasting sureties. This compact was then formalized according to the custom of both peoples, which differs from Greek practice in only one detail: both parties, after they have nicked the skin on their own forearms, will then lick up the other's blood.

[75] It was this same Astyages who was the father of Cyrus' mother and who, for reasons I will explain later on in my narrative, had been toppled and imprisoned by his grandson. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that Croesus should have regarded Cyrus' actions as a provocation, and sent messengers to ask the oracles if he should invade Persia; nor, once the oracle's ambiguous answer had been brought back to him, that he should have interpreted it favourably for his own ambitions, and pushed his army directly into the Persian sphere of influence. When Croesus arrived at the Halys, he used existing bridges to get his troops across the river – that is my opinion, at any rate, although it is true that the story as conventionally told by the Greeks holds Thales of Miletus responsible for effecting the crossing. This version presupposes that the bridges had not yet been built, and that Croesus, arriving at the river with his army, found himself with no idea how to cross it; Thales, however, who was present in the camp at the time, was able to make the river flow on both sides of the army, rather than merely on its left. He achieved this feat by digging a deep, crescent-shaped trench, starting upstream from the army's encampment and finishing well in its rear, so that the river was

diverted from its old course into the new one, flowing on round the camp until in due course it had bypassed it altogether and rejoined the original channel. Instead of one river, there were now two— and both were fordable. Indeed, there are those who say that the original river-bed dried up altogether, a claim which seems to me most improbable – for how then would the return crossing have been made?

[76] Beyond the river, Croesus and his army advanced into a land known as Pteria: this is the most readily defensible region of Cappadocia, and lies more or less in a line with the city of Sinope on the Euxine Sea. Croesus built a camp there, and set himself to ravaging the Syrians' farmland. The main city of the Pterians was captured, its inhabitants enslaved and all its outlying settlements overrun, while the Syrians – who had done absolutely nothing to merit this treatment – were made into refugees. Cyrus, meanwhile, had been mustering his own army, and now he set off to confront Croesus, raising conscripts from among all the peoples he passed along his way. Prior to setting out with his army on this expedition, he had even sent heralds to the Ionians, trying to incite them to rebel against Croesus – but they had resisted his blandishments, and so it was that Cyrus ended up in the region of Pteria, eye-balling Croesus from his camp and then locking with him in a trial of strength. The battle was fierce and the casualties heavy on both sides, but even as dusk began to thicken and the two armies fell back, neither had secured victory, such was the quality of the contest that the rival camps had fought.

[77] To Croesus, of course, this came as a major disappointment; and because the army he had led into battle was much smaller than that of Cyrus, he attributed his lack of success to the fact that he had been outnumbered. So it was, the next day, when Cyrus did not return to the fray, that he ordered a withdrawal to Sardis. Prior to his alliance with the Lacedaemonians, he had arranged a pact with Amasis, the king of Egypt; and it was his intention now to invoke the terms of this treaty with the Egyptians. Nor was that all – for because he had also made an alliance with Labynetos, who was the ruler of Babylon during this period, he similarly planned to summon the Babylonians to his assistance, as well as issuing a specific date for the Lacedaemonians to join him; then, with these reinforcements secured, and his own army mustered, he aimed to bed down for the winter and to attack the Persians the moment spring arrived. Sure enough, no sooner had he returned to Sardis than he put this plan into action, dispatching heralds round his various allies, instructing them to assemble at Sardis in five months' time. The mercenaries in the army that had already fought the Persians he disbanded and sent home, every last one— for so evenly matched had he and his rival found themselves while going head to head, it never crossed his mind that Cyrus would actually advance on Sardis.

[78] Over and over Croesus turned his plans in his head; and as he did so, all the lower reaches of the city began to swarm with serpents. No sooner had this phenomenon manifested itself than horses out in the fields, interrupting their grazing, came trotting into town and started eating the snakes. Croesus naturally supposed that he was being shown a portent – as indeed he was. Urgently, then, he sent messengers to Telmessus, where there were men qualified to interpret such things. Sure enough, on their arrival, his emissaries were told by the Telmessians precisely what the prodigy meant – but Croesus never got the news. Well before the return voyage to Sardis was over, he had fallen into enemy hands. This was in fact exactly what the Telmessians had said would occur: that Croesus could expect to hear the languages of a foreign army spoken in his land, and would witness its inhabitants conquered by invaders. For what is a snake, after all, if not the offspring of its native earth, and what a horse, if not a

creature broken to warfare, and imported from foreign fields? Such was the interpretation provided by the Telmessians. They had delivered their judgement in complete ignorance of the news from Sardis, and of what had happened to Croesus himself, even though he had already been made a captive by that time.

[79] Meanwhile, in the wake of the battle of Pteria, with Croesus in headlong retreat, and with news reaching the Persians that he planned to disband his army on his return home, Cyrus held a council of war, at which it was agreed that the opportunity to march on Sardis as quickly as possible, before the Lydian forces could be mustered a second time, was too good to miss. No sooner had this been decided than it was put into effect. The messenger who brought Croesus the news that the Persians were at his doorstep was none other than Cyrus himself. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Croesus now found himself in desperate straits, with all the assumptions on which he had based his strategy left in ruins, he still led the Lydians out to battle. Not for nothing was this an era when the Lydians stood unrivalled for courage and prowess in war among the peoples of Asia. Their particular strength lay in their cavalry, for not only were they brilliantly skilful horsemen, but they could handle lances of an unusual length.

[80] The two sides met in front of the city of Sardis, on an immense and treeless plain. (It is watered by a number of rivers, the Hyllus included: all of them are tributaries of the largest river, the Hermus, which rises in the mountain sacred to the mother goddess Dindymene and reaches the sea near the city of Phocaea.) When Cyrus saw the Lydians arrayed for battle, his alarm at the threat posed by their cavalry led him to adopt a suggestion of a Mede, a man called Harpagus: namely, that all the camels which been following in the army's train carrying food and baggage should be divested completely of their loads, formed into a single unit and mounted by men dressed in the clothes of a cavalry unit. Once they had readied themselves, Cyrus commanded these men to advance against Croesus' horsemen, with the rest of his army following behind – his infantry first and then, in the rear, all his cavalry. His orders, given to his entire army as they waited at their battle-stations, were to spare not a single Lydian, but rather to kill all who stood in their way – all, that was, apart from Croesus, who was to be taken alive even if he resisted capture. Such were the instructions that Cyrus issued. As for the reason why he had positioned his camels directly opposite the enemy's cavalry: this was because horses are terrified of camels, and cannot stand the sight of them, nor even to breathe in their scent upon the air. Here was the detail, the crucial detail, upon which the entire stratagem had been founded: it provided Cyrus with a means of disabling Croesus' cavalry, of neutralizing the arm which the Lydian most expected to shine. Sure enough, when battle was joined, the horses had only to smell and see the camels to turn tail, and to trample, as they stampeded, all Croesus' hopes into the dust. Nevertheless, the courage of the Lydians did not fail them; realizing what was happening, they leapt down from their saddles and met the Persians on foot. The slaughter on both sides was prodigious; but it was the Lydians who finally withdrew and fled, back behind the walls of their city, where they now found themselves cooped up by the Persians and put under blockade.

[81] So it was that the invaders settled down to the siege. Croesus, confident that he would be able to hold out for a good while, sent messengers out from his stronghold to his allies. Whereas his first dispatch had requested them all to assemble in Sardis in four months' time, now, with his capital under siege, he sent a revised appeal: that they should come to his assistance without delay.

[82] This alert was sent to all his allies; but to none of them was it sent with a greater sense of urgency than to the Lacedaemonians. By coincidence, however, the warriors of Sparta were

preoccupied at the time with a quarrel of their own, a dispute with Argos over the region known as Thyrae, which they had recently annexed and occupied, despite the fact that it lay within the Argive orbit. (In fact, everything as far west as Malea had once belonged to Argos – not simply the mainland, but the island of Cythera, and all the other islands too.) The Argives, coming to the rescue of their stolen fiefdom, held a parley with the Lacedaemonians, and agreed with them that three hundred men from each side should meet in pitched combat, with Thyrae going to the victors. Meanwhile, the main bodies of both armies were to withdraw back to their own borders, and to remain there for the duration of the contest – thereby ensuring that neither was tempted to come in on the side of its own champions, should it witness them succumbing. Such were the terms on which the two armies parted; and behind them, on the field of battle, the nominated warriors on both sides advanced to the fight. So evenly matched was the clash between them that by the end only three of the six hundred men were left: Alcenor and Chromius for the Argives, and on the Lacedaemonian side, Othryades. These, as night began to fall, were the sole survivors. The two Argives, taking for granted that they were the victors, made off at speed for Argos, but the Lacedaemonian, Othryades, who had been busying himself with the stripping of the Argive dead and the stockpiling of their arms in his camp, refused to abandon his post. The next day, the two armies reappeared, and the story of what had happened was rehearsed in full. For a while, both sides claimed victory: the Argives on the grounds that they had the most champions left standing, and the Lacedaemonians because their own champion – in contrast to the two Argives who had abandoned the battlefield – had remained there all night, despoiling the enemy dead. Finally, so heated did the argument become that the two sides fell to blows. Casualties on both sides were heavy – but it was the Lacedaemonians who came out on top. Ever since then, the Argives have worn their hair cropped short, in contrast to their previous custom, which was to wear it long; indeed, they passed a law, complete with curses against those who broke it, to the effect that no man in Argos should ever grow out his hair, and no woman wear gold jewellery, until Thyrae was theirs again. The Lacedaemonians also passed a new law, but one that was the mirror image of the one passed in Argos, for whereas previously they had worn their hair short, now they began to wear it long. One other detail – it is said that Othryades, the sole survivor of the three hundred, felt such shame at the thought of returning to Sparta while all his comrades lay dead in the earth of Thyrae, that he killed himself there.

[83] This, then, was the situation in which the Spartan elite were operating when the herald from Sardis arrived, requesting their assistance in helping Croesus to lift the siege. Despite everything, once they had heard the herald out, they showed themselves more than willing to answer the call for help. No sooner had they readied themselves and their fleet for departure, however, than another message came, this time bringing news that the Lydians' stronghold had fallen, and that Croesus himself had been taken alive, and was a prisoner. The Lacedaemonians, with great regret, abandoned their effort immediately.

[84] This is the story of how Sardis fell. Two weeks after bottling Croesus up inside the city, Cyrus sent horsemen touring the lines of his army with a proclamation: the first man over the battlements could expect a rich reward. Prompted by this announcement, soldier after soldier made the attempt, but none succeeded. Then, when everyone else had given up, a Mardian by the name of Hyroeades made an attempt to scale the one point of the acropolis which stood unguarded for so precipitously did it rise, and so impregably, that it had never crossed anyone's mind that an attack there could possibly succeed. Even Meles, a king of Sardis back in former times, had overlooked it; and he had been told by the Telmessians that a lion borne to him by his concubine, if it were carried around the battlements, would serve to render Sardis

forever proof against capture. Meles had duly carried the lion along all those stretches of the walls where the acropolis might be reckoned vulnerable to attack; but the sheerest and most impregnable spot, a cliff on the side of the city which faces Mount Tmolus, he had neglected to tour. It was down the very face of this point on the acropolis, however, that Hyroeades, the previous day, had seen a helmet roll, and then, from the summit, a Lydian descend to retrieve it – a sight which the Mardian had noted and replayed over and over again in his innermost thoughts. Up the cliff he went and other Persians quickly began to follow in his wake. More and more made the climb; and the consequence was the fall of Sardis and the sacking of the entire city.

[85] And what of the fate of Croesus himself? To answer that question I must mention his son again, the one who despite all his many other qualities had always been a mute. In the days before the ruin of his prosperity, Croesus had done all that he could for the young man, trying this and that, even to the extent of sending emissaries to Delphi to consult the oracle on his son's behalf. This was the Pythia's reply:

'Such folly, though you are lord of many, Lydian-born Croesus! Beware what you wish for! That sound you long to hear, in your home, Your son finding his tongue – better for you never to hear it. Know, when he does talk for the first time, that the day will be an evil one!'

Well – the battlements had been stormed, and one of the Persians was approaching Croesus to cut him down, not knowing who he was. Even though Croesus could see the soldier coming, such was the numbing effect of the catastrophe which had overwhelmed him that he did not care – for what did it matter to him now if he was struck down and killed? But his son, the mute, terrified and appalled by the sight of the Persian bearing down upon his father, suddenly found that his tongue was sounding out words. 'Please, Sir,' he cried, 'do not kill Croesus!' This was the very first time that he had spoken – and from that moment on he could talk with perfect fluency, and continued to do so all his life.

[86] Sardis fell to the Persians, and Croesus into Persian hands, in the fourteenth year of his reign, and on the fourteenth day of the siege. Just as the oracle had foretold, he had indeed destroyed a mighty empire – his own. Now, following his capture, he was led into the presence of Cyrus, who had him loaded down with chains, and then, accompanied by the children of some prominent Lydians, fourteen of them in all, placed on top of a huge pyre, ready built for the occasion. Quite what Cyrus had in mind, I am not sure: perhaps he was aiming to dedicate the choicest offerings in his possession to some god or other; or perhaps he was looking to fulfil a vow; or perhaps he had learned of Croesus' reputation as a god-fearing man, and made him mount the pyre to see if a supernatural agency of some kind would preserve him from being burned alive. Whatever the explanation, however, Cyrus did what he did; and Croesus, standing there on top of the pyre, and in the full consciousness of his ruin, was suddenly reminded of a maxim that seemed to him now touched by an authentically divine wisdom, for it was the same maxim that had been pronounced by Solon, when he had declared that no one living ranks as happy. The recollection of this prompted Croesus to sigh bitterly, and to utter a groan; and then, breaking a long silence, he repeated, three times over, the name of Solon. Cyrus, overhearing him, ordered the interpreters to approach Croesus and demand of him whom it was he had been calling upon – which they duly did. Although Croesus refused to respond to their questioning at first, an answer was eventually dragged out of him. 'A man so remarkable', he said, 'that I would willingly have paid a fortune to ensure that every ruler in the world be given the chance to listen to him.' This reply, of course, made little sense to the interpreters; and so they pressed him to clarify his meaning. Crowding around Croesus, they

kept on badgering him until at last he told them about Solon: how he had come from Athens, how he had made light of all the splendour he had been shown (that had been the gist, at any rate), and about how everything he had warned Croesus might happen had indeed come to pass. 'Nor', said Croesus, 'were his words directed at me alone, for they apply with no less force to men everywhere – and especially to men who consider themselves blessed by fortune.' So he spoke – and all the while the pyre, which had already been torched, was starting to crackle along its edges. But Cyrus, when he learned from his interpreters what Croesus had said, found his heart melting. He reflected that he too was mortal, and yet there he was, burning alive a fellow human being – and one who had previously been no less prosperous than himself. And then too there was his dread of retribution, and his growing consciousness of the mutability of the affairs of men; and so he gave orders that the fire should be extinguished at once, and that Croesus and all those with him should be helped down from the pyre. And yet the flames, despite frantic efforts, could not be mastered.

[87] It was then, so the Lydians say, that Croesus grasped what was happening: that Cyrus had changed his mind, and that his men, despite all their efforts to extinguish the flames, were failing to bring them under control. Seeing this, Croesus raised a desperate appeal to Apollo: 'If ever any offering I have made to you has been acceptable in your sight,' he cried out, 'then please, stand by me now, and redeem me from this danger I face!' Such was his invocation of the god, uttered through his tears; and at once the previously clear and windless sky began to cloud over, and a storm to break, and then rain to lash down so hard that all the flames were put out. Here was proof enough for Cyrus that Croesus was indeed a good man, and a favourite of the gods; and so he had him brought down from the pyre. 'Tell me now, Croesus,' he asked, 'someone must have persuaded you to invade my country, and to be my enemy rather than my friend – who was it?' 'My Lord,' Croesus answered, 'it was all my own doing – to your profit, and to my misfortune. When I launched the invasion, however, it was with the full encouragement of the god of the Greeks – so the ultimate blame, I suppose, should lie with him. For would I otherwise ever have been so foolish as to choose war over peace? In peacetime it is sons who bury their fathers – but in times of war, it is fathers who bury their sons. Somewhere in the heavens there is someone smiling at what has happened.'

[88] Cyrus, impressed by this speech of Croesus', ordered his chains struck off, and commanded him to sit down by his side. Indeed, it was not only Cyrus but his entire entourage who found themselves admiring Croesus' demeanour. Lost in thought, however, the man himself said not a word. Then he turned, watching as the Persians devastated the Lydian capital, and opened his mouth at last. 'O King, should I say what has been on my mind, or is this not an appropriate time to speak?' Cyrus told him not to be afraid, and to say whatever he wished. Croesus responded with a second question. 'What are they doing, all these rampaging hordes?' 'Why,' said Cyrus, 'they are tearing your city to pieces, and carting off your treasures.' But Croesus turned this statement upon its head. 'It is not my city they are tearing to pieces, not my treasures. None of it belongs to me any more. It is you who is being robbed.'

[89] This observation was sufficient to give Cyrus pause; and so he dismissed the rest of his entourage and asked Croesus for his full reading of the situation. 'Since the gods have seen fit to give me to you as a slave,' Croesus replied, 'it is clearly my duty, should I ever have a particular insight, to share it with you. The Persians are naturally prone to violence and they are poor. If you simply stand by as they plunder and hoard all this staggering wealth, then I can tell you what is likely to happen – the one who grabs the most is bound to end up behind a bid for power. However, I do have a suggestion to make – and one that I hope will meet with your

approval. Put your bodyguards on sentry-duty by all the city gates. Have them confiscate any valuables they see being removed from the city. Give as your pretext the need to offer a tithe to Zeus. If you do that, then you will avoid the obloquy that would otherwise be yours for forcibly stripping people of their plunder – for they will recognize the justice of what you are doing, and willingly forgo what they have.'

[90] Impressed by what he had heard, Cyrus approved this advice wholeheartedly. With much praise for its good sense, he ordered his bodyguards to put the proposal into effect, then turned back to Croesus. 'A king you may once have been,' he said, 'but I see you are no less ready on that account to do me good service and to offer me sound advice. Let me give you something in exchange. Is there anything you want? You only have to ask me for it, and it will be yours straightaway!' 'Master,' Croesus answered, 'nothing would gratify me more than to be allowed to send these chains to the god of the Greeks, whom I honoured above all others, and to ask him if it is his custom to cheat those who serve him well.' When Cyrus asked him what grudge he could possibly hold against the god that he made such a request, Croesus told him the whole story: the plans he had drawn up, the answers he had received from the oracle, the rich gifts he had sent (these were a particular grievance) and the prophecies which had encouraged him to go to war with the Persians. Then, when he had finished his story, he repeated his request for permission to take his reproaches to the god. Cyrus laughed. 'Yes, Croesus,' he said, 'of course you have my permission – not only on this occasion, but whenever else you may have a similar request to make.' The moment Croesus heard this, he dispatched a delegation of Lydians to Delphi. Their orders were to lay the fetters on the threshold of the temple, and then, pointing to them, to ask the oracle if he was not ashamed to have encouraged Croesus to go to war with the Persians, and to believe that Cyrus' hold on power could possibly be destroyed, when the only fruits of such a war were destined to be his chains. All this they were to demand; and then they were to ask whether it was the normal practice of the gods of the Greeks to show such ingratitude.

[91] But when the Lydians arrived in Delphi and obediently repeated Croesus' words, the Pythia, it is said, had a ready retort. 'Not even a god can evade what fate has preordained. Five generations ago, an ancestor of Croesus, a man who at the time was a guard sworn to the personal protection of the Heraclids, succumbed to the seductions of a woman's treachery, killed his master and stole his throne, an honour to which he had no claim – and now it is Croesus who has paid the debt on that crime. The truth is that Apollo was keen to see Sardis suffer her downfall in the time of Croesus' sons, rather than during the reign of Croesus himself – but the Fates would not be gainsaid. Nevertheless, what little they would allow, the god did secure on Croesus' behalf. The fall of Sardis was delayed by three whole years – and so you should be sure to inform Croesus that he has had three years more of freedom than was originally his lot. Secondly – did the god not come to his rescue when he was on the verge of being burned to ashes? As for the oracle he received, Croesus certainly has no right to find fault with that: attack the Persians, Apollo declared, and you will destroy a great empire. Such an answer should have prompted Croesus to consult his advisers, and then to send men back to ask which empire had been meant: Cyrus' or his own? But because he misinterpreted what had been said, he did not follow it up with the right enquiry – and so he should accept that the fault is his alone. He should also acknowledge that he misread the very last oracle he received – the one in which Apollo alluded to a mule. After all, what else but a mule would you term Cyrus, a man who has both the blue blood of his mother flowing in his veins, and the blood of his father, who came from a quite different country, and was of a much lower social class? For Cyrus' mother was a Mede, and the daughter of Astyages, the king of Media; but his father

was a Persian, a vassal of the Medes, and therefore in every way the inferior of the woman he ended up marrying, who should properly have ranked as his mistress as well as his queen.’ This was the reply that the Pythia gave to the Lydians; and once they had returned with it to Sardis, and Croesus had listened to them repeat it, he freely acknowledged that he had indeed been culpable, and that the god was not to blame.

[92] Such is the story of Croesus’ reign, and of how Ionia came to be conquered for the first time. Greece is full of Croesus’ votive offerings, and not only the ones that I have already had cause to mention: in Thebes, in Boeotia, for instance, there is a golden tripod, dedicated to Ismenian Apollo; in Ephesus, it was Croesus who donated the golden cows and most of the pillars; and in ‘The Shrine Before the Temple’ at Delphi, there is a huge shield of gold. All these dedications were still to be seen even in my day, although there are others which have not survived. Branchidae, in Miletus, I am told, also boasts offerings presented by Croesus, which are similar to those found in Delphi, and equal in weight. All the gifts he sent to Delphi, and to the shrine of Amphiaraus too, were paid for out of his own household coffers and the patrimony he had inherited from his father; but the rest were funded by the estates of an enemy of his, the same man who had led the faction which was opposed to his becoming king, and backed the right of Pantaleon to the throne. (Pantaleon was the son of Alyattes, but he and Croesus were only half-brothers – for Croesus was born to Alyattes by a Carian woman, whereas Pantaleon’s mother was an Ionian.) It was Croesus, of course, who ended up inheriting the throne from his father; and no sooner was he king than he made sure to torture his opponent to death by hauling him over the spikes of a carding-comb. Even prior to this, Croesus had vowed that all his adversary’s belongings would be dedicated to the gods, and so they were, just as I previously described – for they were sent to the various shrines I have already listed. So much for the votive offerings made by Croesus.

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(93-216, summary) The greatest adversary of Croesus, king of Lydia, was Cyrus, who became king of the Persians in an unusual way. Cyrus was the son of Mandane, the daughter of the king of the Medes, and a low-ranking Persian. The Persians were, at that time, vassals of the Median people. Astyages, the king of the Medes, wanted to kill Cyrus when he was born, because he feared that Cyrus would revolt against him because of a dream that warned him of such a future. Cyrus survived by accident. When he grew up, he convinced the Persians to overthrow the Medes. Cyrus became king, freed the Persians, and expanded the Persian empire through conquest. He also subdued the Lydians ruled by King Croesus in 546 BC. Cyrus defeated the Assyrians and conquered Babylon in 538 BC, the most important city in the world at that time. In this way, the people They acquired dominion over all of Asia Minor. Later, Cyrus was killed in battle against the Massagetae. His descendants gradually subdued many peoples, including the Greek tribes of the Aeolians and the Ionians.

Book II. Euterpe.

(Summary of the book: Customs of the Egyptians, a country Herodotus visited to learn about their most famous stories and the long-standing tradition of building monuments to the gods, which in his opinion far surpassed those dedicated to them by the Greeks.)

[4] As regards human affairs, however, the priests were all agreed in saying that the Egyptians were the first people to discover what a year is, and to divide up its various seasons into twelve parts. This discovery, they claimed, derived from the stars. Their system, it seems to me, is a much more sophisticated one than the Greek: the Greeks, in order to match their calendar to the seasons, are obliged to insert an intercalary month every other year, whereas the Egyptians, because they have twelve months each of thirty days, need only add another five days onto the year to ensure that the cycle of the seasons returns to its original starting-point. The priests also stated that the Egyptians were the first to use the names of the twelve gods, and that these were then adopted from them by the Greeks. Other innovations included their allocation of altars, images and temples to the gods, and the carving of figures on stone. Most of these claims they were able to back up with evidence. They also informed me that the first human king of Egypt was Min. In his time the whole of Egypt, with the exception of the province of Thebes, was marshland; indeed, north of Lake Moeris, which is a seven-day voyage upriver from the sea, everywhere that is now dry land lay under water.

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[50] Indeed, almost all the names of the gods came to Greece from Egypt. That they derived from barbarians was evident enough, I found on investigation – and that they mostly arrived from Egypt seems to me obvious. Excepting Poseidon and the Dioscuri, whose names I have already mentioned, and Hera, Hestia and Themis, the Graces and the Nereids, there is not one name of a god that has not been known in the land of Egypt since the very dawn of time. Here, I am merely echoing what the Egyptians themselves say. Those gods whose names they do not recognize must, it seems to me, have been given their names by the Pelasgians. The one exception is Poseidon, a god whom the Greeks learned about from the Libyans. The proof of this is that the Libyans are the only people to have used Poseidon's name right from the very beginning, and to have honoured the god without break. One thing the Egyptians do not practise at all is the cult of heroes.

[52] Thanks to what I heard at Dodona, I know for a fact that it was the original practice of the Pelasgians to accompany every sacrifice with prayers to the gods, but without giving any of them titles or proper names, of which the Pelasgians were as yet ignorant. The name they did use was *theoi* – the Greek word for 'gods', which they derived in turn from another Greek word, *ti-themi*, meaning 'to ordain' – on the basis that it was the gods who had ordained what the order of the universe should be, and what its proper arrangement. After a long while had passed, however, the Pelasgians learned of the names used in Egypt for the gods, and which had since arrived on their shores. (All, that is, except for the name of Dionysus, which they learned about much later.) Then, after more time had gone by, they sought advice concerning these names from the oracle at Dodona, which is held to be the most ancient of Greek oracles (and indeed at the time was the only one in existence). When the Pelasgians asked the oracle whether they should adopt the names that had come from the barbarians, the oracle pronounced that they should. And sure enough, ever since, they have been addressing the gods by their names while making sacrifices. It was from the Pelasgians that these same names were subsequently passed on to the Greeks.

...

[54] Speaking of oracles, the Egyptians tell a story about two of them: the one I just mentioned in Greece, and the one in Libya. According to the priests of Theban Zeus, two women, both of

them priestesses, were abducted from Thebes by some Phoenicians. It was subsequently discovered that they had been sold on, one to Libya, and one to some Greeks – and that it was these women who had founded the two oracles, one among each of the two peoples. When I asked the priests what grounds they had for being so certain of this story, they explained that they had launched an exhaustive search for the two women, and that, despite their failure to track them down, all the facts had come to light in due course, precisely as I had been told them.

[55] Such, at any rate, is what I heard from the priests at Thebes. But the priestesses who deliver the oracles at Dodona tell a different story. According to them, two black doves took wing from Egyptian Thebes: one flew to Libya and the other one to them. There, perched on an oak tree, the dove cried out in human voice: 'Here, right here, an oracle of Zeus must be brought into being!' Those who heard this pronouncement presumed it to come from a god, so they did as they had been told. Likewise, the story goes, the dove which had settled in Libya commanded the Libyans to establish the oracle of Ammon – which is also, of course, an oracle of Zeus. I had all this from the priestesses of Dodona, whose names, in descending order of age, are Promeneia, Timarete and Nicandra. Everyone else who lives at Dodona, and is connected to the shrine, concurred.

[56] I have a theory as to what might actually have happened, however. Suppose that the Phoenicians really did abduct the priestesses, and suppose that one of them really was sold in Libya and the other one in Greece. It seems to me that the one who was sold in Greece – or rather Pelasgia, as it was known then – must have been bought by the Thesprotians. Then, as was only natural for someone who had once been an attendant of Zeus in his sanctuary at Thebes but was now a slave, she set up a shrine to Zeus beneath an oak tree, as a memorial of it. Once she had grasped the Greek language, she would have started delivering oracles there, as well as making it known that the same Phoenicians who had sold her had also sold her sister in Libya.

[57] As to why the women should have been called 'doves' by the Dodonaeans, the likeliest explanation, I think, is that they were barbarians, and therefore seemed to the Dodonaeans to be making a noise like birds. The story of the dove that cried out in a human voice derived from the woman's eventual breakthrough in making herself understood – for as long as she was twittering away in her own tongue, she had sounded exactly like a bird to the Dodonaeans. How else to explain the obvious impossibility of a talking dove? The claim of the Dodonaeans that the dove was black surely signifies that the woman was an Egyptian. It is certainly the case that the methods of divination employed at Thebes in Egypt and at Dodona are very similar to one another. It is true as well that the reading of animal entrails to predict the future came from Egypt.

[58] The Egyptians were the first people to meet in large crowds to stage religious festivals, to hold ritual processions and to formulate set approaches for the bringing of gifts to the gods. That these then provided the models for the Greeks seems to me self-evident. Here is the proof: the rites performed in Egypt are manifestly of great antiquity, whereas those in Greece are of recent origin.

[59] Rather than confine themselves to one annual gathering, the Egyptians stage a whole sequence of festivals. The chief of these, and the one they celebrate most wholeheartedly, is that held in honour of Artemis in the city of Bubastis; second is that held in honour of Isis in the city of Busiris. (The reason for staging it there is that Busiris contains a vast temple of Isis,

the goddess known to the Greeks as Demeter. Busiris itself is an Egyptian city located in the middle of the Delta.) Ranked third is the festival in honour of Athena at the city of Sais, and fourth, the Festival of the Sun at Heliopolis. Fifth is the Festival of Leto at Bouto, and sixth the Festival of Ares at Papremis.

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[144] To reiterate the point that was being made by the priests: all the statues portrayed people who, far from being gods, could hardly have been less divine. Nevertheless, long before their time, there had indeed been gods who governed Egypt, living alongside mortals, who always fully accepted that one of their number should rule supreme. The last of these gods to rule as king was Horus (or Apollo, as he is known by the Greeks), the son of Osiris (which is to say, in Greek, Dionysus). It was by overthrowing Typhon that Horus became the last god to sit on the throne of Egypt.

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[156] Of all the shrine's sights, this temple was certainly the one that I personally found the most jaw-dropping; but running it second was an island by the name of Chemmis. This island is in the deep lake which stretches beyond the sanctuary in Bouto, and according to the Egyptians it floats. I was stupefied to hear this (all the more so because, speaking for myself, I never once saw it float or move an inch), but was told that, yes, it truly does lack moorings. It has lots of palms growing on it, together with other trees, some of which bear fruit, and some of which do not; there is also a huge temple of Apollo, complete with three altars, on the island. As to why it should float, the Egyptians have a story which they tell in explanation: that once, at a time when it was still secured to the bottom of the lake, there lived in Bouto one of the Eight Gods, Leto, on the very spot where her oracle stands today; that she was entrusted with the care of Apollo by Isis; and that when Typhon, in his desperation to find the son of Osiris, set to roaming the world and ransacking it, she kept Apollo safe by hiding him on the island that to this day is known as 'The Floating Island'. It was Dionysus and Isis, according to the Egyptians, who were the parents of Apollo and Artemis, while Leto was the one who suckled them and kept them safe. The name that the Egyptians give to Apollo is Horus, to Demeter Isis, and to Artemis Bubastis. It was solely thanks to the influence of the tradition I have described here that Aeschylus, the son of Euphorion, took a step that no other poet had ever previously thought to consider, that of making Artemis Demeter's daughter. It is this story, according to the Egyptians, which explains why the island floats. Such, at any rate, is their claim.

Book III. Thalia.

(Summary of the book: Cyrus' son Cambyses ascended the throne in 530 BC, the causes that led to his expedition against Egypt, his failed expedition against Ethiopia and the oracle of Amun at Siwa, his subsequent madness, the murder of Apis and his brother Smerdis, his death, and the subsequent accession of the two Magi to the throne of Persia.)

Book IV. Melpomene.

(Book Summary: After the death of Cambyses and the dethronement of the Magi, Darius became king of the Persians. He reformed the administration, divided the Persian Empire into 20 provinces, and introduced a tribute. In addition, Darius made the first attempt to explore the Greek coast. At his wife's request, some of his people conquered the island of Samos. At the same time, the Babylonians attempted an uprising, which was suppressed. Darius razed the walls of the city of Babylon. He then began a campaign against the Scythians, a nomadic Asiatic people whose land stretched along the Black Sea coast. The Scythians detested the customs of other peoples, especially those of the Greeks, with whom they nevertheless had trading relations. Darius marched with 700,000 men towards Scythia, ordered the construction of a bridge over the Bosphorus, and conquered Thrace in the process. (Balkan Peninsula, today Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey). However, the Persians could not defeat the Scythians, who escaped and returned to their domains without being able to defeat them.)

Book V. Terpsichore.

(Book Summary: Darius returned to his capital, Susa, a three-month voyage from the coast of Asia Minor. After the domination of Thrace, Macedonia was also conquered. His half-brother Artaphernes remained as governor of Sardis, and tried – unsuccessfully – to conquer Naxos and other Cycladic islands. The tyrant of Miletus, Aristagoras, a former ally of Darius, decided to abandon the Persians and rebel in 499 BC. His attempt to find allies in Sparta failed, despite having made many promises to the Spartans, and worsened the plight of the Ionians. In Athens he was more fortunate. The city had freed itself from its tyrants with the help of Sparta and had grown stronger. Athens sent 20 ships to help the Ionians against the Persians. Although Sardis was burned by the Ionians in 498 BC, the battle against the Persians was lost. The inhabitants of the city of Miletus were either killed or relocated. Darius swore revenge on the Athenians.

Book VI. Erato.

(Book Summary: The first campaign against Greece was in 492 BC, led by Mardonius, Darius's son-in-law, re-subjugated Thrace and forced Macedonia to become a vassal of the kingdom of Persia. Later, Mardonius prepared for war against Athens, but had to withdraw to Asia because his fleet suffered heavy losses due to a storm while sailing around Mount Athos. Darius's anger against the Greeks increased and he launched a new campaign against Athens. In one attack, the Persians managed to subdue the city of Eretria and were convinced that it would be just as easy with Athens. The decisive battle took place at Marathon in 490 BC. Although the Athenians were outnumbered by the Persians and their allies, they won because, as the first adversary, they attacked the barbarian army, a surprise attack that turned out well. 6,400 Persians died and 192 Athenians. The Persians retreated to Asia.)

[8] With Egypt conquered, and preparations for the expedition against Athens well in hand, Xerxes convened a meeting of the foremost noblemen in Persia, to pick their brains, and keep them all abreast of his intentions. 'Men of Persia,' Xerxes said to them when they had gathered, 'far from binding upon you as law some innovation of my own, I am drawing upon tradition – tradition derived from our elders. We have it from them, after all, that never – not since Cyrus deposed Astyages, and we replaced the Medes as the dominant power – have we sat idly around. Because it is God who serves us as our leader, the more enterprises we embark upon, the better for us it will be. You are all of you so familiar with the achievements of Cyrus, Cambyses and my own father, Darius, that it hardly needs me to list the various peoples they absorbed into our dominion. But what of myself? On succeeding to this throne, I began to ponder how I might avoid failing to measure up to those who had preceded me in this seat of honour, and how I might add to the sway of the Persians on a scale that would, at the very least, match their achievements. Now, after careful reflection, I have decided upon a course that will enable us to win both glory and a land that in size and wealth, let alone fertility, is not inferior to our current possessions – and at the same time to exact vengeance and retribution. That is why I have summoned you all to this meeting – to inform you of the enterprise I have in mind. 'I am going to bridge the Hellespont, and then march an army through Europe and into Greece. My reason for doing this is to punish the Athenians for their actions against the Persians and my father. You saw for yourselves how Darius was planning to launch a direct attack on these same men – but he died before he could bring his vengeance to completion. That is why, for his sake, and for the sake of every other Persian, I shall not rest until I have captured Athens, and put it to the torch. It was the Athenians, after all, who began this – who were the aggressors against my father and myself. First, in the company of Aristagoras of Miletus, that slave of ours, they went to Sardis, and burned down its sacred groves and sanctuaries. Then, after we had landed an army on their own soil, under the command of Datis and Artaphrenes, they dealt with us in a way with which I am sure all of you are familiar. 'That is why I am resolved to lead an expedition against them – a course that I have calculated will result in a whole number of benefits. For instance, if we conquer them – and those too who live as their neighbours in the land of Pelops the Phrygian – then the limits of Persian territory will be brought to border the sky, the very realm of Zeus. There will be no more lands left beyond our frontiers for the sun to shine upon. You and I, we will together cross the length and breadth of Europe and mould it all into a single land. Once we have subdued the peoples I just mentioned, there will not – so far as I know – be a city or a nation left anywhere on earth capable of meeting us in battle. It is not simply those who have wronged us, you see, who are to bear the yoke of slavery – so too will the innocent. 'So, if you wish to be in my favour, here is what you must do. When you get the signal from me that the time set for you to come has arrived, every last one of you must look to present himself, and not hesitate for a moment. Whoever brings with him the best-equipped contingent of soldiers will be rewarded by me with gifts of the kind that we in our country value most highly. So now you know what is to be done. Nevertheless, because I do not want you thinking that I take no interest in the opinions of people other than myself, let me now throw the discussion open. Should any of you have a point of view that you would like to make public, I command you to reveal it.' And with this, Xerxes fell silent.

[9] Next to speak was Mardonius. 'Not only are you the greatest Persian who has ever lived, Master, but there is no one in the future who will rival you either. With what excellence and

truth your speech hit its mark across a whole range of topics! Above all, there was your refusal to allow those Ionians who live in Asia to take us for fools – something they have absolutely no right to do. Did the Sacae, or the Indians, or the Ethiopians, or the Assyrians, or indeed any number of other peoples, many of them very great ones indeed, ever do the Persians any wrong, that we conquered them, and now keep them under us as slaves? No! It was because we wished to widen our dominion! That being so, what a monstrous state of affairs it would be were we not to punish the Greeks for a display of criminality that they themselves initiated. ‘What do we have to fear? That they will combine forces to make a large army? That they have deep reserves of money on which to draw? Hardly! We know how they fight – and we know how feeble their resources are. After all, we have already conquered and annexed those of their offspring who settled in our sphere of influence: the Ionians, the Aeolians and the Dorians, as they are called. I myself have already had personal experience of campaigning against these men, when, on the orders of your father, I drove on as far as Macedonia – a region that is hardly any distance from Athens at all! – and not once was I opposed in battle. ‘What is more, I am reliably informed that the way of war as invariably practised by the Greeks is, due to their ignorance and general ineptitude, a thoroughly ridiculous one. Whenever they declare war on one another, they will find the best and most level stretch of ground, and then go off to it for a battle – with the result that even the victors only ever leave the field after sustaining massive casualties. As for the losers – a topic I do not want to get started on – they end up utterly annihilated. What the Greeks should do, of course, is take advantage of the fact that they all speak the same language, and use heralds and messengers to settle their differences – anything rather than open warfare. And if, after all, there is no alternative but for them to meet on the battlefield, then they should find a place where there is no possibility of fighting a really decisive battle, and make trial of one another there. But the Greeks are committed to their pointless way of doing things; and that was why, in the course of my own campaigning, I was able to drive as far as Macedonia without its ever even crossing their minds that they might come and engage me in battle. ‘So who will there be, O King, when you appear at the head of the hordes of Asia, and all its navies too, to block your way and offer you battle? I very much doubt that Greek courage will extend to such an undertaking. But suppose I turn out to be wrong in that respect, and the foolhardiness of the Greeks does indeed incite them to go into battle with us? Well, they will soon discover that there is no one in the world our equal for prowess in warfare. Let no stone be left unturned. Nothing ever happens of its own accord, after all. Good things will always favour those who put themselves to the test.’

[10] And with this, Mardonius ended a speech that had served to cast the opinions of Xerxes in a most excellent light. All the other Persians, lacking the courage to voice an opinion against the proposal laid before them, held their tongues, until Artabanus – who was the son of Hystaspes and therefore could draw confidence from the fact that he was Xerxes’ uncle – spoke as follows. ‘When there is a decision to be made, O King, it is quite impossible to pick the best one, unless a variety of different opinions are aired. If just one single opinion is articulated, it is the only one that can then be adopted. But as with unalloyed gold, whose purity can never be gauged only by reference to itself, but must be rubbed on the touchstone alongside another piece of gold, so with the expressing of different points of view: it enables us to identify quality. I openly told your father, my brother Darius, not to launch a campaign against the Scythians, a people whose refusal to settle down means they lack so much as a single city anywhere in the world. But did he listen to me? No. He was so confident of conquering these nomads, these Scythians, that he went to war against them – only to lose many of his best troops and be forced to retreat. And now you, O King, are about to go to war

with men far more formidable than the Scythians, and whose reputation by both land and sea is without parallel. Terrible danger lurks there – and it is only right that I should tell you so. ‘You say that you will bridge the Hellespont, and then march an army through Europe and into Greece. But what if you suffer a defeat – by land, by sea, or even by both? These men are said to fight very valiantly, the truth of which we can gauge from the fact that an army as large as the one that went with Datis and Artaphrenes to Attica was wiped out by the Athenians alone. But even supposing they are not victorious by land as well as sea, what then? They only have to launch a naval offensive, and bring us to defeat by sea, and then nothing will stand between them and the dismantling of the bridge beyond a voyage to the Hellespont. And that way grave peril lies, O King! ‘It is not because I am blessed with any particular insight of my own that I speculate in this way, but because of the disaster we so nearly suffered on a previous occasion, when your father bridged first the Thracian Bosphorus and then the River Ister with pontoons, and crossed over them to invade Scythia. That was the time when the Scythians did all they possibly could to persuade the Ionians, who had been entrusted with the security of the bridges over the Ister, to dismantle the line of retreat. At that point, had Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, gone along with his fellow-tyrants rather than standing up to them, it would have spelled the utter ruin of Persian interests. That everything the King was and did depended upon a single person is a notion too dreadful even to hear put into words! ‘You do not want to run a risk like that – not when there is no necessity to do so. So take my advice: dissolve this meeting now. Then in due course, once you have had the chance for some private reflection, and feel the time is right, let us all know what you think your best approach might be. There is nothing quite so advantageous, in my own experience, as a really well laid plan. True, it can always be stymied by bad luck, but even when things do not turn out as hoped, a sound plan remains a sound plan still. On the other hand, someone who has planned poorly may enjoy a stroke of good fortune and find that something turns up, but his plan is no less a poor one for that. ‘You can see for yourself how it is creatures of an overbearing size that God strikes down with his thunderbolts and prevents from flaunting themselves, while the insignificant rile him not in the slightest. You can see for yourself how it is always the largest buildings and the tallest trees that are the targets of his missiles. God, you see, delights in clipping everything that rises high. So if, in his resentment, he should afflict a vast army with panic, or pelt it with thunderbolts, it can easily be wiped out by a smaller force: a fate that, left to its own devices, it would not have merited at all. God, you see, allows no one save himself to entertain grand plans. ‘Rush into anything too fast, and you will trip up – most likely with appalling consequences. Good things come to those who pause in their tracks. This may not be immediately obvious, but give it time and you will find it to be so. ‘That is my advice to you, O King. As for you, son of Gobryas – put a stop to this nonsense you are spouting about the Greeks, who do not deserve such slander. By disparaging them, you only encourage the King to make war on them. Indeed, it seems to me that all this frantic effort of yours has precisely that as its end. Well, I hope it never happens. Slander is a most terrible thing: two guilty parties teaming up against a single victim. Why two? Because the one who spreads smears is to blame for levelling accusations against someone who is not present, while the other is to blame for believing something before the certain truth of the matter has been confirmed. As for the one absent from the conversation, he is doubly wronged: slandered by the one, and viewed in an evil light by the other. ‘But come, Mardonius, if war absolutely must be made against these men, then why not let the King stay here in his customary haunts, while we both pledge our children as sureties? You can hand-pick the men you want, recruit as large an army as you please and lead it off on campaign – and should things turn out for the King as you say they will, then let my children be put to death, and me alongside them too. But should my forecast

prove accurate, then let yours be the ones to suffer death – yes, and you too, if indeed you ever make it back home. However, if this is not a bargain you are prepared to strike, and yet still you are absolutely set on leading an army into Greece, then I tell you now that those left behind here in Persia will come to hear of how their country has suffered a terrible calamity, and of how you, Mardonius, the man responsible for it, have been torn to pieces by dogs and birds somewhere in the land of the Athenians, or else of the Lacedaemonians – always provided, of course, that you were not killed earlier on the road. And then you will have a proper understanding of the men whom you are now inciting the King to attack.’

[11] This speech by Artabanus threw Xerxes into a rage. ‘Artabanus,’ he retorted, ‘the only thing that spares you a punishment appropriate to the idiocy of your comments is the fact that you are my uncle. Spineless coward that you are, I hereby sentence you to the humiliation of staying behind with the women, and not accompanying me on the expedition to Greece. I can perfectly well bring my deeds to match my words even without your assistance. Indeed, if I do fail to punish the Athenians, may I no longer rank as the son of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the son of Arsames, the son of Ariaramnes, the son of Teïspes, the son of Achaemenes – since even were we to sit on our hands, I know full well that there is not the remotest prospect of their doing the same. No, to judge by what they did at the onset of this whole business, when they torched Sardis and invaded Asia, they would soon be on the offensive against our lands. It is simply not an option for either side to back down. We are locked into a contest in which we must either act or die. Either the whole of their lands will end up under the sway of Persians, or ours will end up under that of Greeks. Such is our mutual hatred, there can be no middle position. It is only right and proper, then, that we, who were the first to suffer injury, should now look to be avenged. Right and proper also that I should explore the nature of this “terrible fate” that I will supposedly endure when I come to advance against these men – men whom even Pelops the Phrygian, who was a slave of my forefathers, brought so utterly to subjugation that right up to the present day both the people and the land itself still bear the name of their conqueror.’

[12] Later, however, once the speeches were done, and darkness was closing in, Xerxes found himself unsettled by the views of Artabanus. That night, as he turned the issue over, he came to the conclusion that it was not, after all, in his interests to invade Greece. Then, in the wake of this about face, he fell asleep; and that same night, so the Persians report, he had a vision. It seemed to Xerxes that a tall, well-built man was standing over him and saying, ‘Why the change of mind, Persian? Did you not just tell the Persians to muster an army, which you were going to lead against Greece? This reversal of policy will benefit you not at all – nor will the one here before you now forgive you for it. Stick to the course of action that you settled upon yesterday.’ After delivering these words, the man seemed to Xerxes to fly away.

[13] Rather than dwell on the dream, however, Xerxes greeted the new day by reassembling all the Persians he had previously summoned. ‘Men of Persia,’ he said, ‘forgive me my abrupt change of mind. My powers of reasoning are yet to attain their peak, and those who urged on me the course of action that I adopted yesterday have not left me alone for a single moment. What is more, the instant I heard Artabanus give his opinion, my youthful temper boiled over so violently that I dismissed his words most offensively, and in a manner not at all appropriate to a man of his age. Now, however, I acknowledge that he was right, and have adopted his point of view. Consequently, because I have reversed my policy and will not be invading Greece after all, you may relax.’ And the Persians, hearing this, rejoiced and prostrated themselves before him.

[14] When night came, however, and Xerxes fell asleep, he dreamt that the same man as before was standing over him. 'So, son of Darius,' the man said, 'you have appeared before the Persians and cancelled your expedition, have you, dismissing my words as though they were of no account, and spoken by some nobody? Well, know this: if you do not set out at once with your army, then the result will be that though you have risen swiftly to greatness, yet in no less swift a time will you be cast down again.'

[15] This vision threw Xerxes into such a panic that he leapt out of bed and sent a messenger with a summons for Artabanus. 'Artabanus,' Xerxes declared, once he had arrived, 'there was a short time when I was not thinking straight. I responded to the excellent advice you gave me with rude and foolish words. All the same, it did not take me long to change my mind and to realize that I should adopt the policy you had suggested. Nevertheless, keen though I am to do so, I cannot. Ever since I had my change of heart and reversed my decision, I have been haunted by a phantom in a dream, who absolutely refuses to join with everyone else in praising what I am doing. Indeed, just now, before vanishing, he actually threatened me. Now, if it is a god who is sending this dream, and if there is no satisfying him save by going on campaign against Greece, then the same dream might wing its way to you, and deliver you the very instructions it gave to me. Such a thing might come about, it crossed my mind, were you to take all these clothes of mine, put them on and sit down on my throne, and then in due course go to sleep in my bed.'

[16] Such was the order given by Xerxes; but Artabanus initially refused to obey, not thinking himself worthy to sit on the royal throne, and in the end was only brought to do as he was instructed after being left with no choice in the matter. 'In my judgement,' he told the King, 'it makes no difference whether a good idea comes to a man as the result of his own deliberations, or because he is willing to listen to someone who can offer him sound advice. Your good ideas derive from both sources – but because you also keep bad company, this leads you to stumble. Men say much the same of the sea that although there is nothing more serviceable to humanity, yet the winds gusting across its surface prevent it from being true to its own nature. It was not the tongue-lashing you gave me that stung most painfully – no, there was something quite else. The Persians had two choices before them – one that would serve to inflate their arrogance, and the other, by pointing out how wrong it is to school the soul in a perpetually acquisitive dissatisfaction with what one has, to curb their conceit. Yet you, faced by these two options, adopted the one more likely to trip you up: you, and the Persians with you. 'And now, just when you have had a change of heart for the better, and opted to abandon the expedition against the Greeks, you say that a dream sent by some god keeps coming to you, forbidding you to abandon the expedition. But this dream of yours, my boy, is not of divine origin. I have lived many more years than you, and so can explain to you the nature of these visions that drift into the minds of men as they sleep. Most of the things we see as flitting presences in our dreams are likely to be the thoughts we had during the day. And what have we had very much in hand over the past few days? Why, this same expedition! 'But what if my interpretation of your dream is wrong, and it does indeed have some aspect of the divine? Well, you have already given the answer to that yourself. Let it come to me, as it did to you, and issue its orders! But the chances of its appearing to me are most unlikely to be improved by my wearing your clothes in place of my own, or by swapping my bed for yours – always assuming, of course, that it wishes to appear to me at all. Whatever this thing may be that is manifesting itself in your sleep, it surely cannot be so simple-minded as to mistake me for you, purely because it has observed that I am dressed up in your clothes! No, what we need to find out is whether I am simply too insignificant to merit a visitation – in your clothes

or mine, it will make little difference – and whether instead it comes to you. If it does persist in its visits, then even I would be brought to acknowledge it as divine. So come, then, if this really is what you want to happen, and there is no diverting you from your insistence that I go to sleep in your bed, let us see if it will appear to me as well, once I have done as you ask. But until it does, I will hold to my current opinion.'

[17] With these words, and confident of proving that Xerxes had been talking nonsense, Artabanus did as he had been ordered. He put on Xerxes' clothes and sat on the royal throne, before going to bed; and it was there, as he lay asleep, that he was visited by the same dream that had come to Xerxes. Standing over Artabanus, the figure said, 'So you are the one who has been busily trying to dissuade Xerxes from invading Greece, are you? And all out of concern for him! Well, both now and in the future, your punishment for attempting to divert the inevitable is certain. As for Xerxes, he has been left in no doubt as to the suffering that will be his should he prove disobedient.'

[18] And then, after the figure in the dream had issued these threats, Artabanus imagined that it was coming to burn out his eyes with hot irons. With a loud scream he sprang from the bed and sat down next to Xerxes, to whom he gave a thorough account of what he had seen in his sleep. 'O King,' he went on to say, 'it was because I am a man who has often seen the humbling of great powers by those much weaker than themselves that I sought to curb the natural instincts of your youth, and because I know, remembering what happened to the expedition led by Cyrus against the Massagetans, and that launched by Cambyses against the Ethiopians, and from my own personal experience of Darius' campaign against the Scythians, how wrong it can be to hanker after too many things. It was my appreciation of this that led me to conclude that a peaceable inactivity would serve to cast you in the happiest light in the eyes of people everywhere. But since there is some supernatural compulsion at work, and since the ruin overtaking the Greeks does indeed appear to be of divine origin, it is I who must now back down and revise my opinion. Inform the Persians of the message you have had from the god, tell them to resume their preparations in accordance with the instructions that you originally gave them, and so match your actions to the god's commands that no aspect of them is neglected.' These words, and the confidence bred in Xerxes by the vision, prompted the King to inform the Persians of what had happened the moment day had dawned, while Artabanus, who previously had been the one dissenting voice to speak publicly, now openly gave his full backing to the enterprise.

[19] So Xerxes was set on war; and in due course there came to him in his sleep a third vision, which the Magi, when they heard it, interpreted to mean that the entire earth, and all the people within it, would be his slaves. This was Xerxes' vision: his head crowned by a wreath made from the bough of an olive tree, the shoots of which enveloped the whole earth, but then vanished. Immediately, once the Magi had given their interpretation of the dream, every last man among the Persians who had assembled for the meeting set off for his own province, and devoted himself with total enthusiasm to fulfilling the orders of the King, whose promise of a reward everyone was keen to win for himself. So it was, by ransacking every corner of the continent, that Xerxes mustered his army.

[20] In the wake of Egypt's conquest, he spent four whole years preparing and provisioning his task-force – and then, in the course of the fifth year, he embarked on his campaign with an immense array of men. Indeed, for sheer scale, no other army of which we know has ever remotely compared to it: not the one led by Darius against the Scythians; nor the one with which the Scythians, in the course of their pursuit of the Cimmerians, invaded the land of

Media, conquered and occupied nearly all the upper regions of Asia and thereby served to provoke Darius' own subsequent invasion; nor the one that, according to our sources, the sons of Atreus led against Troy; nor, prior to the Trojan War, the one that was raised by the Mysians and the Teucrians, and with which they crossed the Bosphorus into Europe, conquered the whole of Thrace, descended upon the Ionian Sea and advanced as far south as the River Peneius.

(21-60, summary) Account of the army's journey from Asia Minor to Sardis and subsequent crossing of the Hellespont (the present-day Dardanelles) from Asia to Thrace, then also controlled by Persia.

[61] The contingents which made up Xerxes' army were as follows. First, the Persians and their equipment. They wore soft felt caps called tiaras on their heads, long-sleeved, brightly coloured tunics [and corselets] made of iron scales, rather like those of a fish, over their bodies, and trousers over their legs; their shields were not the normal kind, but made of wicker, and had quivers suspended underneath; they had short spears but large bows and arrows made of reed, and each man had a dagger slung from his belt so that it rested against his right thigh. They were commanded by Otanes, whose daughter, Amestris, was married to Xerxes. In ancient times, the Greeks called the Persians the 'Cephenes' – even though the name that they themselves used, and their neighbours too, was the 'Artaei'. Then Perseus, the son of Danaë and Zeus, arrived at the court of Cepheus, the son of Belus, married his daughter Andromeda, and fathered a child whom he named Perses. Perseus left this son behind, because Cepheus had no male offspring. It was from this same Perses that the Persians then derived their name.

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(62-100) List of the commanders who commanded the Persian expedition, relatives of Xerxes and Darius, as well as the number of the army and the fleet, the different nations that composed it and what customs they had when they went to war.

[101] Then, once he had sailed along the whole length and stepped down from the ship, he sent for Demaratus, the son of Ariston, who was accompanying him on the campaign against Greece, and now came in answer to his summons. 'Demaratus,' Xerxes said, 'there is a question I wish to put to you – one that has been much tickling my fancy. You are a Greek, and your city, judging by what you and the other Greeks I have consulted inform me, is hardly lacking in either importance or strength. So then, tell me this – will the Greeks make a stand and take up arms against me? My own opinion is that not all the Greeks combined, and not all the remaining inhabitants of the West with them, are capable of withstanding my onslaught – unless, that is, they present a united front. Nevertheless, I am interested to learn what your view on the matter might be.' To this question Demaratus replied: 'Do you want a truthful answer, O King, or a pleasing one?' 'A truthful one,' Xerxes instructed; and then assured him that it would in no way be to his disadvantage.

[102] When Demaratus heard this, he told the King, 'So your orders are that I should speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, nor ever be caught out by you at some later point as a person

who has been peddling lies. Poverty has always been endemic to Greece, but the courage of its people is a quality that they have acquired for themselves – forged by their wisdom, and by the strength of law. It is this that has enabled them to keep poverty and foreign overlordship at bay. Now, my praise is directed at all those Greeks whose homes lie in Dorian territory – but rather than discuss every last one of them, I am going to confine my comments to the Lacedaemonians. The first point to make is that they will never be open to any proposal of yours which results in the enslavement of Greece – and the second is that they are bound to confront you in battle, even should all the other Greeks take your side. As for the numbers at their command, there is no point in your asking how, with their available manpower, they can possibly adopt such a course of action. It makes no difference whether they have a thousand men on campaign, or more than that, or less – they will fight you still.'

[103] When Xerxes heard this, he laughed. 'Demaratus,' he exclaimed, 'what nonsense this is! A thousand men fight an army the size of mine? Come on! You say that you used to be the king of these people. Tell me, then – would you really be prepared to take on ten men? Surely not! And yet if everything you say about your political system is true, then by rights, as king of these people, you would actually be required by your own laws to take on double the number of opponents as everyone else! After all – if each one of your fellow-citizens is a match for ten men from my army, then I would expect you to be a match for twenty! At any rate, that is the implication of what you have been saying. But can it really be the case that your compatriots are men of the order and stature that you (and all the other Greeks who have come into conversation with me) like to boast that they are? Watch out that your claims are not just empty brags. Come now: I am going to look at the matter in a wholly objective way. How could a thousand men, or ten thousand, or even fifty thousand come to that, possibly stand up to an army the size of mine, when all of them enjoy a similar degree of liberty, and have no one man in command? Why, presuming that they amount to five thousand, we shall outnumber them by more than a thousand to one! Just perhaps, were they like us in having one man set in authority over them, they might indeed be prompted by their dread of him to conquer their own instincts, and under the compulsion of the whip to advance against a force much larger than themselves. Left to their own devices, though, there is no way that they will do either of these things. In fact, it is my own opinion that, even were their numbers equal to our own, the Greeks would still find the Persians alone more than a match for them. It is actually we [and we alone] who have the qualities you have been mentioning – and even then, not all of us, but only a few. There are certainly Persians in my bodyguard who would be willing to fight three Greeks at once. But what do you know of this? You talk nothing but nonsense.'

[104] 'I knew right from the start, O King,' Demaratus replied, 'that you would not care for my speaking the truth. Nevertheless, you demanded complete honesty – and that, as it relates to the Spartans, is precisely what I have given you. Yet you of all people know perfectly well the current state of my affections for them. Why, they stripped me of my office, my ancestral inheritance, and made me an exile without a city – while your father took me in, and provided me with both livelihood and shelter. No man with his wits about him would ever think to spurn a display of such benevolence, rather than to cherish it with all his heart. I do not commit myself to taking on ten men in combat, or two – or even one, if it were solely down to me. Nevertheless, if I had no choice in the matter, or there were some great issue at stake to motivate me, then I would certainly fight – and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to engage with one of these men who claim to be a match for three Greeks. So it is with the Lacedaemonians. One on one, they are certainly nobody's inferior – but as a collective, they fight better than any other men on earth. Free though they are, you see, yet they are not

altogether free. Set over them as their master is the law – and of that they are far more terrified than ever your men are of you. Certainly, they do what it commands them to do – a command that never alters. No matter how many men may be ranged against them in battle, they are forbidden ever to turn tail, but instead must always maintain their positions, and either triumph or be annihilated. If it does indeed appear to you that I am talking nonsense, then I am perfectly content in the future to hold my peace. I only spoke the way I did because you insisted. But may all your hopes be fulfilled, my Lord.’

[105] Such was the reply given by Demaratus; but Xerxes, far from being angered by it, instead made a joke of the matter, and dismissed him in affectionate terms. Then, when his conversation with Demaratus was over, Xerxes replaced the man whom Darius had appointed to the governorship of Doriscus with Mascames, the son of Megadostes, before marching off with his army through Thrace on his way to Greece.

(106-138) Xerxes' journey after crossing the Hellespont, through Thrace, northern Greece until reaching Thessaly, where the Thessalians are subjugated by the Persians.

[139] It is at this stage that I feel obliged to express an opinion which most people will find hard to stomach – but when something seems to me true, I will not shrink from saying it. Had the Athenians been intimidated into abandoning their homeland by the menace that was bearing down upon them, or had they stayed put but surrendered to Xerxes, then no one would have sought to combat the King at sea. And had there been no one to oppose Xerxes at sea, what would have happened on the mainland? Surely, no matter how many walls the Peloponnesians might have strung up across the Isthmus of Corinth in their defence, the Lacedaemonians would still have been betrayed by their allies, not wilfully, but because, with the barbarian fleet capturing their cities one by one, the allies would have had no choice but to abandon the Lacedaemonians; and so the Lacedaemonians themselves, left to stand alone, would doubtless, after displays of prodigious valour, have gone down in a blaze of glory. Alternatively, before such an eventuality could occur, they might have witnessed how all the other Greeks were going over to the Medes, and arrived at some accommodation with Xerxes. Either scenario, however, would have resulted in Greece coming under Persian rule. Certainly, I cannot see what possible good the wall built across the Isthmus would have been, had the King had command of the sea. As it is, anyone who proclaims the Athenians the saviours of Greece would hardly be far from the truth. They were bound to tilt the scales in favour of whichever of the two sides they joined. By deciding to help in the preservation of Greek liberty, they served to rouse to action everyone else in Greece who had not already gone over to the Medes, and to rout the King – only the gods did more. Not even the blood curdling oracles that had come from Delphi and thrown them into a terrible state of alarm could persuade them to abandon Greece. Instead, they stood their ground, held their nerve and met with the invader of their country.

[140] The Athenians, you see, had sent emissaries to the god at Delphi; and these, after they had performed the customary rites around the shrine, and had come into the inner hall, were sitting down ready to make their consultation, when the Pythia, whose name was Aristonice, began to declaim an oracle.

‘Why are you sitting there, you fools? Leave, flee to the ends of the earth! Abandon your homes, and the towering heights that ring your city! For neither the head nor the body stays securely in its place, Nor do the feet below, nor the hands, nor anything in between Endure. Everything is doomed, everything brought crashing to the ground By flames and passion-filled Ares, as he lashes on Syrian-bred steeds Nor is yours the only towered city he Will obliterate. Many temples of the gods as well will he hand over to fierce fire, Which stand even now, surely, streaming with the sweat of their terror, And shuddering with dread, while down from the very tops of the roofs There pours, portending evils inescapably to come, black blood. Go! Leave my sanctum! Shroud your spirits beneath the pall of your woes!’

[141] When they heard this, the Athenians sent to consult the god were plunged into an extreme of distress by what the oracle had revealed of the evils that were due them. It was then, however, that Timon, the son of Androboulus, and a man as highly esteemed as any in Delphi, suggested that they pick up some olive-tree boughs, go back in a second time to the oracle and consult it as suppliants – advice which the Athenians took. ‘Lord,’ they said, ‘be moved to compassion by these boughs which we come bearing before you as suppliants, and grant our fatherland a more favourable oracle. Otherwise, we shall never leave your inner sanctum, but stay here until the end of our days.’ And sure enough, once they had made this statement, the prophetess delivered them a second oracle, which ran as follows:

‘Pallas Athena cannot propitiate Olympian Zeus, No matter how lengthy her prayers, or how cunning her entreaties. So I tell you again, in words that shall bear no distortion While everywhere else will fall that the borders of Cecrops’ land Contain, yes, and the ravines of most holy Cithaeron as well, Yet to Tritogeneia far-seeing Zeus grants a wooden wall. Only this will stand defiant, a succour to you and your children. Do not, then, abide the coming of the cavalry, nor the foot, Still in the face of the vast, landside host. You must retreat instead, And turn your backs. And yet, for all that, you shall meet them face to face. Divine Salamis, the sons of women will be destroyed by you When the grain is scattered – or else, when the harvest is gathered in.’

[142] Because this oracle seemed milder than the previous one (as indeed it was) the messengers sent to consult the god had it transcribed and went back to Athens. On their return, they gave a report to the people, who, in their attempts to make sense of the prophecy, proposed a whole range of interpretations – two of which in particular seemed to be at odds. Some of the older citizens claimed that the god had foretold the survival of the Acropolis, their reasoning being that back in ancient times the Acropolis of Athens had been fenced in by a thorn hedge, and that this [fence] was what had been meant by the ‘wooden wall’. Others, however, maintained that the god was alluding to ships, and urged the abandonment of everything else for the sake of fitting out their fleet – though their case that ships were the ‘wooden wall’ was undermined by the last two lines the prophetess had spoken: ‘Divine Salamis, the sons of women will be destroyed by you/ When the grain is scattered – or else, when the harvest is gathered in.’ The view of those who believed ships to be the ‘wooden wall’ was flatly contradicted by these lines of verse, since the officials who interpreted oracles had taken them to mean that the Athenians, after preparing to fight a battle in the waters off Salamis, would then inevitably lose.

[143] Now, one of the Athenians, a man who had just recently emerged into prominence, was named Themistocles – the son of Neocles, he was called. This man argued that the reading of the oracle given by the interpreters was not altogether the correct one, and pointed out that the verses, had they truly been directed against the Athenians, would never have been

couched in such mild terms, but would have read 'Cruel Salamis' rather than 'Divine Salamis' if its inhabitants really were doomed to perish there. On a correct interpretation of the oracle, he argued, it was the enemy who was the object of the god's verses – not the Athenians. That being so, and since the 'wooden wall' meant the fleet, he recommended that they should ready themselves to fight by sea. This explanation of Themistocles, so the Athenians decided, was preferable to that of the interpreters of the oracle, who would rather they did not prepare for any naval campaign – and indeed, if the truth be told, would have had them put up no resistance at all, but abandon Attica and settle in some other land.

[144] There had also been a previous occasion when Themistocles had demonstrated how supreme were his powers of analysis – and at a most opportune moment too, when the public treasury of the Athenians had become flush with revenues from the mines of Laurium, and each and every citizen was due to get 10 drachmas as a personal windfall. It was then that Themistocles had persuaded the Athenians to halt this distribution, and to deploy the funds instead in the building of two hundred ships for use in the war – by which he had meant the war against the Aeginetans. So it was that this conflict, by forcing the Athenians to become mariners, proved in the long run to be the salvation of Greece. Even though the ships were never used for the purpose for which they had been built, they did become available to Greece in her hour of need. What is more, in addition to the ones already built and in service, the Athenians were obliged to construct additional vessels. This was because, in the wake of the oracle, and after due consultation, they had resolved to do as instructed by the god, and meet the barbarian invasion of Greece by taking to their ships, every last man of them, alongside other such Greeks as wished to join them.

(145-200) Congress of the Greek cities in Corinth, where embassies are sent to Gelon of Syracuse, the most opulent Greek city in southern Italy, then to Argos and Crete. Xerxes provides money to the Carthaginians to wipe out the Greeks in Sicily and Magna Graecia.

[201] King Xerxes made his base at Trachis, in the land of the Malians, while the Greeks were camped out in the pass itself. Although the place is known across most of Greece as Thermopylae, the locals and their immediate neighbours call it Pylae – 'The Gates'. So these were the respective positions of the two sides, with Xerxes in command of everywhere north of Trachis, and the entire mainland to the south under Greek control.

[202] The Greeks who stood awaiting the Persian in this location were as follows. There were 300 hoplites from Sparta, and 1,000 altogether from Tegea and Mantinea, with 500 drawn from each, 120 from Arcadian Orchomenus, and 1,000 from the rest of Arcadia. In addition to the Arcadians, 400 came from Corinth, 200 from Phleious and 80 from Mycenae. These were the contingents from the Peloponnese, while from Boeotia there were 700 Thespians and 400 Thebans.

[203] Swelling these numbers were the Locrians of Opous – who, when the call went out, sent their entire fighting force – and 1,000 Phocians. The summons had come from the Greeks themselves, who had declared through messengers that they were at Thermopylae as the advance guard of all the other allies, that these remaining forces were expected any day and that the sea was being patrolled with unblinking alertness by the Athenians, the Aeginetans and all the various other naval contingents – and so there was nothing to fear. 'After all,' the

message continued, 'it is no god who is invading Greece, but only a man. There never was a mortal who did not, right from birth, have misfortune woven into the very fabric of his life – nor will there ever be. Indeed, the greater the man, the greater the misfortunes. The man coming against us is a mortal, and his expectations are accordingly bound to fail him.' Thus reassured, the Locrians and Phocians had come to the assistance of the troops at Trachis.

[204] Now, although each city supplying a contingent had also sent a man to command it, the one regarded with the greatest awe, and who served as the supreme commander, ahead of all the other generals, was a Lacedaemonian: Leonidas. He was the son of Anaxandridas, and was descended, through Leon, Eurycratidas, Anaxander, Eurycrates, Polydorus, Alcamenes, Teleclus, Archelaus, Hegesilaus, Doryssus, Leobotes, Echestratus, Agis, Eurysthenes, Aristodemus, Aristomachus and Cleodaeus, from Hyllus, who was the son of Heracles. Leonidas had come to be king of Sparta in unexpected circumstances.

[205] Certainly, because he had two brothers older than himself Cleomenes and Dorieus – it had never crossed his mind that he might end up as king. But then, when Cleomenes died without a male heir, and with Dorieus already dead, having met his end in Sicily, the kingdom did indeed devolve upon Leonidas: partly because he was older than Cleombrotus, who was Anaxandridas' youngest son, and partly because he was married to Cleomenes' daughter. So it was Leonidas who came to Thermopylae escorted, as was the custom, by three hundred hand-picked men, all of whom already had sons. On his way there, he also recruited the Thebans whom I mentioned in the roll-call I just gave, and who were commanded by Leontiades, the son of Eurymachus. The reason why Leonidas was so keen to do this, and to single the Thebans out alone among all the Greeks for recruitment, was that they were widely suspected of collaborating with the Medes. By summoning them to war, he wished to discover whether they would indeed supply him with men, or whether they would shrink from lending such open support to the alliance of Greeks. In fact, although the Thebans sent men, their sympathies did indeed incline the other way.

[206] The Spartiates sent Leonidas and his men as an advance guard, so that the other allies would be inspired by the sight to march to war as well, and not go over to the Medes, as they might well have done had they felt that the Spartiates were hanging back. As it happened, the Carneia was indeed holding them up – but it was their intention, the moment the festival was over, to march to the rescue of Leonidas with all their available manpower, leaving behind them only a skeleton holding-force. The rest of the allies too were intending to do much the same thing. In their case, you see, the festival that coincided with the onset of war was the Olympic one. Because they had never imagined that the battle of Thermopylae would be concluded so quickly, they too had sent only advance guards.

[207] So much for their intended course of action. Meanwhile, however, as the Persian bore down upon the pass, so terrified were the Greeks at Thermopylae that they seriously debated withdrawing. The other Peloponnesians were all for heading back to the Peloponnese, and taking the Isthmus as the focus of their resistance; but Leonidas, seeing how enraged the Phocians and the Locrians were by this idea, voted to stay where they were, and send messengers to summon assistance from the various cities, since they themselves were far too few to withstand the army of the Medes.

[208] In the midst of their deliberations, Xerxes sent a scout on horseback to spy out their numbers, and to see what they were up to. Xerxes had already heard, while still in Thessaly, that a tiny force had assembled in the pass, led by the Lacedaemonians under Leonidas – and

that Leonidas was of the bloodline of Heracles. The horseman came galloping up to the camp, and duly made his survey – although not of the whole camp, since it was impossible for him to see most of the troops who were stationed behind the wall, which they had repaired and were now garrisoning. Instead, the scout took stock of the men who were out in the open, with their arms and armour piled up in front of the wall, and who at the time, as it happened, were the Lacedaemonians. Some of the men, the scout saw to his astonishment, were exercising naked, and some were combing their hair. Keeping his eyes peeled, however, he added up their numbers; and then, once he had arrived at an accurate total, galloped off unhindered. Rather than pursuing him, everyone treated him with the utmost indifference. So he went back to Xerxes and reported all he had seen.

[209] The King, though, was unable to appreciate the significance of what he was hearing: namely, that the Lacedaemonians were readying themselves to be killed, and to kill in turn as many as they were able. To Xerxes their actions seemed laughable – and so, because he wished to make sense of them, he summoned Demaratus, the son of Ariston, who was there in the camp. After he had duly arrived, Xerxes asked him to explain, point by point, the behaviour of the Lacedaemonians. ‘You have already heard me discuss these men,’ Demaratus said, ‘when we were setting out for Greece. And when you heard what I had to say, you laughed at my forecast of how events in this campaign would unfold – but that was because, O King, when I am in your presence, I have no greater object or aim than to be truthful with you. So hear me out again. These men have come here to fight us for the pass – and they are getting themselves ready to do just that. It is their custom, you see, whenever they are about to risk their lives, to dress their hair. But rest assured, should you defeat them, and their fellows still in Sparta, my King, then no other people in the world will take up arms against you and stand in your path. For you are about to attack the fairest kingdom in all of Greece – yes, and the bravest men.’ To Xerxes, however, these claims seemed wholly incredible; and a second time, he demanded to know how such a tiny force of men was going to fight his own army. ‘O King,’ Demaratus answered, ‘treat me as you would any liar, if things do not turn out for you as I state.’ But nothing that he said could make Xerxes believe him.

[210] Confident as Xerxes was that the Greeks were bound to run away at any moment, he let four days go by. Then, on the fifth, when they had still not left, and the seeming impudence and folly of their continued presence there were making him seethe with anger, he sent the Medes and Cissians against them, with orders to take them alive and bring them into his presence. The Medes fell upon the Greeks in a great rush, and although many were slain, others still pressed the attack, and were not driven back, despite terrible losses. It was made clear to everyone, however – and not least to the King himself – that for all the mass of humanity under his command, he had only a very few real men. And all day long the clash continued.

[211] In due course, such was the mauling inflicted on the Medes that they were withdrawn from the attack, and replaced by the Persian ‘Immortals’, as the men under the command of Hydarnes were termed by the King – and who, it was expected, would have no difficulty completing the task. When they joined battle with the Greeks, however, it was the same story: because they were fighting in a confined space, using spears shorter than those wielded by the Greeks, and unable to press home their weight of numbers, they enjoyed no more success than the Median divisions had done. The Lacedaemonians fought in a manner that richly merits description, and left no one in any doubt that, while they were men who really knew what they were about, their opponents were just amateurs. Every so often, for instance, they

would turn tail and give the impression of mass flight, and then, after the Barbarians had raised a cry of triumph at the sight of their retreat, rushed forward to attack them with a great hullabaloo and caught up with them, the Lacedaemonians would wheel round to confront the Barbarians, and inflict such terrible damage upon the Persians once they had done so that there was no counting the number who fell. Whenever this happened, the Spartiates would suffer their own casualties too – but only a few. The Persians did all they could to force the pass, attacking in formation, and in a whole number of other ways too; but it proved beyond them, and so they retreated.

[212] As these waves of battle were surging forwards, the King is said to have been so alarmed for his army that he leapt up three times from his throne. Nor, the following day, did the contest for the pass go any better for the Barbarians. Once again they joined battle, confident that the Greeks would have suffered so much damage that, given how few they were, they would no longer have it in them to take up arms. The Greeks, however, had organized themselves by their place of origin into separate divisions, and took it in turns to fight – all except for the Phocians, who had been ordered to take up their station on the mountain to guard the path. When the Persians found things unchanged from the day before, they duly retreated.

[213] But then, with the King at a loss how to resolve the impasse he found himself facing, a man from Malis called Epialtes, the son of Eurydemus, came with information for which he had no doubt Xerxes would pay most handsomely, concerning the path over the mountains that led to Thermopylae; and by passing it on, doomed the Greeks who were making their stand there. Subsequently, Epialtes was so terrified of the Lacedaemonians that he fled to Thessaly; and while he was there in exile, the Amphictyons convened a meeting at Pylae, at which a bounty was publicly put on his head by the Pylagorae. Later still, after Epialtes had returned from exile, he was killed in Anticyra by a man from Trachis called Athenades. Despite the fact that Athenades had actually killed Epialtes for another reason altogether (one that I will point out later on in my account) the Lacedaemonians honoured him for the deed nevertheless. So Epialtes, later on, was slain.

[214] There is another version, according to which it was a man from Carystus called Onetas, the son of Phanagoras, and Corydallus of Anticyra who passed on the information to the King, and led the Persians round the mountain – but personally, I find this impossible to believe. There are two decisive reasons for coming to this conclusion: firstly, that it was Epialtes of Trachis, and not Onetas and Corydallus, who had the bounty put on his head by the Pylagorae, who were speaking on behalf of Greece, and presumably knew all the details. Then there is the fact that the charge laid against Epialtes was, as we know, the reason why he fled into exile. (Admittedly, even though Onetas was not from Malis, he might still have been familiar with the path, had he been a regular visitor to that part of the world.) But no, it was Epialtes who led the Persians along the path round the mountain – and it is as the guilty party that I indict him here.

[215] ‘Yes, it will work.’ Epialtes had no sooner given this promise to a delighted Xerxes than the King, overjoyed, was sending Hydarnes and his men on the mission. They set off as lights began to blaze across the camp. (The discovery of the path was originally made by local Malians, back at a time when the Phocians had blocked off the pass with their wall, and thereby neutralized the threat of armed incursions – and the Malians, once they had identified the path, guided the Thessalians along it into Phocis. From that moment on, the deadliness of the path was something that no Malian ever had cause to doubt.)

[216] And the course of the path? It begins where the River Asopus flows through a gorge, and then proceeds along the ridge of a mountain called the Anopaea – which is also the name of the path itself. It ends at Alpeni, the first Locrian city one reaches after leaving Malis, near the so called ‘Black Buttocks Stone’ and the seats of the Cercopes, where it is at its narrowest.

[217] So that is the lie of the path; and the Persians, after crossing the Asopus, tracked it all through the night, with the mountains of Oeta on their right, and those of Trachis on their left. The coming of dawn saw them on the highest point of the mountain pass. As I mentioned earlier, this stretch of the ridge was being guarded by a thousand hoplites from Phocis, who were there to protect their own territory, and to stand watch over the path. While the pass below was being garrisoned by the men I have already listed, the sentries on the path across the mountains consisted of Phocians who had volunteered themselves to Leonidas for the task.

[218] Now, because the slope of the mountain which the Persians were climbing was covered entirely with oaks, the Phocians did not notice their ascent; but then, once the climb was done, the Phocians realized what was happening. Not a breeze was stirring, and the Persians, as was only to be expected, were making a great noise, because of all the leaves they were trampling underfoot; but although the Phocians scrambled to their feet, they were still busy arming themselves when, all of a sudden, the Barbarians were upon them. The Persians themselves were astonished at the sight of men putting on armour, since they had not been expecting to meet any opposition – and now they had run into a sizeable force! Hydarnes, terrified in case the Phocians were Lacedaemonians, asked Epialtes where the force came from – and then, on being set straight, ordered the Persians into battle formation. A thick hail of arrows began to rain down on the Phocians, who – believing that they had been the targets of the expedition right from the beginning – retreated to the top of the mountain, and there prepared to fight to the death. Contrary to their expectations, however, Epialtes, Hydarnes and the Persians paid the Phocians not the slightest attention, but just continued on down the mountainside.

[219] Meanwhile, the first that the Greeks in Thermopylae knew of it was when the soothsayer Megistias, after inspecting the entrails of the sacrificial victims, declared that death would be coming upon them with the dawn. Then, while it was still dark, various deserters brought in news of the Persian flanking action. The third warning arrived at daybreak, when look outs came running down from the heights. The Greeks then held a council of war, at which opinion was divided. Some argued that they should never abandon their posts, while others took the opposite view. Subsequently, once the meeting had broken up, some began to withdraw and then to scatter in a large number of directions, each to their respective city; others, however, made preparations to stay where they were, alongside Leonidas.

[220] It is also claimed that Leonidas himself sent them away, because he was anxious to ensure their survival, while believing that it would be inappropriate for himself and the Spartiates who were there with him to abandon the position that they had originally come to hold. According to this interpretation, which seems to me by far the likeliest, when Leonidas realized how demoralized his allies were, and how lacking in appetite for sharing in the danger, he dismissed them; but he knew that his own departure would leave a foul stain upon his honour. By holding his ground, he would leave behind him instead a great name, and preserve the prosperity of Sparta from obliteration. You see, at the very first tremors of war, the Spartiates had immediately consulted the oracle; and the Pythia had told them that either Lacedaemon would be destroyed by the Barbarians, or else their king would die. The oracle that she gave them, in hexameters, was as follows:

‘Here is your fate, O you who live in broad-streeted Sparta: Great and glorious though your city is, yet men bred of Perseus Will sack it. Either that, or a king sprung from the stock of Heracles Must perish and be mourned within the borders of Lacedaemon. For the might of neither the bull nor the lion can check The Persian, backed as he is by Zeus, face to face. I tell you this: There can be no holding him, not until one of the two he has rent.’ In my opinion, it was because Leonidas had been mulling this over, and because he wanted to store up glory for the Spartiates alone, that he dismissed the allies, rather than because there was a difference of opinion which then prompted those who left to make a disorderly retreat.

[221] I can offer one further piece of evidence, and not a minor one at that, in support of this view: namely, that Megistias of Acarnania, the soothsayer who had come in the train of the army, and pronounced its fate after looking into the entrails of the sacrificial victims (and who was reputedly descended from Melampous) was instructed quite openly by Leonidas to go, so that he would not share in the general bloodbath. Megistias, however, despite this order to leave, stayed put – but he did in turn send away his son, his only child, who had been serving with the expeditionary force.

[222] So the allies dismissed by Leonidas obediently went off – and with them gone, there remained behind with the Lacedaemonians only the Thespians and the Thebans. Of these two contingents, the Thebans had no choice but to stay, since Leonidas was keeping them there against their will, effectively as hostages; but the Thespians, who had declared that they would rather stay and die by the side of Leonidas and his men than leave and abandon them, were there as volunteers. They were commanded by Demophilus, the son of Diadromes.

[223] Xerxes, who had greeted the sun by performing libations, then delayed launching his offensive until it was roughly the time in the morning when market-squares fill up. Epialtes had told him that he needed to wait only until then, because the route down from the mountain was more direct and took far less time than the ascent and the circuit of it. As Xerxes and the Barbarians under him moved to the attack, so too did Leonidas and his Greeks – indeed, conscious that they were going out to their deaths, they advanced much deeper into the open stretch of the pass than they had done at first. While on previous days they had stood sentry behind the line of the wall, and made sallies only out into the narrow reaches of the pass, now they joined battle beyond the narrows, where the Barbarians suffered massive casualties. This was due to their officers, who wielded whips and would lash all the men in their respective regiments, urging them ever onwards to the front. There were many also who fell into the sea and were drowned, and even more who were trampled underfoot by their comrades while still alive. Indeed, there was no counting how many perished. The Greeks, you see, because they knew that they were going to die at the hands of the men coming round the mountain, did all they could to demonstrate to the Barbarians the full force of their strength, and fought in a frenzy, without regard for their lives.

[224] Now, by this stage, because most of them had smashed their spears to splinters, they were using their swords to slaughter the Persians. The man who proved himself without peer in this struggle was Leonidas – but then he fell, and with him other celebrated Spartiates too, whose names, as men who well merit commemoration, I have made sure to learn. Indeed, I have learned the names of all the three hundred. On the Persian side too, there fell a whole number of eminent Persians: these included two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, born to him by Phratagoune, the daughter of Artanes. (This Artanes was himself the brother of King Darius, the son of Hystaspes, and the grandson of Arsames. He gave the hand of his daughter to Darius, and endowed her with his entire estate, because she was his only child.)

[225] So two of Xerxes' brothers fell in the battle, which raged furiously over the corpse of Leonidas, Persian against Lacedaemonian, until by sheer force of courage the Greeks managed to grab hold of the body, and send their adversaries reeling back four times. This contest continued until the soldiers arrived with Epialtes – at which point, as the Greeks became aware of their coming, the whole character of the fighting changed. The Greeks withdrew back past the wall to where the road was narrow; and there – all of them except for the Thebans – banded together and took up a position on a hillock. On this hillock – which was located in the entrance to the pass, where the stone lion commemorating Leonidas now stands – they defended themselves with daggers, if they still had them, or else with their fists and teeth; meanwhile, the Barbarians buried them beneath a hail of missiles, pulling down the defensive wall and attacking them head on, with those who had come round the mountain completing the encirclement.

[226] Brave though all the Lacedaemonians and Thespians showed themselves, the man who proved himself the bravest of the lot was a Spartiate called Dieneces. There is a witticism attributed to him, which he made before battle was joined with the Medes. 'So teeming are the Barbarians', someone from Trachis warned him, 'that when they fire their bows, their arrows blot out the sun. That is the measure of their number.' Dieneces, however, far from being unnerved by this, instead took so little account of the vast multitudes of the Medes that he only commented, 'Well, my friend from Trachis, this news of yours is all to the good. If the Medes hide the sun, then we can fight them in the shade rather than in the glare of the day.' This was typical of a whole number of apophthegms attributed to Dieneces of Lacedaemon, and by which he is still remembered to the present.

[227] The Lacedaemonians who ranked next to him for bravery are said to have been two brothers, Alpheus and Maron, who were the sons of Orsiphantus. The most distinguished of the Thespians was a man called Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides.

[228] They were buried where they had fallen; and over both them and those who had met their ends earlier in the battle, before any of the men dismissed by Leonidas had gone home, an inscription was set. It reads:

HERE IS THE SPOT WHERE ONCE THREE MILLION MEN BATTLED AGAINST FOUR THOUSAND MEN FROM THE PELOPONNESE.

In addition to this inscription, which is common to all, the Spartiates have their own separate one:

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF LACEDAEMON, O STRANGER, THAT HERE, OBEDIENT TO THEIR ORDERS, WE LIE.

As well as this memorial to the Lacedaemonians, there is also one to the soothsayer:

THIS COMMEMORATES THE FAMOUS MEGISTIAS, KILLED BY THE MEDES ONCE THEY HAD CROSSED THE SPERCHEIUS: A SEER WHO KNEW FULL WELL THE FATE THAT WAS NEARING, BUT COULD NOT BEAR TO ABANDON SPARTA'S LEADERS.

It was the Amphictyons who commissioned these epitaphs and the pillars on which they are written – all except the one to Megistias the soothsayer, which was set up by Simonides, the son of Leoprepes, as a tribute to their guest-friendship.

[229] Two of the three hundred, Eurytus and Aristodemus, are said to have had such chronic eye conditions that they were discharged from the front line, and sent by Leonidas to recuperate in Alpeni, where they could have made common cause, and either headed back together to the safety of Sparta, or else, if they could not bear to go home, perished alongside their comrades. However, although both these options were open to them, they lacked sufficient incentive to agree, and so arrived at different decisions. When Eurytus learned about the Persian flanking action, he demanded his armour, buckled it on and ordered his helot to lead him into battle; the helot duly did so, and though once he had finished escorting Eurytus he then fled, Eurytus himself plunged into the thick of the *mêlée*, and was killed. Aristodemus, meanwhile, left behind, had passed out. Now, it seems to me that had Aristodemus been the only invalid and then returned home to Sparta, or had both of them together made the journey back, the Spartiates would not have shown such fury. As it was, though, one of the two had died, and one – under circumstances no more extenuating – had shrunk from dying; and so the Spartiates were bitterly angry with Aristodemus, as they were bound to be.

[230] The story that Aristodemus made it back safely to Sparta with the above excuse is complemented by another version, according to which he had been sent from the front line with a message, and could have returned in time for the battle, but had no wish to; instead – although his fellow messenger did indeed get back in time, and perished in the battle – he lingered on the road, and so survived.

[231] On his return home to Lacedaemon, Aristodemus met with reproaches and disgrace, as follows. The Spartiates humiliated him by refusing to give him kindling for his fire or so much as exchange a word, and taunted him by calling him ‘Aristodemus the Trembler’. He did, however, manage to wipe clean the stain of his dishonour at the battle of Plataea.

[232] Another of the three hundred, who had been sent as a messenger to Thessaly, is also said to have survived: his name was Pantites, and so dishonoured was he on his return home to Sparta that he hanged himself.

[233] The Thebans, under the command of Leontiades, were also with the Greeks; but although they did fight the King’s army for a while, it was only because they had no choice in the matter. When they saw that the Persians were gaining the upper hand, they split off from Leonidas and the other Greeks during the rush for the hillock, and approached the Barbarians with their hands outstretched in surrender, explaining as they did so the simple truth: namely, that although they had collaborated with the Medes, and been among the first to give earth and water to the King, they had been forced to come to Thermopylae, and so could hardly be held culpable for such injuries as had been inflicted upon the King. This plea – the truth of which was backed up by the Thessalians – saved their lives. Nevertheless, they did not get off entirely free. Some of them, as they approached the Barbarians, were seized and killed, while most of them were branded with the royal mark on the orders of Xerxes – beginning with their commander, Leontiades. (This was the same Leontiades whose son, Eurymachus, was killed many years later by the Plataeans, after he had seized control of their city at the head of four hundred men from Thebes.)

[234] So that was how the Greeks contended for Thermopylae; and afterwards, Xerxes summoned Demaratus, and put a number of questions to him. ‘Demaratus,’ he began, ‘you are a good man. I can appreciate this now because you gave me the truth – everything happened just as you said it would. So, tell me – how many Lacedaemonians are there left? And how many of them are warriors as good as these ones were? Or are all of them that good?’ ‘O King,’

Demaratus answered, 'the Lacedaemonians have a substantial population, and a whole number of cities. To answer your specific question, however – there is a city in Lacedaemon called Sparta, and its manpower comes to around eight thousand. The Spartans are all of them the peers of those who fought here. The other Lacedaemonians do not quite measure up to their standard, but they too are proficient fighters.' 'So, Demaratus,' Xerxes then said, 'how can I best conquer these men with the least amount of trouble? Come, tell me. You became their king, after all so you must know their intentions inside and out.'

[235] 'O King,' Demaratus answered, 'if you are serious about asking me for my advice, then it is only right and proper that I give you the best I can. You should send three hundred ships from your fleet to Laconia. There is an island there, lying just offshore, called Cythera – about which Chilon, the wisest man ever born in Sparta, once commented, "Better for the Spartiates that it be sunk to the bottom of the sea than that it should continue to stick up above the surface." What he had anticipated, the possibility that was constantly preying on his mind, was the very thing I am now urging on you– not because he specifically predicted your expedition, but out of a general dread of what might be attempted by any troop of men. The island will make a perfect base from which to spread terror among the Lacedaemonians. With a war of their own right on their very doorstep, you need not worry that they will attempt to prevent the rest of Greece from being annexed by your land-forces. And then, once the rest of Greece has been enslaved, Laconia will be left alone and neutralized. But should you not adopt this course of action, what can you expect? The Peloponnese has a narrow isthmus. It is there that you can expect to meet the Peloponnesians, all of whom are sworn to resist you, in battles even more ferocious than anything you have met with so far. But if you only do as I recommend, then this isthmus and the cities beyond it will come over to you without a fight.'

[236] Now, it so happened that Achaemenes, Xerxes' brother and the commander of the fleet, was present at this conversation; and because he was afraid that Xerxes might be convinced to do as Demaratus had suggested, it was he who spoke up next. 'You seem to me, O King, to be swallowing the arguments of a man who resents how well things are going for you, and who may even be a traitor to your cause. That, after all, is just the kind of behaviour that Greeks revel in. They envy the good fortune of others, and hate being put in the shade. If, on top of all the bad luck we have had, which cost us the wreck of four hundred ships, you then send another three hundred from the main body of the fleet to sail round the Peloponnese, your adversaries will be able to meet you on even terms in any battle. Keep the fleet together, however, and they will find it a challenge too far, a match altogether beyond their resources. The fleet, if intact, will be able to assist your land-forces, and your land-forces, advancing in conjunction with your ships, will be able to assist the fleet whereas if you split the two arms apart, neither will be able to help the other. Hold to a strategy that best serves your own interests, without concerning yourself with what your enemies are up to – do not worry about where they will take their battle-stations, or what they will do, or how much they number. They can look after all that themselves, while we bother with our own business. And anyway, if the Lacedaemonians do meet the Persians in battle, it will hardly serve to staunch the wound they have been given.'

[237] 'I think you have made some excellent points, Achaemenes,' Xerxes replied, 'and I will act on them. But Demaratus, although his understanding may be trumped by yours, spoke as he did out of a genuine concern for my best interests. I would certainly never accept, as you claim, that he does not have them at heart. I arrive at this conclusion based partly on our previous conversations, and partly on the fact that when one citizen is resentful of another's

successes, it is silence that betrays his hostility. Should someone ask a man from the same city for advice, his fellow-citizen would never suggest what seems to him the best course of action unless he had attained a pinnacle of virtue – and such people are very rare. By contrast, there is no relationship more suffused with warm feeling than that between two guest-friends – and the one, if asked by the other for his advice, will always do his best to oblige. So from now on, there will be no more bad-mouthing of Demaratus, who is my guest-friend! That is an order.'

[238] After this declaration, Xerxes made his way through the bodies of the dead; and when the corpse of Leonidas was pointed out to him as that of the king and commander of the Lacedaemonians, he gave orders for its head to be cut off and set on a spike. This seems to me not the least conclusive of a whole number of pieces of evidence clearly demonstrating that Leonidas, while alive, angered King Xerxes more than any other man. Otherwise, the King would never have behaved so sacrilegiously towards his corpse since under normal circumstances the Persians are more respectful of men who fight bravely than any other people I know. Those whose duty it was to act on the King's commands duly did as instructed.

[239] I shall now return to a point in my narrative where earlier on I omitted something. It was because the Lacedaemonians were the first people to learn that the King was preparing to invade Greece that they sent messengers to the Delphic oracle, and were duly given the prophecy I mentioned a short while ago. The real wonder, though, was the way they had come by their information. Now, it seems to me – and it certainly stands to reason – that anyone exiled among the Medes, as Demaratus, the son of Ariston, was, would hardly have been well disposed towards the Lacedaemonians; but it is still open to question whether he took the action he did out of concern for them, or as a way of gloating. Demaratus was in Susa when Xerxes decided to invade Greece, and when he heard the news, he wanted to pass it on to the Lacedaemonians. The risk, however, was in being caught – and so, with no other way of communicating his message, he devised the following scheme. Taking a folding writing-tablet, he scraped off the wax and wrote down the King's intentions on the bare wood of the tablet; then, having done this, he covered the lettering back up with melted wax, so that the tablet, while it was being carried along the roads, would appear blank to any guards, and thus not make any trouble. When it arrived in Lacedaemon, the Lacedaemonians could not figure it out at all; but then, eventually, so I have been informed, its secret was fathomed by Gorgo, the daughter of Cleomenes and wife of Leonidas, who suggested that, if they followed her instructions by scraping off the wax, they would find writing scratched into the wood. Sure enough, obedient to her advice, they uncovered the message – which, after reading it, they passed on to the rest of the Greeks. That, at any rate, is what is supposed to have happened.

Libro VIII. Urania.

[35] Meanwhile, the remainder of the Barbarians – those who had taken the other turning – were skirting the left flank of Parnassus as they made their way with their guides to the sanctuary at Delphi. They continued to devastate everywhere in Phocis that they occupied. The cities of Panopeus, Daulis and Aiolis – all were put to the torch. The aim of those taking this route, and who had been split off from the rest of the army for the very purpose, was to plunder the sanctuary at Delphi, and then parade its wealth before King Xerxes. So endlessly had all the noteworthy things in the shrine been on everyone's lips that Xerxes, according to

my sources, was more familiar with them than he was with the things he had left behind in his own home – and particularly with the offerings of Croesus, the son of Alyattes.

[36] The news of this plunged the Delphians into such extremes of terror that in a state of blind panic they asked the oracle what they should do with its sacred treasures: bury them in the ground, or move them somewhere else altogether? 'Move nothing,' the god replied. 'I am perfectly capable of looking after my own.' When the Delphians heard this, their thoughts turned next to their own safety. Their children and wives they sent across the gulf to Achaea, while they themselves, for the most part, made their way up to the peaks of Parnassus and took their belongings to the Corycian Cave – although there were some who removed themselves to Amphissa in Locris. The Delphians completely evacuated the city – all except for sixty men, and the prophet.

[37] Then, with the invasion force so close that the Barbarians could actually see the sanctuary in the distance, the prophet – whose name was Aceratus – noticed that the sacred weapons, which it is sacrilege for any human to touch, had been brought out from the inner halls and were lying in front of the temple. He went off to tell the Delphians who still remained there about this prodigy. Meanwhile, the Barbarians, in the course of their onslaught, reached the sanctuary of Athena Before the Temple, where they were greeted by prodigies yet more miraculous. Astounding though it was that weapons of war should have materialized of their own accord outside the temple, it was what happened next that really put every other wonder in the shade. As the barbarian invaders reached the sanctuary of Athena Before the Temple, thunderbolts began to rain down on them from the heavens, two crags splintered off from Parnassus and came crashing into their ranks with a great din, sweeping away large numbers of them, and from inside the sanctuary of Athena there sounded a yell and a war cry.

[38] Amid the confusion of all these various events, fear descended upon the Barbarians. When news came that they were in full retreat, the Delphians headed down against them and inflicted numerous casualties. The survivors fled straight to Boeotia. My information is that those of the Barbarians who made it back claimed to have seen further god-sent marvels. There had been two hoplites of more than human size who had hunted the fugitives and cut them down.

[39] These, according to the Delphians, were a pair of heroes local to the area, Phylacus and Autonoüs, whose precincts adjoin the sanctuary – the precinct of Phylacus is beside the road above the sanctuary of Athena Before the Temple, while that of Autonoüs is near the Castalian Spring, below the Hyampeian Crag. The boulders that fell from Parnassus still lie to our day in the precinct of Athena Before the Temple, exactly where they came to rest after smashing through the Barbarian ranks. And that was how these men came to depart the shrine.

(40-55) The Persians find the city of Athens deserted, sack the temple of Athena and burn the city to the ground.

[56] When news of what had happened in Athens on the Acropolis reached Salamis, the Greeks were so alarmed that some of the commanders did not even wait for the business they had been discussing to be concluded, but instead looked to make their escape by piling into their ships and hoisting their sails. Meanwhile, those left behind passed a formal resolution

that they would give battle in the waters off the Isthmus. As night fell, the council of war broke up and those attending it boarded their ships.

[57] When Themistocles arrived at his ship, an Athenian citizen named Mnesiphilus asked him what decision they had reached – and on learning that the resolution was to head with the fleet for the Isthmus, and fight in defence of the Peloponnese, he urged against it. 'If the ships here do abandon Salamis, they will no longer be fighting for a single fatherland. Instead, each contingent will make for its own city, and neither Eurybiadas nor anyone else will be able to stop the fleet from scattering in all directions. This senseless plan will be the ruin of Greece! By whatever means you can, go and find a way to reverse the decision. Somehow, you have to convince Eurybiadas to change his mind and stay where he is.'

[58] This suggestion appealed very much to Themistocles, who said not a word in reply but headed off instead to Eurybiadas' ship. 'There is something I wish to share with you,' he said on his arrival there, 'on a matter that concerns us both.' 'Come aboard, then,' Eurybiadas told him, 'and talk it over, if you so wish.' So Themistocles sat down beside him, and repeated everything he had heard from Mnesiphilus as though the arguments were his own – and these pleas, together with a whole host of other points, convinced Eurybiadas to leave his ship and summon the commanders to a council of war.

[59] They all duly assembled, but before Eurybiadas could open his mouth to explain why he had convened the meeting, Themistocles began to press his entreaties on them with the utmost vehemence. He was interrupted in this by the Corinthian commander, Adeimantus, the son of Ocytus: 'In the Games, Themistocles, those who are too quick off the mark earn themselves a beating.' 'Yes,' answered Themistocles, in self-justification, 'but those who get left behind do not win the crown.'

[60] All the same, the tone of his reply to the Corinthian was still at this stage an emollient one; and likewise, in his address to Eurybiadas, he made no mention of what had passed between them earlier, when he had argued that the fleet would scatter in all directions if it abandoned Salamis. After all, it would hardly have been seemly of him to level such a charge in the presence of the allies themselves. So instead he pressed a different case. 'The opportunity is now yours', he told Eurybiadas, 'to be the saviour of Greece – but only if you do as I say. Fight in these waters here, where we are now, and ignore those who are urging you to transfer the fleet to the Isthmus. Hear me out, and then weigh the two options. If you join battle with the enemy off the Isthmus, you will be fighting in open sea, and at a serious disadvantage, since our ships are the more heavily built, and our numbers fewer. Not only that, but even if fortune does favour us, you will still have doomed to ruin Salamis, Megara and Aegina. What is more, the enemy's land-forces are bound to move in parallel with his fleet, so that you yourselves will be the ones responsible for bringing them to the Peloponnese, and thereby putting the whole of Greece at risk. 'Only do as I say, though, and you will find that many benefits follow. Firstly, if our smaller fleet meets with their larger one in the narrows, the logic of war suggests that a decisive victory will be ours. After all – just as fighting on the open seas will work to their advantage, so will a battle in crowded waters work to ours. Additionally, we will ensure the survival of Salamis – the place to which we have evacuated our women and children. And then too – most saliently of all from your perspective – there is this advantage: that if you stay here, you will be fighting no less in defence of the Peloponnese than you would be in a battle off the Isthmus. Surely, then, if you have any sense, you will not draw the enemy to the Peloponnese? 'Should things turn out as I expect, and victory go to our fleet, then the Barbarians will never get to the Isthmus. Instead, they will withdraw in disarray, with Attica the limit of their

advance. This in turn will have the advantage of keeping Megara and Aegina intact. Yes, and Salamis too Salamis, where it has been foretold that we will defeat our enemies! Now, as a rule of thumb, when men come up with a sensible strategy, the outcome will generally be as they have planned. However, let their strategy be a nonsense and they are most unlikely to obtain divine backing for it.'

[61] Once Themistocles had given this speech, Adeimantus of Corinth returned to the attack, commanding him – as a man without a city – to hold his tongue, and urging Eurybiadas not to allow a motion brought by a stateless person to be put to the vote. 'All very well', he insisted, 'for Themistocles to parade his opinions if he can demonstrate that he does indeed have a city – but not otherwise.' (The point of this sneer was, of course, that Athens had fallen and lay under occupation.) Themistocles then laid insultingly into Adeimantus and the Corinthians both, and declared in forthright terms that he and his fellow-citizens most certainly had a city one larger than Corinth, and more landed too – for as long as they still had two hundred ships, all fully crewed. 'Were we to turn against the Greeks,' he demanded, 'which of them would be able to block us? None!'

[62] Then, having made his meaning clear, he directed his conversation back to Eurybiadas, whom he pressed with an even greater sense of urgency. 'Stay where you are, and your remaining here will be the measure of your quality as a man. Leave, and you will destroy Greece. The entire course of the war depends upon our fleet. So do as I advise. And if you will not – very well, we shall load up the members of our households and make our way to Siris in Italy, which has been ours since ancient times, and where we are fated, so oracles claim, to found a colony. And then, when you find yourself bereft of our support, and quite abandoned, reflect upon what I have said.'

[63] Sure enough, these words of Themistocles brought Eurybiadas to reverse his opinion – the chief factor in bringing about this change of mind being, so I believe, his anxiety that if he did take the fleet off to the Isthmus, the Athenians would desert them. After all, with the Athenians gone, those left behind would no longer be in any position to put up a fight. Accordingly, then, he sided with the argument that they should stay where they were, and settle the issue at sea.

[64] With Eurybiadas now settled on this course, there were no more verbal skirmishings, and instead the fleet made ready to fight at Salamis. Dawn approached; and at the very moment of sunrise, land and sea alike were shaken by an earthquake. The Greeks decided to pray to the gods, and to summon to their aid the descendants of Aeacus: a resolution which they duly put into practice. Once they had offered prayers to all the gods, they called on Ajax and Telamon (both of whom were already present on Salamis) and dispatched an Aeginetan ship to fetch Aeacus and his remaining descendants.

...

[74] The Greeks at the Isthmus all went to the effort they did because they knew themselves to be running a life-and-death race – and also because they did not regard the prospects of their fleet as very bright. Meanwhile, their comrades on Salamis, although kept abreast of what was going on, remained extremely jittery – less on their own account than out of anxiety for the

Peloponnese. For a while they just whispered to one another, individual to individual, expressing astonishment at the folly of Eurybiadas– but in the end it all erupted into the open. A meeting was convened, at which the same old arguments were rehearsed over and over again – some insisting that it was imperative to set sail for the Peloponnese and risk themselves in its defence, rather than stay and fight for a land that had already fallen to the enemy, while the Athenians, the Aeginetans and the Megarians were for making their stand where they were.

[75] When Themistocles found that his own arguments were being overcome by those of the Peloponnesians, he slipped away unobtrusively from the council of war, and went to find a house-slave of his, his children's tutor, a man named Sicinnus; and after instructing him on what he had to say, dispatched him in a small boat to the camp of the Medes. (Subsequent to these events, Themistocles had him enrolled as a citizen of Thespieae, at a time when the Thespians were accepting new citizens, and made him a wealthy man as well.) Anyway, at this time, Sicinnus landed in his boat and delivered this message to the Barbarian high command: 'Behind the backs of the other Greeks, I have been sent on a mission from the Athenian commander, who is a partisan of the King's, and keen for your cause to triumph over that of the Greeks. He wants to tip you off that the Greeks are panicking and plotting their escape. What you have now, then – just so long as you do not ignore their flight – is an opportunity to secure a victory so perfect as to put all others in the shade. They are at complete loggerheads and will no longer stand up to you. In fact, as you will see, the only fighting they'll get up to will be among themselves – those on your side against those who are not.' Once he had communicated this to them, he stole away.

[76] The response of the Persians to this message, which seemed to them perfectly credible, was two-fold: first, they landed a large number of men on the islet which lies midway between Salamis and the mainland; and second, with the coming of midnight, they had the western wing of the fleet extend in an arc as far as Salamis, while the ships stationed near Ceos and Cynosoura blocked the channel leading to Mounichia, filling it up completely. The reason the fleet undertook these moves was to ensure that the Greeks, rather than escaping Salamis, would be trapped in the narrows and made to pay for the resistance they had shown at Artemisium. As for the landing of Persians on the tiny island (which goes by the name of Psyttaleia), this was done because it lay directly in the path of the imminent engagement, and therefore, come the battle, was the place where both men and damaged vessels were most likely to be washed ashore – some to be rescued, and some eliminated. Everything was done noiselessly, so as not to alert the enemy. These various preparations ensured that none of the Barbarians got a wink of sleep that night.

[77] There can certainly be no disputing on my part the truth of oracles not when, as in the example below, they speak with such transparency that I would shrink from any attempt to discredit them.

'When with their ships they fashion a bridge, and join the holy promontory Of Artemis, she of the golden sword, to sea-girt Cynosoura, Lunatic with over-confidence, the sackers of gleaming Athens Then shall Justice divine quell the strength of that son of Pride, Excess, Despite the terror of his ravening and ambition to gulp down all. Bronze shall meet and clash with bronze, and Ares with blood will dye the sea Deep crimson. Then it is that a day will dawn for Greece of liberty, Brought by the far-seeing son of Cronos, and Victory, that holy queen.'

In light of how clear verses such as these from Bacis are, I would never presume to challenge the veracity of oracles – nor would I accept anyone else doing it either.

[78] Meanwhile, on Salamis, the commanders were embroiled in the cut and thrust of a most almighty argument. They remained ignorant of their encirclement by the barbarian fleet, and took for granted that it was still stationed where it had been spotted during the day.

[79] While the commanders were busy attacking one another, there arrived from Aegina a man called Aristеides, the son of Lysimachus; he was an Athenian, and although he had been ostracized by the people, I have come to the conclusion, based on what I have learned about his character, that he was the best man in Athens, and the most just too. He presented himself before the council of war, and asked Themistocles to come outside with him, despite the fact that the two men, far from being friends, were the bitterest of rivals. Such was the sheer scale of the present crisis, however, that Aristеides had put all that to one side, and asked Themistocles to leave the meeting because he wished to have a word with him. Aristеides had already heard how keen the Peloponnesians were to withdraw their ships to the Isthmus. Now, once Themistocles had come outside to see him, he declared, ‘The issue of who can achieve the most for our country must mark the limit to our rivalry – in every crisis, but the present one especially. Let me tell you this – it makes no difference how much or how little the Peloponnesians talk about sailing away. They will not be able to evacuate their fleets – no matter what the Corinthians, or even Eurybiadas himself, may wish. I can assure you of that based on the evidence of my own eyes. We are surrounded, you see, by a ring of foes. You must go in and make this plain to them.’

[80] ‘Your suggestion is as welcome as your news is excellent,’ answered Themistocles. ‘Precisely what I needed to happen has happened – and here you are, an eyewitness to it. I should explain that these actions of the Medes are my doing. I had no choice, since the Greeks positively refused to stand and fight, except to make them do it. But since you are the one who has come here with this welcome information, you should be the one to report it. If I tell them, you see, they will think that I am making it up and refuse to believe that the Barbarians could possibly be doing such a thing. So please, go in and spell out the situation to them. Ideally, of course, they should believe what you are telling them – but even if they do not, it is all much the same to us. After all, if what you say is true, and we are indeed completely surrounded, then they will not be going anywhere, no matter what!’

[81] So Aristеides went in to give his briefing, and to report that it was only with the utmost difficulty that he had managed to sail across from Aegina and slip through the enemy blockade. ‘The Greek positions are entirely surrounded by Xerxes’ fleet. An attack is coming, and I advise you to brace yourselves for it.’ With these words he left them; and once again the debate degenerated into a wrangle. Most of the commanders, you see, still refused to believe the news.

[82] But it was then, amid this mood of scepticism, that there arrived a trireme crewed by Tenian deserters, under the command of a man from Tenos called Panaetius, the son of Sosimenes – and the information they brought was both full and accurate. (This was the deed that explains why the Tenians had their names inscribed on the tripod at Delphi listing those who had helped to defeat the Barbarian.) The desertion of this ship at Salamis, combined with the earlier one of the Lemnian ship at Artemisium, brought the total of the Greek fleet to a round three hundred and eighty – a number that previously it had been short of by two.

[83] Once the Greeks had been persuaded of the truth of what the Tenians had to say, they made ready for battle. At the first light of dawn, the marines were called to a meeting, at which the best speech of all was given by Themistocles. The whole way through it, he contrasted the better aspects of human nature and society with the worse. 'Choose what is better!' he exhorted, before winding up his oration by ordering the marines to board their ships. Just as they were doing so, the trireme that had gone to fetch the descendants of Aeacus arrived from Aegina. Then the entire Greek fleet put out to sea – and no sooner had the ships been launched than the Barbarians were upon them.

(Aeschylus claims that as the Medes approached (a comment that may indicate they were not in the straits at dawn) they could hear the Greeks singing their battle hymn (paean) even before they saw the allied fleet:

*Forward, sons of the Greeks,
liberate the homeland,
liberate your children, your wives,
the altars of the gods of your fathers,
and the tombs of your ancestors:
it is time to fight for everything.)*

(84-96) In desperate circumstances and unlikely odds the Greeks defeat the Persians, the latter losing more than half of their fleet, decide to retreat and wait for orders from Xerxes to protect the bridge of ships in the Hellespont, and thus provoke an orderly retreat, leaving a part of the army to attempt the conquest the following year.

[97] Once Xerxes realized the full scale of the disaster that had befallen him, he was nervous that it might occur to the Greeks – or perhaps be suggested to them by some Ionian – to sail to the Hellespont and break up the bridges, thereby leaving him trapped in Europe and at risk of utter annihilation; and so he began to contemplate flight. However, because he did not wish to alert either the Greeks or his own men to this, he had various Phoenician merchant-ships lashed together in an attempt to build a causeway across to Salamis that could serve him as both a pontoon-bridge and a barrier, and made preparations for battle, as though it were his intention to fight once again by sea. The spectacle of this activity convinced everyone that he had indeed fully committed himself to staying put and continuing the war – everyone, that is, except Mardonius, who knew the workings of Xerxes' mind better than anyone, and so was not taken in.

[98] Simultaneously, Xerxes sent news of the defeat to Persia. Now, the Persians have found a way of sending messages so efficient that there exists nothing mortal possessed of greater speed. There are horses and riders posted at intervals along the entire stretch of a given route, and every day, so it is reported, a fresh horse and rider stand there waiting, ready to undertake that particular day's travel. Neither snow nor rain, neither the heat of day nor the pitch of night, will prevent him from completing his assigned journey in the fastest possible time. One

man will come galloping up and hand over his instructions to a second, the second will then hand them over to a third, and so it continues, in a relay – rather like the torch race which is staged by the Greeks in honour of Hephaestus. The word used by the Persians to describe this horse-post is angareion.

[99] The first dispatch to arrive in Susa, announcing that Athens was in Xerxes' hands, had brought such joy to the Persians left behind there that they had spread myrtle branches over all the roads, burned incense and busied themselves with the offering of sacrifices and feasting. But then, when the second message arrived on top of the first, they were so devastated that they all tore their clothes to shreds, howling and wailing without restraint as they did so, and holding Mardonius to blame. The Persians did this less out of any distress for their fleet than because they were terrified for Xerxes.

[100] They continued in this state for the whole time until the return to Susa of Xerxes himself, who duly put a stop to it. Meanwhile, because Mardonius could see that Xerxes was deeply cast down by the result of the sea-battle, and suspected the King was planning to flee Athens, he realized that he himself, as the man responsible for persuading Xerxes to invade Greece, was liable to pay a heavy price for it; this meant that the better option for him would be to raise the stakes still further, and fearlessly risk his life in exchange for the opportunity to conquer Greece. (That said, he had every confidence that he would indeed conquer Greece.) Accordingly, once he had arrived at this conclusion, he made the following proposal. 'Master, do not be upset, or imagine that what has happened is somehow a great calamity. In the final reckoning, this is a contest that will be decided, not by planks of wood, but by men and horses. These Greeks may imagine that they have won a decisive victory – but will they leave their ships to meet you in battle? No! Nor is there anyone from the mainland who will stand up to you either. All who have sought to do so have paid the price. So if it is your wish now to test the defences of the Peloponnese, then let us do so at once. Alternatively, if you would rather stay where you are, we can do that too. But please – do not be downcast! It is inevitable, wholly inevitable, that the Greeks will be made to pay for both their present and their former actions, and become your slaves. So yes, this would be your best course of action. But even if you are set on retreat and the withdrawal of your forces, I have a plan crafted for that eventuality too. Do not, my Lord, allow the Greeks to make a laughing-stock of the Persians! It was hardly our fault, after all, that your fortunes suffered a reversal – nor can you accuse the Persians of ever having played the coward. Yes, the Phoenicians did, perhaps, and the Egyptians, and the Cypriots, and the Cilicians – but the Persians played no part in this calamity. That being so, and since the Persians are innocent of letting you down, do as I say. If you are resolved not to remain here, then certainly, head off home, and take the bulk of your forces with you. It will then be my responsibility to bring Greece to slavery for you – to which end, let me pick three hundred thousand men from your army.'

[101] Hearing this improved Xerxes' mood no end, and left him as cheerful as could be expected under the circumstances. 'Let me take some soundings,' he told Mardonius, 'and I will then tell you what course of action I intend to adopt.' So he summoned his Persian advisers; and, as he was listening to them, he decided to send for Artemisia as well, and get her advice, since it was clear now that she alone, on the previous occasion, had properly appreciated the course of action that would have served him best. On her arrival, Xerxes dismissed all the other people present – both his Persian advisers and his bodyguards – and told her, 'Mardonius has urged me to stay where I am, and probe the defences of the Peloponnese. He points out that my defeat was hardly the fault of the Persians, or indeed any

of my land-forces, and that they are all itching to prove their worth. Alternatively, should I not do as he suggests, then he wishes to have the pick of three hundred thousand of my men and use them to bring Greece to slavery for me, while I myself, on his urging, march what remains of the army back to my native land. In light of the excellent counsel you gave me before the recent sea-battle, which you told me not to engage in, I would like you now to recommend the course of action I would be best advised to follow.'

[102] 'My Lord,' Artemisia answered, in response to this request for advice, 'it is actually hard to know the best option to recommend. But having said that, and present circumstances being what they are, I think you should probably go back, and leave Mardonius here in Greece, with the men he wants – if indeed he is willing to put his words into action. Look at it this way. Should his conquests measure up to the ambitions he has spoken about, and everything go as he intends, then the achievement, Master, will be yours. The people responsible for it, after all, will have been your slaves. Then again, should events run contrary to Mardonius' expectations, the damage will be strictly limited – just so long as nothing fatal happens to you and the fortunes of your house. After all, if you survive, and your dynasty with you, then the race will be far from over for the Greeks, who will still be engaged in a continuing struggle to the death. But should Mardonius suffer a defeat, well – it will hardly matter. In fact, any victory that the Greeks may win will only be over your slave – and the destruction of a slave is no victory at all. But you yourself, when you put Athens to the torch, achieved what you had set out to do on your campaign – and so now you can be on your way.'

[103] Xerxes was delighted by this advice, since it coincided precisely with his own take on the matter. Indeed, so badly had he lost his nerve that, in my own opinion, he would never have stayed, not even had every man been counselling it – and every woman too. As it was, he praised Artemisia highly, then sent her off to take his children to Ephesus.

Book IX. Calliope.

(Summary of the book: Mardonius spends the winter in Thessaly and asks Alexander, King of Macedonia, to intervene on their behalf with the Athenians and request an alliance to confront the Spartans. However, the negotiations do not end well. The Thebans, allies of the Persians, suggest stirring up discord and division among the Greeks through bribery. Mardonius takes Athens 10 months after Xerxes.)

PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF ARISTIDES

(I have decided to continue my account from the victory at Salamis to the Battle of Plataea with Plutarch's life of Aristides, who was the commander of the Athenians in the even more decisive land battle that defined the victory over the Persians and where the role of the Delphic oracle in this final phase of the war can be appreciated.)

5 Now when Datis, on being sent by Darius ostensibly to punish the Athenians for burning Sardis, but really to subdue all the Hellenes, put in at Marathon with all his armament and went to ravaging the country, then, of the ten generals appointed by the Athenians for the conduct of the war, it was Miltiades who enjoyed the greatest consideration, but in reputation and influence Aristides was second. By adopting at that time the opinion of Miltiades about the battle to be fought, he did much to turn the scale in its favour. And since each general held the chief authority for a single day in turn, when the command came round to him, he handed it over to Miltiades, thereby teaching his fellow-officers that to obey and follow men of wisdom is not disgraceful, but dignified and salutary. By thus appeasing the jealousy of his colleagues and inducing them to be cheerfully contented in the adoption of a single opinion (and that the best), he confirmed Miltiades in the strength which comes from an unrestricted power. For each of the other generals at once relinquished his own right to command for a day in turn, and put himself under the orders of Miltiades.

6 Of all his virtues, it was his justice that most impressed the multitude, because of its most continual and most general exercise. Wherefore, though poor and a man of the people, he acquired that most kingly and godlike surname of "The Just." This no kings or tyrants ever coveted, nay, they rejoiced to be surnamed "Besiegers," or "Thunderbolts," or "Conquerors," and some "Eagles," or "Hawks," — cultivating the reputation which is based on violence and power, as it seems, rather than on virtue. And yet divinity, to which such men are eager to adapt and conform themselves, is believed to have three elements of superiority, — incorruption, power, and virtue; and the most reverend, the divinest of these, is virtue. For vacuum and the ultimate elements partake of incorruption; and great power is exhibited by earthquakes and thunderbolts, and rushing tornadoes, and invading floods; but in fundamental justice nothing participates except through the exercise of intelligent reasoning powers.

Therefore, considering the three feelings which are generally entertained towards divinity, — envy, fear, and honourable regard, men seem to envy and felicitate the deities for their incorruption and perpetuity; to dread and fear them for their sovereignty and power; but to love and honour and revere them for their justice. And yet, although men are thus disposed, it is immortality, of which our nature is not capable, and power, the chief disposal of which is in the hands of fortune, that they eagerly desire; while as for virtue, the only divine excellence within our reach, they put it at the bottom of the list, unwisely too, since a life passed in power and great fortune and authority needs justice to make it divine; by injustice it is made bestial.

8 But in the third year thereafter, — when Xerxes was marching through Thessaly and Boeotia against Attica, they repealed their law of ostracism, and voted that those who had been sent away under it might return. The chief reason for this was their fear of Aristides, lest he attach

himself to the enemy's cause, and corrupt and pervert many of his fellow-citizens to the side of the Barbarian. But they much misjudged the man. Even before this decree of theirs, he was ever inciting and urging the Hellenes to win their freedom; and after it was passed, when Themistocles was general with sole powers, he assisted him in every undertaking and counsel, although he thereby, for the sake of the general safety, made his chiefest foe the most famous of men.

Thus when Eurybiades wished to abandon Salamis, but the Barbarian triremes, putting out by night, had encompassed the strait where he lay round about, and had beset the islands therein, and no Hellene knew of this encompassment, Aristides came over to them from Aegina, venturously sailing through the enemy's ships. He went at once by night to the tent of Themistocles, and called him forth alone. "O Themistocles," said he, "if we are wise, we shall at last lay aside our vain and puerile contention, and begin a salutary and honourable rivalry with one another in emulous struggles to save Hellas, thou as commanding general, I as assistant counsellor, since at the very outset I learn that thou art the only one who has adopted the best policy, urging as thou dost to give a decisive sea-fight here in the narrows as soon as may be. And though thine allies oppose thee, thy foes would seem to assist thee; for the sea round about and behind us is already filled with hostile ships, so that even our unwilling ones must now of necessity be brave men and fight. Indeed, no way of escape is left." To this Themistocles replied: "I should not have wished, O Aristides, to find thee superior to me here; but I shall try to emulate thy fair beginning, and to surpass thee in my actions." At the same time he told Aristides of the trick he had contrived against the Barbarian, and entreated him to show Eurybiades convincingly, inasmuch as he had the greater credit with that commander, that there was no safety except in a sea-fight. So it happened in the council of generals that Cleocritus the Corinthian declared to Themistocles that Aristides also was opposed to his plan, since he, though present, held his peace. Aristides at once replied that he would not have held his peace had not Themistocles counselled for the best; but as it was, he kept quiet, not out of any good-will to the man, but because he approved of his plan.

10 At this Xerxes grew exceedingly fearful, and hurried straight to the Hellespont; but Mardonius, with the flower of the army, to the number of three hundred thousand men, was left behind. He was a formidable adversary, and because his confidence in his infantry was strong, he wrote threateningly to the Hellenes, saying: "Ye have conquered with your maritime timbers landsmen who know not how to ply the oar; but now, broad is the land of Thessaly and fair the plain of Boeotia for brave horsemen and men-at-arms to contend in." But to the Athenians he sent separate letters and proposals from the King, who promised to rebuild their city, give them much money, and make them lords of the Hellenes, if only they would cease fighting against him.

When the Lacedaemonians learned this, they took fright, and sent an embassy to Athens, begging the Athenians to despatch their wives and children to Sparta, and to accept from her a support for their aged and infirm; for great was the distress among the people, since it had so recently lost both land and city. However, after listening to the embassy, on motion of Aristides, they answered with an admirable answer, declaring that they could be tolerant with their foes for supposing that everything was to be bought for wealth and money, since their foes could conceive of nothing higher than these things; but they were indignant at the Lacedaemonians for having an eye only to the penury and indigence that now reigned at Athens, and for being so unmindful of the valour and ambition of the Athenians as to exhort

them to contend for Hellas merely to win their rations. When Aristides had made this motion and had introduced the waiting embassies into the Assembly, he bade the Lacedaemonians tell their people that there was not bulk of gold above or below ground so large that the Athenians would take it in payment for the freedom of the Hellenes; and to the messengers of Mardonius he said, pointing to the sun: "As long as yonder sun journeys his appointed journey, so long will the Athenians wage war against the Persians in behalf of the land which has been ravaged by them and of the temples which they have defiled and consumed with fire." Still further, he made a motion that the priests should solemnly curse all who came to a parley with the Medes or forsook the alliance of the Hellenes.

When Mardonius for the second time invaded Attica, again the people crossed over to Salamis. Then Aristides, who had been sent as envoy to Lacedaemon, inveighed against their sluggishness and indifference, in that they had once more abandoned Athens to the Barbarian, and demanded that they go to the aid of what was still left of Hellas. On hearing this, the Ephors, as long as it was day, publicly disported themselves in easy-going festival fashion; for it was their festival of the Hyacinthia. But in the night they selected five thousand Spartans, each of whom had seven Helots to attend upon him, and sent them forth without the knowledge of the Athenians. So when Aristides came before them with renewed invectives, they laughed and said he was but a sleepy babbler, for that their army was already in Arcadia on its march against the "strangers" (they called the Persians strangers). But Aristides declared they were jesting out of all season, forasmuch as they were deceiving their friends instead of their enemies. This is the way Idomeneus tells the story. But in the decree which Aristides caused to be passed, he himself is not named as envoy, but Cimon, Xanthippus, and Myronides.

11 Having been elected general with sole powers in view of the expected battle, he came to Plataea at the head of eight thousand Athenian hoplites. There Pausanias also, the commander in chief of the whole Hellenic army, joined him with his Spartans, and the forces of the rest of the Hellenes kept streaming up. Now, generally speaking, there was no limit to the encampment of the Barbarians as it lay stretched out along the river Asopus, so vast was it; but round their baggage trains and chief headquarters they built a quadrangular wall, whereof each side was •ten stadia in length.

To Pausanias and all the Hellenes under him Tisamenus the Eleian made prophecy, and foretold victory for them if they acted on the defensive and did not advance to the attack. But Aristides sent to Delphi and received from the god response that the Athenians would be superior to their foes if they made vows to Zeus, Cithaeronian Hera, Pan, and the Sphragitic nymphs; paid sacrifices to the heroes Androcrates, Leucon, Pisandrus, Damocrates, Hypsion, Actaeon, and Polyidus; and if they sustained the peril of battle on their own soil, in the plain of Eleusinian Demeter and Cora. When this oracle was reported to Aristides, it perplexed him greatly. The heroes to whom he was to sacrifice were, it was true, ancient dignitaries of the Plataeans; and the cave of the Sphragitic nymphs was on one of the peaks of Cithaeron, facing the summer sunsets, and in it there was also an oracle in former days, as they say, and many of the natives were possessed of the oracular power, and these were called nympholepti, or "nymph-possessed." But the plain of Eleusinian Demeter, and the promise of victory to the Athenians if they fought the battle in their own territory, called them back, as it were, to Attica, and changed the seat of war.

At this time the general of the Plataeans, Arimnestus, had a dream in which he thought he was accosted by Zeus the Saviour and asked what the Hellenes had decided to do, and replied: "On the morrow, my Lord, we are going to lead our army back to Eleusis, and fight out our issue

with the Barbarians there, in accordance with the Pythian oracle." Then the god said they were entirely in error, for the Pythian oracle's places were there in the neighbourhood of Plataea, and if they sought them they would surely find them. All this was made so vivid to Arimnestus that as soon as he awoke he summoned the oldest and most experienced of his fellow-citizens. By conference and investigation with these he discovered that near Hysiae, at the foot of Mount Cithaeron, there was a very ancient temple bearing the names of Eleusinian Demeter and Cora. Straightway then he took Aristides and led him to the spot. They found that it was naturally very well suited to the array of infantry against a force that was superior in cavalry, since the spurs of Cithaeron made the edges of the plain adjoining the temple unfit for horsemen. There, too, was the shrine of the hero Androcrates hard by, enveloped in a grove of dense and shady trees. And besides, that the oracle might leave no rift in the hope of victory, the Plataeans voted, on motion of Arimnestus, to remove the boundaries of Plataea on the side toward Attica, and to give this territory to the Athenians, that so they might contend in defence of Hellas on their own soil, in accordance with the oracle.

The munificence of the Plataeans became so celebrated that Alexander, many years afterwards, when he was now King of Asia, built the walls of Plataea, and had proclamation made by herald at the Olympic games that the King bestowed this grace upon the Plataeans in return for their bravery and magnanimity in freely bestowing their territory upon the Hellenes in the Median war, and so showing themselves most zealous of all.

15 After this cavalry battle, both sides refrained from further fighting for a long time, since only as they acted on the defensive would victory be theirs — so the soothsayers interpreted the sacrifices alike for Persians and Hellenes, — but if they attacked, defeat. At last Mardonius, since he had supplies remaining for only a few days, and since the Hellenes were ever increasing in number as fresh bodies joined them, impatiently determined to wait no longer, but to cross the Asopus at daybreak and attack the Athenians unexpectedly. During the evening he gave the watchword to his commanders.

But about midnight a solitary horseman quietly approached the camp of the Hellenes and falling in with the outposts, ordered that Aristides the Athenian come to him. He was speedily obeyed, and then said: "I am Alexander the Macedonian, and I am come at the greatest peril to myself, out of my good-will toward you, that no suddenness of attack may frighten you into inferior fighting. Mardonius will surely give battle on the morrow, not because he has substantial hope or even courage, but because he is destitute of provisions. His soothsayers, indeed, are trying to keep him from battle by unpropitious sacrifices and oracular utterances, while his army is full of dejection and consternation; but he must needs boldly try his fortune, or sit still and endure extremest destitution." When he had told him this, Alexander begged Aristides to keep the knowledge to himself and bear it well in mind, but to tell it to none other. Aristides replied that it was not honourable to conceal this knowledge from Pausanias, since it was on him that the supreme command devolved, but that it should not be told the other leaders before the battle; though in case Hellas were victorious, no man should remain ignorant of Alexander's zeal and valour. After this conversation, the king of the Macedonians rode off back again, and Aristides went to the tent of Pausanias and told him all that had been said. Then they summoned the other leaders and gave them orders to keep the army in array, since there was to be a battle.

17 Night came on, and the generals set out to lead their forces to the appointed encampment. The soldiers, however, showed no great eagerness to follow in close order, but when they had once abandoned their first defences, most of them hurried on toward the city of Plataea, and there tumult reigned as they scattered about and encamped in no order whatsoever. But it chanced that the Lacedaemonians were left alone behind the others, and that too against their will. For Amompharetus, a man of a fierce and venturesome spirit, who had long been mad for battle and distressed by the many postponements and delays, now at last lost all control of himself, denounced the change of position as a runaway flight and declared that he would not abandon his post, but stay there with his company and await the onset of Mardonius. And when Pausanias came up and told him that their action had been formally voted by the Hellenes in council, Amompharetus picked up a great stone and threw it down at the feet of Pausanias, saying that was his personal vote for battle, and he cared not a whit for the cowardly counsels and votes of the rest. Pausanias, perplexed at the case, sent to the Athenians, who were already moving off, begging them to wait and make the march in company with him, and then began to lead the rest of his troops toward Plataea, with the idea that he would thus force Amompharetus from his position.

At this point day overtook them, and Mardonius, who did not fail to notice that the Hellenes had abandoned their encampment, with his force in full array, bore down upon the Lacedaemonians, with great shouting and clamour on the part of the Barbarians, who felt that there would be no real battle, but that the Hellenes had only to be snatched off as they fled. And this lacked but little of coming to pass. For Pausanias, on seeing the situation, though he did check his march and order every man to take post for battle, forgot, either in his rage at Amompharetus or his confusion at the speed of the enemy, to give the signal for battle to the confederate Hellenes. For this reason they did not come to his aid at once, nor in a body, but in small detachments and straggling, after the battle was already joined.

When Pausanias got no favourable omens from his sacrifices, he ordered his Lacedaemonians to sit quiet with their shields planted in front of them, and to await his orders, making no attempt to repulse their enemies, while he himself went to sacrific-ing again. By this time the horsemen were charging upon them; presently their missiles actually reached them, and many a Spartan was smitten. And then it was that Callicrates, said to be the fairest of the Hellenes to look upon, and the tallest man in their whole army, was shot, and, dying, said he did not grieve at death, since he had left his home to die for Hellas, but at dying without striking a single blow. Their experience was indeed a terrible one, but the restraint of the men was wonder-ful. They did not try to repel the enemy who were attacking them, but awaited from their god and their general the favourable instant, while they endured wounds and death at their posts.

Some say that as Pausanias was sacrific-ing and praying, a little to one side of his line of battle, some Lydians suddenly fell upon him and rudely hurled away the sacrificial offerings; and that Pausanias and his attendants, being without weapons, smote the intruders with the sacrificial staves and goads; wherefore, to this day, in imitation of this onslaught, the ceremonies of beating the young warriors round the altar at Sparta, □ and of the procession of the Lydians which follows this, are duly celebrated as rites.

18 Then, in distress at this state of affairs, while the seer slew victim after victim, Pausanias turned his face, all tears, toward the Heraeum, and with hands uplifted prayed Cithaeronian Hera and the other gods of the Plataean land that, if it was not the lot of the Hellenes to be victorious, they might at least do great deeds before they fell, and show to a certainty that their enemies had marched out against men who were brave and who knew how to fight.

While Pausanias was thus calling on the gods, right in the midst of his prayers, the sacrifices showed themselves propitious and the seer announced victory. Word was at once passed all along the line to set themselves in motion against the enemy, and the phalanx suddenly had the look of a fierce beast bristling up to defend itself. The Barbarians then got assurance that their contest was to be with men who would fight to the death. Therefore they made a rampart of their wicker targets and shot their arrows into the ranks of the Lacedaemonians. These, however, kept their shields closely locked together as they advanced, fell upon their foemen, tore away their wicker targets, and then, smiting the Persians in face and breast with their long spears, they slew many, who nevertheless did great deeds of courage before they fell. For they grasped the long spears with their naked hands, fractured them for the most part, and then took to short-range fighting with a will, plying their daggers and scimitars, tearing away their enemies' shields, and locking them in close embrace; and so they held out a long time.

The Athenians, meanwhile, were quietly awaiting the Lacedaemonians. But when the shouts of those engaged in battle fell loud upon their ears, and there came, as they say, a messenger from Pausanias telling them what was happening, they set out with speed to aid him. However, as they were advancing through the plain to his aid, the medising Hellenes bore down upon them. Then Aristides, to begin with, when he saw them, went far forward and shouted to them, invoking the gods of Hellas, that they refrain from battle, and oppose not nor hinder those who were bearing aid to men standing in the van of danger for the sake of Hellas. But as soon as he saw that they paid no heed to him, and were arrayed for battle, then he turned aside from rendering aid where he had proposed, and engaged with these, though they were about fifty thousand in number. But the greater part of them at once gave way and withdrew, especially as the Barbarians had also retired, and the battle is said to have been fought chiefly with the Thebans, whose foremost and most influential men were at that time very eagerly medising, and carried with them the multitude, not of choice, but at the bidding of the few.

19 The contest thus begun in two places, the Lacedaemonians were first to repulse the Persians. Mardonius was slain by a man of Sparta named Arimnestus, who crushed his head with a stone, even as was foretold him by the oracle in the shrine of Amphiaraüs. Thither he had sent a Lydian man, and a Carian beside to the oracle of Trophonius.□This latter the prophet actually addressed in the Carian tongue; but the Lydian, on lying down in the precinct of Amphiaraüs, dreamed that an attendant of the god stood by his side and bade him be gone, and on his refusal, hurled a great stone upon his head, insomuch that he died from the blow (so ran the man's dream). These things are so reported. Furthermore, the Lacedaemonians shut the flying Persians up in their wooden stockade.

Shortly after this it was that the Athenians routed the Thebans, after slaying three hundred, their most eminent leaders, in the actual battle. After the rout was effected, and more might have been slain, there came a messenger to the Athenians, telling them that the Barbarian force was shut up and besieged in their stockade. So they suffered the Hellenes in front of them to make good their escape, while they themselves marched to the stockade. They brought welcome aid to the Lacedaemonians, who were altogether inexperienced and helpless in storming walled places, and captured the camp with great slaughter of the enemy. Out of three hundred thousand, only forty thousand, it is said, made their escape with Artabazus. Of those who contended in behalf of Hellas, there fell in all one thousand three hundred and sixty. Of these, fifty-two were Athenians, all of the Aeantid tribe, according to Cleidemus,

which made the bravest contest (for which reason the Aeantids used to sacrifice regularly to the Sphragitic nymphs the sacrifice ordained by the Pythian oracle for the victory, receiving the expenses therefor from the public funds); ninety-one were Lacedaemonians, and sixteen were men of Tegea.

Astonishing, therefore, is the statement of Herodotus, where he says that these one hundred and fifty-nine represented the only Hellenes who engaged the enemy, and that not one of the rest did so. Surely the total number of those who fell, as well as the monuments erected over them, testifies that the success was a common one. Besides, had the men of three cities only made the contest, while the rest sat idly by, the altar would not have been inscribed as it was:

"Here did the Hellenes, flushed with a victory granted by Ares Over the routed Persians, together, for Hellas delivered, Build them an altar of Zeus, Zeus as Deliverer known."

This battle was fought on the fourth of the month Boëdromion, as the Athenians reckon time; but according to the Boeotian calendar, on the twenty-seventh of the month Panemus, the day when, down to the present time, the Hellenic council assembles in Plataea, and the Plataeans sacrifice to Zeus the Deliverer for the victory. We must not wonder at the apparent discrepancy between these dates, since, even now that astronomy is a more exact science, different peoples have different beginnings and endings for their months.

20 After this, the Athenians would not grant the Spartans the highest meed of valour, nor allow them to erect a general trophy, and the cause of the Hellenes had certainly gone at once to destruction from their armed contention, had not Aristides, by abundant exhortation and admonition, checked his fellow-generals, especially Leocrates and Myronides, and persuaded them to submit the case to the Hellenes for decision. Thereupon, in the council of the Hellenes, Theogeiton the Megarian said that the meed of valour must be given to some third city, unless they desired the confusion of a civil war. At this point Cleocritus the Corinthian rose to speak. Every one thought he would demand the meed of valour for the Corinthians, since Corinth was held in greatest estimation after Sparta and Athens. But to the astonishment and delight of all, he made a proposition in behalf of the Plataeans, and counselled to take away contention by giving them the meed of valour, since at their honour neither claimant could take offence. To this proposal Aristides was first to agree on behalf of the Athenians, then Pausanias on behalf of the Lacedaemonians. Thus reconciled, they chose out eighty talents of the booty for the Plataeans, with which they rebuilt the sanctuary of Athena, and set up the shrine, and adorned the temple with frescoes, which continue in perfect condition to the present day; then the Lacedaemonians set up a trophy on their own account, and the Athenians also for themselves.

When they consulted the oracle regarding the sacrifice to be made, the Pythian god made answer that they were to erect an altar of Zeus the Deliverer, but were not to sacrifice upon it until they had extinguished the fire throughout the land, which he said had been polluted by the Barbarians, and kindled it fresh and pure from the public hearth at Delphi. Accordingly the commanders of Hellenes went about straightway and compelled all who were using fire to extinguish it, while Euchidas, who promised to bring the sacred fire with all conceivable speed, went from Plataea to Delphi. There he purified his person by sprinkling himself with the holy water, and crowned himself with laurel. Then he took from the altar the sacred fire and started to run back to Plataea. He reached the place before the sun had set, accomplishing thus a thousand furlongs in one and the same day. He greeted his countrymen, handed them the sacred fire, and straightway fell down, and after a little expired. In admiration of him the

Plataeans gave him burial in the sanctuary of Artemis Eucleia, and inscribed upon his tomb this tetrameter verse:

"Euchidas, to Pytho running, came back here the selfsame day."

Now Eucleia is regarded by most as Artemis, and is so addressed; but some say she was a daughter of Heracles and of that Myrto who was daughter of Menoetius and sister of Patroclus, and that, dying in virginity, she received divine honours among the Boeotians and Locrians. For she has an altar and an image built in every market place, and receives preliminary sacrifices from would-be brides and bridegrooms.

21 After this, there was a general assembly of the Hellenes, at which Aristides proposed a decree to the effect that deputies and delegates from all Hellas convene at Plataea every year, and that every fourth year festival games of deliverance be celebrated — the Eleutheria; also that a confederate Hellenic force be levied, consisting of ten thousand shield, one thousand horse, and one hundred ships, to prosecute the war against the Barbarian; also that the Plataeans be set apart as inviolable and consecrate, that they might sacrifice to Zeus the Deliverer in behalf of Hellas.

These propositions were ratified, and the Plataeans undertook to make funeral offerings annually for the Hellenes who had fallen in battle and lay buried there. And this they do yet unto this day, after the following manner. On the sixteenth of the month Maimacterion (which is the Boeotian Alalcomenius), they celebrate a procession. This is led forth at break of day by a trumpeter sounding the signal for battle; waggons follow filled with myrtle-wreaths, then comes a black bull, then free-born youths carrying libations of wine and milk in jars, and pitchers of oil and myrrh (no slave may put hand to any part of that ministration, because the men thus honoured died for freedom); and following all, the chief magistrate of Plataea, who may not at other times touch iron or put on any other raiment than white, at this time is robed in a purple tunic, carries on high a water-jar from the city's archive chamber, and proceeds, sword in hand, through the midst of the city to the graves; there he takes water from the sacred spring, washes off with his own hands the gravestones, and anoints them with myrrh; then he slaughters the bull at the funeral pyre, and, with prayers to Zeus and Hermes Terrestrial, summons the brave men who died for Hellas to come to the banquet and its copious draughts of blood; next he mixes a mixer of wine, drinks, and then pours a libation from it, saying these words: "I drink to the men who died for the freedom of the Hellenes." These rites, I say, are observed by the Plataeans down to this very day.

The Serpentine Column of Plataea

The Serpentine Column has one of the longest literary histories of any object surviving from Greek and Roman antiquity: its provenance is undisputed and it dates back almost 2,500 years. Along with its original golden tripod and cauldron (both long lost), it constituted a trophy, or offering commemorating a military victory, dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. This offering was made in the spring of 478 BC, several months after the defeat of the Persian army at the Battle of Plataea (August 479 BC) by those Greek city-states in alliance against the Persian invasion of mainland Greece, during the Greco-Persian Wars. Writers who allude to the Column in ancient literature include Herodotus, Thucydides, Pseudo-Demosthenes, Diodorus Siculus, Pausanias

the Traveler, Cornelius Nepus, and Plutarch. The removal of the column by the Emperor Constantine to his new capital, Constantinople, is described by Edward Gibbon, citing the testimony of the Byzantine historians Zosimus, Eusebius, Socrates and Sozomen.

In Ancient Writers

After describing the Greek victory at Plataea in 479 BC, Herodotus recounts the collection of rich spoils by the Helots (the Spartan lower class) who had participated in the battle, and then records the decision of the Greek cities to dedicate an offering to Apollo at Delphi:

Having gathered all the spoils, they set aside a tithe for the god of Delphi. From this, the tripod that rests on the three-headed bronze serpent nearest the altar was made and dedicated.

In the same chapter, Herodotus records that dedications were also made to Zeus at Olympia and to Poseidon on the Isthmus. It is significant that priority was given to Apollo at Delphi, despite ambiguities in the Delphic oracle's responses about the outcome of the invasion, and a suspicion that Delphi was sympathetic to the Persians.

Thucydides and Pseudo-Demosthenes

Pausanias, filled with arrogance over his victory at Plataea and the subsequent ease with which he punished the Theban leaders for their support of the Persians, ordered a dedication on the column attributing the victory to himself alone. Later, it was discovered that he had been in negotiations with the Persians and the Helots of Sparta to organize a rebellion, and he established himself as tyrant. Although his treachery was, at first, disbelieved in Sparta, it was eventually confirmed by the Ephors of Sparta through his personal slave, and he was assassinated. Thucydides describes the Spartan suspicion that Pausanias was about to commit treason and defect to the Persians, citing the affair of the serpentine column as evidence. Pausanias provided other causes for suspicion in his disregard for the laws, his admiration for the Persians, and his dissatisfaction with the status quo. Examining the rest of their behavior, the Spartans recalled that when the tripod was first erected at Delphi, Pausanias had seen fit, of his own volition, to have a diptych engraved on it with the inscription:

***"Pausanias, commander-in-chief of the Greeks,
when he had destroyed the army of the Medes,
dedicated this monument to Phoebus (Apollo)."***

The Lacedaemonians immediately removed the diptych from the tripod and engraved the names of the cities that had united against the Persians and established the offering.

Pseudo-Demosthenes gives a significantly different account of the course of events. In one speech, "Against Neera," the orator recalls the conduct of Pausanias after the defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Plataea on the Serpentine Column: "Pausanias, king of the Lacedaemonians, caused a diptych to be inscribed on the tripod at Delphi, [which those Greeks, who had fought as allies at the Battle of Plataea and at the naval engagement at

Salamis, had made together from the booty taken from the barbarians and had set up in honor of Apollo as a monument to their bravery], as follows: "Pausanias, commander-in-chief of the Greeks, when he had destroyed the army of the Medes dedicated this monument to Phoebus (Apollo)," as if the work and the offering were his alone, and not those of the allies together. The Greeks were enraged, and the Plataeans obtained permission to bring a suit, in the name of the allies, against the Lacedaemonians for 1,000 talents at the council Amphictyonic; and they forced the Lacedaemonians to erase the inscription and inscribe the names of the cities that had participated in the work."