

# Kedrenos, Pseudo-Symeon, and the Last Oracle at Delphi

*A. Markopoulos*

IN A RECENT article on the famous last oracle at Delphi, addressed to the emperor Julian, T. E. Gregory concludes by accepting the authenticity of the oracle and restoring the connection with Delphi,<sup>1</sup> rather than with Daphne near Antioch, which a number of earlier scholars had asserted.<sup>2</sup> The oracle is known from two historical sources, separated from one another by nearly seven centuries: Philostorgios (fifth century)<sup>3</sup> and George Kedrenos (twelfth century).<sup>4</sup> All modern studies of the Delphic oracle depend upon these two authors.<sup>5</sup> Gregory also refers to the *Artemii Passio* (BHG 170), which is usually attributed to John of Rhodes and also preserves the oracle addressed to Julian.<sup>6</sup> But this work has no significant independent value for our investigation, since it is completely dependent on Philostorgios, as Bidez has already demonstrated.<sup>7</sup> However, we shall have to refer to the *Artemii Passio* again in what follows.

Gregory points out, quite correctly, the distance that separates Philostorgios' account from that of Kedrenos; the latter embellishes his narrative with the mission of the quaestor Oribasios to rebuild the temple of Apollo, an episode not found in Philostorgios. This fact prompted Gregory to suppose that either Kedrenos was dependent on some unknown source, or that he himself invented the story in question.<sup>8</sup> The first hypothesis seems closer to the truth, as the source from which Kedrenos draws his material is now known: this is the chronography of Pseudo-Symeon, which belongs in part, at least,

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Gregory, "Julian and the Last Oracle at Delphi," *GRBS* 24 (1983) 355–66.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory 364–66; to the bibliography listed by Gregory the following two articles should perhaps be added: O. Lampsides, "Σχόλια εἰς τὸν ὡς δελφικὸν φερόμενον χρησμόν πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰουλιανόν," *Platon* 9 (1957) 133–35, and Averil M. Cameron, "Agathias and Cedrenus on Julian," *JRS* 53 (1963) 91–94.

<sup>3</sup> Philostorgios 77 (Bidez-Winkelmann).

<sup>4</sup> Kedrenos I 532 (Bonn).

<sup>5</sup> References at Gregory 355f.

<sup>6</sup> Gregory 356f, who places the composition of this text in the tenth century; but see *infra*.

<sup>7</sup> Philostorgios XLIV, 77.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory 355 n.4, 357.

to the chronographic 'cycle' of Symeon Logothete.<sup>9</sup> Pseudo-Symeon, which is transmitted by a single manuscript, *Paris.gr.* 1712 ff.18<sup>v</sup>–272,<sup>10</sup> covers the period from the creation of the world to the reign of Romanos II, at which point it breaks off abruptly; only the last section of the chronicle, covering the events of the years 813 to 962, has been published.<sup>11</sup>

The chronography of Theophanes is the principal source on which Pseudo-Symeon draws, and is his basic source for the years 284–813. However, Pseudo-Symeon inserts into his narrative several additions to the text of Theophanes, relevant to various isolated events in Byzantine history.<sup>12</sup> Thus, at ff.91<sup>v</sup>–92 of the text of Pseudo-Symeon, immediately after the following passage of Theophanes, τότε λοιπὸν Ἰουλιανὸς μονοκράτωρ γενόμενος ἀναιδῶς ἐλλήνιζεν, αἵματι θυσιῶν τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα ἀποπλυνάμενος καὶ πάντα ποιῶν, ὅσοις οἱ δαίμονες θεραπεύονται (Theoph. 46 de Boor), comes the story of the last oracle addressed to Julian, including the account of Oribasios' mission found in Kedrenos but absent in Philostorgios:

*Paris.gr.* 1712 ff.91<sup>v</sup>–92: πέμπει οὖν Ὀρειβάσιον, τὸν ἰατρὸν καὶ κυαίστορα, ἐν Δελφοῖς ἀνεγείραι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. ἀπελθὼν οὖν καὶ τοῦ ἔργου ἀψάμενος λαμβάνει χρησμὸν παρὰ τοῦ δαίμονος τοιόνδε:

εἶπατε τῷ βασιλεῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά,  
οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλύβην, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην  
οὐ παγὰν λαλέουσαν ἀπέσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.<sup>13</sup>

The dependence of Kedrenos on Pseudo-Symeon has long been known and leaves no room for doubt.<sup>14</sup> However, the question arises:

<sup>9</sup> On this chronography see H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* I (Munich 1978) 354–57, and A. Ph. Markopoulos, *Ἡ χρονογραφία τοῦ Ψευδοσυμεῶν καὶ οἱ πηγές της* (Ioannina 1978); both works list earlier bibliography. Cf. also W. Treadgold, "An Indirectly Preserved Source for the Reign of Leo IV," *JÖB* 34 (1984) 69–76. For the dependence of Kedrenos on Pseudo-Symeon see H. Gelzer, *Sextus Iulius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* II.1 (Leipzig 1885) 357–84; K. Praechter, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Kedrenos (Cod.Paris.gr. 1712)* (= *SitzMünchen* 1897, 2.1); K. Schweinburg, "Die ursprüngliche Form der Kedrenchronik," *BZ* 30 (1929–1930) 68–77; Hunger 393; Markopoulos 27–29; and R. Maisano, "Sulla tradizione manoscritta di Giorgio Cedreno," *RivStBiz* 14–16 (1977–1979) 180–201.

<sup>10</sup> Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 30–37; extracts of Pseudo-Symeon copied from the Paris codex are also preserved in *Scor.gr.* 243 (Y.I.4) ff.7–83.

<sup>11</sup> Under the name of Symeon Magister in the Bonn Corpus volume *Theophanes Continuatus* (1838) 603–760.

<sup>12</sup> Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 111–43.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 129. It should be mentioned that Praechter (*supra* n.9) 56 had also noted the presence of the Delphic oracle in the unpublished portion of Pseudo-Symeon.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *supra* n.9.

what was the specific source Pseudo-Symeon was using, alongside Theophanes, to cover the period between 284 and 813? I believe that we shall not be far from the truth if we suppose that this 'supplementary' source was the important chronicle, now lost, known as the *Epitome*. It is conjectured that this work, usually attributed to Traianos the Patrician, began with the creation of the world and concluded with the reign of Justinian II Rhinotmetos; later additions brought the narrative down to the time of Theophilos.<sup>15</sup> Modern research has shown that in the tenth century Symeon Logothete not only continued the text of Traianos but also made extensive use of it in the composition of his own chronicle.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the different compilations of the chronicle of the Logothete and Pseudo-Symeon both transmit, indirectly, extensive excerpts of the *Epitome*.<sup>17</sup> Thus we have a satisfactory (in my view) explanation of the last Delphic oracle in the unpublished portion of the *Chronographia* of Pseudo-Symeon.<sup>18</sup>

Some supplementary comments may be made on the *Artemii Passio* (*BHG* 170). This work is usually attributed to John of Rhodes, about whom nothing else is known. Bidez, in his preface to Philostorgios, dated this text to shortly before the time of Romanos the Melode, linking it with a reference in the *Miracles of Saint Artemios* (*BHG* 173).<sup>19</sup> However, the *Miracles of St Artemios* were written shortly after 659,<sup>20</sup> while the *Artemii Passio*, in all probability, is to be detached from the name of John of Rhodes and added to the works of John Damascene.<sup>21</sup> It is perhaps of interest to note that in the tenth century Symeon Metaphrastes included the *Artemii Passio* in his *Menologion*, with the usual changes of construction and phrasing he imposed on the hagiological texts he revised (*BHG* 172); as one might expect, the Delphic oracle is also transmitted by the Meta-

<sup>15</sup> On the *Epitome* see Hunger (*supra* n.9) 355 and Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 74–87, 99ff, 115ff (with further bibliography).

<sup>16</sup> Hunger (*supra* n.9) 355; Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 74–77.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Patzig, "Leo Grammaticus und seine Sippe," *BZ* 3 (1894) 480–97; D. Serruys, "Recherches sur l'Epitomé," *BZ* 16 (1907) 1–51; and Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 74–77.

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that Averil Cameron (*supra* n.2) regarded the *Epitome* as the source of a passage of Kedrenos that is also preserved complete in Pseudo-Symeon; the passage refers to another oracle that Julian received before his expedition against the Persians.

<sup>19</sup> Philostorgios XLIV. Particularly useful is the additional material given by Fr. Winkelmann, ed., in Philostorgius, *Kirchengeschichte*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin 1981) 341, 356–62.

<sup>20</sup> C. Mango, *Byzantium* (London 1980) 78.

<sup>21</sup> See J. M. Hoeck, "Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung," *OrChrPer* 17 (1951) 5–60 and particularly 32; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich 1959) 482f; and M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* no. 8082.

phrastic version of the *Artemii Passio* (PG 115, 1185A). Furthermore, if our conclusion as to the relationship between the oracle and the *Epitome* is correct, the chronicler Symeon Logothete, who is usually identified with Metaphrastes,<sup>22</sup> must have known the Delphic oracle from two sources, *i.e.*, from the *Epitome* and also from the work of John Damascene. The oracle was utilised, as we have seen, both in the *Menologion* and in Pseudo-Symeon.

It is clear from this brief survey of the sources that Kedrenos did not include the Delphic oracle at random, however much he is to be regarded as the classic example of the plagiarising historian. Philostorgios was followed by John Damascene (if the *Artemii Passio* is indeed a work of his) and of course by Symeon Logothete in the mid-tenth century.

Perhaps behind all this we may catch a glimpse of the continuous fascination which the personality of Julian held for Byzantine writers.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CRETE  
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<sup>22</sup> Hunger (*supra* n.9) 355; Markopoulos (*supra* n.9) 12–16.