1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 2 — Apollo

John Henry Freese

APOLLO (Gr. Ἀπόλλων, Ἀπέλλων), in Greek mythology, one of the most important and many-sided of the Olympian divinities. No satisfactory etymology of the name has been given, the least improbable perhaps being that which connects it with the Doric ἀπέλλα ("assembly")[1] so that Apollo would be the god of political life (for other suggested derivations, ancient and modern, see C. Wernicke in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie*). The derivation of all the functions assigned to him from the idea of a single original light- or sun-god, worked out in his *Lexikon der Mythologie* by Roscher, who regards it as "one of the most certain facts in mythology," has not found general acceptance, although no doubt some features of his character can be readily explained on this assumption.

In the legend, as set forth in the Homeric hymn to Apollo and the ode of Callimachus to Delos, Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto. The latter, pursued by the jealous Hera, after long wandering found shelter in Delos (originally Asteria), where she bore a son, Apollo, under a palm-tree at the foot of Mount Cynthus. Before this, Delos—like Rhodes, the centre of the worship of the sun-god Helios, with whom Apollo was wrongly identified in later times—had been a barren, floating rock, but now became stationary, being fastened down by chains to the bottom of the sea. Apollo was born on the 7th day (ἑβδομαγενής) of the month Thargelion according to Delian, of the month Bysios according to Delphian, tradition. The 7th and 20th, the days

of the new and full moon, were ever afterwards held sacred to him. In Homer Apollo appears only as the god of prophecy, the sender of plagues, and sometimes as a warrior, but elsewhere as exercising the most varied functions. He is the god of agriculture, specially connected with Aristaeus (*q.v.*), which, originally a mere epithet, became an independent personality (see, however, Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, iv. 123). This side of his character is clearly expressed in the titles *Sitalcas* ("protector of corn"); *Erythibius* ("preventer of blight"); *Parnopius* ("destroyer of locusts"); *Smintheus* ("destroyer of mice"), in which, however, some modern inquirers see a totemistic significance (*e.g.* A. Lang, "Apollo and the Mouse," in *Custom and Myth*, p. 101; against this, W. W. Fowler, in *Classical Review*, November 1892); *Erithius* ("god of reapers"); and *Pasparius* ("god of meal"). He is further the god of vegetation generally—*Nomios*, "god of pastures" (explained, however, by Cicero, as "god of law"), *Hersos*, "sender of the fertilizing dew." Valleys and groves are under his protection, unless the epithets *Napaeus* and *Hylates* belong to a more primitive aspect of the god as supporting himself by the chase, and roaming the glades and forests in pursuit of prey. Certain trees and plants, especially the laurel, were sacred to him. As the god of agriculture and vegetation he is naturally connected with the course of the year and the arrangement of the seasons, so important in farming operations, and becomes the orderer of time (*Horomedon*, "ruler of the seasons"), and

frequently appears on monuments in company with the Horae.

Apollo is also the protector of cattle and herds, hence *Poimnius* (“god of flocks”), *Tragius* (“of goats”), *Kereatas* (“of horned animals”). *Carneius* (probably “horned”) is considered by some to be a pre-Dorian god of cattle, also connected with harvest operations, whose cult was grafted on to that of Apollo; by others, to have been originally an epithet of Apollo, afterwards detached as a separate personality (Farnell, *Cults*, iv. p. 131). The epithet *Maleatas*, which, as the quantity of the first vowel (ă) shows,[2] cannot mean god of “sheep” or “the apple-tree,” is probably a local adjective derived from Malea (perhaps Cape Malea), and may refer to an originally distinct personality, subsequently merged in that of Apollo (see below). Apollo himself is spoken of as a keeper of flocks, and the legends of his service as a herdsman with Laomedon and Admetus point in the same direction. Here probably also is to be referred the epithet *Lyceius*, which, formerly connected with λυκ- (“shine”) and used to support the conception of Apollo as a light-god, is now generally referred to λύκος (“wolf”) and explained as he who keeps away the wolves from the flock (cf. λυκόεργος, λυκοκτόνος). In accordance with this, the epithet λυκηγενής will not mean “born of” or “begetting light,” but rather “born from the she-wolf,” in which form Leto herself was said to have been conducted by wolves to Delos. The consecration of the wolf to Apollo is probably the relic of

an ancient totemistic religion (Farnell, *Cults*, i. 41; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, new ed., 1894, p. 226).

With the care of the fruits of the earth and the lower animals is associated that of the highest animal, man, especially the youth on his passage to manhood. As such Apollo is κουροτρόφος (“rearer of boys”) and patron of the palaestra. In many places gymnastic contests form a feature of his festivals, and he himself is proficient in athletic exercises (ἐναγώνιος). Thus he was supposed to be the first victor at the Olympic games; he overcomes Hermes in the foot-race, and Ares in boxing.

The transition is easy to Apollo as a warlike god; in fact, the earlier legends represent him as engaged in strife with Python, Tityus, the Cyclopes and the Aloidae. He is *Boëdromios* (“the helper”), *Eleleus* (“god of the war-cry”), and the Paean was said to have been originally a song of triumph composed by him after his victory over Python. In Homer he frequently appears on the field, like Ares and Athene, bearing the aegis to frighten the foe. This aspect is confirmed by the epithets *Argyrotoxos* (“god of the silver bow”), *Hecatebolos* (“the shooter from afar”), *Chrysaoros* (“wearer of the golden sword”), and his statues are often equipped with the accoutrements of war.[3]

The fame of the Pythian oracle at Delphi, connected with the slaying of Python by the god immediately after his birth,

gave especial prominence to the idea of Apollo as a god of prophecy. Python, always represented in the form of a snake, sometimes nameless, is the symbol of the old chthonian divinity whose home was the place of “enquiry” (πυθέσθαι). When Apollo Delphinius with his worshippers from Crete took possession of the earth-oracle Python, he received in consequence the name Pythius. That Python was no fearful monster, symbolizing the darkness of winter which is scattered by the advent of spring, is shown by the fact that Apollo was considered to have been guilty of murder in slaying it, and compelled to wander for a term of years and expiate his crime by servitude and purification. Possibly at Delphi and other places there was an old serpent-worship ousted by that of Apollo, which may account for expiation for the slaying of Python being considered necessary. In the solar explanation, the serpent is the darkness driven away by the rays of the sun. (On the Delphian cult of Apollo and its political significance, see AMPHICTYONY, DELPHI, ORACLE; and Farnell, *Cults*, iv. pp. 179-218.) Oracular responses were also given at Claros near Colophon in Ionia by means of the water of a spring which inspired those who drank of it; at Patara in Lycia; and at Didyma near Miletus through the priestly family of the Branchidae. Apollo’s oracles, which he did not deliver on his own initiative but as the mouthpiece of Zeus, were infallible, but the human mind was not always able to grasp their meaning; hence he is called *Loxias* (“crooked,” “ambiguous”). To certain favoured mortals he communicated the gift of prophecy (Cassandra, the

Cumaean sibyl, Helenus, Melampus and Epimenides). Although his favourite method was by word of mouth, yet signs were sometimes used; thus Calchas interpreted the flight of birds; burning offerings, sacrificial barley, the arrow of the god, dreams and the lot, all played their part in communicating the will of the gods.

Closely connected with the god of oracles was the god of the healing art, the oracle being frequently consulted in cases of sickness. These two functions are indicated by the titles *Iatromantis* ("physician and seer") and *Oulios*, probably meaning "health-giving" (so Suidas) rather than "destructive." This side of Apollo's character does not appear in Homer, where Paieon is mentioned as the physician of the gods. Here again, as in the case of Aristaeus and Carneius, the question arises whether Paean (or Paeon) was originally an epithet of Apollo, subsequently developed into an independent personality, or an independent deity merged in the later arrival (Farnell, *Cults*, iv. p. 234). According to Wilamowitz-Möllendorff in his edition of Isyllus, the epithet Maleatas alluded to above is also connected with the functions of the healing god, imported into Athens in the 4th century B.C. with other well-known health divinities. In this connexion, it is said to mean the "gentle one," who gave his name to the rock Malion or Maleas (O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, ii. 1442) on the Gortynian coast. Apollo is further supposed to be the father of Asclepius (Aesculapius), whose ritual is closely modelled upon his. The healing god could also prevent

disease and misfortune of all kinds: hence he is ἀλεξίκακος ("averter of evil") and ἀποτρόπαιος. Further, he is able to purify the guilty and to cleanse from sin (here some refer the epithet ἰατρόμαντις, in the sense of "physician of the soul"). Such a task can be fitly undertaken by Apollo, since he himself underwent purification after slaying Python. According to the Delphic legend, this took place in the laurel grove of Tempe, and after nine years of penance the god returned, as was represented in the festival called Stepterion or Septerion (see A. Mommsen, *Delphika*, 1878). Thus the old law of blood for blood, which only perpetuated the crime from generation to generation, gave way to the milder idea of the expiatory power of atonement for murder (cf. the court called τὸ ἐπὶ Δελφινίῳ at Athens, which retained jurisdiction in cases where justifiable homicide was pleaded).

The same element of enthusiasm that affects the priestess of the oracle at Delphi produces song and music. The close connexion between prophecy and song is indicated in Homer (*Odyssey*, viii. 488), where Odysseus suggests that the lay of the fall of Troy by Demodocus was inspired by Apollo or the Muse. The metrical form of the oracular responses at Delphi, the important part played by the paean and the Pythian nomos in his ritual, contributed to make Apollo a god of song and music, friend and leader of the Muses (μουσαγέτης). He plays the lyre at the banquets of the gods, and causes Marsyas to be flayed alive because he had boasted of his superior skill in playing the flute, and the

ears of Midas to grow long because he had declared in favour of Pan, who contended that the flute was a better instrument than Apollo's favourite, the lyre.

A less important aspect of Apollo is that of a marine deity, due to the spread of his cult to the Greek colonies and islands. As such, his commonest name is *Delphinius*, the "dolphin god," in whose honour the festival Delphinia was celebrated in Attica. This cult probably originated in Crete, whence the god in the form of a dolphin led his Cretan worshippers to the Delphian shore, where he bade them erect an altar in his honour. He is *Epibaterius* and *Apobaterius* ("embarker" and "disembarker"), *Nasiotas* ("the islander"), *Euryalus* ("god of the broad sea"). Like Poseidon, he looks forth over his watery kingdom from lofty cliffs and promontories (ἀκταῖος, and perhaps ἀκρίτας).

These maritime cults of Apollo are probably due to his importance as the god of colonization, who accompanied emigrants on their voyage. As such he is ἀγήτωρ ("leader"), οἰκίστης ("founder"), δωματίτης ("god of the home"). As *Agyieus* ("god of streets and ways"), in the form of a stone pillar with painted head, placed before the doors of houses, he let in the good and kept out the evil (see Farnell, *Cults*, iv. p. 150, who takes Agyieus to mean "leader"); on the epithet *Prostaterius*, he who "stands before the house," hence "protector," see G. M. Hirst in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxii. (1902). Lastly, as the originator and protector

of civil order, Apollo was regarded as the founder of cities and legislation. Thus, at Athens, Apollo *Patroös* was known as the protector of the Ionians, and the Spartans referred the institutions of Lycurgus to the Delphic oracle.

It has been mentioned above that W. H. Roscher, in the article "Apollo" in his *Lexikon der Mythologie,* derives all the aspects and functions of Apollo from the conception of an original light-and sun-god. The chief objections to this are the following. It cannot be shown that on *Greek* soil Apollo originally had the meaning of a sun-god; in Homer, Aeschylus and Plato, the sun-god Helios is distinctly separated from Phoebus Apollo; the constant epithet Φοῖβος, usually explained as the brightness of the sun, may equally well refer to his physical beauty or moral purity; λυκηγενής has already been noticed. It is not until the beginning of the 5th century B.C. that the identification makes its appearance. The first literary evidence is a fragment of Euripides (*Phaëthon*), in which it is especially characterized as an innovation. The idea was taken up by the Stoics, and in the Roman period generally accepted. But the fact of the gradual development of Apollo as a god of light and heaven, and his identification with foreign sun-gods, is no proof of an original Greek solar conception of him. Apollo-Helios must be regarded as "a late by-product of Greek religion" (Farnell, *Cults*, iv. p. 136; Wernicke in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie*). For the manner in which the solar theory is developed, reference must be made to Roscher's article, but one legend may here be

mentioned, since it helps to trace the spread of the cult of the god. It was said that Apollo soon after his birth spent a year amongst the Hyperboreans, who dwelt in a land of perpetual sunshine, before his return to Delphi. This return is explained as the second birth of the god and his victory over the powers of winter; the name Hyperboreans is explained as the "dwellers beyond the north wind." This interpretation is now, however, generally rejected in favour of that of H.L. Ahrens,—that Hyperborei is identical with the Perphereës ("the carriers"), who are described as the servants of Apollo, carriers of cereal offerings from one community to another (Herodotus iv. 33). This would point to the fact that certain settlements of Apolline worship along the northernmost border of Greece (Illyria, Thrace, Macedonia) were in the habit of sending offerings to the god to a centre of his worship farther south (probably Delphi), advancing by the route from Tempe through Thessaly, Pherae and Doris to Delphi; while others adopted the route through Illyria, Epirus, Dodona, the Malian gulf, Carystus in Euboea, and Tenos to Delos (Farnell, *Cults*, iv. p. 100).

The most usual attributes of Apollo were the lyre and the bow; the tripod especially was dedicated to him as the god of prophecy. Among plants, the bay, used in expiatory sacrifices and also for making the crown of victory at the Pythian games, and the palm-tree, under which he was born in Delos, were sacred to him; among animals and birds, the wolf, the roe, the swan, the hawk, the raven, the crow, the

snake, the mouse, the grasshopper and the griffin, a mixture of the eagle and the lion evidently of Eastern origin. The swan and grasshopper symbolize music and song; the hawk, raven, crow and snake have reference to his functions as the god of prophecy.

The chief festivals held in honour of Apollo were the Carneia, Daphnephoria, Delia, Hyacinthia, Pyanepsia, Pythia and Thargelia (see separate articles).

Among the Romans the worship of Apollo was adopted from the Greeks. There is a tradition that the Delphian oracle was consulted as early as the period of the kings during the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, and in 430 a temple was dedicated to Apollo on the occasion of a pestilence, and during the Second Punic War (in 212) the *Ludi Apollinares* were instituted in his honour. But it was in the time of Augustus, who considered himself under the special protection of Apollo and was even said to be his son, that his worship developed and he became one of the chief gods of Rome. After the battle of Actium, Augustus enlarged his old temple, dedicated a portion of the spoil to him, and instituted quinquennial games in his honour. He also erected a new temple on the Palatine hill and transferred the secular games, for which Horace composed his *Carmen Saeculare*, to Apollo and Diana.

Apollo was represented more frequently than any other deity in ancient art. As Apollo Agyieus he was shown by a

simple conic pillar; the Apollo of Amyclae was a pillar of bronze surmounted by a helmeted head, with extended arms carrying lance and bow. There were also rude idols of him in wood (*xoana*), in which the human form was scarcely recognizable. In the 6th century, his statues of stone were naked, stiff and rigid in attitude, shoulders square, limbs strong and broad, hair falling down the back. In the riper period of art the type is softer, and Apollo appears in a form which seeks to combine manhood and eternal youth. His long hair is usually tied in a large knot above his forehead. The most famous statue of him is the Apollo Belvidere in the Vatican (found at Frascati, 1455), an imitation belonging to the early imperial period of a bronze statue representing him, with aegis in his left hand, driving back the Gauls from his temple at Delphi (279 B.C.), or, according to another view, fighting with the Pythian dragon. In the Apollo Citharoedus or Musagetes in the Vatican, he is crowned with laurel and wears the long, flowing robe of the Ionic bard, and his form is almost feminine in its fulness; in a statue at Rome of the older and more vigorous type he is naked and holds a lyre in his left hand; his right arm rests upon his head, and a griffin is seated at his side. The Apollo Sauroctonus (after Praxiteles), copied in bronze at the Villa Albani in Rome and in marble at Paris, is a naked, youthful, almost boyish figure, leaning against a tree, waiting to strike a lizard climbing up the trunk. The gigantic statue of Helios (the sun-god), “the colossus of Rhodes,” by Chares of Lindus, celebrated as one of the seven wonders of the world, is unknown to us. Bas-reliefs and painted vases

reproduce the contests of Apollo with Tityus, Marsyas, and Heracles, the slaughter of the daughters of Niobe, and other incidents in his life.

AUTHORITIES.—F. L. W. Schwartz, *De antiquissima Apollinis Natura* (Berlin, 1843); J. A. Schönborn, *Über das Wesen Apollons* (Berlin, 1854); A. Milchhöfer, *Über den attischen Apollon* (Munich, 1873); T. Schreiber, *Apollon Pythoktonos* (Leipzig, 1879); W. H. Roscher, *Studien zur vergleichenden Mythologie der Griechen und Römer*, i. (Leipzig, 1873); R. Hecker, *De Apollinis apud Romanos Cultu* (Leipzig, 1879); G. Colin, *Le Culte d'Apollon pythien à Athènes* (1905); L. Dyer, *The Gods in Greece* (1891); articles in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie*, W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der Mythologie*, and Daremberg and Saglio's *Dictionnaire des antiquités*; L. Preller, *Griechische und römische Mythologie* (4th ed. by C. Robert); J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.; G. Wissowa *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (1902); D. Bassi, *Saggio di Bibliografia mitologica*, i. *Apollo* (1896); L. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, iv. (1907); O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, ii. (1906). In the article GREEK ART, fig. 9 represents a bearded Apollo, playing on the lyre, in a chariot drawn by winged horses; fig. 55 (pl. ii.) Apollo of the Belvidere; fig. 76 (pl. v.) a nude and roughly executed colossal figure of the god. (J. H. F.)

1. ↑ Hesychius; who also gives the explanation σηκός ("fold"), in which case Apollo would be the god of flocks and herds.
2. ↑ The authority for the quantity is Isyllus.
3. ↑ Hence some have derived "Apollo" from ἀπολλῦναι, "to destroy."

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