

## THE MYTH OF THE FIRST TEMPLES AT DELPHI\*

The intriguing myth of the first temples at Delphi is first attested in Pindar's fragmentary eighth *Paean*.<sup>1</sup> This text, and Pausanias 10.5.9–13, are the only two sources that actually tell the story of the first temples, while a few others simply mention, *en passant*, one or more—but not all—of these legendary temples, without setting out to give an account of the myth.<sup>2</sup>

The version found in Pausanias runs as follows:

The first temple of Apollo at Delphi was made of laurel and had the shape of a hut. The laurel branches used in its construction came from the Tempe valley in Thessaly. The second temple had been built by bees who used as building materials their own wax and birds' feathers. It is said, Pausanias adds, that Apollo sent this temple to the land of the Hyperboreans—a land, it should be remembered, to which the Greek *logos* ascribed now a real historical identity, now the character of a Paradise. At this point Pausanias inserts a rationalizing euhemeristic alternative version of the myth, according to which this second temple had been built by a man, a Delphian called Pteras, and took its name (πτέρυος) from the builder. The third temple was made of bronze—and there is nothing extraordinary in that, Pausanias hastens to add; he backs up this statement by mentioning other known bronze buildings, some actually existing in his own day. Then he proceeds to reject the version told by Pindar, according to which this bronze temple had been built by gods<sup>3</sup> and had golden singers singing above the pediment. Clearly then, Pausanias is rationalizing again here, rejecting the miraculous elements, and pulling the bronze temple into the realm of reality and everyday life. He concludes his account of the third temple by giving two alternative versions of its end: it was said either to have disappeared in an opening of the earth, or to have been melted down by fire. The fourth temple was made of stone; it was the work of Trophonios and Agamedes. Pausanias identifies this fourth temple with the one which was burnt down in 548 B. C.

Trophonios and Agamedes, the legendary architects who lived before the Trojan War, were credited with the construction of many splendid buildings believed to have been erected in the heroic past. They were usually considered to be the sons of Erginos, a king of Orchomenos, but Trophonios was sometimes said to have been Apollo's son.<sup>4</sup>

\* This is an enlarged version of a paper first delivered to a class on Delphi which Professor J. K. Davies and I held in Oxford in Hilary Term 1975, and then again to a Seminar on myth run by Mr. A. H. Griffiths and Mr. S. G. Pembroke at the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London in the autumn term 1976. I would like to thank all those who raised interesting points during the discussions.

<sup>1</sup> 11.58–99 ed. Snell 1964<sup>3</sup>; cf. *The Oxyrhynchys Papyri*, Part xxvi, ed. by E. Lobel (London, 1961), pp. 45–50. I should

note that an extraordinarily bad study has been written on three-quarters of this myth: G. W. Elderkin, *The First Three Temples at Delphi. Their religious and historical significance* (Princeton, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. below.

<sup>3</sup> Pindar says (cf. below) that it was built by Hephaistos and Athena, but Pausanias only mentions Hephaistos as the divine builder in the version which he mentions in order to reject.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Pausan. 9.37.3.

Pindar's account of the myth survives in fragmentary form. The first three mythical temples are mentioned in the surviving text<sup>5</sup> which breaks off after the discussion of the bronze temple. However, there can be no doubt that Pindar went on to talk about the fourth temple, built by Trophonios and Agamedes. For after the break the text appears to be concerned with Erginos, the father of the two legendary architects.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Pindar elsewhere tells of Trophonios and Agamedes building a temple to Apollo at Delphi.<sup>7</sup>

The following points are worth noting with regard to Pindar's account. First, as remarked by Lobel,<sup>8</sup> while we were told by Pausanias that Apollo had sent the second temple to the Hyperboreans, 'the "mighty rushing wind" is a new detail'. Secondly, the discussion of the third, the bronze, temple, contains several interesting points. This temple is said to be the work of Hephaistos and Athena, and this divine craftsmanship goes together with the generally supernatural character that Pindar's account attributes to this temple—and which, we saw, Pausanias rejected. We are told that above the pediment six Charmers (Keledones) made of gold were singing. I shall discuss the significance of the Keledones later on, when I come to consider the third temple in detail. With regard to the manner of the disappearance of this bronze temple, Pindar tells us that the gods hid it inside the earth which they had opened up with a thunderbolt. Lobel<sup>9</sup> notes that Pindar's account 'covers' both versions given by Pausanias. I take this cautious expression to mean 'could have given rise to' both versions, which is likely to be correct.

The sources that refer to one or more of the mythological first temples *en passant*, without dwelling on the story, are the following.

Aristotle, *De philosophia* fr. 3 R mentions the temple made of feathers (πτέρυρον) and the bronze temple. The Scholia to *Paean* viii P. Oxy. 841 fr. 107 mention the laurel temple, and may have included the information that the laurel used in its construction had come from the Tempe valley.<sup>10</sup> Strabo 9.421 distinguishes three temples: the one made of feathers (πτέρυρον), which he ascribes to the mythical sphere; the 'second' temple, built by Trophonios and Agamedes; and 'the present' temple, constructed by the Amphiktyones. Clearly then, Strabo has constructed here a tripartite model, one pole of which is occupied by reality and the present, and the other by the sphere of myth and supernatural things. Between the two poles, and mediating in a way between them, lies the world of the heroic, legendary past, to which Trophonios and Agamedes belong. Eratosthenes, *Catast.* 29 mentions the temple of feathers which he locates in the land of the Hyperboreans. Plutarch, *De Pyth. orac.* 402 D quotes the following verse, which he presents as an ancient oracle: (ἐνιοὶ δὲ καὶ πρῶτον ἐνταῦθα φασὶν ἡρώων μέτρον ἀκουσθῆναι)

συνφέρετε πτερὰ τ', οἰωνοί, κηρόν τε, μέλισσαι.

Finally, Philostratos, *Vit. Apollon.* 6.10–11 first mentions the temple made of

<sup>5</sup> All that survives of the account of the laurel temple is δαφν, but cf. also the mention of the laurel temple in the Scholia to Pind. *Paean* 8, P. Oxy. 841 fr. 107.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Snell, op. cit., p. 43; Lobel, op. cit., pp. 49–50.

<sup>7</sup> *Isthm.* fr. 2 Snell; cf. also Plut., *Consol.*

*ad Apoll.* 109 A–B.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., p. 46 on fr. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> The text reads [ἐποιήθη ὁ π]ρωτος ἀπ[ὸ] δάφνης, δάφνη[ and B. Snell, *Hermes* 73 (1938), 435, supplements [δὲ ἐκομίσθη ἐκ τῶν Τεμπῶν vel sim.

wax contributed by bees and feathers contributed by birds and then quotes the oracle mentioned by Plutarch; next comes a passage referring to the (bronze) temple with the golden Keledones which I will discuss later.<sup>11</sup>

I shall attempt to explore the significance of this myth by first investigating each of its component elements, each temple, separately, and then examining the relationship between the component elements and the structure of the myth.

First, the laurel temple. Three nuclei of religious-mythological reality need to be investigated here, in order that a framework for the assessment of this 'mythologem' should be provided, proceeding from the generic to the specific: i. the significance and role, if any, of the laurel in a Delphic Apolline context; ii. the significance and role, if any, of the Tempe laurel in particular in a Delphic Apolline context and iii. the laurel temple.

The numerous and close connections of Apollo in general and the Delphic Apollo in particular with the laurel are too well known to need discussion.<sup>12</sup> It may, however, be worth stressing that the laurel at Delphi is associated with the act of divination itself. It was used in the ritual preparation of the Pythia, who also wore a laurel crown, and it adorned the prophetic tripod.<sup>13</sup> But more importantly, the evidence indicates that the Pythia was shaking a laurel while prophesying.<sup>14</sup> The laurel from the Tempe valley had a special place and significance in Delphic myth, cult, and ritual.<sup>15</sup> Apart from our myth, the Tempe laurel appears in three mythological and/or cultic contexts, which are associated into one nexus in the version in which our sources record them, though they have been shown to have had different origins, and to have been fused into one complex, probably in the archaic period.<sup>16</sup> The first context is mythological:

<sup>11</sup> For the temple of Trophonios and Agamedes cf. also the following sources: Steph. Byz. s.v. Δελφοί; Pausan. 9.37.4; Schol. Arist. *Nub.* 508, ed. Dindorf; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.47.114 (and cf. also above, n. 7). The account of their involvement in the building of a temple to Apollo given in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* will be discussed below.

<sup>12</sup> For the important role of the laurel in Delphic cult and ritual cf. P. Amandry, *La Mantique apollinienne à Delphes. Essai sur le fonctionnement de l'oracle* (Paris, 1950), pp. 126–9; (cf. also Eur. *Ion*, vv. 112–24).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Plut., *De Pyth. orac.* 397 a, *De E apud Delph.* 385 C; Luc. *Bis acc.* 1; Aristoph., *Ploutos* 39; Schol. Aristoph. *Ploutos* 39; Callim. *Iamb.* 4 fr. 194. 26–7 Pfeiffer; cf. also Amandry, op. cit., pp. 126–9.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Aristoph. *Ploutos* 213; Schol. Aristoph. *Ploutos* 213; Callim. *Hymn to Delos* 94; cf. Aristonoo, *Paeon to Apollo*, vv. 9–11. (M. G. Colin, *Fouilles de Delphes* III Epigraphie, vol. ii (Paris, 1909–13), no. 191, where Apollo is said to prophesy shaking a laurel branch; (the date of this paean is the third quarter of the fourth century B.C.). And cf. Amandry, op. cit., pp. 129–34. The

*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* v. 396 (cf. 394–6) makes clear that the laurel played a fundamental role in the act of divination. I intend to discuss elsewhere the problems associated with this passage, and some other aspects of the laurel's place and significance in Apolline cult and ritual. Bousquet's suggestion (*Gnomon* 32 (1960), 260) that the laurel tree shaken by the Pythia and situated in the adyton was artificial, made of bronze, is very unconvincing, especially when three factors are taken into account: (i) we know from the texts, and especially the *Ion*, that real laurel was used a lot, and grew in the sanctuary, (ii) laurels grew in the adyton-courtyard of the temple (and oracle) of Apollo at Didyma, (iii) several inscriptions mention the δάφνη. . . παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ or δάφνη. . . παρὰ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνος, which is likely to be referred to the adyton laurel, and which is a real laurel from which crowns were made.

<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that according to Hesychius, the laurel growing at Tempe had a special name; it was called *δναρεία* (cf. Hes. s.v. *δναρεία*).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome, 1969), pp. 398–412; 427–8; cf. also op. cit., pp. 397–8; 412–27.

after Apollo had killed the dragon he had to be purified; he did this at the Tempe valley, and afterwards he cut some of the laurel that grew there, crowned himself with it, and carrying some more of it in his right hand he returned to Delphi.<sup>17</sup> The second context involving the Tempe laurel, the boys' theoria to Tempe, was supposed to take place in memory of this mythological event, Apollo's purification and its aftermath, which became the aition of this institution—this in the version of the institution which belongs to the 'unified nexus', the earlier role and significance of this theoria being another matter. In commemoration of Apollo's purification, every eight years the Delphians sent to Tempe boys from noble families, headed by one of their number who was *architheoros*.<sup>18</sup> On arrival at Tempe the boys performed a sacrifice and then cut laurel branches from the trees growing there and crowned themselves. They then returned to Delphi following a definite itinerary, the route called Pythias. Wherever they went festivities took place and the boys were escorted with great honour. Finally, they returned to Delphi; the laurel they brought with them from the Tempe valley was used to make the laurel crowns for the victors in the Pythian Games.<sup>19</sup> And this use of the Tempe laurel provides the third context in which the Tempe laurel had a special significance and role.

Two conclusions can be drawn from all this. First, that the Tempe laurel was special, had a particular holiness in the cult of Apollo at Delphi. And secondly, that the act of carrying the laurel (*daphnephorein*) was of importance at the level of myth and cult. It is difficult to doubt that this was also reflected at the theological level, and that Apollo was Daphnephoros at Delphi, despite the fact that the epithet is not attested here. I will be arguing elsewhere that the *persona* of Apollo-of-the-laurel/Apollo Daphnephoros was of great importance in the earlier stages of the history of the Delphic sanctuary, but became overshadowed by the god's character of law-giver and guide, establisher of order and authority on purification, which developed as a result of the role which the Delphic oracle was called upon to fulfil in the archaic Greek world.

Let us now consider the concept of the laurel temple.<sup>20</sup> A temple made of laurel is a perfectly feasible proposition. And we have just seen that the laurel had an all-important place in the Delphic cult of Apollo, with the Tempe laurel possessing a special holiness. In these circumstances, the story of the first temple of Apollo at Delphi, made of laurel, can theoretically be explained in two alternative ways. It may have arisen as an expression, and perhaps even partial explanation, in mythological-spatial terms of the laurel's important role in

<sup>17</sup> Theopompos, *FGrH* 115 F 80; Callim. *Aet.* 4 fr. 86; according to Hypoth. *Pind. Pyth.* c, Apollo was purified in Crete, but he then went to Tempe and brought the laurel to Delphi from there; in Aristonoo's *Paeon* (cf. n. 14) Apollo is said to be *σεῖων* a laurel branch when prophesying in vv. 9–11 and to have been purified at Tempe in v. 15 but no connection is made by the poet between laurel and Tempe purification; cf. also: Nicander, *Alexipharmaca* vv. 198–200; Steph. Byz. s.v. *Δειπνιάς*, Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 293 C, and Tert. *De cor.* 7,5.

<sup>18</sup> Theopompos, *FGrH* 115 F 80; Steph.

Byz. s.v. *Δειπνιάς*; cf. also *Iamb.* 4 fr. 194 Pfeiffer 34–6; Hypoth. *Pind. Pyth.* c; Plut. *De mus.* 1136 A, *De def. orac.* 418 A–B, *Quaest. Graec.* 293 C.

<sup>19</sup> Theopompos, *FGrH* 115 F 80; Hypoth. *Pind. Pyth.* c; cf. also Callim. *Iamb.* 4 fr. 194 Pfeiffer 34–6.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. H. Schaefer, *Die Laubbütte. Ein Beitrag zur Kultur- und Religionsgeschichte Griechenlands und Italiens* (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 54 ff., and especially the important study by C. Bérard, 'Architecture érétrienne et mythologie delphique. Le Daphnéphoréion', *AntK* 14 (1971), 59–73.

Delphic cult. Or, it could be reflecting a true historical memory, a memory of a shrine made of laurel. A recent find has shown that there had existed at least one temple of Apollo made of laurel, in a place closely connected with Delphic cult and myth, in the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria.<sup>21</sup> There, the excellent Swiss excavations revealed a mid-eighth-century temple, the walls of which were made of laurel branches. What was discovered was a horse-shoe-shaped stone wall, c. 40 cm high, with another wall across the opening at the front, c. 10 cm high. The elongated apsidal shape thus enclosed is c. 5.40 m wide and 8.25 m long. It is clear from the preliminary publication<sup>22</sup> that Bérard, the excavator, was right in thinking that there was no superstructure, no stone or brick above the height of 40 cm. On the other hand, he found clear traces of a series of wooden columns close against the curved wall, all the way round inside and outside it,<sup>23</sup> of two columns in front of the building, and of three more columns within the enclosed shape, towards the centre. These columns formed a wooden framework, and Schefold and Bérard ingeniously concluded<sup>24</sup> that laurel branches and foliage were intertwined in this framework, so that they formed walls and roof; Auberson published a reconstruction of the building.<sup>25</sup>

In mid-eighth-century Eretria then, when a new temple of Apollo the laurel-carrier was built in the new city, it was considered appropriate that it should be largely made of laurel, the god's sacred plant. Our return to Delphi is depressing. There the circumstances for the proper recovery of a structure such as the Eretrian Daphnephoreion were not favourable. The Delphic sanctuary had been much more drastically rearranged in antiquity; and the earlier French excavations at Delphi had not been conducted with the precision and meticulous attention to detail that characterizes the Swiss excavations at Eretria. At Eretria on the other hand, the local conditions were particularly good for the preservation of buildings such as the Daphnephoreion.<sup>26</sup> So any attempt to determine whether or not a temple made of laurel, similar to the one at Eretria had existed at Delphi is destined to remain in the realm of hypothesis. It is, nevertheless, worth making.

The remains of a wall have been found at Delphi which suggest that there may have been there a Geometric apsidal structure with a religious function. Bérard notes the existence of this wall in a context which suggests that he is thinking of the possibility that it had belonged to a structure not dissimilar from the Eretrian Daphnephoreion.<sup>27</sup> The evidence consists in a portion of an eighth century wall found under the archaic so-called 'apsidal temple'. The report reads as follows:<sup>28</sup> 'Le tronçon de mur conservé s'incurve de manière assez nette (fig. 12): il semblerait donc qu'il y ait eu là, dès les temps géométriques, une chapelle (?) de plan déjà apsidal; mais, là encore, aucune trouvaille ne permet d'appuyer solidement cette hypothèse.' The last cautionary note is fully justified.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bérard, op. cit.; P. Auberson, 'La reconstitution du Daphnéphoréion d'Eretrie', *AntK* 17 (1974), 60–8; cf. also P. Auberson and K. Schefold, *Führer durch Eretria* (Bern, 1972), pp. 118–19 and 116 fig. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Bérard, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> The last two on the inside are in front of the transversal wall.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Bérard, op. cit., esp. pp. 67–8.

<sup>25</sup> Auberson, op. cit. (cf. n. 21).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *BCH* 97 (1973), 363–5.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., p. 68 n. 47. Auberson, op. cit., p. 66 also thinks that a Daphnephoreion may perhaps have existed at Delphi, but he does not connect this hypothesis with the eighth-century curved wall: . . . 'le temple d'Apollon à Delphes recèle peut-être dans ses soubassements un édifice proche ou semblable.'

<sup>28</sup> L. Lerat, *RA* 12 (1938), 215; cf. also H. Drerup, *Griechische Baukunst in geometrischer Zeit*, *Archaeologia Homerica*, Band II, ch. 0 (Göttingen, 1969), 064.

However, given the state of affairs at Delphi, it is worth keeping in mind the possibility that this curved wall may have belonged to a structure similar to the laurel temple at Eretria, especially since we know that at Delphi too, the laurel and the *daphnephorein* were important elements of the Apolline cult.

We know from the quantity and typology of the eighth-century votive offerings, that Delphi was an important sanctuary from the early eighth century onwards. The earliest peribolos of the Delphic sanctuary dates from the end of the eighth century.<sup>29</sup> Yet, the earliest temple the remains of which have been discovered only dates from the second quarter or the middle of the seventh century.<sup>30</sup> Where then is the earlier temple of Apollo, the eighth- and early seventh-century temple? It is theoretically possible that there was no such temple, that the Apolline cult-spot then was an open-air shrine. But this is most unlikely. The situation at the Eretrian sanctuary, with which Delphi is cultically connected,<sup>31</sup> would lead us to expect some type of temple in the eighth-century Delphic sanctuary; and the evidence of the Homeric poems, such as it is, tends to support the hypothesis that Apollo had a temple in the eighth-century Delphic sanctuary. There are two relevant passages.

*Il.* 9.404–5

οὐδ' ὅσα λάϊνος οὐδὸς ἀφήτορος ἐντὸς ἑέργει,  
Φοῖβου Ἀπόλλωνος, Πυθοῖ ἐνι πετρῆεσσι.

*Od.* 8.79–81

ὥς γὰρ οἱ χρεῖων μυθήσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ' ὑπέρβη λάϊνον οὐδὸν  
χρησόμενος.

This suggests a structure which encloses things, and within which the oracular consultation took place. Consequently, the Homeric evidence indicates the existence of some kind of temple in the eighth century—unless these two passages were to be dated later than the mid-seventh century, but this appears unjustifiable.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> P. de La Coste-Messelière, 'Topographie delphique', *BCH* 93 (1969), 737.

<sup>30</sup> La Coste-Messelière, *op. cit.*, pp. 731–2.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bérard, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>32</sup> J. Defradas, *Les Thèmes de la propagande delphique* (Paris, 1954), p. 30, has argued that the two passages should be dated to the seventh century; firstly because λάϊνος οὐδὸς indicates, he thinks, the type of monumental temple that the Greeks only began to build in the seventh century; and secondly because, he believes, the two passages are found in more recent parts of the poem. Berve (Review Defradas, *Thèmes, Gnomon* 28 (1956) 174) has criticized these views and noted, first, that λάϊνος οὐδὸς only implies stone foundations, and second, that the argument that the passages belong to more recent parts of the epics is of doubtful validity. The first point is self-evidently correct—except that I would modify

'foundations' to and/or 'socle'. With regard to the second point, it is worth noting that Defradas's approach to the notion of 'lateness' in the epic is rather simplistic and confused. On Achilles' speech in *Il.* 9 to which our passage belongs, cf. A. Parry, The language of Achilles, *TAPA* 87 (1956), 1–7, who shows how Homer has here deliberately misused the traditional epic language in order to allow Achilles to express his disillusionment. On *Od.* 8.72–82 cf. W. Marg, 'Das erste Lied des Demodokos', *Navicula Chiloniensis*, *Studia filologa Felici Jacoby Professori Chiloniensi Emerito octagenario oblata* (Leiden, 1956), pp. 16–29; cf. also K. Rüter, *Odysseeinterpretationen. Untersuchungen zum ersten Buch und zur Phaiakis* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 247–54 (and cf. also W. Marg, review Rüter, *Gnomon* 43 (1971), 321–30, and esp. 328.)

λάϊνος οὐδός: von Blumenthal has argued<sup>33</sup> that in *Il.* 9.404, *Od.* 8.80, and in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* v. 296—where it is also referred to a temple of Apollo at Delphi—it has the meaning not of ‘stone threshold’ but of ‘layer of orthostats made of stone’. This is undoubtedly correct with regard to the *Homeric Hymn*, where (vv. 294–9) Apollo laid down the foundations of the temple, upon which Trophonios and Agamedes laid *λάϊνον οὐδόν*, a footing of stone, and then men built the rest of the temple of wrought stones. In *Od.* 8.79–81 Agamemnon stepped over the *λάϊνος οὐδός* in order to consult the oracle. Here the expression undoubtedly means stone threshold; for one steps over a threshold to enter a building, not over a socle. *Il.* 9.404–5 is more problematic. For *λάϊνος οὐδός* could still mean ‘stone threshold’ and denote the whole temple through a *pars pro toto*. However, I would be inclined to take it as meaning ‘stone socle’, ‘footing of stone’ here. Especially when the context is that of enclosing, to denote the whole temple through its threshold may appear inappropriate. If we take the expression to mean ‘stone socle’, then *ἐέργει* appears particularly appropriate. For the stone socle at the base of the walls, continued into the threshold, *par excellence* delimits the (sacred) space within which *ῥσα* are enclosed, fenced in, and so it *par excellence* ἐντὸς ἐέργει.

If this analysis is correct, then the mention of the Delphic structure in the Homeric poems corresponds precisely to the usual type of Geometric building techniques in which stone was used for the foundations and a stone socle formed the base of the walls—normally with a superstructure of mud bricks.<sup>34</sup> But even if *λάϊνος οὐδός* means ‘stone threshold’ in both passages from the epic, this implies the presence of a stone-wall construction, either a stone socle, or stone walls; given the chronological context, it can only be the former.

The Homeric evidence then indicates that there was an Apolline temple in eighth-century Delphi with a stone socle, in which the oracular consultation took place. Where is this temple? It may not have been situated at the same place as the seventh-century temple and its successors. In the eighth century the area between the later temple and altar was occupied by houses,<sup>35</sup> and it is perhaps unlikely that the temple and oracle, already of more than civic importance, would have been so closely adjacent to the habitation area. In these circumstances, it is quite possible to suppose that the eighth-century curved wall mentioned above may have belonged to the earlier temple of Apollo, which was replaced by a more impressive structure in the seventh century (as the sanctuary and the oracle grew in importance), situated at a more imposing and dominating level—once the temenos boundaries were defined, and the area of the later terrace cleared of houses. Clearly, the Homeric evidence would fit any structure with a stone socle, whatever happened above that level, and not just those with a superstructure of mud bricks. In other words, it would also fit a temple made of laurel such as the one at Eretria. Is there any reason to suppose that this evidence would fit a daphnephoreion better than it would a conventional building with mud brick superstructure? I think there may be.

Let us consider the Eretrian Daphnephoreion again. The walls made of laurel were clearly impermanent, in the sense that they would undoubtedly have been

<sup>33</sup> A. von Blumenthal, ‘Der Apollontempel des Trophonios und Agamedes in Delphi’, *Philologus* 83 (1928), 220–4.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Drerup, *op. cit.* 0 106; 0 108.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *BCH* 74 (1950), 320–2.

periodically renewed.<sup>36</sup> Of the remaining permanent parts, it is the low wall or stone socle, rather than the wooden framework that had the all-important symbolic function of permanently defining and delimiting the sacred space, functioning as the permanent boundary between the sacred and the profane.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the use of *λαῖνος οὐδός* in *Il.* 9.404–5, if I interpret it correctly, although it would fit any type of temple, would be especially appropriate for a laurel temple, where the stone socle is *the* one and only boundary defining and delimiting the sacred space—while in a temple with mud-brick superstructure, the boundaries defined by the stone socle at the level of the ground are continued vertically above, in a sharp and permanent form. I should make clear that when I speak of a ‘particular appropriateness’ of a Homeric expression, I am thinking primarily not in terms of a deliberate choice by the poet, but in terms of the nexus of facts and ideas in the poet’s mind, which determined the choice of expression.

It is quite conceivable, then, that a laurel temple like the one at Eretria had existed in eighth-century Delphi. But in any case, we now know, thanks to the Eretrian find, that at least one temple made of laurel and dedicated to Apollo had existed. The concept of the laurel temple has had a historical reality. The problem that needs to be answered is, what was the relationship between the historical laurel temple—at Eretria and perhaps also at Delphi—and the myth about the first temple at Delphi; which came first, and gave rise to the other? Schefold and Auberson<sup>38</sup> think that the Eretrian laurel temple was a votive offering rather than an actual temple, reproducing the mythical oldest temple of Apollo at Delphi. This view depends on the assumption that the myth of the first temples at Delphi is older than the mid-eighth-century Eretrian Daphnephoreion. Bérard’s view<sup>39</sup> is much more convincing: he thinks that the myth of the Delphic first temple, not attested before Pindar, is later than the Eretrian laurel temple and any other contemporary laurel temple that may have existed. It is, I think, easy to see why Apollo the laurel-carrier could have had a temple dedicated to him which was largely made of laurel, especially in a period in which Greek religious architecture was still at an experimental stage, and no temple type had crystallized as canonical, long before the emergence of the monumental type made wholly of stone. It is more difficult to understand why Apollo’s connection with the laurel should have found mythical expression in a story postulating the past existence of a laurel temple if that connection had not first generated the cultic reality, had not been expressed in cultic terms in the form of a laurel temple.<sup>40</sup>

Now, let us turn to the consideration of the ‘mythologem’ of the second mythical temple, the one made of wax and feathers.

The ‘mythologem’ concerning this temple contains ‘miraculous’ elements, which were absent from that about the laurel temple. A temple made of laurel is a perfectly possible thing, one made of wax and feathers is only feasible as a

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Bérard, *op. cit.*, p.68.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Bérard, *op. cit.*, p.64.

<sup>38</sup> *Führer*, p.118.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.* n. 48 (pp. 68–9).

<sup>40</sup> A question raised by Bérard (*op. cit.*

n. 48) is this: given that the story of the laurel

temple reflected a historical cultic reality, ‘pourquoi le temple de cire et de plumes, pourquoi le temple d’airain, quand et comment s’insèrent-ils dans la tradition?’ I shall attempt to give an answer to this question later on in this article.



model, not at the scale necessary for an actual place of worship. Then, the wax-and-feathers temple is said to have actually been constructed by bees, with the bees themselves contributing the wax, and the birds adding their feathers. It was also said to have been sent by Apollo to the land of the Hyperboreans, through a mighty rushing wind, according to Pindar. So, while the mythologem of the laurel temple can be seen as reflecting a cultic phenomenon, describing a temple like the Eretrian Daphnephoreion, that concerning the wax and feathers is different in character; its miraculous elements place it firmly in the realm of myth. However, this obviously does not necessarily mean that the mythologem may not contain reflections of cultic elements and cultic phenomena. I shall now therefore consider the place, if any, of birds and bees in Delphic cult and myth.

It is well known that Apollo had connections with many birds, at Delphi as well as elsewhere, and that he was particularly closely associated with the raven, which is believed to be a prophetic bird, the swan, and the kirkos, a type of hawk, and to a lesser extent, the crow; while doves appear to have had special rights at Delphi.<sup>41</sup>

The connection with some of these birds was probably due to specific reasons; the close connection with the swans, for example, could be due to the fact that the singing swan was a *topos* in Greek (and Latin) literature and probably also folklore.<sup>42</sup> But the god's extensive and wide-ranging connections with all kinds of birds was probably determined by the fact that he had become the prophetic god *par excellence*, and birds were involved with prophecy through the practice of oionoskopeia, in which their flight or cries were taken to be omens.<sup>43</sup> Amandry has argued<sup>44</sup> that the flight of birds was observed at Delphi as a preliminary to the main consultation.

Bees have an extensive place in Greek cult and myth.<sup>45</sup> Some priestesses, mostly of Demeter, were called 'Melissai',<sup>46</sup> some priests in the cult of Artemis

<sup>41</sup> On Apollo's many associations with birds cf. the following, where references to ancient texts and representations as well as further bibliography can be found: H. B. Jessen, *AA* 1955, 281–309; O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt* vol. ii (Leipzig, 1920), *passim*; D'A. W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, (Oxford, 1936); Amandry, *Mantique*, pp. 57–8; H. Metzger, 'Απόλλων σπένδων, *Etudes Delphiques*, *BCH* Supplement IV (1977), 422 n.13; 425; 426; 428; cf. also H. Metzger, *Les Représentations dans la céramique attique du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1951), pp. 171–5. On doves at the Delphic sanctuary cf. Eur. *Ion* vv. 1196–8; Diod. Sic. 16.27.2.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. e.g. Eur. fr. 773 N<sup>2</sup>. 33–4; Aristoph. *Av.* 769–84; Callim. *Hymn Ap.* 4–5, *Hymn Del.* 249–54.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Aristophanes' comparisons between birds and Apollo:

*Av.* 716–22:  
 'εσμέν δ' ὑμῖν Ἀμμων, Δελφοί, Δωδώνη,  
 Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
 ἐλθόντες γὰρ πρῶτον ἐπ' ὄρνεις οὕτω πρὸς  
 ἅπαντα τρέπεσθε,  
 πρὸς τ' ἐμπορίαν, καὶ πρὸς βίωτον κτήσιω,  
 καὶ πρὸς γάμον ἀνδρός.

ὄρνω τε νομίζετε πάνθ' ὅσα περ περὶ  
 μαντείας διακρίνει . . .  
 ἄρ' οὐ φανερώς ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν ἐσμέν μαντεῖος  
 Ἀπόλλων;

<sup>44</sup> *Mantique*, pp. 57–9.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. A. B. Cook, 'The bee in Greek mythology', *JHS* 15 (1895), 1–24; H. M. Ransome, *The Sacred Bee in Ancient Times and Folklore* (London, 1937), pp. 91–111, with several errors; Ch. Picard, *Ephèse et Claros* (Paris, 1922), pp. 183–4; 228–9; *idem*, *REA* 42 (1940), 279–83 (very speculative); M. Feyel, *Σμῆναι*. 'Etude sur le v. 552 de l'hymne homérique à Hermes', *RA* 1946; i. 5–22; Keller, *op. cit.*, pp. 421–31. Cf. also R. F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (London, 1962), pp. 216–8; 257. Apart from the sources quoted in these discussions, cf. also Pind., *Encom.* fr. 123 Snell<sup>3</sup> 10–11.

<sup>46</sup> Pindar, fr. 158 Snell<sup>3</sup>; Hesych. s.v. Μέλισσαι; Porphyry. *Antr. Nymph.* 18; *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Part XV, ed. by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (London, 1922), 1802, col. ii, 29–35; cf. also pp. 155–60; Callim. *H. Apoll.* 110–2; Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.106c; Serv. Schol. Virgil. *Aen.* 1. 430; Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.22.

at Ephesos were called 'Essenes'<sup>47</sup> and other holders of a cult office in the same cult were called 'Melissonomoi'.<sup>48</sup> These belong to the wider category of Greek priests, priestesses, and cult personnel or worshippers bearing the names of animals.<sup>49</sup> And this leads us back to Delphi. For the first connections between bees and the Delphic cult of Apollo is found in a verse of Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.60–1) where the Pythia is called 'Delphic Bee', *Μελίσσας Δελφίδος*. It could be argued that this expression which is attested nowhere else need not be a cult title, but simply a poetic expression. However, this is not likely to be the case. First, the scholia read as follows: Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 106b: *χρησμός μελίσσας τῆς Δέλφικης ἱερείας · φησὶ δὲ τῆς Πυθῶνος; ὅς· μελίσσας δὲ τὰς ἱερείας, κυρίως μὲν τὰς τῆς Δήμητρος, καταχρηστικῶς δὲ καὶ τὰς πάσας, διὰ τὸ τοῦ ζώου καθαρὸν*. Second, and more importantly, the fact that the word *Μελίσσα* was established as a cult title, a name for some priestesses, would, in my opinion, make it rather unlikely that Pindar should have used it for a priestess to whom this did not cultically belong as a simple metaphor.

The second connection between bees and the Delphic oracle and cult is rather indirect, though significant. Pausanias (9.40.1) tells us that the Pythia had advised some Boeotians to consult the oracle of Trophonios. The Boeotians could not locate that oracle, until one of them, Saon, followed a swarm of bees which led him to it. So here we have an oracle, belonging to a hero involved with building a temple to Apollo at Delphi, and associated with Delphi,<sup>50</sup> revealed by bees.

The third connection between bees and the Delphic Apollo is very important, but also somewhat problematic.

The relevant text is *Hom. Hymn to Hermes*, vv. 552–66:

σεμναὶ γάρ τ' ὄντες εἰσὶ κασίγνηται γεγαυῖαι  
παρθένοι ὠκεῖησιν ἀγαλλόμεναι πετρύγεσσι  
τρῆϊς · κατὰ δὲ κρατὸς πεπαλαγμέναι ἄλφιστα λευκά  
οἰκία ναιετάουσιν ὑπὸ πτυχὶ Παρηγοῖο,  
μαϊτείης ἀπάνευθε διδάσκαλοι ἦν ἐπὶ βοῦσι  
παῖς ἔτ' ἑὼν μελέτησα · πατὴρ δ' ἑμὸς οὐκ ἀλέγιζεν.  
ἐντεῦθεν δὴ ἔπειτα ποτῶμεναι ἄλλοτε ἄλλη  
κηρία βόσκονται καὶ τε κραίνουσιν ἕκαστα.  
αἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν θνύωσιν ἐδηδυῖαι μέλι χλωρὸν  
προφρονέως ἐθέλουσιν ἀληθείην ἀγορεύειν ·  
ἦν δ' ἀπονοσφισθῶσι θεῶν ἡδεῖαν ἐδωδὴν,  
ψεύδονται δὴ ἔπειτα δι' ἀλλήλων δονέουσαι.  
τάς τοι ἔπειτα δίδωμι, σὺ δ' ἀτρεκέως ἐρεεῖνων  
σὴν αὐτοῦ φρένα τέρπε, καὶ εἰ βροτὸν ἄνδρα δαείης  
πολλάκι σῆς ὁμφῆς ἐπακούσεται αἶ κε τύχησι.

<sup>47</sup> Pausan. 8. 13.1; G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig, 1915–24), 352.6; 363; 16.

<sup>48</sup> Aesch. *Hierai* fr. 87 N<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. e.g. the bears at Brauron (cf. e.g. Aristoph. *Lys.* 645), the ταῦροι of Poseidon at Ephesos (Athen. 10.425 c), the πῶλοι in Laconia (for the Leukippidai: Hesych. s.v. † πῶλῖα; for Demeter and Kore: *IG* V.1 594; the Peleiai or Peleïades at Dodona (cf. Pausan.

10.12.10; Hesych. s.v. πέλειαι; cf. also Soph. *Trach.* 172; Schol. Soph. *Trach.* 172; and J. C. Kamerbeck, *The plays of Sophocles, commentaries*, Part II, *The Trachiniae* (Leiden, 1959), comm. on vv. 171, 2).

<sup>50</sup> On the relationship between Delphi and the oracle of Trophonios cf. H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford, 1956), p.368.

It is quite clear<sup>51</sup> that Apollo is talking of three winged bee-women virgins, who were sisters and lived under a ridge of Parnassus and who had taught Apollo the art of divination.<sup>52</sup> When they have eaten honey they deliver true prophecies, if they are deprived of it, false ones. This oracle of the women-bees Apollo offered to Hermes.

The first problem is how these bee-women are understood in the Hymn to be delivering prophecies. Amandry<sup>53</sup> suggests that it is their flight, different in each case, that reveals their decision. Latte<sup>54</sup> and Jacoby,<sup>55</sup> on the other hand, are thinking of prophecies derived from the buzzing of the bees—women-bees in the mythological image presented in the *Hymn*. Perhaps what the *Hymn* is thinking of is a combination of observation both of the way of flying of the women-bees and of their buzzing. For on the one hand, as implied by Amandry,<sup>56</sup> vv. 558–9 suggest that they reveal things through their flight, and on the other, as Jacoby notes,<sup>57</sup> ‘the ἀγορεύειν alongside of δονέουσαι can only mean the buzzing of the bees.’

Amandry<sup>58</sup> comments: ‘Sous une forme allégorique, il y a là une allusion à un ancien rite agraire où la farine et le miel constituaient l’essentiel des offrandes.’ And this is surely correct as far as it goes—except that, instead of speaking of an allegorical form and allusion, I would prefer to say that our passage offers the mythological expression and crystallization of a rite of this type. As for the kind of old agrarian rite involved, it is surely likely to have been a rite of divination through the observation and interpretation of the flight and/or buzzing of bees:<sup>59</sup> bees which would be special sacred bees kept somewhere within the sanctuary.<sup>60</sup>

It cannot be proved conclusively that divination by bees had been practised at or around Delphi (cf. n. 52) and that this is what the mythological image of the hymn to Hermes reflects. But apart from the fact that this is the most likely explanation for the emergence of this mythological image, other considerations make this hypothesis likely. Prophetic bees at Delphi would help make better sense of the myth mentioned above in which bees revealed the oracle of Trophonios to Saon, when he and other Boeotians were trying to locate it, on the advice of the Delphic Pythia. For the bees in this story have supplemented the directions of the Pythia, taking on, as it were, her role, from a certain point onwards. This would make better sense if there had existed a conceptual framework in which a divination pattern through prophetic bees was included. We could speculate about the factors that determined the creation of this myth, and

<sup>51</sup> On this passage cf. L. Radermacher *Der homerische Hermes hymnus*, Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Wien, cxliii, 1 (Vienna, 1931), 169–73; Amandry, *Mantique*, pp. 61 ff.; Latte, *RE* xviii. 832; Feyel, op. cit.; Jacoby, *FGrH* III B Suppl. 559–60; cf. also the commentary on the passage in *The Homeric Hymns* ed. by T. W. Allen, W. R. Halliday, and E. E. Sikes (Oxford, 1936<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>52</sup> On ἀπάνευθε of v. 556 cf. Amandry, *Mantique*, p. 62 n. 4.

<sup>53</sup> *Mantique*, p. 63 n. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *RE* xviii, col. 832.

<sup>55</sup> *FGrH* III B Suppl. 560.

<sup>56</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> *Mantique*, p. 61.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Latte, op. cit.; Radermacher, op. cit.; Feyel, op. cit., p. 6; Jacoby, op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> The problems concerning the name of the bee-women in the *Hymn* (on which cf. Feyel, op. cit., pp. 7–8, and Amandry op. cit., pp. 62, 64 n. 2) and the relationship between this passage of the *Hymn* and Philochoros, *FGrH* 328 F 195 and Apollod. *Bibl.* 30.10.2 (on which relationship cf. Jacoby, op. cit., pp. 559–60) do not affect the argument that the *Homeric Hymn* concerns an oracle involving the behaviour-pattern of bees or women-bees in the myth—reflecting the cult phenomenon of bee-divination (cf. esp. Jacoby, op. cit., p. 560).

suggest that, in order to give greater prestige and holiness to the institution of the oracle of Trophonios under Delphic authority, two Delphic divination patterns were made to come into play: the delivery of prophecies through the Pythia, and the prophetic bees. Clearly, given the context, direction to a new oracle, the role of the bees could only be of a limited kind. This role took the form of revelation of the location of the oracle by the bees. If the motif of animals discovering an oracle<sup>61</sup> had already been extant at that time, its influence may have operated and determined the form of the bees' role. Otherwise, it would be conceivable that the story about the oracle of Trophonios could have given rise to the motif of animals discovering oracles.

The hypothesis may also explain why the Pythia should be called Melissa. She would have fulfilled a role similar to that of the bees and this similarity of role could easily lead to a parallelism being made between the two, resulting in the Pythia being called bee, especially given the existence of the mythological image of the prophesying women-bees which could serve as intermediary.

Moreover, if we accept that divination through prophetic bees had been practised at Delphi, we obtain for this oracle a nexus of interconnected divination patterns<sup>62</sup> parallel to that found at Dodona—it is irrelevant whether or not these patterns had coexisted in time, since we can detect the influence of the two marginal patterns on the central one, for it is this contact that matters.

Delphi : bees—Pythia who could be called 'bee'—laurel tree (cf. above:cf.  
esp. *Hom. H. to Ap.*  
394–6)

Dodona: : doves—priestesses who were called 'doves'—oak tree (cf. *Hom.*  
(cf. above n. 49) *Od.* 14.327–8: *Od.*  
19.296–7)

Whether this similarity was due to an influence of one oracle over the other, or to a common 'mentality' operating at a particular stage in the history of Greek religion—a stage in which physical objects and animals were of paramount importance, and which in historical terms I would identify with the Dark Ages, with cultic elements continuing, and being reinterpreted in, the early historical age—it could be argued that the close correspondence between the nexus known from Dodona and that emerging from Delphi, if we include the element of the prophetic bees, may offer some additional support for the validity of this reconstruction of the Delphic model.

As we have seen, the miraculous elements contained in the story of the second temple place it in the realm of myth, unlike that of the first, the laurel temple, which appeared to be an account of a past cultic reality. It is now clear that this 'myth' contains some reflections of cultic phenomena.

Specifically, the association of both birds and bees with the Delphic Apollo and the Delphic sanctuary and the concept of these creatures 'serving' Apollo inherent in the story corresponds to a cultic association at Delphi between birds and Apollo and divination, and bees and Apollo and divination, an association

<sup>61</sup> Cf. for Delphi Diod. Sic. 16.26; Pausan. 10.5.7.

<sup>62</sup> There were of course also other modes of divination practised at Delphi (cf. Amandry, *Mantique*, pp.57–65). The Delphic

oracle having become the most important Greek divination centre, it attracted to itself divination methods that may not have originally belonged there.

in which both types of creatures 'serve' Apolline divination. But these facts do not explain why the story of the second temple should have arisen. We can see why it was the birds and the bees that were chosen for the role of animal builders of a Delphic temple to Apollo, especially since both are builder-animals. But the problem still remains, where did the idea of such a temple built by animal creatures come from in the first place? This question cannot be answered except in the context of a consideration of the whole myth. For the full significance of a 'mythologem' can emerge only in the context of the whole myth to which it belongs. Some 'mythologems', like that of the laurel temple, make sense to us even in isolation, but of course this 'sense' is a very partial one: we have discovered the origin of the laurel-temple story in cultic reality, but we do not know yet what was its full meaning and significance in the context of the whole myth about the first Delphic temples.

There is one more thing to add about the temple of wax and feathers. It has been suggested that this mythological temple had been transposed into architecture, reproduced as a real building.

The excavation at Delos revealed some blocks of stone, belonging to the outer walls of three buildings, which were decorated on the outside with continuous hexagons forming a honeycomb pattern.<sup>63</sup> The three buildings from which the blocks came are the Letoon, built at c. 540 and the so-called 'Monuments with the hexagons', built between 530 and 500.<sup>64</sup> One block of stone with a similar pattern has been reported from Thasos,<sup>65</sup> but it remains unpublished. Nothing is said about its find-spot in the sources where the discovery is mentioned.

The Delian finds led Rumpf to suggest<sup>66</sup> that the mythological bees' temple of Delphi had been copied in stone at the Delian sanctuary. But there are serious objections. The stone blocks decorated with the honeycomb pattern do not all come from one building, as Rumpf appears to imply, but from three different ones. The earliest of these has a firmly established function: not a temple, or an offering, to Apollo, but a temple, the temple of Leto, situated in a distinct temenos belonging to Apollo's mother.<sup>67</sup> The other two buildings of more problematic identification,<sup>68</sup> do not appear to have been temples—one may have been the oikos of the Andrians.<sup>69</sup> It follows, first, that these blocks with the honeycomb pattern do not come from a building conceived and executed as the architectural transposition of the mythological Delphic temple; and secondly, that it is not the case that the honeycomb pattern was identified, in the architectural vocabulary of the period, with the translation of a mythical temple made of wax and feathers into stone—for otherwise, their use in these three buildings would have been incongruous. A second objection against Rumpf's theory is that the honeycomb-decorated blocks by no means covered the whole surface

<sup>63</sup> Cf. R. Vallois, *BCH* 53 (1929), 216; idem, *L'Architecture hellénique et hellénistique à Delos jusqu'à l'éviction des Déléens*, i (Paris, 1944), 23, ii (Paris, 1966), 62–3. Cf. also A. K. Orlandos, *Tὰ Ἑλικά δομῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων* ii (Athens, 1958), 257 fig. 225, 257–8; *École française d'Athènes, Guide de Délos* par Ph. Bruneau et J. Ducat (Paris, 1965), pp. 99, 111.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. H. Gallet de Santerre, *Délos*

*primitive et archaïque* (Paris, 1958), p. 297; *Guide*, op. cit.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Guide*, p. 99, Rumpf (cf. next note), p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> A. Rumpf, 'Bienen als Baumeister', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 6 (1964), 5–8.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Gallet de Santerre, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Guide*, p. 99.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Vallois, *Architecture* i. 23.

of the outer walls of any of these buildings.<sup>70</sup> So the whole structure would have hardly evoked a temple built by bees.

It could be argued that this type of outer-wall decoration, found in a sanctuary of Apollo, must have been inspired by the story of the second Delphic temple, in which case we would have a *terminus ante quem* c. 540 for the creation of the myth. This is perfectly possible; however other possibilities can also be conceived: that the idea to create a pattern imitating a honeycomb was dictated by a purely decorative impulse; or that it may have been inspired by the Delphic Apollo's association with prophetic bees, probably housed in the Delphic sanctuary, without there having been a story about an Apolline temple constructed by bees; or that the cultic connotations of the pattern are to be associated with Artemis, in whose cult at Ephesos bee-elements were prominent<sup>71</sup>—and it should be remembered in this connection that the outlook of the Delian sanctuary in the relevant period is predominantly Aegean and Ionian.

The Swiss excavations at the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria revealed part of the stone socle of a building which was contemporary with the *daphnephoreion* and which appeared at first to be polygonal on the inside and rounded on the outside, with inner corners inside and a rounded outer surface, and to have what seemed to be an oval shape. This first impression gave rise to the tentative hypothesis put forward by the excavators that the building evoked a honeycomb on the inside and a beehive on the outside; and that therefore it may have been built as an architectural transposition of the second Delphic mythological temple.<sup>72</sup> However, further investigation showed that while the west wall does have an inner corner, the east one appears to be rounded on the inside and the outside; and that beyond the west inner corner and the east rounded one both walls run straight for the whole of their preserved course.<sup>73</sup> The excavators therefore became rather sceptical about the beehive/honeycomb hypothesis. It is perhaps more likely that the plan of the building was simply apsidal. Unfortunately, no more information can ever be gained about this building, as the remaining part of it has not survived. In my opinion, the new circumstances indicate that this building is unlikely to have been built as an architectural transposition of the Delphic myth. Not only does the plan now appear much more likely to have been apsidal than anything else, but also the corrected plan of the surviving part shows the apparent similarity of the interior to a honeycomb to have disappeared. Moreover, the *daphnephoreion* does not offer a real parallel for an architectural transposition of the Delphic myth, if it is correct that this laurel-temple was an actual temple rather than a votive offering reproducing the first mythical Delphic temple.

Let us now turn to the third temple, the one made of bronze. As we have seen, in the Pindaric account we are told that above the pediment of this temple six Charmers (Keledones) made of gold were singing. Pausanias dismisses this by arguing that Pindar invented the Charmers in imitation of the Homeric Sirens.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Vallois, *Architecture* ii. 62–3; *Guide*, pp. 99, 111.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. above, nn. 45, 47, 48. Cf. also C. M. Kraay and M. Hirmer, *Greek Coins* (London, 1966), pp. 355, 356–7; C. M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London, 1976), pp. 23, 256; cf. also pl. 53, nos. 901–4.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Auberson and Schefold, *Führer*, p. 120 (and p. 116 fig. 22).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. the corrected plan in *AntK* 17 (1974), 70 fig. 1. I am very grateful to Dr. P. Auberson for discussing this building with me and providing information about it.

This last is undoubtedly true, and the surviving text of the 8th *Paean* includes<sup>74</sup> the passage referred to by Athenaeus (7. 290 E): . . . τῶν παρὰ Πινδάρῳ Κηληδόνων, αἱ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ταῖς Σειρήσι τοὺς ἀκρωμένους ἐποιοῦν ἐπιλανθανομένους τῶν τροφῶν διὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀφαναίνεσθαι. Another comparison between the Keledones and the Sirens is found in Philostratos,<sup>75</sup> so it seems that, at least in later antiquity the relationship between the Keledones and the Sirens had become something of a *topos*. But the Keledones do not only relate to the Sirens, although it is with these that they are more closely connected. They belong, like the Sirens, to a wider series of destructive female monsters, part-human,<sup>76</sup> who lure or lead people to destruction, and which also includes the Harpies, the Sphinx, and the Lamia.<sup>77</sup> And this image of dangerous female monsters bringing about death is surely the mythological expression of two fundamental fears, the fear of death and the fear of the alien female nature, as seen through the eyes of the 'establishment world' of men, two fears which have been fused into one, into a model of death caused by a polarized version of the female.

There is a second level of meaning in Pindar's Keledones; another model apart from that of the 'dangerous female monster' has also operated upon their conception.

The meaning of vv. 82–6 is reconstructed by Lobel<sup>78</sup> as follows: 'Pallas put (enchantment) into their voice and Mnemosyne (or her daughters, the Muses) revealed to them the present, past (and future).' In other words, the Keledones, thanks to a divine gift, possessed knowledge of present, past, and future. This implies that they had the gift of prophecy. As there was a close connection between poetry and prophecy in early Greek literature<sup>79</sup> it could be argued that this prophetic gift of the Keledones was a simple corollary of their identity as singers. But even if it was that connection that had triggered off the endowment of these creatures by the mythological imagination with prophetic powers, in my opinion, these part-human female singers of past, present, and future, associated with a temple of Apollo at Delphi could have hardly failed to be perceived as mythological prefigurations of the human female prophetess who operated in the historical temple of Apollo at Delphi. In fact, I am inclined to believe that this 'mythological prefiguration of the Pythia' aspect was the primary model that inspired the creation of the Keledones; that the mythological imagination—Pindar's or whoever else's—was inspired to create the Keledones by the desire to invent mythological prefigurations of the Pythia. In other words, I think that, in the process of mythologizing about a mythical temple of Apollo at Delphi, created by divine craft, the model of the historical temple, created by human craft, in which a woman delivered prophecies, operated on the mythological imagination and prompted the creation of corresponding prophesying female beings of a supernatural character—to match the supernatural, divine,

<sup>74</sup> Cf. vv. 76–9.

<sup>75</sup> Vit. Apollon. vi. xi: ἐνὸς δὲ αὐτῶν [i.e. ναῶν] καὶ χρυσὰς ὤγγας ἀνάψαι λέγεται Σειρήνων τινὰ ἐπεχούσας πειθῶ.

<sup>76</sup> I understand the Keledones as being part-human: cf. *παρθενία* in v. 80 (and cf. Lobel, op. cit. (cf. n.1), p.46) and perhaps also *ἀκηράτων* in v. 81 (cf. Lobel, *ibid.*); vv. 82–6 surely imply a human voice. Other-

wise they appear to have had, wholly or partly, the form of wrynecks (cf. Snell, op. cit. (cf. n.1), p.41, and Philostr. op. cit.).

<sup>77</sup> On Lamia cf. E. T. Vermeule, *Festschrift für Frank Brommer*, ed. V. Höckmann and A. Krug (Mainz, 1977), pp.296–7.

<sup>78</sup> Op. cit., p.47.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* ed. M. L. West (Oxford, 1966), p.166, commentary on v. 32.

craft that created the temple. In my opinion, two factors determined the modeling of these prophesying females on the type of the 'destructive female monster' in general and the Sirens in particular. The mythopoeic imagination was first pulled towards that general area of 'dangerous female' under the influence of the 'different', and in a way scaring, aspect of prophetic powers, which in a mythopoeic process, can easily slide into its polarization<sup>80</sup> 'dangerous female prophet'. This, under the influence of the already established type of 'destructive female monster' was polarized further, so that the supernatural prophesying females took the form of destructive female monsters. This last polarization, and the crystallization of the supernatural prophesying females into the Keledones of the Pindaric description, was undoubtedly prompted by the fact that within the sphere of the dangerous female creatures, the Sirens, singing destructive female monsters, provided an excellent model for supernatural females singing (prophecies) at the temple of Apollo, the god *par excellence* associated with music and song.

The choice of the wryneck for the animal element of the Siren-like Charmers (cf. above, n. 76) was probably determined by the fact that in ancient Greece wrynecks were associated with love charms.<sup>81</sup>

Like the second temple, and unlike the first, the third temple as described in the Pindaric version is placed in the sphere of myth by the miraculous elements it contains: it was constructed by Hephaistos and Athena, the two craftsmen gods, it had the singing golden Charmers, and the gods made it disappear into the earth which they had opened up with a thunderbolt. I argued that the Keledones who possessed the gift of prophecy were visualized as a mythological prefiguration of the Pythia, shaped on the model of the attractive but destructive female monster who brings death.

As we have seen, Pausanias attempted to rationalize the story, remove the bronze temple from the sphere of myth, and place it in the world of reality. Those elements of the story that can be explained in terms of everyday reality—like the concept of a bronze building—he accepts as true, those that cannot, he dismisses as false. The implication is that the story contains a core of historical truth, to which have been added other 'false' elements, the miraculous ones. Clearly, this *a priori* assumption—which I shall argue is false—is only relevant to the problem of the origin of the story; it is of no relevance to the understanding of the myth as told by Pindar. For this version, found in Pindar, whatever its origin, forms one interlocking organic whole, in which each element has a significance, with reference to all the other elements and to the whole, and no part of the story can be considered in isolation. For this reason, in this version, the material, bronze, and the miraculous character are inextricably bound. With regard to the origin of the myth, I consider it unlikely that it started life as a factual report about a real temple made of bronze, and then miraculous elements became attracted to this core and transformed the historical account into the story of a miracle. For Pausanias was correct in claiming that bronze buildings belonged to everyday reality. Bronze was indeed used in Greek architecture, mostly for revetment, metal plaques covering a surface of different material;<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> I should note that polarization frequently takes place within the mythopoeic process; cf. also A. Brelich, *Gli eroi greci. Un problema storico-religioso* (Rome, 1958), pp. 277–8.

<sup>81</sup> D'A. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford, 1936), s.v. ὠρυξ.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. R. Martin, *Manuel d'architecture grecque, i Matériaux et techniques* (Paris, 1965), p. 155.



architectural members made entirely of bronze were rare.<sup>83</sup> This surely suggests that bronze was not a sufficiently exotic building material in archaic Greece to attract around it miraculous elements. So it is difficult to see why and how the account of a historical temple made of bronze should be transformed into a myth about a magical bronze temple built by gods, especially since the story of the laurel temple, which did reflect a historical reality, did not attract any miraculous elements, although it was remoter in time than any bronze temple could have been, belonging, as it does, to the period of the beginnings of the Delphic sanctuary.

These considerations cannot prove that Pausanias' implied theory about the origin of this myth is fallacious. But they do indicate that it is less likely to be correct than it may appear at first. Consequently, the attempt to recover the significance and circumstances of the creation of this story must not be based on the assumption that the 'bronze temple' element is primary, and reflects a historical reality, and the other elements secondary.

The fourth temple was made of stone and had been built by Trophonios and Agamedes.<sup>84</sup> As I have already mentioned, the involvement of Trophonios and Agamedes in the construction of a temple of Apollo at Delphi is first attested in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*.

vv. 294—9

Ὦς εἰπὼν διέθηκε θεμειλία Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
εὐρέα καὶ μάλα μακρὰ διηγεκές· αὐτὰρ ἔπ' αὐτοῖς  
λαῖνον οὐδὸν ἔθηκε Τροφώνιος ἡδ' Ἀγαμήδης  
υἱέες Ἐργίνου, φίλοι ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν·  
ἀμφὶ δὲ νηὸν ἔνασσαν ἀθέσφατα φύλ' ἀνθρώπων  
ξστοῖσιν λάεσσιν, αἰοῖμον ἔμμεναι αἰεῖ.

Why this complex process of collaboration in the construction of this temple? What significance does it have? If we decode the essential elements of the story, it comes to this. Three types of beings participated in the construction of the temple, in this chronological order: a divine being, Apollo, who laid the foundations; heroic beings, Trophonios and Agamedes; and human beings, the tribes of men. The three stages and the three types of participants in the construction of the temple of Apollo as told by the poet of the *Hymn*, can be seen as standing for three different orders, three different spheres which are included, and play a role in the Greek notion of a cult unit, a sanctuary or temple. The divine, in virtue of whom, and in the name of whom the cult unit functions. The human, which operates the cult unit at the practical everyday level; and the heroic, a sphere which partakes of both the divine and the human, and which has the function of bringing close, in terms of projecting into the mythological past, the god and the man—a function which accounts for the frequent phenomenon of various Greek sanctuaries and cults tracing their foundation to legendary, heroic

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>84</sup> On this temple cf. R. Heidenreich, 'Agamedes in Delphi oder Mythos und Bankunst', *Zeitschrift d. Friedr. Schiller-Universität, Jena* 4 (1954–5), 49 ff.; G. Kaulen, *Daidalika. Werkstätten griechischer Kleinplastik des 7. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*

(Munich, 1967), p. 101—discussion rather unsound and somewhat irrelevant (cf. Philipp—next item—p. 12 n.9); H. Philipp, in *Dädalische Kunst auf Kreta im 7. Jahrhundert*, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (Hamburg, 1970), pp. 6–7, 12 n.9.

figures: as for example, the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia in Attica, believed to have been founded by Iphigeneia, or the cult of Zeus Hellanios at Aegina whose founder was believed to be Aiakos. The mythological image of temple-building also expresses the concept of cult-foundation, and this is why the *Hymn* shows the three orders of being involved in cult participating in the building of the temple.

The position of Trophonios and Agamedes as heroes, lying between the divine and the human, is reflected in their role in the construction of the temple described by the *Hymn*, which comes between that of Apollo and that of the tribes of men. The same situation is surely found in the myth of the first temples. In this myth, the human element lies outside the nexus of the four mythological temples: it is provided by the actual, physical temple visible in the Delphic sanctuary, at whichever period one considered the myth. The temple of Trophonios and Agamedes, the heroic craftsmen, again provides the heroic element,<sup>85</sup> while the temple preceding theirs, the one made of bronze, was made by gods, Hephaistos and Athena. The tripartite model<sup>86</sup> then found in the hymn is also present here, but analysed into three different temples when in the *Hymn* it was combined into one. In the *Hymn*, the divine element is represented by Apollo, the owner of the temple, and this is particularly appropriate, given that the context is that of the foundation of the sanctuary, oracle and temple. In the myth of the first temples, it is Hephaistos and Athena, the craftsmen gods, who represent the divine element. But, of course, the myth of the first temples contains more than the 'human-heroic-divine' tripartite model. For it also includes the temple of wax and feathers and the laurel temple. So we now have to consider whether these two mythological structures have any significance in terms of the scale of values which, I argued, lies behind the nexus of the third and fourth mythological temples considered together with the real, historical temple at the Delphic sanctuary.

Bees and birds belong to the animal world. They thus take us out of the anthropomorphic human-heroic-divine sphere, and into nature—here contrasted with the world of man and culture. A nature which is not devoid of craft (albeit non-human, non-culture craft); for both birds and bees are builders.

Moving backwards from the wax-and-feathers temple, we reach the first temple, the one made of laurel. From the point of view of the values that we have so far decoded, the important thing about the laurel is that it is a wild plant that can grow spontaneously. So the laurel, and the laurel temple, take us one more move away from the anthropomorphic sphere and from culture and into wild nature. It is perhaps significant in this respect that nothing is said about who constructed this temple, or how it was done.

<sup>85</sup> The choice of these two as the contributors of the heroic element in the first place was natural. They were the architects of the heroic age *par excellence*. They were also associated with Apollo. It is possible that one of these two features determined the choice, and the other resulted from their connections with the building of the Delphic temple.

<sup>86</sup> It is interesting to remember that, as

we have seen, Strabo had ordered the Delphic temples according to a tripartite model expressing three different orders of 'reality': the mythical sphere represented by the temple of wax and feathers, the world of the heroic, legendary past, represented by the temple of Trophonios and Agamedes, said to be the second temple, and the real world of humanity, represented by 'the present' temple constructed by the Amphiktyones.

We can tabulate the successive temples as follows:

*First temple:* laurel : plant—no craft : wild nature

*Second temple:* wax and feathers : animals (animal : nature  
craft)

The third and fourth and historical temples belong to the *anthropomorphic* sphere and culture, and this nexus can be analysed as follows:

*Third temple:* bronze : Hephaistos : divine sphere  
and Athena  
(divine craft)

*Fourth temple:* stone : Trophonios : heroic sphere  
and Agamedes  
(heroic craft)

*Historical temple(s):* stone : men : humanity  
(human craft)

If we take the anthropomorphic sphere as one unit, the order within the myth, from the first temple onwards, is ascending, from the lower and wilder, to the higher and more civilized. But within the anthropomorphic sphere itself, the order is descending, from the divine, to the heroic, to the human. This descending order is determined by the fact that the 'chronological/historical' framework of the story makes it necessary that the last stage should involve the actual historical temple, representing humanity and everyday reality. This dictated the order: human, before that heroic, before that divine. The same chronological framework dictated the ascending order from the laurel temple to the anthropomorphic unit, ascending order which gives an evolutionary dimension to the myth and expresses the Greek way of structuring the universe.

The anthropomorphic unit, we saw, is found on its own, independently of the nature-unit, in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, where, through the image of temple-building, it expressed in mythological language the concept that three interlocking spheres are involved in, and operate within a sanctuary. This significance of the anthropomorphic unit was extended when, in the myth of the first temples, the nature-unit was also brought into play. In this myth, the nexus of the two units expressed in mythological language, through the image of temple-building, two groups of ideas. First, it set out all the different categories of things and beings which were involved in the Delphic sanctuary; in this way it also expressed the fact that Apollo's might extended over all categories of life, plant, animal, human, and heroic. Secondly, by means of this first group of ideas, the myth also expressed in mythological language a structured view of the *cosmos*. This is obviously the result of the fact that the evolutionary model expressed in this myth was ordered according to the Greek conception of world-order.

The next question is, how did all this come about, what was the stimulus that led to the creation of the myth of the first temples, and how did it operate? I would like to suggest that this stimulus was the result of the juxtaposition on the one hand of a story about the existence of an early temple of Apollo made of laurel—indeed, the first Delphic temple, if a 'daphnephoreion' had indeed existed at Delphi—and on the other of the tripartite model of the *Homeric Hymn*, in which the image of temple-building, through being broken down into stages,

was used to express the concept of the three interlocking spheres of cultic and cosmic reality. This juxtaposition stimulated the mythological imagination and inspired further myth making. In this process, the tripartite model of the Hymn provided a conceptual framework in which different stages in temple-building expressed different orders of beings and of cultic and cosmic reality. The story of the laurel temple, associated with a cultic reality, the role of the laurel in the Delphic cult, and at the same time containing as dominant element a plant, a thing clearly belonging outside the divine-heroic-human anthropomorphic nexus, offered the following: a model for representing the different stages of temple-building—which were used for expressing different orders or beings and of cultic and cosmic reality—through different structures, successive temples. And it provided the stimulus for extending the orders of cultic and cosmic reality represented in the myth beyond the anthropomorphic sphere.

Within the framework thus outlined, to the mythological imagination under the impact of the juxtaposition I mentioned, the laurel temple, already thought of as a very early, probably the first Delphic temple, provided one pole, that of wild nature, while the historical temples, products of human craft, and representing humanity and historical reality, fixed the other. Beyond this last—going backwards—unfold the remaining two-thirds of the 'human-heroic-divine' tripartite model, each sphere now represented by a separate structure. So the model now runs: temple made of laurel—temple made by gods; temple made by heroes; end of 'myth'; temple made by men, i.e. real, historical temple. This as it stands is clearly unbalanced: the animal world is not represented and the transition between the laurel temple and the rest is abrupt: as an evolutionary model this would be incomplete, and as a narrative pattern unsatisfactory. The solution to this problem would have been obvious to a mythological and/or poetic imagination: the existing framework demands the gap to be filled by a temple involving the animal world. As for the type of animals involved, given that the parameters operating on the mythoplastic imagination were (a) craftsmanship and (b) cultic connections with the Delphic sanctuary, the choice of birds and bees was natural.<sup>87</sup> The choice of material for the temple was also natural; wax and feathers, the bodily products of the animal creatures themselves, and material which they could, and did, naturally handle.

In terms of narrative structure, the bronze temple is the element that provides the linking points between the 'nature' unit and the anthropomorphic one. First, this temple belongs to the latter, but is built of a 'characteristic' material, like those of the former. Secondly, it helps to link the two units through its relating by means of a set of similarities and contrasts to the last temple of the previous unit, the wax-and-feathers one. Both these temples were 'invented', in the sense that neither had had a historical existence, as the laurel temple had, or had been identified with a historical temple, like the fourth temple had. Probably because of this, they both contain miraculous elements, which are lacking from the other two. A contrast is provided by the fact that the second temple involves the lowest form of craft, animal craft, and the third the highest, divine craft—represented by the craftsmen-gods Hephaistos and Athena. Both temples 'disappeared' in a supernatural way. The second temple was sent to the land of the Hyperboreans by means of a mighty wind—an element belonging to nature. In the case of the bronze temple, it was the thunderbolt that was involved,

<sup>87</sup> Cf. also above, discussion of second temple.

an element of nature, but one believed to be the product of divine craft, like the bronze temple itself.

This set of relationships and contrasts between the two temples clearly enhances strongly the narrative unity of the whole myth. It also suggests that the present forms of both mythologems are likely to have been created at the same time and by the same mind.

The choice of bronze as the 'characteristic' material of the third temple may have been a chance one. But it is also possible, indeed more likely, that this choice was the result of the influence of another historical/evolutionary model involving materials: that of Hesiod's generations. The Hesiodic model may have influenced the mythoplastic process of the creation of the Delphic myth in the following way. In Hesiod's scheme, the 'present-day' generation is that of Iron; it is preceded by the generation of the heroes, in its turn preceded by the generation of bronze. So there are already two correspondences between the Delphic and the Hesiodic sequence: the last two stages are the same: present day, preceded by heroic; and in both, different materials stand for different stages in the evolution. Given these already existing similarities, the creator of the Delphic mythological model, poet or theologian that he was, may have slipped naturally into the choice of bronze for the material characteristic of the evolutionary stage preceding the heroic one, under the influence of the fact that bronze was the material characteristic of the stage preceding the heroic one in Hesiod. As we saw a 'characteristic' material was desirable for the creation of an effective link-up with the laurel and the wax-and-feathers temples. And thus the bronze temple, built by Athena and Hephaistos, representing divine craft, was invented.

The last question to be considered is, when and by whom was this myth invented.

The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* gives us, in my opinion, a *terminus post quem*, in so far as the version of the tripartite model human-heroic-divine contained there appears—to me—to be primary, and likely to have at least partly stimulated the creation of our myth. If the decoration of stone blocks with honeycomb patterns had indeed been inspired by the story about the temple made of wax and feathers, then we would have a *terminus ante quem* of c. 540—for I am assuming that, as I argued above, the story of the second temple was invented in the framework of the creation of the whole myth. However, as I said earlier, the association between mythological temple and honeycomb decoration is far from certain.

I would be tempted to think that it was Pindar's mythological and poetic imagination which invented the myth. Another possibility would be to suppose that Pindar had not invented the myth, but was responsible for its elaboration, for example, for an elaboration of the motifs of the wax-and-feathers and the bronze temples, and the creation of the complex set of relationships between the two. In any case, what matters most is that the creator of the myth used pre-existing motifs, modifying and reinterpreting them, and invented new ones, mostly using established cultic and mythological material; the result was a myth which gave mythological expression to some aspects of the Delphic cultic reality and through it also presented an articulated and evaluative view of the world.