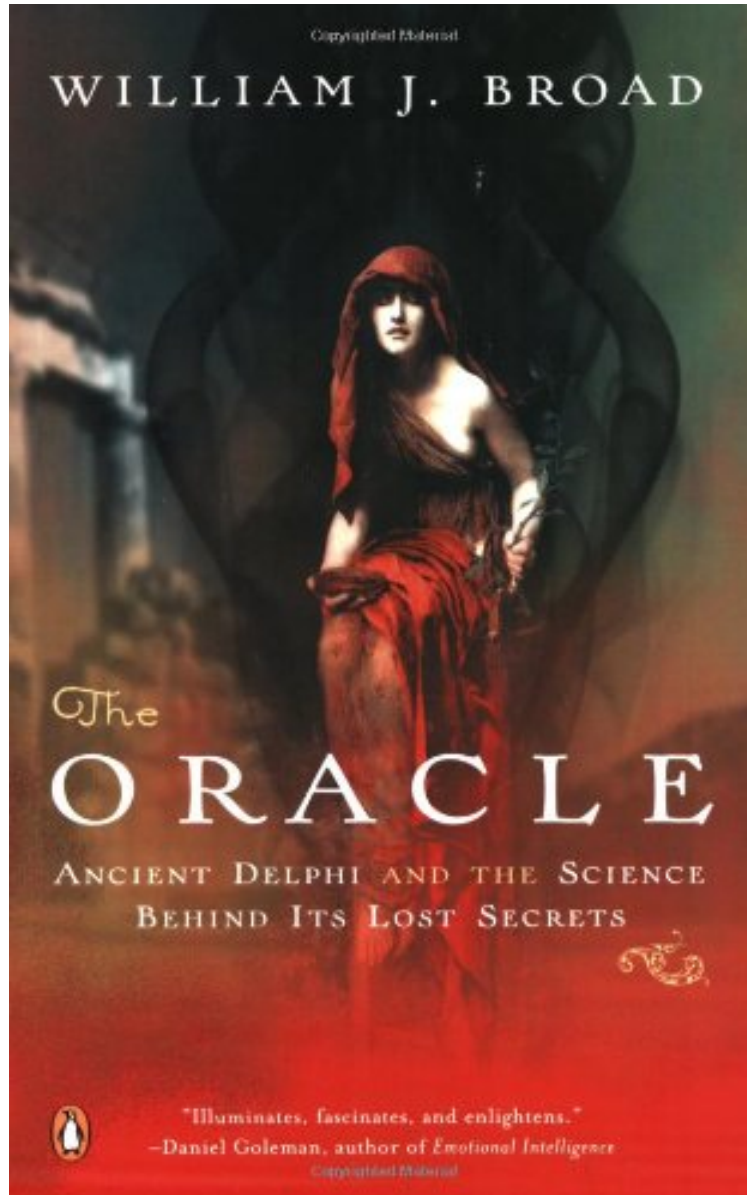


## The Oracle: Ancient Delphi and the Science Behind Its Lost Secrets

William J. Broad

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#702691 in Books William J Broad 2007-01-30 2007-01-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .80 x 5.50l, .67 #File Name: 0143038591336 pagesThe Oracle Ancient Delphi and the Science behind Its Lost Secrets | File size: 68.Mb

**William J. Broad : The Oracle: Ancient Delphi and the Science Behind Its Lost Secrets** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oracle: Ancient Delphi and the Science Behind Its Lost Secrets:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Required reading before visiting DelphiBy Michael PoleyThis is an

interesting book. The first part covers the history of the Oracle at Delphi, doing a great job of presenting what it is that makes Delphi special. There were many shrines and temples in Ancient Greece where you could ask about the future, but Delphi was only for momentous questions. The second part of the book is an academic adventure story that follows a geologist and an archaeologist that refuted a French study that claimed that there weren't any hallucinogenic gasses or vapors emitting from the ground at Delphi. In fact, though there were trace amounts of ethelyn (an early drug used for anesthesia) - enough to get the oracle "high" - it was only 1 part of a larger mystical experience that Delphi pilgrims would have participated in. Having been to Delphi this past week, this book did a great job of putting me in the frame of mind to appreciate the archaeological site and to imagine what it might have been like. There's still a lot we don't know. 4th century Christians have done their best to eliminate any trace of our "pagan" pasts. But damn. Delphi is still a deep spiritual place that might be the center of the universe. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! By Stormlaugther What an interesting book! The science was fascinating and the conclusions were useful. I imagine that the overall slightly skeptical tone may have been editorial but it didn't distract me from thoroughly enjoying it. This one will be a reference book for me. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating blend of science, history, and philosophy By MICHAEL W DEANI looked for books about the Oracle after watching a History Channel documentary about the scientific search for a fault and evidence of intoxicating gasses beneath the temple of Apollo (I show it to my philosophy students). I expected this book to tell the same story in detail, which it does, but it also provides interesting historical context, and has a well-written chapter that considers relevant epistemological issues (philosophical issues about knowledge, how it is gained, what counts as legitimate knowledge, etc.). I gave it four stars because I wished it were longer, and just provided more of the same kinds of content.

A gripping modern-day detective story about the scientific quest to understand the Oracle of Delphi Like Walking the Bible, this fascinating book turns a modern eye on an enduring legend. The Oracle of Delphi was one of the most influential figures in ancient Greece. Human mistress of the god Apollo, she had the power to enter into ecstatic communion with him and deliver his prophecies to men. Thousands of years later, Pulitzer Prizewinning journalist William J. Broad follows a crew of enterprising researchers as they sift through the evidence of history, geology, and archaeology to reveal as far as science is able the source of her visions.

From Publishers Weekly The oracle at Delphi influenced politicians and slaves with her prophecies, yet her life and practices are shrouded in mystery. In a fascinating story that is part detective tale and part science report, Pulitzer Prizewinning New York Times writer Broad unveils the oracle. In order to prepare for her encounter with Apollo, the oracle descended into a chasm near the temple, where she would breathe the holy pneuma. She would then deliver her prophecies in a trance, sometimes foaming at the mouth and sometimes in a frenzy. When the temple was unearthed in the 19th century, archeologists and geologists searched for the mysterious chasm. Broad traces the history of these efforts and the conflicts they produced. By the mid-20th century, many scientists argued that the chasm never existed. He follows two modern-day Indiana Joneses, geologist Jelle de Boer and archeologist John Hale, as they refute those conclusions by uncovering the chasm and the geological faults that produced hallucinogenic vapors. Broad's lively prose and fast-paced storytelling conduct us on a breathless adventure of religious mystery and scientific discovery and ends with a surprising consideration of the meaning of the oracle's powers and the existence of "shadowy worlds... beyond the ken" of science. Bw illus. (Feb. 20) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Scientific American The Oracle of Delphi, human mistress of the god Apollo, had the power to communicate his prophecies and advice. Accounts from the time describe how she breathed in vapors rising from the temple floor before communing with the god. But modern scholars have long discounted these reports. Broad, a writer at the New York Times, tells the story of scientists who worked from subtle clues scattered through the ancient literature and the landforms near Delphi to uncover evidence that explains the oracle's powers. They discovered that the vapors actually existed--they were petrochemical fumes that contained a hallucinogenic gas, which rose through cracks in the earth into the oracle's chamber. A fascinating account in its own right, the story also allows Broad to weave in the modern debate between science and religion. Editors of Scientific American From Booklist \*Starred\* The Oracle at Delphi, with its enormous influence on Greek civilization, has been scrutinized over the centuries by scholars of religion and science. The female oracles, who consulted the god Apollo on everything from state matters to human affairs with the aid of mysterious vapors emanating from a chasm beneath the temple, were revered by the greatest of Greek philosophers. In this absorbing book, New York Times science writer Broad recalls the ancient history of the Oracle, its discrediting during the rise of Christianity, and scientific investigations from a French excavation in 1892 to more recent studies. Broad dramatically details the most recent scientific investigation, revealing that ethylene was the source of the mysterious vapors that enhanced the prophetic powers of the oracles. With all the drama of a science thriller, Broad masterfully weaves the interpretations of artists, scientists, philosophers, and historians into a remarkable account of the search for the secrets of the Oracle. Broad examines how the latest Oracle discovery fits into efforts to reduce the world's wonders to scientific explanations, positing that the discovery enhances knowledge of the Oracle but never diminishes its mystery. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All

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