ON THE SACRED ROUTE FROM DELOS TO DELPHI
AND THE PHLEGYANS

The sacred route from Delos to Delphi, the one that Apollo himself took when assuming possession of the Pythian Oracle (v. Aeschylus, Eumenides, sub. in.), the same to the one that theoretic embassies and delegations would follow, passed through Attica according to Aeschylus, op. cit. v. 9 sqq.:

Липών δὲ λίμνην Δηλίαν τε χοιράδα,
κέλσας ἐπ’ ἀκτὰς ναυπόρους τὰς Παλλάδος,
ἐν τίνδε γαῖαν ἦλθε Παρνησσοῦ θ’ ἔδρας.
πέμπτοι δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ σεβίζουσιν μέγα
κελευθοποιοί παῖδες Ἐφαίστου, χθόνα
ἀνήμερον τιθέντες ἡμερωμένην.

The roadmakers, children of Hephaestus are the artful Athenians, masters of various crafts according to the sch. ad v. 13: οἳ
Athenaioi. Ἐσεύς γὰρ τὴν ὀδὸν καθήμεν τῶν λῃστῶν· καὶ όταν πέμπωσι εἰς Δελφοὺς θεωρίαν (so Weil pro θεωρία), προέρχονται τινὲς ἄνεχοντες (so, I read, pro γὰρ ἔχοντες) πελέκεις ώς διημερώσοντες τὴν γῆν. Theseus was the great civilized hero of Athens, and so appropriately credited with the clearance of that chief communication route as well. (We know the roundabout travel that Aegeus had to undertake when he went to consult the Great Oracle). The carrying of Axes is a very significant feature of the procession; for they bespeak the Minano-Cretan patronage of the Glorious God of the Archipelagus: just as the myth in the Homeric hymn indicates the same coordinates for the Delphian Phoebic worship.

With Aeschylus, Ephorus agreed, apud Strabo, IX, 422 (= Fr. 31b Fr.Gr.H.): ὑποβάς δὲ (sc. Ephorus) περὶ τῶν Δελφῶν οὕτως εἰσὶ διαλεγόμενος, φησὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Παρνασίους τινας αὐτόχθονας καλουμένους οίκειν τὸν Παρνασόν, καθ’ ὄν χρόνων Απόλλωνα τὴν γῆν ἐπιώντα ἠμεροῦν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἡμέρων καρπῶν καὶ τῶν βιῶν, ἐξ Ἀθηναίων δ’ ὀρμηθέντα ἐπὶ Δελφοὺς ταῦτην ἴέναι τὴν ὀδὸν, ἢ νῦν Αθηναίοι τὴν Πυθιάδα πέμπουσι· γενόμενον δὲ κατὰ Πανοπέας Τιτυνὸν καταλύσαι ἔχοντα τὸν τόπον, βίαιον ἄνδρα καὶ παράνομον· τοὺς δὲ Παρνασίους συμμίξαντας αὐτῷ καὶ ἀλλὸν μηνύσαι χαλέπδον ἄνδρα, Πῦθωνα τούνομα, ἐπίκλησιν δὲ Δράκοντα, καταστροφόντος δ’ ἐπικελεύειν « ἢ παιάν», ἀφ’ οὗ τὸν Παιωνισμόν οὕτως ἐξ ἔθους παραδοθηναι τοῖς μέλλοσι συμπίπτειν εἰς παράταξιν. Ἐμπροσθῆσθηναι δὲ καὶ σκηνὴν τότε τοῦ
Πῦθωνος ὑπὸ τῶν Δελφῶν, καθάπερ καὶ νῦν ἔτι καίειν ἄεὶ (so I think adding ἄεὶ to Coraes’ suggestion καίειν, πρὸ καὶ ἄεὶ) ὑπόμνημα ποιουμένους τῶν τότε γενομένων.

Strabo correctly castigates the overrationalism of the account, chiefly in its confusion of divine with heroic proprieties; myths are not to be explained by a mere translation in terms of heroic exploits. But apart from this we learn important details of the actual proceedings [1], and in the present connection, that Panopeus was lying on the sacred roote. The Thyiades of Attica that went to Parnassus to celebrate the trieretic Dionysiac orgia together with the Delphic Bachants, used to stop at certain places (just as in the litanies of the new religion) and dance their frantic dances as they proceeded from Athens to Parnassus (Pausanias X, 4, 3); Panopeus was one of those halting places. And in fact the same sacred road was followed by the worshippers of either godhead of the Double that possessed Delphi. Pausanias explains by the custom of those dances the appropriateness of the standing epithet καλλιχόρον Πανοπής in Homer Odyssey λ, 580, where further, significantly, Leto as well was going to Delphi via Panopeus:

Λητώ γὰρ ἠλικήσε (sc. Τιτυός), Διὸς κυδῆν παράκοιτιν,
Πυθώδ’ ἐρχομένην, διὰ καλλιχόρου Πανοπής.

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The story about Tityos belongs to the general, pregnant pattern of the reduction into productive order of overwhelming but unruly potency and of the chastisement of the latter’s outbreaks of sheer violence. In that area, the primeval state of overweening force was represented with emphasis by the renowned Phlegyans. In fact, the Panopeans, according to their own account, were Phlegyans by origin, Pausanias X, 4, 1: καὶ γενέσθαι μὲν τῇ πόλει τὸ ὅνομα λέγουσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑπειοῦ πατρός (thus falling to the Phocean confederacy as he has previously noted), αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐ Φωκεῖς, Φλεγύαι δὲ εἶναι τὸ ἔξ ἀρχῆς καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν διαφυγεῖν φασὶ τὴν Φωκίδα ἐκ τῆς Ὀρχομενίας. They were the martial Φλεγύες μεγαλήτορες of Homer (Ilias, N, 302). They inhabited also the nearby lying Daulis (where the horror concerning Proce and Philomela took place cf. e.g. Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Δαυλίς). Scholia T ad Ilias loc. cit. (= Ephorus Fr. 93 Fr.H.Gr.): ἧ μετὰ Φλεγύας· οἱ μὲν Γυρτωνίους (as one should correct from Eustathius ad loc. and Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Γυρτῶν; for the mss. of the Scholia consistently have the impossible Γορτυνίους etc.). οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας τὴν Δαυλίδα τῆς Φωκίδος, οὓς μεγαλήτορας οἴονει δεινοφέκτας φησὶ διὰ τὸ πεπορθηκέναι τὸν ἐν Πυθοῖ ναὸν... ἐπὶ πλείον δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν διείλεκται Ἐφορός, ἀποδεικνύς ὅτι τὴν Δαυλίδα καὶ οὐ τὴν Γυρτῶνα ὑκησαν· οὖν καὶ παρὰ Φωκεῦσι τὸ ὑβρίζειν φλεγύαν λέγεσθαι. ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ἐν τῇ τριακοστῇ τῇ Δημοφίλου (Ephorus’ son).
The Phlegyans were, of course, the aboriginal Minyans and Orchomenians; there existed considerable but argue archegetic *aeolic* admixture, if appears, of Thessalic and Corinthian derivation (cf. Pausanias’ elaborate account, IX, 34, 6-10). If Servius has been preserved uncorrupt (*Comm.* in Vergilius, *Aeneis*, VI, 618), the high authority of Euphorion, the Chalcidic learned poet and antiquarian, points in another direction: Hi namque (sc. the Phlegyans) secundum Euphorionem populi *insulae* fuerunt, satis in deos impii et sacrilegi; unde iratus *Neptunus* percussit tridentem *eam partem insulae* quam Phlegyae tenebant, et omnes obruit. The rather large island implied I take to be no other than Euboea itself, the home of the fierce Abantes (*μένεα πνείοντες Ἀβαντες, ὅπισθεν κομώντες, αἰχμηταί*, Homer, *Ilia* B, 536 sqq.); the involvement in the affair of Neptune squares with this supposition, as he was particularly connected with the island, being the divine father of Abas (v. Sch. D ad loc.; Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Ἀβαντίς; Eustathius 281.28sqq. – Stephanus, *loc.cit.*, mentions another tradition according to which the nomenclator hero was the Argive warlike king Abas, the son of Argeios; the Poseidonian progeny is there testified by Aristocrates, the author of the Λακωνικά probably. - Eustathius *loc. cit.* has both derivations for the name mentioned, and the Poseidonian one is detailed according to *Porphyry*; the genealogy there given (similarly also in *Scholia B ad Ilias*, B, 536) of the Abantic leaders in the Trojan War from Erechtheus the son of Pandion is an attempt, no doubt based on some local tradition, to
authenticate the later claims of Athens in Euboea, (cf. also the story of
Xuthos helping the Athenians in an Euboic enterprise to subdue the
island and thereby gaining as wife for himself Creussa, the daughter
of Erechtheus; Euripides, Ion, 295 sqq.). According to Strabo (X, 445),
Aristotle held that Thracians from the Phocic Abae transplanted
themselves to the island and henceforth all inhabitants were called
Abantes – a very unlike combination, purely, I submit, speculative,
based on the widespread presence of Thracians all over eastern
mainland Greece down to Attica at primeval times, the ferocity of
Abantes and their homonymy with the Phocic city – itself a foundation
of the Argive Abas. –

In a vexed passage, Apollodorus, Bibl. III, 41, seems to
countenance Euphorion’s position: ἀμφότεροι δὲ ἀπὸ Εὔβοιας
φυγόντες (sc. Λύκος καὶ Νυκτεύς), ἔπει Φλεγύαν ἀπεκτειναν τὸν
Ἤρεος καὶ Δωτίδος τῆς Βοιωτίας, Ὕριαν (so Heyne correctly pro
Συρίαν) κατώκουν etc. Heyne arbitrarily deletes the problematic ἀπὸ
Εὔβοιας. But if the passage needs treatment, it requires a more
pragmatic handling. I propose ἀπὸ Φλεγύας; for as Pausanias says
(IX, 36, 1-2): τῇ μὲν δὴ χώρᾳ τῇ πάσῃ (sc. North Boeotia)
Φλεγυαντίδα ὄνομα εἶναι μετέθεντο ἀντὶ Ανδρηῖδος, πόλις δὲ
ἐγένετο ἡ τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἰκισθείσα ἡ Ἀνδρηῖς, καὶ προσέκτισεν ὁ
Φλεγύας ὀμόνυμον αὐτῷ, τοὺς τὰ πολεμικὰ ἀρίστους Ἑλλήνων
συλλέξας εἰς αὐτήν. Thus the warlords Nycteus and Lycus, sons of
Chtonius, went there. Having killed according to this philo-Theban
tradition the fatal Phlegyas, the fled to Ἶρια by Aulis (thus coalescing this account with the alternative tradition which made the brothers sons of Ἶριεύς and Κλονίη, Apollodorus, *Bibl.* III.111). Later they went to Thebes (the lacuna after καὶ in 41 has to be surely filled in some such way as Heyne suggested: ἐκείθεν ἐλθόντες εἰς Θήβας), where they were made citizens and played leading role διὰ τὴν πρὸς Πενθέα οἰκειότητα – they were his first cousins, as Pentheus was son of Echion, the Σπαρτός, brother of Chthonios father of the brothers. – I suppose that some transcriber was puzzled by ἀπὸ Φλεγύας... ἐπεὶ Φλεγύαν etc. and thought to correct Φλεγύας to Εὐβοίας. But after all Apollodorus may be simply following here Euphorion’s account and locate Phlegyas to Euboea. Unfortunately, no doubt by a regrettable for us inadvertence, Pausanias does not specify the brothers’ parentage, not having need to do it.–

To be noticed that there was a third Orchomenos near Carystos at the southeast end of Euboea according to some antiquarians writing on the Homeric Catalogue of Ships: so Strabo, *IX*, 416: καὶ περὶ Κάρυστον δ’ ἦν τις Ὀρχομενός. εὐ γὰρ τὴν τουαύτην υλήν ύποβεβλήκασιν ἡμῖν οἱ τὰ περὶ τῶν Νεῶν συγγράψαντες, οἷς ἀκολουθοῦμεν, ὅταν οἰκεία λέγωσι πρὸς τὴν ἕμετέραν ὑπόθεσιν. –

From Euphorion, then, in conclusion, we keep the residence of Phlegyans in some part of Euboea, at a primeval time. This is consistent with a descent from Thessaly as a by-branch of the main stock that settled in Orchomenus (cf. the case of the Euboic Istiaeans).
Needless to be added that the Thessalian origin is apparently confirmed by the stories of Coronis (V. essay On Asclepius’ Parentage, Birthplace and Cult-Localization).

Phlegyas, Mar’s son(1) organized with a Thracian component, a military power, and achieved a political eminence, with which he violently arranged affairs (Pausanias IX, 36, 1-2); he attacked even Delphes, and plundered it, cf. Pausanias X, 7, 1. The Argive Philammon with a select body of his compatriots opposed the sacrilegious onslaught, but they fell all in the battle (ibid.). Pausanias quotes the Homeric passage as a proof of the Phlegyan warlike character, interpreting it very naturally, as referring to the Orchomenians (and the Thesprotian Ephyreans). Strabo and the scholia is unduly perplexed here as elsewhere (IX, 442) adducing as reason for his hesitancy the fact that ἐσθόν ὅτε ἀποφίλαν παρέχειν etc. (he would have been much surprised to see that nowadays they tend to be practically always, and not just sometimes and occasionally, in suspension of judgement in a truly Pyrrhic way). But that fact is controllable; and chiefly by utilizing and comparing appropriate local traditions in the examination of concretely cases. Compare, for example, the circumstantial Orchomenian genealogies of Pausanias, with the bare mention in Strabo that τοῦς μὲν γὰρ Γυρτωνίους Φλεγύας πρότερον ἐκάλουν ἀπὸ Φλεγύου τοῦ Ιξίονος
ἀδελφοῦ etc. (Similarly another tradition made Phlegyas the father of Ixion, Servius ad Virgilius, Aeneis VI, 618; Scholia ad Pindarus, Pythia II, 40). This Strabonian statement makes definite and immediate what is indirect and blurred, thereby creating a nonexistent problem. Eustathius ad loc. before reproducing Strabo’s indecisive remarks, gives sounder information; characteristically, he or his source, despairing of making sense of Thessalic Gyrtonian Phlegyans postulate a Phocic Gyrtone, together with the alternative of Phlegyans in Daulis. (More on this, infra).

Pausanias ends his relation of Phlegyan enormities thus: τὸ μὲν δὴ Φλεγυών γένος ἀνέτρεψεν ἐκ βάθθων ὁ θεὸς κεραυνοῖς συνεχέσι καὶ ἱσχυροῖς σεισμοῖς· τοὺς δὲ ύπολειπομένους νόσος ἐπιπεσοῦσα ἐφθειρε λοιμώδης· ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ ἐς τὴν Φωκίδα διαφεύγουσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν. The scholia D ad Ilias N, 302 speak of a continued ὑβρίς and θεοβλάβεια, referring to Pherecydes as source: πλείονα δὲ τολμῶντες ἀδικήματα κατὰ Διὸς προσάφεσιν ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος διεφθάρσαν, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Φερεκύδης. Or as Eustathius has it significantly, although strictly inaccurately: μῦθος δὲ ἐστὶ ταρταρωθήναι αὐτοὺς ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος Ἐθβαίως ἐπιχειροῦντας. In fact they destroyed the first Theban wall, built by Amphion and Zethus through the power of Music and harmony – the magic lyre having been given to them by Apollo or the Muses (v. Scholia ad Apollonius, Arg., I, 740). This was a symbol of the operation of a culturing influence in the district; that the walls were needed precisely
for protection from the Phlegyans had been observed already by Pherecydes, who gave all relevant particulars (sch. Apoll. I, 735; scholia Odyssey λ, 261; 263; scholia T Ilias N, 302; Scholia D ad loc. (according to this, Pherecydes also mentioned the attack on Delphes = Fr. 41 Fr.Gr.H.). In fact even Homer suggests as much:

λ,260: τὴν δὲ μετʼ Ἀντιόπην ἱδον, Ἀσωποῖο θύγατρα,
ἡ δὴ καὶ Διὸς εὖχετ ἐν ἀγκοίνησιν ἰαύσαι,
καὶ ό ἐτεκεν δύο παῖδι, Ἀμφίονα τε Ζήθον τε
οἱ πρώτοι Θήβης ἐδος ἐκτισαν Ἑπταπύλοιο("
πύργωσαν τʼ ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν ἀπύργωτὸν γʼ ἐδύναντο
ναείμεν εὐρύχρον Θήβην, κρατερῶ περ ἐόντε.

For his representation of the enormities perpetrated by his nation, in executing deeds of sheer, unrestrained force, Phlegyas is recensured among the damned ones in the Vergilian Hades (Aeneis VI, 618 sqq.):

--------- Phlegyasque miserrimus omnis
admonet, et magna testatur voce per umbras:
Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.---
The Martial character of the Phlegyans is always stressed: even in the reduced Minyan situation at the time of the Trojan expedition Homer relates (Ilias, B, 512 sqq.):

τῶν ἰχθυόν Ἀσκάλαφος καὶ Ιάλμενος, νίες Ἀρης,
οὕς τέκεν Ἀστυόχη δόμῳ Ἀκτορὸς Ἀζέίδαο,
παρθένος αἰδοίη, ὑπερωίον εἰςαναβάσα,
Ἄρηι κρατεῖτιν οὔ δὲ οἱ παρελέξατο λάθρη.

Phlegyas himself was the son of Ares - and Χρύσης τῆς Ἀλμου; or from Δωτίς the Boeotian as in Apollodorus, Bibl., III, 5, 5 (41). The context in the account by Mnaseas of Glaucus Pontius (Athenaeus VII, 296b-c) makes him Boeotian; ἀρπάσαντα δὲ Σύμην τὴν Ἰηλύμου (vel. Ἰαλύσου ex Stephano s.v. Σύμη) καὶ Δωτίδος θυγατέρα ἀποπλεύσαι εἰς τὴν Ἀσιαν and founded the island Σύμη: the affair thus took place in Boeotia. The Δωτία daughter of Elatos who according to one, and that rather inferior, tradition in Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Δωτίων, gave her name to the illustrious plain, the Δωτίων πεδίων, in Lapithean Pelasgiotis, has nothing to do with the Boeotian Δωτίς. This Elatos is the Thessalian father of the heroes Caeneus and Polyphemus, the Argonauts. – Confusion may only spring from the homonymy with the Δωτίων πεδίων and, more importantly, from the Coronis affair up there (which complication itself may have contributed towards the magnification of some local Dotis into the mother of the stupendous Phlegyas). On the other hand, the disruption in the aelic reigning house that Phlegyas introduced is more total with the account of a
local mother, than in the typical muptial ingrafting to the royal
continuity. However I confess that Δωτίδος τής Βοιωτίδος in
Apollodorus, loc. cit., is provocatively, but maybe only accidentally,
odd; but still, one would expect a patronymic; so Heyne
unpersuasively deleted τής Βοιωτίδος. On the whole I prefer to keep it
as it stands: the emphasis lie on the toponymic, Dotis the Boeotian, not
the other and well known Thessalian one.

(**) Homer represents somehow exaggeratingly that both town
and walls were built now for the first time. In fact the walls were
added to a preexisting habitation (as e.g. in Apollonius Rhodius, loc. cit.).
But in the circumstances, the emergence of a proper city and
fortification went necessarily together. The precise and accurate
Pausanias, with reference to the present Homeric passage, observes
cooly: Ὅμηρος δὲ σφᾶς ἀνήγαγεν ἐπὶ τὸ σεμνότερον τοῦ γένους,
cαὶ Θῆβας φησίν οἰκίσαι πρῶτους, ἀποκρίνων τὴν κάτω πόλιν, ἐμοὶ
δοκεῖν, ἀπὸ τῆς Καδμείας (II, 6, 4), the proper city from its acropolis.
Excellently. V. IX, 5, 6-7.

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