

Apostolos L. Pierris

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 theoric embassies and delegations would follow, passed through Attica according to Aeschylus, *op. cit.* v. 9 sqq.:

Λιπῶν δὲ λίμνην Δηλίαν τε χοιράδα,
κέλσας ἐπ' ἀκτὰς ναυπόρους τὰς Παλλάδος,
ἐν τήνδε γαῖαν ἦλθε Παρνησοῦ θ' ἔδρας.
πέμπουσι δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ σεβίζουσιν μέγα
κελευθοποιοὶ παῖδες Ἥφαιστου, χθόνα
ἀνήμερον τιθέντες ἡμερωμένην.

The roadmakers, children of Hephaestus are the artful Athenians, masters of various crafts according to the *sch.* ad v. 13: οἱ

Ἀθηναῖοι. Θησεὺς γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν καθῆρεν τῶν ληστῶν· καὶ ὅταν πέμπωσι εἰς Δελφοὺς θεωρίαν (so Weil *pro* θεωρίδα), προέρχονται τινὲς ἀνέχοντες (so, I read, *pro* γὰρ ἔχοντες) πελέκεις ὡς 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 οἵτινές εἰσι διαλεγόμενος, φησὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Παρνασίους τινὰς αὐτόχθονας καλουμένους οἰκεῖν τὸν Παρνασσόν, καθ' ὃν χρόνον Ἀπόλλωνα τὴν γῆν ἐπιόντα ἡμεροῦν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἡμέρων καρπῶν καὶ τῶν βίων, ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν δ' ὀρμηθέντα ἐπὶ Δελφοὺς ταύτην ἰέναι τὴν ὁδόν, ἣ νῦν Ἀθηναῖοι τὴν Πυθιάδα πέμπουσι· γενόμενον δὲ κατὰ Πανοπέας Τιτυὸν καταλῦσαι ἔχοντα τὸν τόπον, βίαιον ἄνδρα καὶ παράνομον· τοὺς δὲ Παρνασίους συμμίξαντας αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλον μηνῦσαι χαλεπὸν ἄνδρα, Πύθωνα τοῦνομα, ἐπὶ κλησιν δὲ Δράκοντα, κατατοξεύοντος δ' ἐπικελεύειν «ἴε παιάν», ἀφ' οὗ τὸν Παιωνισμόν οὕτως ἐξ ἔθους παραδοθῆναι τοῖς μέλλουσι συμπίπτειν εἰς παράταξιν. Ἐμπρησθῆναι δὲ καὶ σκηνήν τότε τοῦ

Πύθωνος ὑπὸ τῶν Δελφῶν, καθάπερ καὶ νῦν ἔτι καίειν ἀεὶ (so I think adding ἀεὶ to Coraes' suggestion καίειν, *pro* καὶ ἀεὶ) 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 trieteric 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 infact 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 *καλλιχόρου Πανοπήος* in Homer *Odyssey* λ, 580, where further, significantly, Leto as well was going to Delphi via Panopeus:

Λητὼ γὰρ ἤλκησε (sc. Τιτυός), Διὸς κυδρὴν παράκοιτιν,
Πυθῶδ' ἐρχομένην, διὰ καλλιχόρου Πανοπήος.

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 ὄνομα λέγουσιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἐπειοῦ πατρὸς (thus falling to the Phocian confederacy as he has previously noted), αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐ Φωκεῖς, Φλεγῦται δὲ εἶναι τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν διαφυγεῖν φασὶ τὴν Φωκίδα ἐκ τῆς Ὀρχομενίας. They were the martial *Φλεγῦτες μεγαλήτορες* of Homer (*Ilias*, N, 302). They inhabited also the nearby lying Daulis (where the horror concerning Procne and Philomela took place cf. e.g. Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Δαυλίδας). Scholia T ad *Ilias*, *loc. cit.* (= Ephorus Fr. 93 Fr.H.Gr.): ἡ μετὰ Φλεγῦτας· οἱ μὲν Γυρτωνίους (as one should correct from Eustathius *ad loc.* and Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Γυρτών; for the mss. of the Scholia consistently have the impossible Γορτυνίους etc.). οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας τὴν Δαυλίδα τῆς Φωκίδος, οὓς μεγαλήτορας οἰονεὶ δεινορέκτας φησὶ διὰ τὸ πεπορθηκέναι τὸν ἐν Πυθοῖ ναόν... ἐπὶ πλεῖον δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν διείλεκται Ἐφορος, ἀποδεικνύς ὅτι τὴν Δαυλίδα καὶ οὐ τὴν Γυρτῶνα ᾤκησαν· ὅθεν καὶ παρὰ Φωκεῦσι τὸ ὑβρίζειν φλεγυᾶν 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 insulani fuerunt, satis in deos impii et sacrilegi; unde iratus Neptunus percussit tridente 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 Ἄβαντες, ὄπισθεν κομόωντες, αἰχμηταί, Homer, *Ilias 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. Ἄβαντίς; Eustathius 281.28sq. – 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 Troian 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 Εὐβοίας φυγόντες (sc. Λύκος καὶ Νυκτεύς), ἐπεὶ Φλεγύαν ἀπέκτειναν τὸν Ἄρεος καὶ Δωτίδος τῆς Βοιωτίας, Ὑρίαν (so Heyne correctly pro *Συρίαν*) κατώκουν etc. Heyne arbitrarily deletes the problematic ἀπὸ Εὐβοίας. 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 Ἀνδρηΐδος, πόλις δὲ ἐγένετο ἢ τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἰκισθεῖσα ἢ Ἀνδρηΐς, καὶ προσέκτισεν ὁ Φλεγύας ὁμώνυμον 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 Ὑρία by Aulis (thus coalescing this account with the alternative tradition which made the brothers sons of Ὑριεύς 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: ἐκεῖθεν 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. εὖ γὰρ τὴν τοιαύτην ὕλην ὑποβεβλήκασιν ἡμῖν οἱ τὰ περὶ τῶν Νεῶν συγγράψαντες, οἷς ἀκολουθοῦμεν, ὅταν οἰκειᾶ λέγωσι πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν 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 Istiaean).

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^(*) 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 *εοίκασιν οὖν διὰ τὰς συνεχεῖς μεταστάσεις καὶ ἐναλλάξεις τῶν πολιτειῶν καὶ ἐπιμίξεις, συγχεῖν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ ἔθνη, ὥστε τοῖς νῦν ἔσθ' ὅτε ἀπορίαν 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 concrete cases. Compare, for example, the circumstantial Orchomenian genealogies of Pausanias, with the bare mention in Strabo that *τοὺς μὲν γὰρ Γυρτωνίους Φλεγύας πρότερον ἐκάλουν ἀπὸ Φλεγύου τοῦ Ἰξίονος*

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 Φλεγυῶν γένος ἀνέτρεψεν ἐκ βάρων ὁ θεὸς κεραυνοῖς συνεχέσι καὶ ἰσχυροῖς σειμοῖς· τοὺς δὲ ὑπολειπομένους νόσος ἐπιπεσοῦσα ἔφθειρε λοιμώδης· ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ ἐς τὴν Φωκίδα διαφεύγουσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν. The scholia D ad *Ilias* N, 302 speak of a continued ὕβρις and θεοβλάβεια, referring to Pherecydes as source: πλείονα δὲ τολμῶντες ἀδικήματα κατὰ Διὸς προαίρεσιν ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος διεφθάρησαν, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Φερεκύδης. Or as Eustathius has it significantly, although strictly inaccurately: μῦθος δὲ ἐστὶ ταρταρωθῆναι αὐτοὺς ὑπὸ Ἀπόλλωνος Θηβαίοις 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 μετ' Ἀντιόπην ἴδον, Ἀσωποῖο θύγατρα,
 ἦ δὴ καὶ Διὸς εὐχετ' ἐν ἀγκοίνησιν ἰαῦσαι·
 καί οῖ' ἔτεκεν δύο παῖδ', Ἀμφιονά τε Ζῆθόν τε
 οἱ πρῶτοι Θήβης ἔδος ἔκτισαν Ἑπταπύλοιο(**)
 πύργωσαν τ'· ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν ἀπύργωτόν γ' ἐδύναντο
 ναιέμεν εὐρύχορον Θήβην, κρατερώ περ ἔόντε.

For his representation of the enormities perpetrated by his nation, in executing deeds of sheer, unrestrained force, Phlegyas is recensed 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 ἦρχ' Ἀσκάλαφος καὶ Ἰάλμενος, υἷες Ἄρηος,
οὓς τέκεν Ἀστυόχη δόμῳ Ἄκτορος Ἀζειίδαο,
παρθένος αἰδοίη, ὑπερῳϊον εἰσαναβάσα,
Ἄρηι κρατερῶ· ὁ δὲ οἱ παρελέξατο λάθρη.

Phlegyas himself was the son of Ares - and Χρύσης τῆς Ἄλμου; 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 ἀποπλεῦσαι εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν 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. Δώτιον, gave her name to the illustrious plain, the Δώτιον πεδῖον, 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 Δώτιον πεδῖον 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 aeolic 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 τῆς Βοιωτίδος* in *Apollodorus, loc. cit.*, is provocatively, but maybe only accidentally, odd; but still, one would expect a patronymic; so Heyne unpersuasively deleted τῆς 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 coolly: Ὅμηρος δὲ σφᾶς ἀνήγαγεν ἐπὶ τὸ σεμνότερον τοῦ γένους, καὶ Θήβας φησὶν οἰκίσαι πρώτους, ἀποκρίνων τὴν κάτω πόλιν, ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, ἀπὸ τῆς Καδμείας (II, 6, 4), the proper city from its acropolis. Excellently. V. IX, 5, 6-7.

[Spring, 1986]