

TRAVELS
 IN
 NORTHERN GREECE.

FIRST JOURNEY.

CHAPTER I.

EPIRUS.

Arrival on the coast of Albania—*Avlóna, Aulon*—*Kanína*—*Erikhó, Oricum*—River *Celydnus*—*Sázona* Island, *Sason*—*Acroceraunia*—*Palása, Palæstus*—*Aspri Ruga*—*Corfú*—*Forty Saints, Onchesmus* or *Anchiasmus*—*Nívítza*—*Délvino*—*Morzená*—*Theriakhátes*—*Arghyrókastro*—*Valiaré Khan*—*Lábovo*—*Tepeléni*—*Aoi Stena*—*Bantza*—Course of the *Viósa* below *Tepeléni*—Family and Court of *Alý Pashá*.

DEC. 9, 1804.—*Aulon*, which preserves its ancient name in the usual Romaic form of *Avlóna*¹, converted by the Italians into *Valona*, is about a mile and a half distant from the sea-beach, and has eight or ten minarets. On the sea side there is a tolerable wharf, with an apology for a fort, in the shape of a square inclosure of ruinous walls, with

¹ Ἀὐλῶνας.

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towers and a few cannon. The town occupies a hollow thickly grown with olive trees, among which are some gardens of herbs mixed with cypresses, poplars, and fruit trees. Beyond, are rugged hills entirely covered with olives, and to the northward a woody plain extending for a considerable distance, and forming a low shore except just at the northern entrance of the gulf, opposite to the island Sázona, where are some white cliffs of small elevation separated from the plain by a lagoon, containing salt works and a fishery.

Two miles southward of the town rises a steep hill, on the summit of which is the ruinous castle of Kanína, and on a ridge branching from it to the southward the scattered houses of a Turkish village of the same name overtopped by two small minarets. Kanína is a name which occurs in the Byzantine history¹. It was built upon a Hellenic site, as appears by some remains of masonry of that age among the walls. Not far to the southward of the height of Kanína, begins a range of steep mountains separated only by a narrow valley from the *Acroceraunia*, which mountain presents the same forbidding aspect on this side as towards the sea, and forms a narrow steep ridge, woody, rocky, and terminating in a sharp summit which closes the valley about ten miles from the extremity of the gulf. This valley is a part of the district of Khimára, and contains a large village named Dukái, in Greek Dukáðhes, below which at the southern extremity of the gulf is the har-

¹ Anna Comn. l. i. p. 34. Paris.

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bour named Pashalimán by the natives, and Porto Raguséo by the Italians, near the mouth of a river which flows from the peak of the Acroceraunia through the valley of Dukádhēs. Eastward of the mouth of the river is a succession of lagoons, in the midst of which are the ruins of Oricum, on a desert site now called Erikhó¹—the last syllable accented as in the ancient word, and E substituted for O, which was not an uncommon dialectic change among the ancients. The river of Dukádhēs would seem from Ptolemy to have been the Celydnus, although its position does not exactly agree with his order of names, which places the Celydnus between Aulon and Oricum². Porto Raguséo I take to be the Panormus which Strabo describes as the port of Oricum³.

The gulf of Avlóna being surrounded, for the most part, by high mountains, is subject to sudden and violent squalls. When the wind blows strong from the westward, the road of Avlóna is not considered safe, and the usual anchorage is under Sázona, the ancient Sason, notorious among the Romans as a station of pirates⁴. This island is most conveniently placed to shelter this great bay just at the mouth of the Adriatic, and affords a safe entrance on either side into the bay; for the cliffs in front of the lagoons of Avlóna, the island itself, and the cape which forms the extreme point of the *Acro-*

¹ Anna Comnena writes *νειον αὐτοῦ ὁ Πάνορμος καὶ τὰ Ἰεριχῶ*, p. 34. 389.

² Ptolem. l. 3, c. 13, 14.

³ *Μετὰ δ' Ἀπολλωνίαν Βυλ- λιακῆ καὶ Ὠρικόν, καὶ τὸ ἐπί-*

νειον αὐτοῦ ὁ Πάνορμος καὶ τὰ Κεραύνια ὄρη, &c. Strabo, p. 316.

⁴ Plin. H. N. l. 3, ad fin.

ceraunian ridge, are all equally bold. The latter remarkable promontory is now called Glossa (perhaps its ancient name); and by the Italians Linguetta. The depth of the gulf between Sázona and Avlóna is from 10 to 15 fathoms, and towards the southern extremity much greater, except near *Ori-cum*, where, as well as near Avlóna, the depth is from 2 to 4 fathoms. Every where the bottom is a tough mud, deposited from the surrounding mountains.

Among a few ships now lying in the road of Avlóna, is a Ragusan vessel loading fossil pitch from the mine mentioned by Strabo¹. The mountain, at the foot of which this mineral is found, is about three hours to the eastward of Avlóna, and being conspicuous from off the coast, is marked in the Italian charts under the name of Montagna della Pegola. Its real name is Kúdhési. Another ship is from Constantinople, bound to Palermo with corn; a third, which has been three months from Venice, is of the species of Adriatic vessels called a Pielago, which differs not much from the Manzera and Trabaccolo. It has a main-mast of a single stick from Fiume, almost as large as the main-mast of our ship², and twice as long. These vessels make quick passages with a fair wind, but are very unfit to contend with the Etesian breezes of summer, and still less with the equally obstinate and much more violent southerly gales in the autumn and winter. In the month of October, 1802, I made a passage of ten days in one of these vessels, from Corfú to Trieste, through the Dalmatian islands,

¹ Strabo, p. 316.² H. M. Sloop Bittern, Capt. Corbett.

touching at several of them in the way. In the present season it is not uncommon for them to be four months in making the passage in the opposite direction between the two ports. During the Etesian winds in summer, instances often occur of these vessels putting into the *Rhizonic Gulf*, or Bocche di Cattaro, with a contrary wind, when the masters proceed to Venice by land, make an agreement for the disposal of their cargo, and return to the Bocche before the ship has sailed. In the winter the Bocchesi seldom pass their gulf, but leaving a man and boy aboard, join their families on shore, and there remain till the spring.

Dec. 10.—Having sailed out of the gulf in the night with a light breeze at north, we speak a vessel from Alexandria bound *direct* to Tunis, with pilgrims returning from Mecca.

Dec. 11.—At noon at the foot of the Acroceraunian peak, on the slope below which stands the village Palása, a name resembling that of the place where, according to Lucan, Cæsar landed from Brundisium previously to his operations against Pompey in Illyria¹, but which Cæsar names Pharsalus². There can be little doubt that, in

¹ movitque Ceraunia nautis.

Inde rapi cœpere rates atque æquora classem

Curva sequi, quæ jam vento fluctuque secundo

Lapsa Palæstinas uncis confixit arenas.

Lucan. Pharsal. l. 5, v. 457.

² Postridie terram attingit adversariis arbitrabatur ad eum Cerauniorum. Saxa inter et locum, qui appellatur Pharsalus alia loca periculosa, quietam omnibus navibus ad unam nactus stationem et portus incolumibus, milites exposuit. omnes timens, quos teneri ab —Cæsar de B. Civ. l. 3, c. 6.

this instance, the poet is more correct than the great captain, who was so negligent of geography, (in Greece at least), that he has not named the place in Thessaly, where he gained the greatest of all his victories : so that this is the only passage in the commentaries where the word Pharsalus occurs. Cæsar's chief consideration in selecting his place of debarkation on this coast, was to avoid the harbours likely to be in the hands of the enemy, and to make himself master of Oricum, Apollonia, and Dyrrhachium, before Pompey could arrive from Macedonia. Trusting, therefore, to his protecting fortune to carry him through the perils both of the enemy and the season, he embarked seven legions and six hundred cavalry at Brundisium, in ships of burthen, for want of any others, arrived on the day after his departure at the Ceraunia, where he found a quiet station for the ships in the midst of rocks and dangerous places ; and having immediately landed his troops, sent back the ships to Italy the same night. By this promptitude, Pompey arrived from Candavia in time only to save Dyrrhachium. Appian, though he does not specify in what part of the Ceraunian mountains the landing was made, shows that it was very near to Oricum, for he agrees with Cæsar in representing Oricum to have been taken within a day from the time of the landing¹ : he adds that Cæsar marched by night ; that on account of the rugged and difficult country, he divided his forces into several bodies, which were reunited at day-break, and that the Oricii having declared their

¹ Appian. de Bel. Civ. l. 2, c. 54.—Cæsar, l. 3, c. 11.

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unwillingness to resist the Roman Consul, the commander of the garrison delivered up the keys to Cæsar. The distance of the site of *Oricum* from the shore below Palása, seems perfectly to agree with these circumstances; and there is in fact a small harbour below Palása, though it seems rather diminutive for the force which Cæsar disembarked.

The Strada Bianca, so called in the Italian charts, and known to the Greeks by the synonym *Aspri Ruga*, is a broad torrent-bed very conspicuous at sea, which, originating in the summit of the mountain of Palása, descends directly to the sea to the northward of that village. To the southward of Palása is a succession of villages on the side of the mountain, as far as the entrance of the Channel of Corfú, all formerly belonging to the Khimariote league; but these, from Port Palérimo southward, are now in the hands of Alý Pashá. Khimára, which now gives name to the *Acroceraunian* range, is a town, a little to the northward of Port Palérimo, the ancient Panormus, described by Strabo as a harbour in the midst of the Ceraunian mountains¹.

The great summit at the northern end of Corfú, named Pandokrátora, and by the Italians Salvator, is now a conspicuous object to the south by east, and a little to the eastward of it the northern Cape of Corfú, named St. Catherine. Masléra and Salmastráki are in a line off the north west Cape of Corfú, and farther eastward Ὀθωνοῦς (*Ital. Fanu*), forming

¹ Strabo, p. 324.

an equilateral triangle with the two former. Othonus, or Othronus, is an ancient name¹, and appears from Procopius to have been applied in the plural number to all the three islands².

DEC. 13th to 20th.—In quarantine at Corfú, in consequence of the fever at Gibraltar. The quarantine ground is a small level space on the shore below the gate of the city, which still bears the French inscription *Porte d'Epire*, but by the Greeks is called the gate of St. Nicolas, from a small church which, with an adjoining apartment, is the only building on the ground. St. Nicolas is the patron of sailors, and his churches are often found near the shore. His feast-day being on the 18th, the priest and his deacons were employed for two or three days previously in weaving garlands of myrtle to adorn the pictures, and in preparing branches of bay and myrtle to stick about the walls of the church.

Dec. 20.—From the quarantine at eleven A. M. I cross over to the Forty Saints, a harbour on the Epirote coast, in an open boat, which carries a cargo of oranges and lemons; these fruits, with figs, rice, and oil, form the export trade of Corfú with the Skala³ of the Forty Saints, from whence are brought in return, grain, fish, botargo, cattle, and

¹ Plin. l. 4, c. 12, Schol. Lycophron. v. 1027, 1034.—Stephan. in *Ἰθρωνος*.

² Procop. de B. Goth. l. 4, c. 22.

³ *Σκάλα*, in Turkish *Iskéle*, has been adopted from the Ita-

lian language, and is used in every part of the Levant to signify a port of trade, from the largest commercial city, to a place where a single magazine is sufficient for the traffic of the coast.

wood. We row over in six hours, against a light adverse air.

Kyr G. Z., to whom I have a letter of recommendation from our minister, is collector of the customs of the Forty Saints, which is the chief port of Délvino and its district. Having a share also in the fishery of *Buthrotum*, he sells fish, both fresh and salted, and retails wine and other commodities imported from Corfú. All these affairs are transacted in a small stone building: three-fourths of the space within the walls are destined to the shop and store which are on the bare ground, the remaining fourth, in which he dwells, is separated from the rest by a floor half way up the wall, and a wooden partition in front, having two windows looking down into the store. Around the apartment are ranged trunks and shelves containing the collector's property and domestic utensils. Among them are some boxes full of salted κεφαλοί, or grey mullets, making a powerful addition to the various odours, none of them very agreeable, which are diffused through the apartment. At one end is a hearth, but no chimney, the smoke serving, as it effects its escape through the tiles, to cure the botargo¹, or roes of the mullet, which, enclosed in the natural membrane as extracted from the fish, are suspended to the rafters, and after the smoking will be dipped in melted wax. The kefalós is produced in abundance in all the lagoons and lakes of Greece, which like that of *Buthrotum* have

¹ ἀγγοάριχον: the Roman form of the ancient ὠὰ τάριχα; literally, pickled eggs.

a communication with the sea ; and the botargo is a great resource to the Greeks during the severer fasts, when only a bloodless fish diet is allowed.

Dec. 21.—On the north-western side of the harbour of the Forty Saints are some extensive ruins, situated on a gentle slope by the sea side, at the foot of the bare rocky hills of which all this part of the Epirote coast consists. The ruins are those of a town of the better times of the Lower Empire. The walls forming an exact semicircle, the diameter of which is the sea beach, are flanked by about twenty towers ; and contain within them the remains of churches, cisterns, and houses. At present the inclosure serves as a fold for the flocks of some Albanians, who have left their native mountains, now covered with snow, in search of pasture, and who are accompanied by their families ; some living in tents, others in *καλύβια* or huts of light materials. This is the common practice of the mountaineers of northern Greece, the far larger proportion of whom are Christians, either of Albanian or Vlakhote race, but the present party are Musulman Liape, from the mountains near Tepeláni.

Between the walls of the ancient town and the modern houses of the Liméni, Skala, or Skáloμα¹, are the remains of a suburb of the ruined town, and close to the houses of the Skala those of a large church, which has long been in ruins, but still retains the name of its saint, St. Basil². On its southern side are the ruins of a smaller church of the same date, sacred to St. Nicolas³.

¹ τὸ λιμένι, ἢ σκάλα, or τὸ σκάλωμα.

² Ἅγιος Βασίλειος.

³ Ἅγιος Νικόλαος.