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William Martin Leake

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# TRAVELS

IN

## NORTHERN GREECE.

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### CHAPTER X.

#### MELIS, ÆNIANES.

Zitúni, *Lamia*—View of *Melis*, *Thermopylæ*, and Mount *Æta* from Zitúni—Mount Katavóthra—Patratzíkí or Neópatra, *Hypata*—Rivers Elládha, or *Spercheius*, and Vistrítza, or *Inachus*—*Ænians*—*Ætæi*—tribes of the *Malienses*—*Phthiotæ*—*Dolopes*—*Dryopes*—Franzí—River Gurgo, *Dyras*—Mavranéria, *Melas*—*Trachis*—*Heracleia*—Rivers Karvunariá, or *Asopus*, and *Phænix*—*Anthele*—*Thermopylæ*—*Alpeni*—*Nicæa*—Pundonítza—Military events at *Thermopylæ*—Upper Pass of Mount *Callidromus*, or *Anopæa*—Forts *Tichius*, *Rhoduntia*, *Callidromum*.

Nov. 25.—*Ζηρούσιον* is a name remarkable from its resemblance to the Arabic *Zeitún*, which means a place of olive trees, and is repeatedly found in countries where that language is spoken, but as none of the names of Greece are derived from the Arabic unless through the Turkish, as the Turks have corrupted *Zeitún* into *Isdún*, and as *Ζηρούσιον* is found among the bishoprics of the province of

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Larissa in the ninth century, there can be little doubt that the name came into use with others still existing, which are found in the *Notitiæ Episcopatum*, and is not to be traced to an Oriental origin. There are about 3000 Turks in the town, and 2000 Greeks, who are poor, or at least afraid of not appearing so. The district confines eastward on that of *Armyró*, and is bordered in the other directions by *Neópatra*, *'Agrafa*, and *Fér-sala*. It contains near 60 villages, of which the population is almost entirely Greek.

The strength of the castle hill of *Zitúni*, the secure and convenient distance of the place from the sea, and its abundant sources of water, point it out at once as the position of an important Hellenic city, which an inscription copied at *Zitúni*, by Paul Lucas, shows to have been *Lamia*<sup>1</sup>. And this is amply confirmed by *Livy* and *Strabo*. The latter places *Lamia* above the plain, which lies at the head of the *Maliac Gulf*, at a distance of 30 stades from the *Spercheius*<sup>2</sup>. *Livy* describes it as situated on a height distant seven miles from *Heracleia*, of which it commanded the prospect<sup>3</sup>, and as lying

<sup>1</sup> Πόλις Σεβαστήων Λαμιέων Μνασιλαΐδαν Παραμόνου, φύσει δὲ Ξενοφάντου, ἀρετῆς ἕνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς αὐτήν.—P. Lucas, *Voyage dans la Grèce*, &c. tome i. p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀπέχει δὲ Λαμίας ὁ Σπερχεῖος περὶ τριάκοντα σταδίου, ὑπερκειμένης πεδίον τινὸς καθήκοντος ἐπὶ τὸν Μαλιακὸν κόλπον.—*Strabo*, p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Eodem tempore quo Romani Heracleam, Philippus Lamiam ex composito oppugnabat . . . . Intersunt septem millia passuum et quia *Lamia* quam posita est in tumulo, tum regionem eam maxime despectat oppidum, qua breve intervalum videtur et omnia in conspectu sunt, &c.—*Liv.* l. 36, c. 25.

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on the route which led from Thermopylæ through the passes of Phthiotis to Thaumaci<sup>1</sup>.

The only remains I can find of the ancient city are some pieces of the walls of the Acropolis, forming a part of those of the modern castle; and some small remains of the town walls constructed of masonry of the third species, at the foot of the hill beyond the extreme modern houses to the eastward. On the opposite side of the town, a brisk little river turns fourteen mills, situated one above the other, on the slope of the hill. The same method is practised at Dhomokó, but there with only four mills.

The ancient importance of Lamia is shown by its silver coins, and by the occurrence of its name in ancient history, on some important occasions, particularly in the year B. C. 323, when the Athenians, on the death of Alexander, were excited by the “*sibi mortifera facundia*” of Demosthenes to renew their struggle with Macedonia. Antipater was at first unsuccessful, and retired into Lamia, where he was besieged by the Athenians, but their commander Leosthenes, having been slain, and Antipater having received a reinforcement from Asia under Craterus, the Macedonians were again enabled to meet the enemy in the field, and terminated the war by a victory near Crannon<sup>2</sup>. In the year B. C. 191, Lamia was besieged by Philip, son of Demetrius; Livy, in relating this

<sup>1</sup> Liv. l. 32, c. 4. V. supra, Polyb. l. 9, c. 29. Pausan. vol. i. p. 458. l. 10, c. 3. Plutarch. in Demosth.

<sup>2</sup> Diodor. l. 18, c. 9, et seq. Arrian. ap. Phot. cod. 92.

transaction, takes notice of the rocky soil of Lamia, which prevented the Macedonians from making so rapid a progress in this siege as their comrades, who were similarly employed at Heracleia on the opposite side of the plain<sup>1</sup>. In the following year Lamia was taken by the Romans under Manius Acilius Glabrio<sup>2</sup>.

The castle of Zitúni commands a most beautiful and interesting prospect; and being itself a remarkable point, is an excellent geographical station. There is no other of equal altitude which comprehends so complete a view of the country adjacent to the head of the *Maliac* Gulf, or at least that affords so much assistance in understanding the history of the celebrated events which have occurred on this scene. Having the advantage to-day of a most diaphanous atmosphere, I easily recognize the places with which I was familiar in 1802.

The most striking part of the prospect is the vast *Ætæan* range of mountains extending from *Callidromus* above *Thermopylæ*, as far westward as the summit near Karpenísi named Velúkhi, not far to the left of which is seen Patratzíkí or Neópatra, below one of the highest summits of the range; to the left of that town rise the stupendous precipices called Katavóthra, which fall in a north-eastern direction to the plain of Zitúni. In the opposite quarter, towards the entrance of the gulf, is seen Stylídha<sup>3</sup>, the port of Zitúni; and in a line

<sup>1</sup> Liv. l. 36, c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Στυλίδθα.

<sup>2</sup> Id. l. 37, c. 5.

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with it the most westerly inlet of the sea, which here advances to within three miles of the town. Near the shore, on this side of Stylídha, appears the village Aghía Marína; and beyond Stylídha the slope of Mount *Othrys*, as far as the entrance of the *Euboic* Straits. The promontory of Lithádha in *Eubœa* forms a lofty peninsula in the center of the gulf, to the right of which the view comprehends a long reach in the *Euboic* channel; and at its entrance the islands anciently called Lichades, to the right of which is Mount *Cnemis*, with the village of Mola at its foot. From hence, to the beginning of the pass of *Thermopylæ*, a narrow plain abounding with wood extends along the shore, behind which are the hills below Pundonítza, which connect the mountains *Cnemis* and *Callidromus*, and at their foot a remarkable rock, upon which I observed, on my former visit to this country, some remains of ancient monuments. It is nearly in a line with the castle of Pundonítza, seven degrees to the left of which appears the peak of Khlomó above Tálanda. Considerably to the right of Pundonítza begins the precipitous termination of Mount *Callidromus* above the salt springs, which gave name to *Thermopylæ*<sup>1</sup>.

This alone is the proper pass, for to the eastward of it the hills, though now difficult to penetrate on account of the woods, form a very regular slope from the summit of *Callidromus* to the paralian plain, about Mola; the above-mentioned rock

<sup>1</sup> See the plans of the Pass, *Thermopylæ*, at the end of this and of the country around volume.

with the ancient remains, being at the foot of a part of this slope, is not very near the pass, and cannot therefore be the site of any of the places in the pass mentioned by Herodotus; it may indicate perhaps the position of Nicæa<sup>1</sup>. Thereabout it must have been that Hydarnes descended to the rear of Leonidas. The eastern extremity of the pass was a little to the left or east of the dervéni, or guard-house, from whence to the upper or western salt-springs, precipices overhang the pass, gradually increasing in height from the former position to the latter, immediately over which they are highest. Above these precipices there is still an elevated country of varied surface, gradually rising to the foot of the snowy and fir-clad summit of the mountain; and in this place, just under the highest peak, stands the village of Dhrakospiliá<sup>2</sup>.

Below the district of Dhrakospiliá, to the westward, extends a regular and cultivated declivity, which belongs to another village named Dhamastá<sup>3</sup>, and reaches to the *Asopus*, and *Thermopylæ*, terminating at the latter in a long stony slope corresponding to the plain of Anthele of Herodotus, which lies between the upper salt source of *Thermopylæ* proper, and another pass to the westward where the road is confined between cliffs and a marsh, and where are also some sources of hot salt water. But this latter pass, lying between the plain of *Anthele* and the *Aso-*

<sup>1</sup> Polyb. l. 10, c. 42; l. 17, c. 1. 7. Strabo, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Δρακοσπιλιά.

<sup>3</sup> Δαμουστά.

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*pian* plain, may be turned through the slope of Dhamastá. So that supposing the sea and marshes to have occupied all that which now forms a plain in front of *Thermopylæ*, the real pass will be reduced to the space between the dervéni and the old or upper sources, or in other words to the space eastward of the plain of *Anthele*, which is now occupied by the course of the eastern salt springs and their deposit. Dhamastá is situated at the head of some cultivated declivities at the foot of a precipice under the upper heights of the mountain, and around it there is a considerable tract of vineyards. The cultivated slope immediately below the village is separated by some shrubby steep from the *Asopian* or *Trachinian* plain. To the right of Dhamastá is seen a little table land on the mountain, upon which, among the woods, stands a monastery of the Panaghía, and near it to the right, is an acclivity reaching to the crest of the *Zygós*, or connecting ridge, which unites Mount *Callidromus* with the great *Ætæan* summits, and over which passes the modern road from *Zitúni* to *Sálona*. This *Zygós* is cultivated in patches quite to the top. The summit of *Parnassus* makes its appearance above a shrubby height; one of the lowest of those bordering the plain, and which to the westward is bounded by the precipitous ravine of the *Asopus*, which river here traverses the mountain nearly in the same oblique direction in which it crosses the plain. To the right of the *Asopus* for two miles are seen the great precipices from which the city *Trachis* derived its name, and which about the middle

advance considerably into the plain. Above them are seen some small villages, situated on cultivated slopes, extending as far as the great summit which is called Patriótiko, or Patratzikiótiko, from its being immediately above Neópatra, or Patratzík. This summit is covered with firs and other trees. Between the cliffs of Trachis or *Heraclia*, to the westward, and the still higher precipices called Katavóthra, where the valley is narrowest, a cultivated declivity advances into the *Trachinian* plain. Here on the edge of the plain are the villages Vardhátēs, Alpóspata, and Franzí. A remarkable chasm separates the south easternmost summit of the Patriótiko from the Katavóthra, and terminates to the left of the heights of Franzí in a ravine which descends into the plain near Alpóspata, half way between the end of the *Trachinian Rocks* and the point of Franzí. Here and at the foot of the gorge of the *Asopus*, the land of *Trachis* is highest, and from these two points it subsides gradually to the *Spercheius*. This river is now known by the name of Elládha<sup>1</sup>; Mount *Callidromus* is called Sarómata, —the *Asopus*, Karvunariá.

A pezodhrómo well acquainted with all this country, informs me that there is a road of not above two hours along the upper region of the mountain from Dhrakospiliá to Pundonítza, which he has often traversed. It is undoubtedly by the same route that Hydarnes crossed the mountain, and the pézo may possibly be a descendant of his

<sup>1</sup> Ἑλλάδα.



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guide; for neither the barbarians of the east nor of the north seem to have colonized much in *Melis*, if we may judge by the names of places, which are chiefly of Greek derivation.

Livy thus describes the *Œtæan* barrier<sup>1</sup>: “These mountains which divide Greece in the middle, as Italy is divided by the ridge of the Apennine, extend in a continued line from Leucas and the western sea to that on the eastern side of Greece; they are so uneven and rocky, that not only armies, but even ordinary pedestrians find a difficulty in crossing them by the few paths which they afford. At the eastern extremity they are named *Œta*, and their highest summit *Callidromon*, at the foot of which, towards the *Maliac* Gulf, there is a pass only sixty paces in breadth. This is the only military road which affords the means of transit to an army, when it meets with no impediment from an opponent. Hence the place is denominated *Pylæ*, and sometimes *Thermopylæ*, the latter name being derived from some hot waters, which have their sources in the pass itself.”

Strabo agrees with Livy in considering the proper *Œta* to have been the eastern portion of the ridge which stretches across the continent from the *Ambracic* Gulf, as well as in describing the summit nearest to *Thermopylæ* as the highest point of *Œta*<sup>2</sup>; in which latter opinion, however, they were both mistaken, *Mount Patriótiko* being

<sup>1</sup> Liv. l. 36, c. 15.

τατον ἑὲ κατὰ τὰς Θερμοπύλας.

<sup>2</sup> Τραχὺ καὶ ὑψηλόν, ὑψηλό-

—Strabo, p. 428.

considerably higher. Strabo further remarks, that *Œta* was 200 stades in length, that it terminated towards the sea in precipices which left only a narrow passage for the road from *Thessaly* into *Locris*, and that the pass was called *Pylæ*, or *Stena*, or *Thermopylæ*, which last appellation was derived from some hot waters, sacred to *Hercules*. He adds that the mountain which rises above the pass bore the name of *Callidromum*, though some gave this denomination to the whole range, extending through *Ætolia* and *Acarmania* to the *Ambracic Gulf*; and that near *Thermopylæ*, within the Straits, were several fortresses, namely, *Nicæa* on the sea shore of *Locris*,—higher up *Teichius*, and *Heracleia*, which was founded by the *Lacedæmonians* in a position six stades distant from the ancient *Trachis*, and *Rhodontia*, in a strong situation. The geographer then subjoins some remarks borrowed from *Herodotus*, who, as his object was that of tracing the progress of *Xerxes* and his host through the eastern part of Greece, confined himself to a description of the eastern extremity of that belt of country which is referred to by *Livy* and *Strabo*. After having described the march of the Persian army through *Thessaly* and the *Achaian Phthiotis*, *Herodotus* states that *Xerxes* then entered *Melis*, near a gulf where the sea ebbs and flows. “Here,” he continues, “is a plain, large in one part, and in another very narrow. High and inaccessible mountains, called the *Trachinian rocks*, surround the land of *Melis*. The first city in the gulf, proceeding from *Achaia*, is *Anticyra*, near which the river *Spercheius*, flowing from the *Ænians*,