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 William Martin Leake
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TRAVELS

IN

THE MOREA.

FIRST JOURNEY.

CHAPTER I.

ELEIA.

Gastúni.—ELIS.—Modern agriculture of the ELEIA.—
 From Gastúni to Pyrgo.—OLYMPIA.—Pyrgo.

ON the 22d of February 1805 I sailed from the town of Zante ^a with a strong northerly breeze, and in five hours arrived at the mouth of the Peneius, now called the river of Gastúni ^b: landed and walked to Gastúni, not without some impediment from the marshy state of the plain; arrived there at sun-set, and was politely received by Dr. Sessini, to whom I had letters.

^a Ζάκυνθος—by the Greeks pronounced Zákyntho, and often Zátjitho, a cacophonia derived from the Italians, whose *ce*, *ci*, have been adopted by many of the maritime

Greeks in the pronunciation of *k* before those vowels or diphthongs which are equivalent to the Italian *e*, *i*.

^b Τὸ ποτάμι τοῦ Γκαστουίνου.

I then sent down horses for my baggage, which did not arrive till midnight.

Gastúni, like the other places in these maritime plains, is built of brick baked in the sun ; and, as in Egypt where the same material is used, the excavations formed in digging out the bricks leave large stagnant pools of water. The exhalations from these ponds render Gastúni very unwholesome in summer. In Egypt the same bad effect does not occur, because there, in the dangerous season, the whole country is inundated. The unhealthy air of Gastúni has made all the three brothers Sessini physicians. One of them only is now here ; another is with Seid Agá at Lalla.

The town has one advantage at least—that of not being crowded ; each house has a yard around it, or a garden planted with orange and cypress trees. Space indeed would be their last want, for the greater part of this plain of Elis, once so renowned for its fertility, is now a desert ; a little cultivation around a few villages being all that its present possessors have done to assist the prodigality of nature. Buffalos, sheep, and oxen enjoy the rest of the plain. The two latter supply butcher's meat to Zante, where pasture is found only on the mountain. Gastúni contains about 500 houses ; half of these belong to the Turkish proprietors of the lands, of which

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PYRGO.

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those in cultivation are chiefly the property of the heirs of one Hassán Agá, who died lately at Constantinople ; namely, his son Bekír Efféndi, who is now at Gastúni, and a nephew, Shemseddín Bey, who is at Constantinople,—to him Castel Tornese belongs. Ismaíl Efféndi, the Vóivoda, who has purchased the Dhekatía^a, or tithe, and customs from the Porte for three years, in the usual manner, is said to be a cypher compared with Bekír Efféndi.

At Pyrgo all the inhabitants are Greeks, with the exception of those who are in the service of Mustafá Agá, who is Vóivoda and chief landed proprietor, as well as farmer of the imperial revenue. He and his brother Seid Agá of Lalla, who as well as most of their followers are of Albanian race, can bring 500 or 600 men into the field. At Lalla all the inhabitants are Musulmans, except a few shop-keepers. The hills which lie between the maritime plains and the districts of Lalla and Fanári produce among the pine-woods, which cover the greater part of them, wine and corn, a little oil and silk, and a considerable quantity of tar, extracted from the pines. The hills, though not high, are often steep ; they consist for the most part of a light-coloured clay, and being cut into deep ravines by the torrents, and extremely varied in their

^a Δεκατία.

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forms, they present a very picturesque scenery, quite peculiar to this district. Olympia was situated in the midst of this beautiful country. The hills are intersected by many small streams, flowing to the *Alpheius*, which winds along a narrow lower valley very subject to inundation.

Feb. 23.—*Elis* stood on the edge of the plain where the *Peneius* issues from the hills, on the northern side of one of them, at a distance of about eight miles by the road from Gastúni. The hill of *Elis* is conspicuous above the others by its superior height, its peaked form, and by a ruined tower on the summit. Both the height and the tower are now called Kaloskopí; a name which the Venetians, having translated it into Belvedere, applied to one of the five districts into which they divided the Moréa. But the most remarkable of all the natural features of this part of the *Eleia*, is the great insulated rock called the mountain of Portes or Sandaméri^a, two villages which are situated in a narrow valley watered by a branch of the *Peneius*, which separates the mountain of Portes from the great heights of O'lonos. The southern extremity of the rocky summit is about eight miles to the north-east of Kaloskopí. Near the foot of Kaloskopí are two or three small villages, which, from their standing on the site of

^a Τὸ βουνὸν Πορταῖκὸν ἢ Σανταμεριώτικον.

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ELIS.

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the ancient capital of this country, are called by the common name of Paleópolis. In that which is nearest to the hill I find the men and girls singing and dancing the Roméika^a, with the more diligence as to-morrow is the last day of Carnival, after which the fast of Lent begins. They break off as soon as I ride up, and in a few minutes bring me upwards of a hundred coins, one or two of which are Venetian and Dalmatian, the rest Greek, but for the most part in very bad preservation. They are found in ploughing the fields among the ruins.

Strabo represents the Peneius as flowing *through* the city of Elis^b; at present there are no remains on the right bank, which is steep, and runs into the plain in the form of a long even slope, easily recognized at a distance. It seems therefore that all the public monuments were on the left bank of the stream; and this is confirmed in great measure by Pausanias not having made any allusion to the river in the course of his description of Elis. The ruins consist of several masses of Roman tile and mortar, with many wrought blocks of stone and fragments of sculpture scattered over a space

^a The ancient κύκλικος χορός. For a proof of the ancient practice of the circular dance, see an Inscription which I

copied at Acræphium in Bœotia, and lately published in the Museum Criticum.

^b Strabo, p. 337.

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of two or three miles in circumference. The most remarkable of the ruins is that of a square building of about twenty feet on the outside, which within is in the form of an octagon with niches. Like most of the other remains it is built of alternate strata of Roman tile and stone rubble.

Strabo^a and Diodorus^b assert, that Elis did not exist as a city until after the Persian war, when, according to Strabo, seven other neighbouring towns were united to Elis. On the other hand, it was the opinion of Pausanias, and of the natives themselves, that Elis had been founded, on the return of the Heracleidæ, by Oxylus the Ætolian; and Strabo himself admits, that it was the capital of the Epeii before the Trojan war. The probability is, that the town of Elis was at that time named Ephyra, and that it assumed under Oxylus, who enlarged it, the name which had before been applied to the district. This opinion is supported by a scholiast on the *Odyssey*, and it is conformable to Homer, who informs us that Ephyra was on the Selleis; for that the Peneius was the Selleis of the poet, there can be little doubt, as it is the only considerable river in this part of the country. Indeed, I think

^a Strabo, p. 336.^b Diod. l. II. c. 54.

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ELIS.

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Strabo himself was of this opinion, though an opposite meaning is conveyed by his corrupted text ^a.

When Ephyra was the chief town of the Eleia, or κοίλη Ἡλίδος, Buprasium was the capital of the Epeii, and when the latter people obtained possession of Elis, their king, Augeias, fixed his residence at Ephyra. Such seems to have been the state of affairs at the time of the

^a I allude particularly to the following passage:—

Μεταξὺ δὲ τοῦ Χελωνάτα καὶ τῆς Κυλλήνης ὁ τε Πηνειὸς ἐκδίδωσι ποταμὸς καὶ ὁ Σελλήεις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παιητοῦ λεγόμενος ῥέων ἐκ τῆς Φολόης ἐφ' ᾧ ἔφουρα πόλις ἐπὶ τῇ ὁδῷ κειμένη τῇ ἐπὶ θάλατταν ἦτοι ἢ αὐτῇ οὔσα τῇ Βοιῶνα ἢ πλησίον ἐκείνης, διέχουσα τῆς Ἡλείων πόλεως σταδίους ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι, Strabo, p. 338. In the beginning of this passage I conceive that Strabo wrote Μετὰ τὸν Χελωνάταν καὶ τὴν Κυλλήνην: for if we revert to what precedes, we shall find that he is describing the coast of Eleia, beginning from the northern promontory Araxus [ἄκρα πρόσφορος Ἀραξος]; he then proceeds to say—μετὰ ταύτην ἐστὶν ἡ Κυλλήνη, and, μετὰ Κυλλήνην ἀκρωτήριον Χελωνάτας: After these, (μετὰ τὸν Χ. καὶ τὴν Κ.) ὁ Πηνειὸς ἐκδίδωσι would correctly follow; the

received text, on the contrary, is quite untrue, for there is not any river joining the sea between Chelonatas and Cyllene, two places, in fact, very near to each other. I should propose also, instead of καὶ ὁ Σελλήεις, to read ὁ καὶ Σελλήεις: for I conceive Strabo to have intended to say, that the Peneius was the same river as the Selleis of the poet. He appears to have imagined that Ephyra stood at or near a place called Bœnoa or Œnoe, which must have been very near the mouth of the river, if the number of stades in the text (120) is accurate, the mouth of the Peneius being hardly so much from Elis. But, as I have already remarked, it is more probable that Ephyra was the same place as Elis itself.

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ELIS.

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Trojan armament. Notwithstanding the care of Oxylus, Elis appears, in consequence of the peculiar government and manners of the people, to have again declined, until after the Olympiad of Corœbus, B. C. 776, when the Eleians having wrested from the Pisatæ the possession of the Hierum of Jupiter Olympius, and having obtained the management of the quadrennial festival and contest, with all the power and influence annexed to that sacred charge, the city increased rapidly in importance. Herodotus informs us, that the Eleians sent an embassy to Psammis, king of Egypt, who lived about the year 600 B. C. Some of the earliest extant coins with the legend FAΛEION may be still more ancient; at least, they show the riches of Elis, as well as its connexion with Olympia, at a very early period. The brazen tablet, now in the British Museum, which records a treaty of alliance between the FAΛEIOI and EYFAOIOI, may also be ascribed to the seventh century^a.

Gastúni is supplied with water for drinking

^a Inscriptions of this remote antiquity are the more difficult to explain, as they are not only always dialectic, but often in forms to which we find nothing similar in later inscriptions in the same

dialect. One can hardly suppose APXOΙ ΔΕΚΑΤΟΙ to have had any other meaning than ἐπὶ ἄρχῃ δεκάτῃ, Elis, perhaps, having been governed by decennial archons, as Athens was about the same

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GASTUNI.

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from the *Peneius*; it is clear and good even in this season of rain, and my host, the Doctor, assures me that it is wholesome. The district,

period. Ἄρχοι is the word applied to the Eleian leaders by Homer.

The following passage in the tablet,—

ΑΙ ΔΕ ΜΑ ΣΥΝΕΑΝ ΤΑΔΑΝΤΟΝ Κ' ΑΡΤΥΡΟ ΑΠΟΤΙΝΟΙΑΝ
ΤΟΙ ΔΙ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΟΙ ΤΟΙ ΚΑΔΑΛΕΜΕΝΟΙ ΛΑΤΡΕΙΟΜΕΝΟΝ

is thus translated by Mr. Knight, “but if they do not so assist, let those who, by failing, may have violated the treaty, pay a talent of silver to Jupiter Olympius for sacred services.” May it not rather be thus translated: “But if they do not so assist, let them pay a talent of silver to Jupiter Olympius, as men who have violated a thing sanctified”? καταδηλημένοι λατρεύμενον will then resemble the κερπὸν ἐδηλόσαντ' of Homer. M. Boeck (Inscr. Gr. Vol. I. p. 29.) has adopted the opinion that the word ΕΥΦΑΟΙΟΙΣ ought to be read ΕΡΦΑΟΙΟΙΣ, and applied to Heræa. Allowing the second letter to be doubtful on the tablet, which I do not think, there are still some strong objections to his interpretation. These are, first, that the name of Juno on all the most ancient monuments is always preceded by Η, or

some other sign of an aspiration. Secondly, that no example can be found of a digamma between a P and a vowel, though it was used preceding a P. Thirdly, that the people of Heræa were called ΗΡΑΙΕΙΣ, which it seems impossible to convert into ΗΡΑΟΙΟΙ. I am inclined to think, that the people mentioned in the inscription were the inhabitants of the Arcadian city called by Stephanus Eva, though that may not have been correctly the ancient form of the word. The small towns of Arcadia were extremely numerous at a remote period, as their remains still testify; of many we have not even the names, and of others, the names of which occur in Pausanias and Stephanus, the situations are not known. Mr. Knight supposed Eva to have been one of the Eleian towns; but I cannot conceive that at the

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GASTUNI.

[CHAP. I.

exclusive of Pyrgo, has three ports^a; that at which I disembarked at the mouth of the river, distant one hour; Glarántza, distant three hours; and Kunupéli, distant six hours. Ecclesiastically the district belongs to the bishopric of Olenus^b, a diocese of the *ἐπαρχία*, or province of the Metropolitan of Patra^c, which is bounded on the south by the *Alpheius*, where it borders on the province of Christianopolis or Arkadhía. Pyrgo is the usual residence of the Bishop of Olenus. The Vilayéti, or civil district, including Pyrgo, contains 140 villages, of which the largest next to Gastúni and Pyrgo, are Lekhená and Andravídha.

The name of Gastúni, otherwise Ghastúni^d, indicates a Frank origin: it was probably founded by some person of the name of Gaston, belonging to one of the French families, Champlite and Villehardouin, which, about the time of the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, established a principality in the north of the Moréa. After the Turks had recovered the Moréa from the Venetians in 1715, the Sultan gave the Mukatá of the district of Gastúni as a malikhiané, or farm for life, to Khotmán Oglú

date of this inscription any of those towns were in a condition to make a treaty, on equal terms, with Elis.

^a Σκάλαις or σκαλώματα.

^b Τοῦ Ὁλένου.

^c Τῶν Παλαιῶν Πατρῶν.

^d Γκαστούμιον or Γαστάμιον.