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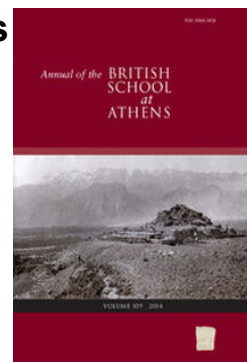
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A Cave of the Nymphs on Mount Ossa

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The Annual of the British School at Athens / Volume 15 / November 1909, pp 243 - 247

DOI: 10.1017/S0068245400017639, Published online: 18 October 2013

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0068245400017639

How to cite this article:

A.J.B. Wace and M.S. Thompson (1909). A Cave of the Nymphs on Mount Ossa. The Annual of the British School at Athens, 15, pp 243-247 doi:10.1017/S0068245400017639

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A CAVE OF THE NYMPHS ON MOUNT OSSA.

ON the north-west side of the great central cone of Mount Ossa a wide fissure runs right across the mountain from Mega Keserli to Tságezi. On the south side of this fissure and at the base of the central cone lies the village of Spiliá, which is to be distinguished from another village of the same name near Laspochori at the eastern entrance to Tempe. To the north of the fissure rises a peak known as Pláka, which is the part of Ossa that directly overhangs Tempe. A little below the bare rocky summit of this peak, which rises to a height of at least 3,500 feet, and on its south side about an hour's walk from Spiliá, is a cave, which, though long known to the inhabitants of the district, has never before been visited by archaeologists. We were told of its existence by Mr. Kostis Phrangópoulos of Pournári, and he accompanied us when we examined it with Mr. H. A. Ormerod on February 2nd, 1910, so that it may be said that archaeology is indebted to Mr. Phrangópoulos for the discovery of this interesting monument, and we ourselves also desire to record here our great obligations to him.

The mouth of the cave, which faces south, is low and is now partly blocked by the fall of masses of stone in front of the entrance. Within the cave the floor slopes downward from the entrance, but this perhaps is partly due to the fact that shepherds and others have dug for treasure in the innermost parts and thrown up the earth and stones towards the entrance. At all events Mr. Phrangópoulos told us that the cave had been much disturbed and that some of the inscriptions which he had seen there (for instance (1) below) had been broken up since his first visit some twenty years ago. The eastern half of the cave is now entirely blocked by the fall of enormous masses of rock from the roof; in the northern corner of the western part there is a stone base (20 m. high, 50 m. square) with a socket

on top (·17 m. by ·20 m.) for the insertion of a votive stele or statue. Near it once stood the other socketed block which bears inscription (1). Below this and connected with the north-western corner by a low narrow passage is a small inner cave similar to the large main one. It was here that we found inscription (4). Both caves are natural, and, as far as we could see, show no signs of having been artificially enlarged. The walls are covered with a stalactite deposit, but there are few actual stalactites. We were unable to find any small votive objects such as fragments of bronze or terracotta, except a few vase fragments of uncertain date, but amongst the rubbish inside the entrance to the cave we found, besides the piece of the inscribed base already mentioned, many fragments of votive stelai, most of which are also inscribed. These are dedications to the Nymphs, who in one inscription (4) are apparently called Oreads or mountain Nymphs, and, so far, there is no mention of Pan. The stelai are all inscribed in one or two lines at the top or bottom, and the rest of the surface is now blank; none of them is sculptured. It seems unlikely that it would ever have been the custom to dedicate blank slabs of marble to any deity, therefore we must assume that these stelai, like the now famous grave stelai of Pagasai, once bore paintings. In fact we thought that on one or two fragments we could discern slight traces of paint. As on the Pagasai stelai, only the part which is inscribed is smoothed, and the whole of the rest of the stele is slightly roughened in order to hold the paint. So we think that no one who has had the opportunity of comparing these stelai with those from Pagasai can seriously doubt that these also were painted. All the stelai have a 'root' at the bottom to set them up in the ground or in a stone socket.

The inscriptions we found are as follows:—

(1) Fragment of a socketed marble base: front left-hand corner; ·20 m. high, ·26 m. long, ·32 m. deep, letters ·03 m. high. Inscription complete above, below, and on left. The letters are irregular and vary in size.

ΤΑΙΞΝΥΝ - - - -

ΧΟΞΚΑΙΟΙΓ - - - -

ΙΟΝΕΘΕΙΚΑΕ - - -

Ταῖς νύν[φαις ὁ δεῖνα - - μα]-

χος καὶ οἱ π[αῖδες εὐξάμενο]-

ι ὀνέθεικαε[ν].

Ὀνέθεικαεν for ἀνέθηκαν occurs in a Pharsalian inscription, *I.G.* ix. 2, 244.

(2) Gabled votive stele: marble; left half only; root at bottom; inscription on raised bar below gable; '18 m. wide, '34 m. high, '04 m. thick, letters '01 m. high; complete on left; painted surface '25 m. high.

.. ΡΥΧΑΔΕΥΝΤΙΣ - - - -

These letters, if read correctly, probably conceal the names of the dedicators.

(3) Flat-topped stele: marble; broken in two, but complete; inscription on raised bar at top; root below; '32 m. high (with root '43 m.), '30 m. wide, '03 m. thick, letters '015 m. high; painted surface '25 m. high.

ΛΕΩΙ . . . ΤΙΓΟ - - - - Λέω(ν)[᾿Αν]τίγο[νος (or -γόνου) ταῖς]
ΝΥΜΦΑΙΞΕΥΞΙ - - - - νύμφαις εὐξ(ά)[μενοι or -μενος].

Λέων is a common name in Thessaly, cf. *I.G.* ix. 2, p. 297.

(4) Gabled stele with simple acroteria: marble; no raised bar; root below; '26 m. high (with root '30 m.), '26 m. wide, '04 m. deep, letters '01 m. high.

ΟΡΕΙ - - - -

ΕΝΠΕΔΟΚΛΕΙΑΦΙΛΟΔΑΜΕΙΑΠΕΡΓΕΝΕΑΣ

᾿Ορει[άσιν]

᾿Ενπεδόκλεια Φιλοδαμεία πὲρ γενεᾶς.

We have suggested ᾿Ορειάσιν as a restoration although we cannot find any epigraphical parallel (in *C.I.G.* 997 = *I.G.* iii. 2, 1354 ᾿Ερει[νύ]σιν is now read for [᾿Ο]ρει[ά]σιν); but the word is used by Bion, i. 19. Πὲρ γενεᾶς is probably equivalent to ὑπὲρ γενεᾶς, cf. *I.G.* ix. 2, p. 333; and in two Thessalian votive inscriptions (*I.G.* ix. 2, 577, 585) πὲρ τοῖ παιδός is the restored reading.

(5) Flat-topped stele: marble; inscription on raised bar at top; three fragments fitting together, lower left hand corner missing; '66 m. wide, '49 m. high (with root '525 m.), '08 m. thick, letters '015 m. high; painted face '27 m. high.

.. ΝΦΑΙΣΜΙ - - - ΑΜΟΣΘΕΝΕΙΑΕΥΞΑΜΕΝΑΙ - - - -

[Νύ]μφαις Μί[κρα Δ]αμοσθενεία εὐξάμεναι [ἀνέθηκαν (?)].

For the conjunction of these two names, cf. *I.G.* ix. 2, 1227, l. 4, where the second name is regarded as a patronymic, and therefore is accented

paroxytone. But the present inscription, if read correctly, seems to prove that they are two separate names, and must be restored as such in the *Corpus*, unlike those in the rest of the inscription, which are clearly nominatives followed by the patronymic in each line. It is, however, possible that we should read here *εὐξαμένα* ι - - -, and thus regard Δ]αμοσθενεία as a patronymic, as we have several other examples of feminine participles in -μένα for -μένη. This in turn avoids inconsistency in the other stone.

(6) Lower left-hand corner of stele: marble; inscription below; complete on left; '23 m. high, '20 m. wide, '04 m. thick, letters '015 m. high.

ΠΑΝΞΑΞ - - - -

Πάνσας [νύνφας - - -]

ΠΑΝΞΑ occurs in a Pharsalian inscription as a Thessalian form for *πάσα*, *I.G.* ix. 2, 234, l. 2; cf. also the feminine forms of the participles in Thessaly, *I.G.* ix. 2, p. 338.

(7) Flat topped stele: marble; inscription on bar at top; root below; complete; '30 m. high (with root '36 m.), '30 m. wide, '04 m. thick, letters '02 m. high. All that is visible of the inscription are the following letters near the end:—

- - - - ΣΙΙ - - - -

(8) Mr. Phrangópoulos once had in his possession a fragment of marble inscribed, as he told us, *ταῖς νύμφαις ἐξάμενον*; this should probably be read *ταῖς νύμφαις ἐξάμενος*.

With the exception of (1), which seems to belong to the fourth century, all the inscriptions apparently date from the third and second centuries B.C.

The interest of this cave lies in the fact that it is the first so far discovered in North Greece,¹ and that, unlike the others hitherto known, it seems to be dedicated to the Nymphs alone, and not to Pan and the Nymphs.² We hope that it will be possible for us to excavate it later, when doubtless more light will be thrown on the cult³ practised here.

A. J. B. WACE.

M. S. THOMPSON.

¹ Cf. Rouse, *Gk. Votive Offerings*, pp. 46 ff.

² Pan was worshipped on Mount Homole, the part of Ossa near Homolion, which is placed at Laspochori: Theocritus, vii. 104; Γεωργιάδης, *Θεσσαλία*,² p. 146.

³ For the cult of the Nymphs in general see Gruppe, *Griech. Mythologie*, pp. 826 ff.; Roscher, *Lexikon*, s.v., and Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. pp. 424 ff., 458 ff.

NOTE.

Dr. Arvanitopoulos has now brought down to the Larissa Museum the inscriptions we saw. He also, through Mr. Phrangópoulos, excavated for a day. His finds include two inscribed fragments which complete No. 2, which now reads: ///ΙΥΡΙΧΑ. ΞΥΝΤΙΣ////////ΦΙΑΝΥΝΦΑΙΣ. The whole stone is now twice the width of the fragment seen by us in the cave. [We have probably to deal with two names coupled with σύν, *e.g.* Πυριχα · σύν Τισ[ικρατ]εῖα Νύμφαις; but it is hard to see what the first name can have been, as we have to account for the vacant space between Α and Σ, unless, perhaps, it was Πυρίχα[s], an unknown variety of the common name Πύρ(ρ)ιχος¹: the omission of the second ε is frequent in Thessalian inscriptions. For the second name the choice is not large: we might also read Τισ[ιμα]χεία, a feminine name formed from Τισίμαχος, but hitherto, apparently, unknown.—A. M. W.] Other finds include fragments of black-glazed pottery and broken terracotta figurines of the fourth and third centuries B.C., a bronze ring with a representation of Eros with a bow, and a copper Thessalian coin of the Antonine Age. Dr. Arvanitopoulos hopes to complete the excavation of the cave later in the summer.

A. J. B. W.

M. S. T.

LARISSA, May 21st.

¹ Or Πυρί(ν)α[s], as in *I.G.* ix. 2, 109 b, l. 48; cf. *Pyrrhas*, *ibid.* 281, l. 2.