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HERMES *CHTHONIOS* AS EPONYM OF THE SKOPADAE

FROM the tenth Pythian ode of Pindar we learn that both the Aleuadae,¹ who had their seat of power at Larissa, and the Skopadae, lords of Crannon, once called Ephyra, were descendants of Heracles. These families are chiefly known to us through the poets, and in the case of the Skopadae, from the passage in the *Protagoras* of Plato in which a poem of Simonides is discussed. The statement of Theocritus,² that the great families of Thessaly would be buried in obscurity but for the songs written in their honour, is amply justified :

πολλοὶ ἐν Αντιόχοιο δόμοις καὶ ἄνακτος Ἀλεῦα
 ἄρμαλιν ἐμμηνον ἐμετρήσαντο πενεσταί·
 πολλοὶ δὲ Σκοπάδαισιν ἐλαυνόμενοι ποτὶ σηκοὺς
 μόσχοι σὺν κεραῇσιν ἐμυκήσαντο βοέεσσι
 μυρία ἄμ' πεδίον Κραννώνιον ἐνδιάσκειν
 ποιμένες ἔκκριτα μῆλα φιλοξείνοισι Κρεώνδαις.
 ἀλλ' οὐ σφιν τῶν ἡδος, ἐπεὶ γλυκὺν ἐξεκένωσαν
 θυμὸν ἐς εὐρείαν σχεδὶαν στυγνοῖο γέροντος,
 ἀμναστοὶ δὲ τὰ πολλὰ καὶ ὄλβια τῆνα λιπόντες
 δειλοῖς ἐν νεκύεσσι μακροὺς αἰῶνας ἔκειντο
 εἰ μὴ δεινὸς ἀοιδὸς ὁ Κήιος αἶολα φωνέων
 βάρβιτον ἐς πολύχορδον ἐν ἀνδράσι θῆκε ὀνομαστοὺς
 ὀπλοτέρους.

The Aleuadae are more conspicuous and more often mentioned than the Skopadae, who were the younger branch of the Aleuad family, as the Kreondae are the younger branch of the Skopadae at Krannon. Both families appear to have immigrated from Thesprotia. The eponym of the Aleuadae is one of the Thessalian heroes whose story brings them into connexion with the serpent, of whom the most famous is Asklepios. Of him Rohde writes : ' In Wahrheit ist ursprünglich auch er ein in der Erde hausender thessalischer Ortsdaimon gewesen, der aus der Tiefe, wie viele solche Erdgeister, Heilung von Krankheiten, Kenntniss der Zukunft (beides in alter Zeit eng verbunden) heraufsandte.' ³

The name Aleuas, as I have previously pointed out,⁴ means Averter of Ill, and is closely connected with the name of the goddess of Mantinea and Tegea, whose title Alea has been interpreted by M. Fougères ⁵ as the goddess affording the 'protection qui éloigne le mal.' Aleuas was evidently once the name or title of a divine hero of the order of the Thessalian Heracles. In the northern Greek countries, in Aetolia, Epirus, Macedonia, and Thessaly, names

¹ Boeckh on Pindar, *Pyth.*, 10, pp. 531–534.

² *Id.*, 16, 34 ff.

³ *Psyche*, 1, 141.

⁴ *C.Q.*, xiii., 3–4, 170–171.

⁵ *B.C.H.*, xvi., 573.

from the verbs meaning to ward off ill are exceedingly common among the princes and other distinguished men. Amyntor, Amyntas, Alexander, Alkon, Alketas, Aleuas will serve for examples of such.

It would seem probable that the name Skopas, which maintains itself in the Skopad genealogy, had some especial meaning such as that which kept the name Alexander so prominent in the north of Greece. The value of that name is seen in the health deity Alexanor, as well as in the epithet applied to Heracles, Hermes, Apollo, and other divinities, ἀλεξίκακος. The name Skopas evidently comes from the root σκεπ-, which has in it the meanings of shelter, watch, and look, and may be compared with Latin tueor, which signifies both to guard and to gaze. The meaning of shelter is seen in connexion with the chthonic deities at Hermione, in a definition in Suidas, in which, under the phrase ἀνθ' Ἑρμίωνος is the following :

Ἑρμιόνη γὰρ ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ πόλις Κόρης καὶ Δήμητρος ἄσυλος, ὥστε σκέπην παρέχειν τοῖς ἱκετεύουσιν.

This is the most useful example of the root for my purpose, which is to give the meaning of Shelterer, Protector to the name Skopas, and to attach it to a chthonic deity of Thessaly, for whose cult at Crannon and Larissa, and at many other places in Thessaly, there is inscriptional evidence.⁶

The chthonic deity is Hermes, from whom a Thessalian and Aetolian month was named. This month, Hermaios may, as Stein⁷ suggests, testify to a very ancient cult of Hermes as 'Totengott' in Thessaly and Aetolia. There is evidence⁸ that Hermes was worshipped at Pherae, that seat of divinity that traffics with the dead. The chthonic deities are notably the gods of increase of field and flock, and in the sixteenth book⁹ of the *Iliad* Hermes lies with Polymele, the One of Many Flocks, and there is born to him a son Eudoros, an epithet that recalls titles of the Earth, the All-Giver. Hermes himself has the title of ἐπιμήλιος, and the word πολύμηλος¹⁰ occurs in the *Iliad* in connexion with Phorbas (the Feeder of Cattle), the Trojan most beloved by Hermes, who gave him wealth.

There is no need to dwell on these well-known facts, which I use in leading up to the interpretation of Hermes' epithet εὔσκοπος, as the Shelterer or Protector, an interpretation which would link the word with Skopas, the eponym of the lords of Crannon, whose ten thousand goodly sheep were watched by countless shepherds on the plains of Crannon. I would interpret both words in the sense of the lines addressed to another shepherd god :

thou god of shepherds all,
which of our gentle lambkins takest keepe
and when our flock into mischaunce mougt fall
dost save from mischief the unwary sheepe,
Als of their maisters hast no less regard
than of their flocks, which thou dost watch and ward.

⁶ P.W., 8, 738, gives the references.

⁷ P.W., 8, 763.

⁸ Calleim, *Frag.*, 117.

⁹ *Il.*, 16, 180 ff.

¹⁰ *Il.*, 14, 490.

'Watch and ward' expresses the etymological meaning of the root seen in both words. The words *εὔσκεπής*¹¹ and *εὔσκεπαστος*,¹² passives to *εὔσκοπος*, both mean sheltered, the passive forms evidently retaining the more ancient meaning. The active form *εὔσκοπος* passed over into the meaning 'with good aim,' and is applied once in the *Odyssey* to Artemis in that significance. It is later used of the other gods of the bow, Apollo and Heracles. It is not suited to Hermes in that sense, and is found with reference to him twice in the *Iliad* and twice in the *Odyssey*, both in connexion with the much-disputed epithet *ἀργεῖφόντης*.

The lines in the seventh book¹³ of the *Odyssey*, in which the epithets appear, suggest the meaning of Shelterer, the 'custos maximus' of Horace, for *εὔσκοπος*.

σπένδοντες δεπάεσσιν εὔσκόπῳ ἀργεῖφόντῃ
ῥ' πύματ' σπένδεσκον, ὅτε μνησαίαιτο κοῖτου.

Before lying down in sleep, which is so akin to death, they commend themselves to the protection of the God of Souls. Here is the true meaning of *εὔσκοπος* with reference to Hermes. By contamination with the meaning seen in *σκοπός*, mark, the epithet assumed the significance which made it appropriate to archer-gods. The other epithet, *ἀργεῖφόντης*, whatever its meaning, has in it the root which appears in the name of the dread Death Goddess, Persephoneia, and if the etymology of 'Περσε-' is that which is declared in Roscher 2,1288, to be the only satisfactory one, *i.e.* 'stürmendes Licht,' the meaning of *ἀργεῖφόντης* would closely approach that of Persephoneia in both parts of its composition.

In the genealogy of the Skopadae, so far as known, the name Skopas appears as the name of three of the family. The name Diaktorides appears among the suitors of Agorista in the sixth book of Herodotus—*ἐκ δὲ Θεσσαλίας ἦλθε τῶν Σκοπαδέων Διακτορίδης Κρανώνιος, ἐκ δὲ Μολοσσῶν Ἄλκων*. The name of the Skopad suitor is derived from an epithet of the god Hermes, which appears always in the *Iliad* in the phrase *διάκτορος ἀργεῖφόντης*. Of the ten instances of the word in the *Odyssey* it accompanies *ἀργεῖφόντης* in eight. It appears alone in the *Odyssey*, once in the genitive, and once in the vocative. The epithet is appropriate to Hermes *ψυχοπομπός*, who guides souls to and from the realm of Persephone.

Connecting the name Skopas with the epithet *εὔσκοπος*, and noting the name Diaktorides, which points directly to a cult of Hermes, I argue that just as the Aleuadae traced their family to a hero, perhaps a hypostasis of Heracles, whose name was Aleuas, Averter of Evil, so the Skopadae, lords of many flocks, had for their eponym a hypostasis of Hermes Chthonios under the name of Skopas, the Protector.

A third name, for which Gruppe's theorising would furnish me an argument, I must regretfully forgo. He does not discuss the Skopadae, but finds that the hero Kreon is a hypostasis of the Thessalian Hermes. We learn from Plato's

¹¹ Theophrastus, *H.P.*, 4, 11.

¹³ *Od.*, 7, 136–138.

¹² Thuc., V., 71.

J.H.S.—VOL. XLI.

Protagoras that the father of Skopas of Simonides' ode was Kreon. Gruppe¹⁴ writes of Hermes *κρέων*, worshipped in Thessaly, but the train of reasoning by which Hermes is shown to have had this title is to my mind unsound. The only passage quoted in which the title is actually given to Hermes is a fragment from Anacreon, and I have been able to find no other. It is, of course, possible that Hermes may have borne this title, which is a usual one for divinities and heroes, and in that case he would serve excellently as the eponym of the younger branch of the Skopads, the Kreondae.

Like the names Alexanor, Alketas, Alkon, Alexander, Amynder, etc., the name Skopas appears in the western part of northern Greece. It is found in inscriptions¹⁵ referring to Aetolians, and the well-known strategos of the Aetolians¹⁶ (whose name occurs in the second of the two inscriptions cited) was named Skopas. It is significant for the prevalence of these names of religious origin in the north-western parts of Greece, as well as in Macedonia and Thessaly, that among the witnesses on the bronze tablet discovered at Dodona¹⁷ are the names of two Molossians, Alexanor and Skopaïos. (It must be said that the first two letters of the latter name are supplied.)

Hermes does not appear on the coins of Thessaly, which chiefly testify to the worship of the great Thessalian god, Poseidon, but the cult of Hermes was widespread in this land of flocks and herds, and it is characteristic of Thessalian cult that he should be worshipped as *χθόνιος*. From this god, who watched over their wealth and gave them increase, I think the Skopadae got their name.

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¹⁴ *Handbuch*, 5, 2, 1323.

¹⁵ Ditt., *Sylloge*, 845, 11; 923, 3.

¹⁶ *Aetolia, Geography, Topography, and Antiquities*, Woodhouse, p. 235.

¹⁷ Ditt., *Sylloge*, 839, 5.