

Hesiod and the Valley of the Muses

Paul W. Wallace

HESIOD lived at Askra in the Valley of the Muses, in a remote and secluded district among the foothills of Mt Helikon in southwest Boiotia.¹ Hesiod has rather a lot to say about his homeland; in fact, few Greek authors have given so much detail about the places where they themselves lived. In later antiquity travellers also made their way to the old poet's homeland, where festivals and games were held in honor of the Muses. As a result of so much attention, the Valley of the Muses has received more notice in the literature than would be expected for such an out-of-the-way place, but though the area has been visited and discussed by learned travellers from the seventeenth century to the present, the identification of the sites is still uncertain and the general topography of the area still unclear. This study attempts, by considering the ancient references against the actual Valley of the Muses (PLATE 1, fig. 1), to reconstruct the topography of Hesiod's homeland. The evidence is, in my opinion, generally sufficient for identifying his immediate environment.

References in ancient literature are made to the following places in or in the vicinity of the Valley of the Muses.

- I. Villages: ASKRA, KERESSOS, DONAKON, LEONTARNE
- II. Rivers and springs: AGANIPPE, HIPPOKRENE, LAMOS, PERMESSOS, OLMEIOS
- III. Mountains: HELIKON, LIBETHRION
- IV. Sanctuaries: SANCTUARY OF THE MUSES, ALTAR OF ZEUS, SANCTUARY OF MNEMOSYNE

I. Villages

The situation of Askra can be determined with a greater degree of probability than can that of the other cities. Hesiod himself men-

¹ I owe thanks to Sterling Dow, who provided the impetus for this study by inviting me to give a talk on "matters related to Hesiod." Thanks are also due to William M. Calder III for his careful reading of the manuscript and suggestions, and to Walter T. Hinkle, a student at Dartmouth College, for supplying the photographs for PLATE 3, figs. 5 and 6.

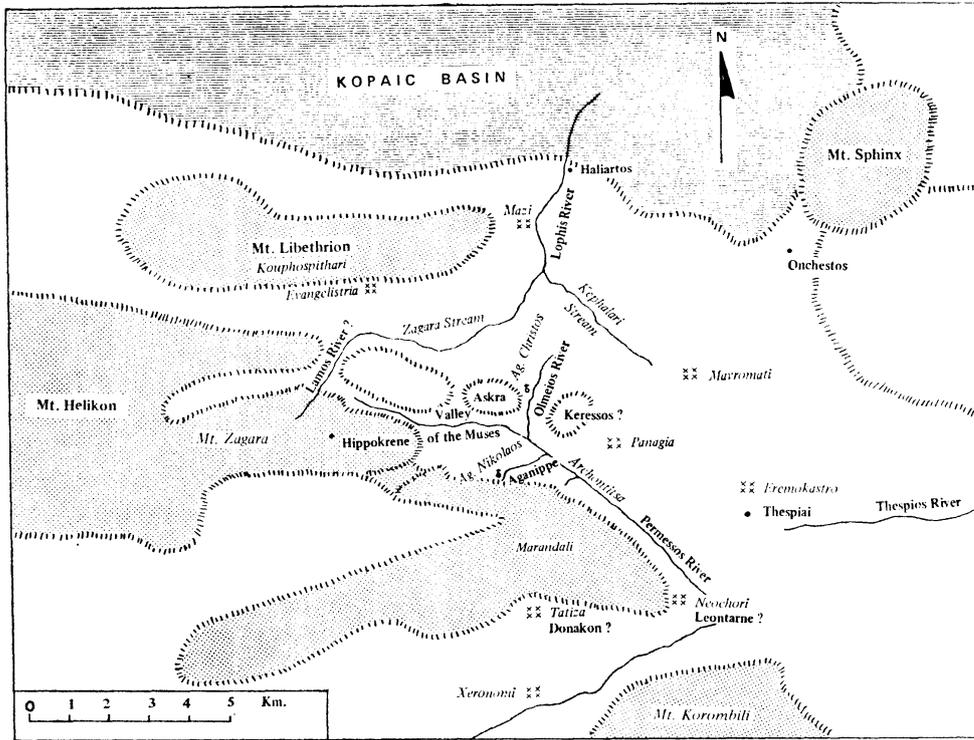
tions his hometown. His father, he said (*Op.* 639f), left Aiolian Kyme and

νάσσατο δ' ἄγχ' Ἑλικῶνος διζυρῆ ἐνὶ κώμῃ,
Ἄσκραν, χεῖμα κακῆ, θέρει ἀργαλέῃ, οὐδέ ποτ' ἐθλήῃ.

Hesiod's lines give very little topographical information, since "near Helikon" could describe equally well a number of sites. Nor does the reference to the severe climate help us to discover the location of Askra, for no ancient site in this general vicinity is particularly bad in reference to the extremes of heat and cold, although nearly every writer who speaks of Hesiod's home feels called upon to defend the poet's condemnation. Attempts to locate Askra have instead been based usually on the texts of Pausanias and Strabo. Pausanias goes from Thespiiai (9.26.6) to Helikon. After extolling the qualities of Helikon (9.28), he mentions Askra (9.29.1,2), and proceeds to describe the dedications in the Sanctuary of the Muses. Pausanias quotes from the *Atthis* of Hegesinus (*FGrHist* 331 F 1), who speaks of Ἄσκραν, ἧ θ' Ἑλικῶνος ἔχει πόδα πίδακόντα. As for his own visit, Pausanias says Ἄσκρας μὲν δὴ πύργος εἰς ἐπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἐλείπετο ἐς μνήμην. But perhaps the fullest account of the location of Askra is Strabo 9.2.25: ἐν δὲ τῇ Θεσπιέων ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ Ἄσκρα κατὰ τὸ πρὸς Ἑλικῶνα μέρος, ἧ τοῦ Ἑσιόδου πατρὶς· ἐν δεξιᾷ γὰρ ἐστὶ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος, ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ καὶ τραχέος τόπου κειμένη, ἀπέχουσα τῶν Θεσπιῶν ὅσον τετταράκοντα σταδίου.

The descriptions given by Pausanias and Strabo are perfectly suited to a site called Pyrgaki (PLATE 1, fig. 2), about four kilometers west of the modern village of Panagia (MAP 1). As one looks toward Helikon, Pyrgaki is, as Strabo says, on the right and is about forty stadia (*ca.* 7 kilometers) distant from Thespiiai, modern Eremokastro. The hill is an essential part of the Valley of the Muses, as we should expect from Pausanias' account, and the lonely tower on its summit is very likely the same one the topographer saw (PLATE 2, fig. 3). Leake was the first to identify Askra with the hill Pyrgaki, and his identification has been accepted almost unanimously by all subsequent travellers.² Indeed

² W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* II (London 1835) 491ff; H. N. Ulrichs, *Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland* II (Berlin 1863) 94f; A. Conze, *Philologus* 19 (1863) 181; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland* I (Leipzig 1862) 237; W. Vischer, *Erinnerungen und Eindrücke aus Griechenland* (Basel 1857) 555; the best description in English of the tower and walls on Pyrgaki is by J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece*² V (London 1913) 150; H. Hitzig and H. Blümner, *Des Pausanias Beschreibung von Griechenland* III (Leipzig 1907) 479; F. G.



Map 1. THE HALIARTIA AND THE THESPIAKE

Pyrgaki is the obvious choice for Askra, whether one has in mind the descriptions of Pausanias and Strabo or the verses of Hesiod. Only the descriptions of harshness and inhospitality are inappropriate to the hill Pyrgaki. Since the alleged unfavorable climate of Askra is the one fact topographers, ancient and modern, have stressed, it would seem proper now to look at the problem more closely. For in the case of

Welcker, *Tagebuch einer Griechischen Reise II* (Berlin 1865) 34–36; for a full description of the tower at Pyrgaki, see G. Roux, “Le val des muses et les musées chez les auteurs anciens,” *BCH* 78 (1954) 45–48; E. D. Clarke, *Travels*⁴ VII, pt.2 sec.3 (London 1818) 137ff, thought Askra was at the village of Zagara (now Evangelistria). For different opinions on the identification of Askra: E. Kirsten and W. Kraiker, *Griechenlandkunde*⁵ I (Heidelberg 1967) 238f with map at I 241 and bibliography at II 875; E. Meyer, “Askra,” *Der Kleine Pauly* I (1964) 648; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Ilias und Homer* (Berlin 1916) 407 n.1, thought that Askra “lag südlich vom Helikon.” As for the identification of Pyrgaki with Askra, Wilamowitz noted that Lolling, “der einzige, der den Berg erstiegen zu haben scheint,” disagreed. Wilamowitz does not say where he found Lolling’s opinion, but he probably took it from Baedeker’s *Griechenland* (Leipzig 1883) 148, which was based on Lolling’s manuscript. But the Baedeker merely says that the tower hardly dates to the heroic period. See also *infra* n.12.

Askra we have an excellent example of the way an error can be perpetuated through centuries, passed on from one generation of scholars to another.

The bad repute of Askra is apparently due only to the denigration of Hesiod. Many of the travellers who have visited the Valley of the Muses have been at pains to prove Hesiod right and to point out the climatic disadvantages of Askra. Bursian³ thought that “der Ort war durch seine hohe Lage dem Winde sehr ausgesetzt und zur Winterszeit, wo die ganze Gegend von hier bis nach Thespieae hin oft wochenlang mit Schnee bedeckt ist, sehr rauh, im Sommer, weil der erfrischende Seewind keinen Zugang hat, sehr heiss;” and Sinclair,⁴ who surely never visited the site, in his commentary on the *Erga* speaks of Askra as a “lofty and isolated district, difficult of access, and exposed to extremes of cold and heat.”

Strabo (9.2.35) carried the denigration of Askra one step further, by insisting that a site so described by Hesiod must also be infertile. In the Catalogue of Ships Homer (*Il.* 2.507) speaks of “Arne rich in vines,” but since there was no known Arne in historical Boiotia, Zenodotus attempted to emend the text of Homer to read πολυστάφυλον Ἀσκραην for πολυστάφυλον Ἄρνην. Strabo comments on Zenodotus’ emendation and is quick to point out that no one who has read Hesiod could possibly call Askra “rich in vines.” Askra actually is a delightful site with as pleasant and refreshing a situation as a Greek city could have. The land about, especially to the east, south and southwest, is rich and productive, well-watered, and supports a great number of healthy vineyards (PLATE 2, fig. 4). That Strabo’s opinion of Askra’s fertility was erroneous was clearly stated by Ulrichs:⁵ “wenn Strabo behauptet, die benachbarte Stadt Ascra könne nicht zugleich rauh und traubenreich heissen, so vergass er dabei, dass ungeachtet der rauhen Anhöhe, auf der dieselbe erbaut war, die Felder unter ihr sehr fruchtbar, durch viele Quellen bewässert, weniger dem Winde ausgesetzt und gegen die Morgen- und Mittagssonne offen sind.” Leake,⁶ though he admitted that there might be some truth in Hesiod’s description of Askra, noted that the town was “surrounded with beautiful scenery, with delightful summer-retreats, and with

³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 237. Vischer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 555, says about the same.

⁴ T. W. Sinclair, ed. and comm., *Hesiod, Works and Days* (London 1932) 66.

⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 88.

⁶ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 491ff.

fertile plains, enjoying a mild climate during the winter.” Frazer,⁷ who quotes Leake’s observations, brings back the wind and the snow and insists on a disagreeable climate for Askra, even though he himself had not visited the site: “However, the summit of the hill is exposed to every wind that blows, and in winter the whole neighbourhood as far as Thespieae and even farther is said to be often buried under deep snow for weeks together.” In 1928 O. Davies⁸ argued against identifying Pyrgaki with Askra, but then proceeded to locate the ancient town at the bottom of the same hill on the east, “since there is no room on the top of the hill for more than a dozen houses . . .” Of course the city would never have stood on the hill itself. The summit of the hill, defended by a polygonal wall encircling the tower, would have been used only as a final refuge in case of siege. This seems obvious to us now, but still it needed to be said, especially since some, like Frazer (whose discussion inspired Davies’ note), asserted that the disagreeable nature of Askra was due to its situation on a high and windy hill. In the summer of 1970 I examined the area about Pyrgaki. At the base of the hill on the southeast I found the greatest concentration of pottery. The tower itself, dated to Hellenistic times,⁹ was probably a lookout and could have held only a small number of men.

Why is Hesiod so hard on his hometown, especially since what he says is simply untrue? We cannot now say whether Hesiod’s bitter description represented some real personal hostility or was merely a literary device. Leake thought that “it was less, perhaps, upon its intrinsic defects, than upon a comparison of it with the delightful Asiatic Aeolis . . . that Hesiod founded his condemnation of Askra.” Detienne¹⁰ seems to think that Askra was to Hesiod an example of the age: “Ancrée dans l’âge de fer, Askra est aux antipodes de l’âge d’or, l’âge des éclats de fête, des doux festins . . . Sur tous les plans, Askra est une terre d’Hybris.”

The almost universal identification of Askra with Pyrgaki¹¹ has,

⁷ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 150.

⁸ O. Davies, “Askra,” *CR* 42 (1928) 62.

⁹ Roux, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 47.

¹⁰ M. Detienne, *Crise agraire et attitude religieuse chez Hésiode* (Bruxelles 1963) 38, 39.

¹¹ The identification of Askra with Pyrgaki was strengthened by the discovery in the Valley of the Muses of an inscription (IG VII 1883, 1884) recording the death of a young woman, Kallityche, who was buried in the “Askraian plain.” This epitaph was found built in the church of Agios Loukas at the foot of Pyrgaki. See Conze, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 181.

however, recently been challenged by an eminent topographer, Ernst Kirsten. Alfred Philippson¹² in his great study of the physical geography of Greece accepted the traditional identification of Askra with Pyrgaki, but Kirsten in his Beiträge to the same work identified Askra with ruins near Xeronomi (see MAP 1), basing his opinion on a fragment derived perhaps from Plutarch (Proclus) which seems to locate Askra south of Helikon. Kirsten does not deal directly with the text in question but is content to accept it second hand from Wilamowitz's discussion of it in his commentary on the *Erga*.¹³ The text has not generally been used in discussions of Askra, though Plutarch's opinion (if the fragment is Plutarch's)¹⁴ should carry weight, since he is usually regarded as knowledgeable in the geography of his native Boiotia. Along with the now familiar statements concerning Askra's bad climate, the text (fr.82 Sandbach, LCL *Moralia* XV pp.182f) reads: *Κεῖται μὲν οὖν ὑπὲρ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν βαδίζουσιν οἱ ἐπὶ τὸ Μουσεῖον ἀπιόντες ἡ Ἄσκρα. τοῦ δ' Ἑλικῶνος ἐκκειμένου τοῖς ἀνέμοις, καὶ θανμαστὰς μὲν ἀναπαύλας ἔχοντος ἐν θέρει δυστηνέμου δ' ὄντος ἐν χειμῶνι, τὴν Ἄσκραν ἐν τῷ μεσημβρινῷ κειμένην τοῦ ὄρους . . .* I am not sure what importance should be given to this evidence or how it should be interpreted. A location south of Helikon (ἐν τῷ μεσημβρινῷ) would place Askra completely outside of the Valley of the Muses, thereby conflicting with all the other evidence we have. One would be inclined to think that Proclus (or his excerpters) had not excerpted his source with accuracy. In any case, it will be noted that Xeronomi is not really south of Helikon either, and is therefore no more suitable for the text in question than is Pyrgaki. If one were to insist on the accuracy of the fragment from Plutarch, it would be necessary to find a site for Askra

¹² A. Philippson, *Die griechischen Landschaften*, ed. with appendix by E. Kirsten, I (Frankfurt 1951) 452, 672, 718 n.82. Others who disagree with the traditional identification of Askra are cited *supra* n.2 *ad fin.*

¹³ U. Wilamowitz, ed. and comm., *Hesiodos: Erga* (Berlin 1928) 115. Wilamowitz thought that Perses had now inherited the family property and that Hesiod had left Askra. Hesiod is now in better circumstances, and his denigration of Askra is therefore a cut at Perses. See also Wilamowitz's discussion in his *Ilias und Homer* (*supra* n.2).

¹⁴ Since Plutarch's name is mentioned later in the fragment, the quotation given here perhaps should not be attributed to Plutarch. Plutarch is quoted in reference to Askra's being uninhabited, and the context suggests that Plutarch was referring to the time of Aristotle (fr.565 Rose). Only careful investigation of the pottery sequence on Pyrgaki could prove whether or not the hill was deserted as early as the time of Aristotle. The existence of the Hellenistic tower on top does not of course mean that a village also existed on the hill in Hellenistic times.

somewhere along the coast of the Corinthian Gulf, which, as far as I know, no one has been willing to do.

Kirsten himself does not mention having visited Xeronomi. The existence of antiquities at the village are known from the account given by Leake¹⁵ of his visit there. He saw “a large ruined church, composed of fragments of Hellenic architecture, and many ancient squared blocks of the white stone of the neighbouring mountains.” He also saw some grave monuments. Leake suggests no ancient name for the place. We cannot even be certain that an ancient city once stood at Xeronomi, for ancient blocks can of course be brought from elsewhere. And in this case they could easily have come from Tatiza, a town only two kilometers or so to the north of Xeronomi.

At Tatiza Leake¹⁶ saw a ruined church and the enclosure for a fountain built of ancient stones, and he noted that “in the corn-fields above are many remains of former habitations.” Recent discoveries¹⁷ have proved beyond question that an ancient settlement once stood at Tatiza. In the last few years deep plowing in the area has turned up ancient blocks, foundations, two grave stelai and, most interesting of all, fragments of a circular structure which had been surmounted with an entablature. Leake thought Tatiza might have been Donakon¹⁸ (Paus. 9.31.7) and that the spring might have been the fountain of Narkissos. The ancient blocks at Xeronomi could easily have been carried over from the ancient site at Tatiza. Pausanias is the only ancient author to mention Donakon, and all he says is *Θεσπιέων δὲ ἐν τῇ γῆ Δονακῶν ἐστὶν ὀνομαζόμενος*, which is scarcely enough to locate the ancient site.

The evidence is just as tenuous for the location of Leontarne; that such a site even existed is by no means certain. Leontarne is mentioned by Lycophron (*Alex.* 645 *Λεοντάρνης πάγουσ*) and by the scholiast on Homer, *Iliad* 2.507b as a gloss on *Ἄρνην ἔχον: ἑτέρα δὲ ἡ Λεοντάρνη, ἣ ὑπὸ τὸν Ἑλικῶνα, ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτόθι λέοντος*. The site was so called, says

¹⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 501f.

¹⁶ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 500f. Also see E. Dodwell, *A Tour through Greece* I (London 1819) 257, and G. Wheler, *A Journey into Greece* (London 1682) 471. Dodwell saw at Tatiza “several large blocks of stone and foundations.” Wheler, who called the town Tadza, also identified it as Donakon and noted “some marks of Antiquity.”

¹⁷ *Deltion* 21 (1966) B.1 Chr. 202 and pl. 207a.

¹⁸ The identification is accepted by Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 242; Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 159; and N. D. Papachatzis, *Παυσανίου Ἑλλάδος Περιήγησις* V (publ. privately 1969) 190 n.2.

Eustathius (270.33), because there a lion snatched away the lamb which Adrastus was sacrificing or because there Herakles was supposed to have killed the Helikonian lion (schol. on Theoc. *Id.* 13.6). Few have even tried to find a site for Leontarne. Bursian¹⁹ thought that Leontarne might possibly have been at Palaiopanagia (Palaiopyrgos), and Ulrichs²⁰ suggested Neokhori, Tatiza or Palaiopyrgos.

The mention of Palaiopyrgos brings us to the site most commonly chosen for ancient Keressos.²¹ Keressos served as a fortress for the people of Thespiiai, and history records two instances of a siege of the city, viz. by the Thessalians under Lattamyas (Plut. *Vit.Cam.* 19 and *de Herod.mal.* 33) and by the Thebans under Epameinondas²² (Paus. 9.14.1–4). The only topographical information Pausanias gives on the location of Keressos is (9.14.2): ἔστι δὲ ἐχυρὸν χωρίον ὁ Κερησσὸς ἐν τῇ Θεσπιέων. Pausanias (9.14.3) records an oracle which associates Keressos with Leuktra. Leuktra was the home of Skedastos and his two daughters, who had been molested by two Lakedaimonians. The oracle foretold the fall of Keressos when the Lakedaimonians fell in recompense. This citadel, which had withstood the siege of the Thessalians, fell before Epameinondas. I cannot say whether the association of Keressos with Leuktra has any topographical significance.

Ulrichs²³ mentions in passing that some blocks which he saw at Eremokastro might have been remains of Keressos, but any fortification on Eremokastro must surely have been connected somehow with Thespiiai. The site most topographers have chosen for Keressos is a hill which rises three or four kilometers to the west of the modern village of Panagia (MAP 2). The hill is to the east of the stream which descends from the chapel Agios Christos. Different names in recent years have been attached to the hill: Palaiopyrgos (from a mediaeval tower on its summit), Palaiopanagia and Agios Taxiarchis. Wheler²⁴ called the site Panagia; the present village of that name apparently did not yet exist. Wheler identified the site as Keressos, and Leake, as

¹⁹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 237. See also Wrede, *RE* 12 (1925) 2038.

²⁰ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 88, 89 n.26, 92 n.42.

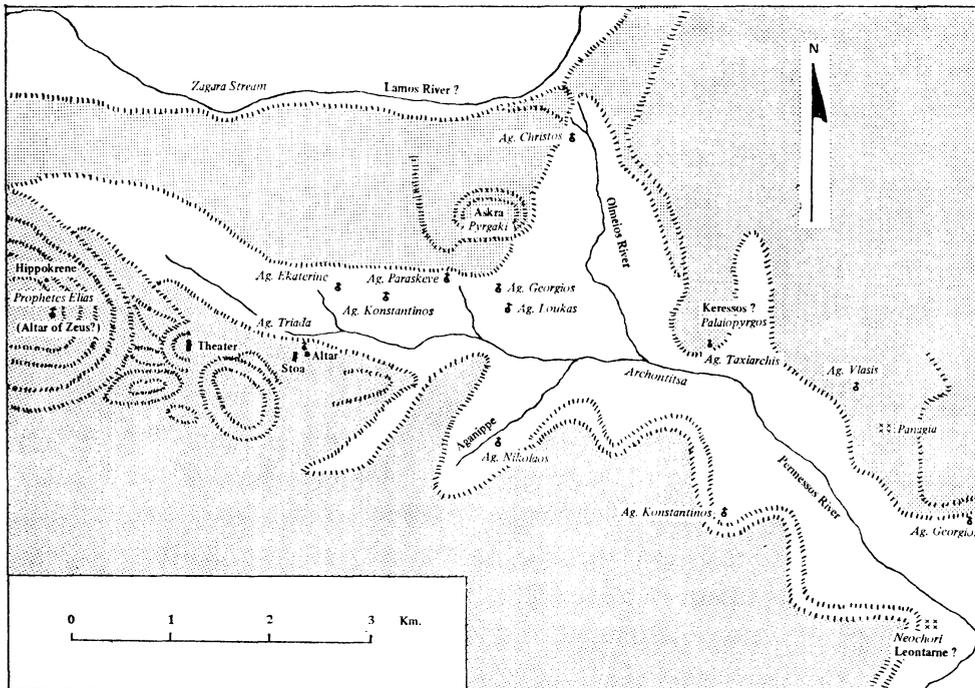
²¹ For the pre-Greek form of the name, see August Fick, *Vorgriechische Ortsnamen* (Göttingen 1905) 81. Also see *IG VII* 1926, 1927, 2033.

²² For the date of the Thessalian invasion, see P. Guillon, *Le Bouclier d'Héraclès* (Aix-en-Provence 1963) 69f, 95–97, and P. Cloché, *Thèbes de Béotie* (Paris ca. 1953) 18.

²³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 87.

²⁴ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 476.

well as most other topographers, agreed with him.²⁵ Ulrichs²⁶ describes the antiquities which he saw at Palaiopyrgos: “Unfern dieses Thurmes . . . entdeckte ich zwei Stücke von alten polygonen Mauern und weiter abwärts eine ebenfalls antike Substruction aus grossen Quadern.” Papachatzis²⁷ argues that Palaiopyrgos is too easy of approach to have been Keressos. For the Boiotians to withstand the siege of the Thessalians, they must have had better natural fortification than the hill at Palaiopyrgos would have provided. Papachatzis’



Map 2. THE VALLEY OF THE MUSES

choice for Keressos is therefore the rocky and difficult hill Pyrgaki,²⁸ though he locates Askra at the foot. Papachatzis thinks that Keressos was the name applied to the hill itself, which was used as an acropolis by the people of Askra as well as by the other inhabitants of the Valley of the Muses.

²⁵ Leake, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 490; Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 238; Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 53f; Conze, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) Taf. iv; M. P. Decharme, “Notice sur les ruines de l’hiéron des muses dans l’Hélicon,” *ArchMiss* SER.II 4 (1867) 174; Roux (*supra* n.2) 22 and fig.1.

²⁶ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 92.

²⁷ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 95 n.3, 172 n.2.

²⁸ Kirsten, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 741 no.144, also identifies Pyrgaki as Keressos, but he does not argue his choice. Philippson himself (p.452) thought that Keressos was at Palaiopyrgos.

Neochori has also been suggested as a possibility for Keressos. Leake²⁹ speaks of the “ruins of an ancient city” which Wheler³⁰ observed above Neochori and where Wheler found an inscription (*IG VII 1862*) mentioning Thespiiai. Leake was more inclined to regard this site as Keressos, since it was “more central with regard to the *Thespice*, whereas Paleopanaghia [Palaiopyrgos] is on the extremity of the district very near Askra, and has not the advantage of being backed by Mt. *Helicon*, from which it is quite separated.”

A recent discussion of the location of Keressos was made by R. J. Buck,³¹ who locates the citadel at a hill called Listi, two kilometers north of Mavromati. Buck bases his arguments on his assumptions concerning the forces and purpose of Lattamyas. But his arguments seem to me to apply equally well to Palaiopyrgos, especially since we know so little of Lattamyas’ campaign.

In short, on the evidence now available, definite identification cannot be made for the sites of Donakon, Leontarne and Keressos, but the sites discussed above are at least possibilities.

II. Rivers and Springs

In the area of the Valley of the Muses the following rivers or springs are mentioned in ancient literature: Aganippe, Hippokrene, Lamos, Permessos, Olmeios. Every discussion on the streams and springs of the valley must begin with the text of Hesiod, where he describes the bathing places of the Muses (*Theog.* 5–7):

καί τε λοεσσάμεναι τέρενα χροά Περμησσοῖο
ἢ Ἴππου κρήνης ἢ Ὀλμειοῦ ζαθέοιο
ἀκροτάτῳ Ἐλικῶνα χοροῦς ἐνεποιήσαντο.

The importance of this text does not lie in its topographical details, since it does not really give any, but in its fame, since all later visitors to the valley had it in mind when they came to describe the area. As Pausanias approaches the Valley of the Muses from Thespiiai, he mentions first (9.28) Mt Helikon, then the Muses and Askra (9.29.1–4), and then Aganippe (9.29.5): ἐν Ἐλικῶνι δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἄλλοις ἰόντι τῶν Μουσῶν ἐν ἀριστερᾷ μὲν ἢ Ἀγανίππη πηγὴ — θυγατέρα δὲ εἶναι τὴν

²⁹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 499f.

³⁰ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 471.

³¹ “The Site of Ceressus,” *Teiresias Suppl.* 1 (1972) 31–40.

Ἄγανίππην τοῦ Τερμησσοῦ λέγουσι, ρεῖ δὲ καὶ οὗτος ὁ Τερμησσὸς περὶ τὸν Ἑλικῶνα. He then speaks of the “straight road” to the grove, as if to reach Aganippe he was obliged to turn off the main way. Pausanias next proceeds to describe the offerings in the valley, apparently moving from east to west. When he has finished at the western end, he turns to the sites which he wants to mention on the mountain itself. As for Hippokrene (9.31.3): ἐπαναβάντι δὲ στάδια ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄλλου τούτου ὡς εἴκοσι ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ Ἴππου καλουμένη κρήνη. Pausanias himself climbed to the spring, for he saw there a lead tablet engraved with Hesiod’s *Erga*. Pausanias concludes his mention of the area with the remark (9.31.7), ἐπὶ δὲ ἄκρα τῆ κορυφῆ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος ποταμὸς οὐ μέγας ἐστὶν ὁ Λάμος. Strabo (9.2.25) mentions Hippokrene, but he does not locate it more specifically than the area of Helikon. Strabo’s observations (9.2.19) on the Permessos and Olmeios Rivers have created considerable difficulties for the topographer: καὶ ὁ Περμησσὸς δὲ καὶ ὁ Ὀλμειός, ἐκ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος συμβάλλοντες ἀλλήλοις, εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ἐμπίπτουσι λίμνην τὴν Κωπαΐδα τοῦ Ἀλιάρτου πλησίον.

Aganippe is identified almost unanimously³² with a spring which welled up by the now dismantled church and convent of Agios Nikolaos on the south side of the valley, on the left as one enters the valley from Thespiiai, which tallies well with Pausanias’ description. Almost the only dissenting voice was Leake,³³ who identified the stream from Agios Christos with Aganippe, because he assumed, on the strength of an inscription he found at Agios Nikolaos (IG VII 1776), that the Grove of the Muses was at the site of Agios Nikolaos and that Pausanias, proceeding from Askra to the Mouseion, would have had this stream on his left. The Sanctuary of the Muses was not, however, at the church of Agios Nikolaos. But in any case, Pausanias does not seem to be moving physically from Askra to the Sanctuary of the Muses. He speaks of Askra as he approaches the valley, through which he proceeds directly to the Sanctuary of the Muses. Pausanias probably did not climb the deserted hill. Too many statues and works of art awaited him in the valley for him to waste a couple of hours climbing a hill which had nothing but a tower.

³² Vischer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 554; Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 125; Conze, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 183; Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 152f; Decharme, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 175; Philippson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 453; Papachatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 175f n.1.

³³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 492f. Dodwell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 257, suggested the spring at Tatiza for Aganippe.

A river Lamos is mentioned only by Pausanias³⁴ (9.31.7). The passage was emended to read Ὀλμιός by Leake,³⁵ who gives good reasons for his emendation: "I have no hesitation in making the emendation here proposed, for on comparing the words of Pausanias with those of the Scholiast on Hesiod (ὁ Ὀλμειὸς ποταμὸς ἐστὶν ἐν Ἐλικῶνι κατὰ τὸ ἄκρον αὐτοῦ), it is evident that the latter refers to the same river intended by Pausanias, and that both authors had in view the words Ἀκροτάτῳ Ἐλικῶνι in Hesiod." Leake must be right. In an uncial manuscript the reading would be close: ΟΛΜΙΟC ΟΛΑΜΟC. Nevertheless, the majority of the scholars who have noticed the problem have not accepted Leake's emendation.³⁶ If we were to accept the existence of a river called Lamos, the Zagara stream would be a good candidate, for it is in the general area which Pausanias has just been describing and begins on the top of the mountain; but it is more likely that Pausanias, with Hesiod's verse in mind, simply wrote Ὀλμιός without identifying it with any river which he himself had seen in the area.

Hippokrene, says Pausanias, is twenty stadia (*ca.* 3½ kilometers) above the Valley of the Muses. This description coincides well with the location of the spring now called Kryopegadi, just below the summit of Mt Zagaras on the north side. The first to identify Kryopegadi with Hippokrene was Ulrichs, and his identification is now accepted by everyone.³⁷ Leake³⁸ mentions Kryopegadi, but his whole account of the valley is confused because of his mistaken notion that the grove was at Agios Nikolaos. Earlier travellers became enraptured by the mere thought of the spring of poetic inspiration. William

³⁴ In the fifth century Nonnus (*Dion.* 9.28; 47.678) also mentioned the Lamos, but his reference seems to me derivative and unimportant; in any case, it does not help topographically.

³⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 498 n.3.

³⁶ The emendation was accepted by Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 233 n.3, and Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) I 605 and V 159, but rejected by Ulrichs, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 93 n.43, Kirsten ("Olmeios," *RE* 17 [1936] 2490), Geiger ("Lamos," *RE* 12 [1925] 566), Hitzig-Blümner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 488, Papachatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 190, and by F. Spiro (Teubner) and W. H. S. Jones (Loeb) in their editions. Ulrichs identified the Lamos with the Archontitsa.

³⁷ Ulrichs, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 97–99; Vischer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 557; Welcker, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 38f; Decharme, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 177f; Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 239f; Conze, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 184f; Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 158; Hitzig-Blümner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 487; Philippson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 453; Papachatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 189 n.1; A. R. Burn, "Helikon in History," *BSA* 44 (1949) 322f.

³⁸ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 493f.



Figure 1. VALLEY OF THE MUSES AND HELIKON FROM ASKRA (PYRGAKI)
PERMESSOS R. LOWER LEFT



Figure 2. ASKRA (PYRGAKI) FROM THE VALLEY OF THE MUSES

PLATE 2 WALLACE



Figure 3. ASKRA (PYRGAKI), TOWER FROM S.



Figure 4. VALLEY OF THE MUSES AND THE ARCHONITSA R. FROM ASKRA (PYRGAKI)



Figure 5. GLADE OF HIPPOKRENE (KRYOPEGADI) AND VIEW TOWARD KOPAIS FROM N. SPRING IS BEHIND TREES ON LEFT



Figure 6. HIPPOKRENE SPRING (KRYOPEGADI)

PLATE 4 WALLACE



Figure 7. VIEW TOWARD KOPAIC BASIN AND HALIARTOS FROM ASKRA (PYRGAKI)



Figure 8. MT LIBETHRION (KOUFHOSPITHARI) FROM ASKRA (PYRGAKI)

Lithgow³⁹ saw the mountain from a distance as he sailed toward Salonika in 1609:

Here it was sayd the nine Muses haunted: but as for the Fountaine Helicon [*i.e.* Hippokrene], I leave that to be searched, and seene by the imagination of Poets; for if it had bene objected to my sight, like an insatiable drunkard, I should have drunke up the streames of Poesie, to have enlarged my dry poeticall Sun scoarch'd veine.

Another seventeenth-century traveller, George Wheler,⁴⁰ made an attempt to find the great fountain but was hindered by snow:

And as to the Fountain *Hippocrene*, the famous haunt of the nine Sisters, it was then frozen up, if it were where I guess'd it to have been. So that were I a poet, and never so great a Votary of those *Heliconian Deities*, I might be excused from making Verses in their praise, having neither their presence to excite, nor their liquor to inspire me. For having gone two or three Miles forwards on the top, till I came to the Snow, my further proceedings that way were hindered; only alighting I made shift to clamber up the Rocks somewhat higher, until I came to look down into a place encompassed round with the tops of Mountains; so that the inclosed space seemed to me to be a Lake frozen, and covered with Snow. But my Guide telling me he passed that way once in the Summer time with *Monsieur Nantueil*, the *French* Ambassador, and then saw it a very pleasant green Valley, covered with Flowers, having a very good Fountain in the middle of it; I am much inclin'd to think the *Hippocrene* was there, and there also in ancient times the delicious Grove of the Muses.

Probably the most famous description of Hippokrene Spring is J. G. Frazer's,⁴¹ though he himself did not climb to the fountain:

To reach the far-famed Hippocrene ('the Horse's Fount') from the sanctuary of the Muses we ascend the steep eastern side of Mt. Helicon (Zagara), over moss-grown rocks, through a thick forest of tall firs. After a toilsome ascent of about two hours we emerge from the wood upon a tiny open glade of circular shape, covered with loose stones and overgrown with grass and ferns. All around rises the dark fir-wood. Here, in the glade, is Hippocrene, now called *Kryopegadi* or 'cold spring'. It is a well with a triangular opening, enclosed

³⁹ William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures, and Painefull Peregrinations* (Lyon 1632) 106f.

⁴⁰ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.16) 478.

⁴¹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) V 158.

by ancient masonry. The clear, ice-cold water stands at a depth of about 10 feet below the coping of the well. But it is possible to climb down to the water by means of foot-holes cut in the side, or by holding on to the sturdy ivy, which, growing from a rock in the water, mantles the sides of the well. The coldness and clearness of the water of this perennial spring are famous in the neighbourhood, especially among the herdsmen, who love to fill their skin-bottles at it.

When I climbed to the fountain in May 1973 the water was indeed exceedingly cold; its taste, however, was so foul that we drank it only because nothing else was available.

Nonetheless, Hippokrene is a delightful place and well worth the effort it takes to visit it. Situated just below the brow of the mountain in a coppice of fir trees (PLATE 3, figs. 5, 6), the fountain is far from the bustle and noise of humanity. It is easy for one who has just been refreshed from the fountain after climbing Helikon to see spiritual parallels (AP 9.230):

*Ἄμβαινων Ἑλικῶνα μέγαν κάμες, ἀλλ' ἐκορέσθης
Πηγαίδος κρήνης νεκταρέων λιβάδων·
οὕτως καὶ σοφίης πόνος ὄρθιος· ἦν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἄκρον
τέρμα μόλης, ἀρύσῃ Πιερίδων χάριτας.*

The location of the Permessos and the Olmeios Rivers, as said above, constitutes a grave difficulty for the topographer. If one enters the valley with only the verses of Hesiod in his head, he will have little trouble in finding suitable candidates for the Permessos and Olmeios. From Hesiod's verses we should expect to find these rivers in the Valley of the Muses, where in fact fine perennial streams do flow. What better candidate for the famous Permessos than the Archontitsa, the stream which flows through the middle of the valley, the stream which no visitor, ancient or modern, could fail to observe? It is only when one begins to look at the other ancient references that the trouble begins. Strabo clearly says that the Permessos and the Olmeios flow together and discharge into the Kopaic Lake, which the streams in the Valley of the Muses do *not* do. The scholiast on Hesiod, *Theogony* 5 gives the same evidence as Strabo: *Περμησός . . . ἐμβάλλει δὲ εἰς τὴν Κωπαΐδα λίμνην. τὰς δὲ πηγὰς ἔχει ἐν τῇ Θεσπιακῇ χώρᾳ καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ῥεῖ εἰς τὴν Κωπαΐδα λίμνην. καὶ ὁ Ὀλμειὸς ποταμὸς ἐστὶν ἐν Ἑλικῶνι τῆς Βοιωτίας κατὰ τὸ ἄκρον αὐτοῦ.* The evidence of Strabo and the scholiast has caused topographers to avoid the obvious and to look for streams

which flow into the Kopais. Two alternatives are at hand, as is generally the case in topography. Just to the north of the ridge of which Askra and Palaiopyrgos are a part the land begins to slope off toward the Kopaic Basin (PLATE 4, fig. 7). Near the town Mavromati a spring called Kephalaria comes to the surface and flows to the north to the basin. Just before it reaches the basin it is joined by another stream from the west. This latter stream begins as a runnel from high up on Mt Helikon; it flows to the west of a ridge which separates it from the Valley of the Muses and continues to the northeast until it joins the Kephalaria stream. The stream from Helikon is called the Zagara stream, the name of the mountain before it was renamed Helikon. Leake⁴² was the first to discuss the problem in detail. He identified the Permessos with the Kephalaria and the Olmeios with the Zagara stream. But Leake admits later⁴³ that these identifications may not be right, since both Strabo and the scholiast seem to derive their information from Zenodotus, who lived in Ephesus in the time of Ptolemy II and who does not seem to have good first-hand knowledge of Greek topography. Since both Strabo and the scholiast mention Zenodotus in the immediate context, Leake's assumption that Zenodotus is the authority for the location given by Strabo and the scholiast is surely correct. How much of Greece Strabo himself actually saw is unknown; for the composition of his *Geography*, however, there is no doubt that he relied very heavily on secondary material, and he is always ready to name his sources.⁴⁴ The association of the Permessos and Olmeios Rivers with the Kopaic Basin rests, therefore, only on the authority of Zenodotus. Leake⁴⁵ says that it is possible that the names Permessos and Olmeios had been lost from the time of Hesiod to that of Zenodotus and Pausanias, and that Zenodotus and Pausanias did not really know where the rivers were. Leake therefore allows that the Kephalaria may have been the Permessos and the Archontitsa the Olmeios.

The Archontitsa is such an important presence in the Valley of the Muses that it is difficult not to identify it with one of the rivers of the tradition (MAP 2). Frazer returned to the Archontitsa-Permessos

⁴² *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 212f.

⁴³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 496ff.

⁴⁴ For Strabo's sources and method of composition, see E. Honigmann, "Strabon," *RE* 4 A (1931) 90-147, and W. Aly, *Strabon von Amaseia. Untersuchungen über Text, Aufbau und Quellen der Geographika* (Bonn 1957).

⁴⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 499 and 501.

identification, and this is the popular view today.⁴⁶ Leake's theory involving the Zagara and the Kephalaria streams, however, has recently been revived. Ernst Kirsten⁴⁷ argued for identifying the Zagara stream with the Permessos and the Kephalaria stream with the Olmeios. Kirsten's identifications are also accepted by West⁴⁸ in his recent commentary on the *Theogony*. Some of the evidence for the location of these rivers undoubtedly points to the area north of Askra and Palaiopyrgos, but this evidence (Strab. 9.2.19 and schol. on Hes. *Theog.* 5) is weak. The other evidence for these rivers suggests a location within the Valley of the Muses. Hesiod himself speaks of them as if they are in the immediate vicinity. The ancient sources like to associate the Permessos with the Aganippe spring: Pausanias (9.29.5) records the tradition that Aganippe was the daughter of Permessos, and Callimachus (fr.696 Pfeiffer) said that Aganippe was the source of the Permessos: *Callimachus Aganippem fontem esse dicit Permessi fluminis*. The Aganippe spring seems to be rather firmly located within the valley; the association of the Permessos with it gives some support to the placement of the Permessos within the valley also. Pausanias' description (9.29.5) is also quite appropriate for the Archontitsa, for that stream does indeed flow, literally, "around Helikon," for it flows east from the Valley of the Muses, then at Neochori bends around to the south and southwest, and finally is diffused in the plain near Thisbe. A dedicatory inscription (IG VII 1855) found in the valley proves that in the fourth or fifth century at least the Permessos was thought to be in the Valley of the Muses: *Περμησσοῦ πέλας ζαθέου [ποταμοῖο]*. Such conflicting evidence obviously makes it impossible to be certain about the identification of the Permessos and Olmeios rivers, but the evidence of Zenodotus seems to me to carry less assurance than the combined opinion of the other sources. In this case our instincts are probably right: the Permessos and the Olmeios Rivers *ought* to be in the Valley of the Muses.

The topographers who have looked for these rivers in the valley have generally been content to identify the Permessos. Almost no one suggests a candidate for the Olmeios,⁴⁹ though an excellent candidate

⁴⁶ Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 150f, 153; Philippson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 453; Hitzig-Blümner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 480f; Papachatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 176 n.1; Roux, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) figs. 1 and 10; Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 125f.

⁴⁷ E. Kirsten, "Olmeios," *RE* 17 (1936) 2490 and *id.* "Permessos," *RE* 19 (1938) 868-72.

⁴⁸ M. L. West, ed. and comm., *Hesiod, Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 154, n. on v.5.

⁴⁹ Decharme, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 178-80 and map facing 180, identifies the Olmeios with the Archontitsa.

is at hand. The three most prominent streams in the Valley of the Muses are the Archontitsa, the spring at Agios Nikolaos, and the stream which flows down from Agios Christos. If the Archontitsa was the Permessos, and if the fountain at Agios Nikolaos was the Aganippe, the stream from Agios Christos must have been the Olmeios River.

III. The Mountains

The most important mountain in this part of Boiotia is of course Mt Helikon. The ancients had proper names for other mountains in the vicinity, the closest to the Valley of the Muses, besides Helikon, being Mt Libethrion. Pausanias (9.34.4) says that Mt Libethrion was forty stadia (*ca.* 7 kilometers) from Koroneia. Though Mt Libethrion cannot be identified with absolute certainty, the most likely candidate is the ridge, now called Kouphospithari,⁵⁰ which runs along the south side of the Kopais between Koroneia and Haliartos (PLATE 4, fig. 8). The most prominent peak (860 m.), which rises above the village Evangelistria, is almost exactly 7 kilometers from the site of ancient Koroneia. A great number of the place names about the region of the Valley of the Muses are duplicated in the Pieria region of Makedonia east of Mt Olympos. The Thracians who were then said to inhabit this part of Makedonia were supposed to have moved to the Valley of the Muses (Paus. 9.29.3, 4; 9.30.4–11; Strab. 9.2.25). Libethrion and Helikon were names reportedly brought in by the Thracians. Strabo (9.2.25) speaks of a cave sanctified to the Leibethrides nymphs.

The name Helikon referred essentially to the same peaks and foothills in antiquity that it does now. It rose above the Corinthian Gulf and is mentioned in connection with places as far west as Mychos Harbor in Phokis and Lebadeia, as far north as Koroneia, and as far east as Onchestos (Strab. 9.2.25, 29, 33, 38). Philippson⁵¹ estimated that Helikon covered about 800 sq. km. The mountain's structure is also interesting. The corridors or troughs which run parallel to the whole range have not been without significance in the events which history brought to pass in the area. A. R. Burn⁵² has suggested that the

⁵⁰ Philippson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 450f. See also Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 236 n.2. Papa-chatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 204 n.2, and L. Ross, *Wanderungen in Griechenland I* (Halle 1851) 33, identify Libethrion with Palaiovouna.

⁵¹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 435.

⁵² *op.cit.* (*supra* n.37) 322f.

geological nature of Helikon may have been responsible for the Thracians' choice of the Valley of the Muses for their sanctuary. The Helikon of Hesiod and of the Valley of the Muses (PLATE 1, fig. 1), however, is the peak now called Zagaras (1526 m.), a peak which is about 10 kilometers to the northeast of Palaiovouna, the highest point (1748 m.) of the Helikon range.

Mt Helikon certainly seems to merit the praise Pausanias lavished on it. Now at least it is one of the most beautiful mountains in Greece. Remote from traffic and cities, the mountain still has that pastoral and rustic character which we expect Hesiod's Helikon to have.

IV. The Sanctuaries

Leake, as mentioned above, and some of the other early travellers⁵³ to the Valley of the Muses thought that the Sanctuary of the Muses was located near the church and monastery of Agios Nikolaos. Decharme⁵⁴ was apparently the first to locate the sanctuary around the churches of Agia Trias, Agios Konstantinos and Agia Ekaterina. He was convinced by the abundance of ancient blocks and inscriptions in the area, whereas at Agios Nikolaos there was little beyond the inscription which Leake found.

Excavation settled the problem once and for all. Stamatakis began excavation in 1882.⁵⁵ He succeeded in uncovering the altar of the Muses (then called the "temple" of the Muses) and in locating the theater, though he did not excavate the latter. The fullest excavations took place under Jamot of the French School in Athens from 1888 to 1890. Jamot uncovered the theater and a stoa, and explored more completely the altar. Only brief reports of these early campaigns were published, however, and the world had to wait till 1954 for an account of even modest proportions to appear.⁵⁶

The Valley of the Muses must have been regarded as a holy place, even though the worship of the Muses had long ceased to exist. There was a remarkable concentration of churches in the valley, at least seven in the valley proper (MAP 2). All of the churches except one

⁵³ Leake, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 492f; Ulrichs, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 89-91; Clarke, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 125; Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 239.

⁵⁴ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 170f.

⁵⁵ *Praktika* (1882) 66f.

⁵⁶ Roux, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 22-48. See also *BCH* 46 (1922) 217-18 n.6 for Jamot's work.

were dismantled by the archaeologists in order to retrieve the ancient materials built into them. Shrines have now been built on their sites to the appropriate saints. Only the church of Agia Paraskeve is still standing. In the early 1960's Agia Paraskeve was renovated, and the neighboring villages now and then hold mass and panegyries there.⁵⁷

Some have thought that the saints to whom the churches were dedicated had a particular significance:⁵⁸ “Le nom de Constantin fait peine à entendre en pareil endroit. C'est lui le premier qui a violé le sanctuaire des Muses, qui a enlevé leurs statues pour les transporter à Constantinople, où elles furent plus tard consumées dans un incendie. Il ne s'est pas contenté de les détruire; il a remplacé leur divinité par la sienne. Les noms d'Hag. Trias et de Hag. Catherina conviennent mieux aux souvenirs que rappellent ces ruines; on peut voir, dans le premier, la tradition du nombre ternaire des Muses; dans le second, celle de leur virginité.” According to Pausanias (9.29.2) there were originally only three Muses: Melete, Mneme and Aoide. At any rate, since Constantine removed the statues of the Muses to Constantinople (Euseb. *de Vita Constant.* 3.54; Sozom. *Hist.Eccl.* 2.5; Zosim. 2.21, 5.24), it is surely not coincidental that a chapel was built to him above the Muses' ancient sanctuary.

Agios Nikolaos is usually the successor of Poseidon in Greece,⁵⁹ but there is little evidence that Poseidon was among the gods worshipped in the valley, though *Hymn.Hom.Pos.* 22.3 and *Etym.Magn.* 547.15ff (Gaisford) suggest that he may have been.⁶⁰ That Poseidon was perhaps worshipped in the area was suggested by Bursian,⁶¹ who thought the god could have been the predecessor of Agios Elias above Hippokrene. The passage might well refer, however, to the sanctuary of Poseidon at Onchestos (*Hymn.Hom.Ap.* 3.229–38; Strab. 9.2.33).

The altar of Zeus (*βωμὸν ἐρικθηνέος Κρονίωνος*) which Hesiod (*Theog.* 4) mentions, has often been identified with the ancient structure, later made into a chapel of Agios Elias, on the summit of

⁵⁷ Papachatzis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 167.

⁵⁸ Decharme, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.25) 171.

⁵⁹ J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1910; repr. New York 1964) 75–77.

⁶⁰ For Poseidon in Boiotia, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* IV (Oxford 1907) 78f.

⁶¹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 239 n.4.

Zagaras above Hippokrene.⁶² There is no evidence at all for this identification; Agios or Prophetes Elias in fact generally followed the worship of Helios.⁶³ Though the summit of the mountain certainly seems an appropriate place for the altar of the chief god, the ancient structure preserved there now may actually have been a watchtower to maintain surveillance over the Corinthian Gulf. Hesiod's *bomos* was perhaps only an ash altar.

Hesiod's words about Mnemosyne (*Theog.* 53–55) have been interpreted⁶⁴ to mean that Mnemosyne also had a cult in the valley. Support was given to this suggestion by the discovery, in a church at Palaiopanagia, of a herm (*IG VII 1782*), probably of the third century B.C., consisting of the one word *Μναμοσύνας*. Where this cult was located, if indeed it existed at all, we now have no way of knowing.

In conclusion, we can identify with a high degree of probability a number of the ancient places in the Valley of the Muses. The identity of Mt Libethrion, of Mt Helikon proper and of the Sanctuary of the Muses is rather obvious. The location of Askra is fairly decided. We can also feel reasonably secure in the identification of the Aganippe and Hippokrene springs and of the Permessos and Olmeios Rivers. But Keressos, Donakon and Leontarne, the Altar of Zeus and the Sanctuary of Mnemosyne, cannot now and probably will never be definitely located. Nonetheless, it is a pleasure to realize that we can still discover a number of those sites most closely associated with the homeland of the old poet of Askra. The attempt to restore this ancient locality would surely have been regarded with sympathy by one who, in spite of his apparent dislike for his home town, had no desire to leave it and could boast of having journeyed to no city more distant from it than Chalkis (*Op.* 646–62), who advised his brother to marry a local girl (*Op.* 700) and to be a good neighbor (*Op.* 342–51), and whose counsel to the seafaring trader, even in the most propitious season, was: *σπεύδειν δ' ὅττι τάχιστα πάλιν οἰκόνδε νέεσθαι* (*Op.* 673).

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⁶² Frazer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 158; Vischer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 557; Ulrichs, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 99; Bursian, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 239; Hitzig-Blümner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 487; Welcker, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 38.

⁶³ Lawson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.59) 44f; M. Hamilton, *Greek Saints and their Festivals* (London 1910) 19–23.

⁶⁴ West, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.48) 174f.