

## THE SPRING TELPHUSA

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Soon after his birth on Delos, Apollo left the island and wandered over the mainland looking for a suitable site on which to build a temple in which he would give oracles to men (*Homeric Hymn* 3.247–48). Crossing from Euboea he walked through Boeotia until he came to the spring Telphusa, a few miles west of Haliartos. This looked like the right place, and he at once told the spring nymph his purpose and laid out the foundations. But Telphusa did not want to share the site with Apollo. Dissembling her true feelings, she told him that the place was unsuitable for his oracular shrine; the noise of horses and mules that men would water at her spring would annoy him, and men would be more interested in looking at horses and carts than at Apollo's temple and treasures (*Homeric Hymn* 3.262–66):

πημανέει σ' αἰεὶ κτύπος ἵππων ὠκείων  
ἀρδόμενοί τ' οὐρήες ἐμῶν ἱερῶν ἀπὸ πηγέων·  
ἔνθα τις ἀνθρώπων βουλήσεται εἰσοράσθαι  
ἄρματά τ' εὐποίητα καὶ ὠκυπόδων κτύπον ἵππων  
ἢ νηὸν τε μέγαν καὶ κτήματα πόλλ' ἐνέοντα.

She proposed that he go on to Crisa ὑπὸ πτυχὶ Παρνησοῖο, meaning Pytho (Delphi). She persuaded the god and he went on to Pytho, which he found to be in truth an excellent site for his oracle. So he laid the foundations, on which Trophonius and Agamedes placed a stone threshold and the tribes of men built a temple. But Apollo met with a difficulty that Telphusa had not mentioned: he had to fight a terrible she-dragon who lived at Pytho.<sup>1</sup> Apollo killed her

<sup>1</sup> On the she-dragon, unnamed in the Hymn and called Delphyne in later sources, and her relation to the male dragon usually called Python, see my *Python* (Berkeley, Los Angeles 1959) 13–14, 94–97, 365–66, 468.

and then realized that Telphusa had deceived him. He went back to Telphusa, upbraided her, and pushed a crag over the spring in a shower of rocks (i.e. the rocks that he threw over the spring formed the crag), and thus hid the spring from sight (382–83):

ἦ καὶ ἐπὶ ρίον ὤσεν ἄναξ ἐκάεργος Ἀπόλλων  
πέτρῃσι προχυτῆσιν ἀπέκρυψεν δὲ ῥέεθρα.

So Apollo took this site too, built an altar in the grove, and assumed the epithet Telphusius, sharing the place with the humiliated spring nymph, as his words spoken to her imply (381):

ἐνθάδε δὴ καὶ ἐμὸν κλέος ἔσσεται οὐδὲ σὸν οὔης.

Such is the story told in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (3.244–304, 375–87). The spring Telphusa has for a century and a half been identified with a spring situated near the northernmost foot of the rocky hill called Petra (figs. 1, 3). At this point Petra nearly touches the margin of the ancient Copaic Lake, now drained, leaving little more than room enough for the highway and railroad; the distance from tip to lake margin is about a hundred meters. Apparently the first to propose this identification was Colonel Leake, who visited this part of Boeotia in December 1805, in company with Gell.<sup>2</sup> He identified Petra as Mount Tilphusion, beneath which flowed the spring Telphusa (or Tilphusa), according to Pindar, Strabo, and Pausanias.<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Ross, who visited the region in September 1834, made the same identification, taking the remains of a structure found on top of Petra, directly above the spring, to be the temple of Apollo Telphusius (Tilphossius), whereas Leake had called them “some remains of a small ancient tower, or fortress.”<sup>4</sup> Since then, almost without

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* (London 1835) 142.

<sup>3</sup> Pind. *ap.* Strab. 9.2.27, p. 411; Strabo 9.2.36, p. 413; Paus. 9.33.1. The spring name appears as *Telphousa* (*Delphousa* in manuscripts of the Hymn at 3.244, 247, 256, 276), *Tilphousa* (Paus., Schol. AB on Il. 23.346), *Tilphoussa* (Apollod. 3.7.3); *Tilphōssa* (Strabo, Pind. frag. 188 Bowra, and Aristoph. frag. 701 HG *ap.* Ath. 2.41E). The mountain name is given as *Tilphōsion* (Diod. 19.53.7); *Tilphōssion* (Pind., Strabo), *Tilphousion* (Paus. 9.33.1, 3); *Tilphōssaion* (Theopompus 279 GH; Diod. 4.66.5, 67.1); see Steph. Byz. pp. 613–14 Mein.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Ross, *Wanderungen in Griechenland* (Halle 1851) 31; Leake (above, note 2) 136.

exception, scholars, travelers, and guidebooks have identified the Petra spring with Telphusa and Petra with Tilphusion.<sup>5</sup>

The main reason for the identification is the position of the spring at the foot of a rocky eminence beside a much traveled road; for the ancient road from Thebes to Lebadeia must have been fairly coincident with the modern highway at this point (see Map). In other respects the identification is unsatisfactory. One must suppose that the whole mass of Petra is the crag which Apollo pushed over the spring; yet the Petra spring does not flow from under the rocky face of Petra, but comes forth several yards to the north. Though it rises on the south side of the highway, it is now hidden beneath the highway construction, and its waters flow out of two culverts and a smaller opening into a channel on the north side of the road (fig. 1). Furthermore, though the waters flow abundantly in winter and spring, they dwindle appreciably in summer and may nearly disappear.<sup>6</sup>

Yet I probably would never have questioned the accepted identification if in May 1959 I had not happened upon another spring about three kilometers to the south. Having inquired about local springs at the kaffeneion beside the highway, I was directed to the convent of Hagios Nikolaos (St. Nicholas), which was visible some way above the village of Ypsilanti (formerly called Vrastamiti). In fig. 5 the convent appears as a white speck at almost the center of the picture; it is nearly surrounded by trees and situated at the left foot of a small crag that sits just below the highest rocky peak at the upper center (see fig. 4, which will help place the convent in fig. 5); convent and crag are situated southwest from and above the village of Ypsilanti

<sup>5</sup> See H. N. Ulrichs, *Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland* 1 (Bremen 1840) 205; Conrad Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland* (Leipzig 1862) 234; J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias* (London 1913) 5.167-68; Yves Béquignon, *Grèce* (Paris 1935) 219 and "Sur l'itinéraire d'Apollon dans la suite Pythique," *Etudes d'Archéologie Grecque* (Ghent 1938) 10-11; A. Philippson, *Der Nordosten der griechischen Halbinsel. II: Das östliche Mittelgriechenland und die Insel Euboea* (Frankfurt am Main 1951) 450-51, 474. The identification was questioned or disputed by A. Conze, A. Michaelis, "Rapporto d'un viaggio fatto nella Grecia nel 1860," *Ann. Inst. Corr. Arch.* 30 (1861) 84-86; Franz Dornseiff, *Die archaische Mythen-erzählung* (Berlin, Leipzig 1933) 12-13; see Pierre Guillon (below, note 9).

<sup>6</sup> The photograph of fig. 1 was taken in summer, but the complete absence of water in the basin is due to diversion for irrigation. On May 25, 1967, I saw streams of water issuing from the culverts, although not in great volume.

(left, fig. 5; the camera points southwestward), which is about one kilometer south of the highway. From Ypsilanti a zigzag dirt road of many turns, visible in fig. 5, ascends to Hagios Nikolaos. Up this road I walked on a hot sunny day, and on reaching the convent I saw a lovely spring of cold water close to the southwest corner of the chapel enclosure (fig. 2), shaded by a large plane tree—a welcome sight after my climb. The waters of this spring, I saw at once, literally flow from under the rock; at that time they flowed abundantly from three pipes driven back under the rock, where the hollow opening appears at the base of the crag in fig. 2. These pipes emptied the water into a trough in front of the opening, whence it ran off into the gully that carries the stream of which this spring is the source. Unfortunately I had no camera with me in 1959; and when I returned in May 1967, I found that a concrete chamber now conceals the spring and that only a little of its water is now visible on the spot, flowing from a faucet into a small trough.

Not only does this spring rise from under a crag, but the crag is truly a shower of rocks, as fig. 6 makes plain.<sup>7</sup> That is, it has the appearance of a heap of great rocks solidly joined together. It is a small cliff, not even as big as fig. 4 (see also fig. 5) may lead one to believe, since what appears there to be one crag is really two, which are separated by the apparent fold in the middle; it is the lower cliff that overhangs the spring. As soon as I saw this spring I was certain that I looked upon the spring Telphusa of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. Its position exactly suits the indications of verses 382–83 (Greek text quoted above): “The lord Apollo spoke and pushed a crag upon her with a shower of rocks and hid the streams.” The crag and spring of Hagios Nikolaos easily suggest such an aetiological episode; Petra and the spring below it do not, since, as I have pointed out, the Petra spring does not obviously flow from under Petra. Fig. 1 shows the base of Petra opposite the spring; with good will one may look upon it as a heap of rocks, but no more so than any other rocky hill in Greece. And there is no spring at the base flowing from underneath; as I have said, the Petra spring issues from the earth

<sup>7</sup> The human figure (the nun who looks after the chapel and convent of Hagios Nikolaos) seen near the corner of the enclosure wall, lower left, in fig. 6, is standing by the spring.

some yards in advance of the base. The Hagios Nikolaos spring satisfies the requirements of the Hymn: abundant waters flow all year long from beneath a crag that looks like a heap of rocks.

Furthermore the waters of the Hagios Nikolaos spring are cold, as those of Telphusa must be. So cold was the water when Teiresias drank of it that he died from the effects. When the Epigoni took Thebes, many Thebans, including Teiresias, fled to Tilphusion; or the Epigoni sent a tithe of the captive Thebans, including Teiresias, to Apollo at Delphi. When the Thebans reached Telphusa, Teiresias drank too much of the cold water and expired; and the Thebans buried him beside the spring, where visitors saw his tomb in later times.<sup>8</sup> The water of the Petra spring, on the contrary, is not unusually cold and may become very mild in summer. True enough, springs change in character and volume in the course of centuries; a spring may even disappear or a new spring gush forth suddenly. But there is nothing to indicate that either spring has changed much in 3000 years. In all likelihood the Hagios Nikolaos spring, like Peirene at Corinth, has been flowing abundantly since prehistoric times; for it is the source of the stream that flows down to Lake Copais in what does not appear to be a new channel.

The Hagios Nikolaos spring has been virtually unknown to travelers and scholars, since the road to it is seldom traveled by others than natives, whereas everyone who has visited Boeotian sites has seen the Petra spring. After seeing the Hagios Nikolaos spring I thought myself alone in identifying it with Telphusa until I came upon Pierre Guillon's *La Béotie antique* (Paris 1948), in which Plate xxix shows the church of Hagios Nikolaos and behind it the cliff which stands over the spring. Guillon refers to the spring only in his "Table des Illustrations" under "Pl. xxix.—Le site du Telphousion et la passe en direction de la Phocide" (p. 110):

Le sanctuaire et son oracle . . . occupaient sans doute le site marqué ici par la chapelle du couvent d'Hahios Nicolaos: la source jaillit encore abondante

<sup>8</sup> Aristoph. frag. 701 HG: Teiresias because of his old age could not endure the chill of the water; Pind. frag. 188 Bowra: *μελιγαθὲς ἀμβρόσιον ὕδωρ Τελφώσσης ἀπὸ καλλικρήνου*; Paus. 9.33.1; Apollod. 3.7.3. Cf. Diod. 4.67.1; Strabo 9.2.27, p. 411, 35, p. 413; who mention Teiresias' death and tomb at this place without indicating the cause.

derrière la chapelle, au pied même du rocher qui surplombe cette chapelle; tel est sans doute le roc que, dans sa fureur d'avoir été repoussé et trompé par la nymphe du lieu, Apollon fit rouler sur la source.

Guillon hereupon quotes Hymn 3.379–86 in French translation.<sup>9</sup> He makes no mention at all of the Petra spring, and nowhere does he present a case for the identification, which is surely correct, but has gone unnoticed among scholars.

Only the position of the Hagios Nikolaos spring may raise a doubt about identifying it with Telphusa. For the Hymn demands that the spring be situated beside a road over which horses and mules passed, stopping to drink at the spring; it was also passable to carts and wagons, and, according to the nymph, the traffic would annoy Apollo with its noises and would divert men's attention from worship of him (3.262–66, quoted above). Scholars assume that the nymph's words require a well traveled road, and they take this to be the Thebes-Lebadeia road that ran along the south side of the Copaic Lake just about where the present highway runs. But does the Hymn require a main thoroughfare? Or does only the lakeshore road fit the requirement? We must first look closely at the Hymn.

Apollo's only purpose in wandering over the mainland was to find a suitable site for a temple and oracle. He himself was traveling no road, since there was none yet (227–28):

οὐδ' ἄρα πω τότε γ' ἦσαν ἀταρπιτοὶ οὐδὲ κέλευθοι  
Θήβης ἄμ' πεδίον πυρφόρον, ἀλλ' ἔχεν ὕλην.

If there was no road across the Theban plain, then there was no extension of it westward along the south shore of the Copaic Lake. The strange custom of chariot-smashing at Onchestos (230–38) belongs to the future; and Apollo passes the sites of future towns, not actual settlements, when he goes by Onchestos, Haliartos, and the other towns named—as the poet says, no one lived yet in Thebes (226).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Guillon had already identified Hagios Nikolaos with the sanctuary of Apollo Telphusius in *Les trépieds du Ptoion* (Paris 1943) 2.105 note 2, 196. See also his *Études Béotiennes* (Aix-en-Provence 1963) 87–88, 90, 94, where he writes “H. Giorgios” by mistake for H. Nikolaos. In neither of these works does he mention the Petra spring.

<sup>10</sup> An exception may be the city of the hybristic Phlegyans (3.278), which Apollo

So to Apollo Telphusa predicts future traffic on a road that will pass her spring; it was, of course, the road known to the poet and his contemporaries. Verses 262–66 require no more than a road over which horses, mules, and vehicles passed, and such a road went past the Hagios Nikolaos spring in antiquity as today: it is a dirt road passable to wagons and cars. And much more traffic moved on this road in antiquity than does so today. It was an important road that ran through the pass between Mount Tilphusion and the spur which terminates in the rock of Petra. Fig. 4 shows this pass to the left of the rocky peak that rises above the crag of Hagios Nikolaos. Spring and convent are very near the entrance to the pass. About one kilometer west near the summit of the pass are visible the remains of a fort, now called Palaiothiva (Old Thebes). This was the fort Tilphusaion, as Guillon points out, which the Phocians held for a time during the Third Sacred War until it was recovered by the Thebans.<sup>11</sup> At the height of their power the Phocians held Orchomenos and Coroneia; and the Tilphusaion pass was a strategic point, whence they could control access to eastern Boeotia and Phocis. The remains on Petra, sometimes taken to be the temple of Apollo Telphusius, belong to a fourth-century fort, which, according to Guillon, was an advance post of the higher fort that guarded the pass.<sup>12</sup> We can conclude that the road through the pass was used frequently enough to satisfy Telphusa's warning words in the Hymn. Furthermore all travelers and their beasts would stop to drink at the Hagios Nikolaos spring after a long pull upslope and after journeying several miles without water; whereas the lower road passed several sources, crossed streams, and ran along a lakeshore, only a few yards from the margin, so that the Petra spring had no unusual character as a watering place.

reached after leaving Telphusa; they were villains, fit neighbors of Telphusa on one side and of the Delphian dragoness and Typhaon on the other.

<sup>11</sup> Dem. Or. 19.141, 148; Guillon, *Les trépiéds* 2.120 note 7. Diod. 4.66.5 mentions the *chôrion* called *Tilphôssaion* as the place to which Theban refugees, including Teiresias, fled when the Epigoni took their city. Fort, pass, Apollo sanctuary, and mountain may be called *Tilphôs(s)aion* or *Tilphous(s)aion*. Strabo (9.2.27, p. 410, 35, p. 413) lists Tilphusion with Acraephiae, Onchestos, Haliartos, Coroneia, and other towns surrounding Lake Copais, indicating that it was a settlement.

<sup>12</sup> Guillon, *Les trépiéds* 2.120 note 7, 196; *Etudes Béotiennes* 87 note 114. Bursian in 1862 (above, note 5) 234, had already identified Palaiothiva with Tilphusaion. See Ross (above, note 4) 31–32.

Telphusa's words in Hymn 3.262–63 do not suit the Petra spring very well, but are exactly right for the upper spring.

The nymph's statement that Apollo would be free at Delphi from the annoyance that he would experience at Telphusa has been commonly misunderstood and has been taken to indicate a *terminus ante quem* for the Hymn, namely 582 B.C., when the chariot race was instituted at the Pythian festival. Yet Apollo's temple at Delphi was nearly as far from the Pythian hippodrome, situated on the Amphissa plain near Crisa, as was Telphusa from Poseidon's grove at Onchestos, where chariots were driven in a strange and certainly noisy ritual (Hymn 3.230–38). Surely Telphusa was talking about the noises of traffic on the road next to her spring and about Apollo's future freedom from them at Delphi.<sup>13</sup> There horses and mules refreshed themselves at the Castalian spring beside the road, a quarter mile or more east of Apollo's temple, which is also well above the road and its passing traffic. The mantic spring was Cassotis, above the temple and inaccessible to beasts of burden. At Delphi, therefore, Apollo would not hear the noises of traffic just outside his door, as he would at Telphusa, where his mantic spring would also be a roadside watering place.<sup>14</sup> In the end, Apollo did not mind the traffic noises, since he took over Telphusa anyway and established a sanctuary there and probably an oracle.

Mount Tilphusion, therefore, beneath which lay the Telphusa spring, according to the sources (see above, note 3), cannot be Petra alone, nor is it a proper name for the small crag over the spring. It is the whole steep and jagged wall of rock that lies behind Haliartos and Ypsilanti, called Vrastamiti Vouno or Kysopithari in recent times; and it is so identified on some maps.<sup>15</sup> It is a spectacular ridge (fig.

<sup>13</sup> See Guillon, *Etudes Béotiennes* 87 note 115: "il peut s'agir simplement dans le passage en question du bruit des chevaux qui s'abreuvent après un long trajet en montagne; or la fontaine de Castalie, à Delphes, se trouve assez loin du temple même d'Apollon pour que le dieu, au fond de son adyton, ne soit point troublé par le bruit des bêtes, tandis que le temple principal du Tilphoussaion, s'il occupait l'emplacement actuel de la chapelle de Hagios [Nicolaos], se trouvait au voisinage immédiat de la source."

<sup>14</sup> We need not bother about the date of the Hymn to Apollo; it could well be later than 582. It probably belongs to the first quarter of the sixth century, at least the *Suite Pythique*, if that is a separate poem.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. J. G. Frazer, A. W. Van Buren, *Graecia Antiqua* (London 1930) map 52, which marks the whole ridge as Mount Tilphusius (but map 9 identifies Tilphusius with



5) that belongs to the mountain mass of Helicon; it runs east and west, and Petra is a spur that branches off from it at right angles to the north. The sources call it *oros Tilphousion*, and *oros* is more likely to designate a range or ridge than a small hill like Petra. It is true that Pausanias (9.33.1) places Mount Tilphusion and the spring about fifty stades from Haliartos, but in this section his attention is mainly upon the spring. A little later (9.33.3) he informs us that the Haliartians have an hypaethral sanctuary of the *Praxidikai* (goddesses similar to Erinyes) next to Mount Tilphusion. He then speaks of the Lophis River east of Haliartos. We need not suppose that the *Praxidikai*'s sanctuary was close to Telphusa spring, but rather that it was situated near the base of the mountain wall south of Haliartos.

Ancient Haliartos stood on a projecting hill just behind the modern village, which occupies the strip between hill and lake. The towns around Lake Copais were built on higher ground: on the south side we find Onchestos, Haliartos, Ocalea, Alalcomenae, Coroneia, situated on low hills. A road that crossed the slopes connected them more directly than the lower road along the lakeshore. Ancient roads commonly ran across slopes, ascending and descending as the terrain required. They were likely to be just below the line where the gentler slope meets the base of the steep mountainside.<sup>16</sup> So a road ran athwart the slopes from Haliartos to Ocalea and thence through the Tilphusaion pass to Coroneia, Lebadeia, Stiris, and Delphi. Still today the old villages of Mazi, Petra (Siacho),<sup>17</sup> and Ypsilanti (Vrastamiti) are situated on the lower hills, and a dirt road connects them, rising then from Ypsilanti to Hagios Nikolaos and thence through the pass to villages on the other side (see Map). A little to the north of Hagios Nikolaos, just before the ascending road reaches it, a road forks off northwestward and crosses the saddle behind Petra to Soulinari.<sup>18</sup> The ancient road may have run south of Ypsilanti, where

Petra). See Béquignon, *Grèce* 213, whose map identifies Vrastamiti Vouno with Mt. Libethrion. Ross (above, note 4) 31 identified the whole ridge with Tilphusion.

<sup>16</sup> See R. J. Forbes, *Notes on the History of Ancient Roads and Their Construction* (Amsterdam 1934) 106; G. Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work* (London and New York 1926) 114.

<sup>17</sup> Not to be confused with the rock Petra (see Map); it is probably on or near the site of Ocalea; see S. Lauffer, *Bericht in Arch. Anz.* (1940) 186.

<sup>18</sup> See fig. 5 and Map. In fig. 4 the faint horizontal line, right center, which crosses

apparently no ancient settlement stood, and nearer to the mountain wall behind, going upslope on the right side of the stream that flows from Hagios Nikolaos, where there is now a crude dirt road, rather than on the left side, where the zigzag road now ascends.

It is clear that both an upper and a lower road carried travelers between Thebes and Lebadeia. The low road that goes along the lakeshore is level and easy; the other required some climbing of slopes. Why, then, would more than an occasional beast of burden have occasion to drink at the spring Telphusa? There would be some traffic connected with the fort in the pass, some peasants going by with mules and donkeys, and little besides. The fact is that the lakeshore road could not be used through the entire year. It became impassable in the winter months, especially at the narrow pass between Petra and Lake Copais, because the lake waters rose then and covered it. Lake Copais was a shallow marsh lake, fed from the Cephissus, Permessus, Lophis, Phalarus, and other rivers and streams, and from many springs around the margins, one of which is the Petra spring. In summer the lake would nearly disappear, but in winter the waters would rise and overflow the ordinary limits of the lake, flooding the low lands round about to an extent determined by the amount of rainfall. The annual floods were not due only to the abundant waters that the incoming rivers and surrounding springs poured into the basin, but also to the clogging of the *katavothra*, the underground outlets that carried the lake waters to the sea.<sup>19</sup> Hence in the winter months, perhaps well into the spring in some years of heavy rainfall, the low road could not be used, and anyone traveling from Thebes to Lebadeia and Phocis, or thence to Thebes, had to use the upper road which carried him past the spring Telphusa and through the Telphusaion pass.

Therefore the Hagios Nikolaos spring admirably shows every feature of the spring Telphusa as indicated in the sources: it rises under a crag

the scrub at the level of the chapel, is the road; just to the right of the picture the road to Soulinari forks off northwestwards.

<sup>19</sup> On the annual overflow of Lake Copais and its marshes and springs see Strabo 9.2.16, p. 406; Paus. 9.38.6; Plut. *Mor.* 578A; Pliny *NH* 16.66.168; Leake (above, note 2) 37; Ross (above, note 4); Ulrichs (above, note 5); Philippson (above, note 5) 466, 478–81; Lauffer (above, note 17) 185–86. The lake was drained in 1883–92 and is now a fertile plain worked by the people of the surrounding villages. See Guillon, *La Béotie antique*, pl. 7.

which looks like a heap of rocks beside a road that bore considerable traffic in horses and mules and carriages—the only road from east to west in winter months.

The Telphusa spring belonged to the sanctuary of Apollo Telphusius, whose temple probably occupied the site of the chapel of Hagios Nikolaos. But why St. Nicholas, who is usually Poseidon's successor saint?<sup>20</sup> The reason may be that Poseidon was also worshiped at Telphusa. It was beside this spring that Poseidon mated with Erinys, who bore the swift horse Areion as a result of the union. This Erinys was the nymph Telphusa, as is evident from the parallel traditions of Arcadian Telphusa (Thelpusa).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore Poseidon had an important cult at nearby Onchestos, and the ritual of this cult is given prominent treatment in the Hymn to Apollo just before the Telphusa episode. So the deities worshiped at Telphusion were Apollo, Poseidon, Telphusa Erinys, and Teiresias, who probably preceded Apollo as the god of the place, speaker of oracles. This may well be the original locale of Teiresias, whom tradition transferred to Thebes. It is with some surprise that we notice the modern name for the remains of Telphusaion, Palaiothiva (*Palaiothéba*, Old Thebes), although there is no ancient record of the name; there, according to the legend, Theban refugees from the Epigoni settled, and Teiresias came with them.

The presence of Teiresias' tomb with its attendant cult is the only evidence for an oracle at Telphusa, which Apollo presumably took over, since, according to the Hymn, he started to establish an oracle there, was dissuaded, and then came back to take the site anyway. The Hymn mentions only Apollo's founding of an altar on his return; but the poet represents the Delphic shrine and would not advertise a rival oracle.

The conclusion that it was at one time an oracle is corroborated by the close parallel between the topography of Telphusa and that of Ptoon, almost diagonally opposite to Telphusa near the northwestern corner of the lake. On my visit to Boeotian sites in May 1959, I

<sup>20</sup> See Mary Hamilton, *Greek Saints and Their Festivals* (Edinburgh and London 1910) 128–29.

<sup>21</sup> Schol. AB on *Il.* 23.346; see *Python* (above, note 1) 366–72. All Boeotia was sacred to Poseidon according to *Etym. Mag.* 547; cf. Poseidon Heliconius.

noticed this similarity, and Guillon has drawn attention to it.<sup>22</sup> At Ptoon too the oracular spring issues from the base of a small crag, which is beside a road near the top of a slope and close by the entrance to a pass that leads to the coast of the Euboean Sea; and there the hero Ptoos corresponds to Teiresias as Apollo's hero companion and probable predecessor.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Guillon, *Les trépieds* 2.105; see *La Béotie antique*, pl. 5; Frazer and Van Buren (above, note 15) pls. 9, 52. At Delphi too the oracular spring, if it can be identified with Kerna, comes forth from the foot of Nauplia (Rodhini), the western Phaedriad; and the temple of Apollo, beside which is the shrine of his hero-companion Pyrrhus, is situated on the upper slope. The Cassotis mentioned by Paus. 10.24.7 is probably a fountain near the northeast corner of Apollo's temple that was fed from Kerna; see J. Pouilloux and G. Roux, *Enigmes à Delphes* (Paris 1963) 79-101.

<sup>23</sup> I am indebted to Keith de Vries for the photographs from which the figures have been taken, and to Eugene Vanderpool for enlisting Mr. de Vries' aid. My own photographs taken in 1967 were not nearly so suitable for illustrating this paper. And I must also thank Mrs. Adrienne Morgan, senior draftsman in the Berkeley Geography Department, for drawing the map.

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KEY TO MAP OF CENTRAL BOEOTIA

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Hagios Nikolaos (Telphusa spring) | 12 Sphinx Mountain |
| 2 Palaiothiva (Telphusaion pass)    | 13 Lake Copais     |
| 3 Mount Tilphusion                  | 14 Alalcomenae     |
| 4 Petra rock                        | 15 Soulinari       |
| 5 Petra spring                      | 16 Coroneia        |
| 6 Ypsilanti (Vrastamiti)            | 17 Phalarus River  |
| 7 Petra (Siacho), ancient Ocalea    | 18 Mount Helicon   |
| 8 Haliartos                         | 19 Orchomenos      |
| 9 Mazi                              | 20 Cephissus River |
| 10 Lophis River                     | 21 Acraephiae      |
| 11 Onchestos                        | 22 Ptoon           |

