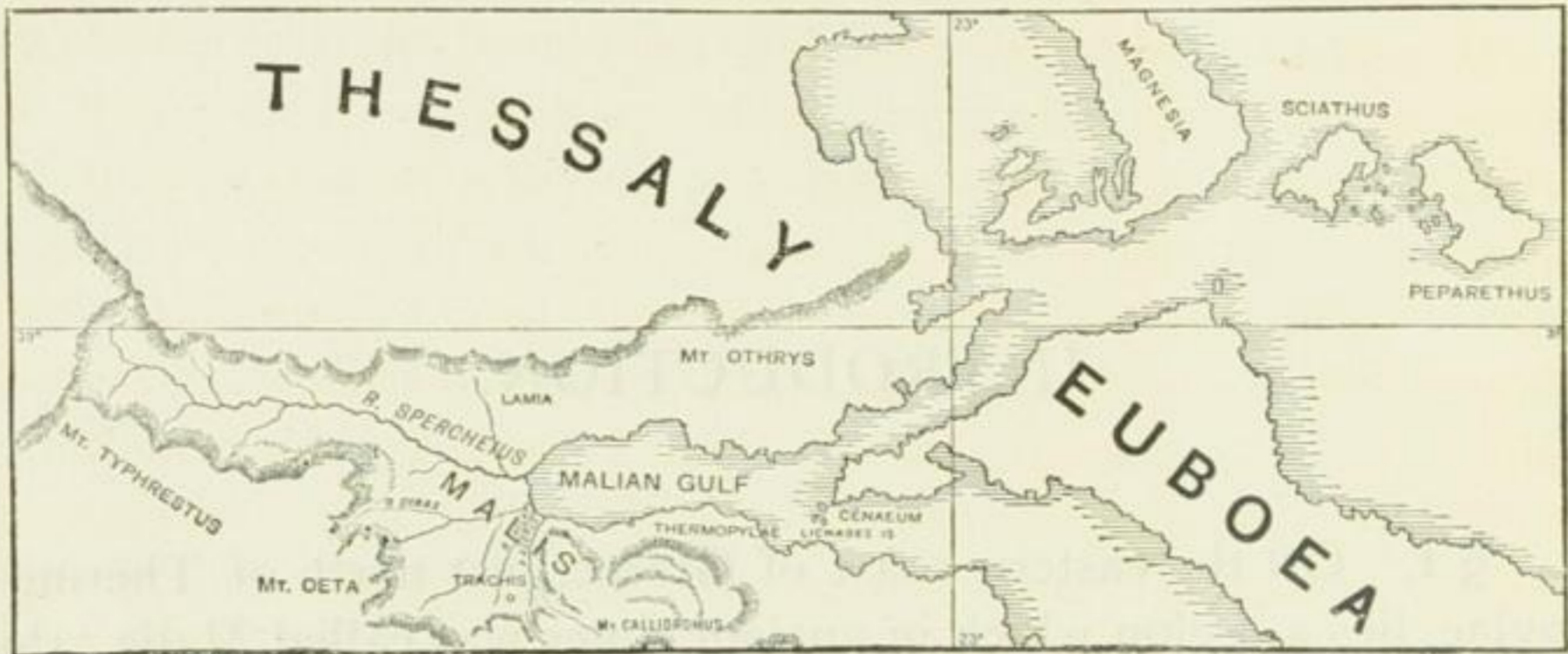


sweeps down upon Thermopylae, where the fir-clad and snowy



summit of Callidromus rises above the pass. Precipitous cliffs are thrown forward from this part of the Oetaean range, forming an irregular crescent round the southern and western sides of the plain. These cliffs were called of old 'the Trachinian Rocks.' Trachis, the 'city of the crags,' stood on a rocky spur beneath them, a little north of the point where they are cleft by the magnificent gorge of the Asopus,—that steep ravine by which Hydarnes led his Persians up through the mountain oak-woods, on the night before he surprised Leonidas. Between the Asopus and the Spercheius are the narrow channels of two lesser streams, anciently known as the Melas and the Dyras<sup>1</sup>. The name Malis denoted this whole seaboard plain, with the heights around it, from the lower spurs of Othrys on the north to those of Oeta on the south and west. Just opposite the entrance of the Gulf, the bold north-west promontory of Euboea, once called Cape Cenaeum, runs out towards the mainland. There was a peculiar fitness in the phrase of Sophocles, when he described this district, with its varied scenery, as 'the haunt of Malian Nymphs'<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The Dyras was said to have first started from the ground in order to relieve the fiery pangs of Heracles (Her. 7. 198). In a vase-painting noticed below (n. on v. 728, p. 121, 1st col.), the Nymph who seeks to quench the pyre probably symbolises this stream.

The ancient mouth of the Spercheius was some miles N.W. of Thermopylae; the present mouths are a little E.N.E. of it, and the line of the coast has been considerably advanced, so that there is no longer a narrow pass. The Asopus, Melas and Dyras formerly had separate courses to the sea. They are now mere affluents of the Spercheius,—the Melas and Dyras uniting before they reach it.

<sup>2</sup> v. 725 αὐτὰν Μαλιάδων νυμφᾶν.