



Revisiting the Rivers Which Granted Life to Parion: Hermotos (?) and Rhesos (Rhoeites)

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Parion'a Yaşam Bahşeden Nehirleri Tekrar Gözden Geçirme: Hermotos (?) ve Rhesos (Rhoeites)

Michael D. YILMAZ*

Abstract: Parion, a colony founded on the Asiatic shore of the Propontis in the Troas Region, similar to most colony cities was founded on a cape overlooking trade routes and adjacent to a fertile hinterland and a water source. The water sources, the vitalizing rivers are of the utmost importance. Two rivers are known in Parion: the Hermotos and Rhesos. These two rivers which by granting the Parianoi water to drink and fish to eat along with providing fertile agricultural lands (through feeding the plains either by irrigation channels or in a natural manner) have directly effected and ensured life in Parion. This paper aims to re-establish the ancient knowledge regarding rivers as the source of the water required by the city by referring to ancient geographical and hydrographical information provided by ancient and modern sources for Parion as well as the ancient world.

Keywords: Troas, Parion, River, Hermotos (?), Rhesos (Rhoeites)

Öz: Parion, Troas Bölgesinde Propontis'in Asya kıyısında kurulmuş bir koloni kenti olmakla beraber birçok diğer koloni kentleri gibi ticaret yollarına hakim, yakınlarında su kaynakları ve verimli bir hinterland bulunan bir yarımada üzerinde kurulmuştur. Yaşam bahşetme özellikleri ile su kaynağı olan nehirler büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda Parion'da: Hermotos ve Rhesos olmak üzere iki nehir bilinmektedir. Bu iki nehir Parionlulara içecek su ve yiyecek balık yanı sıra verimli tarım arazilerinin (sulama kanalları ile yapay olarak veya doğal şekillerde) oluşmasını sağlayarak Parion'da yaşamı doğrudan etkilemiş ve mümkün kılmışlardır. Bu makalenin amacı kentin su kaynağı olarak nehirleri antik ve modern kaynaklarda Parion ve antik dünya kapsamında sunulan tarihi coğrafya ve hidrografi bilgileri ışığında nehirleri tekrar saptamak ve tanımlamaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Troas, Parion, Nehir, Hermotos (?), Rhesos (Rhoeites)

Introduction¹

The importance of water for human life is an undeniable fact and in this scope Vitruvius emphasizes this “*Water is very necessary for life, for delight and for daily use*”². Water being the

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¹ This article is produced from the continuing PhD dissertation of the author titled “Aqueducts of Parion (Supply Distribution-Discharge)” [Bu makale yazarın çalışmalarına devam etmekte olduğu “Parion Su Yolları (Temin- Dağıtım- Tahliye)” başlıklı doktora tezinden türetilmiştir].

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This article is a revisit to and correction of a previous publication (Yılmaz 2019) in light of new research.

I would like to thank my colleagues and friends Reşat KARABIYIK, Asc. Prof. Dr. Atıla TÜRKER and Res. Assist. Soner ÖZMEN who assisted me with their help in regards to translations from German.

² Vitr. VIII. 1. 1.

source of life and food, is significant not only for human life but also for enabling humans to assemble and found cities.

Mentioned as having been founded in 709 BC³ Parion is currently located within the borders of Kemer Village in the Biga Municipality of Çanakkale Province. By having natural harbours, a fertile hinterland, and by being closely situated to trade routes established both on sea and land, the city can be said to have been founded on a strategical position as were other Ionian colonies in the region⁴. The peninsula known as Bodrum Cape constitutes the acropolis and the bay forming the harbour of the city is sheltered on the west of this peninsula. On the coastline south-southwest of the acropolis and Bodrum Cape the Rivulet Kemer (Kemer Çayı) flows to the sea. This river is the reason in Parion having a fertile hinterland as well as being one of the first water sources for the city.

This work aims to re-establish the identity of the two rivers important for Parion. Information regarding the rivers derives from written ancient sources, travellers from previous centuries, ethnographic evidences (in the form of local legends), recent geographical work, along with very recent archaeological fieldworks (surveys and fieldtrips)⁵. The greatest problem regarding these rivers associated with Parion is that they are not identified or mentioned in ancient written sources as being associated with Parion. Although they are mentioned within the geography of the area or within stories associated with the area, they are presented with relations and situations according to geographical elements such as mountains and other rivers. After gathering and filtering most of the possible ascriptions of these rivers, the sources are then required to be organised and separated. Therefore the rivers will be approached separately and evidence regarding the rivers will first be presented briefly, and later in more depth with subtitles and categories regarding, geography, mythology and literature.

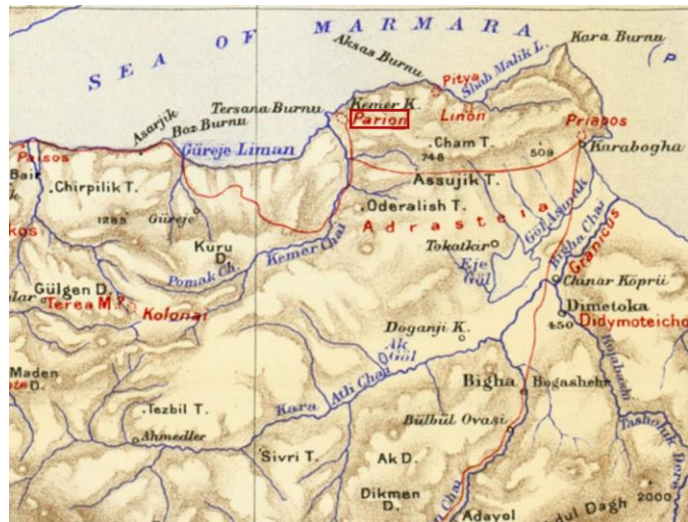


Fig. 1. Parion and its surroundings (Leaf 1912, Map 1)

The two rivers which are of utmost importance for the subsistence of Parion; the Hermotos for the founding of the settlement by presenting a fertile hinterland, and the Rhesos (Rhoeitas) from which water was conveyed to Parion by the artificial means of aqueducts. The former flows into the sea close to Parion, whilst the latter flows into the Granikos (Fig. 1).

1. The Hermotos River

The river which had an important impact in choosing the location and the founding of Parion is the Kemer Rivulet⁶ (Kemer Çayı) which flows to the sea beside the ancient city (Fig. 1,2,3,4). The

³ Avram 2004, 991.

⁴ Roebuck 1984, 113.

⁵ This work differs from the previous work (in Turkish, see. Yılmaz 2019) with new information gained from the most recent of the mentioned archaeological fieldworks.

⁶ Kemer Rivulet throughout its course is known by different names, therefore in order to prevent confusion the rivulet will be referred as Kemer Rivulet.

Kemer Rivulet, most likely being a water source during the early days of the city, is also known to have been a food source due to the fish it yielded.

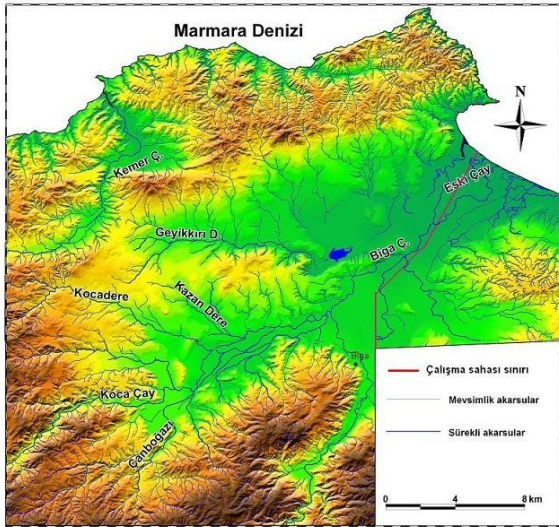


Fig. 2. Rivers located West of Biga (Şencan 2007, Şekil 8)

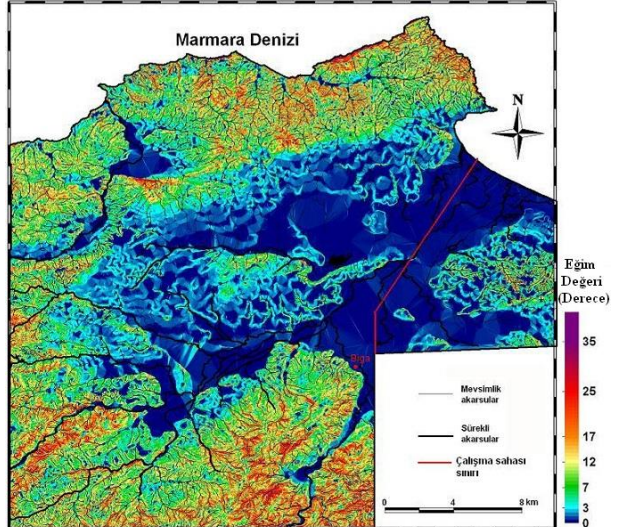


Fig. 3. Topography and rivers West of Granikos (Biga Çayı) (Şencan 2007, Şekil 14)

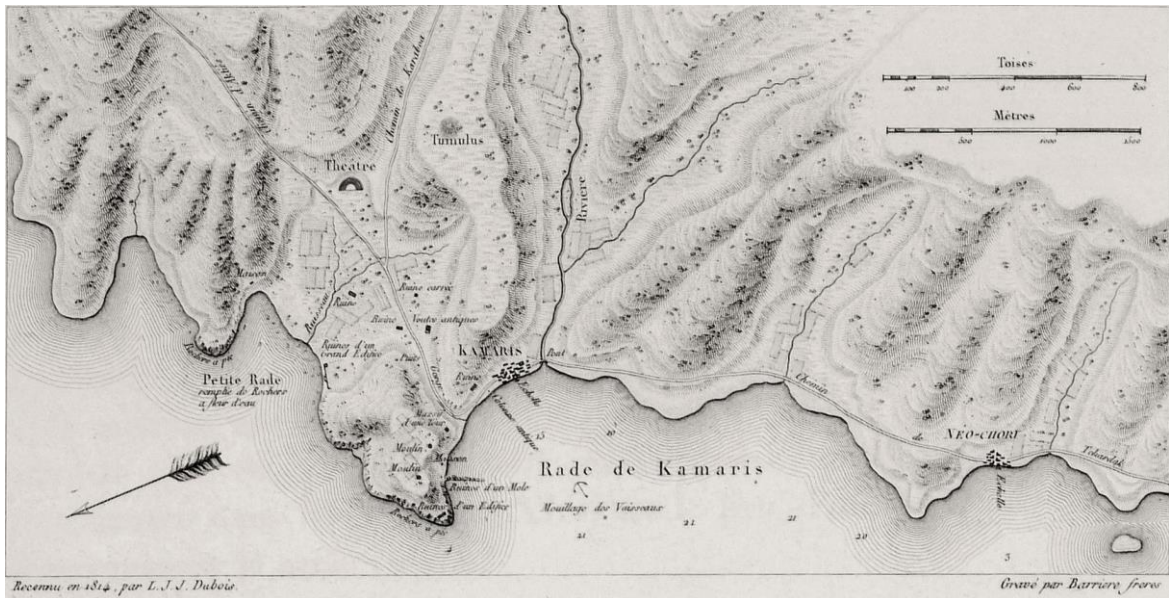


Fig. 4. Plan of Parion and Kemer Village (de Choiseul-Gouffier 1822, Planche 64)

1.1. Geography of Hermotos

Polyaenus mentions⁷ of fisherman employed along the road from Parion to Hermaeum who were cooking fish and eating them whilst drinking wine as an offering to Poseidon and that these fishermen invited the Parion party to join them in order to delay them in their contest against the Lampsaceniens. When the text is analyzed it can be concluded that the road in the Parion hinterland leading to Hermaeum which is accepted to be a settlement in the vicinity of Çınardere Village and this would therefore reveal that the fishermen were fishing from the Kemer Rivulet⁸.

⁷ Polyaen. VI. 24.

⁸ See. Janke 1904, 135-136; Leaf 1923, 100; Frisch 1978, 105, fn. 5; Hammond 1980, fn. 23.

Judeich, is observed to refer to the Kemer Rivulet as “the ancient Hermotos River”⁹. When these two statements are approached together the settlement of Hermaeum which is also known as Hermotos¹⁰ should be located on the banks of the Kemer Rivulet, and due to this the settlement was named after the river¹¹.

The Hermotos River can be concluded as being the source of water during the city’s early days, and a source of food throughout the city’s existence. Another undisputed feature of this river for Parion is the natural irrigation which formed the fertile hinterland for the city.

2. The Rhesos River

Parion by acquiring an aqueduct system during the Roman Age is observed to have chosen another river as the source for conveying water rather than the adjacent Kemer Rivulet (Hermotos)¹².

The water chosen for conveying to the city finds its source in the Gürgen Mountain which is the eastern peak of the Çataltepe (Forkhill) formation (Fig. 1,2,3). This water source is a legendary water source, having tales in its name which are continued to be told today. The tale told today is:

One day the king of Parion announces that whoever brings water to the city of Parion which is absent of water he will marry to his gorgeous daughter. After hearing the news the son of the king of Çataltepe begins to work in Çataltepe where there are many water springs and after months of labour he channels the water to Parion. The Çataltepe prince after bringing the water finds himself by the Parion king and speaks of the water as coming like a dog after him. The water hearing this is offended and flows backwards to its source.

Another version of the tale changes in the ending such as;

The Çataltepe prince after bringing the water finds himself by the Parion king and informs him of the water’s arrival. Asking for the king’s blessing to marry his daughter to the water bringer, this is denied by the king. The water being enraged at the unfulfilled promise turns back and returns to its source.

There are three important conclusions to be drawn from this tale. Firstly that water is important for Parion, secondly the water is required to be conveyed by aqueducts, and finally the water was personified. With the final conclusion it can be stated that existences with such personifications are usually divinities. In this case the subject water or river can therefore be expected to be a divinity.

During field trips carried out during the 2018 campaign of Parion excavations the villages of Arabakonağı and Çınardere were visited. Conversations with the locals of these villages revealed the presence of “tunnels” and “tunnels with chimneys” respectively in the villages. These “tunnels” and “tunnels with chimneys” are clearly the vaulted aqueduct channels with ventilation shafts. Judging that the only settlement located between Parion and Gürgen Mountain being

⁹ Judeich, refers to the river as “*dem antiken Hermotos-Fluss*”. See. Judeich 1898, 548.

¹⁰ Leaf 1923, 100-101; Körpe 2008, 375; Arr. *Anab.* I. 12. 6.

¹¹ Today the rivulet is named differently throughout its course, mostly by carrying the closest village’s name and inevitably changes throughout its flow to Değirmen Dere, Çınar Dere, Kemer Çayı etc. See. fn. 6.

¹² During field trips carried out in 2018 and 2019 information regarding the water sources and aqueducts of Parion was gained. I would like to thank Res. Ast. Soner ÖZMEN who we carried out the trips with.

Hermæum which can be stated as a *kome*, the destination of these channels should be Parion. This conclusion and the previously mentioned tale also support each other.

2.1. Geography of Rhesos

Strabon, states that all the rivers which rise from Mount Ida (the formation of which Çataltepe is a part of) and flow to the sea, the Rhesos and the Heptaporos mentioned by Homeros were still visible in his time¹³. From this it is to be understood that the Rhesos River doesn't flow to the sea. Strabo also states that among the rivers mentioned by Homeros; Rhesos and Heptaporos, Karesos and Rhodios are actually lesser rivers¹⁴. This statement somewhat differs to Plinius' statement. According to Plinius, from the rivers mentioned by Homeros; Rhesos, Heptaporos, Karesos and Rhodios have vanished¹⁵.

Strabon, quoting Demetrius of Skepsis¹⁶ explains that the mountainous region located between Dardanos, Zeleia and Pityeia yielding a fertile hinterland is known as the Karesene Region; and that the rivers of Rhesos, Heptaporos, Karesos and Rhodios are the rivers of this region. Demetrius, further mentions Rhesos as being a river which flows into Granikos. Though the sentence explaining Rhesos is hard to be understood. The translation of this sentence is "The Rhesos River is now called Rhoeites, unless it be that the river which empties into the Granikos is the Rhesos". It should be noted that the Greek text mentions of Rhesos flowing adversely. When looking at all of the Troas Region rivers we can see that with the exception of Granikos (Biga Çayı) and Aisepos (Gönen Çayı) all of the rivers rise in the east and flow to the west and to the sea. In this context Rhesos (Koca Çay & Koca Dere) by rising in the west and later flowing first to the east and later turning northeast and flowing into the Granikos can be stated as "flowing adversely" (Fig. 1,2).

Eustathius, clearly mentions that Rhesos and Heptaporos combine their powers and flow to a much stronger river, and that Rhesos is also called Rhoeites¹⁷. Eustathius, quoting Strabon mentions that the Rhoeites River located in the Karesene Region to be flowing to the Granikos River¹⁸.

Nonnus, another author mentioning the Rhesos and Heptaporos states that Dardanos of Thrace founded a city in the Troas Region which he named after himself, later drinking from the waters of Heptaporos and the floods of Rhesos¹⁹.

Demetrius, Strabon and Eustathius are understood to have taken excerpts from each other in respective order. Judging that Demetrius' text has not survived to the present day, it can be assumed that the surviving texts of the latter authors could have been contaminated. According to Strabon's statement there are two rivers; first is the old (Homeric) Rhesos which is now called Rhoeites and the new Rhesos which flows into the Granikos. Though according to Eustathius' statement, the river flowing into the Granikos is Rhesos which is also called Rhoeites. We can therefore conclude that the Strabon text which Eustathius was reading, differs from the Strabon text which survived to our day.

Keeping in mind Nonnus' statement, Homeros and Strabon both couple some rivers, strikingly Rhesos and Heptaporos are coupled; which should be related to the fact that both rivers flow into

¹³ Str. XIII. 1. 5.

¹⁴ Str. XII. 3. 27.

¹⁵ Plin. *nat.* V. 33.

¹⁶ Strabon is observed to be inconsistent and inexplicit while quoting Demetrius regarding Rhesos or Rhoeites. See. Leaf 1911, 294; Str. XIII. 1. 44.

¹⁷ Eust. 889. 58-60.

¹⁸ Eust. 890. 6.

¹⁹ Nonn. *D.* 3. 192-194.

the Granikos²⁰. Though, Hercher draws attention to the possibility that Rhesos by the time of Demetrius had lost its old name and was called Rhoeites²¹. Plinius' quoting solely Homeros and not knowing of the other authors texts may be the reason for his contrary statement.

Similarities between the names of cities and rivers, and the fact that disruption and change to ancient texts may take place as they survive to the present day, can cause the modern researcher to fall into error regarding the name and location of rivers²².

Observing the publications of researchers who have conducted field work in the Northern Troas Region, Karaatlı Çay (Koca Çay) (Fig. 1) which rises in the Southern springs of the Gürgen Mountain is defined as Rhesos²³. Though one of the tributaries of Rhesos called Koca Dere is seen to rise in the strongest spring in the mountain located on the Northern slope of the Gürgen Mountain which is known to have many springs²⁴. Judeich, mentions that Rhesos flows into Granikos from the West²⁵. Leaf, states that Rhesos rises West of Biga and flows into Granikos, being great enough in size to have a name of its own²⁶. In the same way Janke also states Rhesos flows into the Granikos, both of the rivers having similar sized river beds by presenting dimensions²⁷. According to Körpe, the water conveyed to Parion was channeled from here²⁸. Rhesos is observed to begin as two rivers (Koca Dere & Koca Çay), having two basins located north and south of the Gürgen Mountain that join together as Koca Çay and flow in to the Granikos. The confluence of the Koca Dere and Koca Çay is know as "Batak Ova" (Marshy Plain) and during seasonal river risings this area is known to be flooded²⁹. This plain with its floods is undoubtedly the "floods of Rhesos" mentioned by Nonnus.

Gürgen Mountain during antiquity was known as Tereia and on the peak and north of the mountain towards the Village of Arabakonağı, the city of Kolonai is known to have been located³⁰. Tereia being a steep mountain, is known to have accomodated a temple dedicated to Kybele³¹. Kybele being the goddess of ferility, the source of this fertility can be seen as the springs of Rhesos.

During further field trips carried out in the 2019 campaign of Parion excavations the village of Arabakonağı and the mentioned spring were located with the help of the local residents. The locals knowledge of the legends regarding the water which was conveyed to Parion, confirmed the spring to be the renown spring. Today the spring (which was used for Parion) has dried, and turned in to an underground river although the water is still being used through a nearby fountain for animal herds and is known as "Soğuk Su" (Cold Water). The team has observed the water to be as good as its name: very cold. The schist bed rock is observed to have been carved in order to create a catch basin for the water (Fig. 5), which accomodates a small shrine in the form of a niche (Fig. 6). The niche could be either for Fontus; the water spring god, or for Rhesos.

²⁰ Leaf 1923, 67,202-203,206-207; Eust. 889. 58-60.

²¹ Hercher 1877, 774.

²² Hercher 1877, 769,772-774,779,781; Virchow 1879, 84-85.

²³ Kiepert 1854, 57; Leaf 1923, 206.

²⁴ Kiepert 1854, 58; Körpe 2008, 383.

²⁵ Judeich 1898, 549.

²⁶ Leaf 1923, 70-71,206.

²⁷ Janke 1904, 136-137.

²⁸ Körpe 2008, 383.

²⁹ Janke 1904, 137; Şencan 2007, 51-53.

³⁰ Judeich 1898, 548; Leaf 1923,72,101; Körpe 2008, 383; Str. XIII. 1. 10. 17

³¹ Leaf 1923, 65; Körpe 2008, 383; Hom. //. II. 828; Str. XIII. 1. 17.



Fig. 5. Spring and catch basin located in the Tereia Mountain (Parion arch.)



Fig. 6. Niche of the spring catch basin (Parion arch.)

2.2. Mythology and Literature of Rhesos

Hesiodos and Homeros make mention of the Rhesos River. Rhesos³², the son of Okeanos and Thetis is also mentioned among the rivers called by Poseion and Apollon in order to help in demolishing the city walls of Troia³³.

Rhesos, is also the name of a Thracian king mentioned in the Iliad³⁴. King Rhesos is known to have traveled although delayed to Troia in order to help the defenders, and to have been killed by Diomedes without being able to join the battle³⁵. The death of king Rhesos is also the subject of a theatrical play of Euripides³⁶ as well as the love story of king Rhesos and Arganthonne written by Asklepiades of Myrlea as quoted by Parthenios of Nicaia³⁷. In the story of Arganthonne, the death of Rhesos happens while fighting Diomedes and takes place by a river which later is named after the king³⁸.

Setting out from the differences and diversities in the stories regarding king Rhesos, although it seems plausible that there is a connection between the king Rhesos and the river Rhesos, especially with the diversities and even adversities -notably in Arganthonne's story- caution must be taken towards these texts. In other words, the name of the river Rhesos, should not have been given after the death of the king Rhesos as retold by Parthenios of Nicaia. Judging that the river's name is mentioned in the works of Homeros and Hesiodos who had written before Parthenios, the river should have been named beforehand.

Coins of Parion are observed as not depicting Rhesos, however Parion having had statues of Rhesos placed in public fountains is plausible. In order to state if there were any sort of belief or festivals related to Rhesos further investigation and finds are necessary. Though it is highly likely that there should have been a way of showing gratitude to the everlasting deity whose waters the Parianoi had consumed.

Conclusion

It should be noted that in a version of *the Wasps* of Aristophanes there is an ascription regarding the water of Parion³⁹ as:

³² Hes. *Th.* 337-340.

³³ Hom. *Il.* XII. 17-26.

³⁴ Rempe 1927, 20; Fries, 2014. fn. 33. (p. 17); Eust. 889. 58-59; Eur. *Rh.*; Hom. *Il.* X. 434-440; Parth. 36; Str. XIII. 1. 21.

³⁵ Hom. *Il.* X. 434-440, 469-525.

³⁶ Eur. *Rh.*

³⁷ Parth. 36.

³⁸ Fries, 2014. fn. 33. (p. 17); Parth. 36. 4

³⁹ Frisch 1983, 95, T. 110; Ar. V. 1189b (Koster - Holwerda 1978, 188).

ἐν Παρίῳ ψυχρὸν μὲν ὕδωρ, καλαὶ δὲ γυναῖκες.

This ascription can be translated as:

In Parion the water is cold, and the women are good.

The singular usage of the Greek word ὕδωρ or “water” in English, reveals the mentioned water as being the source of the water. Judging that in 422 BC when the play was written there was no great distance water conveyance the source should have been in or in close proximity to Parion⁴⁰. Although, this ascription was previously thought to possibly be in respect of the river Hermotos⁴¹, recent evidence reveals that this ascription to be more likely made for a water spring located within the ancient city of Parion⁴².

Before conveying water over great distances, cities are known to have used rivers and water sources which were located in a vicinity close to them. This practice was later abandoned when it became possible to convey better waters into the cities⁴³. The Romans are known to have been careful with regards to the choosing of their water and water source as well as preferring cold waters which were taken directly from the source⁴⁴.

The reason why Parion didn't use water from the Hermotos River which flows into the sea beside the city is one of the first questions which arise. The reasons of the choice of Rhesos over Hermotos can be explained by several factor such as; the quality of the water, the hidrography of the basin, the topography between the source and the city and the protection of the area at the source.

Among ancient authors whose work has survived to the present day such as Hippokrates, Aristoteles, Erasistratus, Vitruvius, Cornelius Celsus, Columella, Plinius, Athenaeus, Palladius and Paulus of Aegina provide evidence relating to the choosing of water sources and determining the wholesomeness of water (Fig. 7)⁴⁵.

Considering these texts the waters of Parion can be concluded as having been wholesome and good waters. When the sources and basins of the two rivers are compared; Hermotos is observed to have a basin consisting of a deep and steep valley whereas Rhesos is observed to consist of several springs and tributaries flowing along the slope and foot of the Tereia Mountain. It can therefore be concluded that Rhesos was more suitable for the building of an aqueduct. According to the statements of Kiepert and Körpe, among the springs of Rhesos, the one located on the Northern slope is the strongest⁴⁶. The choice of water is related not only to architecture and engineering but also to the quality of the water. Parion by choosing to take the water directly from the source and by slightly extending the route has changed the source to another river. Although the water and remains were not analyzed, the water of Rhesos is known to be calcareous⁴⁷ (Fig. 8) and to also be plentiful and wholesome⁴⁸; making it a good choice of water.

⁴⁰ Singular usage of the water can not refer to a water source as a well or cistern due to the diversity in temprature and structure. Water source refered along with the city in singular form should be water from an aqueduct, a spring or a certain river consumed in the city.

⁴¹ Yılmaz 2019, 582.

⁴² This water spring by not being a river will be excluded from this work. Further information regarding this water spring will be presented in the PhD dissertation of the author.

⁴³ Hodge 2012, 70-71,73; Frontin. *Aq.* I. 1. 4.

⁴⁴ Ashby 1935; Aicher 1995; Evans 1997; Hodge 2012, 72-79.

⁴⁵ Arist. *Met.* I. 13. 349b-350a, II. 1. 353b; Ath. *Deip.* II. 2. 42c-e, 46b-c; Cels. II. 18. 12-13; Col. I. 5. 1-3; Hp. *Aër.* 1, 7, 9; Pall. *R.R.* I. 4,16-17, IX. 10; Paul. *Aeg.* I. 50.; Plin. *nat.* XXXI. 21-22, 26, 28-29; Vitruvius. VIII. 1. 2; 6-7; 2. 8; 4. 1-2.

⁴⁶ Kiepert 1854, 58; Körpe 2008, 383.

⁴⁷ Yılmaz 2019, 588, Fig. 5; Keleş - Yılmaz 2020, 142, 146, Fig. 11.

⁴⁸ Springs located in calcareous rocks are mentioned to be wholesome and good in taste by ancient sources. See. Vitruvius. VIII. 1. 2; Plin. *nat.* XXXI. 28-29.

Properties of wholesome water and its source according to ancient authors in chronological order	Hippokrates	Aristoteles	Erasistratus	Vitruvius	Cornelius Celsus	Columella	Plinius	Atheneaus	Palladius	Paulus of Aegina
Odourless and colourless	√					√	√		√	√
Cold temprature				√					√	
Purity	√			√		√	√	√	√	√
Lightness (purity)			√		√		√	√		√
Lightness of water alone is not sufficient			√					√		
Softness (lime)	√			√	√		√	√	√	√
Leaving no traces on bronze vessels (lime)	√			√			√	√	√	
Quick to boil and exchanging heat quickly	√			√	√		√	√	√	√
Being a non-stagnant (flowing) source	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	
Spring located in a high area or a mountain	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	
Springs in the northern part of mountains	√			√			√		√	
Spring should be shaded by trees				√		√	√		√	
Spring should be among limestone rocks				√			√			
Health and anatomy of the consuming population	√			√			√		√	
Absence of foam or moss									√	
Presence of eels							√			

Fig. 7. Properties of wholesome water and its source according to ancient authors



Fig. 8. Calcareous deposits on terracotta water pipes of Parion (Parion arch.)

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