Mapping river gods. Highlighting the importance of rivers as gods, as seen through their representations in art during the Roman period in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace

Georgia Aristodemou

International Hellenic University, Thermi, Thessaloniki, Greece
garistodemou@gmail.com; g.aristodemou@ihu.edu.gr

The personification of local water bodies (rivers, or lakes) and their worship as divinities was widespread in the ancient Greek and Roman world.[1] Homer (*Iliad* 21. 195) regards rivers as gods and narrates that Oceanos is the source of all rivers, all springs and all wells of the universe. Hesiod (*Theogony* 337–370) as well, informs us that all rivers are offspring of Oceanos and Tethys.[2] As early as the Homeric poems, rivers in human form were considered immortal, divine figures and temples, or altars were built for them, some even with their own priests.[3] Hesiod (*Erga kai Emerai* 737–741) states that when a person needed to cross a river, they had to make an offer to the river and wash their hands.[4] In relation to this, river gods were quite often among the divinities invoked in various oaths.[5]

The lands of ancient Macedonia and Thrace are historically and geographically defined by major rivers (Haliakmon, Loudias, Axios, Gallikos, Strymon, Nestos, Hebros) and their tributaries, as well as lakes (Fig. 1). Running from the north to the south they discharge to the Aegean Sea deeply affecting the landscape and lives of local populations, both in beneficial and hazardous ways.[6] On the one hand there is a significant number of important settlements that have been established close or alongside their banks, on the other there were cases where local communities (for example in Thrace) had to adjust their habitation and economic activities according to restrains caused by the major rivers (for example, the Nestos, northern Hebros).[7] These water bodies had a substantial impact in the formation of the surrounding natural environment, in the chosen settlement patterns and hence in the shaping of people's lives, their culture and way of thinking and consequently their responses to extreme circumstances.

The power of rivers and their decisive impact to human life explains to a large degree why so many of these rivers were deified.[8] Water entities, such as rivers (and Nymphs), inhabiting the Macedonian and the Thracian landscape embodied – at a mythological level – the concept of locality. Their organic relation with a specific location is among the reasons why many of these personified rivers became the initiary point for the genealogies of renowned founder-heroes.[9] Ancient literary sources offer some information on the genealogy of the rivers but are rather elusive on their worship.[10] In addition, apart from river depictions in monetary types, river figures and river cults are not as frequently represented in art from Macedonia, and even then more like as a supplementary figure – a controversy, when thinking the number of rivers flowing in the region.

Starting westwards, from the northernmost mountainous region of Upper Macedonia, one finds an inscribed votive relief, today kept at the Bitola Archaeological Museum[11] (Fig. 2). The relief originates from Heraclea Lyncestis,[12] the city located eastwards of the Prespa Lakes, dated at the Roman Imperial period. It carries a lion figure carved within a rectangular frame.

[1] On river divinities: *RE* VI (1909) 2774–2815, *s.v.* Flußgötter (Wasser); *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* I 2, *s.v.* Flußgötter, 1487–1496 (M. Lehnerdt); *DNP* 4 (1998), *s.v.* Flußgötter, 576–578 (F. Graf); Weiss 1984; *LIMC* IV (1988), 139–148, *s.v.* Fluvii (C. Weiss); Ostrowski 1990; 1991; Brewster 1997; Mylonopoulos 2012; Bremmer 2019; Aristodemou 2021; Hollaender 2022.

[2] For an extended examination on the perception of rivers in antiquity: Dan 2018.

[3] Ostrowski 1991, 11; Bremmer 2019, 90.

[4] Tekin 2001, 520.

[5] Bremmer 2019, 90–93, with examples of ritual offerings, sacrifices and games established in honour of the major rivers of Peloponnese.

[6] The impact of water to the formation of cities and identities during antiquity on the lands of today's central Europe, is the main subject of Chiarenza *et al.* 2020.

[7] Mallios 2011, 71. Recent research reveals how the regular overflowing of the Nestos and the Hebros resulted in cities being built at a safe distance from them (see Tsiafakis and Evangelidis 2022, 52).

[8] Tzanavari 1998, 215–16.

[9] Mallios 2011, 71; Bremmer 2019, 89.

[10] On various evidences about river cults in Macedonia region, Mallios 2011, 71–95; Chatzinikoloaou 2011, 159–61 (Upper Macedonia) and Tsiafis 2017, 278–79 (Lower Macedonia).

[11] Naroden Zavod Muzej Bitola, inv. no. 23. Chatzinikolaou 2011, 159, no. 207. Also Mačkić and Mikulčić 1961, 49, no. 21, pl. XIX.

[12] On the Lyncestis region: Papazoglou 1988, 256–76.

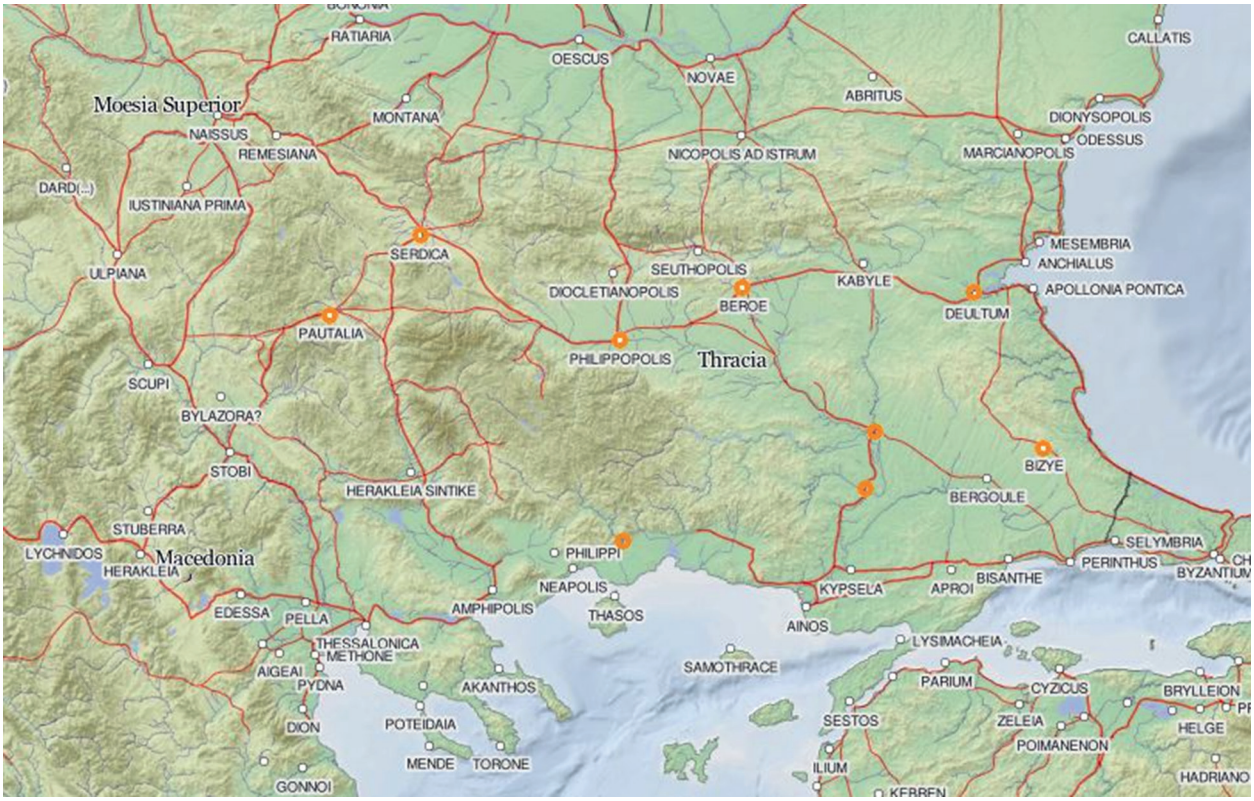

Fig. 1. Roman Macedonia and Thrace. Rivers and cities (after https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/thrace/map/).

Fig. 2. Bitola, Archaeological Museum, inv. nr. 23. (Photograph courtesy of Dr S. Gotsis).

The right edge of the slab is broken. Traces on the frame indicate that the relief originally belonged (or was attached) to a larger monument. Above the lion's back a Greek inscription (*IG* X 2 2 64) records an epiclesis to a river (*potamo Leonti.....euxen*).[13] It is not clear whether the written word *Λεοντι* refers to the dedicant, or the river itself. To this account it has been suggested that the lion figure stands as a representation of the River Lyncus, along the banks of which Heraclea Lyncestis was actually founded.[14]

The city of Stymbara (or Stuberra) in Pelagonia (4th century BC–3rd century AD) was a scene of action for both the First and the Third Macedonian Wars.[15] As Livy (*Ab urbe condita* 39. 53, 43. 20) and Strabo (7. 7) inform us, it lies by the Erigon river (today Cnra Reka) and was situated in the middle of the Pelagonian plain on the road between Stobi and Heraclea. It reached its peak at the 2nd century AD and was abandoned at the middle 3rd century.[16] A statue base found re-employed as building material on a wall carries a dedication to Poseidon, the Erigon river and the Nymphs (*IG* X, 2 2 321) (Fig. 3). The inscription has been dated at the early 3rd century AD, a period during which the city was still flourishing.[17] The Erigon river being the largest western branch of the Axios river, running through the

[13] *IG* X 2, 2, 64, pl. X; Vulić 1941–48, 13, 28, 276.

[14] Robert 1955, 89–92.

[15] On Pelagonia: Papazoglou 1988, 276–92, pl. 10.

[16] Vulić 1941–48, nos. 390–92. Also, *PECS s.v.* Stymbara (Styberra) (J. Sasel) (https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0006:entry=stymbara, 28 June 2023). Small-scale excavations unearthed remains of a Hellenistic rampart, along with those of a gymnasium complex with an atrium, a peristyle court, a semi-circular exedra, a *temenos* and a *heroon*. The city's patronal deity was Tyche. See https://haemus.org.mk/styberra/.

[17] Vučković-Todorović 1963, 82; Düll 1977, 87, 351, no. 155, fig. 1; Chatzinikolaou 2011, 60, 160, nn. 1192–1193.

Fig. 3. Stymbara, IG X.2, 321. (after, http://www.traveladventures.org/continents/europe/stibera03.html).

lands of Upper Macedonia, was recorded by geographers of both the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[18] The same river is depicted in coins of Stobi, of the Trajanic period, placed together with Axios river at each side of goddess Tyche.[19] Could this dedication originate from the city's Gymnasium complex, or even yet the temple of Tyche that dominated the site? At this point, no strong evidence can support an answer. Nevertheless, the dedication reflects the existence and the importance of Erigon river's cult at the lands of Upper Macedonia, where its sources have been identified.

The Haliakmon river, son of Oceanos and Tethys, streams from the ancient *Orestis* region (Hesiod *Theogony* 341; Strabo 7. 7). Flowing to the east it crosses almost all Upper Macedonia (basically the kingdoms of the Orestis and Elimia) and emits to the Thermaic Gulf. The two major neighbouring rivers were the Axios to the north and Vaphyras to the south.[20] Judging from the numerous settlements founded along its route, it had been an important river as early as the prehistoric period. Despite its life-sustaining significance for the Macedonians, Haliakmon is only referred to as regards the foundation myth of the Temenid dynasty – and then, without playing a major role.[21] It is recorded as a topographical trait in the omen that Karanos, the first Temenid king, received so as to establish his kingdom, in Macedonia.[22] An important aspect in the mythology related to the Haliakmon is its relationship to another great river, the Strymon, another offspring of Oceanos and supposed father of Rhesus (Hesiod *Theogony* 339).[23]

Ps.-Plutarch (*Peri Potamon* 11. 1) informs us that the Strymon's former name was Konozos. Palestinos, the local king and son of Poseidon, filled with grief for the loss of his son Haliakmon, fell into the waters of the Konozos, who was then renamed Haliakmon after him. In a second mythological episode, another local king, Strymon, son of Ares and Helike, repeat the same act, also urged by his pain for the brutal loss of his son Rhesus.[24] There are striking similarities between these two narratives: two kings, both offspring of Olympian gods, drowned in a river, who was afterwards named after them. Both their sons have died in the battle and have been resurrected as river gods, each at the place where they were killed.[25] Both myths seem to originate from later sources, of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The mythological association of Haliakmon and Strymon may also recall the relations developed between the people living in these areas that shared the two rivers and were defined by them.

The Strymon has its sources in the Vitosha Mountain in the Thracian lands (Herodotus 8. 115) and, after a course of about 415 km between Mts Kerdylion and Pangaion, it empties in the Strymonic Gulf near Eïon.[26] Thucydides (*Peloponnesian War* 2. 96. 3) refers to the Strymon as a borderline between Thracian and Paeonian tribes who lived alongside its banks. When the Paeones were subdued by the Macedonians, the river became the frontier between Thrace and Macedonia (Strabo 7, fr. 11).[27] Its cult in the region is implied already by Herodotus (7. 113–114) when he records the episode when Xerxes' priests sacrificed white horses to the river asking for a safe passage and a successful outcome to the expedition.[28] The cult is epigraphically verified by an inscription dated to 357 BC mentioning the shared sanctuary of Apollo and Strymon in Amphipolis (*Syll.*[3] I, 194).[29] The city of Amphipolis was founded in 437 BC near the Strymon's entrance to the Aegean, at the site previously known as Ennea Hodoi (nine roads).

[18] Papazoglou 1988, 292–93, pl. 11. *Cf.* Arrian *Anabasis* 1. 5. 2; Livy *Ab urbe condita* 31. 39, 39. 53; Strabo 7. 7. 8–9, 12, 20–23, 48; Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 2. 43.

[19] Gaebler 1935, 112, no. 5, pl. XXI.27.

[20] Mallios 2011, 72.

[21] On the Haliakmon river, related mythology and the literary sources: Mallios 2011, 72–75.

[22] Mallios 2011, 74, n. 175.

[23] On the *Strymon*: https://www.livius.org/articles/place/strymon/. On references to Strymon in Latin literary sources: Michalopoulos 2007. On Rhesus: Euripides *Rhesus* 347. Also, Mallios 2011, 72, 75, n. 177.

[24] Rhesus, soon after his arrival in Troy with his Thracian army was killed by Diomedes and Odysseus, who in addition they stole his famous steeds (Homer *Iliad* 10. 430–503). His mother (one of the nine Muses) not only announced the punishment of his assassins, but also the imminent resurrection and immortality of Rhesus. Since his deification as a local Thracian deity he was considered a healer and a savior. His deification, his strong relation to horses and his healing powers associated him with the figure of *Heros Equitans*, see, Liapis 2011. The association of the Thracian king Rhesus with the region of Bithynia is reflected to a local river named Rhesus (Homer *Iliad* 12. 20; Parthenius of Nicaea *Erotika Pathemata* 36).

[25] Mallios 2011, 62, n. 128, 74–75. On references of Strymon in Latin literary sources: Michalopoulos 2007.

[26] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/501629.

[27] Mitrev 2014; Ivanov 2016. On the Roman period, Samsaris 1989, 203–06 (historical-geographical background), 301–05 (epigraphic evidence).

[28] Chatzinikolaou 2011, 159, n. 1186; Sourvinou 2015, 76.

[29] Hatzopoulos 1996, 40 (= *CIG* 2008). The local sanctuary of Apollo was probably also hosting athletic events held since the 3rd century BC: Lorber 1990, 11.

Fig. 4. Amphipolis, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Λ673 (photograph by author).

Later inscriptions (*IG* X 2 1 168) attest that Strymon's cult survived well into the Roman Imperial period.[30] Strymon's cult in Amphipolis is reflected in both sculpture and monetary issues. A partially preserved votive relief exhibited today at the Archaeological Museum of Amphipolis (inv. no. Λ673) depicts Strymon at the centre of the scene (Fig. 4). Strymon is represented in the typical reclining posture (today only his lower legs with the himation are preserved). On the left, he was flanked by the Dioscuri and their horses and on the right by the (lost) Charites. The 2nd century AD inscription records a dedication to Strymon and the Charites.[31]

Strymon had been a regular subject in the Amphipolis mint since the 5th century BC, when the city was founded.[32] During the early period it was either symbolised by a fish (or other water animal), or was depicted in the hybrid form of a young male with a reed wreath and horns on his head. From the 2nd/1st century BC the type of the reclining Strymon becomes a standard iconographical subject in the Amphipolis coinage.[33] Strymon appears also on coins of Serdi, the Danubian Celtic tribe of Moesia, since it flowed through their lands.[34] The Serdi coins copied a rare Macedonian *Koinon* bronze issue, struck after 187 BC.[35] The obverse carries the head of the river god Strymon turned to the right, wearing a corn wreath.

[30] Also Samsaris 1989, 371, n. 2.
[31] Kaftatzis 1967 I, 967, 617, 619.
[32] Imhoof-Blumer 1923, 216; Samsaris 1989, 371, n. 3; Lorber 1990, 80–83; Ivanov 2016.
[33] Gaebler 1935, 33, no. 24, pl. VII, 39, no. 63, pl. X–XI.
[34] https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Serdi.
[35] These coins were official Celtic issues due to the various overstrikes found on coins of Pella, Thessaloniki and Amphipolis, all struck after 187 BC

Fig. 5. Thasos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Λ 100. River figure (after Aristodemou 2021, fig. 1).

Their reverse depicts a trident with dolphins between their prongs. The reclining Strymon river appears as a regular subject also at the monetary types of Pautalia, from the reign of Antoninus Pius, until the Severans.[36]

The fountain statue of a young river figure is today kept at the Archaeological Museum of Thasos (inv. no. Λ100).[37] It represents a young fluvial figure, depicted naked and reclining with his legs crossed on a plinth that imitates rock (Fig. 5). His right hand bents behind the head like a pillow, while the left hand rests on an overturned vessel. Neither the identity nor the original display of the river figure are known. Apart from a Late Antique private *nymphaeum* in the *chora* of Thasos,[38] so far no public fountain structure has come to light where this sculpture could be placed. If we assume that it originates from a fountain at the *agora* of Thasos, then its presence may be connected to the period when the Roman *agora* was reformed, in the 2nd century AD.[39] The youthful fluvial figure of Thasos fits well in the large series of statues of reclining river figures that adorned water monuments throughout the empire[40] and perhaps recalls a river, or a torrent, known to the local communities.[41]

Two more rivers with substantial impact on the local terrain and the local myths of the regions through which they flow, are the rivers Loudias and Olganos. The Loudias dominated the central Macedonian plain.[42] Most references to it focus more on historical and geographical information and less on mythological.[43] Only in Euripides' *Bacchae* (571–575) is it used as a topographical designation of Dionysus' descent from Asia Minor towards Thrace and southwards towards Attica, a reference which accentuates its importance and perhaps indicates attributions of divine honours to it.

Olganos, on the west of Loudias, was the son of the River Beres (today Tripotamos), son of Macedon.[44] His sisters were Beroia and Mieza, after whom the two major Pierian cities were named.[45] The king's son was transformed into a river (today the Arapitsa) which flows from Naoussa towards the plain near the village of Kopanos. The significance of the river for the local communities is reflected on a 2nd-century AD marble bust of unknown origin exhibited today at the Archaeological Museum of Beroia (inv. no. 409)[46] (Fig. 6). A local cult of Olganos during the Roman Imperial period seems possible, although not yet verified. Nevertheless, the connection with the eponymous

[36] https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/search/browse?q=Strymon.
[37] Aristodemou 2021.
[38] Sodini *et al.* 2016.
[39] On the gradual development of the *agora* of Thasos during the Roman period: Evangelidis 2010, 95–103.
[40] Aristodemou 2021, 48–55, with examples and bibliography.
[41] On the reclining river gods: Klementa 1993; Aristodemou 2012, 102–05, 164; 2021, 46–57.
[42] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/491653.
[43] On references of Loudias river in ancient literary sources: Mallios 2011, 76.
[44] On Olganos' references in ancient literary sources: Mallios 2011, 77–78.
[45] On Beroia and Mieza: Larson 2001, 6–7.
[46] Kallipolitis 1952; *LIMC* VIII.1B (1997) 922, *s.v.* Olganos (I. Akamatis); Chatzinikolaou 2011, 160, n. 1189; Tsiafis 2017, 279, no. 48.2, pl. 144d.

Fig. 6. Beroia, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 409. Olganos Bust (photograph by author)

hero of the Macedonians makes the river specifically important in the Macedonian genealogy.[47]

A circular silver medallion was found during excavations at the ancient cemetery of Beroia and is today kept at the local Archaeological Museum (inv. no. M1370).[48] In her study, K. Tzanavari recognises it as a bust of a young river divinity with horns on the head, surrounded by a circular wavy band (Fig. 7). She dates the medallion around the 2nd century BC (or later) suggesting it was probably a local river.[49] The figure follows the archaistic iconography based on earlier depictions of the Acheloos river, when river gods were depicted in the form of a bull, at times with a human head with horns.[50] In general, sculptural representations of river

Fig. 7. Beroia, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1370. Silver medallion with a river figure (after Tzanavari 1998, fig. 1).

gods in a zoomorphic form from the Greek lands during the Hellenistic or Roman periods are quite rare – one being the bull statue from the *nymphaeum* of Herodes Atticus in Olympia.[51]

The Sys in Lebithra[52] and Vaphyras in Dion are two neighbouring rivers, associated with the myth of Orpheus in the region of Pieria.[53] Sys, according to its name (wild boar) is a rushing torrent that in just one night destroyed the sanctuary of Orphic cult in Lebithra. Pausanias in his *Periegesis* (9. 30. 8) narrates the myth of the Helikon river who sank underground so that the Maenads who killed Orpheus would not wash in its waters. After a gap of about 22 stades, its waters re-emerged at Dion and under the new name Vaphyras, discharged into the sea as a navigable river.[54] A marble statue head with a turreted crown, today exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Dion (inv. no. 5469) has been identified as the personification of Vaphyras (Fig. 8). It has been dated at the late 2nd/early 3rd

[47] On the etymology of the name Olganos: Graikos 2008.
[48] Tzanavari 1998.
[49] On the rivers flowing close to Beroia: Tzanavari 1998. 220.
[50] On Archaic depictions of river gods, *RE* 6 (1909) 2774–2815 *s.v.* Flußgötter (O. Wasser) and Matz 1913, 90–117. On Achelloos, as a typical example of Archaic river-god iconography: Isler 1970. On animal-form depictions of river gods of the 5th century BC: Gais 1978, 356; Klementa 1993, 204–05. Lately, on river gods on Archaic Magna Grecian coins: Carroccio 2013. On the early iconography of river gods: Lorber 1990; Weiss 1984; Bremmer 2019, 97–99; and now Taylor 2023.
[51] Bol 1984, 109–10, no. I.A.1, n. 371, Appendix 5, pls. 2–3; Aristodemou 2012, 294, no. 40, pl. 7.1.
[52] Sys: https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/491735.
[53] On mythological and literary references about Sys and Vaphyras: Pritchett 1969, 149–50, nos. 1–4; and Mallios 2011, 78–79.
[54] Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9. 30. 8. Tsiafis 2017, 278, no. 48.1, pl. 144c. Note that the 'Central Road Bath' of Dion (see Oulkeroglou 2017, 297–302, no. 1.3, figs. 14–20) is built in close proximity to the southern section of the East Wall, where a fluvial port was located. This port led via the Vaphyras river to the open sea: Hammond 1989, 388; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1998, 29, nn. 32–35.

Fig. 8. Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 5469. Marble head of Vaphyras river (photograph by author).

century AD.[55] It is not impossible that a cult of Vaphyras as saviour and patron of the city existed in Dion during the Roman Imperial Period, although G. Bakalakis also suggested a possible origin from a city *nymphaeum*, or from one of the bath complexes of Dion.[56]

The Chalcidike Peninsula lies between the Thermaic and the Strymonic Gulf, southwards of the lakes Bolbe and Koroneia. It is traversed by several rivers, already known in antiquity and recorded by ancient authors.[57] As Athenaios (*Deipnosophistae* 8. 11) records, each year during the months Anthesterion and Elaphebolion (namely late winter/early spring), the Olynthiakos river would be filled with shoals of fish that provided the residents with food for the entire year.[58] This recurring phenomenon corresponds to the narration according which the Nymph Bolbe offers an annual libation to her son Olynthos, at the place where he drowned and where an honorary monument to his memory had been erected, at the banks of the Olynthiakos river.[59]

At Palaiokastro, a suburb westwards of Thessaloniki, the excavations of a Late Antique fortified rural villa brought to light an impressive floor mosaic.[60] The villa comprised of a walled enclosure with a watch tower, a bath complex, a peristyle courtyard with a well, rooms on either side of a large triclinium and a warehouse. The floor mosaic at the north portico of the peristyle is divided in five panels. The central panel depicts a mythological figure, recognised as Poseidon on his chariot. The east side encloses a male bust rendered with a rich hairstyle and a beard (Fig. 9). The three-line inscription at the upper left edge identifies the figure as the auriferous Echedoros river, today known as the Gallikos. Its Latin name comes from the 1st-century BC Roman post station of Callicum/Gallicum (perhaps corresponding to the modern Kolchis village 4.5 km westwards of the river).[61] This mosaic is the only so far known representation of the Echedoros river in Late Antique art.[62] The scene is completed at the west side with the representation of another river, perhaps Axios.[63] The fortified villa dates at the first half of the 5th century AD and belonged to a wealthy landowner of Thessaloniki. The excavators suggest that the selection of this subject indicates the acknowledgment of the owner that his wealth and the fertility of his lands were a gift from the adjacent auriferous river.

Herodotus (4. 99. 1–2; 5. 1–2) describes Thrace as a four-sided area surrounded to the south and east by two seas, the Aegean and the Black Sea and to the west and north by two great rivers, Istros and Strymon.[64] In another passage Herodotus (7. 59. 108–109) makes the first ever detailed reference to the rivers and lakes of Thrace while describing the march of Xerxes' army in 480 BC.[65] The existence of major rivers (Nestos, Hebros) and their tributaries, the abundance of fresh water and fertile lands was noticed as early as the Homeric Poems (*Iliad* 11. 222) and Thrace was already known as *eukarpos* and *polydoros*, i.e. fertile and generous.

[55] Bakalakis 1990, 1115.
[56] Bakalakis 1990, 1118.
[57] A detailed work on the rivers of Chalcidike Peninsula during antiquity: Manoledakis 2017.
[58] Athenaios cites the today lost passage of Hegesandros of Delphi (*FGH* IV 420–421 F 40–41) – the only reference to the Olynthiakos river. On this: Manoledakis 2017, 57.
[59] Extended reference to the ancient and modern literary sources about Nymph Bolbe and her son Olynthos, as well as geographical information on Lake Bolbe and the Olynthiakos river, in Manoledakis 2017, 57–75.
[60] Marki and Akrivopoulou 2003, 285, fig. 5; Marki 2010, 29, fig. 3.
[61] The *callicum* was actually the goatskin sieve with which the gold dust was collected from the river banks. The Roman settlement developed into a gold collecting centre and eventually received the name *Gallicum*. On the identification based on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*: Kissas *et al.* 1984, 245. For a detailed discussion on the various interpretations of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*: Makropoulou and Kapsoudas 2014, 275–77.
[62] *LIMC* Suppl. 2009, 2, 193 (http://ark.dasch.swiss/ark:/72163/080e-76a17b4e6c24c-8); Kirsten 1985; Marki and Akrivopoulou 2003, 285–86, 296, fig. 5; Marki 2010, 29; Chatzinikolaou 2011, 160, n. 1195.
[63] Marki and Akrivopoulou 2003, 287.
[64] Kallintzi *et al.* 2020, 130.
[65] Kefalidou 2022b, 5; Skoulikidis *et al.* 2009.

Fig. 9. Thessaloniki, Oraiokastro. Floor mosaic depicting *Echedoros* river (after Marki and Akrivopoulou 2003, 285, fig. 5).

Nestos was another son of Okeanos and Tethys (Hesiod, *Theogony* 341). In Ptolemy's *Geography* (3. 11. 1–6) the river is considered the boundary between Macedonia and Thrace.[66] It discharged into the Aegean Sea near the Thracian town of Abdera, opposite the island of Thasos.[67] Due to its rough course between canyons and inaccessible mountain areas, Nestos was not navigable in antiquity. The river had only two passes (one near Nicopolis and the other near Topeiros), which served for communication between Macedonia and Thrace.[68] The Nestos had a huge impact to the physical and historical environment, the habitation choices and almost every aspect of economic activities (agricultural, pastoral, metal exploitation) of the estuary cities, both positive and negative. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the communities living there ascribed divine powers to the mighty river god and that the cities later founded by the emperor Trajan depicted the Nestos on their coins.[69]

(The) Hebros, 'the most beautiful of rivers' as Alcaeus describes it in the 7th/6th century BC[70] was a river god of Kikonia in south-eastern coastal Thrace.[71] Its sources were on Mt Rhodope in northern Thrace and disgorges into the Aegean Sea near the Greek colony of Ainos, opposite the island of Samothrace. Possible worship of the Hebros river can be traced in the area of Plotinopolis.[72] Plotinopolis was located at a privileged geographical location. It controlled the roads that connected the entire coastal line of the north Aegean with the Thracian hinterland through the Hebros river and its tributaries, allowing the Romans to have the economic, military and political control of the area. Information as regards the divinities worshiped in the city is mainly provided by the pictorial types of the city's coins, especially from the period from Antoninus Pius to Caracalla.[73] A today lost votive relief, quite fragmentarily preserved, carries a carelessly carved inscription recording Κυρίω Ἔβρω[74] (Fig. 10). The inscription which follows the upper curvature of the stele dates at the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD. The depicted scene is lost, apart from a partially preserved hand holding a thyrsus (or a pine cone). The work is of a poor artistic quality, possibly from a local workshop. On the other hand, a striking depiction of *Hebros* was recognised at an impressive floor mosaic belonging to a luxurious building with a sophisticated hydraulic system, the character of which remains to be specified. It has been dated to the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD. The figurative scenes include Apollo and the Muses and the Marine Thiasos. Within one of the panels of the main scene there is a reclining youthful male

[66] Also Samsaris 2005, 33–36. On rivers serving as frontiers, see Rankov 2005.
[67] On Abdera: Kallintzi *et al.* 2020; Kallintzi 2022.
[68] Kamidis *et al.* 2021. 2832.
[69] Nestos in the typical reclining posture is a regular subject at the reverse side of the coins of Topeiros during the reign of Lucius Verus (AD 161–169). Psoma *et al.* 2008, 88 (M196), pl. LVII. Also, *RPC* IV.1, no. 5011 (temporary) (= *SNG Copenhagen* 807); Ivanov 2016.
[70] Alcaeus frg. 45ab (trans. D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry* I [London 1967 etc.]).
[71] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/501432.
[72] Chatzinikolaou 2011, 160, n. 1191.
[73] In the coins of Plotinopolis, Hebros is depicted either bearded standing with foot on water-urn, or seated holding a fish(?), and resting on a water-urn: see *RPC* IV.1 no. 7646 (temporary), no. 7807 (temporary), no. 10473 (temporary).
[74] Petridis 1925–26, 190 with fig. The relief was found in 1926 and was given to the Archaeological Museum of Athens: Loukopoulou *et al.* 2005, 591–92, no. E477, with previous bibliography.

Fig. 10. Plotinopolis. Lost relief (after Loukopoulou *et al.* 2005, 591–92, E477).

Fig. 11. Plotinopolis. Mosaic Floor. Hebros river (after Koutsoumanis 2016, 21–22, fig.17).

figure, depicted emerging from the water, wearing a wreath made of reeds. He has been identified as the River Hebros[75] (Fig. 11). Next to him a female figure is depicted seated on a rock-perhaps a Tyche (or a City Personification).

The constant presence of the Hebros river on coins of Thracian cities reflects its role as a topographical trait and geographical/cultural boundary, its life sustaining importance for the local communities and therefore its divine powers and probably its use by the official art for political/propagandistic reasons.[76] The Hebros is regularly depicted on coins of Philippopolis from the reign of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius until the reign of Commodus.[77] It is rendered in the standardised type of a bearded male figure, reclining on his left side, holding a branch (of reeds?) and resting on a water urn. The same type is recognised on coins of Augusta Traiana.[78] Hadrianoupolis is located at the confluence of the Hebros with its tributaries, the Tonzos[79] and the Ardeskos.[80] Previously, there had been an ancient Greek city of Orestias, probably built at the site of an even earlier Thracian settlement known as Uskudama, the name of which translates as 'water city'.[81] In AD 125 Hadrian (re-)founded the city and named it after him upgrading it to the status of the capital of the province of Thrace, launching an extended building program with fortifications, infrastructure and monumental edifices. The continuous presence of river-god figures on the city coins reveals the immense importance of Hebros and its tributaries to the lives of the local communities. This is further emphasised by the fact that coins of Hadrianoupolis from the Antonines until the Severans and even later (Gordian III) not only did they represent a river-god figure at their reverse sides,[82] but they also depicted the triad of rivers that were flowing through their lands, namely Tonzos, Ardeskos and Hebros – in a way acknowledging the contribution of these rivers to their high degree of prosperity and well-being.[83]

To the north, there is the Istros river (today's Danube).[84] Istros is recognised on the reverse sides of the coins issued by Nikopolis ad Istrum, thus included in the pantheon of the other chief divinities of the city. He is always depicted at a reclining posture to his left, resting on a water vessel. Most coins are dated at the reign of Antoninus Pius and Commodus, although there is a significant number issued during the reign of Elagabalus.[85]

Ancient Develtos was situated in a marshy area close to the River Sredetska,[86] who through the Lake Mandrensko discharged into the Black Sea near the Gulf of Burgas.[87]

[75] Koutsoumanis 2016, especially 21–22, fig. 17.
[76] *LIMC* IV (1988) 467–468, *s.v.* Hebros (H.A. Cahn); Ostrowski 1990; Şahin 2021.
[77] Philippopolis coins: *RPC* IV.1, no. 17326 (temporary), no. 7426 (temporary), no. 10461 (temporary), no. 7505, no. 7424 (temporary), no. 10614 (temporary), no. 7423 (temporary), no. 9867 (temporary), no. 25005 (temporary), no. 7430 (temporary), no. 7431 (temporary), no. 25006 (temporary), no. 7633 (temporary), no. 11116 (temporary), no. 7406 (temporary), no. 7416 (temporary), no. 7415 (temporary), no. 7420 (temporary), no. 10460 (temporary), no. 25007 (temporary), no. 7504 (temporary), no. 7505 (temporary), no. 10679 (temporary), no. 7514 (temporary), no. 7623 (temporary), no. 7646 (temporary). Lately, Vassilev 2021, 23–25, figs. 7–10. The Hebros river is also depicted in the contemporary medallions of the city: see Tasaklaki 2022, 381, n. 21.
[78] Augusta Traiana coins: *RPC* IV.1, no. 10330 (temporary), no. 3898 (temporary), no. 10678 (temporary), no. 10328 (temporary), no. 10339 (temporary), no. 11115 (temporary), no. 10327 (temporary), no. 9379 (temporary), no. 9383 (temporary), no. 10353 (temporary).
[79] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/501644.
[80] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/501430.
[81] On Uskudama: Duridanov 1985, 49, 76, 86.
[82] Hadrianopolis coins with the Tonzos river figure: *RPC* IV.1, no. 10591 (temporary), no. 17302 (temporary); *RPC* VII.2, nos. 733–735; Hadrianopolis coins with unnamed river figure: *RPC* IV.1, no. 10606 (temporary), no. 9297 (temporary), no. 10610 (temporary), no. 10531 (temporary), no. 10457 (temporary), no. 10585 (temporary); *RPC* VII.2, nos. 750, 751.
[83] Hadrianopolis coins with the triad of rivers (Tonzos, Ardeskos, Hebros): *RPC* IV.1, no. 10601 (temporary); *RPC* VII.2 nos. 666 –68.
[84] https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/226577.
[85] Nicopolis ad Istrum coins with the Istros river: *RPC* IV.1, no. 7801 (temporary), no. 4323 (temporary), no. 4338 (temporary); *RPC* VI, nos. 1266–1271 (all temporary); *RPC* VII.2, nos. 1296–1299.
[86] Draganov 2007, 149.
[87] Develtos was founded as an *emporion* of Apollonia Pontica (7th

The city was annexed to the Roman empire in AD 46 and in AD 69 was (re)founded as a *colonia* (*Colonia Flavia Pacis Deultensium*).[88] Deultum had its own mint that reached its peak between the reigns of Caracalla and Philip the Arab.[89] Deultum's monetary types included a series of river-god figures. The main type depicts the bearded river god Oiskos reclining to his left, holding a reed branch on one hand (and sometimes a cornucopia on the other) and resting on a water-urn; at times in the background there is a ship's prora-symbol of the cities fluvial commerce.[90] There is a small group of issues where the river god is unidentified,[91] and there is one issue depicting the *Istros* river.[92] An impressive Gordian III coin type seems to render the marshy location of Deultum. It depicts the reclining river god Oiskos who rests on an overturned vessel.[93] The water from the vessel runs into a large basin, perhaps a symbolic representation of Lake Mandrensko.[94] The second figure in the foreground has been interpreted either as Thalassa (the personification of the sea, and to this extent a symbolic depiction of the colony's port), or better, Pontus- since it looks rather as a male figure. Nevertheless, this group of coins emphasise the economically favourable location of the city at the mouth of the modern Sredetska river at the Black Sea and its thriving maritime commerce.

Accordingly, the flourishing economy that is based on the fertility of the river plains and the navigability of rivers are the probable cause why river figures are a standard monetary type in issues of several other cities of Thrace, such as Bizye,[95] Odessos[96] and Serdica.[97]

Conclusions

Until quite recently Macedonia and Thrace were rather neglected by scholarship as regards water studies. It is only during the past few years that literature on water management (conduits, aqueducts) or water consuming structures (baths, latrines, *nymphaea*) or water culture, have been published. Macedonia and Thrace were important crossroads connecting the West with the East and the Balkan/Danubian provinces. They consist of continuously inhabited regions, where human communities from prehistory until today transformed their aquatic environment to their convenience or were themselves influenced by the available water sources. The long and navigable rivers that pass through these regions affected largely the formation (and transformation) of the physical and historical environment and played a vital role (both positive and negative) in human life. On the one hand river valleys and deltaic plains had a beneficial effect in agriculture and pastoral activities and the major rivers (for example, the Nestos) provided the necessary routes for the transportation of metals from their mountain sources to the littoral cities and the Aegean.[98] On the other hand, the frequent flooding, the course shifts, the extended marshlands, wetlands, dunes and lagoons, and the resulted illnesses, created environmental restraints, which in turn lead to a variability of settlement patterns and survival strategies, one of them being the settling in a relative safe distance from major active rivers.[99]

This paper attempted to trace the reflection of these rivers in art focusing on the lands of Macedonia and Thrace, which diachronically are considered the river-and-lake districts of Greece. So far, their representation in art from Macedonia and Thrace is not what one would expect.[100] River figures in Macedonia or Thrace do not appear in art neither in the numbers nor in the artistic quality of the examples we know from the other provinces of the Roman empire.[101] Instead, they are far fewer.

Based on the here presented examples, stone monuments of river gods are only few; relief depictions (Heraclea Lyncestis, Amphipolis), statues (Thasos, Dion, Beroia), inscriptions (Stymbara, Plotinopolis). There are also a few mosaic depictions (Palaiokastro, Plotinopolis) and some examples of minor art, mainly medallions (Beroia, also Philippopolis).

Things differ when examining the representation of river figures in monetary types, where they profoundly outnumber all other art depictions.[102] Although coins convey a variety of messages, either in the form of designs or legends, their intended content or message

century BC) and served as an important commercial hub between Thracians and Greeks (6th-4th centuries BC): *RE* V.1 (1903) 260 *s.v.* Develtos (E. Oberhummer); Jurukova 1973, 4.

[88] Draganov 2007, 24.

[89] The earliest coins date back to Trajan: Jurukova 1973, 18; Draganov 2007, 25, 32.

[90] *RPC* VII.2, nos. 823–825, no. 853, nos. 956–958, no. 1023, also Draganov 2007, nos. 1883–1885.

[91] *RPC* VI, no. 736 (temporary), no. 30639 (temporary), no. 772 (temporary).

[92] *RPC* VI, no. 835 (temporary),

[93] *RPC* VII.2, no. 823; Jurukova 1973, no. 251; Draganov 2007, 358, nos. 1252–1254, pl. 85, figs. 1252–1254 (https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/7.2/823).

[94] Draganov 2007, above.

[95] Bizye coins with river figures: *RPC* III, no. 736 (Hadrian); *RPC* IV.1, no. 9306 (temporary) (Antoninus Pius); *RPC* VIII, unassigned: ID 48648 (Philip I).

[96] Odessos coins with river figures: *SNG BM Black Sea* 294.

[97] *RPC* IV.1, no. 7384 (temporary), no. 7400 (temporary); *RPC* VIII, no. 48648.

[98] Lately on Thracian river-lands: Stoyanov 2021; Kallintzi *et al.* 2022, 11–12, 16; Kefalidou 2022.

[99] Kefalidou 2022b, 5; Tsiafaki and Evangelidis 2022, 46–51. Due to the constant battle with the forces of nature, it is a possibility that Thracians had a different attitude towards streams and rivers in comparison to the Greeks, but this is not definitely detectable: Triantafyllos 2009.

[100] Previously on river gods in art: Ostrowski 1991; in Greece, Brewster 1997; in Macedonian mythology, Mallios 2011, 80.

[101] On river-god figures from the Roman East: Aristodemou 2012, 102–05, 203–06. On river gods from Croatia: Rendić-Miočević 2012. On the perception of rivers in Asia Minor: Dan 2018.

[102] Peter 2021. On personifications of rivers in coins and mosaic from Asia Minor: Acolat 2018.

is not always clear.[103] One cannot decode with absolute certainty how and why the specific types were chosen, their addresses, or how these visual messages were perceived by common people. As J. Hollaender states, the selection of a specific iconography and therefore the key for the viewers to recognise the given river god may be understood through the earliest literary sources and representations.[104]

The personifications of rivers are not just occasional hints to the surrounding watery environment but they may also help us reconstruct the past hydrological background of a given area. Being linked to specific mythological or realistic/geographical *loci*, they may be comprehended as expressions of local identities- a term however that may include many identity-related aspects, such as religion, monumentality, historical or mythical past, time periods, geography, language, *romanitas* or local self-esteem.[105] Similarly, as regards the representation of rivers in Roman Imperial coinage of Macedonia and Thrace, U. Peter clearly understands them not just as abstract symbols of rivers, but as 'hints to the surrounding landscape, communicating local elements'.[106] She believes that the Roman-period typology with its strong standardisation and explanatory legends, referred to a specific river divinity of the area under discussion. When rivers are depicted on coins they are supplemented with their onomastic (for example, Strymon, Istros, Hebros, Tonzos),[107] they carry (or not) symbols indicative of the region or even they name a city after them (for example, Nicopolis ad Istrum).[108]

As regards to the iconography, there are two standard forms of representation. The bull form, which is an archaistic representation and probably influenced by the depictions of the winged bull from Anatolia (3rd millennium BC). Homer (*Iliad* 21. 237) was the first to attribute characteristics of a bull to a river, compering the rapid force and the growls of a bull with the power and the roars of the rushing torrents and rivers.[109] During the colonisation process the bull motif was borrowed by the Greeks, who omitted the wings and used it on the coins issued by the Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily.[110] The Acheloos, the most famous river in antiquity had been mostly represented as a man-headed bull.[111] Most zoomorphic representations of rivers are observed in the pre-Roman period. During the Roman period they are quite rare. There are however two such zoomorphic examples from Macedonia, the lion relief from Heraclea Lyncestis and the medallion from Beroia, the archaistic representation of which possibly reflects a cultic choice.[112] This hybridity of river gods, their appearance as partly human and partly animal entities is recently discussed by R. Taylor who ascribes them with both a divine and a sacrificial status and both dominance and servitude qualities.[113]

Anthropomorphic depictions of river gods are the norm during the Roman period.[114] There is a variety of types: bust form, seated, standing, reclining, swimming/ emerging from the sea, swimming at Tyche's feet.[115] The representation of rivers in a reclining posture becomes the standard iconography in all kinds of art.[116] It emerges from the earliest iconography of the symposium scenes which during the Hellenistic and Roman period was used to represent the sleeping figures of the drunken Silenoi and Satyrs, as well as the figure of Heracles.[117] It has been argued that the original statue of the reclining river god dates back to the 2nd century BC Alexandria, where it might have actually depicted Heracles reclining, marking his victory over the Acheloos river.[118] The use of the same statuary type for river gods and Heracles is not a coincidence. From the 4th century BC, when the diversion of the *Acheloos* and the construction of the homonymous dam was regarded as the victory of Heracles over his rival river god, the two mythological figures shared a common iconography.[119] Let it be noted, however, that Heracles and Acheloos were connected not only due to their rival but also because they both descended from a god and because of their common role as protectors of waters and the fertility of lands. The Strymon relief from Amphipolis and the Thasos fountain statue render the river figure at such a reclining posture.

The seated, reclining and swimming representations are the most frequently observed on mosaics, reliefs

[103] Peter 2021, 122.
[104] Hollaender 2021, 9.
[105] On these matters: Howgego 2005; Bremmer 2019, 106.
[106] Peter 2021, 133.
[107] Peter 2021, 133, pl. 2.12; *RPC* VII.2, no. 28754, no. 71261; Peter and Stolba 2020, 107
[108] *RPC* VII.2 nos. 28919, 28781, 28836, 28928 (with ship).
[109] Şengör 1999, on the relation of mountains and bulls (in connection with earthquakes). Also Bremmer 2019, 97–98.
[110] Gais 1978, 356.
[111] Isler 1970, 123–91 (catalogue of Acheloos representations); Gais 1978, 356–57.
[112] The great number of monetary types depicting bulls issued by Macedonian and Thracian cities, could also be considered as representing rivers, but this examination is not within the scopes of this present paper.
[113] Taylor 2023.
[114] J. Bremmer (2019, 99–100) discusses the human form of rivers as a reflection of Archaic myths where rivers descend from a divine father, or where they themselves have fathered humans (mythical heroes and royals).
[115] Ostrowski 1991, 30; Tekin 2001, 521.
[116] On the reclining river gods, see Klementa 1993; Aristodemou 2012, 102–05, 164; 2021, 46–57.
[117] Aristodemou 2021, 46–47, with bibliography.
[118] On the reclining Heracles, see Mommsen 1971; *LIMC* IV (1988) 777–779 nos. 1008–1065, *s.v.* Herakles (J. Boardman, O. Palagia, S. Woodford). The type has been associated with the inscribed base of Hercules Olivarius, patron of the olive trade (E. Loewy): Gais 1978, 367, 369–70 and Bonanno Aravantinos 1991.
[119] Gais 1978, 367; Bonanno Aravantinos 1991, 169; Saloway 1994, 78; From then on Heracles was frequently depicted at a reclining posture, just like the now destroyed rock relief at Alyki quarries (Saliara) in Thasos: Grandjean and Salviat 2012, 194, fig. 117; Bremmer 2019, 98–99; Aristodemou 2021, 47.

and on the reverse sides of monetary issues.[120] The Echedoros mosaic in Palaiokastro, the Hebros mosaic in Plotinopolis present the river figure emerging from the sea or swimming next to a Tyche (or City) figure. It has been argued that rivers when depicted next to the Tyche of the city, they link the natural space and the human-shaped space (the city), and the local element is integrated into the empire-wide context.[121]

As regards to their operation, the personifications of rivers are primarily associated with the illustration of mythological episodes, where they serve as indications of the scene of the action (mythological/decorative operation). Secondarily they serve historical/realistic geography, operating as indications and symbols of the land (or the *polis*), situated on a given river (political/propagandistic function).[122] The first group includes river figures represented in round and relief sculpture, in murals and mosaics decorating villa and temple interiors, on sarcophagi scenes, also on vase paintings and terracotta reliefs. The second group includes figures of rivers used for propagandistic purposes and these appear primarily on coins and architectural/historical reliefs and friezes (in arches, triumphant columns and monuments), personifying the lands conquered by the Roman army and the rivers crossed by it.[123] The personifications of rivers, especially those in the provinces (here Macedonia and Thrace) received political/propagandistic character from the Flavian dynasty onwards and became even more intense during the following periods, and generally whenever new war campaigns were launched.[124]

Another issue concerns the inner nature of a river god. As early as the Homeric poems (*Iliad* 21. 300–309) and a little later, in Hesiod's *Theogony* (337–345), rivers received supernatural qualities. Yet, even then they were still referred to as *potamos* and are not considered to be equal with the rest of the gods, even when they descend from one (*Iliad* 21. 184–187).[125] It was only in modern scholarship when discussing the representations of rivers that the mixed use of the terms 'god' and/or 'personification' created interpretation problems regarding the nature of the river. H.A. Shapiro in 1993 stated that Greeks and Romans had no problem with ascribing divine qualities and connotations to a natural element,[126] which is important but it does not address the issue of the nature of a river in-depth.[127] There are many layers and possibilities of identification and interpretation. On the one hand there is the generic appearance (the motifs, the water related attributes), on the other hand there are specific and individual features (unique attributes, a particular body posture, or participation in specific narratives).

Rivers are a definite water emblem. But, were the waters of a given river sacred because a god was thought to live there, or is it that the hero that drowned in the river became a god because the water itself is sacred by nature?[128] Is it safe to say that landscape or environment provoked or influenced religious practices? As divine images, the degree of reverence that is shown to rivers, depends on the context in which they are placed and this is a determining factor for the function of an image. For example, representations in which river gods appear primarily in a decorative context, such as the façades of fountains or the sculptural assembly of thermal baths or mosaics, it is safe to assume that no cultic worship but rather, decorative aspects will be in the foreground. On the other hand, when rivers in human form are depicted among the Greek and the Roman gods, their presence can be thought of as divine (although not equal to the high ranked gods of the canonical pantheon). At which point do rivers become the receivers of cult?[129] Is this detected through the given material? In most of the here discussed examples one cannot claim that there is a concrete evidence of cult but rather an indirect testimony. Let us bear in mind that no matter their force or life sustaining significance, the range of a river cult remained locally based.[130] In accord with this, cult becomes more detectable in the cases of the Erigon statue base (Stymbara), the Strymon votive relief (Amphipolis), the Olganos (Beroia) and the Vaphyras (Dion) busts, the Hebros relief (Plotinopolis), the Olynthiakos *heroon* (Olynthos).

In all cases, the honorification of the local rivers (with statues, reliefs, or numismatic representations) is an indication that in areas with a rich aquifer, such as Macedonia and Thrace, communities addressed those divinities that fertilised (or compromised) their lands and acknowledged their life-sustaining impact. The uncountable references on river gods in ancient literature or their monetary representations express exactly this, along with the fact that the relationship between water and storytelling was well established in Greek and Roman thought.[131] Further statements on the semantics of river-god images are therefore possible only through a close-up analysis of their immediate context, their social, political and also historical/geographical background.[132]

[120] Tekin 2001, 521. On swimming river gods from Cilicia: Tahberer 2003
[121] Hollaener 2022, 351.
[122] Ostrowski 1990, 310.
[123] Ostrowski 1990, 311.
[124] Ostrowski 1990, 313–14.
[125] Bremmer 2019, 96–97, 100. For Anatolia, see Parker 2016.
[126] Shapiro 1993, 12.
[127] As Hollaender (2022, 20) correctly points out, one should distinguish the divinisation of natural entities (rivers, mountains, etc.) from the divinisation of abstract concepts (Virtue, Omonoia, etc.).
[128] Tekin 2001, 519.
[129] Similar questions posed by Hollaender 2022, 350–52.
[130] Bremmer 2019, 107.
[131] Ostrowski 1991, 10
[132] More in Hollaender 2022, 347–50.

It is not possible within the limited length of a conference paper to address all issues related to river gods, their iconography, identification, interpretation, historical, geographical or propagandistic operation, their practical as well as their symbolic meaning to the local communities. However, the brief study of rivers in Macedonia and Thrace which shared major rivers, allow one to vividly observe how water affected neighbouring communities, how it allowed (or prohibited) commercial mobility and interprovincial relations to develop and thrive, how it influenced the way in which shared experiences of their urban and natural habitat were formed and resulted to shared cultural, artistic and possibly cultic practices.

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Bibliography

Abbreviations

CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* 1–4 (Berlin 1828–77).
DNP	*Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Das klassische Altertum und seine Rezeptionsgeschichte* 1–16, Suppl. 1–14 (Stuttgart 1996–2003, 2004–23).
FGH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin 1923–).
IG X	*Inscriptiones Graecae* X (Berlin 1999).
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*.
RE	Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.
RPC	*Roman Provincial Coinage* I–X (https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/).
SNG BM Black Sea	*Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Volume IX: The British Museum. Part I: The Black Sea* (London 1993).
SNG Copenhagen	*Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum* 1–43 (Copenhagen 1942–).
Syll.	*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd edition (Leipzig 1915–24).

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