

A Note on an overlooked Heraclea and the DINGIR.KASKAL.KUR. "underground water-course"

OVE HANSEN, Athens

The authors of Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Band viiii, l. 423–439, s.v. Herakleia, list in total 29 locations with that name, but at least one has been excluded, viz. modern Ereğli in the southern part of central Anatolia c. 150 km to the E. of Konya towards the Cilician Gates.¹ In Late Bronze age, Hittite times, this location was called Hubisna² for unknown reasons, but concerning the Greek and Roman name Heraclea there is, I think, a good possibility of explaining how the site got that name.

About 25 km to the W. of Ereğli, there are the famous Ereğli Marshes,³ which extend from the S. to the N. of the road between the modern Turkish villages of Böğecik and Ambar. To the S. of the road, there is a small pond with a maximum depth of 7,5 m.,⁴ which in Turkish is called *düden*, probably derived from Hittite *tuwaduna* with the meaning of "swallow hole", because the water of the pond disappears underground. This natural phenomenon was called in Sumerian DINGIR.KASKAL.KUR., which means both the swallow-hole itself and its subterranean course, as well as the place where the water re-appears.⁵ The best-known example of the phenomenon in Anatolia is probably the subterranean drainage of Lake Beyşehir, which re-appears c. 150 km to the S. at modern Manavgat c. 70 km to the E. of Antalya on the Mediterranean.

As is well known, one of the Twelve Labours of the Greek hero Herakles was to take the dog Cerberus up from the netherworld, and the Greek historical writer Xenophon⁶ offers a description of it as having been done at Heraclea Pontica on the Black Sea, but usually Herakles' descent is regarded as having taken place at Tainaron in the Southern Peloponnese in Greece and his re-appearance with Cerberus at Troezen or Hermione to the NE. of the peninsula. I think that Xenophon's account

¹ I wish to thank N. P. Skøtt Jørgensen, of the University of Aarhus, for having urged me to write this note in his letter dated August 12, 1996.

² See F. Cornelius, *Geschichte der Hethiter* (Darmstadt, 1976), 24, 35, 100, 240.

³ A full description of the topography is offered by A. and M. Kasperek, *Reiseführer Natur Türkei*, 99–103.

⁴ See Erinc, 'On the Karst Features in Turkey', *Review of the Geographical Institute of the University of Istanbul* (Internat. Ed.), 6 (1960), 12.

⁵ First described by E. I. Gordon, 'The Meaning of the Ideogram "KASKAL.KUR" (– "Underground Water-Course") and its Significance for Bronze Age Historical Geography', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 21 (1967), 70–88.

⁶ *Anabasis* 6, 2, 2, with a description of the cave there.

fits well with the swallow-hole mentioned above in the Ereğli Marshes, and as a possible location for Herakles' re-appearance, I would like to suggest the spring at İvriz/Halkapınar c. 12 km to the SE. of Ereğli, very close to the Taurus Mountains.⁷

⁷ A full description of the topography is offered by A. D. Ramsay, *Everyday Life in Turkey* (London, 1897), 157–161.