

PAUSANIAS AT THE ISTHMIAN SANCTUARY

The principles governing his narrative

Introduction¹

Pausanias' brief account of the ancient pan-Hellenic Sanctuary of Poseidon on the Corinthian Isthmus is puzzling from several points of view. In scope it stands in sharp contrast to his detailed treatment of the equally ancient pan-Hellenic shrines at Olympia and Delphi. The traveler pauses at only two of the many buildings and says virtually nothing about the games and festival. Of the rites he gives a mere tantalizing hint. Oscar Broneer, while trying to reconstruct the sanctuary, found his description puzzling. Later commentators on the text have added little to our understanding of the topic².

I suggest that Pausanias' selective description reflects not the reality of what he saw but rather it was shaped by his particular interest in the Isthmian cults³. He chose to mention only the temples and monuments of Poseidon and Palaïmon among the many religious places that are known from the period of his visit, in the mid second century (*fig. 1*)⁴. The amount of white space on the plan is indicative of the limited exploration in the area, and future excavation will inevitably increase the number of monuments that Pausanias passed over. From his choice, however, it would appear that it was not the sanctuary or festival as a whole that attracted him, or even all of the buildings and statues, it was the deities who promised salvation at sea: Poseidon and Melicertes-Palaïmon.

A second point concerns the date of Pausanias' visit. Based on a close reading of the text together

with the results of recent archaeological exploration of the Palaïmonion, his Isthmian tour very likely occurred in the decade A.D. 150–160. A summary of arguments regarding the chronology is given in the Appendix. The identification of the Temple of Palaïmon described by Pausanias as the shrine represented on coins minted under Hadrian is discussed in note 45.

The traveler's interest in Melicertes emerges well before he reaches the Isthmus. At three points along the road Pausanias stops to set out episodes of the Isthmian legend: the tomb of his mother Ino at Megara; the Molourian Rock where she leapt with the child into the sea and they became marine deities; the pine tree and altar where Sisyphus found the boy's body and established the Isthmian Games (*fig. 2*). Other versions of the events are omitted. It is by his selection of stories that Pausanias places the focus solely on the hero and prepares the reader for the places and objects sacred to him at the sanctuary.

The approach to the Isthmian passage suggested here draws on recent discussions that emphasize Pausanias' structuring of his narrative, and especially his use of natural features, ancient monuments and rituals to create the image of a heroic past that was connected through the *longue durée* of history to the present time. »Even to this day« is a favored phrase⁵. The theme of remote antiquity directly linked to the places he visits recurs frequently in the Isthmian story. A particular rock, tomb, tree and altar evoke the ancient kings and divine heroes that Pausanias feels belong to his imme-

¹ A version of this paper was given at the Classics seminar in St. Andrews University in October, 2008. Jaş Elsner, Katherine Harloe, and Irene Polinskaya kindly read and commented on earlier drafts, giving many helpful suggestions. For *figures 1* and *4–7* Fritz Hemans drew the architectural plans and reconstructions and Peggy Sanders did the three-dimensional imaging. Sara Strack contributed substantially to the study and saved me from many errors. Those that remain are my own.

² Roux 1958, Musti–Torelli 1986, and Rizzo 2001 follow Broneer's lead in matching Pausanias' description to excavated monuments, although Torelli makes a couple of surprising suggestions.

³ Pausanias' method of selection: Torelli 2001, 53–55; on Messenia, Alcock 2001. Torelli is mistaken, however, regarding Pausanias' silence on Herodes Atticus as donor of the chryselephantine group in the Temple of Poseidon, as discussed below.

⁴ e.g. the shrine to Demeter in the *Hiera Nape*; Anderson-Stojanović 2002. Of the eight altars and temples as well as the large stoa listed in the commemorative inscription of the high priest, Publius Licinius Priscus Juventianus (IG IV 203), and the three temples he restored Pausanias mentions only the Temple of Palaïmon, Geagan 1989, 349–354. Some of the monuments may post-date his visit since the activity of Juventianus stretched over several decades in the middle to the second half of the second century, Geagan 1989, 358–360. Camia 2002, places Juventianus before the time of Hadrian, cf. SEG 51, 2003.

⁵ See especially Bowie 1996, 2001; Elsner 2001; Alcock 1996, 2001; Hutton 2005a; Hutton 2005b; Pirenne-Delforge 2006, Dillon 1997; also Pretzler 2007. For a different view: Aukjärvi 2005.

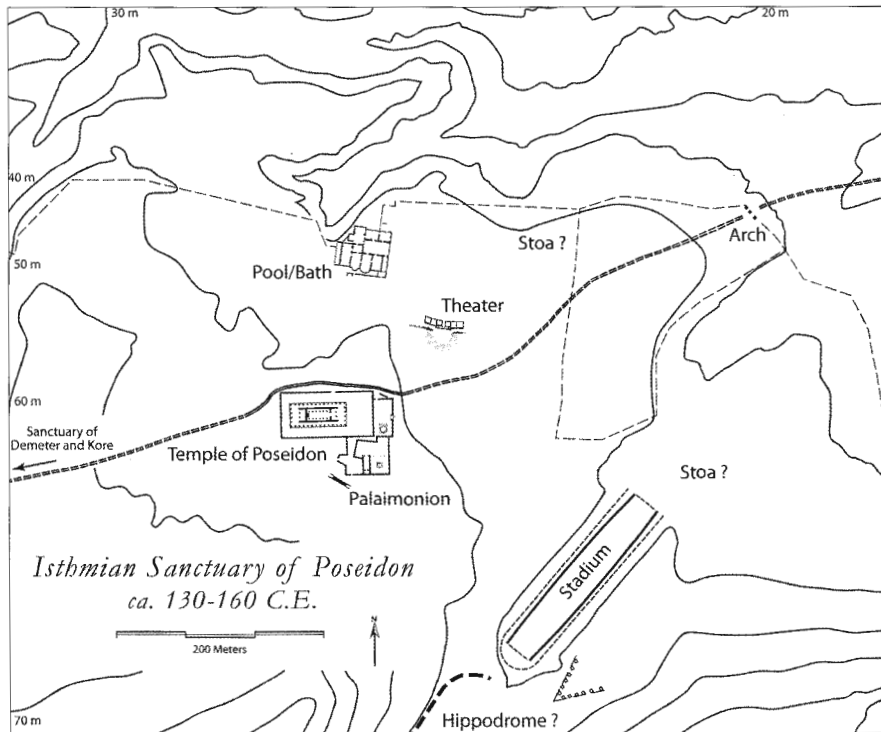


Fig. 1 The Sanctuary of Poseidon in the time of Pausanias

diate present. He and they occupy the same space and time⁶.

Road to the Isthmus (fig. 2)

Ino's tomb at Megara

»On the road to the Prytaneion is the Heroön of Ino, about which is a fence of stones; beside it grow olives. The Megarians are the only Greeks who say that the corpse of Ino was cast up on their coast, and that Cleso and Tauropolis, the daughters of Cleson, son of Lelex, found and buried it, and they say that among them first was she named Leucothea, and that every year they offer her sacrifice« (Paus. 1,42,8)⁷.

Ino, daughter of the Cadmus, was a key figure in Isthmian myth. Like her son Melicertes, she was transformed in the sea to become the white goddess Leucothea while he was named Palaimon. Both belonged to the group of divine figures, such as Hercules and Asclepius, who were worshipped both as gods and as heroes at their tombs⁸.

Pausanias does not enlarge on Ino's story at this point but emphasizes the ancient character of her cult at Megara, noting the uniquely Megarian ver-

sion of her burial and their claim to have been the first to call her Leucothea. According to the tale, two girls, grand-daughters of the Egyptian king Lelex, found her body and offered sacrifices to her which continue to this day. The continuity of the cult suited Pausanias' interest in objects and rites from the remote past that formed a bridge to the present. He lavishes more detail on Ino's tomb and burial than on any of the more than twenty heroic tombs he mentions at Megara, perhaps not only out of his interest in her but due to the richness of the local legend. He carefully notes the boundary of the heroön, olive trees, and the names of the girls who found her, Cleso and Tauropolis. That their grandfather Lelex was a son of Poseidon and Libya pleased him⁹. He presents here a view of Egypt and Greece joined in a heroic past that continues through rites that remained unchanged through time.

The traveler's silence about alternative versions of Ino's fate that would have been familiar to him or his guides gives added emphasis to the Megarian version. Although a relatively minor figure in the Greek pantheon, Ino received honors, often with her son, throughout the Mediterranean¹⁰. In the Odyssey she rescues the ship-wrecked Odysseus (Od. 5,333–353). Her tomb is claimed for the Isthmus in

⁶ Veyne 1988, 95–102.

⁷ All translations are adapted from W. H. S. Jones, Loeb edition of Pausanias, 1918.

⁸ Their dual nature is discussed in Gebhard 2005, 168–174.

⁹ Lelex, son of Poseidon and Libya, daughter of Epaphus: Paus. 1,44,5. An aura of antiquity hangs over Pausanias' description of the city.

¹⁰ Bonnet 1986.

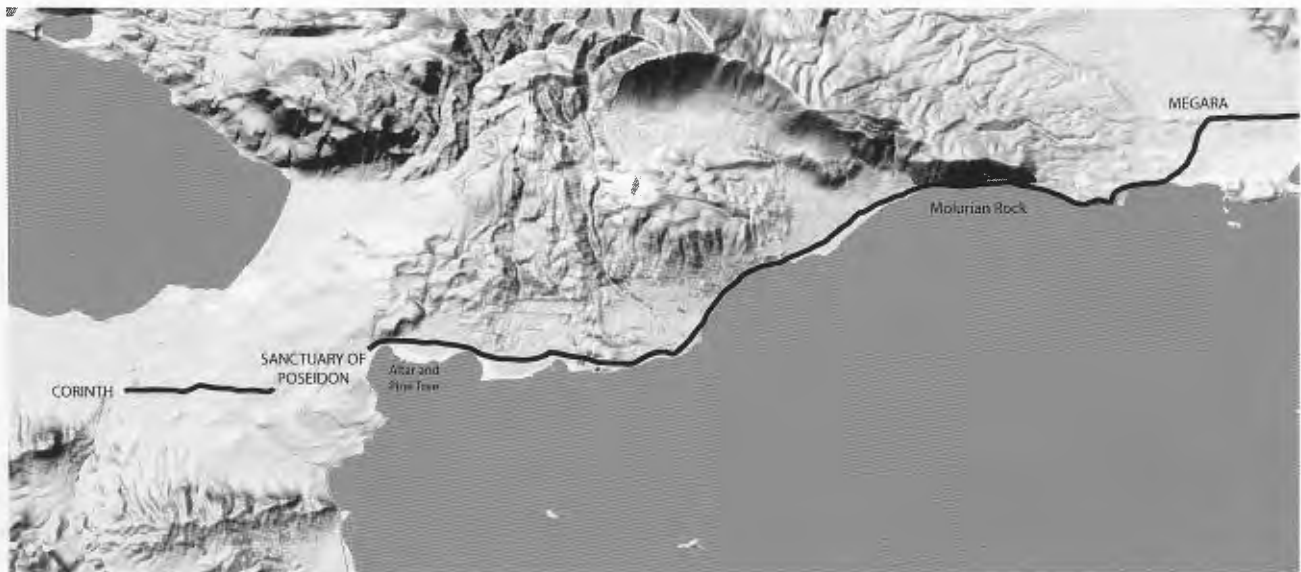


Fig. 2 The road from Megara to the Isthmus

a version, probably Corinthian that resembles the Megarian story to the extent that it names the two Corinthian youths, Amphimachus and Donakinus, who found her body. In this version the youths recover both the bodies of Ino and her son at the small local harbor of Schoinous and carry them to Corinth, where Sisyphus then established contests and an annual sacrifice to them¹¹. Another version, apparently Theban, places Ino's tomb at Chaeronea and associates her rites with those of the Roman goddess Mater Matuta¹². Pausanias passes over all these stories, evidently preferring to focus on Melicertes, as does Pindar and the *scholia* to him¹³. There is no hint of the mourning figure of Leucothea on the Isthmus that Statius so vividly portrays in the *Thebaid* 6,1–18.

Sea-leap at the Molourian Rock

»There are many legends about the rocks, which rise especially at the narrow part of the road. As to the Molourian, it is said that from it Ino flung herself into the sea with Melicertes, the younger of her children. Learchus, the elder of them, had been killed by his father. One account is that Athamas did this in a fit of madness; another is that he vented on Ino and her children unbridled rage when he learned that the famine which befell the Orchomenians and the

supposed death of Phrixus were not accidents from heaven, but that Ino, the step-mother, had intrigued for all these things. Then it was that she fled to the sea and cast herself and her son from the Molourian Rock. The son, they say, was landed on the Corinthian Isthmus by a dolphin, and honours were offered to Melicertes, then renamed Palaimon, including the celebration of the Isthmian Games. The Molourian Rock they hold sacred to Leucothea and Palaimon« (Paus. 1,44,7–8). The road from Megara to the Isthmus itself becomes a marker of past and present time. Pausanias comments that it is named »to this day« Scironian after the warlord of Megara in the time of king Pandion (Paus. 1,44,6).

Reaching the great cliffs that rise at the narrowest part of the road Pausanias stops at the Molourian Rock to finish Ino's story, apparently following a Corinthian version¹⁴. The leap was an essential element of the narrative, and some explanation for her husband's rage was called for although Pausanias is selective with the details. The first reason is insanity, but he fails to mention that Hera was responsible for Athamas' condition, having sent it as punishment for their nurture of the infant Dionysos. He is not interested in Dionysos at this point, nor the image of Ino suckling him together with her infant son Melicertes. The second version involving Ino's crimes as a wicked step-mother seems to have noth-

¹¹ Scholia ad Lykoph. Alex. 107; cf. Stat. Theb. 12,13.

¹² Sekos at Chaeronea: Plut. qu. R. 16,267d; Mater Matuta at Rome: Ov. fast. 551–562. Yet another version places her grave on Tenedus with darker overtones in that the inhabitants, called Leleges, erected an altar to Melicertes and were said to have sacrificed children on it before the Greeks arrived. (Kall. ait., Bk 4, frag. 91 (ed. Pfeiffer); Lykoph. Alex. 229 and scholia.

¹³ Cf. Pind. frg. 6.5 (ed. Snell); Pind. I. hyp. b version 2; c (ed. Drachmann).

¹⁴ »According to the Megarians Ino ran down to the sea with the child in her arms« at another spot near Megara called Kales Dromos or Beauty's flight, as mentioned by the periegetes Praxiteles in Plutarch (qu. conv. 675E).

ing to do with the Isthmian Sanctuary. Why does he include it after having omitted so much else¹⁵? Pausanias does not enlighten us but leaves her story there and does not pick it up again. He ends the episode with the founding of the Isthmian Games in honor of Melicertes. The theme leads him, after his introduction to Book 2, to the Isthmian shore.

Pine tree and altar of Melicertes

»Farther on the pine still grew by the shore at the time of my visit, and there was an altar of Melicertes. At this place, they say, the boy was brought ashore by a dolphin; Sisyphus found him lying and gave him burial on the Isthmus, establishing the Isthmian Games in his honor« (Paus. 2,1,3).

The wording suggests that Pausanias saw both pine tree and altar although his road may not have taken him to the water's edge. In any case, he focuses attention on them as objects that linked the remote past to the present, bringing his day into the same time frame as Melicertes and Sisyphus. The games are still celebrated; the hero's altar and pine tree are still to be seen. By expanding the foundation legend that he had begun at the Molourian Rock, he locates the action firmly on Corinthian soil. Coins of Roman Corinth from the time of Marcus Aurelius reproduce the scene with Poseidon or a personification of Isthmus standing at right (fig. 3). The small figure of the boy across the back of the dolphin lies above the altar and the pine tree stands beside it. A more pictorial version of the discovery scene from Domitian's reign affirms the popularity of the myth in the 1st century A.D.¹⁶ Pausanias, however, says nothing about the first victor's crown being of pine¹⁷, nor does he comment later on other aspects of the games except to say, at the end of his visit to the sanctuary, that they continued under the Sicyonians after Mummius destroyed Corinth and were restored to the city when it was rebuilt (Paus. 2,2,2). While he knew about a prose history of Corinth under the name of »Eumelus« (Paus. 2,1,1), he omits what may have been »Eumelus'« version of the first Isthmian Games that were presided over by Poseidon and Helios with the



Fig. 3 Corinthian coin of Marcus Aurelius representing the pine tree and altar of Melicertes by the shore. Boy on the dolphin lies on the altar. Poseidon stands at right

Argonauts as contestants¹⁸. The Athenian hero, Theseus, is also removed from the scene. Although he pauses on the Isthmus to take account of Theseus' victory over Sinis, the Pine-bender, and to mention his other labors on the road from Troizen to Athens, Pausanias omits the story that Theseus founded the Isthmian Games¹⁹. The spotlight remains firmly on the boy-hero whose story he has told in the previous three passages and whose temple and tomb he is about to visit in Poseidon's sanctuary.

The sanctuary

Road to the temples

»Worth seeing here are a theater and a stadium of white stone. As one goes to the sanctuary of the god, on the one hand stand images of Isthmian victors, on the other pine trees growing in a row, the greater number of them rising up straight to a point« (Paus. 2,1,7).

The main road from the shore will have entered the *Hieron tou Poseidonos* through a monumental, triple-arched gateway, probably built under Domitian, that provided a formal entrance to the sanctuary

¹⁵ Ino's conspiracy against Phrixus and Helle was treated at length by the fifth century tragedians: Ganz 1993, 177–180; and later authors, e.g. Apollod. bibl. 1,9,1.

¹⁶ Coin: Oakley House South, 31/10/1933 (#12). I am grateful to Orestes Zervos for his help with Corinthian coinage and Guy Saunders for permission to study the collection. The story of the pine and altar of Melicertes will have circulated well before the Roman period, but whether or not the objects themselves were renewed after the resettlement of Corinth in 44 B.C. is impossible to tell. For Greek rites to Melicertes, see Gebhard 2005, 174–178, cf. Athena's olive tree that »still« grows today on the Athenian Acropolis.

¹⁷ Discussed in Plut. qu. conv. 677B.

¹⁸ Quoted by Favorinus (Cor. [= Dio Prus. Or. 37] 14); see West 2002, 122–123. At the end of the Isthmian passage Pausanias cites »Eumelus« again in regard to the lost tombs of Sisyphus and Neleus on the Isthmus, Paus. 2,2,2.

¹⁹ Pind. I. hyp. b; Plut. Thes. 25,4.

(fig. 1)²⁰. Although such a gate is more often found in an urban setting (cf. the Propylaea at the top of the Lechaion Road in Corinth), it does not merit a comment here, and Pausanias passes through it in silence. Other buildings whose remains have been identified in the area, including bathing facilities, a large building north of the theater, and possibly several stoas, are likewise ignored²¹. He may have omitted them as Roman additions not belonging to the original Greek sanctuary, but that is perhaps not a valid criterion since he later describes in detail a recent chryselephantine statue group and mentions the Temple of Palaimon built under Hadrian. Pausanias seems to have preferred another way of looking at the shrine, one that focused on the deities and their powers²². The theater and stadium that he names on his way to the central sanctuary are left to represent the athletic facilities. In view of his likely route as marked on fig. 1, he probably did not see much of the stadium nor the hippodrome nestled in the Southeast Valley²³.

No trace of the road has been found before it reaches the central plateau²⁴. On the rocky surface of the temenos, however, the wheel ruts are well-marked²⁵. »Pine trees rising to a point« suggest that a line of cypresses bordered the approach, as shown in the restored drawing (fig. 4). Along the other side would have stood the athletes' images and their bases. Pausanias does not give us their names or the events in which they were victorious. Such an omission may seem strange until we notice that he similarly passes over the victors at Delphi, commenting: »The athletes who have made themselves a name have already been set forth by me in my account of Elis« (Paus. 10,9,2)²⁶. The traveler seems to have decided that Olympia represented the major panhellenic athletic sanctuary. Other themes are chosen for the Isthmian and Pythian shrines.



Fig. 4 The approach to the Temples of Poseidon and Palaimon as seen by Pausanias, restored view

Temple of Poseidon and dedications

»On the temple, which is not very large, stand bronze Tritons. In the pronaos are images, two of Poseidon, a third of Amphitrite, and a Sea, which also is of bronze. The offerings inside were dedicated in our time by Herodes the Athenian, four horses, gilded except for the hooves, which are of ivory, and two gold Tritons beside the horses, with parts below the waist of ivory. On the chariot stand Amphitrite and Poseidon, and there is the boy Palaemon upright upon a dolphin. These too are made of ivory and gold« (Paus. 2,1,7–8).

When Pausanias saw the temple roof rising above the high Flavian temenos wall, the bronze Tritons caught his eye. They are the only external features he mentions. It may be that they were especially conspicuous since most of the temple was obscured behind the wall, as shown in the restored view (fig. 4)²⁷.

²⁰ Gregory – Mills 1985.

²¹ Possible stoa: Marty 1993, 117–118; Roman bath, chronology: Gregory 1995, 302–303; Greek pool under bath: Gregory 1995, 303–312. The pool may have been refurbished for use in the early Roman period, Gregory, pers. comm. Conspicuous to a visitor would have been a large early Roman building that stretched eastward from the bath along the line of the Byzantine fortification wall, north of the theater, Gregory 1993, 44–47.

²² In Corinth he likewise concentrates on the religious monuments to the exclusion of much else, but his approach to cult material is different and lacks the thematic approach that the smaller compass of the Isthmian Sanctuary afforded. See Hutton 2005a; Hutton 2005b, 145–174, especially table 5.1.

²³ The »white stone« need not refer to marble. There were only a few rows of stone seats at the closed end of the race course, and none were of marble as far as we know; Broneer 1973, 55–63.

²⁴ Trenches opened in 1972–1973 along a possible route of the road: Clement 1972, 227; Clement 1973, 145. In view of the topography, a path south of the theater seems likely, restored in fig. 1.

²⁵ Gebhard et al. 1998, 420–428, fig. 7.

²⁶ Athletic monuments at Olympia cover 10 chapters in Book 6. I thank Jaś Elsner for bringing this point to my attention.

²⁷ The temple was not small but about two thirds the size of Zeus's shrine at Olympia: Broneer 1971, 101–103. Flavian temenos wall: Gebhard et al. 1998, 433–436; Broneer 1973, 69–72.

On the other hand, the Tritons are appropriate to mention since they introduce the reader to the maritime theme of the dedications. In the pronaos our attention is directed to two bronze figures of Poseidon, and a third statue of Amphitrite and one Thalassa, also of bronze²⁸. On the other hand, he passes over the many objects that are known from the excavations to have been housed in the temple: a marble cuirassed statue of Hadrian, a statue of Antinous, a colossal marble group of Poseidon and Amphitrite, other statues represented only by fragments, and numerous triangular stelai listing Isthmian victors²⁹. He moves on to the magnificent gold and ivory group that will have dominated the cella³⁰. Any prejudice he may have had against the wealthy donor, Herodes Atticus, is not evident here³¹. The ensemble must have been spectacular, rivaling in expense and complexity Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia and Hadrian's chryselephantine Zeus in the Olympieion in Athens. Pausanias lavishes on it one of his most extensive descriptions of a work of art. It is here that he sees Palaimon as a god, erect on his dolphin, as a companion of Poseidon. His story, evoked by landmarks from the Molourian Rock to the pine and altar by the shore, finds its climax here in Poseidon's temple and in his own temple and tomb that stand nearby. Corinthian coins representing the young Palaimon standing upright (*orthos*) on his dolphin are generally thought to reflect the Herodian statue³².

»In the middle of the base on which the chariot stands Thalassa has been made holding up the young Aphrodite, and on either side are the nymphs called Nereids. I know that there are altars to these in other parts of Greece, and that some Greeks have even dedicated to them precincts [by shores]³³, where honors are also paid to Achilles. In Gabala is a

holy sanctuary of Doto, where there was still remaining the *peplos* by which the Greeks say that Eriphyle was bribed to wrong her son Alcmaeon. Among the reliefs on the base of the statue of Poseidon are the sons of Tyndareus, because these too are saviors of sea-faring men. The other offerings are images of Galene and Thalassa, a horse like a whale from the breast onward, Ino, and Bellerophon and the horse Pegasus« (Paus. 2,1,8–9).

On the base below Poseidon's chariot Pausanias selects the Nereids for two digressions. They struck a chord with him, sending his thoughts to far off lands, but for the knowledgeable reader they were not irrelevant to his main theme. He moves first to altars of Nereids in Greece, then, with mention of Achilles, to the Black Sea, the Troad, and finally, with Doto to northern Syria. Nereids had close connections with the Isthmian Sanctuary, not only as sea creatures appropriate to accompany Poseidon, but specifically in relation to Ino, whose apotheosis formed part of the founding legend. Shrines to her were known in the Black Sea region³⁴ where Achilles, the son of another Nereid, was honored³⁵. Philostratus later compared his funeral rites with those which the Corinthians perform for Melicertes³⁶. The rites offered at their tombs and to them as immortals furnish a direct link between the local hero Melicertes and the epic figure of Achilles³⁷.

Pausanias, moving from the Black Sea to Gabala (modern Djebili or Jebele) on the north Syrian coast, recalls the sanctuary of the Nereid, Doto³⁸. We might wonder what recalled this obscure figure to mind until he mentions a famous *peplos* to be seen at her shrine. The passage has the ring of autopsy. The garment was one of those tangible objects connecting the present with a heroic past of which Pausanias

²⁸ The wording of the last item, »a Thalassa also of bronze«, suggests that the others were of the same metal.

²⁹ Marble sculpture: Sturgeon 1987, 17–20 (over life-sized group of Poseidon and Amphitrite on a base with reliefs). 24 (statue of Ares or an athlete). 57 (Antinous). 58 (cuirassed statue of Hadrian). 91–96 (fragments from other over life-sized statues). 106. 109–116 (fragments of drapery); victor lists: Geagan 2005.

³⁰ Sturgeon 1987, 4. 8–9, Tobin 1997, 312–313; Graindor 1930, 210–212; cf. Philostr. VS 551. Herodes' dedication was probably made before Regilla's death in A.D. 160. The date of Pausanias' visit (ca. A.D. 150–160) is discussed in the Appendix.

³¹ For Pausanias' attitude to contemporary monuments and wealthy benefactors: see Arafat 1996, 36–42. 191–201. At the Isthmus, however, Pausanias was guided neither by modernity nor by the identity of a benefactor in determining his selections.

³² Coins minted under Antoninus Pius and Septimius Severus, Imhoof-Blumer – Gardner 1964, 12 pl. B.9, 10.

³³ Text is doubtful. Preller emended ποιμαίνισιν το πρός ήίόσιν = by the sea-banks.

³⁴ Perhaps at Vani: Vickers 2008; cf. Strab. geogr. 11,2,17.

³⁵ Achilles' sanctuary on Leuke: Paus. 3,19,11–13; founded by Thetis, scholia on Pind. N. 4,29 a. b. Hedreen 1991, 313–330. Pausanias records that women mourned for Achilles at Elis 6,23,3 and he had annual rituals at Brasiae 3,24,5. Cf. Musti – Torelli 1986, 211.

³⁶ Her. 52,3; 53,4; discussed in Gebhard 2005, 174–180. Statius pictures Leucothea mourning for Melicertes on the Isthmus (Theb. 6,10–14; 9,401–03).

³⁷ Burkert suggested that the divine status of Thetis may have been a factor in Achilles being worshipped as a god, 1985, 172, n. 30; 205. For the range of cults honoring Leucothea and Melicertes, see Bonnet 1986.

³⁸ For Doto, see Hom. Il. 18,43; Hes. theog. 248. Pausanias is our only source for her sanctuary at Gabala. Strab. geogr. 16,2,12 p. 753 places the city on the coast near Laodiceia. See Dussaud 1927, 136–138.

was particularly fond³⁹. By mentioning Eriphyle and Alcmaeon he recalls a story that reached back to the wedding of Ino's parents, Cadmus and Harmonia, at which the *peplos* was one of the gifts⁴⁰. Although commentators have found the story strange in this context⁴¹, Pausanias is following a consistent train of thought. He uses the Nereids represented at the birth of Aphrodite to bring into his narrative shrines, rituals and objects related to Palaemon and Leucothea. The *peplos* at Doto's shrine in particular recalls Ino's Theban origins. He thus varied the narrative by references to far-off places that the reader would have recognized as linked to the subject before him⁴².

Besides the sumptuous chryselephantine group, Pausanias found seven other statues in the temple that he considered worthy of mention, perhaps because they were of bronze and also dedicated by Herodes. With the exception of the Corinthian hero Bellerophon and his horse Pegasus, the statues of Poseidon, Galene, Thalassa, a sea-monster, and Ino carry the same marine theme as the central composition. Seeing the sons of Tyndareus, Castor and Pollux, on the base of Poseidon's bronze image, Pausanias sums up the theme of the entire assemblage as salvation at sea, »these too are saviors of ships and sea-faring men«⁴³.

Palaimonion

»Within the enclosure is on the left a Temple of Palaemon, with images in it of Poseidon, Leucothea

and Palaemon himself. There is also what is called his *adyton*, and an underground descent to it, where they say that Palaemon is concealed. Whosoever, whether Corinthian or stranger, swears falsely here, can by no means escape from his oath. There is also an ancient sanctuary called the Altar of the Cyclopes, and they sacrifice to the Cyclopes upon it« (Paus. 2,2,1).

With Palaemon's temple and *adyton* Pausanias completes his Isthmian narrative. The probable path of the traveler from the north gate of Poseidon's temenos to the east entrance to Palaemon's precinct is shown with a dashed line in *figure 5*⁴⁴. Entering at the gateway he would have seen the Temple of Palaemon, as he says, »on his left side« (*fig. 6. 7*). At the time of his visit (ca. A.D. 150–160) the precinct of Palaemon would have been a walled area at the east side of the main temenos, entered by a gate in the east wall and containing the temple in the south half. Foundations of walls and gate remain, and the rectangular podium of the temple, as seen in restored drawing and aerial photograph (*fig. 7. 8*)⁴⁵. For the superstructure we must rely on coins of the Hadrianic period that carry the image of a small, open tholos ornamented with dolphins around the roof and a statue of Palaemon lying on his dolphin in the center. Pausanias adds the information that it also held images of Poseidon and Leucothea⁴⁶. All trace of monuments that may have accompanied the temple have disappeared⁴⁷. A few years later the temple was moved and the East Stoa covered its foundation (*fig. 8*).

³⁹ Pausanias hedges about its authenticity, however, prefacing the story with »as the Greeks say«.

⁴⁰ As Ino's parents Cadmus and Harmonia found a place in the narrative; cf. Frazer 1898, 13; Rizzo 2001, 344. The bridal gifts included a necklace, made by Hephaestus, with which Polyneices bribed Eriphyle to send her husband Amphiaraus to war against Thebes Apollod. bibl. 3,6,2. Ten years later his son Tersandrus used the peplos to persuade Eriphyle to send her son Alcmaeon with the Epigoni. For necklace: Paus. 9,41,2–3. For the peplos and necklace dedicated at Delphi: Apollod. bibl. 3,4,2,6; 3,7,2,6.

⁴¹ e.g. Roux 1958, 100; Musti – Torelli 1986, 211 suggest a later insertion.

⁴² I owe the idea of his introducing topics to vary the narrative to Katherine Harloe who gave me helpful comments from the perspective of Renaissance readers of Pausanias.

⁴³ For a possible trace of the Dioscuri, see Sturgeon 1987, 19 I.

⁴⁴ A northern entrance to the Flavian temenos is restored. None of the wall is well enough preserved to show where the openings were. Since a north gateway existed from Archaic through Classical times, it seems likely that the same point of entry continued in the early Roman period, Gebhard et al. 1998, 433. On the east side the absence of stairs or a ramp between the higher precinct of Poseidon and the lower Palaimonion enclosure militates against a direct connection between them. Thus, Pausanias will have retraced his steps to enter the Palaimonion by the eastern gateway, as in *fig. 5*.

⁴⁵ Following an earlier chronology for the monuments, Broneer 1973, 72–75, identified the foundation in the eastern precinct as a Roman altar and the southern foundation with its passage to the *adyton* as the Temple of Palaemon seen by Pausanias, 1973, 106–112; chronology, 112 and n. 14. Recent study of the archaeological evidence, however, supports identification of the foundation in the eastern enclosure as the podium of a temple of Palaemon built under Hadrian and depicted on Corinthian coins of the period. see Gebhard 1993, 89–93; coin *fig. 5 top*; Gebhard et al. 1998, 438–441. Shortly after Pausanias' visit construction of the east stoa required that Palaemon's temple be moved, being either rebuilt or replaced on a new podium that was connected to the *adyton* of the hero (discussed below). Coins beginning with the reign of Lucius Verus (A.D. 161–169.) show the temple with an opening in the base. For the development of Palaemon's Roman sanctuary, see Gebhard 2005, 189–202, *fig. 6.7 a*; *6.7 b*. For another view, see Walbank 2010, 173–180. The archaeology of the site cannot support her suggestion.

⁴⁶ On a few issues Poseidon seated on a rock is seen in the center of the temple; Walbank 2003, 346; *fig. 20.12.1*. Walbank notes 53 specimens referring to Palaemon on Hadrianic coins.

⁴⁷ After removal of the east stoa in Late Antiquity the ground was heavily eroded to levels below the use surface in Flavian and later times.

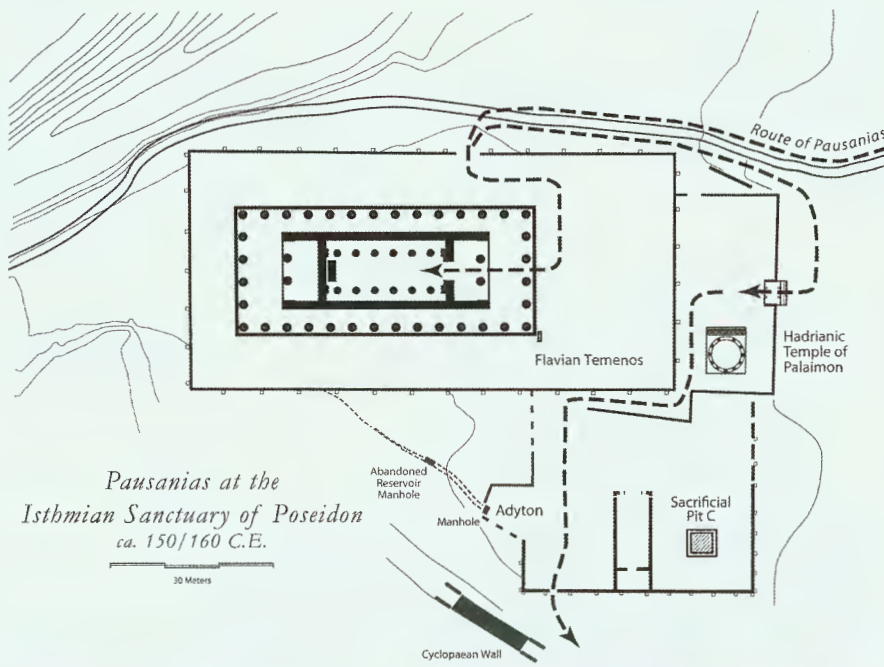


Fig. 5 Pausanias's path through the sanctuary

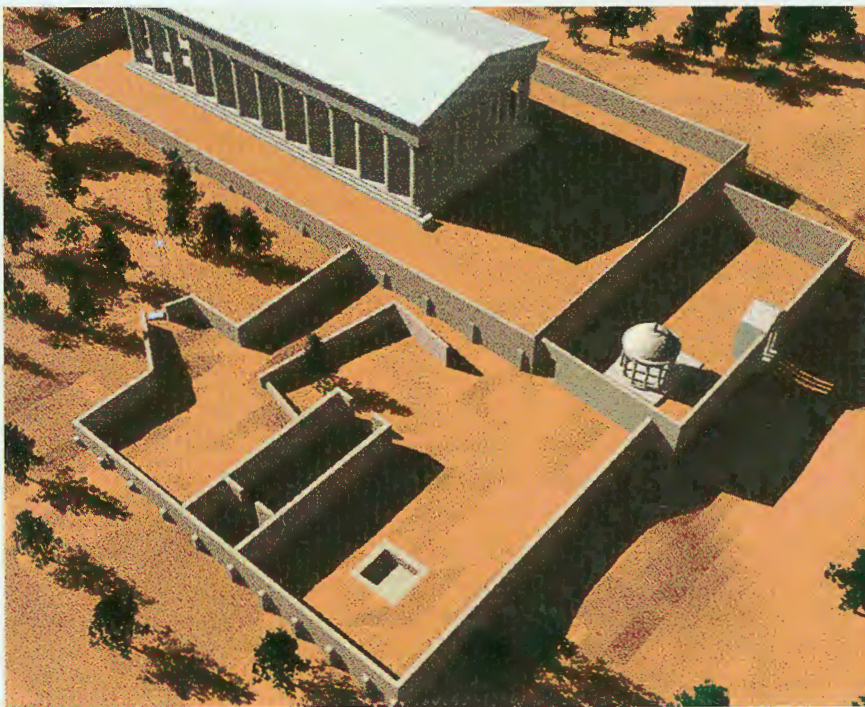


Fig. 6 Restored view of the Temples of Poseidon and Palaimon and the sacrificial area of the Palaimonion with the adyton

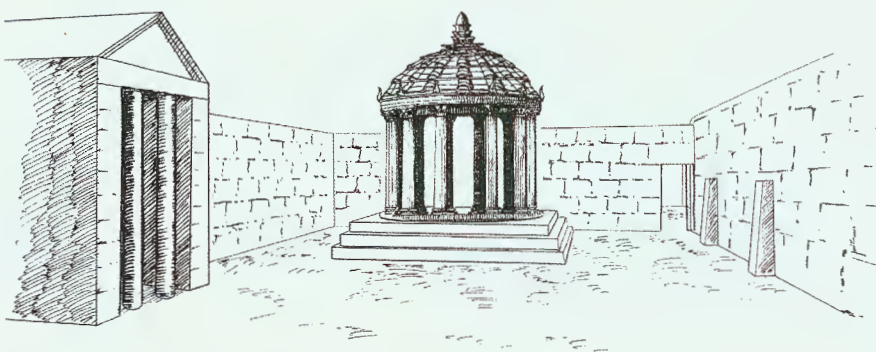


Fig. 7 Restored view of the Hadriatic Temple of Palaimon

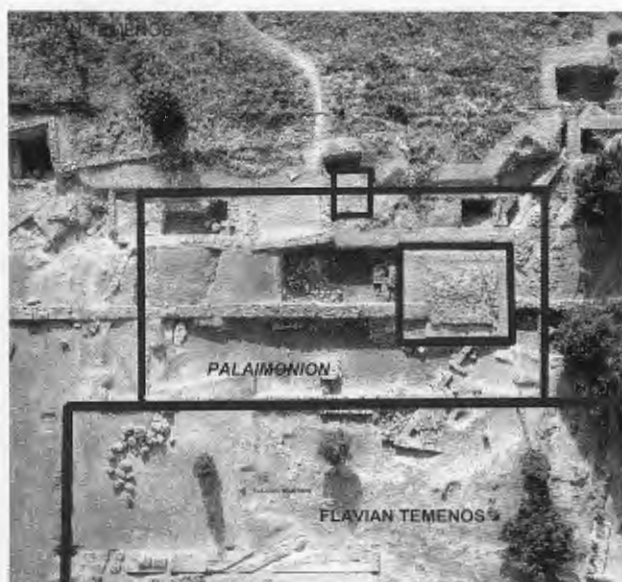


Fig. 8 Aerial view of the Hadrianic precinct of Palaimon

Pausanias probably left by the southwest doorway and walked down the ramp that led into the southern area of Palaimon's sanctuary since the next feature he mentions is the *adyton* (fig. 5. 6). His path would have avoided the pit where bulls were offered to the hero, and he is silent about the holocaustic sacrifices (fig. 6)⁴⁸. The *adyton* lies before him on the right, and he points it out with the phrase: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλο Ἄδυτον καλούμενον, »there is also another place called *adyton*«. His choice of wording, »there is also another place«, makes it clear that the *adyton* was separate from the Temple of Palaimon and not connected with it. Pausanias uses the same phrase when he is referring to a series of things that are joined in sense but not in space, i.e. one object and then another object, separate and distinct from the one previously cited. The meaning is additive, as in a list of places. Examples of the usage include one harbor and then another (Paus. 1,1,4), a statue of Apollo and then a further Temple of Apollo (Paus. 1,19,1), another Tomb of Laïs (Paus. 2,2,5), another temple (Paus. 3,15,6) and so forth⁴⁹.

The *adyton* of Palaimon was in fact a long, narrow underground reservoir cut from clay and entered by a manhole at either end. It was built to serve the Classical Stadium and abandoned with the stadium at the beginning of the third century B.C.⁵⁰. For reasons impossible to decipher at this point, those who established the Roman shrine to Palaimon in the middle of the first century considered the subterranean cavity to be sacred to him. The eastern manhole became its entrance. The place had a ritual significance from the earliest days of the cult. A ramp connected it with the first sacrificial pit (A), and masses of lamps were uncovered in front of it⁵¹. Pausanias provides the further information that it was known as Palaimon's *adyton*, which he adds, was accessible through an underground descent, a *kathodos*⁵². It was here that Palaimon was *kekruphthai*, which is to say he was buried there⁵³. The cavity then, was the tomb of the hero. The identification of the underground reservoir as Palaimon's tomb was probably made when the cult was established in this place, but Pausanias is our unique source for the terminology relating to it.

The traveler leaves much unsaid. He is silent about Palaimon's mysteries⁵⁴, and there is no hint whether or not he was initiated. The one rite he chooses to mention is the taking of an oath that incurred wide-ranging penalties for its violation. In view of Pausanias' lack of interest in the athletic competitions, the oath was probably not taken by the athletes as Broneer argued⁵⁵. On the other hand, since the traveler's description of the sanctuary and its monuments focuses almost exclusively on Poseidon and Palaimon and their role as saviors, the oath may have been that which Aelius Aristides mentions in referring to Palaimon's mysteries Or. 46,40. Pausanias, who was such an enthusiastic initiate at the oracular shrine of Trophonius at Lebadeia (Paus. 9,39,5–14) does not choose to tell us more about Palaimon and his cult.

Moving past the *adyton* the traveler probably left the precinct by the south door (fig. 5). The final monument he mentions just at this point is an ancient altar to Poseidon's violent children, the Cyclopes. It

⁴⁸ Broneer 1973, 100–104; Gebhard et al. 1998, 428–438. 442–444; Gebhard – Reese 2005, 137–140.

⁴⁹ So Frazer understood the phrase, 1898, 14–15. Torelli agrees but seeks to place the *adyton* outside the Palaimonion; Musti – Torelli 1986, 211–212.

⁵⁰ Broneer 1973, 27, pl. 13 a.

⁵¹ Details in Gebhard 2005, 199–202, fig. 6.12–14.

⁵² For the use of *adyton* as an underground chamber in Pausanias, see 7,27,2; 9,39,10–13; 10,32,13–18; location uncertain: 5,1,5; 10,33,11; cf. Musti – Torelli 1986, 17, 212.

⁵³ For his use of κρύπτειν with the meaning »to bury a body«, see Paus. 1,32,5; 2,7,2; 6,21,9.

⁵⁴ Plutarch refers to Melicertes' nocturnal rites as *teletē* Thes. 25,4; Aelius Aristides comments: »it is good ... to speak his (Palaimon's) name and take his oath and to participate in his *teletē* and celebrate his *organismos*« Or. 46,40. The *nigra superstitio* at Melicertes' altar probably refers to the holocaustic sacrifices as well as mysteries; Staius, Theb. 6,10–14.

⁵⁵ Broneer 1973, 111.

is possible that the Cyclopean masonry immediately outside the door of the Palaimonion suggested an ancient altar, or it was pointed out to him as such by his guides⁵⁶. We must leave it there.

Summary and conclusions

At this point let us consider the picture in the reader's mind that Pausanias intended to convey through his abbreviated but carefully orchestrated account of the Isthmian Sanctuary. What he omits from the passage tells us more about his viewpoint than the few lines of the physical description. His exclusion of alternative versions of the stories and the many buildings and shrines of the Isthmian Sanctuary reveals his primary focus, after the treasures of Poseidon himself, to be the cult of Melicertes–Palaimon, the companion of Poseidon and, like his patron, a savior of those lost at sea. He anchors the hero's story firmly in landscape features he encounters on the road from Megara to the Isthmus, and thereby he gives a sense of unbroken time from remote antiquity to his own day. The altar and tree by the shore, still to be seen, place Sisyphus and the traveler within a single time frame.

He does not arrive at the Isthmus, pause, and give an introduction that included the founding stories of the games and the panhellenic festival. Within the sanctuary Pausanias draws attention primarily to the Temples of Poseidon and Palaimon. The place, entrance and identity of Palaimon's tomb which the traveler calls his »holy chamber« are reserved to last. The unbreakable oath taken there suggests that the rites included mysteries that were secret, and Pausanias ensures that they should remain so.

Appendix

Opinion is divided on the date of his visit to Corinth, and the picture is complicated by the possibility of additions and revisions in the course of editing the manuscript. Habicht prefers a period around the middle of the second century (A.D. 150–155)⁵⁷; Musti and Torelli A.D. 145–150 with final revision in A.D. 155–170⁵⁸. Bowie moves composition of Book 2 to ca. A.D. 160⁵⁹. The difference between A.D. 150–160 is undetectable in the archaeological record. Because the wording, »ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλο Ἄδυτον καλούμενον«, makes it clear that the *adyton* was a place separate from the second Temple of Palaimon that was linked to the tomb, it will have been the Hadriatic temple that he visited. A *terminus ante quem* for his visit is provided by coins of Lucius Verus (A.D. 161–169), on which the image of the second Temple of Palaimon with access to the *adyton* first appears. His tour of the sanctuary, then, will have occurred during the decade A.D. 150–160.

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⁵⁶ Pausanias may have seen the large, rough boulders and simply inferred that they were appropriate for sacrifices to the Cyclopes. For the »wall«, see Morgan 1999, 446 figs. 13. 14.

⁵⁷ Habicht 1985, 6–12.

⁵⁸ Musti – Torelli 1986; also Roux 1958.

⁵⁹ Bowie 2001, 21–24. A date of ca. A.D. 160 for the completion of the Odeum of Herodes at Athens gives a *terminus ante quem* for Bk. 1 since Pausanias explicitly says that the Odeum was not built at the time of his visit. Bk 2 refers to a building at Epidaurus built by a senator Antoninus, identified as Sextus Iulius Maior Antoninus Pythodorus, active in the 160s. Pausanias 2,26,9 mentions as constructed in his own time an Asclepieum at Smyrna, which is known to have been still being built in Sept. A.D. 147. Bowie concludes that Bks 1 and 2 were composed ca. A.D. 160 rather than Habicht's date of A.D. 150–155.

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