

About the origins of the names of the rock town of Perperikon

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Subject of this article is the important problem of the names of the rock town Perperikon situated in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains. The present name Perperikon (the full name is Hyperperperikon) is attested after the 12th century. It consists of two Greek words: *hyper* and *pyros* (*fire*). It is supposedly related to the gold extraction at the well-known mines situated in the town's vicinity. However, there is another possibility as well: that the name is earlier and is an echo of the ritual practices performed during millennia at the rock sanctuary, which existed there. I mean the idea of *hyperpyros* used by the Aristotle's school meaning „lighting a fire

on an altar“. One more interesting possibility appeared recently. The name of the town of Pergamos in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains has been found on European maps since the Middle ages. These maps are replicas of the lost works of the outstanding Roman astronomer and mathematician Claudius Ptolemaeus and contain lots of authentic information for the Thracian past. After careful research of a large number of maps, the author suggests that the earliest name of Perperikon was Pergamos. It was derived from the old Thracian word for a fortress, attested at other locations in the Balkans and Asia Minor as well.