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*Manolis Manoledakis*

## THE SOUTHERN BLACK SEA IN PTOLEMY'S *GEOGRAPHY*

Ptolemy stands out among the ancient geographers as one of the most prominent ones and certainly the most influential one throughout the history of cartography that followed his era. Geographical research, which had displayed significant achievements by his time, culminated with his celebrated *Geography*, a methodologically trustworthy work, the first preserved one providing co-ordinates for thousands of places around the then known world. In this paper we will focus on the way in which the southern Black Sea appears in the Ptolemaic record. We shall deal with the coast's division into provinces, the references to indigenous peoples, as well as all the places, both settlements and geographical features, which are listed in the relevant chapters of the *Geography* with their co-ordinates, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of this treatment. We will finish with a short evaluation of the way in which the area under study is presented in the Ptolemaic record. In this evaluation several characteristics of the Ptolemaic work should be taken into consideration: First of all, we cannot say for sure which parts of the text that is preserved today do indeed belong to Ptolemy, since some data might have undergone changes or corrections in several periods of time. Besides, the *Geography* has been preserved and transmitted to us through several codices from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and there are numerous cases where these do not agree with each other on a place's co-ordinates, exact name or other details. Finally, we should always keep in mind that Ptolemy's *Geography* is a general geographical work dealing with the whole Oecumene without the intention to deal more thoroughly with a specific area, such as the Black Sea. All these notwithstanding, our examination shall confirm that Ptolemy's *Geography* is still a valuable geographical work that fully justifies its enormous impact on later geographers and cartographers.

*Keywords:* Ptolemy, ancient geography, ancient cartography, southern Black Sea, geographers, north Anatolia

### **Introduction**

Claudius Ptolemaeus (Ptolemy) undoubtedly stands out among the ancient geographers as one of the most prominent ones and certainly the most influential one throughout the history of cartography that followed his era. Geographical research, which had displayed significant achievements by his time

(AD 90–168), culminated with his celebrated work *Geographike Hyphegesis* or, more simply *Geography*. *Geography* is actually a list of about 8000 places (settlements as well as geographical features) covering the entire known world, accompanied with their co-ordinates, with the final object being the construction of a world map. Although Ptolemy was not the first to have used co-ordinates, his work happens to be the earliest preserved one of its kind, and therefore inspired all the later important European cartographers.

Nevertheless, *Geography's* significance does not lie merely in the fact that it displays co-ordinates, but also in the reliability of his author's methodology, as this is described in the first of the work's eight books. Ptolemy followed a long tradition of great geographers, which goes back as at least as far as Eratosthenes, and living in Alexandria, he had access to a huge variety of works.

Ptolemy made clear that, in order to draw a world map, as close to reality as possible, it would be necessary to make a systematic investigation. This required the collection of all knowledge available to the cartographer from reports by people with scientific background who had travelled around the world. The cartographer then should study and compare these reports with his own data, mainly topographic and astronomic observations and measurements (1.2.2). Thus, Ptolemy followed the most recent reports by travellers and geographers, especially Marinus of Tyre, and was careful in distinguishing the reliable information from the unreliable. He corrected the latter, crosschecking them with the help of astronomical observations, and determined the place of each region, giving lists of spherical coordinates (longitude – latitude) in degrees and primes (with a five primes resolution) for a great number of cities and other geographical entities that, according to him, deserved representation on a world map. As Ptolemy stated, he made sure to determine the position of each place and region “with respect to each other and to the whole Oikoumene” (1.19.3), while he also mentioned some nations inhabiting each region (1.19.1–2)<sup>1</sup>.

For these reasons, examining the way in which a region appears in the Ptolemaic work is a quite interesting task, all the more so since Ptolemy lived in a period of time in which many geographical works had already appeared. It is noteworthy that those which were reportedly used by Ptolemy, like the ones by Hipparchus and Marinus, have not survived. On the contrary, as regards other works that did survive, like those of Menippus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, and especially the Ptolemy's contemporary Arrian, one cannot easily assert whether they were used by Ptolemy or not; most of them probably not. Nevertheless, the data provided by these latter texts, particularly the most

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<sup>1</sup> About Ptolemy's *Geography* and the geographer himself see more recently and indicatively Dilke 1987; Lennart Berggren and Jones 2000; Stückelberger 2000. P. 185–208; Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006; 2009, with the previous bibliography; Jones (ed.) 2010.

trustworthy among them, as the *Periplus* by the eyewitness Arrian, can be used to crosscheck the Ptolemaic data.

In any case, the high number of sites listed in the *Geography*, followed by their co-ordinates, namely an in principle objective measure for their spatial relation to each other, combined with the division into provinces, constitute a quite good source for the geographical examination of a region in the second century AD<sup>2</sup>. The region which we shall be examining in this paper is the southern Black Sea; a region that was contemplated by several *Periploi* compilers, as a coastal one, but also by Strabo, who was born and lived in the area, and thus what he wrote on it was based on first-hand knowledge and observation as well as on personal access to archives and other sources of information, as becomes evident from some of his references (Tozer 1971. P. 258; Dueck 2000. P. 4–5, 185).

### Ptolemy's data

Let us first see what exactly Ptolemy records about the southern Black Sea. It must be noted that the coast is not treated as a unity, as would be the case, for example, in *Periploi*. Ptolemy deals with Asia Minor in his fifth book, in the “first map of Asia”. He divides it into areas and deals with them by following strips of a north-south direction, from west to east. Thus the order followed is Pontus and Bithynia (Ptol. 5.1), “Asia Proper” (5.2), Lycia (5.3), Galatia (5.4), Pamphylia (5.5), Cappadocia (5.6), Armenia Minor (5.7) and Cilicia (5.8) (Fig. 1a)<sup>3</sup>. The three of these regions that border the Black Sea (Pontus and Bithynia, Galatia and Cappadocia) are described from the coast to the hinterland (north-south). This means that the southern Black Sea coast is treated in three different parts of Book 5: the coastal part of Pontus and Bithynia, from the Bosphorus as far as Cytoron in 5.1.5–7; that of Galatia, as far as Amisos in 5.4.2–3; and that of Cappadocia, as far as the Apsorros river and the ambiguous case of Sebastopolis in 5.6.2–7 (see below).

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<sup>2</sup> And not earlier. Ptolemy was not interested in presenting historical data (see more below and in Ptol. 1.19.2).

<sup>3</sup> It must be stressed that, although Ptolemy gave detailed directions concerning the creation of a map of the *Oecoumene* in his *Geography*, it is doubtful that he ever made a map himself. The earliest so-called “Ptolemaic” maps are those that accompany some of the earlier (Mediaeval) manuscripts of the *Geography*. Besides, it is noteworthy that among all these later maps, even those of specific regions, we find no one that contains all the places of the displayed region that were mentioned in the Ptolemaic record. The first such maps are those of the 2006 edition of Stückelberger and Grasshoff, who have created maps with all the places mentioned by Ptolemy, put in graticules according to his co-ordinates, with all the uncertainties that for the rest the drawing of such maps would entail (see Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 34, 37–38, 44–45). The map depicted here is a detail from their reconstructed “Asia’s map 1” (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 846–847).



Fig. 1a. Reconstruction of Ptolemy's "Asia's map 1", after Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 846–847.

In all three chapters, the first paragraph (5.1.1; 5.4.1; 5.6.1) is dedicated to a brief description of the general borders of the region, in one of the rare cases of short texts (not in the form of lists with names and co-ordinates) in the *Geography*. Only in the first instance, there are also paragraphs (5.1.2–4) dedicated to the western coast, that of the Propontis. Similarly, in all three chapters, the description of the coast is followed by that of the hinterland, the reference to the most noteworthy mountains of each region, while some of the indigenous peoples are also mentioned (e.g. in 5.1.11; 5.4.5; 5.6.2; 5.6.6). In the case of Pontus and Bithynia in particular, 5.5.15 is dedicated to the islands of the region, which for the rest are absent from the Black Sea<sup>4</sup>.

To focus on the coast, in the following table all the coastal places mentioned in the *Geography* appear, from west to east, according to the co-ordinates provided in the Ptolemaic record<sup>5</sup>. As we shall see later on, some of the sites might be in a wrong spatial relation with each other, but here Ptolemy's geographical order is kept. Unlike the western boundary of the coast, which is formed by the Bosphorus straits, the eastern one cannot be easily defined, since the coastline describes a smooth curve to the north. But since an eastern boundary there must be, we follow here Ptolemy's division into regions and finish with the mouth of the river Apsorros, which forms the border between Cappadocia and Colchis (see also Fig. 1b).

<sup>4</sup> For Ptolemy's omission of the Island of Ares in Cappadocia, see below.

<sup>5</sup> The co-ordinates can be seen in Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 480–484, 502–504, 512–516. On cases of different co-ordinates given by different manuscripts see below, in the last chapter.

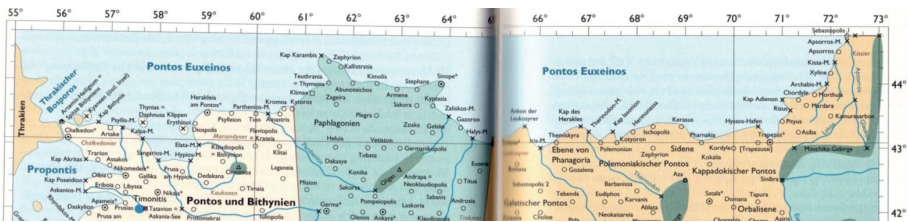


Fig. 1b. The southern Black Sea coast, according to the Ptolemaic record.  
Detail from Figure 1a.

Nr.	Name	Region	Category	Location
1	Bithynias akra	Pontus and Bithynia	cape	Karaburun
2	Artake	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Şile
3	Psillis	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Ağva/Koca Creek
4	Calpe	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Sarısu Stream
5	Thynias/ Daphnousia	Pontus and Bithynia	island	Kefken Island
6	Sangarios	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Sakarya
7	Erithynoi	Pontus and Bithynia	reefs	off the coast of Çakraz
8	Hypios	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Büyükmelan Stream
9	Elata	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Kocaman Stream
10	Diospolis	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Akçakoca
11	Heraclea	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Ereğli
12	Psylleion	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Eren Port

13	Tion	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Filyos
14	Parthenios	Pontus and Bithynia	river	Bartın
15	Amastris	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Amasra
16	Cromna	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Tekkeönü or Kurucaşile
17	Cytoron	Pontus and Bithynia	settlement	Gideros
18	Climax	Galatia	settlement	Şehriban Beach, Sakallı
19	Teuthrania/ Thymaina	Galatia	settlement	Çayyaka
20	Carambis	Galatia	cape	Kerempe
21	Zephyrion	Galatia	settlement	Doğanyurt
22	Callistratia	Galatia	settlement	Marçula Koyu
23	Abonou Teichos	Galatia	settlement	İnebolu
24	Kimolis	Galatia	settlement	Ginolu
25	Armene	Galatia	settlement	Hamsilos, Aklıman
26	Stephane	Galatia	settlement	Istifan, Çaylıoğlu
27	Sinope	Galatia	settlement	Sinop
28	Cyptasia	Galatia	settlement	Demirciköy Limanı
29	Zaliscus	Galatia	river	Uluçay
30	Gazonon	Galatia	settlement	unknown
31	Halys	Galatia	river	Kızılırmak
32	Amisos	Galatia	settlement	Samsun
33	Ancon of the Leucosyroi	Cappadocia	settlement	at the outlet of the Yesil River
34	Iris	Cappadocia	river	Yeşilirmak

35	Themiscyra	Cappadocia < Pontus Galaticus	settlement	Terme, or close to it
36	Heracleous Akron	Cappadocia < Pontus Galaticus	cape	close to Amazon Tabiat Parkı
37	Thermodon	Cappadocia < Pontus Polemoniachus	river	Terme
38	Polemonion	Cappadocia < Pontus Polemoniachus	settlement	Bolaman
39	Iasonion	Cappadocia < Pontus Polemoniachus	cape	Yason Burnu
40	Cotyoron	Cappadocia < Pontus Polemoniachus	settlement	Ordu
41	Hermonassa	Cappadocia < Pontus Polemoniachus	settlement	Akçaabat
42	Ischopolis	Cappadocia < Pontus Cappadocicus	settlement	Bulancak
43	Kerasous	Cappadocia < Pontus Cappadocicus	settlement	Giresun
44	Pharnakia	Cappadocia < Pontus Cappadocicus	settlement	close to Giresun
45	Hyssou Limen	Cappadocia < Pontus Cappadocicus	settlement	Araklı
46	Trapezous	Cappadocia < Pontus Cappadocicus	settlement	Trabzon

47	Pityous	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	settlement	Of
48	Rhizous	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	settlement	Rize
49	Adienon or Athenon Akron	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	cape	close to Pazar
50	Chordyle	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	settlement	unknown (between Çayeli and Pazar?)
51	Morthoula	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	settlement	Fındıklı
52	Archabis	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	river	Orçi Stream
53	Xyline	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	settlement	Sugören or Hopa
54	Kissa	Cappadocia < at the Kissioi	river	Hopa Stream
55	Apsorros	Cappadocia	settlement	Gonio
56	Apsorros	Cappadocia	river	Chorokhi River

*Table 1. List of settlements and geographical features of the southern Black Sea mentioned in the Geography.*

Apparently, several observations and remarks can be made on the list. To start with the most basic of them, Ptolemy mentions totally 56 places on the southern Black Sea coast, of which 36 are settlements. From the 20 geographical features, we count five capes, thirteen rivers and two islands. Ptolemy mentioned also three wider provinces and four sub-provinces, as well as six indigenous peoples, which we shall be dealing with later on.

### ***Division into provinces and regions***

The division into provinces is one of the aspects of Ptolemy's work that deserve some attention. Generally, the division into provinces is a weak point for many geographers of the Roman period. It may be that most of them were influenced by certain historical sources or by each other, that they were giving geographic rather than political/administrative names, or that they were simply misinformed (Manoledakis 2022a). Actually, most of them do not seem



to have laid much stress on this matter. Ptolemy on the other hand appears to have been more interested in dividing the world – at least, in our case, the southern Black Sea littoral – into provinces and districts, but his division again displays some problems, since it does not correspond to the division of a specific period, Ptolemy's or any previous one.

The western part of the littoral as far as Amisos is divided between Pontus and Bithynia and Galatia. Their border appears to be between the cities of Cytoros and Climax. Thus Galatia possesses the coast between Climax and Amisos, which is one of the most surprising elements of the whole map. The eastern part of the littoral belongs to Cappadocia. The relevant chapter is divided into six paragraphs dedicated to the small parts of the Leucosyroi, around the Iris estuary (5.6.2), and Pontus Galaticus, around the Cape of Heracles (5.6.3), as well as the larger parts of Pontus Polemoniachus, up to the area between Cotyora and Ischopolis (5.6.4), and Pontus Cappadocicus, up to the east of Pityous (5.6.5). A quite long land is also attributed to the Kissioi (5.6.6), as far as the Apsorros and the homonymous city, which are given a separate paragraph (5.6.7).

Ptolemy's confusion might have been due to the different names and borders of vassal kingdoms and provinces in northern Anatolia throughout the Roman period. Right after his victory over Mithridates VI, Pompey had created the expanded province of Pontus and Bithynia, which reached to the east the area to the east of Amisos, and had given Galatia and part of the coast to the east to Deioterus (Strab. 12.3.13; Dio Chr. 41.63; 42.45). Similarly, a couple of decades later, Marcus Antonius gave Pontus to the east of Amisos to Polemon (hence the name Pontus Polemoniachus) and Cappadocia to Archelaus. Paphlagonia – as an administrative and not cultural region (Manoledakis 2021. P. 171, n. 39) – was restricted on the mountains to the south of the coast and north of Galatia. Galatia was annexed in 26/25 BC by Augustus. A bit later, in 6 BC, Galatia annexed Paphlagonia and, three years later, its northern part, around Amaseia, Sebastopolis and Sebasteia – the latter called Pontus Galaticus (Marek 1993. P. 55–56). In AD 17, under Tiberius, Cappadocia (Ptolemy's Pontus Cappadocicus) was also annexed to the Empire, as was Pontus Polemoniachus in 64, under Nero. Whether Pontus Polemoniachus was integrated to the province of Galatia (Sartre 1991. P. 44, 259) or to that of Cappadocia (Marek 1993. P. 62, n. 421; Burrell 2004. P. 205) remains obscure, but Ptolemy's data confirms the latter. In AD 72 Cappadocia annexed Armenia Minor and Vespasian created a new province by uniting Galatia and Cappadocia. Finally, between 107 and 113, Trajan divided the two provinces again, and the two regions, Pontus Galaticus and Pontus Polemoniachus, went with Cappadocia, as we meet them in Ptolemy<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> For the history of the Roman provinces in Anatolia, until as well as after Ptolemy's time, see Sartre

Consequently, a map showing the provinces as described by Ptolemy is a creation that – as regards the eastern half of the coast – synchronizes divisions of different periods that preceded the geographer (Marek 1993. P. 79–80): those of Augustus (Galatia including Paphlagonia), Tiberius (Pontus Galaticus with Amaseia and Cappadocia with Pontus Cappadocicus), Nero (Pontus Polemoniacus in Cappadocia, but Pontus Galaticus in Galatia and not in Cappadocia as in Ptolemy) and – after Vespasian’s unification break – Trajan. According to the available historical evidence, Ptolemy’s division into provinces was not valid in any period. Especially as far as the western half of the littoral is concerned, the attribution of the coast to the north of Paphlagonia as far as Amisos to Galatia is totally fictitious, since the specific coast seems to have never belonged to Galatia before the Severan period, which followed Ptolemy’s death (Marek 1993. P. 72–73). The placement of borders to the east of Amisos may be correct, but the borders separated Cappadocia from Pontus and Bithynia, not Galatia<sup>7</sup>.

This mistake might well be due to the fact that the Paphlagonians, a quite well-known and culturally influential people throughout antiquity, always dominated the coast<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, Paphlagonia appears as a coastal province in many other Roman geographers. In view of this, Ptolemy, knowing that Paphlagonia belonged to Galatia, probably presumed that Galatia bordered the Black Sea. But in our case, of course, we deal with the administrative and not ethnic or cultural borders, and Paphlagonia as an administrative district did indeed belong to Galatia but not possess part of the Black Sea coast before the Severan period. The coastal strip to the north belonged to Pontus and Bithynia.

Worth noting are also the paragraphs of the chapter of Cappadocia that mention the lands of the Leucosyroi and the Kissioi. Unlike the other paragraphs and chapters, they are not named after a province, but after two of the indigenous peoples of the littoral. And while the Leucosyroi had always been a well-known people (Manoledakis 2022b. P. 133–154), this is not the case with a people called Kissioi in the specific part of the world. The only Kissioi known are the Elamite inhabitants of Susiana, far away from our area of interest, where the only relevant name is that of the river Kissa. The latter is, however, quite far from Trapezous and Pityous, between which the territory of Ptolemy’s Kissioi appears to have had its western border. Besides, we would expect the sites included in this territory to have been included in Pontus Cappadocicus.

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1991. P. 14–54, 258–261; Marek 1993; 2003. P. 45–47; 2010. More bibliography in Burrell 2004. P. 205–206.

<sup>7</sup> At least, Ptolemy is the only geographer who correctly mentioned the province of Cappadocia (Jones 1971. P. 181–184).

<sup>8</sup> As also Ptolemy’s words a bit later indicate (5.4.5). See also below.

One could claim here that each paragraph is not necessarily dedicated to a different region. This may be true, judging by the division into paragraphs in the other two chapters we are dealing with here (Pontus and Bithynia, and Galatia); a division that does not allow a clear explanation. However, the titles of the three previous paragraphs (5.6.3–5) dispose us to expect a title referring to a province as well (the paragraphs in the two other chapters do not have titles). Moreover, whatever the case with Ptolemy's Kissioi may have been<sup>9</sup>, their territory cannot have almost reached Trapezous to the west. The choice of a people for the title of a paragraph is in itself strange, as is the case with the Leucosyroi, to whom an anyway very small area is attributed. The only explanation I can think of is again the continuously changing borders of the provinces in Anatolia in the Roman period, which might have been causing some uncertainty or even confusion to Ptolemy – his target was, after all, not concentrated on the definition of the administrative borders in different parts of the world, and even most of his (at least geographical) sources might well have been in a confusion or discrepancy with each other as regards the specific matter.

The existence of the last paragraph (5.6.7) might also be considered as an indication of confusion. Without a title, this paragraph mentions the river Ap-sorros and the homonymous city, and thus brings us to the north-east borders of Cappadocia, and in specific Pontus Cappadocicus, with Colchis, which by the way should also belong to Cappadocia, into which it had been incorporated under Trajan. There we meet a city called Sebastopolis (5.6.7), which constitutes an interesting case we shall deal with later on.

## References to peoples

Ptolemy does not lay much stress on mentioning the peoples that inhabited the southern Black Sea littoral, contrary to other areas. Actually, once again, there are some remarks that can be made in this respect. Already at the western end of the coast we encounter the Chalcedonioi, who are reported to have possessed the coast from the Bopsorus to the river Hypius (5.1.11). This was actually the coastal territory of the Bithynians and such an identification of the Chalcedonioi with the Bithynians is unprecedented in the preserved ancient literature, where Chalcedonioi are called only the inhabitants of Chalcedon or its vicinity, including Byzantium (see, e.g., the *Suda*, s.v. Χαλκηδόνιοι; Nicephorus Blemmydes *Conspectus geographiae* 464.2.44–45). The city lay indeed within Bithynian territory,<sup>10</sup> but would this be enough to explain Ptolemy's unique

<sup>9</sup> Probably considered as a people that inhabited the area around the Kissa, but again, totally absent from any other source. According to Cramer (1832. P. 295), Ptolemy might refer to the Zygoi (Strabo 11.2.1), but this would take us even further east-northeast.

<sup>10</sup> Bithynia's southern borders must have included the peninsula created between the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Olbian gulf (the Gulf of Nicomedia: Pseudo-Scylax 92. See e.g. Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Ἀστακός; Νικομήδειον; Χρυσόπολις), as well as the next peninsula to the south, covered by

designation of the Bithynians as Chalcedonioi? And why would he not use the name Bithynians, which was always used both before and after him?

Although not directly related to this issue, we could mention Eustathius' words in his Commentary on the *Orbis descriptio* by Dionysius periegetes (Comm. ad Dion per. 805) that after the Chalcedonioi Chalcideis lived the Bebryces<sup>11</sup>. Eustathius wrote the specific commentary in order to deal with the Bebryces and not the Chalcedonioi, hence the verse 805 of the *Orbis descriptio*, which mentions the Bebryces. However, two verses before, Dionysius had indeed mentioned the Chalcideis. The whole passage is as follows: "The Chalcideis first of all inhabit the land near the mouth, looking at the soil of Byzantium on the opposite coast. After them are the Bebryces and the mountains of the Mysian land" (*Orb. descr.* 803–805)<sup>12</sup>. Probably, the confusion started from Dionysius, who called the people of Chalcedon Chalcidians instead of Chalcedonians (no Euboean colony was ever mentioned in the specific area). His work is dated from *ca.* 120 and thus could have been read by Ptolemy, who wrote his Geography *ca.* 150. Knowing that Chalcedon was there he corrected the name to Chalcedonians, although still erroneously identifying them with the Bithynians. Eustathius, confused by both works, provided us with the all-inclusive and rather weird "Chalcedonians Chalcidians".

Nevertheless, the border between these Chalcedonioi and the Mariandynoi (the Hypius) is correct, if it is indeed the Bithynians that are meant under the former's name, and coincides with the data provided by Pseudo-Scylax (Periplus 91)<sup>13</sup>. Here we have the only clear reference in the passages of Ptolemy we are dealing with to two neighbouring peoples with their border<sup>14</sup>.

Of special interest is Ptolemy's reference to the Caucones<sup>15</sup>, to the south of Mt Orminion (5.1.11), which can be identified with the Koroğlu Mountains. First of all, the specific inland placement of the Caucones is mentioned by no one else in the entire body of ancient literature, where the specific people are always mentioned as having lived on the Black Sea coast around the Parthe-

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Mt Argantheion. The border proceeded eastward to Lake Ascania, Nicaea (Menecrates in Plutarch Theseus 26; Pliny NH 5. 43), the land to the north of Mt Olympus (Strabo 12.4.10, 8.1, 8.8, 8.10; Constantine Porphyrogenitus De thematibus Asia 4.13; Nicephorus Blemmydes Conspectus geographiae 465.1.2–4) and the southern course of the Sangarius, which ran parallel to the sea (Strabo 12.5.2; Pliny NH 5.43).

<sup>11</sup> Ὅτι μετὰ τοὺς Χαλκηδονίους Χαλκιδέας οἱ Βέβρυκες κείνται.

<sup>12</sup> Χαλκιδέες μὲν πρῶτα παρὰ στόμα γαίαν ἔχουσιν, οὐδας ἕς ἀντιπέρην Βυζάντιον εἰσορόοντες· Βέβρυκες δ' ἐπὶ τοῖσι καὶ οὖρα Μυσίδος αἴης...

<sup>13</sup> The Sangarius has also been mentioned as the natural border between Bithynia and the Mariandynoi (Strabo 12.3.7; contra Arrian Alexandri Anabasis 1.29; Arrian, in Eustathius Comm. in Dion. Per. 793 and Comm. ad Hom. II. 2.754, who included the river in Bithynia). The two rivers are actually not far from each other and the small discrepancy could even be due to occasional shifts of the border.

<sup>14</sup> For the Mariandynoi, see most recently Manoledakis 2022b. P. 89–102, with bibliography.

<sup>15</sup> Or Cycones or Cyllones in some manuscripts.

nus. And secondly, one would rather not expect this people to have been mentioned by Ptolemy at all.

The geographer had pointed out in his first book that he would refer to the most significant nations inhabiting each region, always aiming to create a useful map (1.19.2) – for his contemporaries and not a historical one. There is no hint in his introduction that he was interested in writing history. Nonetheless, the Caucones constitute a nebulous case of people, whose very existence is obscure and who, even if they had existed, must have disappeared many centuries before Ptolemy.

The Caucones are practically known thanks to their mention in the *Iliad* (10.429; 20.329), where they are reported by Homer to have fought in the Trojan War on the Trojan side. Afterwards, only Strabo and, according to him, Callisthenes mentioned them, and only on the occasion of their examination of the Homeric work. However, Strabo did not manage to draw a firm conclusion about the Caucones' existence. It is indeed noteworthy that this people was never mentioned by any other known ancient author, whether historian or geographer or even poet or mythographer, for example Apollonius, who speaks of several peoples on the southern Black Sea coast<sup>16</sup>.

All the obscurities and disagreements surrounding them do indeed make us doubtful of their precise geographic location and even of their very existence<sup>17</sup>. Like the Leleges and the Pelasgians, it seems that the Caucones might have belonged to those very ancient peoples for which things were not perfectly clear after the Archaic period. The several theories about them might have been encouraged by some sporadic reminiscence or remaining traces of them, or perhaps even claims by later inhabitants here and there. Some of these theories may have contained elements of fiction, but the Caucones themselves need not necessarily have been fictitious (*cf.* Strabo 8.3.17; 12.3.5). Whatever the case may have been, Ptolemy's reference to the Caucones is rather unexpected, but on the other hand, one could say, an argument in favour of their historicity.

This Ptolemaic reference to the Caucones might have triggered the Mediaeval copyists of the *Geography* to add the Bebryces (their name in brackets in 5.1.13) to the paragraph mentioning inland cities that actually occupy most of Bithynia's hinterland. This is another case of people who seem to have disappeared relatively early. Already Eratosthenes is reported (Pliny NH 5.127) to have written that by his time the Bebryces and many other peoples had disappeared from Asia Minor. But this must have happened much earlier, and it is usually the Bithynians who are blamed for that<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, the Bebryces

<sup>16</sup> For the Caucones, see Manoledakis 2022b. P. 102–110 in detail, with all the previous bibliography.

<sup>17</sup> Claudius Aelianus (fragm. 282) speaks of 'the Homeric Caucones and Leleges', as if Homer had invented them, but then he adds that they 'plot against people'.

<sup>18</sup> Prêteux (2005. P. 249) argues that the replacement of the Bebryces by the Bithynians must have taken

were remembered for many centuries after their extinction, as their frequent appearance in the literature as late as the Late Byzantine period indicates<sup>19</sup>. Their early disappearance, in an obscure period marked by important events and with few sources, combined with the fact that most references to them (all dated much later) had a mythical context, resulted first in ambiguity and gradually in total confusion concerning their history, from their geographic area to their very identity. A confusion that is obvious in the Late Antique and Mediaeval texts, where the Bebryces appear occasionally as having occupied several parts of western Asia Minor, Bithynia, Mysia, the western part of the Black Sea coast, even Lydia, around Ephesus and Magnesia (Schol. in Apol. Arg. 2.124), or as being identified with the Bithynians (Nic. Blemmydes Phil. et Theol. Conspect. geogr. 465.1.1–2), the Phrygians (Apollodorus in Strabo 14.5.23), the Trojans (Pseudo-Zonaras Lexicon, s.v. Βέβρυκες; Scholia in Lycophronem 1305; Scholia in Oppianum\_Haleutica 1.618) and even the Greeks (Lexicon Artis Grammaticae, s.v. Βέβρυξ). Nevertheless, all these references indicate how popular the Bebryces still were among authors of the period during which they appeared in the Ptolemaic manuscripts.

To return to our coast, to their east, the Mariandynoi reach the area of Cytoron, after which Galatia starts, always according to Ptolemy (5.1.11; 5.4.1–2). The coastal part of Galatia is possessed by “the people of Paphlagonia” (5.4.5), who held also a considerable inland part to the south<sup>20</sup>. Ptolemy’s reference to “people of Paphlagonia” and not “Paphlagonians” deserves to be highlighted. It rather implies that Ptolemy was not quite sure whether the Paphlagonians, i.e. the inhabitants of the area called Paphlagonia, were one or actually more peoples. Although this might just be accidental, I cannot fail to think of a particularity regarding the Paphlagonians, as compared to most of the other peoples that dwelt the southern Black Sea coast: their territory appears to vary considerably in the ancient literature, the largest extending from the Billaeus (or even the Callichorus) to Cotyora<sup>21</sup>.

It may be that the changing borders of what is called Paphlagonia could be due to assimilation or other kinds of connections emerging from the ancient literature between the Paphlagonians and neighbouring peoples, such as the Mariandynoi, the Caucones, the Enetoi, the Tibarenoi and the Leucosyroi. Moreover, many texts refer to the cultural influence of the Paphlagonians on

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place in the 8th century BC. Cf. W. Ruge, *Bebrykes 2*, RE III.1 (1897), 180. However, if the accounts of Plutarch (*Moralia* 255) and Polyaeus (*Strategemata* 8.37) that mention the Bebryces refer to the foundation of Lampsacus as a Phocaeen colony (see more recently, Morel 2006. P. 360–361), which took place in the 7th century BC (see Roebuck 1959. P. 113, with earlier bibliography), then we have a tradition that contradicts this dating.

<sup>19</sup> See the works of many commentators and lexicographers, such as Eustathius (*De capta Thess.* 30).

<sup>20</sup> See also above, on the issue of Paphlagonia’s territory in Ptolemy.

<sup>21</sup> The smallest territory emerging from the texts lies between the rivers Parthenius and Euarchus. See the sources in Manoledakis 2021. P. 171.



several peoples of northern Anatolia as manifest, for example, through similarities in their armour (Manoledakis 2021. P. 171–173). It is noteworthy that in all these accounts it is always other peoples that had armour resembling the Paphlagonian and never that the Paphlagonians had armour resembling that of another people or that all these peoples wore similar armour.

All the above could indicate a cultural influence, if not a cultural dominance, of the Paphlagonians over their neighbours, some of whom may have even had an ethnic kinship with them. This dominance, which has even led to expression of the view that all the local peoples of the central part of the southern Black Sea littoral were probably Paphlagonians (Saprykin 1991; Tsetskhladze 2007. P. 193; 2012b. P. 236), may probably have established the name Paphlagonia in a large area extending from west of the Billaeus to east of the Iris. In this case, the name is purely cultural and geographic, devoid of any administrative character, and the territory is not to be confused with the homonymous Roman province, as this was discussed above. In passing, it is worth noting that the Paphlagonians are among the very few southern Black Sea peoples that managed to give their name to the territory they inhabited, and perhaps an even larger one.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Ptolemy's formulation might be due to the actually vague image of the area that from time to time was called Paphlagonia throughout antiquity, as well as of the people(s) possessing it.

On the contrary, as far as the Leucosyroi are concerned, who follow to the east, Ptolemy seems to attribute quite a small region to them to the east of Amisos, including just Ancon of the Leucosyroi and the area around the Iris estuary (5.6.2)<sup>23</sup>. In general terms, the placement is correct. However, we cannot be totally sure whether Ptolemy considered the land of the Leucosyroi as reaching Themiscyra to the east, since no other people is mentioned by him until Trapezous and the Kissioi. This is the problem with the different paragraphs of the chapter on Cappadocia mentioned previously. To the east of the Iris several peoples are known to have been inhabited the coast up to Trapezous in antiquity, such as the Chalybes, the Tibarenoi and the Mossynoikoi, but none of them appears in Ptolemy.

Curiously enough, the only people mentioned by the geographer after the Leucosyroi are the Kissioi, and actually as possessing a quite long part of the coast (5.6.6), an attribution that is unique in the ancient literature, as we have already seen. No safe explanation can be provided for this. It is, however, remarkable that the specific area to the east of Trapezous, which actually reaches

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<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is striking that Apollonius refers very rarely to the Paphlagonians and never to Paphlagonia. In the first of the four relevant passages, the 'hills of the Paphlagonians' are vaguely placed in the huge area between the Billaeus and the Halys or the Thermodon (*Argonautica* 2.357–358; *cf.* 2. 790–791; 4.245, 300), although elsewhere Sinope, to the west of the Halys, is said to belong to the land of Assyria (2.946).

<sup>23</sup> Nöldeke (1871. 447) harshly criticised Ptolemy for this, but he is rather unjust, since he expected from a second-century geographer more than he should.

Colchis to the east, happens to be the one characterised by a noteworthy particularity in the ancient literature. Most sources that deal with the inhabitants of the area in question mention several peoples from west to east, like the Becheires, the Ececheiries, the Saspeires and the Byzeres, and then follow the Colchinas, after the Apsaros<sup>24</sup>. Besides, the vast majority of the ancient sources refer to the Colchians as the people who lived around the Caucasus and the Phasis, with varying levels of generality<sup>25</sup>.

Xenophon, however, gives a quite different image. According to his *Anabasis*, not only was Trapezous clearly situated in the territory of the Colchians (4.8.22), the first people whom the Greek army met when they reached the coast coming from the south, but this people seems to have occupied the littoral as far to the west as Kerasous (5.3.2), at least at the time of the Ten Thousand's march through the area, namely in 400 BC. Given that Xenophon is alone in providing such a pattern, this contrast could be by-passed, were it not for the fact that the *Anabasis* is one of the most credible sources we have on the region (Manoledakis 2022b. P. 18–19). On the other hand, the earliest among the preserved sources mentioning all the other peoples in the same area, Pseudo-Scylax' *Periplus*, was written not long after the *Anabasis*, which makes the disagreement regarding Colchian expansion along the southern Black Sea coast even more significant. The disagreement concerns even the peoples living between Trapezous and Kerasous to its west<sup>26</sup>.

Difficult as the issue may be, it is worth directing our attention to another particularity regarding the Colchians, which might prove to be of some help. For it is not only the demarcation of their territory that is marked by obscurity, but also their very status: there is evidence that the Colchians were not one distinct nation, but the term 'Colchians' denoted a wider group of different peoples, similar to the case of the Scythians and the Thracians. Already Hecataeus is reported to have mentioned at least two peoples as 'Colchian nations'. This could lead us to the possibility which would practically confirm

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Pseudo-Scylax *Periplus* 81–89; Apollonius *Argonautica* 2.396–397, 1242–1280 (cf. the Scholia); Strabo 12.3.18; Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 5.153–180; Mela 1.108; Pliny NH 6.11–12; Dionysius *Orbis descriptio* 765 (cf. Paraphrases); Orphica *Argonautica* 756; Eustathius *Comm. in Dion. Per.* 762.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Hecataeus FGrH 1a 1 F 17, 18a, 210, 288; Herodotus 1. 2. 2, 104. 1, 3. 97. 4; Ctesias FGrH 3c 688 F 57; Herodorus fragm. 52; Timaeus FGrH 3b 566 F 84; Pseudo-Scymnus 937; Strabo 1. 3. 2, 7, 21, 11. 2. 1, 14, 16–17, 5. 6, 14. 4, etc.; Appian *Mithridatica* 282, 556; Dionysius *Periegetes* 688–689, 762; Aelius Herodianus 3. 1. 96: Pyenis, city of the Colchians (Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Πυήνις, mentioning also another city called Tyenis: s.v. Τυήνις), 3. 1. 102, 271, 332; Hesychius *Lexicon*, s.v. Φᾶσις; Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Αἴα, Φᾶσις; Procopius *De bellis* 3. 1. 11; 8. 1. 8; Eustathius *Comm. in Dion. Per.* 19. 14–15, 689. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Which was inhabited by Colchians, according to Xenophon (*Anab.* 5.3.2), and by the Leucosyroi, the Chalybes, the Tibarenoi, the Mossynoikoi and the Macrocephaloi, according to the rest of the sources, even if the latter were not always in agreement with each other as regards the exact placement and borders of these peoples.



both Xenophon and the authors mentioning all the other peoples to the east of Trapezous: that the latter or most of them were actually Colchian. As an eyewitness, Xenophon could not have been mistaken. He and his soldiers were on the coast; they stayed there for many days, were in contact with the locals, discussed, negotiated and fought with them, witnessed their customs and way of life. If Xenophon had met other peoples there, he would have mentioned them. On the other hand, the rest of the authors would not necessarily be mistaken in numbering all these peoples we read about in their works among those living on the coast (Manoledakis 2022b. P. 225–232).

Whatever the case may be, the area in question is exactly the one that Ptolemy attributes to the Kissioi. Could this be mere coincidence, or was Ptolemy confused by the (actual or not) discrepancy of the sources? It must be noted that he never mentions the Colchians, not even in the relevant chapter about Colchis (5.10); and this is an ethnic name that one would certainly expect in a work on the world's geography that mentions the Caucones. He rather divided the inhabitants of his coastal Colchis between the Lazoi, the Manraloi and the people living in the Ekrektike land (5.10.5). The Kissioi could thus have been another Colchian tribe, or even a by mistake used name for the Colchians. But still, their absence from the rest of the ancient literature rather makes us think of a confusion – either of Ptolemy himself or of one of his immediate sources (Marinus?).

### **The places and their locations**

We shall now focus on the 56 places that are followed by their co-ordinates in the Ptolemaic record (Table 1). Generally, Ptolemy is very detailed providing his readers with as many as 56 places on the southern Black Sea coast, more than Pseudo-Scylax, Pseudo-Scymnus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela and Pliny. Only Menippus and Arrian have mentioned more in the preserved ancient geographical works. Moreover, as already mentioned, he is the only among them all who specifies the location of each place by giving its co-ordinates. Nevertheless, while as a rule his data coincided with what is mentioned by the other geographical sources, there are some discrepancies, some of which are indeed noteworthy. Let us try to categorize them.

Probably less important and more easily explainable are different names of sites or different classification terms attributed to them. This could be due to changes that happened in the course of time or even errors in the copying of the manuscripts. For example, Ptolemy stands out by calling Bithynias akra (nr. 1) the cape otherwise known as Melaena or Cale Akre (Apollonius Argonautica 349, 651; Menippus Periplus 5701; Arrian Periplus 12; Anonymous Periplus 3), and Elata (nr. 9) the river otherwise called Elaeus (Menippus 5710; Anonymous 9). As regards settlements, Hyssou Limen (nr. 45), called like that

also by Arrian (3) and Anonymous (38), seems to have been called Psoron Limen in earlier times (Pseudo-Scylax 85). Pityous (nr. 47), irrelevant with the homonymous Colchian city, was otherwise known as Ophious (Menippus 9r9; Anonymous 38). Finally, there is the plain of Phanagoria (5.6.3), mentioned in the Galatian Pontus (without co-ordinates), which should probably be connected with Strabo's Phanaroia (12.3.15, 30), traversed by the Iris.

On the other hand, Ptolemy provides us with an interesting piece of information about one of the very few islands of the Black Sea, Thynias or Apollonia (Nymphis in Schol. in Apol. Arg. 2. 672; Apollonius Argonautica 2.350, 672–673; Pseudo-Scylax 92; Menippus 8; Strabo 12.3.7; Pomponius Mela 2.98; Pliny NH 6.13; Arrian 13; Anonymous 6; Aelius Herodianus De prosodia catholica, s.v. Θυνιάς; Anonymous 6; Schol. in Apol. Arg. 2.177), which, according to him (nr. 5) was also called Daphnousia.

As for site classification terms, Climax (nr. 18) appears as a *chorion*, while Menippus (5801) had called it *polis* and Anonymous (17) would call it *kome*. Similarly, Stephane (nr. 16) is called *kome* by Ptolemy, as well as by Menippus (5905), but *limen* by Pseudo-Scylax (90) and *hormos* (roadstead) by Arrian (14). Anonymous (20) combined *polis* and *limen*.

Generally, Ptolemy is less persistent than other authors of geographical works in clarifying the status of his settlements; whether, for example, they are *poleis*, *komai*, *choria*, *emporía*, etc. He uses a site classification term only seven times, mentioning two *choria* (nrs. 2 and 18), two ports (nrs. 45 and 48), two *poleis* (nr. 11 and 17) and one *kome* (nr. 26)<sup>27</sup>. However, the way in which Ptolemy's two *poleis* are mentioned as such might be indicative: Heraclea and Cytoron are not classified as *poleis* in their appearance on the list of the coastal cities of Pontus and Bithynia (5.1.7), but when they are mentioned as borders of areas and peoples' territories (5.1.11; 5.4.2). This, combined with the fact that Ptolemy's lists of inland cities usually start with the phrase "the inland *poleis* of ... are those:", with slight variations, indicate that actually all or most settlements in the lists (of both coastal and inland settlements) could have been considered *poleis* by Ptolemy. In this case, one would be inclined to support that the term *polis* was mostly used by Ptolemy in its political rather than urban sense<sup>28</sup>.

Unique is the case of Gazoron (nr. 30), otherwise unknown as a settlement's name on the Black Sea coast. An error has probably been made here, and Ptolemy might have meant one of the two towns with similar names that existed in the neighbourhood, either Caroussa (at modern Gerze: Pseudo-Scylax 89; Menippus 6001; Pliny 6.7; Arrian 14; Anonymous 24) or Zagora / Za-

<sup>27</sup> For an overall comparison of the geographical sources in this respect, see Manoledakis 2022b. P. 360–361, Table 4.

<sup>28</sup> In recent decades many studies have sought to comprehend how this term was used by ancient authors, mainly of the Archaic and the Classical periods – in the urban or political sense (or both), consistently

goron (at modern Çayağzı: Menippus 6001; Arrian 14; Anonymous 24).

Nevertheless, far more important than the afore-mentioned differences in names and site classification terms are the divergences in the Ptolemaic record of some places' locations from the locations that appear in the rest of the sources. Starting from the west, already the eastern one of the two Cyanean Rocks appears to be more to the east of the westernmost Bithynian cape (Yum Burnu), which does not make much sense. The Erithinoi reefs (nr. 7), which are always (as Erythinoi) placed to the east of Amastris<sup>29</sup>, appear in Ptolemy more to the west, even of Heraclea, and actually to the south of it (5.1.15) – a considerable divergence. Furthermore, Armene (nr. 25) appears to the west of Stephane (nr. 26), while the rest of the sources unanimously speak for the opposite geographical relation with each other (Pseudo-Scylax 89–90; Menippus 5905; Pliny 6.5–6; Arrian 14; Anonymous 20).

As far as the eastern part of the coast is concerned, Hermonassa (nr. 41) is placed by Ptolemy far more to the west than we meet it in all the other sources (Menippus 9r9; Strabo 12.3.17; Arrian 16; Anonymous 36), where it appears just to the west of (and very close to) Trapezous. Besides, there is the case of Cordyle, one of the two coastal homonymous cities mentioned in the ancient literature, which usually appears on the coast between Pharnakia<sup>30</sup> and Hermonassa (Menippus 9r9; Pliny NH 6.11, who actually calls it a port; Arrian 16, who calls it a roadstead; Anonymous 36), while Ptolemy refers to it as an inland town (5.6.11)<sup>31</sup>, and keeps on the coast only Chordyle of nr. 50. Moreover, the settlement of Hyssou Limen (nr. 45) is placed by Ptolemy to the west of Trapezous, while the rest of the sources mention it always to the east of Sinope's colony (Pseudo-Scylax 85; Arrian 3; Anonymous 38). Another town that is placed inland by Ptolemy (5.4.6) but on the coast by Arrian (15) is Eusene.

Finally, Zephyrion (nr. 21) appears to the west of Callistratia (nr. 22), while Anonymous (19) mentions them with the opposite geographical relation with each other. But since Anonymous is actually combining the data given by Menippus (5901) on Callistratia (Callistratis) and by Arrian (14) on Zephyrion, and neither of these two authors has mentioned both sites, the mistake might well have been Anonymous' and not Ptolemy's.

Another interesting aspect of the Ptolemaic record is some settlements and geographical features that are mentioned only there in the preserved litera-

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or not, etc. – and much debate has ensued. See Hansen 2000; Hansen and Nielsen 2004, with the whole bibliography, also on the reservation expressed about the Copenhagen Polis Centre's research results. The most insightful view expressed in the publications of the Centre is that 'each occurrence of *polis* must be studied in context' (Hansen 2000. P. 177).

<sup>29</sup> On the location of Erythinoi, as well as on the issue of whether this was just a pair of rocky outcrops or a settlement as well, see Manoledakis 2013. P. 24–25, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Pharnakia is clearly different from Kerasous in the Ptolemaic record. For the relation of the two cities with each other, see Manoledakis 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Therefore not mentioned in our list here.

ture. Starting from the west, these are the settlement called Cyptasia (nr. 28), the Cape Adienon or Athenon Akron (nr. 49), the settlements of Morthoula (nr. 51) and Xyline (nr. 53), as well as the river Kissa (nr. 54). Most of them are in the eastern end of the coast.

Indeed, the case of Morthoula deserves some attention as regards its treatment in the modern bibliography. As stated, the site has never been mentioned in any other preserved source and thus what we have is only its appearance in the Ptolemaic catalogue, where it is clearly listed among the coastal sites (5.6.2–7). However, modern scholars have usually placed it inland and identified it with the modern town of Borçka<sup>32</sup>. What is noteworthy is the fact that they have done so despite the fact that they cite Bryer and Winfiled (Bryer and Winfiled 1985. P. 336), who do not give any such identification, but place Morthoula correctly on the coast and identify it with modern Fındıklı. The erroneous identification with Borçka, probably inserted by the influential *Barrington Atlas*, was followed even by Stückelberger and Grasshoff (2006. P. 515), although on their reconstruction map Morthoula appears on the coast. Many decades earlier, A. Herrmann (*RE XVI.1* (1933), 321, s.v. Morthoula) had also placed Morthoula in the Cappadocian hinterland, at the Firtina Creek, although Ptolemy's longitudes given for the sites before and after Marthoula indicate that the latter must have been situated almost in the middle of the distance between Cape Adienon and Chordyle to the west and the estuary of Archabis to the east. Thus Marthoula does anyway not fit with Firtina Creek, which flows into the sea just to the east of Pazar, so close to Cape Adienon and Chordyle.

Special mention must be made of Ischopolis (nr. 42). Writing in the first century AD, probably between 18 and 24, Strabo mentioned in his *Geography* (12.3.17) that Ischopolis was in ruins in his day. However, a century later, Ptolemy (5.6.5) mentions it as if it were a proper settlement; this could suggest a city that had declined for a time but later prospered again. No other preserved source mentions this settlement.

As already mentioned, Sebastopolis (5.6.7), the last city mentioned by Ptolemy in Cappadocia, to the north of the Apsorros and almost on the borders with Colchis, constitutes another interesting case. Here as well, no such settlement is known by any other source as been situated there. The two known cities with this name in the wider region lay in the Cappadocian inland (Sulusaray) and in Colchis (the earlier Greek colony of Dioscurias), both also mentioned by Ptolemy in 5.6.9 (as the “other Sebastopolis”) and 5.10.2 respectively. Stückelberger and Grasshoff are wrong in identifying this strange Sebastopo-

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<sup>32</sup> Talbert 2000 (*Barrington Atlas*); Pleiades project (<https://pleiades.stoa.org>); Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire by the Centre for Digital Humanities, University of Gothenburg (<https://dh.gu.se/dare/>); Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 515.

lis of Ptolemy with Sulusaray, which is actually the “other Sebastopolis”, and the latter with Sebasteia (modern Sivas) (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 517). After all, Sulusaray and Sivas are actually very close to each other, contrary to what results from Ptolemy’s co-ordinates of the two homonymous cities. Probably, what we have here is a frustration of our geographer.

The last aspect of Ptolemy’s work that deserves some attention regards places that are absent from it, although they were rather well-known, as becomes evident from their mention in many other sources throughout antiquity (including the Roman period), and not only geographical ones. Starting from the settlements, one would certainly expect to meet the port of Calpe, visited by Xenophon (*Anabasis* 6.2.17) and mentioned by several authors of the Roman period, such as Menippus (5701), who actually called it an *emporion* of the Heracleans, Pliny (6.4) and Arrian (12)<sup>33</sup>. The island of Thynias, which Ptolemy was aware of (5.1.15), also had one or two settlements, Apollonia and Thynias, which were rather well-known (Pseudo-Scylax 92; Pseudo-Scymnus 1026; Pomponius Mela 2.98; Arrian 13), but not mentioned by the geographer from Alexandria. Moreover, Lillaion, Elaion and Cales, three settlements to the west of Heraclea and probably its *emporion*, were mentioned by two authors of the Roman period before Ptolemy (Menippus 5710; Arrian 13), but not by him. The same applies to the fortress Phadissane or Phabda, to the west of Polemonion (Menippus 9r9; Strabo 12.3.16; Arrian 16), and, of course, the second of the two towns called Kerasous, identified with the modern Vakfikebir<sup>34</sup>.

As regards geographical features, one cannot fail but notice the absence of the renowned Island of Ares, opposite Kerasous of Giresun (Pseudo-Scylax 86; Menippus 9r9; Mela 2.98; Arrian 16), known also from the celebrated Argonautic myth (e.g. Apollonius *Argonautica* 2.382-87, 1031). Notwithstanding the fact that Ptolemy seems quite assiduous in mentioning the rivers of the southern Black Sea, including thirteen of them in his list, this number is rather small as compared with the totally 49 rivers that are mentioned in the ancient literature as flowing into the Black Sea from the south (Manoledakis 2022b. P. 36–41, Table 1). Among them, in the Ptolemaic record we would certainly expect to meet the Rhebas, the Lycus, the Oxinas or Callichorus, the Billaeus, the Lycastus, as well as some of the many rivers of the eastern part of the littoral that are omitted.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous mentions all these settlements, since he derives information from several earlier sources, so we shall not mention him again here.

<sup>34</sup> The question of Kerasous is one of the most puzzling in the study of the southern Black Sea littoral. I have dealt with the matter in detail elsewhere (Manoledakis 2010; 2022c). While for the identification of the city mentioned by Xenophon as the colony of Sinope that he visited (*Anab.* 5.3.2; cf. Diodorus 14. 30. 5) things are now rather clear (this is the one mentioned by Ptolemy – nr. 43 – as well as by Pseudo-Scymnus 911, and Arrian 16), no secure answer can be given for three Roman authors, Strabo (12.3.17), Mela (1.107) and Pliny (NH 6.11), whose descriptions are utterly unclear, contrary to Menippus’ placement (9r9).

## Concluding remarks

In the beginning of this paper, we pointed out that Ptolemy is one of the most prominent and influential geographers of antiquity and referred to his *Geography* as a most valuable geographical work. Focusing on the southern Black Sea, however, we discovered some divergences from reality. Should this mean that this work is, after all, not as reliable as has been considered? To answer this question, we should first make sure that all the data included in this work as we know it today do indeed belong to Ptolemy. Though, modern scholarship's examination of the Ptolemaic *Geography* is far from explicitly confirming such a case. Even if scholars do not agree about how much (and what) of the work is actually Ptolemy's, the only certain thing is that the whole of it is not. Apart from Book 1 and the first chapter of Book 2, which refer to the methodology used by Ptolemy, the other seven books, and especially the large parts of them with the lists of places and co-ordinates, might have undergone changes – deliberate or not – or corrections in several periods of time (Bagrow 1985. P. 35).

As regards the co-ordinates in particular, Ptolemy himself stated in his second book that he had considered the possibility of obtaining more accurate figures in the future and accommodated the ability to write them on the lists (2.1.3). Besides, the work itself has been preserved and transmitted to us through several codices from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, divided into two main recensions ( $\Omega$  and  $\Xi$ ), and there are numerous cases where they do not agree with each other on a place's co-ordinates, exact name or other details. This is the result of errors during the copying from manuscript to manuscript – or even deliberate attempts to correct the Ptolemaic data, but not of Ptolemy's mistakes (Lennart Berggren and Jones 2000. P. 41–45; Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 27–30, 39–40; 2009; Mittenhuber 2010). For example, the thirteen-century Codex Vaticanus Graecus 191, which is actually the only one representing the recension  $\Xi$ , contains several mistakes that are considered to have been made during the transcription from a majuscule manuscript (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 33). Whether we could recognize in this codex an effort of Ptolemy himself “to prepare a new edition of his *Geography*, which was not completed”, as has been proposed (E. Polaschek, RE. Suppl. 10 (1965), 717, s.v. Ptolemaios als Geograph), remains doubtful.

Other issues should also be taken into consideration. For example, Ptolemy cannot have been himself to all the places of the world he describes; on the contrary, scholars believe that his journeys were rather limited (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 10). This means that most of the co-ordinates in the *Geography* are not the results of his own measurements. From what we have seen in the previous pages, the southern Black Sea coast must not have been visited by him. Besides, it is rather impressive that, apparently, we cannot



include any of the geographical works that are preserved today (like the several *Periploi*) in his sources, both those that are mentioned by him and those defined by modern scholars (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 16–20). Especially, Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini* was certainly unknown to Ptolemy, although it was written about twenty years earlier (AD 130–132) than the *Geography*. Had he read it, various parts of his description of the coast would have been different. All the more so, since Ptolemy himself had stated (1.18.6) that calculations on coasts are easier than inland.

In connection to this, one should furthermore bear in mind that Ptolemy's co-ordinates are given with an intrinsic approximation of five spherical minutes of arc, which means *ca.* 10 kilometres on an actual terrestrial sphere. This means that a place mentioned by Ptolemy with specific co-ordinates could in reality lie anywhere within a circle of uncertainty of 10 km radius around the point indicated by those co-ordinates, and thus possibly, in the case of the afore-mentioned 'exceptions', in the correct (according to other geographers) location. Would this be enough to justify the mistakes pinpointed in this paper? Rather not, since in almost all the afore-mentioned cases of Ptolemaic divergences from reality (according to the rest of the sources) as regards the location of a place the deviation is larger than five minutes and there are not different co-ordinates given by different codices.

The only exception is Hyssou Limen (nr. 45), which, as we saw, is placed by Ptolemy to the west of Trapezous, while the rest of the sources mention it always to the east of Sinope's colony. In this case some manuscripts give for the settlement exactly the same longitude as for Trapezous (70° 45') (Stückelberger and Grasshoff 2006. P. 514). Theoretically, this could mean that, if we take the maximum range of error, Hyssou Limen could have been situated ten primes to the east of Trapezous in the Ptolemaic record. However, first of all, according to Arrian (*Per.* 7), the river called Hyssus (Karadere stream) traversed the homonymous city (Araklı) just before flowing into the Black Sea 180 stadia far from Trapezous, while the Anonymous (38) gives the same distance (obviously taking it from Arrian) between the two cities. This distance corresponds to 33,3 km, and thus is larger than the possible Ptolemaic error. Second and most important, in the Ptolemaic list, which follows a geographical order from west to east, Hyssou Limen is mentioned before Trapezous, and this leaves no doubt that it was considered by Ptolemy as being situated to its west. Actually, the order in which places appear in this list is the only reliable criterion is such a discussion, given the many errors that occurred during the successive copies from manuscript to manuscript, especially in the co-ordinate numbers (see above), which actually makes it very difficult to attribute most of the latter to Ptolemy himself<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> It has even been argued that all the lists of co-ordinates in the *Geography* are actually a compilation of earlier and later than Ptolemy works by an unknown author, who "gave the whole work an air of

One should also attach importance to the considerable difficulty in determining longitude in Ptolemy's era; a problem that was actually solved much later, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although the Ptolemaic record appears much more accurate regarding the latitude determination, some slight divergences still exist, but cannot be considered significant, given the period of time in which the work was created. For example, the northernmost point of the littoral appears to be Cape Carambis (Kerempe), although in reality it is Lepte or Syrias Akre (Inceburun), to the west of Sinope. Besides, Apsorros (5.6.7) appears to be more to the north than Cape Carambis (5.4.2), although it is not.

Finally, it would be right to remark that one should always know what to expect from each work and not set the bar exceedingly high. A comparison with the *Periplus Ponti Euxini* written by Arrian of Nicomedia, for example, would be unrealistic. Ptolemy's *Geography* is a general geographical work dealing with the whole *Oecumene* and having as an ultimate goal the creation of a world map and the demonstration of the appropriate methodology, as the very existence of Book 1 indicates, and not of the co-ordinates themselves, many of which, as Ptolemy himself acknowledged (2.1.3), would need corrections in the future. There was no intention to deal more thoroughly with a specific area, such as the Black Sea. Arrian, on the contrary, was governor of Cappadocia in the time of Hadrian and wrote his *Periplus*, addressing it to his emperor, *ad hoc*, containing strictly geographical data. Besides, the great value of this work derives also from the fact that Arrian actually visited the places he described, having a personal interest in conveying reliable information to his emperor. This is clearly stated in his text, as is also the fact that he had studied the works of other eye-witnesses describing the littoral, including Xenophon's *Anabasis*, whose information Arrian sometimes tries to confirm. It would have been almost impossible for anybody to create such a work about the whole world in antiquity.

Consequently, despite the errors pinpointed above, which are anyway not many, Ptolemy's *Geography* is still a valuable geographical work that fully justifies its impact on geographers and cartographers for more than one and a half millennium.

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authority by attributing it to Ptolemy and attaching to it the name of one of his works" (Bagrow 1985. P. 35).



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*Μανολις Μανολεδακις*

## ЮЖНОЕ ПРИЧЕРНОМОРЬЕ В «ГЕОГРАФИИ» ПТОЛЕМЕЯ

Птолемей выделяется среди античных географов как один из самых выдающихся и, разумеется, самых влиятельных авторов в истории всей последующей картографии. Географическая наука, совершив к его времени немало значительных достижений, достигла кульминации в его знаменитой «Географии», методологически надежном сочинении, первом известном нам труде, доносящем координаты тысяч мест во всем известном в те времена мире. В данной работе мы сосредоточимся на том, каким предстает Южное Причерноморье в

описании Птолемея. Мы обратимся к делению побережья на провинции, упоминаниям местных народов, а также ко всем местам, как поселениям, так и географическим объектам, перечисленным в соответствующих главах «Географии», с их координатами и дадим оценку сильным и слабым сторонам их описания. Мы закончим краткой оценкой того, каким предстает изучаемый регион в описании Птолемея. Вынося эту оценку, следует принять во внимание несколько особенностей сочинения Птолемея. Прежде всего, невозможно с уверенностью сказать, какие части дошедшего до нашего времени текста действительно принадлежат Птолемею, поскольку некоторые данные могли быть изменены или исправлены за прошедшее с тех пор время. Кроме того, «География» сохранилась и дошла до нас в нескольких кодексах, относящихся к XIII–XV вв., и во многих случаях они не согласуются друг с другом относительно координат или точного названия того или иного места или других деталей. Наконец, надо всегда помнить, что «География» Птолемея – это сочинение о географии в целом, посвященное всей Ойкумене, автор которого не собирался углубляться в описание таких конкретных регионов, как Черное море и Причерноморье. Но несмотря на всё это, мы утверждаем в нашем исследовании, что «География» Птолемея до сих пор является ценным географическим трудом, по праву оказавшим огромное влияние на географов и картографов последующих эпох.

*Ключевые слова:* Птолемей, античная география, античная картография, Южное Причерноморье, географы, Северная Анатолия

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