

РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК
ОТДЕЛЕНИЕ ИСТОРИКО-ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ НАУК
ИНСТИТУТ ВСЕОБЩЕЙ ИСТОРИИ

ВЕСТНИК ДРЕВНЕЙ ИСТОРИИ



Том 80 № 2

Апрель—Май—Июнь

ЖУРНАЛ ВЫХОДИТ ЧЕТЫРЕ РАЗА В ГОД

ОСНОВАН в 1937 г.

МОСКВА
2020

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RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY
INSTITUTE OF WORLD HISTORY

JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY



Volume 80 Issue 2

April–May–June

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

FOUNDED IN 1937

MOSCOW
2020

The content is prepared in the Institute of World History (Russian Academy of Sciences)
in cooperation with the State Hermitage and the Lomonosov Moscow State University

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DOI: 10.31857/S032103910009662-1

(RE-)LOCATING GREEK AND ROMAN CITIES
ALONG THE NORTHERN COAST OF KOLCHIS
Part I. IDENTIFYING DIOSKOURIAS IN THE RECESS
OF THE BLACK SEA

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The reconstruction of the Kolchian land- and riverscapes faces several difficulties, most of all changing riverbeds and coastlines. In the first part of my study, presented here, I offer arguments for the **new location of Dioskourias at Ochamchire Harbour**. The city of Phasis is yet unlocated, but rightly expected somewhere near the mouth of the Phasis / Rioni River by Paleostomi Lake. Common opinion identifies Greek Dioskourias and Roman Sebastopolis with modern Sukhumi, although this lacks sufficient support in the material evidence. My revision of the ancient literary tradition, mainly drawing on Strabo (with Eratosthenes) and Pliny (with Timosthenes of Rhodes), **besides Claudius Ptolemy and Pomponius Mela, has led me instead to the Hippos / Tskhenistsqali and Moches / Mokvi Rivers** in the bay of Ochamchire. This is consistent with the tradition that it was located ‘in the recess of the Black Sea’ and gains further support through the Argonautic themes in its toponomastic context. For Gyenos, which scholars previously situated at Ochamchire, we should rather look somewhere along the lower course of the **Kyaneos / Okumi River**, for Roman Sebastopolis at the **Kodori Delta** south-east of the Sukhumi Airport, for Graeco-Roman Pityous at the estuary of the **Khipsta River**, and only for its Byzantine refoundation at **Pitsunda by the Korax / Bzipi River**. The traditional location of **Caucasian Herakleion on Cape Adler** conforms with the results of our study.

Keywords: Black Sea, Kolchis, ancient Greek geography, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Dioskourias, Sebastopolis, Aia, Gyenos, Pityous, Phasis, Kyaneos, Herakleion, Hippos, Korax, Moches

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For critical feedback and bibliographical or editorial support, I would like to thank Alexandru Avram, Anca Dan, Germain Payen, Jess Russell and Gocha Tsetsckhladze. I am particularly grateful to Stone Chen for working on the maps with me. All remaining shortcomings are my own. I am further grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada for funding my project ‘Ethnic Identities and Diplomatic Affiliations of the Bosphoran Kingdom’ (2017–2022).

В ПОИСКАХ ГРЕКО-РИМСКИХ ГОРОДОВ НА СЕВЕРНОМ ПОБЕРЕЖЬЕ КОЛХИДЫ

Часть I. ДИОСКУРИЯ ВО ВПАДИНЕ ЕВКСИНСКОГО ПОНТА

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Реконструкция топографии древней Колхиды сталкивается с серьезными трудностями, прежде всего из-за изменения очертаний речных русел и береговой линии. В представленной здесь первой части нашего исследования выдвигаются аргументы в пользу новой локализации древней Диоскурии в Очамчирской бухте. Город Фасис до сих пор не обнаружен, хотя его местонахождение справедливо предполагается по соседству с устьем р. Фасис (совр. Риони), неподалеку от озера Палеостомы. Общепринятая гипотеза отождествляет греческий город Диоскурию и римский город Себастополь с современным Сухум(и), но эта точка зрения не находит достаточной поддержки в археологических данных. На основании пересмотра данных античной литературной традиции (в первую очередь Страбона, опирающегося на Эратосфена, и Плиния, опирающегося на Тимосфена Родосского, а также Клавдия Птолемея и Помпония Мелы) в статье выдвигается гипотеза о местоположении Диоскурии в Очамчирской бухте около рек Гипп (Цхенисцкали / Цхенцкар) и Мохес (Мокви / Мыку). Это предположение согласуется с античной традицией, помещавшей Диоскурию во «впадине Евксинского Понта», и находит дополнительное подтверждение в следах мифа об аргонавтах в местной топонимической и ономастической традиции. Гиенос, ранее идентифицировавшийся исследователями в Очамчирской бухте, следует искать в нижнем течении р. Кианей (Окуми / Окум), римский Себастополь – в дельте р. Кодори к юго-востоку от сухумского аэропорта, а греко-римский Питиунт – в устье р. Хыпста. Только новооснованный византийский город того же имени можно идентифицировать в Пицунде около р. Коракс (Бзипи / Бзыбь). Традиционная локализация кавказского Гераклеяна на мысе Адлер подтверждается результатами нашего исследования.

Ключевые слова: Черное море, Колхида, античная география, Страбон, Плиний Старший, Диоскурия, Себастополь, Эя, Гиенос, Питиунт, Фасис, Кианей, Гераклеяон, Гипп, Коракс, Мохес

Dioskourias, the Milesian colony located ‘in the recess of the Black Sea’ outshone all other Greek cities on the eastern-Pontic coast, at least for some generations in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. By the end of the first millennium BC, its glamour was over, but its erstwhile fame continued to be reflected in a broad geographical tradition, which has hitherto remained underexplored. The present study will scrutinize these literary accounts, question the prevailing location of Dioskourias in the Sukhumi area and suggest looking for this yet undiscovered city around Ochamchire Harbour instead.

1. DIOSKOURIAS / AIA / SEBASTOPOLIS – AN INTRODUCTION

Strabo of Amaseia conveys the impression that Dioskourias was a thriving city when he was writing in the Augustan period (with a few random additions dating early under Tiberius). He praises this *polis* as *the* urban centre of northern Kolchis, as the economic hub for about 70 tribes in-between the Kolchian plain and the Main Caucasus, although

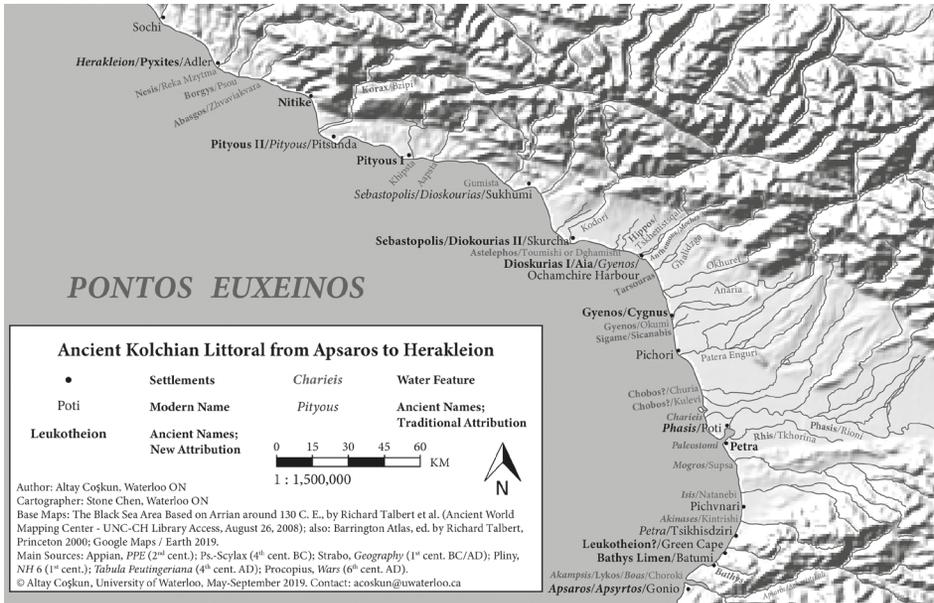


Fig. Ancient Kolchian Littoral from Apsaros to Herakleion

the geographer rejects the number of 300 as exaggerated. Strabo is not aware of any major changes in the recent past, so the information he is drawing on may be somewhat dated, as is so often the case in his *Geography*¹. Pliny seems to be exploiting at least one of the same sources on the eastern Black Sea littoral for his *Naturalis Historia*, when attributing to Dioskourias ‘300 nations with different languages’ (*CCC nationes dissimilibus linguis*). He ascribes this piece of information explicitly to the third-century scholar Timosthenes of Rhodes². The greatness of Dioskourias was, however, history for Pliny, since he regarded it as abandoned (*nunc deserta*), whether based on hearsay or following one of his younger written sources. Timosthenes cannot have been Pliny’s source for the city’s abandonment, since it still served Mithradates VI Eupator as a residence in the winter of 66/65 BC³. Its history in the subsequent two centuries is obscure, until Arrian of Nikomedeia talks of it again in his *Periplus Maris Euxini* (around AD 132). By this time, the name had changed from Dioskourias to Sebastopolis, as he explains. The identity of the two communities is further confirmed by the geographer Claudius Ptolemy

¹ Strab. 11.2.16 (497–498C), quoted below, n. 37. For general scholarship on Strabo, see, e.g., Engels 1999; Dueck 2017; Roller 2018.

² Plin. *NH*. 6.5.15; cf. Lordkipanidze 1996, 240; Radt 2008, 253. Pace Liddle 2003, 103: ‘by Strabo’s time [Dioskourias] was a flourishing emporium’. Strabo probably used Timosthenes’ work *On Harbours* through Eratosthenes, see Geus, Guckelsberger 2017, 168. For comparison, Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v9 (ed. Diller 1952) speaks of 60 different languages for the trade hub of Phasis.

³ App. *Mithr.* 101.467. Cf. Strab. 11.2.13–19 (496–499C), who mentions Dioskourias in the context of the king’s flight, though not his stay there, but Strabo’s information on the city at least in part draws on the historians of the Mithradatic Wars.

a generation later⁴. Another witness is the ethnographer Stephanos of Byzantion (sixth century AD), who is the only ‘ancient’ source to attest that Dioskourias had claimed to be (the successor of) mythical Aia, the capital of King Aïetes⁵.

That Dioskourias / Sebastopolis was in or near the modern city of Sukhumi is the common opinion today. This identification, however, needs reconsideration, as I shall try to demonstrate in the present study. After pointing to the shortcomings of current scholarship (§ 2 below), I shall revisit the shape of the Kolchian coastline, since the consensus of the ancient tradition locates Dioskourias in the ‘recess’ of the Black Sea. This recommends the area of Ochamchire Harbour, although this is most often identified with the Greek *polis* Gyenos (§ 3). The remarkable concentration of Argonautic toponymy point to the same area as the site of Dioskourias / Aia (§ 4). More information on Sebastopolis, Pityous and Herakleion will be relegated to three appendices. In part II, I shall argue that the re-attribution of the Ochamchire Harbour area to Dioskourias / Aia also allows us to make better sense of the ancient *periplus* literature. After introducing our main source, Arrian’s *Periplus* (§ 5), and explaining the pragmatic approach to his use of the stade as measure of distance (§ 6), we shall follow up the coastline first from Phasis to Sebastopolis (§ 7), then, after some methodological reflection and adjustments (§ 8), further to Caucasian Herakleion (§ 9), before summing up the conclusions of the individual sections (§ 10).

My research owes much to the standard reconstruction of the region by David Braund and T. Sinclair, which is to be found in Richard Talbert’s *Barrington Atlas*⁶ and has also informed the map produced by Talbert and others for the *Ancient World Mapping Center* (2008). I gratefully acknowledge the use of these tools, based on which my cartographer Stone Chen prepared several maps of the (eastern) Black Sea littoral to reflect my new conclusions. The one included in the present article contrasts the traditional attributions of the main Greek and Roman cities with my own suggestions (fig.)⁷. It is designed to navigate the reader as much through a contested landscape as through my complex argument.

2. SEBASTOPOLIS / DIOSKOURIAS = SUKHUMI?

Scholars largely agree that the material, numismatic or epigraphic evidence for the equation of Dioskourias with Sukhumi is very slim. Early pottery from the bay of Sukhumi is overwhelmingly indigenous and the urban grid of a Greek *polis* yet to be uncovered,

⁴ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.4; see part II.5 for the date. And Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2; 8 map 3 (Stükelberger, Graßhoff 2006, II, 854).

⁵ Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Διοσκουριάς (Δ 93 edd. Billerbeck, Zubler 2011): Διοσκουριάς, μία τῶν ἐν Λιβύῃ Λευκῶν νήσων. ὁ νησιώτης Διοσκουρίτης. ἔστι καὶ ἑτέρα περὶ τὸν Πόντον, ἣ τις Σεβαστόπολις καλεῖται. καὶ πρότερον δὲ Αἶα ἐκικλήσκετο, ὡς Νικάνωρ. ὁ πολίτης Διοσκουριεύς. ἔστι καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσῃ νῆσος Διοσκουρίδου. Nikanor is a third-century-BC author, see Müller, *FHG* III, 632–633 *praefatio* and no. 4 (cf. *DFHG s.v.* Nicanor). I shall revisit the evidence for multiple *Aiai* in ancient Kolchis elsewhere.

⁶ Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1226–1242; map 87.

⁷ Talbert *et al.* 2008 quote, besides Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, Silberman 1995 and Liddle 2003 as their sources. More maps are accessible at <http://www.altaycoskun.com/materials-2>.

so that most scholars assume that Dioskourias has been submerged by the sea⁸. The army camp of Sebastopolis mentioned by Arrian is also claimed for Sukhumi, although all we have are mere hints at some Roman military presence probably as early as the second century AD⁹. More noteworthy are some third-century-BC amphorae stamped with the abbreviated name ΔΙΟΣ / KOY, especially since some examples have been found in a kiln at Gvandra somewhat north of Sukhumi and west of Eshera. These inscriptions have been adduced to confirm the toponymy only occasionally, perhaps because such stamps normally denote the entrepreneur or his workshop rather than his hometown. In this specific case, however, the view has gained currency that the city of Dioskourias exerted ‘state control’ over the production process – a very difficult-to-prove hypothesis. But, even if it should be granted to take these stamps as evidence for economic activity controlled or run by the *polis* of Dioskourias, this alone would not yet be sufficient to prove that the site of Gvandra was located in the *chora* of the *polis* also contiguous with the *asty*¹⁰.

⁸ E.g., Tomaschek 1905, 1125; Oberhummer 1921; Bryer, Winfield 1985, I, 387; Ehrhardt 1988, 84; Brodersen 1996, 18, 168: ‘die Unterscheidung, die Plinius hier trifft, ist irrig’; Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1231 and Map 87; Tsetskhladze 1998, 15–21 (Dioskouria); 2013, 294; 2018a, 37; Bäbler Nesselrath 1999, 1058; Gabelia 2003, 1218–1219, 1222, 1223 (tracing the identification back to the 17th century), 1225 (discussing an onomastic argument that links Dioskourias with Sukhumi), 1227 etc. as well as 2015, 101–103 (Gabelia is heavily drawing on the publications of Voronov, esp. Voronov 1980 (*non vidi*)); Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, 952–953 (Dioskouris); Counillon 2004, 57; von Bredow 2006 (under or beneath Sukhumi); Radt 2008, 253; Belfiore 2009, 176 n. 94 (but see below, n. 27, for a distinction between Sebastopolis / Sukhumi and Dioskourias); Roller 2010, 229; 2018, 640. Silberman 1995, 32–33 assumes that the city was ‘déjà immergée à l’époque d’Arrien’, but admits his *aporia* in the face of the inconsistent literary evidence. Part of his problem is artificial albeit, since Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2 (not 5.9.2) does not locate Sebastopolis at the mouth of the Korax, but *before* this, and the same river equals the modern Bzipi, not the Kodori. Lordkipanidze 1996, 235–239 and Sens 2009, 57–99 (S. 62 Anm. 222 with a survey going back to the nineteenth century) also accept the identity, despite some hesitation due to the scarcity of material evidence. Further references are given below.

⁹ See, e.g., Braund 1994, 193–198, who surveys older scholarship, mentioning an obscure epigraphic fragment (which seems to have attested either the presence of a legion or the activity of a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, cf. *AE* 1905, 175) and structures of a Roman fort from the late second and fourth century AD. As far as I can see, older layers have not yet been uncovered, cf., e.g., Liddle 2003, 103; Belfiore 2009, 176–177; Sens 2009, 61 Anm. 215: ‘Aus den Funden ragt eine leider bereits seit langem verschollene Inschrift heraus, die auf die Präsenz römischen Militärs hindeutet.’

¹⁰ See Tsetskhladze 1991, esp. 362–363 (on the kiln); 370; 374–375 and Tsetskhladze, Vnukov 1992, 372–374, who attribute 9 examples to the ‘the production complex at Gvandra’ and the rest to Eshera (1), Pantikapaion (3) and Nymphaion (2), sometime in the third century. They conclude (p. 373): ‘Study of these stamps and of marks on the locally produced amphorae suggests that state workshops existed in the cities of the east coast of the Black Sea (in Dioskouria, for example, since the stamps from the city incorporate an ethnikon). Some privately owned workshops may also have existed, however.’ Cf. Braund 1994, 143: ‘the city involved itself in the production of these amphorae’; Gabelia 2003, 1240: ‘branding of amphorae in the Greek world served as the guarantee of standard stipulated by the state control of the earthenware industry’; Sens 2009, 99 with Anm. 561, who draws on them as an additional argument for the late foundation of Dioskourias around the mid-fourth century. But, as far as I understand the descriptions of the evidence, it has not yet been demonstrated that the amphorae were really produced in the aforementioned kiln, whose final usage seems to have been that of a garbage pit. I am not aware

At all events, scholars seem to have decided for Sukhumi most of all for their belief that the combined literary evidence seems to be pointing to this city¹¹. Take, as an example, the aforementioned maps from the *Barrington Atlas* or the Ancient World Mapping Center (whose interpretation is indicated in fig. in italics). They locate Dioskourias / Sebastopolis on the thin shore along the south-eastern slopes of the Main Caucasus, neighbouring the Abasgoi to the north-west and the Apsilai to the east. These connections appear to follow at least in part Pliny's account, since the Roman scholar mentions *Sebastopolis castellum* side by side with the Apsilai, at a distance of 100 miles from the Phasis. The distance between Poti and Sukhumi is indeed around 150 km on land¹². Arrian's account is also recognizable here, since he renders the Apsilai neighbours of the Abaskoi, although without specifying their territories¹³.

This said, Pliny is at odds with the common opinion, because he shows no awareness of Dioskourias and Sebastopolis belonging together, let alone being one and the same settlement. He qualifies Sebastopolis as a *castellum* somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Apsilai (*NH.* 6.4.14) and Dioskourias as an abandoned city on the bank of the Anthe-mous River in the territory of the Koraxoi (6.5.15). In addition, he mentions *Heracleum oppidum* (in the context of the Caucasian Heniochoi) at a distance of 100 miles from

of any stamps among the findings, nor do the above-quoted reports state that some of the stamped amphorae had been unfinished or unused. But even if we concede the local production of those amphorae, the standard practice seems to have been that names or symbols on the amphorae denoted the workshop or its owner, as Tsetsckhladze, Vnukov 1992, 373–374, admit for all other Kolchian examples that they address. The closest parallel for the claimed state-controlled production process is provided by the tile stamps from Vani reading Βασιλική (κεραμίδς), but royal ownership of estates or factories is quite a different category, as is a cooperative of independent entrepreneurs or producers (as hypothetically described by Tsetsckhladze 1991, 374). Alternatives are of course possible. Most famous are the names of the eponymous magistrates on Rhodian amphorae; see Finkielsztein 2001. But as long as there is no firm evidence that Dioskourias was located in the bay of Sukhumi and that its territory extended beyond the Gumista River, we should refrain from any firm conclusion and at least consider the possibility that the production center was located on a territory not contiguous with the *asty* or *chora* of Dioskourias. There is the further possibility that those amphora stamps referred to a producer called Dioskourides or the like.

¹¹ E.g., Sens 2009, 62: 'Die Kenntnisse bleiben insgesamt also spärlich, doch erscheint eine Lokalisierung der griechischen Kolonie Dioskourias und der späteren römischen Garnisonsstadt Sebastopolis im Bereich der Bucht von Suchumi, wie gesehen, anhand der schriftlichen Quellen durchaus als wahrscheinlich.' See also the references below.

¹² The modern road from Poti to Sukhumi is calculated at 159 km by *Google Maps*. More on distances below.

¹³ Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, Map 87, without mentioning Plin. *NH.* 6.4.14–15. and Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.4 (Sebastopolis = Dioskourias); 11.3 (Apsilai, Abaskoi, Sanigai). Arrian actually locates Dioskourias within the territory of the Sanigai, who have been pushed a bit too far to the north-west, to yield space for the Heniochoi, a concession to Pomp. Mela 1.100 (111) ed. Frick 1967 (*in Heniochorum finibus Dioscurias*), although this may have been a more generic term for the north-Caucasian peoples (*cf.* Plin. *NH.* 6.4.14: *multis nominibus Heniochorum gentes*). The boundary between the Sanigai and the Zilchoi is located 920 stades north-west of Sebastopolis / Dioskourias in Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.3. Miller 1916, 633, 650 locates the Apsilai around Apsaros, possibly due to a subconscious conflation of Pliny's and Ptolemy's Sebastopolis; likewise, he relates the Abaskoi to the Akinases river just north of the Akampsis / Apsaros (col. 651).

Dioskourias and 70 miles from Sebastopolis (now without the complement *castellum*: 6.5.16)¹⁴. Admittedly, the indication of the distances from Herakleion has suffered some textual corruption, but the emendation has been gentle, and is, as far as I can see, both widely accepted and so far without plausible alternative¹⁵. An isolated reference in the rash compilation of the *Naturalis Historia* would have had little weight in the face of the other (seemingly) consistent evidence, but the pieces of information Pliny provides seem to be coherent. At the same time, they contrast with the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, which sets the distance between Phasis and Sebastopolis at 58 Roman miles. Arrian's *Periplus* and the late Roman anonymous *Periplus* specify the same distance as 810 stades, whereas Eratosthenes and Strabo limit the journey from Phasis to Dioskourias to 600 stades. An argument based on distance should therefore address the entire evidence¹⁶. Its discussion will be relegated to part II, whereas the present part will focus on qualitative features in the ancient literary tradition that may lead us to the location of Dioskourias.

Without considering the distances, Alek Gabelia offers the following reconstruction: Dioskourias was still thriving early in the first century AD (when Strabo wrote), but 'desolated' probably as the result of a 'revolt *en masse*'. This is meant to refer to an uprising that a certain Aniketos stirred up in AD 69. Gabelia thinks that the recent urban development and the stationing of a Roman garrison under Nero was much resented¹⁷. But this is an accumulation of improbabilities: both Strabo and Pliny are supposed to have drawn on very recent information without mentioning any specific events; Tacitus' account of Aniketos seems to imply that the insurgent was a partisan of Vitellius and that he cooperated with some local kings against Vespasian. There is no mention of intensive conscriptions among the Greek city dwellers or of devastation on the Kolchian coast; Vespasian's commander Viridius Geminus is said to have persecuted Aniketos (probably coming from Trapezus or Apsaros) into the Delta of

¹⁴ On the *Korax*, see below, n. 45.

¹⁵ Plin. *NH*. 6.5.16, with the correction of Mayhoff, reads: *Ca Dioscuriade oppidum Heracleum, a Sebastopoli LXX*. The manuscripts have *ca Diosc.* and *cla Diosc.*, see Kießling 1912, 501; Rackham 1961, 348; Brodersen 1996, 18, 266–267. Braund 1994, 47; 178; 192–193 does not address the distances.

¹⁶ *Tab. Peut.* 11.1–2; Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.1–4; Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v19–23; Strab. 2.1.39 (92C) = Eratosth. F 52 Roller. Conversion rates were highly volatile, so that the problem is not to find rates that work with a certain assumption, but to base them in a sound methodological framework. E.g., Sens 2009, 61 with Ann. 209 and 211 draws on the traditional conversion rates of the stade (177.42 m or 185 m) to show that Eratosthenes' distance of 600 stades (hence 106.5 or 111 km) is compatible with Sukhumi, from which the most direct line to Poti is ca. 107 km. But this approach fails to consider 1) that we have to add some 5–10 km for the distance from Poti to Phasis (see part II.5); 2) that ancient navigation did not follow 'Luftlinie' (as the crow flies), but the coast line, so that 120 km is much more realistic; 3) that the divergent distances of the other sources also need to be accounted for; and 4) that others have calculated Eratosthenes' stade as closer to 158 m (Arnaud 2005, 85) or 150 (see part II.6).

¹⁷ Gabelia 2003, 1247, without source reference for Aniketos (but see Tac. *Hist.* 3.47–46). Sens 2009, 61–62 regards Pliny's distance between Dioskourias and Sebastopolis as erroneous, but points out that 70 miles between Phasis and Sebastopolis are close to the 'Luftlinie', which might work on water, but not on land. But even if granted, the same method would not take as far as Herakleion / Adler, which Pliny also sets at a distance of 70 miles from Sebastopolis. See part II for further discussion.

the Chobos, where he was able to bribe a local king to extradite Aniketos. According to Arrian, the mouth of the Chobos was at 450 stades from Dioskourias, so that there is no reason to believe that the war affected the city. Finally, it would be quite surprising for Vespasian to name a new garrison Sebastopolis rather than Flaviopolis. There is thus nothing to commend Gabelia's explanations¹⁸.

Braund has suggested a different solution:

The considerable extent of the city of Dioscurias probably explains the apparent confusion. Dioscurias seems to have stretched from the site of modern Sukhumi west along the coastal strip at least as far as Eshera, where its acropolis and administrative centre seems to have been located, at least down to the first century BC. The abandonment of Eshera would account for Pliny's assertion that Dioscurias was deserted in his day... the change of the name from Dioscurias to Sebastopolis was accompanied by a realignment of the city, whereby the administrative centre was relocated from Eshera to what is now Sukhumi... Archaeology at Sebastopolis has been obstructed by the growth of the modern city of Sukhumi directly above it¹⁹.

Braund's explanation may seem to have various advantages over previous scholarship, which tended to reject Pliny's testimony too easily, or to ignore it altogether. The inclusion of Eshera into the equation has the potential of alleviating the *aporia* that the little material evidence from Sukhumi itself is insufficient to endorse the assumption of a pre-Roman city, let alone the largest Greek city on the eastern Black Sea coast. It has been commonplace to posit that the Greek and Hellenistic layers either sunk into the water or lie buried under the modern city²⁰. This might well be true, but the scarce and highly uncertain numismatic evidence from the Sukhumi area contrasts with Vani and does all but confirm Eshera's role as an economic hub²¹.

¹⁸ See part II on Arrian's *Periplus*. Also note that Gabelia's reconstruction is distorted by the assumption of anti-Roman resentments as a driving factor. On the impact of modern ideology on Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship, see, e.g., Coşkun 2016.

¹⁹ Braund 1994, 193–194.

²⁰ E.g., Ehrhardt 1988, 84; Lordkipanidze 1996, 237–239; Tsetskhladze 1998, 17; 2018b, 479: 'Archaic and Classical Dioscurias is probably under the waters of the Black Sea. This is borne out by the discovery of a Greek tombstone, dated to the end of the fifth century BC, with depictions of a seated woman, who presumably represents the deceased, embracing a small boy at her knees'; Bäbler Nesselrath 1999, 1058: 'größtenteils unter dem modernen Suchumi bzw. im Meer'; Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, 953: 'Part of the city site is under water and the remainder is covered by the modern city' (for a survey of this theory, see Gabelia 2003, 1223–1224.); von Bredow 2006. Note, however, the caution of Sens 2009, 63: 'Die genaue Lage ist allerdings bis heute umstritten. Die bereits früh formulierte These, dass ein Großteil des antiken Dioskourias auf dem Grund der Bucht von Suchumi liege, konnte durch unterwasserarchäologische Forschungen bisher nicht bestätigt werden. Aber auch bei den Grabungen auf dem Festlandsgürtel sind abgesehen von einigen Holzhäusern vermutlich indigener Siedlungen keinerlei architektonische Strukturen archaischer oder klassischer Zeit erfasst worden.' See also p. 54–56 on his methodological concerns regarding Greek city typologies. I further emphasize that the argumentative weight that has been put on a dislocated unepigraphic Greek-looking tomb stone is excessive: it may or may not attest a fifth-century Greek settlement near Sukhumi, but is entirely insufficient for naming the place (also Sens 2009, 97 downplays the implication of the stele).

²¹ There is a modern view that Mithradates VI Eupator granted Dioskourias the right to issue coinage, and that the city issued a bronze type that displayed the two stars and caps of the

And it is by no means clear that Eshera hosted a Greek *apoikia* or *emporion*. Its archaeological site is normally regarded as an indigenous settlement (perhaps the residence of a king or kinglet) that began importing Ionian products in the late-sixth century BC, partly because local ceramics prevailed and partly because Pseudo-Skylax (in the fourth century BC, but drawing on sixth-to-fourth-century materials)²² calls Dioskouris (sic) only a *polis* and not a *polis Hellenis*, in contrast to Phasis and Gyenos²³.

This said, Arrian claims Dioskourias as a Milesian settlement. One possible explanation is that (Pseudo-) Skylax did not yet know about a Greek settlement, perhaps an *emporion* established by Sinope, itself a daughter of Miletos²⁴. Gocha Tsetschladze is

Dioskouroi on the obverse and the legend ΔΙ/ΟΣ/ΚΟΥ/ΡΙΑ/Δ/ΟΣ surrounding a thyrsus on the reverse; see Golenko 1977 (*non vidi*); Tsetschladze 1989 (*non vidi*); 1993, 241–244 with photos on p. 256; cf. Lordkipanidze 1996, 235; Gabelia 2003, 1244–1245; von Bredow 2006; Tsetschladze 2018b, 480. This is also accepted by Braund 1994, 158–159, although he admits that the only evidence for this is one coin hoard from Sukhumi, whereas no other specimen of this type has been found anywhere else in Kolchis so far. De Callataj 1997, 254–255 questions that its iconography is in line with Mithradatic coinage, and further points out that the known evidence nearly exclusively comes from the Bosphoros and Asia Minor; he therefore strongly doubts that we can rely on nineteenth-century sources that ascribe the aforementioned hoard (of which by now no more than a single coin from Tbilisi is known) to Sukhumi. Contrast this with Vani: see Dundua, Lordkipanidze 1979 for the numismatic evidence (cf. Tsetschladze 1993 for a broader survey of coins from ancient Kolchis); Tsetschladze 1998 for the archaeological evidence and Lordkipanidze 1991 (cf. 1996) for a historical synthesis, which, however, is inclined to overstate its importance.

²² According to Dan 2009, vol. 2, who provides a bilingual critical text plus a commentary on Ps.-Skylax (701–788, esp. 768–776 on § 80–88), the author's interest in the hydrography of the region may be explained with the 'intensification des relations athéniennes et sinopéennes avec cette région au cours du V^e siècle' (776). Counillon 2004, 21–22 suggests a time around the mid-fourth century based on one *terminus post* (Kallatis, ca. 360/357) and one *ante* (Gorgippia, before 349), but admits a heterogenous nature of the sources; he considers in particular that the significance of Milesian or Athenian *emporion* seems to imply a date before the fall of these cities (24–26); cf. Arnaud 2005, 67–69 for further references, besides the observation that Ps.-Skylax mixes different ways of indicating distances. Less cautious is Gabelia 2003, 1221, who conflates Skylax and Pseudo-Skylax. Now also see Coşkun 2019a, 19–20 for the suggestion that Limne in Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 83 may be the predecessor of Pontic Athenai in the sixth/fifth centuries BC.

²³ Thus, e.g., Lordkipanidze 1996, 233 (with Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 81) and 238 (Esheri). Counillon 2004, 59 regards the transmitted reading Dioskouris as 'faute d'abréviation'. Tsetschladze 1994a, 83–90 suggests that Miletos founded Dioskouria(s), Gyenos and Phasis as *poleis* in the sixth century, but lost its grip on them with the rise of Achaemenid influence in the area under Darius. 'The Greek settlements which emerged in Colchis did not possess an independent economic foundation and neither did they enjoy political sovereignty' (p. 89). Ehrhardt 1988, 84 is perhaps too quick to decide for a Greek *polis* due to a single Greek tomb relief of the fifth century BC (on which also see above, n. 20). More recently, Sens 2009, 54–56 etc. questions the typology of *apoikia* versus *emporion* for the eastern Black Sea coast altogether, perhaps rightly so. For the most recent typological discussion, see Tsetschladze 2019, 13–24 (on Pistoros). For a survey of mainly Georgian scholarship on the origin of Dioskourias, also see Gabelia 2003 and 2015.

²⁴ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.4. Cf. Silberman 1995, 32, with further references to scholarship.

inclined to admit the foundation of various Greek *apoikiai* on the eastern Black Sea coast in the sixth century and their downgrading to *emporía* in the Kolchian kingdom during the late-fifth century. In the specific case of Eshera, however, he is particularly skeptical given its in-land location: this seems to disqualify it for an early-Greek settlement. At all events, the literary and material evidence from Eshera converges towards an indigenous population that began importing Greek products in the sixth century and perhaps admitted some Greek settlers at an unknown time. The latter view is also shared by Ulrich Sens, who, in turn, interprets the increase of Greek artefacts in the bay of Sukhumi only in the later course of the fourth century as pointing to a foundation date of the Greek *polis* of Dioskourias around the same time²⁵.

Braund's argument is problematic also in other regards. It seems to imply the assumption that Pliny visited the area and drew his conclusions from autopsy, unless one wants to identify another contemporary travel report. But the normal pattern of his geographic treatment is that he drew on diverse, often antiquated or even contradictory written sources²⁶. Moreover, Braund still takes it for granted that Pliny conceived of Sebastopolis and Dioskourias as a unity, which is simply not the case. The distance of 10 km between Eshera and Sukhumi is insufficient to account for the 30 miles (45 km) that Pliny surmised between Dioskourias and Sebastopolis, and they further reverse the order implied in the *Naturalis Historia*, namely that Sebastopolis was closer to Herakleion than to Dioskourias. Only few scholars have been prepared to draw the necessary conclusion, namely, that, if Sebastopolis is to be found at Sukhumi, Dioskourias must have been some 30 miles / 45 km further to the south-east²⁷. This might, after all, explain the scarcity of the material evidence for the pre-Roman periods in Sukhumi. However, as we shall see further below, not even the identity of Sebastopolis and Sukhumi is warranted.

²⁵ See Tsetskhladze 2013, 293–296 on the limitations of the 'Greek' material evidence in Kolchis in general and p. 295 on Eshera in particular; further p. 304: 'Eshera was the abode of local chieftains, called 'septuchi' according to Strabo (11.2.13)'; cf. Tsetskhladze 2018b, 481–485. Partly different is the argument of Tsetskhladze 1998: being undecided between *polis* and *emporion* for Dioskouria(s), he claims that the Greek presence attracted merchants and settlers from among the Caucasian peoples (p. 15–20), although he generally argues that Greek *apoikiai* were reduced to *emporía* in the fifth century (p. 7–9; 44–47; 50–55, 191); he regards Eshera as a *chorion* of Dioskouria(s), and Pityous as its colony, founded in the third century (p. 21–22). For yet a different view, see Sens 2009, 57–99, according to whom the known material evidence until the mid-fourth century BC is mainly local, admitting, however, that the *asty* has not yet been uncovered. He dates the city foundation likewise late, also adducing the legend that names the Dioskouroi rather than a Milesian as *ktistai* and the city's first mention by Ps.-Skylax.

²⁶ A good example is the duplication of the Akampsis and Apsaros in *NH*. 6.4.12. See Coşkun (forthcoming).

²⁷ Thus, e.g., Kießling 1913, 1916; Liddle 2003, 103; Belfiore 2009, 176–178, who only locates Sebastopolis at Sukhumi with certainty; he assumes that Dioskourias was submerged after 66 BC and that its population moved to Sebastopolis, without specifying the former's location. For an explicit rejection of Pliny's account, see Sens 2009, 61–62, but his argument is based on the flawed claim that the remaining literary evidence largely confirmed the equation of Dioskourias with Sukhumi.

3. DIOSKOURIAS AND GYENOS

If we dissociate the sites of Sebastopolis / Sukhumi and Dioskourias and move the latter by about 30 miles towards the Phasis, we get close to Ochamchire, the town that is now mostly regarded as the successor to Gyenos²⁸. A Greek *polis* of (exactly) this name is only mentioned by Pseudo-Skylax, who situates it between Phasis and Dioskourias by the river Gyenos. It is generally assumed to be the same as Pomponius Mela's Cynus, somewhere in Kolchis, probably also between the Phasis River and Dioskourias, and Pliny's Cygnus in the Caucasian area of Kolchis, not far from *Sebastopolis castellum*. While we do not find it in Stephanos' *Ethnika*, the lemmata for the Kolchian cities Pyenis and Tyenis seem to represent two deteriorated traditions for the same *polis*, though unfortunately without offering any further relevant information²⁹. The identification of Gyenos with the predecessor of Ochamchire is based on similar modern toponyms (such as Tguanas and D[g]uana) that have been attested in the area, though the documentation (at least in West-European scholarship) is still insufficient to assess their historical implications effectively. But even if onomastic continuity from antiquity to the present time is admitted, there is a significant geographic scope within which the names may have

²⁸ E.g., Tsetskhladze 1994a, 83–84; 90 (loss of significance in the fourth century; climate change, rise of sea level; much swamp land between Phanagoreia and Pichvnari; the latter and Gyenos ceased to exist by the second century BC); 1998, 12–15; 2019, 25; Braund 1994, 103–106; cf. 88; Lordkipanidze 1996, 194; 233; Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1232 and Map 87; Bähler Nesselrath 1999, 1058; Gabelia 2003, 1221: 'Gyenos is known by archaeological facts'; 2015, 102 and 103 (estimates of sea-level changes of up to 10 m); Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, 953; Sens 2009, 100–122; Dan 2009, vol. 2, 769–770. Note, however, that Tsetskhladze 2018a, 37 is more cautious: 'Gyenos has been located, but not firmly. The archaeological material from the site resembles more that of a local settlement, the base of a local chief-man and elite in receipt of Greek pottery and amphorae – just as was the case with the local settlements (...) of Batumis Tsikhe, Simagre (?), Vani, Chognari and Eshera.' But, contrary to this view, Tsetskhladze 2018b, 478 writes: 'Whether the Ochamchira settlement is in fact Gyenos has been doubted (among others, by me), but we cannot expect Greek colonies in Colchis to have the archetypical grand features and stone architecture found elsewhere. ... absence of stonework is not a valid reason for challenging the identification of this site.' Kvirkvelia 2003 (with detailed survey of Georgian, Abkhazian and Russian scholarship, dating the foundation prior to the mid-fifth century, following Shamba 1988, 63–64 – *non vidi*) also concludes by pointing out the 'hitherto very doubtful identity' of the ancient site of Ochamchire. Likewise uncertain is Counillon 2004, 59–60. There is no entry on Gyenos in *RE* or *BNP*.

²⁹ Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 81; Pomp. Mela 1.99 (110) on Cynus (also § 97 on Phasis and § 100 on Dioskourias); Plin. *NH.* 6.5.15. Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Πυῆνυς and Τυῆνυς (Π 273 and Τ 214, edd. Billerbeck *et al.* 2016, 105 with n. 367 and 351 with n. 352). Billerbeck *et al.* state that neither *polis* is known otherwise and that they may be identical with each other, though without taking Gyenis / Gyenos into account. That all three names seem to be variants of the same Gyenis is further suggested by the fact that Tyenis is said to be named after a homonymous river. Cf. Kvirkvelia 2003, 1267, who considers linguistic rather than paleographical reasons for the variation. See, however, also Tsetskhladze 2018b, 476, who identifies Kulevi (located on the right bank of the Khobi estuary) with Pliny's Cygnus. For further dispute, see the references in Kvirkvelia 2003, 1268.

migrated³⁰. That the ancient city is normally located on the north-western side of the bay, opposite the modern town, is largely based on material evidence, despite the poor state of excavation and preservation. In the *Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, we read:

According to the survey carried out on the site of the supposed ancient city, its area measured 65 ha³¹. It is difficult to accept this because of doubts as to the actual location and the very poor preservation of the site itself. The settlement ranged across three artificial hills and the surrounding plain on the left bank of the river Dzhikimur where it joins the sea. Only the edge of one hill (C) has been partly excavated; the other two hills have been completely destroyed by modern construction work³².

The situation is even more complicated by ancient and modern polyonymy of the rivers in the area, not to speak of additional confusions³³. The Dzhikimur is probably the same as the Mokvi River, which is called Moches in the anonymous *Periplus of the Black Sea*³⁴. At any rate, the three excavated hills brought forth Ionian pottery beginning in the mid-sixth century BC; other finds reflect both Greek and indigenous material culture, whereas inscriptions and coins are practically absent. One peculiarity is that hill C was

³⁰ Without specifying her sources, Dan 2009, vol. 2, 770 with n. 2546 adduces the toponyms Tguanas (from a seventeenth-century map, by Archangelo Lamberti, see Kvirkvelia 2003, 1267) and D(g)uana ('toponyme moderne') to identify the Mokvi with the Gyenos / Kyaneos / Moche(s) / Tarsouras (on which also see below, with n. 31). Sens 2009, 101 Anm. 574 refers to various Russian and Georgian works and speaks of Tguanas as a settlement near the old harbour. Kvirkvelia 2003, 1267 relates all of these toponyms (just as Tyenis, on which see the previous n.) to the modern village of Duana (without location, but with reference to Gulia 1925, 162–163 – *non vidi*). To assess the full potential meaning of the evidence, one would need to know not only the exact locations, but also all available name forms ideally with a linguistic analysis. Even if the claim of onomastic continuity should be sound, it would need to be paired with physical evidence for persistent settlement to rule out my suggestion of locating Gyenos at the Okumi River (see below).

³¹ Shamba 1988, 7.

³² Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, 953. Shamba 1988 is still followed by Kvirkvelia 2003, 1274 (also *cf.* 1268, 1286–1287).

³³ Braund 1994, 88 (map) locates the city between the Mokvi and Ghalidzga Rivers, close to the estuary of the latter, although the Ghalidzga figures west instead of east of the cape (now the harbour). However, on p. 103, he specifies: 'The settlement at Gyenus ranged across three artificial hills (A, B, C) and the surrounding plain on the left bank of the River Dzhikimur (a tributary of the River Mokvi) where it joins the sea.' The last tributary of the Mokvi is called Duabi on *Google Maps* and merges some 12 km inland into the Mokvi. And the Ghalidzga empties into the Black Sea just south of Ochamchire. At its mouth, it is joined by the little stream Anaria, which comes from the south. Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000 call the river which empties into the sea south-west of Gyenos in two arms, Moches / Tarsouras? / Thersas? / Kyaneos / Gyenos; in *Directory*, p. 1234, they identify the Moches with the Mokvi. But *Google Maps* shows that the two arms belong to two separate rivers, the one to the west is called Tskhenistsqali / 'Horse River' (just as the tributary to the Rioni / Phasis, which is normally identified as Hippos). Tsetskhladze 1998, 13 calls the river of Gyenos 'Dshikimur' (Dzhikimur); Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, 953 specify the same river's left bank. Most scholars confine themselves to vague indications such as Lordkipanidze 1996, 194: 'in der Umgebung des heutigen Otschamtschire' (Gyenos is missing on all of his maps).

³⁴ Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v21. The sequence of the rivers is described in part II.7, with further discussion in II.8.

converted to a necropolis around 400 BC – which, however, need not be interpreted as decline. The excavated parts of this settlement seem to have ceased to be inhabited by 100 BC. Tsetschladze explains this with the pressure against Greek cities in the north and east of the Black Sea in the late-second century BC. It is indeed possible that such ‘barbarian’ raids resulted in the destruction of the aforementioned Caucasian Herakleion, which is not known to have recovered again, or of the ‘great’ city of Pityous, which Pliny says was sacked by the Heniochoi, but whose civic life did not end for good³⁵.

A date around 100 BC for the abandonment of Dioskourias would be too early, however, since it hosted Mithradates VI Eupator in winter 66/65 BC. The ensuing period was full of turmoil, beginning with the Kolchian campaign of Pompey in 65 BC, continued by the expansionist politics of Pharnakes II (63–47 BC), the revolt of Asandros in the Bosporos (48/47–20/19 BC) and the invasion of Mithradates of Pergamon (46 BC). The conquests of Polemon I (ca. 15 – ca. 8 BC) would provide further possible scenarios, as might the fraternal war between Mithradates VIII and Kotys I in the 40s AD. At any rate, Eupator’s visit to Dioskourias is the last datable reference that Strabo provides for the city, while Arrian is our earliest witness for Sebastopolis as its successor³⁶. Admitting uncertainty, I would tentatively put forward the suggestion that *Sebastopolis castellum* was founded under Polemon I or his widow Pythodoris, when Dioskourias still existed, and that the fortress later served as a refuge for those citizens who survived its destruction or simple abandonment, whether due to a natural or man-made cause. Since Roman emperors might have taken the refoundation as an opportunity to impose their own name on the new settlement, I would prefer a time prior to the deposition of Polemon II under Nero in the 60s AD.

If Dioskourias should indeed have been the ancient Greek city at the Mokvi River, Strabo’s claim regarding its topography would finally make much more sense:

Be this as it may, since Dioskourias is situated in such a gulf and occupies the most easterly point of the whole sea, it is called not only the recess of the Euxine, but also the “farthermost” voyage. And the proverbial verse, “To Phasis, where for ships is the farthermost run”, must be interpreted thus, not as though the author of the iambic verse meant the river, much less the city of the same name situated on the river, but as meaning by a part of Kolchis the whole of it, since from the river and the city of that name there is left a straight voyage into the recess of not less than six hundred stadia. The same Dioskourias is the beginning of the isthmus between the Caspian Sea and the Euxine, and also the common emporion of the tribes who are situated above it and in its vicinity; at any rate, seventy tribes come together in it, though others, who care nothing for the facts, actually say three hundred. All speak different languages because of the fact that, by reason of their obstinacy and ferocity, they live in scattered groups and without intercourse with one another. The greater part of them are Sarmatians, but they are all Caucasians. So much, then, for the region of Dioskourias³⁷.

³⁵ See appendices 2 and 3 on these two cities.

³⁶ von Bredow 2006 assumes that, after 66 BC, ‘the town presumably fell into ruin and was flooded. Under Augustus, Sebastopolis was founded nearby’.

³⁷ Strab. 11.2.16 (497–498C): ἡ δ’ οὖν Διοσκουριάς ἐν κόλπῳ τοιοῦτῳ κειμένη καὶ τὸ ἐωθινώτατον σημεῖον ἐπέχουσα τοῦ σύμπαντος πελάγους, μυχός τε τοῦ Εὐξείνου λέγεται καὶ ἔσχατος πλοῦς: τό τε παροιμακῶς λεχθὲν οὕτω δεῖ δέξασθαι “εἰς Φάσιν ἔνθα ναυσὶν ἔσχατος δρόμος”, οὐχ ὡς τὸν ποταμὸν λέγοντος τοῦ ποιήσαντος τὸ ἱαμβεῖον, οὐδὲ δὴ ὡς τὴν ὁμώνυμον αὐτῷ πόλιν κειμένην ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὴν Κολχίδα ἀπὸ μέρους, ἐπεὶ ἀπὸ γε τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ τῆς πόλεως οὐκ ἐλάττων ἑξακοσίων σταδίων λείπεται πλοῦς ἐπ’ εὐθείας

Duane Roller explains these lines as follows:

The primary interest of Dioskourias to geographers was that it was considered to be the most remote place on the Black Sea, something that led to the belief that it was also its easternmost point (1.3.2), which was not the case (the mouth of the Phasis is actually farther east), as Strabo knew, but this idea may reflect the length of the shipping routes³⁸.

To my mind, this comment is conflicting with what Strabo says. A different matter is that the estuary of the Phasis in the Paleostomi (Palyastomi) Lake was indeed further east than Dioskourias, but this is not the point, nor that actually Pitchvni is located on the eastern-most edge of the Black Sea. Modern maps allow us to see this with ease. But we should rather apply a *periplus* perspective³⁹, to better appreciate Strabo's words: from Apsaros via Phasis to Dioskourias was (nearly) a straight line of 600 stades, extending to the north along the eastern Euxine coast. Only after that the littoral made a sharp turn to the west. This is what caused the impression of Dioskourias lying in a 'recess' and also being closest to the Caspian Sea. Such a perception should not simply be dismissed as an error⁴⁰, but reflects a literary tradition that we can follow up to Eratosthenes of Kyrene⁴¹. But we may, in fact, go further and regard this topographical feature as an adaptation of the location of Aia, which the oldest sources envisaged on the edge of the Ocean. As the next section will demonstrate, Dioskourias appears to be the first and most obvious city in the Black Sea region for a reconceptualization of the mythical kingdom of Aietes⁴².

εἰς τὸν μυχόν. ἡ δ' αὐτὴ Διοσκουριάς ἐστι καὶ ἀρχὴ τοῦ ἰσθμοῦ τοῦ μεταξὺ τῆς Κασπίας καὶ τοῦ Πόντου καὶ ἐμπόριον τῶν ὑπερκειμένων καὶ σύννεγγυς ἔθνων κοινόν: συνέρχεσθαι γοῦν εἰς αὐτὴν ἑβδομήκοντα, οἱ δὲ καὶ τριακόσια ἔθνη φασίν, οἷς οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων μέλει, πάντα δὲ ἑτερόγλωττα διὰ τὸ σποράδην καὶ ἀμίκτως οἰκεῖν ὑπὸ αὐθαδείας καὶ ἀγριότητος: Σαρμάται δ' εἰσὶν οἱ πλείους, πάντες δὲ Καυκάσιοι. ταῦτα μὲν δὴ τὰ περὶ τὴν Διοσκουριάδα. Transl. here and elsewhere based on Hamilton, Falconer 1903 and Jones 1924 (with occasional adaptations); cf. Roller 2014.

³⁸ Roller 2018, 640.

³⁹ Cf. Arnaud 2006, 66: 'Il (sc. Jean Rougé, 1963 (non vidi). — A.C.) avait alors pressenti ce que P. Janni (1984) a pu théoriser sous le nom d'espace «hodologique», c'est-à-dire une approche de l'espace plus linéaire que cartographique, essentiellement fondée sur la séquence des éléments topographiques le long d'un parcours, réel ou fictif... À ce titre, tous les ouvrages de géographie de l'Antiquité sont, à des degrés divers, des Périples, et tout périple de la Mer Intérieure devient à sa façon un ouvrage de géographie générale.'

⁴⁰ Pace Sens 2009, 58, who is, however, right to point out that Strabo mentions Dioskourias frequently for its location, without ever describing the *asty*.

⁴¹ Strab. 1.3.2 (47C) = Eratosth. F 13 Roller on the recess of Dioskourias, and Strab. 2.1.39 (92C) = Eratosth. F 52 Roller on the distance of 600 stades between Phasis and Dioskourias. See also next note.

⁴² Strab. 1.2.10 (21C) and 1.2.40 (46C) on Homeric Aia 'in the recess of the Pontos'; further Strab. 1.2.40 (46–47C) = Mimnermos F 11 + 11a = Skepsios (? Demetrios of Skepsis) F 50, locating Aia on the edge (*cheilos*) of the *Okeanos*; cf. Tsetschlade 1994b (arguing for a fictional place, though first located somewhere to the north-east); Dräger 1996, 30–45; Roller 2018, 39; further Strab. 11.2.16 (497–498C, as quoted above, n. 37) for the recess of Dioskourias and Phasis. For the mouth of the Phasis, we can go back to Hdt. 4.86 and Apollon. 2.399, 1261 (with Gleit and Natzel-Gleit 1996, 1, 162, concluding the poet used a map) and Procop. *Bell. Goth.* 4.2.4.21, 26, 32 on the Phasis, perhaps with a view to the location of Kytaia (up the Phasis / Rheon / Rioni)? Also see the coordinates and map of Ptolemy 5.10.2

4. ARGONAUTIC LAND- AND RIVERSCAPES IN AND AROUND DIOSKOURIAS AND GYENOS

That Argonautic themes played important roles in the conceptualization of this colony from early on is revealed by the name Dioskourias, which points to Kastor and Polydeukes as the companions of Jason. Perhaps, initially, Dioskourias was only an *emporion* or a *polis* with a very small *chora*, adjacent to a large indigenous city which the Greeks baptized Aia? If so, then the two initially distinct political entities would have been amalgamated over time, which would not only explain the equation of the two by Stephanos, but also the confusion regarding its settlement type or ethnic identity.

Likewise, the names of the neighbouring barbarian tribes were related to the Argonautic myth: the Achaioi were seen as settled by those Greek explorers in general, and the Heniochoi were considered to be the descendants of (those settled by) the ‘Charioteers’ of the Dioskouroi. This obvious conclusion is also drawn by Strabo:

Next to Sindika, and Gorgippia upon the sea, is the sea-coast inhabited by the *Achaioi*, *Zygoi*, and *Heniochoi*. It is for the most part without harbours and mountainous, being a portion of the Caucasus. These people subsist by piracy. Their boats are slender, narrow, light, and capable of holding about five and twenty men, and rarely thirty. The Greeks call them *camaræ*. They say that at the time of the expedition of Jason the *Achaioi* from Phthia founded the Achaia there, and the Lakedaimonians, *Heniochia*. Their leaders were Rhekas, and Amphistratos, the *Charioteers* of the *Dioskouroi*; it is probable that the *Heniochoi* had their name from these persons⁴³.

The same tradition of the Charioteers is also found in the Latin tradition represented by Pomponius Mela and Pliny, with only some minor variation⁴⁴. It had thus gained wide currency in the Graeco-Roman world, and by far outlived the settlement of Dioskourias itself. While the vicinity of the Achaioi and Heniochoi appear to be specific elements of the surroundings of Dioskourias, there are further topographic features or toponyms which it shared with other cities rivaling the fame of legendary Aia. Another toponomastic element of the environs of Dioskourias that became part of the Argonautic landscape was the neighbourhood of the Koraxoi, which Pliny reports. I cannot decide whether this (otherwise unknown) ethnic directly gave its name to or drew it from the Korax / Bzipi River, which Ptolemy names as the northernmost boundary of Kolchis. Alternatively, it is a later (Greek) redefinition of the territory of Kolchis in light of the

and 8.19.3 (Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, II, 540 and 854), which locate Aia (72° / 45° 30') in the corner of a bay, but then create an additional recess for the mouth (72° 30' / 45°) and the city (72° 30' / 44° 45') of Phasis.

⁴³ Strab. 11.2.12 (495–496C): μετὰ δὲ τὴν Σινδικὴν καὶ τὴν Γοργιπίαν ἐπὶ τῇ θαλάττῃ ἢ τῶν Ἀχαιοῶν καὶ Ζυγῶν καὶ Ἠνιοχῶν παραλία τὸ πλεόν ἀλίμενος καὶ ὀρεινὴ, τοῦ Καυκάσου μέρος οὖσα. ζῶσι δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ θάλατταν ληστηρίων, ἀκάτια ἔχοντες λεπτὰ στενὰ καὶ κοῦφα, ὅσον ἀνθρώπους πέντε καὶ εἴκοσι δεχόμενα, σπάνιον δὲ τριάκοντα δέξασθαι τοὺς πάντας δυνάμενα: καλοῦσι δ' αὐτὰ οἱ Ἕλληνες καμάραι. φασὶ δ' ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰάσονος στρατιᾶς τοὺς μὲν Φθιώτας Ἀχαιοὺς τὴν ἐνθάδε Ἀχαΐαν οἰκίσαι, Λάκωνας δὲ τὴν Ἠνιοχίαν, ὧν ἦρχον Ῥέκας καὶ Ἀμφίστρατος οἱ τῶν Διοσκούρων ἡνιοχοί, καὶ τοὺς Ἠνιοχοὺς ἀπὸ τούτων εἰκὸς ὠνομάσθαι.

⁴⁴ Cf. Pomp. Mela 1.100 (111): *In Heniochorum finibus Dioscorias a Castore et Polluce Pontum cum Iasone ingressis, Sindos in Sindonum ab ipsis terrarum cultoribus condita est. Plin. NH. 6.5.16: sunt qui conditam eam ab Amphito et Telchio Castoris ac Pollucis aurigis putent, a quibus ortam Heniochorum gentem fere constat. C (milia passuum) a Dioscuriade oppidum Hercleum distat, a Sebastopoli LXX (milia passuum). Achaei, Mardi, Cercetae, post eos Serri, Cephalotomi. in intimo eo tractu Pityus oppidum opulentissimum ab Heniochis direptum est. Cf. Gabelia 2003, 1231; Roller 2018, 637–638.*

Argonautic myth that may have induced the renaming of the northern limit. At any rate, it is barely coincidental that the promontory at the entry into the Black Sea (on the west-ern side of the Thracian Bosporos) is later attested as Korakion⁴⁵.

Most impressive are the recurring hydronyms, especially the ‘Horse River’ **Hippos (Tskeniszqali)**, which flows parallel to the **Moches / Mokvi (Anthemus?)**, but also re-occurs in our sources for cities on the Phasis called Aia. The Hippos is often paired with the Kyaneos River. The Greek name is identical with the adjective for ‘dark blue’ and thus seems to be an ideal generic name for a river⁴⁶. Some traditions opted for a rein-terpretation, induced by the homonymy with the adjective derived from the noun κύων ‘dog’. This resulted in the conception of the clashing, dog-headed cliffs, the Symplegadai or Kyaneai, a playful adaptation of Homer’s Skylla and Charybdis off Sicily, which the Argonautic tradition relocated to the Thracian Bosporos⁴⁷. Yet another variation seems to be the river name Glaukos, which repeats the theme of blue-coloured water. A fur-ther alternative was the rendering Kygnos ‘Swan’, as the coastal city Gyenos is called in Pomponius Mela’s account, whereas Pliny attests an unspecified copy-cat on the Phasis⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Plin. *NH.* 6.5.15 and Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.1f. For *Korakion*, see Dionysios of Byzantium, *Anaploous Bosporou* 90: *post Cyaneas esse promontorium Coracium* (cf. Belfiore 2009, 315 n. 184–185; Fil Burnu), to be distinguished from its namesake west of Kolophon (Strab. 14.1.29; Roller 2018, 798–799). Also see Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 77–79, who locates the Koraxoi and the Κωρικὴ ἔθνος in-between the Heniochoi and the Melanchlainoi. Counillon 2004, 56–57 ac-cepts them as two different peoples, although I would not like to exclude the possibility that Ps.-Skylax found two variants of the same ethnic. Also see n. 8, 14, and part II.9).

⁴⁶ Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10 mentions Dioskourias / Sebastopolis before the Hippos and the Kya-neos, somewhat further down, he attests an additional Αἰάπολις, which may be a confusion with Dioskourias / Aia, unless there was another candidate on the Euxine coast inbetween Phasis and Dioskourias. Plin. *NH.* 6.4.13 locates Aia only 15 miles up the Phasis River, in the neighbourhood of the Hippos and Kyaneos Rivers. Steph. *Byz. s.v.* Αἶα (A 86) mentions the Hippos and Kyaneos, though not the Phasis, locating the city 300 stades = ca. 45 or 53 km in-land. Strab. 1.2.39 (45C) merely locates Aia on the Phasis; later, in 11.2.17 (497C), he names the Hippos and Glaukos as the major tributaries of the Phasis. These two might appear as surrounding Kytaia / Kotais / Kutaisi, which is located a few km north of the confluence of the Phasis / Kvirila and Rheon / Rioni, and which Apollon. 2.399–407 (also 2.415, 1093–1095, 1266–1267; 3.228; 4.511) and Procop. *Bell.* 8.14.6.47–48 regard as the royal city of the former kingdom of Aia. Lordkipanidze 1996, 243–246 and Dan 2016, 256, 259, 261 claim that Kutaisi was the only Aia and that all sources mentioning this mythical city or kingdom, including Steph. *Byz. s.v.* Διοσκουριάς (Δ 93, edd. Billerbeck, Zubler 2011), meant to refer to the same place. But see Kießling 1913, 1915–1916 for some variation and Tsetschladze 2018b, 501 for a note of caution. The historical reality seems to be more complex: e.g., Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.7 also attests the pair Glaukos and Lykos, see Coşkun 2019b.

⁴⁷ Kyaneai: Apollon. 1.3; Strab. 1.2.10 (21C); Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 16r20–25; cf. Gantz 1993, 356–358; Roller 2018, 80–81. For Skylla, Glaukos and Kirke, see Gantz 1993, 731–733 with further references, though not for the connection with the Argonautic myth. For the multiple meanings of κύων and the adjective κυάνεος, see *LSJ s.v.*

⁴⁸ Pomp. Mela 1.99 (110): *At in primo flexu iam curvi litoris oppidum est quod Graeci mercatores constituisse, et quia cum caeca tempestate agerentur, ignaris qua terra esset cycni vox notam dederat, Cycnum adpellasse dicuntur*; compare Plin. *NH.* 6.4.13, who also attests a certain Tyndaris somewhere on the bank of the Phasis, probably a far echo of Dioskourias. Tyndareus was the human father of the heroic twins.

The most plausible explanation of such a spread of Argonautic landscape elements is that Dioskourias took pride of place in this creative mytho-geographical development, as soon as Milesian settlers claimed to have discovered Aia on the eastern coast of the Black Sea in the second half of the sixth century BC. Particularly telling is the river name Gyenos in its environs: its origin is almost certainly Caucasian, although its meaning escapes us⁴⁹. The river gave its name to the Greek colony at its mouth, which may have been as old as Dioskourias or even older. When its economic importance was eclipsed by the trade hub on the Mokvi, Kyaneos or Kygnos were reconceptualised as defining a boundary of Aia. Many of its specific topographic and toponomastic features, such as its location in a recess, its immediate proximity to a Hippos River as well its delimitation by the Korax / Koraxoi and Kyaneos / Kygnos, were absorbed into the Greek mythical tradition by around 500 BC. Not much later, this affected the spatial conceptualization of the Phasis and the various cities on its banks which were vying for the glory of continuing the mythical kingdom of Aia. Some of these new attributions further enriched the mytho-geographical traditions, especially by adding the hydronyms Phasis, Glaukos and Lykos to the literary tradition as of the fifth century BC. It is telling, however, that these later features never intruded the land- and riverscapes of Dioskourias and Gyenos⁵⁰.

Having drawn on diverse and independent evidence, I have corroborated the expectation to find Dioskourias / Aia on the banks of the Hippos / Tskhenistsqali and Moches / Mokvi Rivers by Ochamchire, south-east to the Korax / Bzipi River and north-west to the Gyenos / Kyaneos / Okumi River. The next part of my argument will put this claim to a test: I shall systematically revisit ancient *periplus* literature for the north-eastern stretch of the eastern-Euxine coastline from Phasis to Herakleion, to show that my location of Dioskourias is consistent with the Greek cities in its neighbourhood, especially with the literary tradition of the distances in-between them.

Appendix 1

SEBASTOPOLIS AND THE KODORI DELTA

The Kodori is by far the broadest river in the area, outdoing the Gumista River (which merges into the Black Sea between Sukhumi and Eshera), the Aapasta and Khipsta Rivers (whose estuaries flank the city of Gudauta), the Korax / Bzipi north of Cape Pitsunda or – beyond the boundaries of Georgia – the Psou and Reka Mzytma Rivers (whose lower courses enclose Cape Adler). Among all the rivers coming down from the Main and Lesser Caucasus that empty into the Black Sea, the Kodori is only second to the Phasis / Rioni. The area is defined by the cape to its south, most of which is alluvial and thus reveals that the easternmost delta had been at least 3 km further east at some point in the past. It is at this cape that the coastline, after having extended westwards from Dioskourias / Ochamchire, bends to the north again. It now encloses Lake Skurcha, which seems to have been a bay with open access to the sea in antiquity. The modern estuary itself dominates a large and fertile plain to its north-west, where the current Sukhumi

⁴⁹ Similarly, though without connecting the name with the broader Greek tradition, Dan 2009, vol. 2, 770 with n. 2546.

⁵⁰ See above, n. 46–48, for references.

Airport is located close by. The terrain narrows down into a straight passage further up between the sea and the mountains, which leads into the plain of Sukhumi City.

Although no ancient name of the Kodori has come down to us, its delta must have been of high strategic importance (not only) in antiquity, and I shall argue (part II.7) that *Sebastopolis castellum* mentioned by Pliny was probably located on the lake's (or lagoon's) northern bank. Most likely, King Polemon I chose this place to relocate a previous *Sebastopolis castellum*. As the King of Pontos, he had established a first garrison of this name in Kolchis to serve as a bridgehead just opposite Fort Apsaros north of the Akampsis / Tchorokhi perhaps in the 20s BC. When he was also assigned Kolchis itself and set his eyes on conquering the Bosporos (ca. 15 BC) and the city of Tanais (ca. 10 BC), he seems to have moved his major fortified harbour in-between Pontos and the Bosporos to Cape Kodori. It later served the Romans well until they had to cede it to the Persians in the 540s AD. When the Byzantine emperor decided to re-establish a fortress and city of the same name in the area, he certainly chose a safe distance from the Persian territory. There is hence the possibility that he chose a location 20 to 25 km further to the north, the site of modern Sukhumi City⁵¹.

Appendix 2

PITYOUS / PITSUNDA

Strabo talks of the 'Great Pityous', located somewhere between the Heniochoi to the west and Dioskourias to the east, on the foothills of the Main Caucasus along the Euxine coast. We are not told what its greatness consisted of. Did this refer to its affluence, as Pliny's *oppidum opulentissimum* seems to imply, or was it rather to denote a new, larger or more prosperous refoundation of a 'Lesser Pityous'? Pliny actually leaves open if its prosperity continued or ended when the city was sacked by the Heniochoi⁵². In Arrian's *Periplus*, it figures as one of the harbours in the north that do not deserve special attention. Whether this was due to its insignificance or because it was outside of his province Cappadocia (or rather its extended maritime district, the Pontus Polemoniacus, which ended at Sebastopolis / Dioskourias)⁵³, cannot be said with certainty.

It is obvious, however, that Pityous did not yet host a Roman garrison in AD 132, in contrast to Apsaros, the Phasis estuary (Petra?) and Sebastopolis / Dioskourias⁵⁴. But,

⁵¹ On the history of *Sebastopolis castellum*, see Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.7, alongside Plin. *NH.* 6.4.14 and 6.5.16. Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.3–11.5 (also 17.2–18.1) is the most important source for the High Imperial period, whereas Procop. *Bell.* 2.29.3.18; 8.4.1.4–6 and *De aed.* 3.7 for the sixth century AD. Many scholars confuse Kolchian *Sebastopolis (castellum)* past the Akampsis (Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.7) with Pontic Sebastopolis / Karana / Sulusaray (Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.9: Σεβαστόπολις ἑτέρα): see, for instance, Brodersen 1996, 161; Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, vol. 2, 516–517 with n. 99. See Coşkun (forthcoming) for further discussion. Note that Polemon was also responsible for renaming Pantikapaion (Kaisareia) and Phanagoreia (Agripe), see Heinen 2011.

⁵² Strab. 11.2.14 (496C) and Plin. *NH.* 6.5.16. Cf. Diehl 1950, 1884 and Radt 2008, 251–252, considering refoundation. There is no entry on Pityous in Avram, Hind, Tsetschladze 2004. Sens 2009, 53–54, Anm. 145 doubts that it was a Greek colony.

⁵³ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10–12 on Sebastopolis and 18.1 on the passing mention of *Pityous*.

⁵⁴ Plin. *NH.* 6.5.16; Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.3–4; 17.1–18.1; also Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.6, which I shall discuss further in part II.9. See also Coşkun (forthcoming) on Petra.

in analogy to these Roman forts, Pityous is generally assumed to have received a garrison in the middle of the second century. Roman military presence is, however, only attested for the mid-third century by Zosimos (who wrote in the fifth century)⁵⁵. It remained the farthest outpost of the early Byzantine Empire in the Black Sea region. The emperor Justinian still mentions Sebastopolis and Pityous as Roman fortresses in AD 535, but when Chosroes was gaining the upper hand in Kolchis, they had to be abandoned in the 540s, as we know from Prokopios⁵⁶.

Pityous is commonly identified with Pitsunda (also Pitzunda, Bitchvinta), mainly due to the near-homophony with the modern name⁵⁷. Regardless of this large consensus, I am hesitant to accept that the sites of the Greek *polis* and the Roman fortress were identical and continuously settled until the present day. The material evidence of Pitsunda is very inconclusive, and the distances specified in our literary sources do not add up. Arrian details the (direct) distance from Sebastopolis to Pityous as 350 stades. A straight line from the north bank of the Kodori estuary to the cape of Pitsunda measures about 70 km, and about 5 km more would have to be added, if Sebastopolis bordered on Lake Skurcha. I have therefore suggested that Pityous was located on one of the banks of the Khipsta River. In the days of Arrian, it probably merged into the Black Sea further to the east in the area of modern Gudauta, some perhaps 58 or 59 km away from the mouth of the Kodori.

It is a plausible assumption that the Byzantines re-established a garrison on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea, at a strategic distance from the territory then controlled by the Persian king Chosroes. I suggest that they reused the name Pityous, which had formerly been their farthest stronghold to the north-east. This would then have been the place mentioned in the Suda (tenth century) as follows: ‘A minor city on the coast of the Black Sea, lying on the right; it was also the endpoint of the Roman Empire, abutting onto barbarian and cruel peoples’⁵⁸. This younger settlement may have developed into modern Pitsunda.

Appendix 3

CAUCASIAN HERAKLEION

Caucasian Herakleion is among the least known cities of this popular name. Pliny is our only witness for a *Heracleum oppidum*, which he situates among the Heniochoi at

⁵⁵ Zosimos 1.32–33 names it as a fortified town, first successfully defended, but later sacked by the ‘Scythians’ (in the mid-3rd century AD). Also see *Not. Dign. Or.* 38.35 ed. Seeck 1876, attesting an *ala prima felix Theodosiana* in *Pithia*; cf. Belfiore 2009, 177 n. 99. *Pityous* is further mentioned by Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v41; cf. Belfiore 2009, 208–209, n. 228.

⁵⁶ Just. *Nov.* 28 *pr.* (transl. Braund 1994, 290–291); Procop. *Bell.* 8.4.1.4–6; also *De aed.* 3.7.8–9, which mentions the evacuation of Sebastopolis and Pityous and the later resettlement of Sebastopolis. Cf. Diehl 1950, 1884, with further late Roman sources.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Diehl 1950, 1883; Ehrhardt 1988, 84; Braund 1994, 198–200; Silberman 1995, 50 n. 184; Lordkipanidze 1996, 241–243; Brodersen 1996, 18, 169; Liddle 2003, 120; Belfiore 2009, 208 n. 228 (admitting, however, that the civilian settlement may have been in **Ldzaa**, 5 km to the east); Roller 2018, 639.

⁵⁸ Suda s.v. Πιτυοῦς (Π 1670 ed. Adler 1928–1935): πολίχνιον ἐν πέρατι μὲν θαλάττης τῆς Ποντικῆς κατὰ δεξιὰν κείμενον, τέλος δὲ καὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς γινόμενον, βαρβάρους καὶ ὁμοῖς ἔθνεσι συνάπτων. Counillon 2004/14, 58–59 speculates that the first name of Pityous may have been Gelon (called after the ‘barbarian’ Gelones mentioned by Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 80).

a distance of 100 miles from Dioskourias and 70 miles from Sebastopolis respectively⁵⁹. Arrian and Ptolemy no longer knew this city, but the former mentions Herakleion and Ἡράκλεια ἄκρα, specifying in the latter case that it was 770 stades away from Sebastopolis / Dioskourias. This equals nearly 129 km at the conversion rate of 167 m / stade⁶⁰. The author of the article in the *Realencyclopaedie*, Emil Kießling, read Arrian as attesting two Herakleian promontories, one at the beginning and the other 150 stades farther at the end of a bay which hosted the city of Herakleion mentioned by Pliny⁶¹. Recent commentators of Arrian have followed this view, identifying the first with Cape Adler, south of Sotchi. Regarding the second, Alain Silberman does not commit himself, but quotes previous scholars who argued for either the town of Golovinka north-west of Sochi and 57 km away from Adler or for the village Volonka another 15 km towards Lazarevskoje. The former location has been followed, with hesitation, in Talbert's map (see fig.). Aidan Liddle, in turn, suggests Mys Kodosh at a distance of some 500 stades⁶².

More convincingly, though without further explanation, Braund and Sinclair seem to collapse the information as pointing only to a single Herakleian cape, equating Ἡράκλεια ἄκρα with Cape Adler⁶³. This decision not only has the advantage of avoiding an awkward homonymy, which would have led to endless confusion in antiquity, but it is also recommended by the flow of information in Arrian's *Periplus*. The distance of 150 stades from the Achaioi does not seem to be a continuation of the itinerary past the Achaian territory (this would need to be expressed differently), but to summarize the two stages from the Nesis to Masaitike (90 stades) and from the latter to the Achaioi (60 stades). I feel uncertain as to the distinction between Herakleion and Ἡράκλεια ἄκρα. If this goes back to Arrian, he might have wanted to introduce stylistic variation, thus using the noun with its nominal apposition in the first place and its adjective to define the generic *akra* in the second place. But since he is not concerned with literal repetitions of toponyms otherwise, I would rather suspect that a scribe felt similarly as Kießling and tried to enhance clarity by introducing an orthographic disambiguation.

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⁵⁹ Plin. *NH*. 6.5.16. See above, § 1.

⁶⁰ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.2–1. Stähelin *et al.* 1912 does not list a Euxine-Caucasian Herakleion or Herakleia. I shall discuss the conversion rate in part II.6 and 9.

⁶¹ Kießling 1912.

⁶² Silberman 1995, 16 n. 188; 51 n. 192. Liddle 2003, 64–65, 121–122 and Belfiore 2009, 209 n. 234 agree on Adler for Herakleion, but Liddle and Belfiore 2009, 210 n. 239 identify Mys Kodosh as the second *akra*; Belfiore further equates the latter place with τὰ Ἐρημα mentioned by Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10r4. Sens 2009, 61 states that the location of Herakleion is unknown.

⁶³ Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1232. Cf. Brodersen 1996, 166, without discussion; Belfiore 2009, 178 n. 101 and 209 n. 234, although he also presupposes that Arrian is speaking of two homonymous capes.

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<i>Ветохов С.В.</i> (Москва) – Скальная гробница Кахерптаха в некрополе Гизы: проблемы зонирования внутреннего пространства	307
<i>Шелестин В.Ю.</i> (Москва) – Кищувадна и Кумманни: о названии страны и города	322
<i>Никольский Б.М.</i> (Москва) – Заметки о прологе «Алкесты» Еврипида	340
<i>Coşkun A.</i> (Waterloo, Canada) – (Re-)Locating Greek and Roman Cities along the Northern Coast of Kolchis. Part I. Identifying Dioskourias in the Recess of the Black Sea	354
<i>Трейстер М.Ю.</i> (Берлин) – Пектораль из Косики	377
<i>Токарев А.Н.</i> (Харьков) – <i>Corona graminea</i> и император Август.....	410
<i>Дмитриев В.А.</i> (Псков) – «Арий, поклоняющийся Ормазду»: к политической биографии шаханшаха Нарсе	434

ПУБЛИКАЦИИ

<i>Абрамзон М.Г.</i> (Москва/Магнитогорск), <i>Безуглов С.И.</i> (Ростов-на-Дону), <i>Гунчина О.Л.</i> (Сенной), <i>Устаева Э.Р.</i> (Тамань) – Клад золотых боспорских статеров II–III вв. н.э. с поселения Волна 1 на Таманском полуострове.....	462
--	-----

В МУЗЕЙНЫХ СОБРАНИЯХ МИРА

<i>Кузнецова Е.В., Монахов С.Ю.</i> (Саратов), <i>Толстиков В.П.</i> (Москва), <i>Чурекова Н.Б.</i> (Саратов) – Амфорная коллекция VI в. до н.э. – I в. н.э. из Государственного музея изобразительных искусств имени А.С. Пушкина	482
--	-----

ИЗ ИСТОРИИ НАУКИ

<i>Ананьев В.Г.</i> (Москва/Санкт-Петербург), <i>Бухарин М.Д.</i> (Москва) – С.А. Жебелёв в системе советской науки (по материалам архивных документов). Часть I. 1913–1927	497
---	-----

КРИТИКА И БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ

<i>Сизов С.К.</i> (Нижний Новгород) – Н. В е с к, Р. F u n k e (eds.). <i>Federalism in Greek Antiquity</i> . Cambridge, 2015.....	513
<i>Высокий М.Ф.</i> (Москва) – «Воскрешение» Кале Акте. F. C o l l u r a. <i>Studia Calactina I. Ricerche su una città greco-romana di Sicilia: Kalè Akté – Calacte</i> . Oxford, 2016.....	523
<i>Ковалев А.С., Филиппов И.С.</i> (Москва) – M. S. B j o r n l i e (ed., transl.). <i>Cassiodorus. The Variae: The Complete Translation</i> . Oakland, 2019.....	530

PERSONALIA

К 70-летию юбилею Александра Васильевича Подосинова	536
---	-----

НАУЧНАЯ ЖИЗНЬ

<i>Антонец Е.В.</i> (Москва) – Международная конференция «Западноевропейские рукописи и документы от поздней античности до начала нового времени в собраниях Санкт-Петербурга: изучение, каталогизация, цифровая публикация» (Санкт-Петербург, 19–22 сентября 2019 г.)	538
--	-----

Карпюк С.Г. (Москва) – Конференция «Советская древность – V. Наука о древности в контексте советской истории» (Москва, 29–30 ноября 2019 г.) 546

Кантор Г.М. (Оксфорд) – Фергюс Миллар (1935–2019) 549

ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ

Исидор Севильский. Этимологии, или Начала. Книга XX. О снеди, домашней утвари и инвентаре. Вступительная статья, перевод с латинского и комментарии *А.А. Павлова* (Сыктывкар) 553

Павлов А.А. (Сыктывкар) – Книга XX «Этимологий» Исидора Севильского: структура и источники 553

CONTENTS

<i>S.V. Vetokhov</i> (Moscow) – Rock-Cut Tomb of Kaikherptah in Giza Necropolis: Problems of Zonation of the Internal Space	307
<i>V.Yu. Shelestin</i> (Moscow) – Kizzuwatna and Kummanni: On the Name of the Country and of the City	322
<i>B.M. Nikolsky</i> (Moscow) – Notes on the Prologue of Euripides’ <i>Alcestis</i>	340
<i>A. Coşkun</i> (Waterloo, Canada) – (Re-)Locating Greek and Roman Cities along the Northern Coast of Kolchis. Part I. Identifying Dioskourias in the Recess of the Black Sea	354
<i>M.Yu. Treister</i> (Berlin) – A Pectoral from Kosika.....	377
<i>A.N. Tokarev</i> (Kharkiv) – <i>Corona graminea</i> and the Emperor Augustus	410
<i>V.A. Dmitriev</i> (Pskov) – “Aryan Worshipping Ohrmazd”: Towards the Political Biography of Shahanshah Narseh.....	434

PUBLICATIONS

<i>M.G. Abramzon</i> (Moscow/Magnitogorsk), <i>S.I. Bezuglov</i> (Rostov-on-Don), <i>O.L. Gunchina</i> (Sennoi), <i>E.R. Ustaeva</i> (Taman) – A Hoard of the 2 nd –3 rd Cent. AD Bosphoran Gold Staters from Volna I Settlement on the Taman Peninsula.....	462
--	-----

IN WORLD MUSEUMS

<i>E.V. Kuznetsova</i> , <i>S.Yu. Monakhov</i> (Saratov), <i>V.P. Tolstikov</i> (Moscow), <i>N.B. Churekova</i> (Saratov) – Amphora Collection of the 6 th Cent. BC – 1 st Cent. AD at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts	482
--	-----

PAGES OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

<i>V.G. Ananiev</i> (Moscow/Saint Petersburg), <i>M.D. Bukharin</i> (Moscow) – S.A. Zhebelev in the System of Soviet Science (Based on New Archival Findings). Part I. 1913–1927.....	497
---	-----

CRITICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS

<i>S.K. Sizov</i> (Nizhny Novgorod) – H. Beck, P. Funke (eds.). <i>Federalism in Greek Antiquity</i> . Cambridge, 2015.....	513
<i>M.F. Vysokii</i> (Moscow) – The “Resurrection” of Kalè Aktè. F. Collura. <i>Studia Calactina I. Ricerche su una città greco-romana di Sicilia: Kalè Aktè – Calacte</i> . Oxford, 2016	523
<i>A.S. Kovalev</i> , <i>I.S. Filippov</i> (Moscow) – M.S. Bjornlie (ed., transl.). <i>Cassiodorus. The Variae: The Complete Translation</i> . Oakland, 2019.....	530

PERSONALIA

The 70 th Anniversary of Aleksandr V. Podossinov.....	536
--	-----

NEWS AND EVENTS

<i>E.V. Antonets</i> (Moscow) – International Conference “West European Manuscripts and Charters from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period in Saint Petersburg Collections: Research, Catalogization and Digitalization” (Saint Petersburg, September 19–22, 2019).....	538
--	-----

<i>S.G. Karpjuk</i> (Moscow) – Conference “Soviet Antiquity V: Studies of antiquity in the context of Soviet history” (Moscow, November 29–30, 2019).....	546
<i>G.M. Kantor</i> (Oxford) – Fergus Millar (1935–2019).....	549

SUPPLEMENT

Isidore of Seville. <i>Etymologies, or Origins</i> . Book XX. <i>Provisions and Various Implements</i> . Introduction, Translation from Latin and Commentary by <i>A.A. Pavlov</i> (Syktyvkar).....	553
<i>A.A. Pavlov</i> (Syktyvkar) – Isidore of Seville, <i>Etymologies</i> 20: Structure and Sources	553

РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК
ОТДЕЛЕНИЕ ИСТОРИКО-ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ НАУК
ИНСТИТУТ ВСЕОБЩЕЙ ИСТОРИИ

ВЕСТНИК ДРЕВНЕЙ ИСТОРИИ



Том 80 № 3

Июль—Август—Сентябрь

ЖУРНАЛ ВЫХОДИТ ЧЕТЫРЕ РАЗА В ГОД

ОСНОВАН в 1937 г.

МОСКВА
2020

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RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY
INSTITUTE OF WORLD HISTORY

JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY



Volume 80 Issue 3

July–August–September

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

FOUNDED IN 1937

MOSCOW
2020

The content is prepared in the Institute of World History (Russian Academy of Sciences)
in cooperation with the State Hermitage and the Lomonosov Moscow State University

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DOI: 10.31857/S032103910010636-2

(RE-)LOCATING GREEK AND ROMAN CITIES
ALONG THE NORTHERN COAST OF KOLCHIS
Part II. FOLLOWING ARRIAN'S *PERIPLUS*
FROM PHASIS TO SEBASTOPOLIS

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After the first part of this study has argued to look for ancient Dioskourias near Ochamchire Harbour based on a broad literary tradition (especially Eratosthenes, Timosthenes, Strabo, Pliny, Pomponius Mela and Claudius Ptolemy), the present second part will focus on ancient *periplous* literature and itineraries, most of all Arrian of Nikomedeia and the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. After reflecting on distances given in stades, I shall try to measure out the various sections on the way from Phasis to Sebastopolis and beyond to Herakleion. A complementary approach will try to disentangle the literary tradition from Eratosthenes to Arrian, to convey a better sense of how the transmitted numbers came about. Both approaches will support my approximate location of Phasis, Gyenos, Dioskourias, Sebastopolis, Pityous, and Herakleion, besides providing some clues of how the ancient riverscape has changed.

Keywords: Arrian, *Periplus Maris Euxini*, Charies, Dioskourias, Eratosthenes, Gyenos, Kolchian rivers, Phasis, Sebastopolis, stadion, *Tabula Peutingeriana*

В ПОИСКАХ ГРЕКО-РИМСКИХ ГОРОДОВ
НА СЕВЕРНОМ ПОБЕРЕЖЬЕ КОЛХИДЫ
Часть II. ЗА «ПЕРИПЛОМ» АРРИАНА ОТ ФАСИСА
ДО СЕБАСТОПОЛЯ

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For critical feedback and bibliographical or editorial support, I would like to thank Alexandru Avram, Anca Dan, Germain Payen, Jess Russell and Gocha Tsetskhladze. I am particularly grateful to Stone Chen for working on the maps with me. All remaining shortcomings are my own. See Part I in VDI 80/2, 2020, p. 354–376.

В первой части настоящего исследования мы показали на основании обширной литературной традиции (в особенности сочинений Эратосфена, Гимосфена, Страбона, Плиния, Помпония Мелы и Клавдия Птолемея), что древнюю Диоскурию следует искать в современной Очамчирской бухте. Вторая часть посвящена античным периплам и итинерариям, в особенности Арриану и Певтингеровой карте. После анализа расстояний, данных в стадиях, в статье дается оценка различных отрезков пути от Фасиса до Севастополя и далее до Гераклеяна. Параллельно с этим предлагается анализ формирования литературной традиции от Эратосфена до Арриана, нацеленный на установление происхождения сохранных традицией чисел. Оба подхода поддерживают мою гипотезу о локализации Фасиса, Гиеноса, Диоскурии, Севастополя, Питиунга и Гераклеяна, а также дают некоторые данные об изменении античного речного ландшафта.

Ключевые слова: Арриан, «Перипл Понта Эвксинского», Гиенос, Диоскурия, Певтингерова карта, Севастополь, стадий, Фасис, Хариэс, Эратосфен

Having drawn on diverse and independent evidence, I have corroborated the expectation to find Dioskourias / Aia on the banks of the Hippos / Tskhenistsqali and Moches / Mokvi Rivers by Ochamchire, south-east to the Korax / Bzipi River and north-west to the Gyenos / Kyaneos / Okumi River. The next part of my argument will put this claim to a test: I shall systematically revisit ancient *periplous* literature for the north-eastern stretch of the eastern-Euxine coastline from Phasis to Herakleion, to show that my location of Dioskourias is consistent with the Greek cities in its neighbourhood. Some background information of Arrian (§ 5) and his usage of distances in stade (§ 6) will start the discussion, before following up on the naval route from Phasis to Herakleion (§ 7 and 9). A map depicting the coastline from Phasis to Herakleion (fig. 1) will help the reader navigate virtually along the Kolchian coast. A digression will explain the principles I have applied to comparing and 'correcting' information from different traditions (§ 8). The conclusion will summarize the results of the whole study, with some further reflection on the methods applied and the potential for further research on the historical geography of ancient Kolchis and beyond.

5. PROLEGOMENA TO ARRIAN'S *PERIPLUS MARIS EUXINI*

The reconstruction of the ancient Euxine coastline with its fluvial landscape faces several problems. Beside the fragmentary state of the literary tradition, uncertain conversion rates for measures¹, and many inaccuracies in our accounts², the dynamics of nature as well as human interference with the river courses pose significant problems. The effect of millennia of sedimentation stand out along the western shores of Georgia, where most river mouths are blocked by natural sandbars of hundreds or even thousands of metres in length. The most famous example is the Paleostomi Lake, the 'Old Mouth' of the Phasis. The sandbar gradually cut off the river from the Euxine, whence an old side arm (which I suggest identifying with the aforementioned Charies) developed into the main outlet above the industrial zone of modern Poti. Not long ago, Otar Lordkipanidze described the impact as follows:

¹ See below, § 6.

² Numerical data was particularly prone to guesswork, generous rounding and faulty copying, see, e.g., Geus, Guckelsberger 2017, 168.

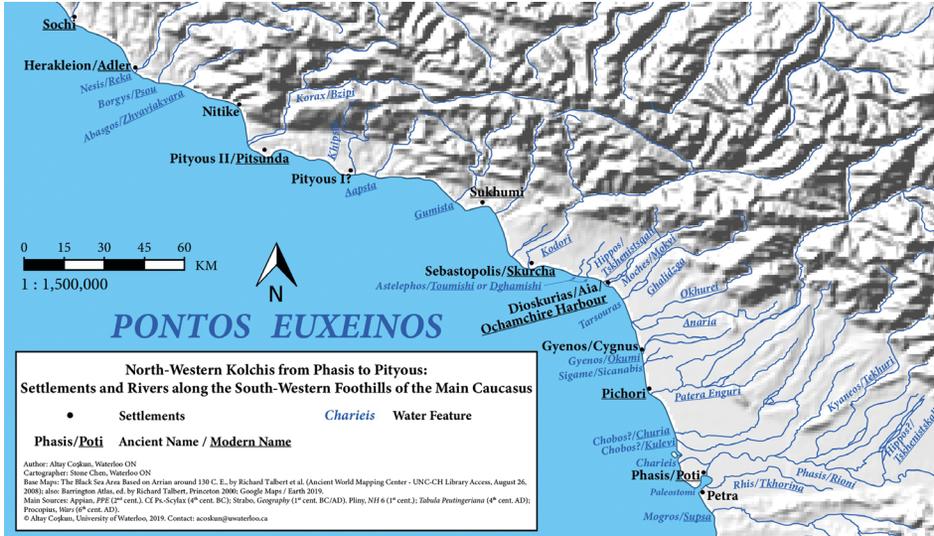


Fig. 1. The coastline from Phasis to Herakleion

The frequent shifts of the Rioni river-bed, recorded over a vast area: from the bed of the modern Pichori, emptying into lake Paleostomi, to the north up to the present bed of the Rioni, have long since been noted in geographical literature ... I repeatedly came across former channels left by the Rioni. As a rule, all of them lie south of the modern bed of the Rioni – in parallel rows ... The southernmost channel is within more than 3 km of the present-day channel. Residents of local villages lying along the lower course of the Rioni remember the changes of the river-bed that took place in the recent past. Thus, for example, the residents of the village of Patara Poti, situated on the right bank of the Rioni, within 5–6 km of the modern city of Poti, remember well that earlier their settlement was on the left bank of the river. ... the drift of the Rioni into the sea reaches approximately 10–12 million tons of sand and silt per year, its volume totaling 10 million m³. Thus, the rate of land increase is rather considerable, reaching an average of 3 m annually, and sometimes even more³.

That the process is still ongoing is shown by satellite images easily accessible through *Google Maps*: sand heaps at the estuary of the Rioni are visible for up to 10 km offshore under the surface of the sea. The higher resolution of a satellite photograph from the European Space Agency (ESA) (fig. 2) seems to extend the effect of sedimentation to up to 30 km off the coast. Latest geomorphological research allows for an even more differentiated picture⁴. No less spectacular is the recent discovery of the ‘Kuban Bosporos’, a second strait or channel of the ‘Kimmerian Bosporos’ that runs parallel to the modern Strait of Kerch: it effectively cut off Phanagoreia and Hermonassa from the Sindike on the Asian continent (the modern Taman Peninsula). Another major challenge is that artificial canalization has dramatically changed the riverscape, to a degree that some streams have been drained and

³ Lordkipanidze 2003, 1308. For a recent description of the coast and riverscape, also see Tsetskhladze 2018b, 431–434; cf. Braund 1994, 102–103; Tsetskhladze 1998, 7; Sens 2009, 125–127, 133: „Gewaltige Anschwemmungen des Rioni haben die Küstenlinie allein innerhalb der letzten 100 bis 200 Jahre stellenweise um mehrere hundert Meter verschoben“; Dan 2016.

⁴ Laermanns *et al.* 2018.

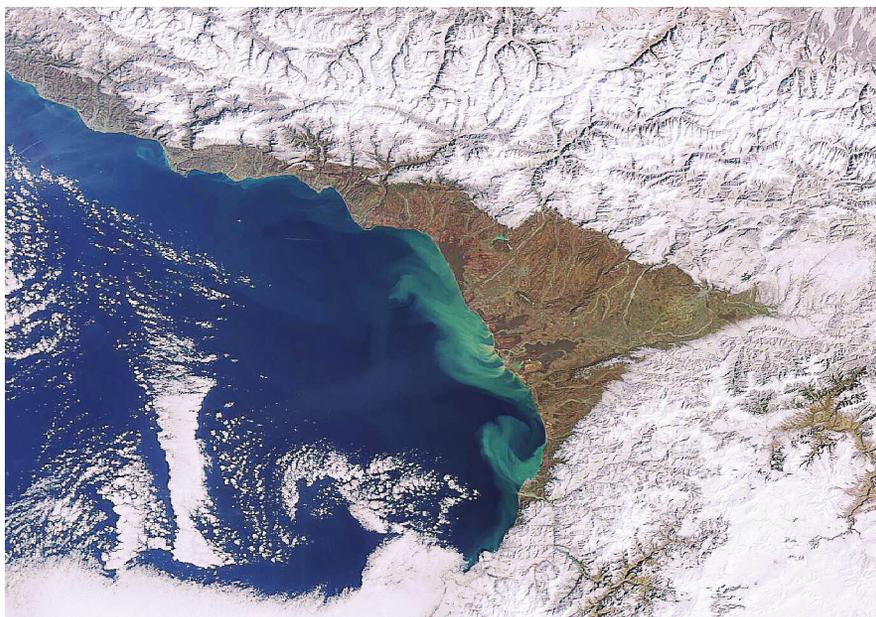


Fig. 2. Satellite photograph from the European Space Agency (ESA)

others redirected⁵. Once again, *Google Maps* conveys a strong sense of the artificial nature of some of the present-day riverbeds, which appear as drawn with a ruler.

The best ancient source we have is the *Periplus Maris Euxini* by Arrian, the famous *homme de lettres* who happened to be the Roman governor of Cappadocia in the 130s AD. His information on the littoral from Trapezous to Sebastopolis is particularly valuable, since it is based at least in part on autopsy during the inspection of the coastline under his command, most likely conducted in summer AD 132⁶. That he also used written

⁵ Kuban Bosphoros: Schlotzhauer *et al.* 2017; cf. Dan 2016, 270–271; Tsetskhladze 2016; 2018a, 34–36; Bolikhovskaya *et al.* 2018; Papuci-Władyka 2018, 312.

⁶ For the date of Arrian's travel, see Rémy 1989, 213–217 (AD 131/32–136/37); Braund 1994, 178 (AD 132); Silberman 1995, VII (AD 131 or 132); Tsetskhladze 1998, 15; cf. 49–50 (AD 134); Liddle 2003, 5–12 (AD 131/138); Rood 2011 (130s). My impression is that Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* reports his first inspection of the Pontic coast, thus around AD 132. The same date is also suggested by the note that, when Arrian heard of the death of King Kotys II of the Bosphoros (AD 123/24–131/32), he 'made an effort also to describe the navigation to the Kimmerian Bosphoros in case that you (sc. Hadrian) have any plans regarding the Bosphoros' (Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 17.3). Less certain is the implication of the statue that King Rhoimetalkes (AD 131/32–153/54) set up in year 430 of the Bosphoran / Mithradatic era (AD 133/34), while Arrian was governor. Since the accompanying inscription (*IOSPE* II 33 = *CIRB* 47, *Pantikapaion*) calls him *philokaisar* and possibly also *philorhomaiois*, we can assume that he had sent an embassy to Rome, possibly stopping by the governor of Cappadocia, and received notice of his recognition; cf. Belfiore 2009, 206–208, n. 207 (though dating the inscription to AD 132/33). Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 6.2 mentions that he paid the soldiers at Apsaros, and *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.3 specifies that he did so in Sebastopolis 'on the very day', which seems to denote one of the regular pay days, 1 January, 1 May or 1 September. Belfiore 2009, 36 thinks of fall AD 131 or spring AD 132. I would rather suggest that Arrian prepaid his soldiers at Apsaros and reached Sebastopolis by

sources is clear from his first chapter, where he begins engaging with Xenophon's *Anabasis*. He also quotes Homer, Herodotos and Aischylos, and his frequent references to the Argonautic myth likewise betray his deep roots in a much broader Greek literary culture⁷. It would be helpful to know in how far he was drawing on similar written sources or alternatively on information from his staff or from local inhabitants when naming the rivers along his journey and specifying the distances between their mouths.

At least, some general observations can be made. First, nearly all of his figures are multiples of 30 stades, which implies a substantial amount of rounding on the one hand and a practice shaped by an established geographical tradition on the other⁸. Second, the various sections that I have investigated are based on a stade that is significantly shorter than the traditional (Olympic) conversion rate of 177.42 m. As I shall explain in the next section (§ 6), I experimented with various conversion rates and discovered that, depending on the sections of Arrian's journey, 123, 150 or 167 m / stade are much more effective averages. If they are granted, Arrian's *Periplus Maris Euxini* allows us to reconstruct his itinerary with only two corrections. To avoid circularity for these emendations, we can draw on internal and external evidence, as will be explained below (§ 7–8).

Moreover, we shall see that the *Tabula Peutingeriana* – even in its insufficient state of transmission – is far from providing random information. This might well be the first impression, when considering that its first route from Phasis to *Cariente* (ablative of *C<h>aries*) only measures 3 miles, seemingly contrasting with the 90 stades (ca. 11–13.5 km) of Arrian. But this discrepancy is justified, if Phasis City was located to the north-east of the Paleostomi Lake, perhaps a little bit further north than the modern coastline⁹: a ship might have had to sail up to 5 km south-west to reach the open sea, and

1 September. He would have avoided the coast for the stronger currents in spring. Most likely, then, Kotys II died in spring or summer AD 132, his son Rhoimetalkes dispatched envoys who might have met Arrian on his naval inspection tour (which could have justified the detour), went on to Rome and returned by summer AD 133; the king commissioned a statue for the emperor, which was inaugurated in AD 133/34, perhaps in fall 133.

⁷ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 1–11 reports on his journey from Trapezous to Sebastopolis; cf. 17 for a summary. Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 1.1–2.3; 11.1 and 251.1 quotes Xenophon; 3.2 Homer; 18.1 Herodotos; 19.2 Aischylos. Also see *Peripl. M. Eux.* 1.2 for a Greek inscription in Trapezous and 9.1–2. for the statue of Phasiane. Cf. Rood 2011, esp. on Xenophon and the Argonautic tradition.

⁸ Arnaud 2005, 73 speaks of a 'fréquence remarquable' and relates it to a more widespread literary tradition that drew on units of 60 or even 120 stades, the latter being a typical Herodotean measure, equalling one parasang or 1/6 of a daily average of 700 stades (cf. p. 72–78). These figures are also compatible with Strabo's preference to round in units of 20s or 40s (cf. Geus, Guckelsberger 2017, 168). The latter is even more noteworthy, given the diverse sources that Strabo was relying on, as Arnaud points out.

⁹ The site of Phasis City is generally expected to be somewhere east of modern Poti, buried under layers of up to 12 metres of alluvial sand: Tssetskhladze 1998, 7–11; 2019, 24–25; cf. Silberman 1995, 30; Lordkipanidze 1996, 228–232; 2003, 1297–1298 (linguistic argument for the derivation of Poti from Phasis, with some hesitation); 1307–1308 (probable location near Poti Harbour); 1310 (possible location on eastern shore of Paleostomi Lake). Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1227; map 87 recommend the results of underwater archaeology by Gamkrelidze 1992 for identifying the site largely in the Paleostomi Lake. But Lordkipanidze 2000, 47–53 (cf. Nawotka 2005, 235) and Tssetskhladze 2013, 293–294 prefer to ignore this claim and contradict explicitly in their later publications. Lordkipanidze 2000, 1310–1311 emphasizes that

then some further 7 km north to the mouth of the Charies. It is thus easily fathomable that the distance from the harbour of Phasis City to the harbour of Charies (or Charious-tos, as Ptolemy calls this place) was about 3 miles / 4–5 km over land¹⁰.

Another problem of the *Tabula* is that the stretches from Phasis to Sebastopolis only add up to 58 miles (87 km), which pales before the 100 miles that Pliny claims for the way to *Sebastopolis castellum*¹¹. As we shall see, however, the problem seems to be that one or two stations before Sebastopolis have gone amiss in the course of the transmission. At the same time, Pliny seems to have calculated his Roman miles too generously. Every single piece of information is thus to be checked for compatibility with the overall evidence and for plausibility from the point of view of an ancient traveler. Considering these principles, we can reconstruct Arrian's naval inspection tour from Trapezous to Sebastopolis with more precision than has been done in previous scholarship. After explaining my approach to converting Arrian's stades into kilometres (§ 6), I shall follow him on his journey from Phasis over Dioskourias / Aia to Sebastopolis / Dioskourias (§ 7). Next will come another methodological reflection, which tries to uncover Arrian's sources and his work procedure. This will in part confirm the results of the previous section, but also call for some modification. Thereafter, I shall explore Arrian's *periploous* further to Herakleion (§ 9), before drawing some final conclusions (§ 10).

6. A NOTE ON THE CONVERSION RATES OF THE ANCIENT STADE

Before we embark on Arrian's ship towards Sebastopolis, we should concern ourselves a bit more with conversion rates for distances measured in stades. This topic has occupied generations of scholars¹². With reference to Eratosthenes, Pliny applied a convenient ratio of 8 stades per Roman mile (1 *mp* = 1,480 m), which yields 185 m per stade, whereas others calculated averages ranging between 7.5 and 8.33 stades¹³. More telling is

under-water finds are late and dislocated, so that they may well have been carried into the lake by the river; cf. Tsetskhladze 2018a, 36 and 2018b, 477: "Underwater exploration of Lake Palyastomi has yielded pottery of the Byzantine period but only one sherd of a Greek vessel (dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BC) and the foot of a Rhodian amphora. Most probably, Byzantine Phasis is situated beneath the waters of the lake. One opinion is that Greek and Roman Phasis is underneath the airport". Sens 2009, 125–127, however, also points to Pseudo-Skymnos 928–931 and Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v9, who locate the city to the left of those sailing into the Phasis River, whereas he qualifies the archaeological material from the Lake as too late to be decisive (also p. 134, n. 893). Bäbler Nesselrath 1999, 1057 does not specify why she suggests that we look for *Phasis* some 20 km east of Poti.

¹⁰ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.1; *Tab. Peut.* 11.1.1; Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2: the coordinates show that the two places lay much closer by each other than at an average distance; see the map (*Asia* 3) in Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, II, 854.

¹¹ Plin. *NH.* 6.4.14 and *Tab. Peut.* 11.1.1–11.3.1. Pliny's figure is too high, the *Tabula*'s too low, see below.

¹² For recent discussions, see, e.g., Hornblower, Spawforth 2003, 942–943; Arnaud 2005, 61–106; Roller 2010, 272.

¹³ Plin. *NH.* 12.53 = Eratosth. F 27, with Roller 2010, 58, 272; Geus, Guckelsberger 2017, 170; also see Arnaud 2005, 81–83, with Plin. *NH.* 3.100–101. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* gives distances in stades plus miles converted at a fixed rate of 7.5 stade. For an example of undue applications of those rates to determine the location of Dioskourias, see part I.2 n. 16.

Strabo's discussion of the distance from Rhodes to Alexandria, once again with reference to the famous geographer from Kyrene, who had rejected the number of 5,000 stades as pure guesswork of sailors and suggested 3,750 as result of his geometrical calculations. In contrast, the geographer of Amaseia prefers a distance of 4,000, resulting from a navigation of four days and nights. His time indication implies a high average speed of 500 stades per 12 hrs (or somewhat more during a long summer day and less during a short summer night)¹⁴. This figure is in line with the premise of Ps.-Skylax and also compatible with the assertion of Markianos of Alexandria in the fifth century AD, according to whom leading-edge ships could cover 900 stades per day, whereas poorly construed vessels could barely do 500¹⁵. In contrast, Herodotos and other writers surmise a higher but still realistic daily average of 700 stades¹⁶.

We are thus well advised not to press measurements in ancient accounts too hard. Robert Bauslaugh, for instance, demonstrates that there was a significant variance, normally between 150 and 200 m per stade, but often well beyond these limits¹⁷. Duane Roller emphasizes that not even Eratosthenes was able to use a consistent standard of the stade, since he was drawing on heterogeneous sources¹⁸. The same was the case for Strabo; he is said to have favoured numerical data, not so much in order to provide a very accurate and reliable account as to convey 'a sense of precision to his readers', to use the words of Roller. According to Klaus Geus and Kurt Guckelsberger, Strabo's stade ranged between 116 and 240 m, despite his preference for 178 and 185 m. This observation is, however, contrasted by his persistent employment of multiples of 20, which seems to imply to Pascal Arnaud that Strabo thoroughly revised and adapted the data of his sources¹⁹.

Arnaud proposes also, with a view to Ps.-Skylax' and Strabo's average, that 500 stades were a 'consensual' conversion rate per day. However, he makes a similar claim for Herodotos' 700 stades, concluding: 'C'est donc non une distance strictement mesurée, mais une valeur conventionnelle, largement approximative, qui a été ici retenue: celle qui évaluait, par principe, à 700 stades un parcours effectué dans la journée, sans souci de plus de précision'²⁰. His argument seems strong at times, while many examples appear a bit forced, since they offer much variation (multiples or fractions of 500, 600 and 700) and rarely go along with time indications to prove the actual claim of a daily average,

¹⁴ Strab. *Geogr.* 2.5.24 (126 C), with Arnaud 2005, 68.

¹⁵ Ps.-Skylax, *Asia* 69; cf. Counillon 2004, 52; Arnaud 2005, 68. And Mark. *Epit.* 5, with Arnaud 2005, 68, 70–72; also 79–81 for further attestations or variations.

¹⁶ Hdt. 4.86 and Mark. *Epit.* 5, with Arnaud 2005, 72–78. For further variations, see Arnaud 2005, 78–79 (600 stades) and 81–86 (100 *mp* = 800 stades, although he admits on p. 84: 'le mille romain, était spécifiquement voué à l'expression des distances terrestres').

¹⁷ Bauslaugh 1979, esp. 5, n. 22. Arnaud 2005, 68–106 lists many other examples, although his conclusion (p. 85) is surprising: 'le plus petit stade connu avoisinant les 150m, quand le plus long dépasse 298m, selon les opinions les plus généralement admises'. — Similar uncertainties pertain(ed) to the relation between stades and parasangs, but they need not concern us here.

¹⁸ Roller 2010, 271–273. Arnaud 2005, 85 assesses the stade of Eratosthenes at 157.5 m or 158.7 m.

¹⁹ Geus, Guckelsberger 2017, 167 (cf. 173), with a brief survey of the different measurements Strabo used, and pp. 168–170 on various conversion rates. Cf. also Arnaud 2005, 73 (see above, n. 49).

²⁰ Arnaud 2005, 72–78, quotation on p. 74.

nor are other factors that affect travel times taken into account. This renders at least part of the argument circular.

The tendency to disconnect the number of stades from the geographical realities is taken even further by other scholars, such as Tim Rood and Anca Dan, who point to the literary functions that measures of distance served, especially in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.²¹ Such an approach may be useful to explain some omissions or other selections of information, but we should not discard too quickly an author's genuine intention of producing reliable spatial information, whether for its practical use (such as is the case with the drier *periploi*) or for the rhetorical purpose of underpinning one's credibility with adequate rather than random figures. My expectation is that authors of non-fictional prose normally shrank away from fabricating their numbers. This view is still compatible with 'guesstimates' to fill occasional gaps in the sources, rounding of uneven values and committing errors of calculation or copying. The general vulnerability of numerals in the course of the literary transmission becomes most obvious when one glances into the critical apparatus, say, of the *Itinerarium Antonini* or *Burdigalense*.

Measuring distance indeed posed a practical challenge in antiquity. On land, at least sometimes, professional step counters (*bematistai*) were available, whereas distances on sea could in theory draw on geometrical calculations. In most cases, however, ranges appear to have been based on a conversion of travel times. An open question is in how far data in stades took into account variable factors, such as mountains, marshland etc. on land or winds, currents or dangerous cliffs on sea, not to mention the means of transportation. Perhaps with the exception of less detailed descriptions of major world regions, it is a fair assumption that values given in stades (or miles) were supposed to be the same on the outbound and return way, and they would not change for a man on foot or on horseback²².

This is not to deny a strong subjective factor in the calculations, but one may still expect some consistency within itineraries composed by individuals or at least within stretches thereof, as much as they were based on a homogenous source or even better on autopsy. If not, such information might have been useless, if not dangerous, since it could have caused perilous shortcomings in the organization of travels. It would, in fact, be difficult to explain that no (preserved) ancient author ever blamed the literary tradition of travel distances in stades as fictitious or useless. At any rate, even those who might still hesitate to accept my more optimistic premise will perhaps yield to Arnaud's observation that the practice of converting stades into Roman miles gradually brought about an inclination towards producing more fact-based distances in the Roman Imperial period²³. Accepting this would be sufficient to grant the numbers reported by the Roman governor Arrian as high a level of authority as I am proposing: while their absolute value is open to question, their proportions should be meaningful.

²¹ Rood 2011 and Dan 2014.

²² That currents or winds might have advised sailors to take an alternative route back is a different matter.

²³ Arnaud 2005, 87: 'les valeurs dont nous pouvons désormais disposer sont réputées être l'expression d'une norme statistique qu'elles acquièrent une valeur documentaire particulière.' Perhaps even more convincingly, one may argue for a trend towards rationalization or standardization under Roman rule.

I began my investigation of his *periplous* by applying traditional conversion rates of 178–185 m / stade, but when they turned out to be futile, I chose two more meaningful values: my first is derived from the traditional (Eratosthenean) distance of 600 stades between Phasis and Dioskourias: based on my approximate locations, these cities were about 74 km apart from each other, which yields an average of 123 m / stade. The second rate is based on Arrian's information that the distance between Phasis and Sebastopolis was 810 stades, from which I subtracted 150 stades (identified as erroneous on two independent ways, see sections 7 and 8 respectively). Since I measure 94 km between those two ancient cities, the average is 149 m / stade, which I rounded to 150 m for the sake of convenience. Without this correction, the conversion rate would have been 116 m / stade and, for the most problematic portion of the way, the stretch from the Tarsouras (if it is the Ghalidzga) to the Hippos (if it is the Tskhenistsqali), 7 km / 150 stades = ca. 47 m / stade. Obviously, this would be beyond reason. Neither 123 nor 150 m / stade is suitable for the stretch from Sebastopolis to Herakleion, a theoretical addition to the *periplous*, since Arrian travelled only as far as Sebastopolis in person. He sets the two places apart by 770 stades, which equals 129 km according to my reckoning. This yields an average of 167 m / stade. Such discrepancies indeed call for caution: any plausible conversion rate requires sufficient context information.

My method implies yet another difficulty in that my new locations of Dioskourias and Sebastopolis are a premise for the numbers to work. Another problem is that I adjusted Arrian's total of 810 stades to 630 stades. Had I maintained the traditional location of *Sebastopolis* at Sukhumi, the total distance by sea would have been ca. 120 km, according to which Arrian's stade would have averaged 148 m and Eratosthenes' 200 m respectively. No scholar has so far been able to apply these and other relevant numbers in a consistent scheme that would support the choice of Sukhumi. As a result, moving away from an entire *aporia* towards a model in which an approximate rate of 123 m / yields acceptable locations consistent with the literary tradition should be welcomed as an improvement. Given the partial circularity, however, I admit that the argument deployed in part II will not prove that the new locations suggested for *Dioskourias* and *Sebastopolis* are correct. It is sufficient to show that, if my suggestions are accepted, we are in a position to apply the extant *periploi* consistently to a historical map²⁴.

7. REVISITING ARRIAN'S PERIPLUS I: FROM PHASIS VIA THE RECESS TO SEBASTOPOLIS

Let us finally start delineating Arrian's itinerary. He set out from Phasis City, took the necessary southern detour described above and reached the mouth of the Charies after 90 stades, which yielded 13.5 km if a conversion rate of 150 m per stade is applied, and ca. 12 km, if we allow for an average stade as short as 123 m. On a modern map, the Kulevi and Churia Rivers come next at distances of ca. 7 and 6 km respectively. These 13 km compare well with Arrian's 90 stades / 12–13.5 km to the Chobos²⁵. One might argue against this reconstruction that the ancient Chobos should rather be identified with

²⁴ See part I.2, p. 359–363 for examples of cherry-picking from the transmitted distances.

²⁵ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.1. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v19 also gives 90 stades each, which he converts automatically as 12 *mp*.

the modern Khobistsqali. This is the name of the upper and middle course of the current Kulevi, which originates in the Main Caucasus and enters the Kolchian plain roughly in its northern center, to run through the town of Khobi before bending south-west towards the sea. But the distances provided by Arrian and the *Tabula* (see below) may well imply that the Chobos / Khobistsqali previously followed a course further to the north. It is even possible that it shared part of its river bed with the little stream Munchia, which now runs parallel to the Khobistsqali north of Khobi.

What is a bit surprising is that the *Tabula* assesses the according land route at 16 miles / 24 km. Konrat Miller felt the need to reduce this to ca. 10 miles, but there may be better explanations. One possibility is that swampland along the shore required substantial detours, although this could be said for nearly the entire littoral. Another potential factor for the discrepancy is that the ancient estuary was a bit further north than that of the Churia, or at least the settlement of Chobos, to the effect that this stretch was longer than the distances between the river mouths as encountered by Arrian. If so, then the subsequent journey was relatively shorter²⁶.

By ship, it is 8 km from the Churia River to the Patara-Enguri River. Arrian does not mention it, although its estuary is (at least now) located on a little cape, which hosts the modern city of Anaklia. He likewise does not pay attention to the iron-age settlement of Pichori (which may not have been visible from the sea) or the Gagida River, which merges into the sea some 14 km north of Anaklia. I do not recognize any particular landmark or river before the Second Gudava after another 8 km (altogether 30 km from the Chobos / Churia River), but we have to keep in mind that the riverscape has been profoundly changed through modern channels, such as the Second Gudava itself. I therefore assume that Arrian's next stage, the mouth of the Sigame River, lay somewhere in-between the Gagida and Second Gudava, perhaps around 5 km past the former and 27 km past the Chobos. It is quite possible that the highly regulated Patara Eristisqali, which now empties into the lower course of the Second Gudava, was the ancient Sigame.

Ptolemy speaks of Siganeon, probably the town at the estuary, whereas the *Tabula* calls it Sicarabis. Arrian declares 'at the utmost' 210 stades (ca. 25.8–31.5 km) for this route. On the one hand, this exceeds even the 19 miles / 28.5 km of the *Tabula*, although it is the latter's land route that should be longer; on the other hand, Arrian himself indicates doubts about his own figure. We should therefore – tentatively – reduce Arrian's distance by 30 to 180 stades (ca. 22–27 km). This would be compatible with a land route of 19 miles / 28.5 km, if only we remember that the settlement of Chobos seems to have been located a few km north of the homonymous river²⁷.

Arrian tells us that, on the subsequent stretch of his journey, his ship 'bended its course to the left' (west). This is still an accurate description of the current littoral from

²⁶ *Tab. Peut.* 11.1.1. Cf. Miller 1916, 652, who, by the way, does not doubt the identity of the Chobos and the 'Khobi'; he is right to point out that the town 'Chopi' (Khobi) is too far inland and vaguely refers to a 'Flecken Kopi' along the coast, which I could not verify. But for the possibility of identifying the Kulevi with the Chobos, see below, § 8.

²⁷ *Arr. Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2 (repeated in Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v20); *Tab. Peut.* 11.1–11.2.1; Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2; Strab. *Geogr.* 2.1.39 (92C) = Eratosth. F 52 and 11.2.16 (497–498 C). They will all be discussed below.

the Second Gudava to Ochamchire²⁸. On this route, sailors pass by the **Okumi** (3 + 3 km) and the **Ghalidzga Rivers** (9 km), the former a little stream that unites with a much larger channel shortly before merging into the sea, the latter reaching the Euxine just south of the modern city of Ochamchire²⁹. Pomponius Mela confirms the characterization by Arrian, since he locates the city of **Cycnus** (i.e. **Gyenos**) ‘where the curving of the coastline begins’³⁰. Arrian appears to be completely unaware of this ancient Greek *polis*, but it figures on the *Tabula*, which locates a certain **Cyanes** 4 miles / 6 km north of Sicarabis. **Kyaneos Potamos** also follows on Siganeon in Ptolemy’s *Geography* (though at a ‘regular’ distance). As a result, we should identify the **Okumi** with the **Gyenos River** attested by Pseudo-Skylax and expect to find the homonymous *polis* on its bank³¹.

Gyenos was established by the Milesians as an *apoikia* right on the coastline in the sixth century BC, but constant sedimentation rendered its harbour economically unviable. By the second century BC, when we see most of the eastern-Euxine harbour cities decline, Gyenos was reduced to an inland village, which still had its minor role as a station on the land route from Phasis to Dioskourias, but was no longer visible as a town from the open sea. The satellite images provided by **Google Maps** show structures of a (probably ancient) settlement between 1 and 2 km away from the estuary of the **Okumi**. My reconstruction is further confirmed by the ensuing station on the *Tabula*, Tassiros, which is 12 miles / 18 km further ahead of Cyanes. This must denote the settlement on the estuary of the Tarsouras River mentioned by Arrian as the first station after Sigame, 120 stades / ca. 14.8–18 km to its north. **The Tarsouras may therefore equal the Ghalidzga River**³².

The next section of Arrian’s journey is the most complicated, likely due to a slip in his notes or logbook. He specifies the distances from the Tarsouras to the Hippos River as 150 stades / 18.45–22.5 km. But this is definitely too long, since the ‘Horse’ River seems to be the same as its Georgian namesake, the Tskhenistsqali, which flows into the sea on the left side of the bay of Ochamchire, some 7 km past the Ghalidzga. I admit some uncertainty, since Arrian does not mention the Moches / Mokvi, a much larger river. It empties into the sea about **1.5 km east** of the Tskhenistsqali³³. However, the Hippos may well have been the demarcation of the city’s (or chora’s) boundary, so that the

²⁸ However, I also see the possibility that this is a reflection of the recess location of Dioskourias, as expressed in the skewed *periplous* B, as reconstructed below, § 8.

²⁹ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 11.4. Note, however, that this is a summary version which does not specify the distances and skips the Tarsouras, both of which were mentioned in *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2. It is thus not entirely clear whether Arrian is referring to the light bending south of the Ghalidzga or to the sharp left turn just before the Mokvi. I assume the former, since he expresses the straight shift to the west after the Hippos in *Peripl. M. Eux.* 11.4.

³⁰ Pomp. Mela 1.99 (110): *At in primo flexu iam curvi litoris oppidum est quod Graeci mercatores constituisse, et quia cum caeca tempestate agerentur, ignaris qua terra esset cycni vox notam dederat, Cycnum adpellasse dicuntur.*

³¹ Ps.-Skylax, *Asia* 81, see above; Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2. The map of Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, II, 854 duly positions this Kyaneos between Siganeos and the Hippos / Mokvi (on which see below), but identify it with the Tekhuri, which is often suggested to be the Kyaneos that merges into the Phasis / Rioni. See part I.4, p. 368–370 for more on these rivers.

³² Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v21 differs, see below.

³³ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2. A possible but unnecessary assumption is that the two rivers swapped their names at some point, perhaps because their lower courses had formerly shared

river called Moches in Late Antiquity would equal the Anthemous, on whose bank Pliny locates Dioskourias³⁴. In fact, I suspect that Arrian took the much broader Moches for the Hippos. Another problem is that the compiler of the anonymous *periplous* identifies the Tarsouras with the Moches, while maintaining the same partial distances as Arrian; it is the Hippos that he relocates by identifying it with an otherwise unknown Lagumpsa River³⁵. What caused the confusions in both *periploi* is ultimately uncertain, but, if we continue to believe that Arrian tried measuring or at least estimated the stretches of his journey, then he may have specified the distance from Sigame over the Tarsouras to the Hippos as $120 + 30 = 150$, which then became $120 + 150$ by a slip in the extant manuscript tradition as well as in the anonymous *periplous*.

By this understanding, Arrian would have identified the Tarsouras with the Ghalidzga and the Hippos with the Anthemous / Moches / Mokvi some 5–6 km away (rather than the Tskhenistsqali another km further)³⁶. In accordance with this, the *Tabula* details Stempeo 4 miles / 6 km after Tassiros. Perhaps this awkward name derives from εἰς τὸν Ἰππεον? My reconstruction can draw on further evidence. The next stage in the *Tabula* is specified as Sebastopolis, allegedly only 4 miles past Stempeo. This is obviously wrong, and I have already mentioned above that one or two stations must have been omitted by accident, since a landroute of 58 miles from *Phasis* to *Sebastopolis* is too short by all accounts. But the 4 miles may still be an authentic piece of information, referring to the next (omitted) station close by the mouth of the Hippos / Tskhenistsqali. In Arrian's *Periplus Maris Euxini*, this is the *Astelephos River*, located 30 stades / 3.7–4.5 km west of the Hippos³⁷. Its modern name is either *Dghamishi* or *Toumishi*, a pair of rivers which empty into the Black Sea 2.9 km and 5.8 km respectively past the Tskhenistsqali. Unless the river courses changed substantially, Arrian most likely related the 30 stades to the distance between the Mokvi and Dghamishi.

It is noteworthy that Arrian describes the route past the Hippos as directed straight to the sunset, which is a clear reflection of Dioskourias' or Aia's location in the 'recess' of the Black Sea. This observation would make little sense, were the Hippos located half-way between Ochamchire and Lake Skurcha, as the modern consensus requires us to believe. The next detail that the Main Caucasus emerges before the sailor's eyes, when turning towards Dioskourias / Sebastopolis, fairly describes the experience of those passing into Lake Skurcha or around Cape Kodori, and is thus compatible with either reconstruction³⁸.

Arrian assesses the way to the *Astelephos* as 30 stades / 3.7–4.5 km, followed by another 120 stades / 14.8–18 km mostly in the western direction towards Sebastopolis³⁹.

a riverbed before reaching the Euxine. The Hippos / Tskhenistsqali must not be confused with the homonymous tributary of the *Phasis* / Rioni, on which see below.

³⁴ Plin. *NH*. 6.4.15.

³⁵ Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v21. Also see part I.3, p. 364–365 with n. 30–34, and below, § 8.

³⁶ But see below, § 8, for an alternative approach.

³⁷ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2 (cf. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v21–22); *Tab. Peut.* 11.2.1.

³⁸ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.2–3 (distances); 11.5 (direction and view, cf. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v36–37). And Plin. *NH*. 6.4.14 and 6.5.16, discussed in part I.2, p. 359–360. Counillon 2004, 57 with n. 271 adduces these passages for Dioskourias / Sukhumi.

³⁹ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.3. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* (9v22) differs once more, specifying 135 stades between Ἀτέλαφος (*sic*) and Σεβαστούπολις (*sic*).

This compares well with the distances that I have measured: 2.9 km from the Tskhenistsqali (or 4.4 km from the Mokvi) to the Dghamishi, another 16.5 km to the outlet of Lake Skurcha on Cape Kodori, whence it is 3 km to the first and another 2 km to the farthest arm of the (modern) Kodori Delta. The nominal distance from the Hippos of 150 stades (18.5–22.5 km) would thus be compared with an effective route of 19.4–24.4 km. But if one looks more closely at the structure of Cape Kodori, it appears to consist for the most part of alluvium, and Lake Skurcha emerges as a left-over of former branches of the Kodori, whose delta thus opened into the sea up to 3.5 km further east than today. The northern coast of Lake Skurcha, which may well have been a bay wide open to the sea in antiquity, was therefore most likely Arrian's final destination, some 20 km west of the Hippos⁴⁰.

8. DIGRESSION: TESTING AND CORRECTING THE COUNTS OF ARRIAN,
THE *TABULA PEUTINGERIANA* AND PLINY

Even if there was a fact-based relation between the distance figures Arrian produces and the (historical) space that he travelled through, we have yet to find an answer to the question of how those figures were actually determined. Ideally, sailing times were converted into stades, with due consideration of the most influential factors such as currents, winds and the condition of the ship. The persistent direct or indirect references to a literary tradition may, however, suggest that the numbers of Eratosthenes (and Strabo) continued to be influential. Perhaps their major route descriptions, such as the 600 stades between Phasis and Dioskourias⁴¹, were accepted as a framework and broken down into meaningful portions that were still measured out. A more pessimistic reconstruction might assume that Arrian drew on a literary tradition and did no more than trying to identify the named rivers and cities on his way, perhaps with the help of the transmitted distances, though not even caring about adjustments where problems were significant. We shall see that all three approaches lurk behind our convoluted literary tradition. Even if one of my results will be pessimistic in that it strongly limits Arrian's concern about measuring or assessing distances himself, his *periplous* will allow us to reconstruct older literary sources, whose archetype was based on a much more precise measurement.

Arrian covered the distance from the Chobos to Sebastopolis in a single day. This induced him to give us the total of this journey, which is 630 stades (210 + 120 + 150 + 30 + 120)⁴². If we add the first two sections of the journey from Phasis over the Charies to the Chobos (90 + 90 stades), we obtain Arrian's nominal total distance for the way from Phasis to Sebastopolis (810 stades). Subtracting the 150 stades in-between the Hippos and Sebastopolis yields the nominal distance from Phasis to the Hippos, where I locate Dioskourias (660). As we have seen above, however, the route from Chobos to Sigame comes closer to 180 stades than ('at the utmost') 210 stades and the stretch from the Tarsouras (if the Ghalidzga) to the Hippos (if the Tskhenistsqali) should have been calculated as 30 instead of 150 stades. The corrected nominal totals are therefore

⁴⁰ According to Gabelia 2003, 1227, Dubois de Montpéroux identified the place of Skurcha with Dioskourias, partly due to its homophony. I would not want to exclude the possibility.

⁴¹ Strab. *Geogr.* 11.2.16 (497–498 C), quoted in part I.3, n. 37. And 2.1.39 (92 C) = Eratosth. F 52, on which see part I.3, p. 367 with n. 41.

⁴² Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.4 versus 10.1–3.

510 stades for the way from Phasis to the Hippos and 660 stades respectively from Phasis to Sebastopolis.

In support of reducing Arrian's distances, one may also adduce Eratosthenes and Strabo, who, as we remember, assessed the distance between Phasis and Dioskourias as 600 stades. This said, none of Arrian's explicit or implicit totals (510, 630, 660, 810) is a match, so that one might (once more) draw the conclusion that Arrian's calculus is independent from those two major authorities. But, upon closer inspection, this does not seem to be entirely true. In fact, the confusion in Arrian's numbers allows for some unexpected insights into the sources that he or his staff drew on. Many different hypothetical reconstructions are possible, but the following seems to be the most plausible and economic to me.

At some point, there must have been a *periplous* that measured the distance from Phasis to the 'recess' / Dioskourias / Aia as 600 stades, no matter whether this resulted in or originated from Eratosthenes' *Geography*. I call this '*periplous* A' or the 'archetype'. The author of a much later source related the same 600 stades to the stretch from Phasis to Sebastopolis / Dioskourias (B): this version must have located the Hippos 450 stades north of Phasis, whereas Sebastopolis came after another 150 stades west, the total remaining 600. A third author (C) conflated both traditions by duplicating the last section of 150: it first figured as the last distance before the Hippos / the 'recess' and once more as the last stretch to Sebastopolis, bringing the total up to 750 stades. This duplication must have been the main root for the confusion that we see in Arrian and the anonymous *periplous*. But this is not yet the only divergence. Further variation potentially crept in through 1) contamination between the traditions B and C, 2) singling out some of the stretches (e.g., Hippos to Sebastopolis = Hippos via Astelephos to Sebastopolis), and 3) further adjustments in response to the changing coastline (such as at the Phasis estuary). These were the mechanisms that let the distance swell to 810 stades in Arrian's account and to 825 stades in the anonymous *periplous*⁴³.

We can try to be more precise, while still openly admitting the hypothetical nature of our endeavour. The abovementioned archetypical *periplous* A might have run as follows: Phasis to Chobos: 120 stades (instead of the 90 + 90 claimed by Arrian); Chobos to Sigame 210 stades (maintained by Arrian and the anonymous *periplous*); Sigame to Gyenos 120 stades; another 150 stades to Dioskourias, possibly with a mention not of its main river but its northern boundary, the Hippos. It is historically relevant that the author of *periplous* A had a much shorter way from Phasis to the Chobos about half a millennium before Arrian embarked on his naval campaign. This seems to imply that Phasis City had a more direct access to the open sea (and thus also to the Charies), not yet inhibited by a sandbar which would later close up the Paleostomi Lake. This assumption can be supported by the short distance (4 miles) on land between Phasis City and Cariente on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

The essential variation of B was the identification of Dioskourias with Sebastopolis, perhaps with the modification of some topographic detail. In particular, the Hippos now became a nominal landmark on the way to Dioskourias, rather than its north-western

⁴³ The latter maintained all but the last of Arrian's summands, the distance from Atelaphos (sic) to Sebastopolis, which rose from 120 to 135 stades.

boundary. Author C contaminated versions A and B by maintaining the distance of 150 stades between Gyenos and the Hippos and adding a further 150 stades after the Hippos on the way to Dioskourias / Sebastopolis. Since neither author B nor C had any effective knowledge of Gyenos or Dioskourias / Aia, either of them could have been responsible for other adjustments, such as replacing Gyenos with Tarsouras (120 stades after Sigame) or introducing the Astelephos; likewise possible is that later editors (B², C²) were at work. One editor, who was no longer concerned with a total of 600 stades (as A and B had been), specified the stretch from Phasis to the Chobos by introducing the Charies as an intermediate station and bringing up the number of 120 to 180 (90 + 90) stades. I do not think that this was Arrian, because, in this case, he should have noticed that 150 stades for the distance between the Tarsouras and Hippos were too long. Whether the Roman governor operated with a single *periplous* (? C²) or had two different versions, which he clumsily combined into one should remain open.

This (even still hypothetical) reconstruction may also shed new light on the difficulties we encountered when trying to identify Chobos, Sigame and the Tarsouras in the previous section (7). While our first conclusions are not yet invalidated, we may still consider potential modifications. Reducing the distance between Phasis and Chobos to 120 stades would give us sufficient leeway to regard the ancient Chobos as the modern Kulevi rather than Churia. If so, my 'correction' of the distance of 210 stades to Sigame may have been rushed as well. It would be interesting to know what ultimately evoked Arrian's doubts about the length of the way to Sigame. Was it that he found the distance between the two landmarks (as he identified them) a bit shorter or was it that he found alternative indications in his written sources?

Another ramification pertains to Tarsouras: understanding that it was somewhat randomly chosen to replace Gyenos by author B or C, I no longer want to exclude the possibility of its identity with the Moches, as the anonymous *periplous* has it. My preference remains, however, its equation with the Ghalidzga, which better accounts for the 4 miles to the Hippos given in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. In addition, I would rather want to regard the Hippos and the Tarsouras as boundary rivers of Dioskourias / Aia, which was centered on the banks of the Anthemous / Moches respectively. Those names were no longer used by *periplous* writers who expected Dioskourias at Sebastopolis by the Kodori (whose ancient name escapes us).

Next, my equation of the last station prior to Dioskourias (until the Hippos) with Gyenos in the archetypical *periplous* A has so far been purely conjectural. One reason that led me to choose Gyenos is that it is the only *polis* mentioned in-between Dioskourias / Aia and Phasis by Pseudo-Skylax (*Asia* 81) in the fourth century BC, who also lists three otherwise unidentified rivers (Cherobios, Chorsos and Arios). This must have been a city of some size, but its harbour declined by the second century BC, whence it may no longer have been visible from the open sea.

Another argument can be developed from the distances reconstructed for the archetypical *periplous*: Gyenos as a station on the way from Phasis to Dioskourias was precisely three quarters (450/600) away from the former and one quarter (150/600) from the latter. The distance, although potentially rounded, implies more than that there were three posts altogether between the two major *poleis*, since the first was at a distance of 120 stades from Phasis and the second further away by 210 stades. The final proportion is

nearly paralleled by the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (despite its indication of a land route): the stretch from Phasis over Charies, Chobos, Sigame to Kyanes (3 + 16 + 19 + 4) adds up to 42 miles. Out of a total of 58 to the Hippos (Stempeo), this would yield 72.4%, but it is a fair assumption that the center of Dioskourias was located about 2 miles west of the Hippos, so that the relative distance to Kyanes / Gyenos would be $42/56 = 75\%$. Ptolemy's map points into the same direction by placing Phasis, Charioustos (Charies, confused with Chobos?), Neapolis / Siganeon, the estuary of the Kyaneos and the mouth of the Hippos at nearly equal distances from each other⁴⁴.

The distances that I have measured from the Phasis to the settlement by the Okumi River, my tentative identification of Gyenos, is ca. 6 + 13 + 27 + 3 = 49 km. Out of a total of 74 km to the Hippos, this only yields $49/74 = 66.2\%$, but if we reduce the distance by an adequate amount to reach the center of Dioskourias, the proportion will come quite close again, $49/71 = 69\%$. While I do not want to exclude the possibility that the site of Gyenos was located a bit further north I would still consider my current suggestion on the bank of the Okumi compatible with these figures. They contrast significantly with those resulting from the traditional locations of Gyenos at Ochamchire (ca. 71 km) and Sebastopolis at Sukhumi (120 km): if these were accepted, then the ratio would be $71/120 = 59.2\%$ – which is quite out of line with the ancient literary tradition.

The *Tabula Peutingeriana* permits us to pursue yet another path. Its route from Phasis to the Hippos (by Dioskourias / Aia) adds up to 58 miles (or ca. 56 respectively). For the remaining stretch from the Hippos over the Astelephos to Sebastopolis, Arrian gives 30 + 120 stades, whereas the *Tabula* provides 4 miles as the equivalent of the former number. We may fill the blank with an approximate $4 \times 4 = 16$ miles, so that the uncorrupted version of the *Tabula* would have rendered the total distance from Phasis to Sebastopolis around $58 + 4 + \text{ca. } 16 = \text{ca. } 78$ miles (ca. 117 km).

These figures may next help us put Pliny's information into perspective. As we remember, the Roman scholar assessed the distances from Phasis to Sebastopolis as 100 miles, from Sebastopolis to Herakleion as 70 miles and from Dioskourias to Herakleion as 100 miles. If correct, this yields distances of 70 miles from Phasis to Dioskourias and of 30 miles from the latter to Sebastopolis. A comparison with the *Tabula*, which also gives longer land routes rather than shorter sea distances, reveals that Pliny's figures are strongly inflated. We cannot know exactly where he got his numbers from, but, at least for the 70 miles from Phasis to Dioskourias, I would venture the suggestion that Pliny (or rather his source) drew on Eratosthenes' sea route defined as 600 stades. Pliny himself normally converted Eratosthenean stades to miles at a ratio of 8 to 1 (which would have yielded 75 miles); Polybios is known to have applied a rate of 8.3 (72 miles). Pliny's source thus either used a conversion rate closer to 8.5 (70.6 miles) or rounded down the result, though not yet enough to render it realistic⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 10.3; Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.2. Cf. the map of Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, 2, 853. But apart from the uncertainty regarding Charioustos, also note that the Hippos is located closer to Sebastopolis than to the Kyaneos, although this runs parallel to the erroneous distance of 150 stades between the Tarsouras and the Hippos in the *periploi* of Arrian and the anonymous author.

⁴⁵ Also see above, § 6, on Pliny's mile. For Polybios, see Arnaud 2005, 83–84.

At any rate, Pliny must have used a heterogeneous tradition, since he had knowledge of *Sebastopolis (castellum)* and still located it 30 miles further up the coast. If we apply the convenient standard of 1.5 km per Roman mile, this would take us some 45 km north-west from the Hippos to reach Sebastopolis. If, however, this distance is flawed by the same ratio as the previous 70 miles, then we may expect to find Sebastopolis after $123/177.42 \times 45 = 31.2$ km. But the original number would have to define the distance on land, to be compatible with the ca. 20 km on sea, which I have measured between the Hippos and Lake Skurcha. Pliny obviously drew on heterogeneous sources.

9. REVISITING ARRIAN'S *PERIPLUS* II: FROM SEBASTOPOLIS VIA PITYOUS
TO CAUCASIAN HERAKLEION

Although Arrian's own journey ended in Sebastopolis, his *Periplus Maris Euxini* covers the whole coastline of the Euxine. Plenty of scholarship on this region was available to him, even if it was often inconsistent or simply inaccurate. Used with some caution, however, Arrian's brief second-hand account is still the most important source for the distances of the north-eastern littoral, which we are going to follow up until Caucasian Herakleion. The first station Arrian mentions after Sebastopolis / Dioskourias is Pityous, which he reached after 350 stades. **Pityous is commonly identified with Pitsunda** (also Pitzunda, Bitchvinta), mainly due to the near-homophony with the modern name, but the material evidence from Pitsunda is very inconclusive, epigraphic material is absent and Arrian's distance does not take us thus far. A straight line from the north bank of the Kodori estuary to Cape Pitsunda measures about 70 km, from Lake Skurcha it would be about 5 km more. The sea route would thus be around 75 to 80 km, so that Arrian's stade would now measure some 220 m, which is simply too much⁴⁶.

A better fit would be the bank of the Apasta River, which is now at a distance of ca. 53 km from Lake Skurcha, thus nearly an exact match of Arrian's distance, if converted at a rate of 150 m / stade. An alternative candidate is the Khipsta River, at a distance of 60 km by sea from the Kodori or even 65 km from Lake Skurcha. The latter would, however, presuppose stades measuring ca. 186 m. Some unexpected support for the Khipsta may come from Ptolemy. Although this geographer misplaces *Pityous* on the southern coast of the Euxine (i.e. in north-east Asia Minor), the latitude of 71° seems to be a match of the Khipsta estuary, whereas it is far off from Pitsunda⁴⁷. Even better in line with Ptolemy's coordinates and with the average conversion rate for the stade in the present segment of Arrian's *periplus* would be a location covered by **present-day Gudauta**, where satellite images show the traces of former branches of the Khipsta. This would reduce the distance from Lake Skurcha to possibly as little as 55 km (as the crow flies),

⁴⁶ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.1; cf. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v42.

⁴⁷ Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.6.6 locates Pityous between Trapezous / Trabzon (70° 45') and Pontic Athens / Pazar (71° 15'). For the most part, coordinates in Ptolemy's *Geography* do not result from absolute geometrical data, but are approximations based on known, experienced or estimated distances to other places; see Arnaud 2005, 67. Irrespective of the coordinates, Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, 2, 515 take the identity of this Pontic Pityous with Caucasian Pityous for granted, although they map it in Pontos (p. 848) without comment. I assume that the mislocation may be due to the establishment of a Roman garrison in the generation after AD 132. See part I, appendix 2, for the history of Pityous.

and thus the conversion rate to 157 m / stade. To be on the safe side, let us take some middle ground, assume a harbour place in the modern city of Gudauta (on the cape just south of the present Khipsta estuary) and further round up the distance by 2 km, to allow for the usual manoeuvring. This adds up to 58.5 km, which yields a conversion rate of 167 m / stade, about the same that will be the average for the whole distance from Sebastopolis to Herakleion, as we shall soon see.

Arrian's next station was *Nitike*, if we read the manuscript ΣΤΘΗΝΝΙΤΙΚΗΝ as (εἰ)ς τὴν Νιτικὴν. His report is embellished with a brief digression on the local Scythians, whom Homer already characterized as 'people who dwell on fir cones' (φθειροτραγέοντες). Nothing helps us locate this tribe, other than the distance of 150 stades, which translates to 25 km, if we apply the aforesaid new conversion rate of 167 m⁴⁸. This takes us exactly to the Bzipi River, which is believed to have been known by the name of Korax in antiquity. Ptolemy calls this the northernmost boundary of Kolchis⁴⁹. Thereafter, Arrian details 90 stades / 15 km to the Abasgos River and another 120 stades / 20 km to the **Bogrys** River. We lack independent evidence for them (other than the anonymous *Periplus Maris Euxini*, which compiled Arrian's report with others). It is of little help to us that these names can be related to the Abchasian people in the north-west of Georgia and perhaps also to the Brouchoi, another Caucasian ethnic, because we do not know their whereabouts either⁵⁰. Arrian's distances suggest the identity of **the Abasgos with the Zhvaviakvara** (16 km) and of **the Bogrys with the Psou** (19 km), which merges into the sea just west of Adler.

This modern city is built on the namesake cape, where the littoral verges to the north again; 60 stades / 10 km further on, Arrian encountered **the Nesis. This must be the Mzytma River** (9 km), which reaches the sea by running south-west, thus nearly cutting through the middle of the cape. Previous branches of the delta may have merged up to 2 km further north. It is in this area where Arrian locates Ἡράκλειον ἄκρα and where we should expect the ruins of Pliny's *Heracleum oppidum*. **The compiler of the anonymous periplus gives Pyxites as another name of the ἄκρα**⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.1, referencing Hdt. 4.109. The commentators Silberman 1995, 50; Liddle 2003, 120 and Belfiore 2009, 209, n. 229 suggest the Gagra area 25 km north of Pitsunda; cf. Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, map 87. Also see Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v44: εἰς Σθηννιτικὴν χώραν (same distance).

⁴⁹ Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.10.1–2. See, e.g., Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, 1228; map 87 and Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, II, 541 for the identification with the Bzipi, also p. 854 for map *Asia* 3. Ptolemy lacks information for the further section from the Korax to Phanagoria, see the map *Europa* 8 (p. 807). I assume that the homonymy with the *Koraxoi*, whom Plin. *NH.* 6.5.15 names as the ethnic living around Dioskourias, is due to the Greek conception of Kolchis, see part I.4, n. 45.

⁵⁰ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.2; cf. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v45–46. Belfiore 2009, 209, n. 231–232 identifies the Abaskos with the modern Lapsta or Liapipista, whereas he equates the Borgys only with the ancient Bourka (Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.9.9) or Brouchon, which was also called Mizygos (Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v46). Cf. Silberman 1995, 15, n. 187 and 50, n. 186; Braund, Sinclair 1997/2000, map 87; Liddle 2003, 120. On the sources and the method of the anonymous compiler, see Diller 1952, 102–113.

⁵¹ Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 18.2; cf. Anon. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 9v46–10r1. On the Nesis / Mzynta, also see Belfiore 2009, 209, n. 233 and Liddle 2003, 121 (Mzynta). For Pliny and the further discussion on Herakleion / Adler, see part I, appendix 3.

Altogether, Arrian puts this cape at 770 stades from Sebastopolis. Applying the convenient rate of 150 m per stade, this would equal 115.5 km. This is not enough to match the effective sea route of no less than 129 km (following the anchorages listed by Arrian)⁵², possibly even a bit more, if we account for accessing harbours or avoiding sand banks. While we saw that Arrian's use of the stades for the route that he travelled and measured himself was up to 20% shorter than our convenient rate of 150 m, the stations after Sebastopolis, for which he was depending on literary sources, used a stade that was up to 15% longer, averaging around 167 m.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Throughout this study, I have addressed the obstacles to identifying the more famous ancient Greek cities on the eastern Euxine coast from Phasis City to Herakleion. Without better technology and more financial resources, we may never see the organization of excavations that may bring forth conclusive epigraphic or numismatic material. Only this may one day enable us to establish ultimate certainty about the cities' exact locations and historical developments. As long as we do not have such hard evidence at our disposition, we should try to make better sense of our ancient literary tradition. Admittedly, the currently prevailing views make frequent recourse to the written sources, where they seem to fit preconceived ideas. As far as I see, however, no convincing attempt has been made to explain the difficult evidence as a whole. I cannot claim to have solutions for every single problem, but I have tried to show that the combined documentation provided by Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, and the *Tabula Peutingeriana* allow for a solid basis to start from. Pomponius Mela, Claudius Ptolemy and the early-Byzantine anonymous *periplous* occasionally complete our evidence. By comparing the different strands of the tradition with each other and cautiously trying to apply it to the current coastline and riverbeds as accessible through *Google Maps / Earth*, we can identify and neutralize some of the gross errors that have crept into the literary accounts.

While conducting my research, I had to make repeated adjustments and modifications to my methodology and to my intermediate results. One important insight is that the use of any constant conversion rate of the ancient stade is inadmissible. In fact, even the standard equation of a Roman mile with 1.48 or 1.5 km is risky, if the information derives from a Greek literary work that operated with stades. Firm context data is required for a meaningful, if still approximative, conversion. More optimism is, however, inspired by the observation that the proportions within certain narrow contexts, such as Arrian's description of the *periplous* from Phasis to Sebastopolis, can be of high value. My high expectation of Arrian's diligence in measuring distances was shattered not due to occasional errors, which might be excused, but due to the fact that those shortcomings betrayed a very close dependency on literary sources which he did not bother to correct. On the positive side, his *modus operandi* allowed me to draft – even if hypothetically – the basic outline of an archetypical *periplous* probably dating to the fifth–third century BC: it either drew on or influenced Eratosthenes, who defined the distance between Phasis and Dioskourias as the canonical 600 stades. I have further suggested that major variations to this early account were due to the physical changes of the Kolchian coastline around

⁵² Sailing directly from Sebastopolis to Nesis would have been about 128 km.

Phasis and Gyenos in the Hellenistic period as well as to the refoundation of Dioskourias as Sebastopolis in the Augustan age.

If my study of these written sources holds ground, we should look for Phasis City somewhere near the north-eastern coast of the Paleostomi Lake. Gyenos was most likely located on the lower course of the Kyaneos / Okumi River, and Dioskourias should not be expected under the modern city of Sukhumi, but just north-west of Ochamchire, on the banks of the Hippos / Tskhenistsqali and Moches / Anthemous / Mokvi Rivers. The fortress city Sebastopolis was founded on Cape Kodori, possibly on the northern coast of Lake Skurcha (then a bay open to the sea), and absorbed the population of Dioskourias by the early first century AD. There is at least a possibility that its refoundation in the later years of Justinian's reign moved the city further westwards, perhaps as far as Sukhumi. Graeco-Roman Pityous was probably situated at the estuary of the Khipsta River, which then, however, merged into the sea closer to modern Gudauta. Its Byzantine refoundation migrated westwards to modern Pitsunda by the Korax / Bzipi River. Only in the case of Caucasian Herakleion, the traditional identification with Cape Adler has found confirmation in my re-evaluation of the literary evidence.

I close by once more admitting that some of my arguments are hypothetical or even partly circular. I have tried to counter-balance the potentially negative impact of that by drawing on a wide range of source genres and diversifying my methodological approach, evaluating topographic features, names related to a mythical land- and riverscape, and attested distances between rivers and *poleis*. My hope is thus to reopen the debate on the geography of ancient Kolchis or, ideally, to direct some scholars on the ground to uncover the one or other of the many secrets of Georgia's mysterious past.

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<i>Богданов И.В.</i> (Санкт-Петербург) – Потомки визиря <i>jww I</i> в Абидосе в начале I Переходного периода. Часть I. Обзор источников	589
<i>Суриков И.Е.</i> (Москва) – Сочинение Ферекида Афинского в контексте раннеклассического греческого историописания	609
<i>Печатнова Л.Г.</i> (Санкт-Петербург) – Роль Агесилая в «деле Сфодрия»	633
<i>Coşkun A.</i> (Waterloo, Canada) – (Re-) Locating Greek and Roman Cities along the Northern Coast of Kolchis. Part II. Following Arrian’s <i>Periplus</i> from Phasis to Sebastopolis	654
<i>Подосинов А.В.</i> (Москва) – Античные истоки средневековой картографии: проблема преемственности	675
<i>Захаров Г.Е.</i> (Москва) – Римский престол и Восточные Церкви в конфликте вокруг св. Иоанна Златоуста	697

В МУЗЕЙНЫХ СОБРАНИЯХ МИРА

<i>Большаков В.А.</i> (Москва) – Саркофаг жрицы Неситауджатахет из собрания Национального музея Республики Татарстан (дополнение)	712
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ИЗ ИСТОРИИ НАУКИ

<i>Панкратова Е.Г.</i> (Санкт-Петербург) – Последний председатель ГАИМК – Ф.В. Кипарисов (<i>Новые материалы к биографии</i>)	728
<i>Ананьев В.Г.</i> (Москва/Санкт-Петербург), <i>Бухарин М.Д.</i> (Москва) – С.А. Жебелёв в системе советской науки (<i>по материалам архивных документов</i>). Часть II. 1927–1932	753

КРИТИКА И БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ

<i>Обухов С.В.</i> (Москва) – А.Ж. А р у т ю н я н. Столица Великой Армении Тигранакерт в контексте армяно-римско-ближневосточных межгосударственных отношений (296–301 гг. н.э.). Ростов-на-Дону–Таганрог, 2019	775
<i>Бухарин М.Д.</i> (Москва) – N. N e b e s. Der Tatenbericht des Yīṭa‘amar Watar bin Yakrubmalik aus Širwāḥ (Jemen). Zur Geschichte Südarabiens im frühen 1. Jahrtausend vor Christus. Mit einem archäologischen Beitrag von Iris Gerlach und Mike Schnelle. Tübingen–Berlin, 2016	786
<i>Беликов Г.С.</i> (Москва) – R. H i r s c h - L u i p o l d, M. T r a p p (Hrsg.). Ist Beten sinnvoll? Die 5. Rede von Maximus von Tyros eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen von Barbara E. Borg, Franco Ferrari, Alfons Fürst, Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Michael Trapp, Vincenzo Vitiello. Tübingen, 2019	791

PERSONALIA

<i>Межеричкая С.И.</i> (Санкт-Петербург) – К 100-летию со дня рождения Н.А. Чистяковой.....	798
---	-----

К юбилею Веры Александровны Головиной	801
К юбилею Елены Валериевны Ляпустиной	803

НАУЧНАЯ ЖИЗНЬ

- Бугаева Н.В., Дурново М.В., Ладынин И.А., Обухов С.В., Сафронов А.В., Барышников А.Е.* (Москва) – XXI Сергеевские чтения на кафедре истории древнего мира исторического факультета МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова (Москва, 29 января – 2 февраля 2019 г.) 805
- Гвоздева И.А., Кириллова М.Н.* (Москва) – Научная конференция «Экономическая история античности в мировой историографии» (Москва, 30–31 января 2020 г.) 822

ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ

- Григорий Великий. Сардинские письма. Вступительная статья, перевод с латинского и комментарий Е.С. Марей* (Москва) 827

CONTENTS

I.V. Bogdanov (Saint Petersburg) – Descendants of Vizier *jww* I in Abydos in the Early First Intermediate Period. Part I. Overview of Sources 589

I.E. Surikov (Moscow) – Pherecydes of Athens’ Treatise in the Context of Early Classical Greek Historical Writing 609

L.G. Pechatnova (Saint Petersburg) – Agesilaus’ Role in the “Case Of Sphodrias” 633

A. Coşkun (Waterloo, Canada) – (Re-)Locating Greek and Roman Cities along the Northern Coast of Kolchis. Part II. Following Arrian’s *Periplus* from Phasis to Sebastopolis 654

A.V. Podossinov (Moscow) – Ancient Origins of Medieval Cartography: The Problem of Continuity 675

G.E. Zakharov (Moscow) – The Roman See and the Eastern Churches in the Conflict Around St. John Chrysostom 697

IN WORLD MUSEUMS

V.A. Bolshakov (Moscow) – Coffin of the Priestess Nesytaudjatakhet in the Collection of The National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (Addendum) 712

PAGES OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

E.G. Pankratova (Saint Petersburg) – F.V. Kiparisov, the Last Chairman of The State Academy of History of Material Culture (*New Materials for the Biography*) 728

V.G. Ananiev (Moscow/Saint Petersburg), *M.D. Bukharin* (Moscow) – S.A. Zhebelev in the System of Soviet Science (*Based on New Archival Findings*). Part II. 1927–1932 753

CRITICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS

S.V. Obukhov (Moscow) – A.Zh. Harutunyan. Stolitsa Velikoy Armenii Tigranakert v kontekste armyano-rimsko-blizhnovostochnykh mezhgosudarstvennykh otnosheniy (296–301 gg. n.e.). Rostov-na-Dony–Taganrog, 2019 775

M.D. Bukharin (Moscow) – N. Nebes. Der Tatenbericht des Yita’amar Watar bin Yakrubmalik aus Şirwāḥ (Jemen). Zur Geschichte Südarabiens im frühen 1. Jahrtausend vor Christus. Mit einem archäologischen Beitrag von Iris Gerlach und Mike Schnelle. Tübingen–Berlin, 2016 786

G.S. Belikov (Moscow) – R. Hirsch-Luipold, M. Trapp (Hrsg.). Ist Beten sinnvoll? Die 5. Rede von Maximus von Tyros eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen von Barbara E. Borg, Franco Ferrari, Alfons Fürst, Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Michael Trapp, Vincenzo Vitiello. Tübingen, 2019 791

PERSONALIA

S.I. Mezheritskaya (Saint Petersburg) – The 100th Anniversary of Natalia A. Chistyakova 798

The Anniversary of Vera A. Golovina 801

The Anniversary of Elena V. Lyapustina 803

 NEWS AND EVENTS

- N.V. Bugaeva, M.V. Durnovo, I.A. Ladynin, S.V. Obukhov, A.V. Safronov, A.Ye. Baryshnikov* (Moscow) – The 21st Sergeev Conference at the Department of Ancient History, Historical Faculty, Lomonosov Moscow State University (Moscow, January 29 – February 2, 2019) 805
- I.A. Gvozdeva, M.N. Kirillova* (Moscow) – Scientific Conference “Economical History of Antiquity in Global Historiography” (Moscow, January 30–31, 2020) 822

SUPPLEMENT

- Gregory the Great. Sardinian Letters. Introduction, Translation from Latin and Commentary *E.S. Marey* (Moscow) 827