

Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών

Τόμ. 10 (1993)



Eusebios on the founding of Trapezous

George Huxley

doi: [10.12681/deltiokms.93](https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.93)

Copyright © 2015, George Huxley



Άδεια χρήσης [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Huxley, G. (1993). Eusebios on the founding of Trapezous. *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών*, 10, 9–12.
<https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.93>

GEORGE HUXLEY

EUSEBIOS ON THE FOUNDING OF TRAPEZOUS

At present there is no archaeological evidence proving that Greeks had settled permanently anywhere on the shores of the Black Sea in the eighth century B. C. However, a single discovery could transform our notions concerning Greek penetration of the Euxine; and the recent finds of Mycenaean pottery at Maşat inland from Samsun¹ provide a warning against total reliance upon arguments from absence.

The purpose of the present paper is historiographical, not archaeological. We shall examine a statement in Eusebian chronography in order to determine what, if anything, is to be learned from it about early Greek settlement on the southeastern shore of the Pontos.

The statement is the Eusebian notice concerning Trapezous. In the Armenian version of the *Kanon* of Eusebios at 01.6.1 (Year of Abraham 1260) the foundation of Trapezous in Pontos is noted (p. 182 Karst)². A corresponding notice is not present in St Jerome's version (p. 88 Helm), but Georgios Synkellos (p. 252, 7 Mosshammer) preserves Σποράδην the entry ἐν Πόντῳ Τραπεζοῦς ἐκτίσθη, and in Michael the Syrian (*Chron.* 1.81 Chabot) the foundation is also mentioned. We need not doubt that Eusebios placed the foundation of Trapezous *circa* 757 B.C.

Xenophon (*Anab.* 4.8.22) calls Trapezous a Hellenic city in the land of the Kolchians and states that it was an ἀποικία of Sinope. If Trapezous was founded from Sinope, then, it has been suggested³, Sinope was founded earlier than 757. The argument is fragile, not least because the Eusebian date for the founding of Sinope is 01.37.2 (Jerome p. 96 1 Helm), 631 B.C., or 01.37.3 (Armenian version, p. 185 Karst, with *Sinope* corrupted to *Sidon*). There is no

1. C. Mee, *Anatolian Studies* 28, 1978, pp. 132-133. M. J. Mellink, *A. J. A.* 88, 1984, p. 445. and 89, 1985, p. 558.

2. Armenian text in J. B. Aucher, *Eusebii Pamphili Chronicon Bipartitum* II, Venice 1818, p. 174.

3. For example, by D. M. Robinson, *Ancient Sinope*, Baltimore 1906, p. 148.

reason to reject Xenophon's statement that Trapezous was founded from Sinope; but even if there had existed a Greek settlement in the eighth century at Trapezous, such an establishment — of unspecified origin — cannot be assumed to have survived the Kimmerian assault upon northeastern Asia Minor; so Xenophon may be supposed to refer to a Sinopean foundation at Trapezous not earlier than the third quarter of the seventh century — that is, in Eusebian terms, to a foundation later than *circa* 631 B.C. (01.37.2).

There are, however, textual grounds in the *Kanon* for doubting that an eighth-century settlement of Greeks at Trapezous ever existed. Two years before the mention of Trapezous in the Armenian text there is a corrupt reference to the founding of Kyrene by Battos-Aristoteles (Year of Abraham 1258, 01.5.3, p. 181 Karst). The equivalent notice in St Jerome is at 01.4.3 (762 B.C., p. 87 h Helm). The founding of Kyrene by Battos recurs at 01.37.1 (632 B.C.) in St Jerome (p. 96 k Helm) and at 01.37.2 (Year of Abraham 1385) in the Armenian version (p. 185 Karst). Battos, as the narrative of Kyrenaian reigns in Herodotos (4.150-167) shows, lived in the second half of the seventh century, not in the eight. The earlier reference to him in Eusebios comes from a different system of chronology, a system in which higher dates are preferred. St Jerome lacks a corresponding mention of Trapezous at or near 01.6.1, but his text has another high date in the vicinity — *Thales Milesius physicus philosophus agnoscitur* apperas at 747 B.C. (01.8.2, p. 88 k Helm). Thales recurs at 01.35.1 (640 B.C., p. 96 b Helm): *Thales Milesius Examis filius, primus physicus philosophus agnoscitur, quem aiunt vixisse usque ad ·LVIII· Olympiadem*. The mention of Trapezous may also belong to the same unhistorically high system of chronology. The origin of the system is not clear: Phlegon of Tralles, whom Eusebios used⁴, may be responsible, since he is reported to have given a high date (01.7) to the philosopher⁵; this is close to the earlier of St Jerome's dates for Thales (01.8.2). Since the high dates for Battos and Thales are in error, and since the notice of Trapezous may belong to the same erroneous system, no archaeological argument should be based upon the statement in the Armenian version of the *Kanon* that Trapezous was founded in 01.6.1.

The seventh-century date in St Jerome (631 B.C.) for the founding of Sinope can be reconciled with the archaeological evidence, since Corinthian pottery of the late seventh century has been found in burial there⁶. The date is also consistent with the statement of Herodotos (4.12) that Kimmerians settled on the chersonese of Sinope, where the Greek *polis* lay in his time, since the Kimmerians can be supposed to have departed as early as 631. The post-Kim-

4. Jerome, *Chron.* p. 174, 23 Helm, ²Berlin 1956 (Phlegon, *F. Gr. Hist.* 257 F 16). Arm. vers. p. 125, 17 Karst.

5. Suda 17 Adler (*F. Gr. Hist.* 257 F 33).

6. E. Akurgal and L. Budde, *Vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Sinope*, Ankara 1956, pp. 5-6. J. G. F. Hind, *Arch. Reports* 30, 1983-84, p. 95.

merian settlement at Sinope is that ascribed to Koios and Kretines, exiles from Miletos, who were reputed to have arrived when Kimmerians were still overrunning Asia Minor (though the marauders had, it is implied, by then departed from the chersonese of Sinope)⁷.

It is said that another Milesian, Abron, arrived at Sinope earlier than Koios and Kretines⁸. Abron is reputed to have been killed by Kimmerians; so he may have arrived as early as 700 B.C., but his settlement, if it ever existed, cannot have lasted long, and it is not likely to be archaeologically obvious. None of these local tales from Sinope supports the hypothesis that Trapezous already existed as a Greek settlement in the eighth century.

Two other references to Sinope deserve mention: — (1) Nikolaos of Daskalos, who may be following Xanthos of Lydia, states that Daskylos, the father of Gyges of Lydia, fled to the Syroi who dwelt above Sinope and there married a woman of the Syroi⁹. The tale implies that Sinope existed as a named place about 700 B.C., but Nikolaos does not show that Sinope was then settled by Greeks. (2) Eumelos the Corinthian poet, who is said to have been an older contemporary of Archias the founder of Syracuse¹⁰, called Sinope a daughter of Asopos¹¹. The context is lost: the poet, writing sometime in the second half of the eighth century, may have mentioned her in connexion with the *Argonautica*, since he had something to say about Aietes and Kolchis¹². But the fragment does not indicate that there was a Greek settlement at Sinope in his time¹³; and the story according to which Sinope, having been taken by Apollo from Hyrie in Boiotia, became by the god the mother of Syros¹⁴, the eponymous ancestor of the Syroi, suggests that her mythical connexions were rather with indigenous Anatolians than with incoming Greeks (others held Sinope to have been an Amazon)¹⁵. Neither Nikolaos nor Eumelos invalidates the inference from the textual tradition of Eusebian chronography that Trapezous was not founded from Sinope before the seventh century B.C.

To doubt that Trapezous was founded in the eighth century is not to assert

7. Ps. - Skymnos, *Fragmenta Periegeseos ad Nicomedem Regem*, pp. 994-997, ed. A. Diller, *The Tradition of the Minor Greek Geographers*, Lancaster, Pa. 1952, p. 175. Phlegon, *F. Gr. Hist.* 257 F 30, also mentioned Koios and Kretines. See also M. I. Maksimova, *Antichnye Goroda Yugo-Vostochnovo Prichernomor'ya* (M./L. 1956) pp. 46-47.

8. Ps.-Skymnos, ed. cit., note 7 *supra*, pp. 992-993.

9. *F. Gr. Hist.* 90 F 46.

10. Clem. Alex., *Strom.* 1.21 (p. 82, 4-5 Früchtel), interpreted by T. J. Dunbabin, *J.H.S.* 68, 1948, p. 76, note 73.

11. Schol. Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 2.946-954c (p. 197, 1-2 Wendel).

12. Schol. Pind., *Ol* 13.74 (1.373, 14-16 Drachmann).

13. So it does not indicate that there was a Corinthian settlement. See J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth*, Oxford 1984, p. 62, note 32, in criticism of R. Drews, *J.H.S.* 96, 1976, pp. 18-31, at 26.

14. Schol. Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 2.946-954c (p. 196, 15-17 Wendel).

15. Ps.-Skymnos (note 7 *supra*) pp. 986-987.

that late eighth-century Greeks knew nothing about Pontic geography. Rivers flowing into the Black Sea are mentioned in Hesiod's *Theogony* (337-345) and Eumelos said that Borysthenis was a Muse and a daughter of Apollo¹⁶; so both poets had heard something about the far northeast beyond the Propontis¹⁷. There are also hints of early trade or exploration in the archaeological record — the part of a late Geometric cup from Istros and a complete middle Geometric jug reliably reported to have come from Berezanj island¹⁸. But exploration preceded settlement; the eighth century was a time of exploration¹⁹; and neither excavation nor Eusebian chronography confirms the notion of an eighth-century settlement at Trapezous.

16. F 17 Kinkel (Tzetz. ad Hes., *Op.*, 1. p. 23 Gaisford). A possible context is Apollo's journeying to and from the Hyperboreans (G. Hermann, *De Musis fluvialibus Epicharmi et Eumeli*, 1819, pp. 15-16).

17. Another Pontic river, the Parthenios of Paphlagonia, is mentioned in the Trojan Catalogue in *Iliad* B (854). T. W. Allen asserted concerning B 853-855 «non legerunt Eratosthenes et Apollodoros ap. Strab. 298, 553 (*Homeri Ilias* 2, Oxford 1931, 73 app. crit.); but even if that were true, the lines could still belong to the original catalogue and represent a late eighth century view of the Paphlagonian coastlands. For criticism of Allen see Drews (note 13 *supra*).

18. J. N. Coldstream, *Greek Geometric Pottery*, London 1968, p. 377. A. J. Graham, *C.A.H.*² 3.3, 1982, p. 123. The seller of the jug stated that it came from Berezanj island: B. Pharmakowsky, *Arch. Anz.* 1910, p. 227, fig. 27.19. Search for metals is likely to have been a motive for sailing east of Sinope, and when Greeks finally settled at Trapezous the mines around Gümüşhane were an attraction: Maksimova (note 7 *supra*) pp. 22-24. Prentiss de Jesus, *Anatolian Studies* 28, 1978, pp. 97-102. Group 4. For routes leading southwards from Trebizond see Anthony Bryer and David Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* 1, Washington, D. C. 1985, pp. 48-51.

Addendum 1994. No reliance should be placed upon the Berezanj «find» of a Middle Geometric II hydrikos. No pottery earlier than the late seventh century has been excavated there; the dealer's provenance, stated in 1909, should not be trusted. The Euboian Late Geometric fragments alleged to have come from Istria may be in fact from Al Mina. See John Boardman, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 10 (3), 1991, pp. 387-390.

This is the text of a paper also published in the 1987 Vani Symposium (Tbilisi). Attempts to obtain approval of the reprint from the authorities in Georgia failed owing to postal difficulties. The priority of the organisers of the Symposium is acknowledged, with thanks.