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**The Careless Representation of the Black Sea on the Tabula Peutingeriana
and the Map’s Possible Origin under Julius Caesar**

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Abstract:

The Greek colony Trapezus is located in Pontic Asia Minor in the south-eastern angle of the Black Sea littoral, but the Tabula Peutingeriana locates it on the north-eastern coast. Alexander Podossinov has recently argued that this error should be traced to the naval campaign of Marcus Agrippa in 14 BCE. This deputy of Augustus wrote geographical notes on which the world map in the Porticus Vipsania in Rome was based. However, Agrippa should have been much more familiar with the geography of the Black Sea. Pliny credits him with substantial knowledge especially on the western and northern Euxine coastlines, which is incompatible with the flaws resulting in the poor coverage of the Black Sea on the Tabula: not even the two capital cities Pantikapaion and Phanagoreia are included, and even worse, the Maiotis appears as an inland lake with no access to the sea. At any rate, Agrippa must have been aware of the mapping project initiated by Julius Caesar, but concluded only between 30 and ca. 20 BCE. This new wealth of information was not yet available to Caesar himself and his staff, when planning the instant Parthian campaign in 44 BCE without being overly concerned with Black Sea geography. The final phase of Caesar’s dictatorship might thus have formed the context for a first, rushed, and flawed, yet highly authoritative mapped itinerary of the whole known world that gradually developed into the Tabula Peutingeriana. Over the next five centuries, some parts of it were revised, while others (such as on the northern shore of the Black Sea) were not.

A similar argument is forthcoming as ‘TRAPEZUS IN KOLCHIS. Part I: The Origin of the Tabula Peutingeriana under Julius Caesar’ in A. Podossinov (ed.), *The Black Sea Region in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Problems of Historical Geography* (The Earliest States of Eastern Europe, 23), Moscow 2023.