

Theches: an elusive mountain

Shane G. Brennan and Christopher J. Tuplin

American University in Dubai, UAE, and University of Liverpool, UK
propontis@gmail.com, c.j.tuplin@liv.ac.uk

Abstract

This article deals with the location of Mount Theches, the vantage point from which Xenophon's Ten Thousand famously got their first sight of the sea after a long and arduous march across eastern Anatolia. It discusses what the written sources can and cannot tell us about this iconic spot, comments on the currently favoured identification (stressing its dependence on an assumption about the route the army followed to and from the vantage point), and presents three other places that can come into contention if different assumptions are made about the route. The aim is not to insist that one or other of these is the correct solution but rather to underline the point that, since we do not (and are never likely to) know how the Ten Thousand approached Theches, and since there are many points in the Pontic Mountains behind Trabzon from which the sea can be glimpsed in the far distance, the identity of Theches is a problem that does not admit of more than conjectural solution. This prompts broader reflections on the textual and the topographical, and the relationship between landscape and narrative.

Özet

Bu makale, Ksenophon'un On Binler'inin Doğu Anadolu boyunca yaptıkları uzun ve zorlu bir yürüyüşten sonra denizi ilk kez gördükleri seyir noktası olan ünlü Theches Dağı'nın konumunu ele almaktadır. Bu çalışma, yazılı kaynakların bu ikonik nokta hakkında bize ne söyleyip ne söyleyemeyeceğini tartışmakta ve şu anda tercih edilen tanımlama hakkında yorum yapmakta (ordunun seyir noktasına gidip geldiği rotanın bir varsayıma bağlı olduğunu vurgulayarak) ve rota hakkında farklı varsayımlar yapılırsa tartışma konusu olabilecek diğer üç yeri sunmaktadır. On Binlerin Theches Dağı'na nasıl ulaştığını bilmediğimizden (ve olasılıkla hiçbir zaman bilemeyeceğimizden), amaç bunlardan birinin ya da diğerinin doğru çözüm olduğunda ısrar etmek değildir. Altı çizilmek istenen nokta, Trabzon'un arkasındaki Pontus Dağları'nda denizin uzaktan görülebildiği pek çok nokta olduğundan, Theches'in kimliğinin, varsayımsal çözümden fazlasını kabul etmeyen bir sorun olduğudur. Bu da, coğrafya ile hikaye arasındaki ilişki hakkında metinsel ve topografik açıdan daha geniş değerlendirmelere yol açmaktadır.

An article by Jane Rempel and Owen Doonan in a recent issue of *Anatolian Studies* on the rural hinterlands of the Black Sea makes brief allusions to material in Xenophon's *Anabasis* relating to such hinterlands in northern Anatolia, rightly describing Xenophon's work as an important source for understanding cultural and economic conditions along the southern coast of the Black Sea at the end of the fifth century BC (Rempel, Doonan 2020). For a more detailed exposition of this material one may turn to an earlier article by Doonan (2019). In this he argues that the data Xenophon provides in *Anabasis* V about the Drilans, Mossynoecans and Tibarenians – peoples in the region

between Trabzon and Sinop – provide a framework that makes sense of the archaeological phenomena (specifically the settlement pattern) of the Sinop peninsula. His points are well taken (the enterprise could in fact be extended to *Anabasis* IV), and he has made a sound case for the reciprocal validation of the archaeologist's reading of survey data from a real landscape and the historian's reading of socio-economic data embedded in a Greek historiographical text.

In this article we are doing something both similar to and different from these earlier studies. It is similar in that we too are looking at the relationship between Xenophon's *Anabasis* and the landscape behind the Greek colonies of

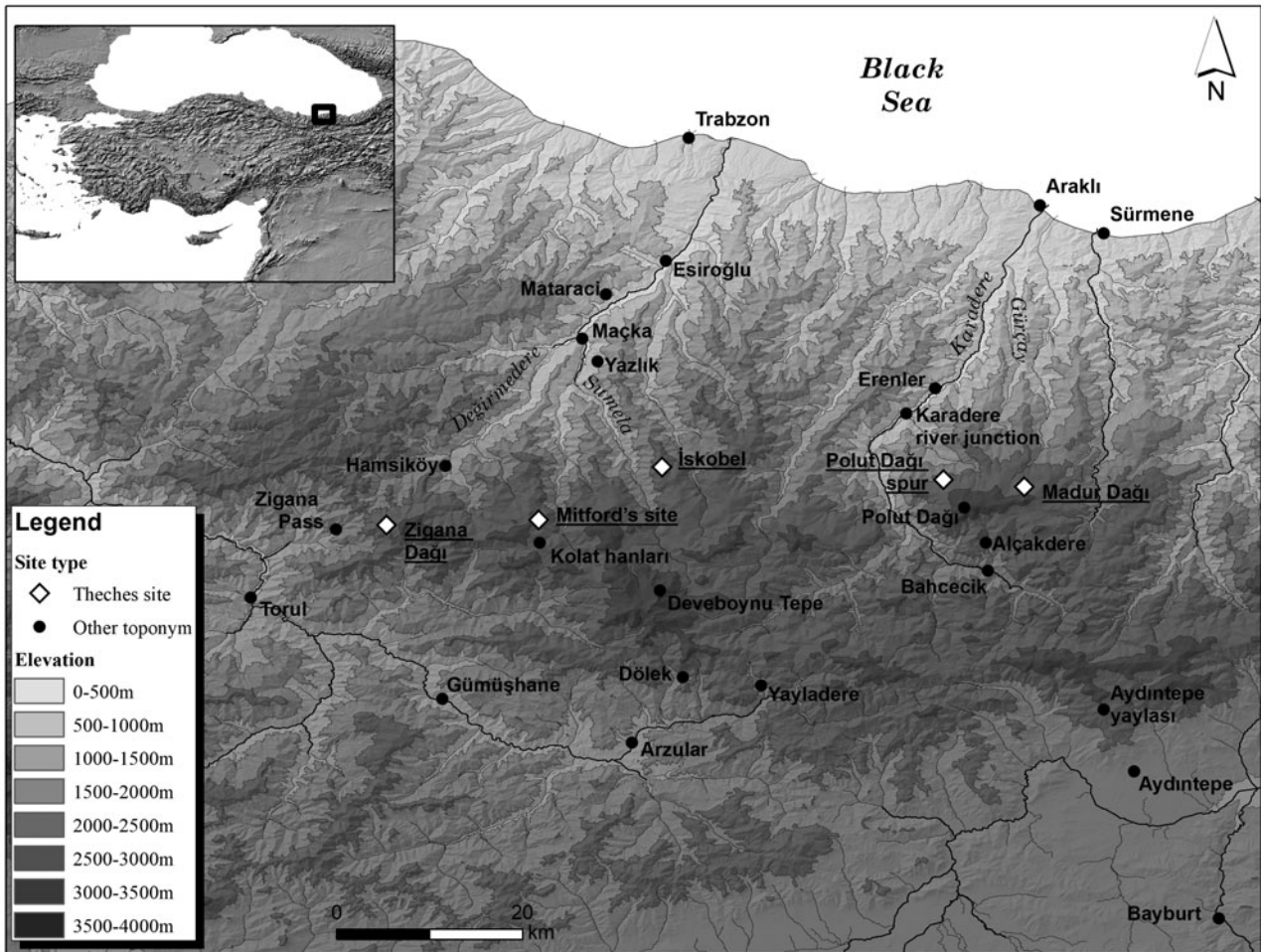


Fig. 1. Places in the Pontic Mountain region relevant to the search for Mount Theches (map by Michele Massa).

the North Anatolian coast – specifically the landscape south of Trabzon, which is one to which Doonan’s argument can be extended. But it is different in that we are looking at the relationship between Xenophon’s text and a very particular spot in the landscape – one that is precisely not a settlement site, even if it was not far from one. And it is also different in that Doonan’s contention is that text and ground marry rather well, whereas our contention is that marrying ground and text is probably not possible. Nonetheless we shall also suggest that the two enterprises have much in common methodologically speaking and that the experience of attempting to locate a particular spot tends to accentuate the qualities in an ancient narrative that are of genuine value to the modern historian and archaeologist.

The particular spot in which we are interested is the site on the mountain named Theches from which the Ten Thousand first glimpsed the waters of the Black Sea (Xenophon *Anabasis* 4.8.21). Among the many places described by Greek historians whose precise real world location has proved controversial, this is arguably the most iconic – an iconic quality beautifully explored by

Tim Rood (2004). But the problem presented by the attempt to locate it is not unique in character. On the contrary, it is actually a small-scale version of a problem about routes and locations that is characteristic of *Anabasis* IV as a whole (Tuplin, Brennan 2022). We know where the journey past Theches ends (at Trabzon) and we can be confident that it starts 110–40km (by modern roads) from Trabzon in the Bayburt-Gümüşhane region (i.e., the area of rolling highlands south of the Pontic Mountains), but in between we are at sea. This is to say that Theches is a problem about routes as much as one about spot-location. In what follows we explore some of the implications of that fact. The investigation falls into two parts of unequal length. In the first and longer section (A) we begin with a summary of the historical background, then offer some remarks on the literary sources before going on to describe and discuss conjectural sites in three parts of the Pontic Mountains. In the second section (B) we place the conclusion we have reached about the search for Theches in broader perspective and return to the articles by Doonan and Rempel with which we started.

A) Searching for Mount Theches

Background

In 401 BC the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger, based in Sardis in western Anatolia, assembled a force of Greek mercenaries and regional levies with the stated aim of expelling the Pisidians from his territory. His real intention, however, was to march to Babylon to contest the royal throne. Cyrus was killed later that same year in the battle with his older brother, King Artaxerxes, but the Greek contingent survived remarkably intact and, following negotiations, began a long and arduous march home. In the early stages they were accompanied by a Persian force led by the satrap Tissaphernes, who managed to seize a number of the Greek commanders in a ruse and then funnel the army northwards into the mountains of eastern Anatolia. After a winter battling the elements and hostile tribes, the Ten Thousand, as they became known, reached the Black Sea and then made their way along the coast to Byzantium. The moment they first sighted the sea on Mount Theches was famously evoked by Xenophon the Athenian in his account of the march in *Anabasis*. In his telling, he was at the head of the rearguard when shouting became audible; the noise grew louder, and as he pressed forward with the cavalry it resolved into the cry of *thalatta thalatta*: ‘The sea, the sea!’

Literary sources for Mount Theches

In the search for Theches, Xenophon’s account is not the only text that theoretically comes into question. Two other authors, Diodorus and Arrian, do have things to say on the subject, but neither of them provides anything that is determinatively useful.

Diodorus

The first-century BC universal historian Diodorus included a summary of Cyrus’s expedition and its aftermath in the 14th book of his work. For the most part this is consistent with Xenophon’s account, and it is debatable whether the relatively few points of difference demonstrate that his ultimate source was independent of Xenophon. (On Diodorus’s summary see Cawkwell 2004; Stylianou 2004; Thomas 2021a; 2021b.) So far as our topic is concerned, there are two divergences from what we find in *Anabasis*, namely that Diodorus calls the mountain *Khēnion* (‘gosling’) and says that it lay 15 (not five) days’ march from Gymnias (14.29), but both of these are normally regarded as due to errors in the manuscript tradition, Diodorus’s text having originally contained the name *Thēkhēs* and the figure five, just as in Xenophon. Iordanis Paradeisopoulos (2013; 2014) is unusual in accepting that Diodorus really did put the mountain 15 days from Gymnias, but he still has the army approach Theches from

the Bayburt region, so his view makes no fundamental difference to the problem of identifying the place from which the army first saw the sea. (Its effect is simply to relocate Gymnias far to the east in what is now the Republic of Armenia. The normal view is that it was somewhere in the Gümüşhane-Bayburt region.) Diodorus, therefore, has nothing useful to contribute and can be left out of account.

Arrian

One of Xenophon’s biggest admirers in antiquity, Arrian opened his second-century AD account of the shores of the Black Sea (*Periplus Ponti Euxini*) with an extended reference to *Anabasis* (see Rood 2011). This has been read as asserting that Arrian and Hadrian looked at the Black Sea from Xenophon’s mountain top in the first half of the second century AD and that there was a monument on the spot at the time. But it does not *have* to be read as saying that (‘we looked down’ on the sea is adequately explained by the height of the acropolis of Trapezus), and the idea of an imperial statue and temple of Hermes (both requiring replacement or adjustment) on the heights of the Pontic Alps seems more romantic than reasonable. It is possible that Arrian is being playful and would like his readers momentarily to imagine that they are on the *thalatta thalatta* spot, but that is the closest the text brings us to Mount Theches (a name that he does not mention). In any case, even if there was in fact a monument on the mountain-top in Arrian’s time, we doubt that it would be good evidence about the situation when Xenophon was there, because we are not keen to believe that a precise and reliable local tradition about the spot survived in Trapezus for over 500 years.

As it became one of the city’s claims to fame that the Ten Thousand had been there, local people acquired an interest in being able to say where Theches was, and so long as the *kolōnos* (the cairn built by the soldiers) survived there was theoretically some evidence about the spot. One may be forgiven, however, for doubting that it survived for centuries or that it was a unique object in the mountains behind Trapezus, given the universal predilection for making stone-piles on high places. Over time identifications would very likely migrate towards whatever was the currently most commonly used route over the mountains. But nothing in *Anabasis* demands that the route used by the Ten Thousand was the primary one at the time (whatever that was, which we do not know), and if it was not, nothing demands either that this fact was remembered or that later shifts in the standard route brought it into alignment with the one the Ten Thousand used.

The only other potentially long-lasting guide was the name Theches, for which Xenophon is the only source. The place where the Ten Thousand first saw the sea was an *oros* (mountain) called Theches, and Xenophon knew

this because someone had told him: either the guide provided the name at the time or he sought the information retrospectively from the Macronians (whom the army encountered shortly afterwards) or from the Trapezuntines. Three questions arise. (1) Did the informant use a name that he regarded as designating a fairly limited area or even a particular site? (2) Did other people in the area habitually use the name in the same way? (3) Did their local descendants go on using the name in exactly the same way? We can only be confident that the name would have provided a reliable marker for the *thalatta thalatta* spot in Arrian's time if the answer to all three questions is yes. We do not think it unreasonable to doubt that that is the case.

Moreover it is not even certain that the answer to question (1) is yes. Greek use of *oros* is flexible: a named *oros* can embrace a mountain range, as well as a more sharply defined peak, and the mountain range can be very large; for example, Rhodope (along the Greek-Bulgarian border) or Boeum (the mountain chain stretching from Kastoria nearly to Delphi: Strabo 7 fr. 1.6) or Haemus (the entire massif of the Balkan Mountain) or the Apennines (which stretch well over a thousand kilometres along the spine of Italy). We do not, of course, suggest that Theches was the name of the entire Pontic Alps, or even of the section east of Trabzon (though there is no reason why that might not have had a name), but we do insist that *oros* can also designate more modest elongated systems, as is the case with Cithaeron (16km) or Geraneia (30km) on the northern and western edges of Attica. The reader's initial reaction to *Anabasis* 4.7.21 may be that Theches names a rather distinctive spot within the mountain landscape through which the army had to get to see and then reach the sea – a spot that might be peculiarly associated with just one route. But that reaction may be unjustified. The area involved – the set of places running west to east from which distant views of the sea first actually become possible – embraces long, rather featureless stretches (the very high equivalent of grassy moorland), as well as places that are more distinctive (geographical peaks that stand out within a fairly wide area or notable features of more local significance). Since we do not know in what terms the question was posed or who the informant was or exactly where the army crossed the Pontic Mountains, it is perfectly possible that from the outset Theches designated a sector rather than a precise spot. This is perhaps least likely if the name came from the guide, but we do not think it can be ruled out even then; and if it came from the Trapezuntines it may count as quite probable. The sector need not be very large, but it could easily be large enough to embrace more than one precise route.

So, although the name Theches may look promising as a basis on which someone in Arrian's time (or at any time back from then until 400) could have known exactly where the Ten Thousand first saw the sea, this is not the case, not

only because in general toponyms and oronyms change over time, but because it might never have served as such a basis. There is a certain poetic justice in the fact that, having appeared in Xenophon and presumably in Diodorus or his source (before it got corrupted to *Khēnion*), it is never found again in surviving Greek or Latin literature. This is not, of course, proof that the name did not remain current in the region well after 400, but it is salutary to be reminded that the modern habit of using Theches as a convenient label for the *thalatta thalatta* spot is a habit without an ancient equivalent. The truth is that nobody who did not independently know the location of the army's viewpoint was demonstrably any better off from being given the name Theches. One needed to know the route they actually used, and one cannot reasonably hold that Arrian provides any evidence on that point. And if (which is doubtful) he provides evidence about what the route was *thought* to be, it was the result of exactly the same sort of process of conjecture that the modern topographer is entitled (indeed obliged) to follow.

Xenophon

Xenophon's evidence, given in full in Appendix 1, is all we have to work with. But it is frustrating.

The description of the spot itself contains no features that distinguish it with certainty among the various places in the Pontic Mountains from which the sea could be seen in the distance. The availability of stones to make the cairn, the possibility of cavalry access and the presence of a village nearby cannot individuate a site. Nor can the guide's confidence that the sea would be visible in the climatic conditions at the time. (He was a brave man: the Theches literature has several examples of weather precluding an expected sea view, and we had a similar experience during a research trip to the area in May 2017.) Xenophon uses both *akron* (peak) and *oros* (mountain) in the course of his description (4.7.21, 25), but nothing demands either that we distinguish the two, or that we invest the *akron* with particular qualities (other than 'topness' in relation to a road): there is lexical and semantic *variatio*, but the phrases using the words can be taken as conveying the same thing. It is true that nothing precludes such a distinction either, and some may feel that (even if the text as such is entirely non-committal) Xenophon frames the story as he does because he knows there was a distinction. So there is something here that might theoretically act as a *differentia* between candidate sites, but it would have little or no weight if there were significant countervailing considerations, and perhaps cannot be relied upon in any circumstances.

The journey to Theches starts at a place we cannot precisely locate (though its general area is clear), and – equally importantly – takes a length of time that we cannot convert into an indication of distance: Xenophon tells us

of elaborate land-ravaging operations (4.7.19–20), and this means that the journey from Gymnias to the viewpoint was at least somewhat circuitous and would not normally take five days. This is also why (unlike their marches immediately before and after) the trip is not computed in stages and parasangs. How high into the mountains ravaging operations would have been pointful is hard to say. It is possible that they only started the real ascent towards Theches on the fourth day.

The route from Theches ends at Trapezus, but otherwise lacks firmly identifiable features in just the same way as in most of the rest of *Anabasis* IV (Tuplin, Brennan 2022); the river junction (reached within a day) and Colchian Mountain (reached in three days) – though given non-banal descriptions both directly and within the associated narrative (4.8.1–8, 9–18) – have not (yet) proved distinctive enough to settle the question. The fact that the route at the river-junction was not habitually used by groups of 8,000 does not serve to distinguish between candidates, and existing modern identifications fail to achieve the degree of distinctive certainty that could settle the Theches issue, though their proponents doubtless feel otherwise. As for the Colchian Mountain, Valerio Manfredi's candidate at Zigana (1986: 224–25, with plate 35) looks much more like what Xenophon implies – that the soldiers climb to a laterally quite extensive ridge – than either Otto Lendle's or Gustav Gassner's (see below, 'Conjectural sites'), for they represent it as simply a local upward section on a (generally) downward *Kammweg* (ridgeway). But Manfredi's identification entails a version of the Theches visit that is rather hard to accept. (He has the army go north to Theches, descend back to the south and then go north again to the Colchian Mountain, thus climbing the Pontic Mountains twice.) Tim Mitford offers no opinion on the matter (2000: 130). The poisonous honey of the Colchian villages (4.8.19–21) might, of course, be encountered anywhere in the valleys of the region at the right time of year.

More generally, one should firstly bear in mind that, like the Gymnias *arkhōn* in 4.7.19–20, the Macronians may have guided the army in a particular direction in the hope or explicit expectation that they would cause damage to their enemies rather than showing them a direct route to Trapezus. Secondly (as elsewhere in *Anabasis* IV; see Tuplin, Brennan 2022: 110–12), it cannot be assumed that the parasang figures recorded for the Theches-Trapezus journey either represent distances of 30 stades (5.32km) or provide straightforward evidence about the route. The overall daily rate of 3.4 parasangs is well below the *Anabasis* average, and nearly the lowest figure: the army only moves more slowly when in formation just before the battle with the King at Cunaxa (1.7.14), and they do far better in all other

formulaic march-records in eastern Anatolia. But the figure may be misleading. The seven parasangs from the 'mad honey' villages to Trapezus is two *stathmoi*, but perhaps not a full two days: they were bound to stop at Trapezus, and perhaps got there relatively early on the second day. Similarly with the three days (10 parasangs) to the Colchian border: they had to stop there to fight, and they may have arrived only shortly into the third day, as there is no suggestion the battle did not happen that same day. At any rate the similarity in daily parasang rate between the two legs of the journey (3.3 and 3.5 respectively) might mask a greater difference in their character. Existing identifications of the Macronian border entail different (air-line) distances to Trapezus (see below, 'Conjectural sites').

That the site was on a proper route over the mountains is clear. There was a visible way onwards (*hodos* in 4.7.27 is perhaps 'road', not just 'route') with a village nearby: the guide returned homewards at night (surely on a well-defined path), parasang counting is resumed (a literary marker of orderly travel) and the fact that Xenophon thought an enemy was attacking the front of the line makes most sense if they were on the road over a *huperbolē* (pass) – as on various occasions earlier in IV (4.1.10, 4.1.20–4.2.22, 4.2.24, 4.4.18–22, 4.6.5–27, 4.8.9–19). Moreover there was no point in the guide taking them somewhere really out of the way, when there were many sea-viewing points along the spine of the mountains, and some were bound to lie on or very near to established routes. The problem is simply that the data Xenophon supplies cannot fix a particular route. Any solution entails making an assumption about the route. But – and this is the crucial point – once an assumption is made, a potential site will pretty certainly present itself.

Conjectural sites

At its most extensive, the list of sites proposed for Theches over the last two centuries stretches over a distance of nearly 200 kilometres, and it embraces a number of distinct geographical areas (see Appendix 2). But what we regard as realistic solutions lie across a more modest space of about 50km in the Western, Central and Eastern sectors, as defined in Appendix 2, and it is to sites in these sectors that we now turn. (For a map see fig. 1.) We start with the three sites towards the western end of the spectrum that figure in the most prominent recent discussions of the problem and then move to three more easterly locations that have attracted less attention.

Western Sector and Central Sector (West)

The current leading contender for the *thalatta thalatta* spot is that proposed by Tim Mitford (2000). It is based on the assumption that the army was following the equivalent of

a later Roman road. If one makes that assumption – a perfectly fair assumption, but not one for which the sources provide actual evidence – then Mitford’s site is a palmary solution, although points slightly further south on the same road might already have afforded a glimpse of the sea.

It is also a solution for which there are precedents, at least in broad terms, based not so much on the Roman road (a subject much better understood now thanks to Mitford’s own pioneering work on Rome’s eastern frontier: Mitford 2018) as on experience with caravan routes in comparatively recent times. In 1836 the English antiquarian William Hamilton, following the Trabzon-Erzurum caravan road (1842: 1.163), went via Cevizlik (modern Maçka) to Karakaban; this lies on Mitford’s Theches-Maçka route (Mitford 2000: 130, with fig. 2), and Hamilton’s last view of the sea six miles south thereof (1842: 1.166; cf. Gassner 1953: 17) corresponds *grosso modo* with Mitford’s site. (Ironically Hamilton denied that the Ten Thousand saw the sea there, preferring an impossible location well to the southeast.) Another traveller, John Macdonald Kinneir, followed a similar route south from Maçka in 1814 (1818: 344–48). He mentions Matior (‘Matiar’ on Heinrich Kiepert’s 1858 Armenia map), which must be on this route. In continuing via ‘Estoury’ (Istavros) to Gümüşhane (like Hamilton) he diverged from Mitford’s Roman road (Mitford 2000: fig. 2), but the mountain top ‘from which the Euxine is visible in a clear day’ (1818: 345) must be in the vicinity of Mitford’s *thalatta thalatta* location.

Still, whether the stimulus comes from the second or the nineteenth century, it is the assumption about the route that is crucial. If one does not make that assumption, Mitford’s site is no longer a palmary solution but an impossible one.

Manfredi (before his conversion to the Mitford solution) and Lendle made different assumptions about how the army entered the high mountains, picking trajectories much closer to the Zigana pass (Manfredi 1986: 223–28; Lendle 1995: 272–73, 276–77). For Manfredi the army made an excursion to see the sea before going south again, and then back up over the Zigana pass (not an attractive scenario, as already noted), whereas for Lendle they followed a route over the mountains that bypassed the pass. Either way, they reached a sector of Zigana Dağı just east of the pass whose contours (and the skyline to the north) make it in principle possible to see the sea from various points. Many before them had also picked this sector, as locating Theches immediately east of the Zigana pass has been a popular option (Appendix 2[1]).

Central Sector (East)

The first of our three more easterly locations is a place known as İskobel. (Since a feature of the place is a prominent rocky ridge on its western edge, it is tempting

to see İskobel as a corruption of Greek *skopelos*, ‘lookout point, peak’.) The site lies some 17km (air-line) south-southeast of the centre of Maçka – slightly closer than Mitford’s site, which lies 20km south-southwest of Maçka and is some 12km west-southwest of İskobel. A triangulation point on top of the prominent ridge is at 40.685 N 39.691 E.

Our attention was drawn to the site in a slightly unusual way. In early 2016 Dr Mitford received a report that the stone feature at his site (the one shown in Manfredi 2003: pl. 2) had been vandalised. He asked a local contact to investigate. The result was a brief report (illustrated with photographs) relating to a place called İskobel yaylası, a sloping plateau through which caravans still passed between Trabzon and the hinterland in the early 20th century. This is not, of course, Mitford’s site (which, as already noted, is some 12km away), and the whole report of vandalism seems to have been a red herring. (There *was* damage to another ‘cairn’ just south of Mitford’s; we also heard talk of the municipality bulldozing a cairn-like feature at İskobel to make a new road, though we saw nothing pertinent on the ground.) But İskobel *is* a place regarded locally as the site from which the Ten Thousand saw the sea, and it is indeed visible (fig. 2).

This identification is one that we heard from a local contact of our own, Hayrettin Karagöz, an official from the local governorate (*kaymakamlık*) in Maçka. We met Hayrettin Bey by chance near Yazlık while looking at flowering rhododendrons – the source of the honey poisoning Xenophon describes as the army fights its way to Trapezus (4.8.20) – and discovered that he had an expert interest in Xenophon’s trip across the Pontic Alps, one going back to his grandfather’s contact with the German botanist Gustav Gassner. Gassner visited the hinterland of Trabzon several times in the 1930s and later wrote an incisive piece on the journey of the Ten Thousand through the area (Gassner 1953). Hayrettin Bey accompanied us to İskobel and not only confirmed the site’s purported association with the Ten Thousand, but also reported a belief that Sultan Selim II once had brought an army this way. Later he also confirmed for us that the modern place names reported by Mitford along the route from *his* site to Maçka are still current, showed us where that route emerges at Maçka and advised us about the best way to drive to the Kolat region on the following day, in what proved to be an abortive attempt to reach Mitford’s site. (We reached a point some 3km to the south, but further progress was blocked by a heavy snowdrift, and, being also enveloped in thick cloud, we could only speculate about the view. Inspection on Google Earth suggests that in the right circumstances the sea might be visible, but the case is marginal compared with Mitford’s site.)



Fig. 2. View north from the height above İskobel yaylası; the dotted line indicates the horizon where the sea is visible (photograph by CJT, 2017).

Local claims that İskobel is the *thalatta thalatta* spot may be bolstered to some degree by Gassner's investigations (see below), but the association with Selim II can hardly be correct: Dr Mitford (in written correspondence) wonders if it is really a story about Mehmet II, who approached Trabzon from the south at the time of the conquest of the Empire of Trebizond in 1461. In any case, belief in such things, together with the reports about early 20th-century caravans, presuppose that the İskobel plateau is on a viable cross-mountain route, and that seems reasonable, given that such a route can theoretically be traced on Google Earth starting at Arzular, just north of the Bayburt-Gümüşhane road, and going north either through Dölek or (more circuitously) through Yayladere, and eventually passing to the east of Deveboynu Tepe (the 3,000+ metre peak immediately south of a small lake called Cakirgöl). If it be thought that the *akron* in Xenophon's account is a separate high spot (see earlier discussion), the craggy ridge above the western side of the plateau could answer that description. It is true that there are places slightly to the south of İskobel whence the sea could be seen, but they are not immediately adjacent to the road, and it seems likely that İskobel (and its adjacent *akron*) is the first satisfactory vantage point for the northbound traveller that meets the requirements of Xenophon's description.

İskobel is not the only spot within this sector of the mountains to have attracted the attention of modern investigators of *Anabasis* IV. Gassner never pinpointed a specific location for the *thalatta thalatta* moment, but he

did identify what he considered to be the line of the road that led from the viewing point towards Trapezus. If we understand his description and map correctly (Gassner 1953: 27–33, Abb. 17), the route he had in mind (and partially traced on the ground) followed a ridgeway accessed at its northern end from the vicinity of modern Esiroğlu (some 10km north of Maçka). Such a route is initially separated by two river valleys and an intervening mountain spur from the İskobel route (which begins at Maçka), but eventually it passes only some 5km due east of İskobel, before (potentially) joining the way through İskobel about the same distance to its south. There would be the possibility of a first view of the sea for the traveller going north at around the same latitude as from İskobel.

Gassner's route north descends to Esiroğlu, a village located at the point where the Değirmendere is joined by a smaller river flowing into its right bank (from the south). We did not inspect this junction – and its characteristics must have been somewhat different before the construction of a dam on the line of the smaller river 3km south-southeast of Esiroğlu – but it is in principle a possible site for the Macronian frontier as described in *Anabasis* 4.8.1, 8. It bears mention that Bryer and Winfield (1985: 48) envisage an ancient route to Trabzon going west from the Değirmendere at Esiroğlu. Such a route would lead to a ridge rather evocative of Xenophon's Colchian Mountain, but at only 4–5km distance it is rather too close to match the timing in *Anabasis*.

The İskobel route, by contrast, descends to Maçka, that is, to the junction of the rivers Değirmendere and Sumela (fig. 3). This is also true of the route from Mitford's site. But there is a difference.

Mitford's route reaches the area of the junction west of the Sumela, whereas the İskobel route reaches it east of the Sumela. Both alternatives can be reconciled with Xenophon's description of the spot (the 'extremely difficult terrain' on the right is certainly present on Mitford's scenario, while on the İskobel scenario the land, though less steep, would be a real impediment, especially if wooded), but how that works out depends on how this description is understood (fig. 4).

What Xenophon says is that the army came 'to the river which separates the land of the Macronians from that of the Scythenians' (4.8.1). At this point they had very difficult terrain on their right and another river on their left. 'The stream marking the border flowed into this second river, and the Greeks had to cross it' (4.8.2). There seem to be two ways of envisaging the situation. (a) The boundary river is the tributary, flowing from right to left into the river-from-the-left (which runs from left to right). This is undoubtedly the natural way of reading the text. (b) The boundary river (flowing left to right) merges with the river-from-the-left (*also* flowing left to right) on the other

side from the bank on which the Greeks find themselves and the joint stream then functions as boundary river. This is certainly a less immediately obvious way of reading the text. But if Xenophon knew that the boundary was formed not just by the piece of water immediately in front of the army but also by a stream on the far side of the river-from-the-left (upstream from the junction) and judged the two streams to be similar in size, he could reasonably have described the situation as he does: the river-from-the-left is closer to the Greeks than the bit of the boundary river beyond it, and more oppressive (because it constrains their freedom of movement), so the boundary river (established as the main reference point in the previous sentence: 'they came to the river which separates the land of the Macronians from that of the Scythenians') is momentarily regarded as subordinate to it rather than vice versa.

Back at Maçka, Mitford's route corresponds to interpretation (a), the İskobel one to interpretation (b).

Interpretation (a) is the more natural one, but (in the circumstances at Maçka) it means that the army crosses the Sumela river from west to east and ends up to the east of the Değirmendere. This is slightly awkward because the continuation of the narrative omits to notice that the army subsequently recrossed the Değirmendere from east to west – for the one thing that is absolutely clear is that they did not just march north along the banks of the Değirmendere the whole way to the sea: that is not what Xenophon describes (apart from anything else the Colchian Mountain narrative would make no sense) and it would probably not have been an option (certainly for an army) until modern engineering entered the equation.

What Kiepert's 1858 Armenia map shows is that the traveller entering Maçka (Cevizlik) from the south and heading for Trabzon crossed the Değirmendere to the east bank and returned to the west bank just south of Mataraci. Mitford postulates the same for the Ten Thousand (2000: 130; 2018: 381 nn. 41–42 with map 23), albeit with a crossing point north of Mataraci (perhaps as far away as Esiroğlu). But there is not, it should be emphasised, any hint of this sort of thing in Xenophon's narrative. When Kinneir followed the Trabzon-Maçka route going south in 1814, shadowing the Değirmendere (Mariamana in his nomenclature) and passing through Mataraci (Kinneir's 'Maturage'), he failed to notice that the river was crossed twice, and mentions only the crossing at Maçka (1818: 343–44). Perhaps there was also a left-bank option between Mataraci and Maçka, but the landscape is harder on the left (west) than the right (east) bank immediately north of Maçka (modern out-of-town settlement favours the eastern side), and Kinneir may simply have made an omission akin to that entailed by Mitford's reading of Xenophon. Hamilton, by contrast, notes the first (northern) crossing of the river (the Surlmel in his terminology) but not the second (1842: 1.163–64).



Fig. 3. Confluence of the Sumela and Değirmendere at Maçka (photograph by SGB, 2017).

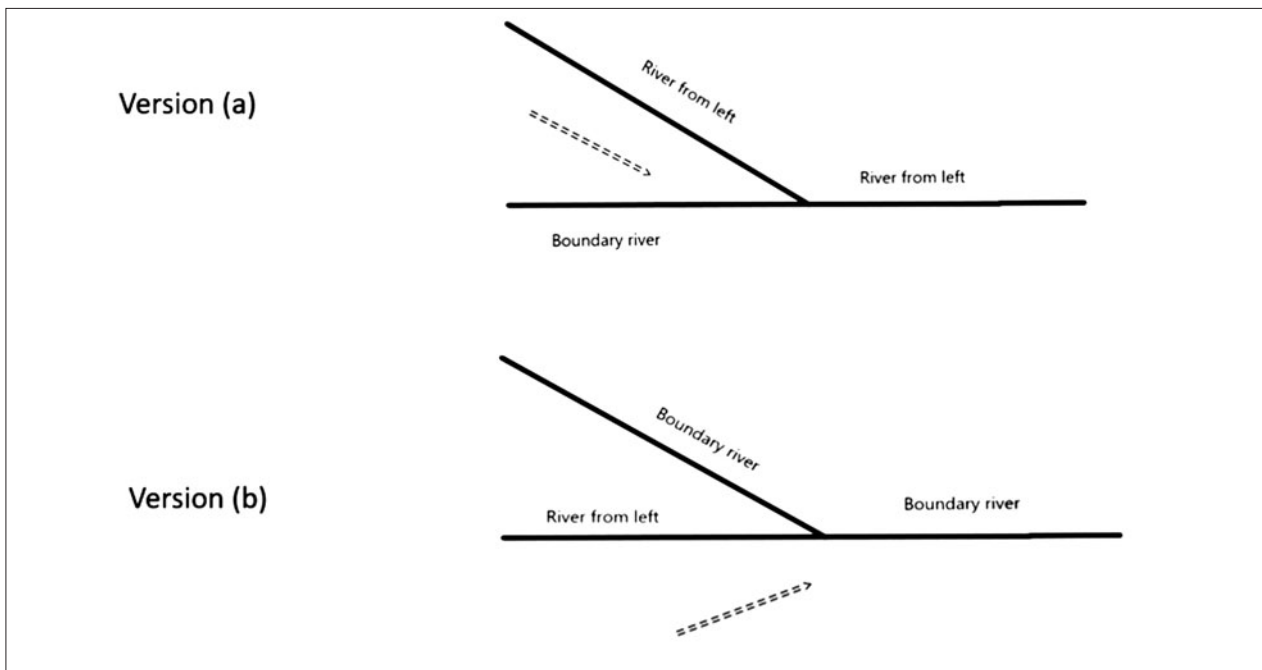


Fig. 4. The river confluence, schematically represented (drawing by CJT).

The İskobel alternative, on the other hand, does not create any of these difficulties: the army crosses the Değirmendere from east to west just below the point at which the Sumela river joins it, and can then proceed to Trapezus through the mountains north of Maçka without encountering additional significant water courses, perhaps following some version of a route marked on Gassner's maps (Gassner 1953: 23 Abb. 13, 27 Abb. 17; cf. Lendle 1995: 273).

We do not, of course, claim that this consideration decisively favours the İskobel solution against Mitford's. Xenophon's silence about a second river crossing could simply be due to the fact that that crossing was entirely uninteresting compared with the first (perhaps because, unlike at the frontier, there was a bridge: see further 'Eastern Sector', and compare Brennan 2021: xl–xli on silence about the crossing of the Lesser Zab in *Anabasis II*) and, although his failure even to hint that they were shadowing a river valley for some of the journey to Trapezus makes it tempting to feel that the army struck further west from the river crossing than was the case with the 19th-century road used by Kinneir and Hamilton, his silence on this point is probably not decisive. Nonetheless we are inclined to assert that, so far as the Macronian border goes, honours are about even between the two solutions.

And this seems likely to be true of other existing solutions and river crossings, insofar as they can be accurately identified. We have already mentioned the identification implicit in Gassner's route. We find the location in Manfredi 1986 too opaque to admit of comment, but Lendle identifies the boundary river as a stream that joins the upper

Değirmendere (Maçka in his nomenclature) 1.5km north-northeast of Hamsiköy (1995: 275–76, with map 49). As he presents it, the crossing is not immediately adjacent to the confluence (perhaps not even in sight of it); the army's course remains on the high ground above the valley of the river on its way to join the ridgeway from Kolat hanları to Maçka (i.e., Mitford's post-Theches route). This account does not match one's instinctive understanding of Xenophon's text, but it can be adjusted to do so rather better. Having viewed the sea from a spot south of Hamsiköy, the army descended the ridge either to a point north of Hamsiköy (near the confluence) or to 1km southeast of Hamsiköy, where the boundary river is itself met by a stream from the west (left). The latter version is perhaps better, as it does not entail losing so much height before climbing again and has prominent high ground on the right. On both versions it is some time before the army confronts the next (serious) river crossing – which occurs, unnarrated, after the Colchian villages (located by Lendle at Maçka).

So Lendle's understanding of the geography resembles Mitford's in providing a workable identification of the river-confluence (albeit one of different character) while also entailing an unrecorded river crossing, and both solutions stand in a similar relationship to the understanding of the Macronian frontier entailed in the İskobel solution.

Eastern Sector

The other two sites to which we wish to draw attention belong in what we have termed the Eastern Sector. This area has attracted less notice from Western scholars, even though at least one Turkish researcher has proposed a site,

Madur Dağı, within this area (Bilgin 2000: 16–23; cf. Brennan 2012: 326; Winfield 1977: 156). We define the sector as bounded by the Karadere valley to the west and the Gürçay river valley to the east. The locations of most interest are its two highest points, Madur Dağı (2,742m) and Polut Dağı (2,875m). Of all the mountains proposed for Theches, they are among the closest by air-line from the sea: 30.5km and 31.5km, respectively. The combination of height and relatively short distance to the coastline (between Araklı and Sürmene, see fig. 1) means that one is likely to see the sea here on more days of the year than from candidates further west. Generally, taking account of meteorological conditions, fog in particular, the most favourable time of year to see the sea from the mountains would be September–January and the least favourable March–May. Most commentators now have the Ten Thousand reach Theches in the latter window (see Brennan 2012), so there is something to be said for a *thalatta thalatta* location relatively close to the Black Sea.

This advantage does have what some may see as a concomitant disadvantage. An Eastern Sector solution leaves the soldiers further from Trapezus than at Maçka and, since they certainly reached Trapezus from the mountains rather than along the sea coast, entails a route that crosses the line of several major valleys. But several factors address this complaint. Firstly, a longer route is arguably more harmonious with the time and distances (five stages and 17 parasangs) given in the narrative. Secondly, owing to the difficulty of the terrain, travel along the coastline was usually by sea (see *Anabasis* 5.1.13 and, for the experience of a pre-modern traveller in the region, Kinneir 1818: 324). So it makes sense that, under guidance from the Macronians, they followed a route that in the end led directly to Trapezus. Thirdly, how hard the trip would be (Colchian resistance aside) partly depends on how much they could stick to relatively high ground (ridgeway paths) before hitting a route that would lead directly across the Değirmendere towards Trapezus: they did not have to go to the bottom of every intervening valley.

Madur Dağı

Oronyms in this region can be a little fluid. We use the term Madur to designate a rather distinctive craggy peak that rises up to 200m above a high ridge running west to east, whose western edge merges with the eastern flank of Polut Dağı, an adjacent mountain with a peak about 5km away (Madur: 40.652 N 40.041 E; Polut: 40.646 N 39.983 E). Along this ridge, both west and east of the Madur peak, there is a fine view of the sea (fig. 5).

Routes from the south cross this ridge at various points. Leaving the Bayburt-Araklı road, which runs through the Karadere Valley, one route goes up from Bahçecik to Alçakdere and then zigzags rightwards (north, east and

north again) to reach the ridge about 1,700m west of the Madur peak. A slight variation towards the end of this route would reach the ridge about 700m west of the peak. That point could also be accessed by a quite different approach route from Aydıntepe yaylası (and ultimately Aydıntepe) – a route that could also be used to reach the ridge a little east of the Madur peak.

In all cases, whether one is west or east of the peak, the view of the sea to the north appears quite suddenly on reaching the ridge, but there is sufficient space alongside or to the front for everyone to congregate and see the view, and the most westerly crossing also leads quite naturally to a spur of high ground running forward to the north that affords an excellent view. In essence the ridge constitutes the upper tier of a natural amphitheatre. Those at the rear of the column who galloped forward to see what was going on would have been riding uphill, but not up a particularly steep gradient. As we have seen (‘Literary sources for Mount Theches: Xenophon’), in his description Xenophon speaks both of an *akron* and an *oros*. If one wished to distinguish the two, the former might designate either the ridge as distinct from the mountain chain along whose top it runs, or an elevated vantage point to the front or side of the place where the ridge was reached, such as the outcrop mentioned above. But there is no need for the two words to be assigned sharply different referents.

From any of the relevant sites summer settlements are currently visible to the north (fig. 5), so one can make sense of the village (not necessarily occupied at the time the army passed) to which the guide pointed. There is also the hollowed out remnant of a cairn on the ridge about 100m west of the base of the high outcrop. There is no reason to suppose that this particular construction has anything to do with the army’s cairn (*kolōnos*), but its existence illustrates the presence of loose stones around this point (a feature shared with other points in the general vicinity) and is evidence of the sort of commemorative activity that is not unusual at sites possessed of some special natural quality.

Continuing on from here or from other parts of the ridge, a route to the north could have gone down the Gürçay valley. But that would have left the army with an extra valley to negotiate on their way to Trapezus, and it is more likely that they would have kept west and made for the valley that lies below the neighbouring Polut Dağı. That valley and the river confluence at its bottom are discussed below.

Polut Dağı

A few kilometres to the west of Madur stands the slightly higher Polut Dağı. A trail from the south runs from Bahçecik to Alçakdere and then turns left (west) to skirt the base of Polut, from the southwestern slopes of which

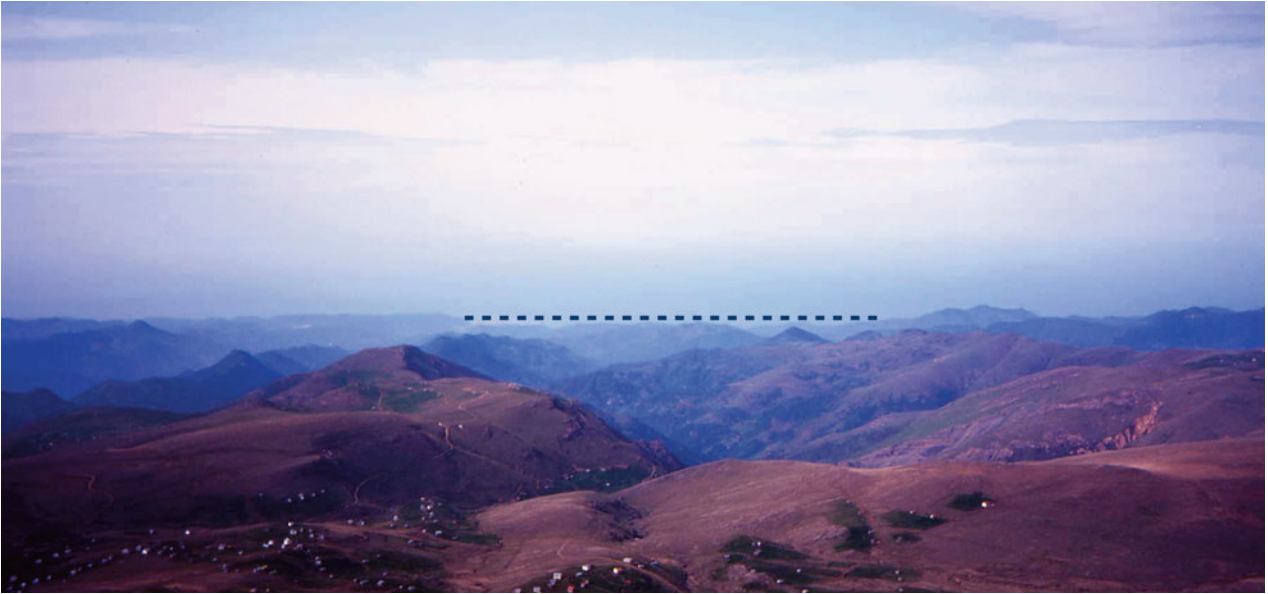


Fig. 5. View north from the Madur Dağı ridge; the dotted line indicates the horizon where the sea is visible (photograph by SGB, 2001).

incidentally there is a striking view to the south, a sea of white-capped mountain tops extending as far as the eye can see. The mass of the mountain, a physically much larger feature than the craggy Madur peak described above, initially blocks any view north, but as one rounds its western side, the view opens up, revealing about 3km to the north a spur of the mountain. Standing at 2,315m, this prominent feature imposes itself as an attractive candidate for the place from which the Ten Thousand saw the sea (40.673 N 39.963 E) (fig. 6).

While the topography at Madur, in one version or another, does not at all rule out the headlong race of cavalry and baggage animals which Xenophon describes as the shouting from the front rolls back along the line, it is particularly easy to envisage this scene unfolding across the shallow dip that separates the crest of the trail running along the western base of Polut and the spur at its north-western edge. As the soldiers advanced towards and then onto the spur, their vague sight of the sea – already perhaps fleetingly visible from just south of the dip – would have resolved into the impressive panorama from the spur’s summit, encompassing valleys, coastline and sea. Getting to that point from the trail entailed only a modest (and initially downhill) detour, so that in the moment one would expect large numbers to hike, or ride, the relatively short way onto the height. It bears mention that both our Madur peak and the height at İskobel are accessible too, but not as enticingly so as here.

If a distinction is to be made between *akron* and *oros* (‘Literary sources for Mount Theches: Xenophon’), in this case the latter would attach to the central mass of Polut and the former to the spur in question. In Xenophon’s usage in

Anabasis an *akron* need not be the actual highest place in a (wide) vicinity, just the highest place that is of interest with respect to a particular narrative. And when it is the highest point of a road viewed along the road, as for example is the case at *Anabasis* 4.5.1, there may in fact be other higher places in the immediate vicinity. (We owe this observation to David Thomas in correspondence.) In this sense the *akron* of 4.7.25 could be seen as quite banal – it is the highest point on a road from which, as it happens, one can see the sea.

The erection of the cairn here would have happened on what in these terms is the *akron*. The large surface area of the spur is covered in loose rocks (more copiously in a relatively compact space than around Madur), making the building of a suitable cairn invitingly easy. Indeed a large, carefully built stone monument stands on the site today, evidence that it is a place of some significance in our time, as it may well have been down the ages (fig. 7).

The Karadere river junction

On leaving the spur the soldiers would rejoin the main trail, which completes its rounding of the main body of Polut and starts to descend to the northwest. Below lies a wide fertile valley, drained by a lively water course running through its heart: this is the same valley that would come into view had they been approaching from the east from Madur Dağı. At the mouth of the valley the stream empties into what, in season, is a swollen, fast-flowing river that runs directly to the Black Sea; its modern name is Karadere, and it may be the river to which Arrian (*Periplus Maris Euxini* 7) attaches the name Hyssus (fig. 8). The current route from Polut to the river junction (40.737 N 39.927 E) either descends into the valley from



Fig. 6. View north from the northwest spur of Polut Dağı; the dotted line indicates the horizon where the sea is visible (photograph by CJT, 2017).

the mountain on its northern side and climbs up the other side to complete the trip on its southern flank or does the whole descent along the slopes on the southern side. (Modern villages are on the higher ground, not in the valley bottom.) In either case the immediate approach to the river junction is down a quite steep crag; in this respect, the set-up rather resembles Mitford's scenario at Maçka.

The way then brought them into a fairly tight space between the Karadere to their west and the valley stream to their north. On both sides of the valley stream there is high ground just a bit upstream from the confluence with the Karadere, with a relatively small amount of flat ground immediately around the actual meeting point of the two rivers. The affluent stream is a good deal smaller in relation to the Karadere than is the case with the Sumela and the Değirmendere at Maçka, and the whole setting is a good deal less spacious. Crossing the affluent stream would not in normal circumstances be difficult, but the combination of small but tightly packed trees, a hostile force on the far side, a fast-moving river on the left and the lack of space to the right would certainly have produced a difficult situation.

In terms of the earlier discussion of the river intersection at Maçka (see 'Central Sector (East)'), this is an interpretation (a) case: having crossed the boundary river, the army would also have had to cross the Karadere. For this



Fig. 7. Modern cairn on the northwest spur of Polut Dağı (photograph by SGB, 2017).



Fig. 8. Confluence of the Karadere and an unnamed river (photograph by CJT, 2017).

there are two options. Either they crossed immediately, turned back slightly on themselves and proceeded west up a cleft in the mountains immediately opposite the point at which they had entered the area, or they went down the right (east) bank of the Karadere for some kilometres and crossed near modern Erenler, where there is another, perhaps slightly easier, way into the mountains to the west. Both ways forward might eventually have brought them to Gassner's route to Trapezus described above. The downstream option presupposes the existence of a path on the east bank, where there is currently just a tree-covered mountainside. It should be remarked that both sides of the Karadere in this sector are steeply sloping, and the modern road on the left (western) bank is the product of engineering.

It is a nice question whether Xenophon's silence about the second crossing is more natural if it did not immediately follow the first one. In narrative terms the material in 4.8.8 about helping to cut trees and bringing a mixed band of Greeks and Macronians across closes the loop with 4.8.2–3, where it is just Greeks doing the cutting and the Macronians are antagonistically separate, while the *agora* provision and three-day trip to the Colchian mountain take us well into the future: in fact *kai agoran ... Hellēnas* (4.8.8) amounts to saying that three days

passed, during which there was opportunity to buy food, and they eventually reached the Colchian mountain, and is a summarising narrative proposition of a quite different sort. In terms of specific incident, what stuck in the mind was the stand-off at the boundary river and its remarkable resolution: everything else disappears in favour of a generalised sense of Macronian helpfulness (providing *agora* and leading them through their country) because nothing during that stage was as interesting as the next set piece (Colchian Mountain). So, arguably all bets are off about the timing of anything unreported that happened after the closed loop, and – if there has to be a second crossing – we can place it whenever we wish. The same, of course, applies in Mitford's scenario at Maçka, where there is a similar choice between immediate and delayed crossing of the Değirmendere downstream of the Sumela river confluence.

In either case the crossing of the Karadere presumably involved a bridge, as will also have been the case with the Değirmendere at Maçka. The absence of a bridge immediately opposite the end of the route down from Polut Dağı (where the modern road bridge is located) will be an artefact of the tribal geography; for the Karadere upstream of the confluence was also a boundary between Scythian territory on the east and Macronian on the

west. That Xenophon only designates the affluent stream as the boundary is simply because that is what had to be crossed to secure entry into Macronian land to the north and (most relevantly) west – and because (for that reason) that was where the Macronians mounted their resistance. Once again, a comparable line of reasoning applies at the Maçka site.

In itself the very constricted nature of this site perhaps makes it a less immediately attractive option for the Macronian frontier narrative than the setting at Maçka – though it would give special force to *speudontes ek tou khōriou hōs takhista exelthein* ('in a hurry to get away from the spot as quickly as possible': 4.8.2), which speaks to the trap-like quality of the spot – and its position in relation to Trapezus may strike some as a problem (but see comment at the start of this section). Nonetheless we believe it to be sufficiently plausible to make the location of the *thalatta thalatta* spot on the northern spur of Polut Dağı a viable hypothesis.

Conclusion

But, if the Polut Dağı site is a viable hypothesis, it is not a demonstrated one or even a demonstrable one. It is viable because (a) the place affords a view of the sea, and the general lie of the land does not contradict Xenophon's indications, and (b) a route leads from it to a river junction that can correspond with the next item in Xenophon's narrative. But it is not demonstrable because these resemblances are not peremptorily better than those that apply at other possible sites, and because we have no evidence that the army entered the Pontic mountains from the south by a route that would lead to the northern spur of Polut Dağı – and the reason we have no such evidence is that we have no evidence at all about how the army entered the Pontic mountains. This is why what we have just said about Polut Dağı applies to the Madur Dağı sites, to İskobel, to Mitford's site and to locations in the western sector. Until someone produces cogent proof that (a) only one river junction on the north side of the Pontic Mountains properly matches the geography of 4.8.1–8, (b) that this site interlinks with a location for the Colchian Mountain that is obviously preferable to all other possibilities, and (c) that these fixed points yield a location for Theches that affords a good probability of a sea view in the window of time during which the army crossed the mountains (May, by our reckoning) the *thalatta thalatta* spot must remain a matter for conjecture.

That is a negative conclusion, but negative conclusions are still conclusions, and knowing what one does not know (and why one does not know it) can be an important step forward. As an attempt to solve a particular problem, our investigation reaches an impasse. But it certainly highlights some methodological issues: the way that assumptions

dictate conclusions, the need to stop conjecture becoming fact, and (more generally) the fight to extend, or at least maintain, the boundaries of ignorance. Indeed its ultimate point is that some problems may be as intrinsically insoluble as they are tantalisingly attractive.

Now, that 'may be' does allow for the possibility that a systematic programme of topographical research across the mountains, valleys and routes of the Pontic Alps – in the hinterland of the coast from Trabzon to Araklı – might after all be able to nail the problem by identifying beyond dispute three interlinked sites (Theches, a river junction and the Colchian Mountain), as well as the route between them. Such a programme is, however, unlikely to be undertaken. It is not that the scientific value of definitively solving the problem would be negligible. Identifying the spot is not simply idle curiosity or a matter of unleashing the warm romantic glow of being exactly in Xenophon's shoes at an emotional moment. It would establish more firmly something about ancient routes over the mountains, add exactitude to our knowledge of tribal boundaries, fix the whereabouts of villages in the Pontic mountain landscape (some at least in the very high mountains) and demonstrate to any inclined to doubt it that Xenophon's narrative is firmly grounded. All of these scientific benefits plainly intersect with the aims and objectives of the sort of enterprise exemplified in Doonan (2019) and Rempel, Doonan (2020). But the labour involved in trying (but not necessarily succeeding) to secure them in this particular case is doubtless disproportionate to their value – or to the added value of knowing exactly, rather than broadly, where the Greeks first saw the sea.

B) Wider perspectives

But this note of pessimism about what is attainable in the attempt to locate Mount Theches is not quite the end of the matter. The character of Xenophon's narrative deserves a little further comment, both in its own right and because it will eventually lead us back to the benign relationship between text and territory to which we referred at the start of this article. Here too methodological issues are to the fore.

Narrative and landscape

Theches exemplifies a wider tendency of ancient narrative texts to be 'not good enough for the topography'. *Mutatis mutandis* we have the same problem here that we face in, for example, Herodotus's quite elaborate account of the battle of Plataea (9.15–86). Herodotus knows of various fairly specific features of the Plataea landscape, but he gives no sense of having digested them into a coherent overall picture (one that looks at the landscape as something in its own right, composed of a complicated mixture of small-, medium- and large-scale features) so that he can then drop

the narrative into it. If we think that we know, broadly speaking, where Herodotus is talking about at Plataea, it is only because the elements of topography he does record are just distinctive enough in themselves and/or in relation to data we have from other sources (e.g., the location of the city of Plataea or rational inferences about routes) to tie things down. The situation with Xenophon and Theches is the same, except that in this case the recorded topographical details are not sufficiently distinctive in themselves and/or in relation to other data to tie things down.

In this respect Herodotus and Xenophon are typical of their genre, as will be well known to anyone familiar with the tradition of topographical scholarship represented by W.K. Pritchett (1965–92; 1996; 1998–99) and the numerous other modern scholars (both historians and archaeologists) who have attempted to tie Greek and Roman narratives to real landscapes; this applies whatever the nature of the landscape, but since our current concern is with the crossing of a mountain range, one may note examples such as Xerxes's circumvention of Thermopylae (Burn 1977; Hignett 1963: 361–70; Müller 1987: 294–302; Pritchett 1958; 1965/1992: IV 176–210; 2002: 120–29; Sánchez-Moreno 2013: 313–20; Szemler et al. 1996; Wallace 1980), Alexander's passage through the Persian Gates (Bosworth 1988: 90; Potts 2008; Speck 2002; Stein 1940), or Hannibal's crossing of the Alps (Kuhle, Kuhle 2015; Lazenby 1998; Mahaney 2016; Seibert 1993; Walbank 1956). Ancient historians may write narratives that include details of the place in which events occur, but they do not set out to provide proper descriptions of places into which they then put a narrative. Often one reason they do not do so is that they have not been to the places in question, but another reason could be that it does not occur to them to do so. In *Anabasis*, of course, the first reason does not apply, but it may be that the second one does, notwithstanding the care Xenophon took to provide a systematic record of the army's journey in terms of time, distance and colourful incident. Theches is only one case of narrative taking precedence over coherent landscape description (Tuplin, Brennan 2022 explores the issue further for Book IV, and by extension for the rest of *Anabasis*), but it is perhaps a specially forceful example, since the site is so iconic in literary terms and in the experience of the author. Xenophon *can* set out to describe landscape in its own right: he does so briefly in Cilicia (1.2.22) and at much greater length at Calpe Harbour (6.4.1–6), but that is as much a literary fact as a topographical one (in the latter case in particular he is channelling a literary *locus amoenus* trope that goes back at least to *Odyssey* IX), and the literary world to which he belongs did not provide him with a framework or an appetite for 'textualising' the distinctions between different mountain landscapes in the sort of way that a satisfactory description of Theches would require.

So one of the things at stake in the discussion of Theches is the character of Greek historiography. Greek historians may sometimes want a certain degree of 'groundedness', and they may even want it quite forcefully. But in the end, story dictates landscape rather than the other way around (this is the fundamental truth that underlies ostensibly more complex discussions of Greek views of geographical space such as Dan 2014), and very often the story dictates landscape so weakly that the reality of the location is almost entirely elusive. When a historian makes a big effort not to allow that to happen, he is up to something. But it is a literary something: he is trying to improve on W.S. Gilbert's 'bald and unconvincing narrative' (*Mikado* Act 2), and landscape features are the sort of corroborative detail that can help to that end – but so are other types of circumstantial item, either rescued straight from his source or perhaps elaborated or even more or less invented or (more charitably) *re-invented*, formal speeches or *oratio recta* conversations being familiar cases in point.

Since we do not assume that the details in *Anabasis* 4.7.20–27 are not true so far as they go, we do not think that the aspiration to match them to the real world is intrinsically invalid; in historiographical texts all of the content has *some* relation to the real world. But one has to be realistic about what that relation might be and, in any given case, one can only do what one can do: 'if the Greek soldier who weeps and embraces his fellows with no regard to rank is Everyman at a moment of profound joy and relief, the place where he does it is (so far as high places with a view of the sea are concerned) Everyplace' (Tuplin, Brennan 2022: 126). We are sure that Xenophon would have accepted that, if you are looking for a spot passed during a journey (and the spot is not intrinsically unique and therefore recoverable), it is essential to know what road the journey was being made on. Now Xenophon does have an answer of sorts to that question. We are told that the army reached the spot with a guide after burning and pillaging the land they had been passing through, that the spot was a mountain called Theches, that they left a prominent physical marker on the site, that they continued their journey via a village (anonymous and undescribed, but that is perfectly normal for villages in *Anabasis*) and that shortly afterwards they reached the junction between two rivers. Neither river is named, which is slightly surprising (rivers are usually named in *Anabasis*, and local informants were available), but the landscape is quite circumstantially described. When he stopped to think about it, as he doubtless did while composing his account, Xenophon might reasonably have felt that he had not made a bad job of 'realising' the spot and the movements around it, especially since he also provided the name Theches. But anyone visiting the region and looking with modern eyes

can see that he did not really do so: there is just too much about the general setting that is not captured. And, even in Xenophon's own terms, the fact that a period of five days elapses before arrival there for which no circumstantial detail is provided at all, suggests a similar conclusion.

No ancient historiographical text is anything like as journey-oriented as *Anabasis* (to find its like you have to go to parts of the *Odyssey* or to Argonautic texts), yet in the absence of named cities or rivers, the author has few ways of 'fixing' the journey non-ambiguously to a real-world framework, and in general he does little to evoke its intrinsic characteristics, whether it is a matter of the ground under their feet or what the view was like in a 360-degree circle. Extrinsic characteristics – snow, enemy action or whatever – are quite another matter, of course, and for the purposes of making the story seem real those are quite good enough for him; story dictates landscape, not vice versa.

Settlement geography in Xenophon's Pontic Alps

But story dictating landscape is not all bad. It can, for example, provide the sort of data that are needed for an enterprise like the one that Doonan has undertaken on Black Sea settlements. Of course, it does not always produce the goods. It would be splendid if Xenophon had said more about the village just north of the *thalatta thalatta* spot (4.7.27). How far below the summit was it? What did a village that high in the mountains look like? Are we right to infer from silence that it was deserted and contained no provisions and, if so, is that because it is still too early in the year for such a settlement to be occupied? (The modern equivalent, the *yayla*, tends to be occupied from May to October, initially with a forward party that brings the animals from the lowlands.) Information of this sort would provide further insight into the socio-economic characteristics of the Pontic mountains. Unfortunately, nothing of note happened there to generate narrative and with it the sort of landscape that would give us the information we need.

But other aspects of the Theches narrative (stretching from Gymnias to Trapezus) are potentially useful to contextualise and enrich historico-archaeological interpretation of the region.

To the south of Theches we encounter hostile relations between a 'large, prosperous and settled city' (Gymnias) and an unnamed piece of 'enemy territory' (4.7.19–20), perhaps to be attributed to the Scythenians, who were a widely spread group encountered both east of Gymnias (4.7.18) and far to its north, on the other side of Theches (4.8.1). If we knew for sure exactly where Gymnias was, what the Scythenians' boundaries were and indeed whether they *are* the owners of the 'enemy territory' or we have to envisage some other group instead, the information would be even better, but it is still useful as it is. The same goes

for the appearance of the first thing Xenophon has called a city since the army left Mesopotamia – for the Chalybian *polismata* (4.7.16–17) and Taochian *khōria*, which (implicitly) have houses and a *polis*-like character (4.7.2), are rather different. Why there should be such a place just south of the Pontic Mountains, and whether its relations with some of its neighbours are structurally or merely contingently hostile, are matters for speculation, but it is speculation that could be reciprocally informed by broader historico-archaeological data about Black Sea hinterlands of the sort investigated in Doonan 2019 and Rempel, Doonan 2020.

On the northern side of Theches, Xenophon provides data about tribal groups in the hinterland of Trapezus (Colchians, Macronians, Scythenians), and one can profitably consider whether those data indicate a similar or divergent model from the one articulated in Doonan 2019 for areas further to the west in the hinterland of Amisus and Sinope. A number of features certainly resonate with Doonan's model: (a) Trapezus has structural interactions of various sorts with Colchians, Mossynoecans and Drilans (4.8.22–24, 5.2.1–2, 5.4.1), though none are reported with Macronians or Scythenians; (b) Macronians and Colchians exist in a state of tension one with another (judging by the former's willingness to bring a large body of Greek mercenaries to blows with the latter: 4.8.8–9); (c) the river valleys of the north face of the Pontic mountains (noted by Doonan as a defining feature of the ecology) play a role in the story (4.8.2–8), and (d) the fact that a Macronian could end up as a slave in Athens (4.8.4) says something about economic processes linking the maritime and mountain regions with one another and with the outside world.

On the other hand, there is no sign of the large-scale fortified settlements that link the Mossynoecans and Drilans to the Sinop peninsula in Doonan's model. The Macronians' Colchian neighbours meet the Greeks on a mountain (4.8.8–19) and the victorious Greeks repair afterwards to some villages (4.8.19–21), so either there was no central *mētropolis* (Xenophon's term for the Mossynoecan and Drilan examples) or, in contrast to the Mossynoecans and Drilans, it was not the Colchians' practice to retreat to it in the face of enemy incursion; in any case, their cultural norms are different. One also has the impression that Colchian relations with Trapezus are not uniform: the city brokered a deal between the 'nearby Colchians who largely live in the plain' and the Greek mercenaries, but the latter (camped close to Trapezus 'in the Colchian villages') nonetheless loot what is described as Colchian territory (some of it no more than a half day's march from Trapezus), displacing people from their houses and turning them into a security problem (4.8.23–24, 5.2.1). We know the Trapezuntines suffered from raids by the Drilans

(5.2.2); perhaps they had similar difficulties with some of the Colchian population. At the same time we also know that the Mossynoecians were at war with themselves (5.4.2), and might speculate that the Colchians were similarly disunited, perhaps precisely by differing attitudes to Trapezus. Colchian territory as a whole was large – it was two days from the Colchian Mountain to Trapezus (4.8.22), and even as the Greeks marched three days along the coast to Cerasus they were still ‘in Colchian land’ (5.3.2) – and there may have been further complexities he had no occasion to record. But the complexities that *are* visible already exceed those in the Sinop peninsula, and suggest that different situations and models might be obtained in different but nearly adjacent parts of the Black Sea hinterland.

Summary

Generally speaking one should ask of one’s data only the questions that those data are capable of answering. The big exception is when one asks questions precisely to discover that they are not capable of answering. Our contention is that, with the dataset as it currently is, the exact location of Theches is such a question. But the exercise of posing the question and doing so with a keen sense of the actual regional topography accentuates the point that absence of precise location does not deprive Xenophon’s data of value. The immediate landscape of Theches is broadly similar wherever precisely the Greeks saw the sea. As a landscape in the physical sense it is not well described by Xenophon, but as a succession of human features between Gymnias and Trapezus it provides both colourful narrative and historically processable information. Earlier in *Anabasis* IV the Greeks famously spent time at a snowbound Armenian village consisting of underground houses. Where it was we cannot securely say because his route is not clearly fixed, and because there will have been plenty of such villages. This does not, however, diminish the value of Xenophon’s description of its physical form, its inhabitants (human and animal), and their food and drink. In both respects it resembles the Theches story. In map-reference terms these are in a way generic places, but generic places can be just as real as real ones.

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This article is one of two publications arising from an exploratory trip to the region in May 2017. The other is Tuplin, Brennan 2022, a discussion of Xenophon’s treatment of geography in *Anabasis* IV as a whole that provides a wider literary context for the particular case of Theches, and we acknowledge with gratitude advice from Tim Rood and Melina Tamiolaki, the editors of the volume in which it appears. Our warmest thanks are due as well to Naoise Mac Sweeney (editor of *Anatolian*

Studies) for her guidance, and to Tim Mitford for the information that took us to İskobel, as well as for the lengthy and informative correspondence that ensued; some of this involved a further visit to Dr Mitford’s Theches site, kindly undertaken on his and our behalf by Taner Demirbulut in 2018. We are also very grateful to Hayrettin Karagöz for his support and advice, and to the Jandarma at Araklı for their assistance. It is not perhaps irrelevant to note that Mr Demirbulut is proprietor of Zenofon Holidays (a travel agency in Trabzon), and that in 2017 Mr Karagöz, coming from the local authority perspective, was investigating the possibilities for ecotourism in the Pontic Mountains themed around the Ten Thousand; this is a story that still has significant local resonance. Both of our pieces are distant *parerga* of *The Landmark Xenophon’s Anabasis* (2021), of which SGB is one of the editors. We thank the other editor, David Thomas, for his comments on various aspects of the problems dealt with here, not least discussion of the meanings of *akron* and *oros*. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Dr Michele Massa for producing the map. Finally we thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

Appendix 1

Xenophon’s evidence about the approach to Theches, Theches itself and the subsequent journey through Macronian territory to the Colchian Mountain is contained in *Anabasis* 4.7.19–4.8.9. The text used is that of the Loeb Classical Library, with slight adjustments. The translation is by CJT.

(19) Ἐντεῦθεν διήλθον σταθμοὺς τέτταρας παρασάγγας εἴκοσι πρὸς πόλιν μεγάλην καὶ εὐδαίμονα καὶ οἰκουμένην ἢ ἑκαλεῖτο Γυμνιάς. ἐκ ταύτης ὁ τῆς χώρας ἄρχων τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἡγεμόνα πέμπει, ὅπως διὰ τῆς αὐτῶν πολεμίας χώρας ἄγοι αὐτούς. (20) ἐλθὼν δ’ ἐκεῖνος λέγει ὅτι ἄξει αὐτοὺς πέντε ἡμερῶν εἰς χωρίον ὅθεν ὄψονται θάλατταν· εἰ δὲ μή, τεθνήσκει ἐπηγγείλατο. καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐπειδὴ ἐνέβαλεν εἰς τὴν πολεμίαν, παρεκελεύετο αἰθεῖν καὶ φθεῖρειν τὴν χώραν· ᾧ καὶ δῆλον ἐγένετο ὅτι τοῦτου ἔνεκα ἔλθοι, οὐ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων εὐνοίας.

(21) καὶ ἀφικνοῦνται ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῆ πέμπτη ἡμέρᾳ· ὄνομα δὲ τῷ ὄρει ἦν Θήχης. ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους καὶ κατεῖδον τὴν θάλατταν, κραυγὴ πολλὴ ἐγένετο. (22) ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ξενοφῶν καὶ οἱ ὀπισθοφύλακες ᾤθησαν καὶ ἔμπροσθεν ἄλλους ἐπιτίθεσθαι πολεμίουσ· εἶποντο γὰρ καὶ ὀπισθεν ἐκ τῆς καιομένης χώρας, καὶ αὐτῶν οἱ ὀπισθοφύλακες ἀπέκτεινάν τέ τινας καὶ ἐξώγρησαν ἐνέδραν ποιησάμενοι, καὶ γέρρα ἔλαβον δασειῶν βοῶν ὠμοβόεια ἀμφὶ τὰ εἴκοσιν. (23) ἐπειδὴ δὲ βοὴ πλείων τε ἐγένετο καὶ ἐγγύτερον καὶ οἱ αἰεὶ ἐπιόντες ἔθεον δρόμῳ ἐπὶ τοὺς αἰεὶ βοῶντας καὶ πολλῶ μείζων

ἐγίγνετο ἢ βοή ὅσω δὴ πλείους ἐγίγνοντο, ἐδόκει δὴ μεῖζόν τι εἶναι τῷ Ξενοφῶντι, (24) καὶ ἀναβάς ἐφ' ἵππον καὶ Λύκιον καὶ τοὺς ἰππέας ἀναλαβὼν παρεβοήθει· καὶ τάχα δὴ ἀκούουσι βοῶντων τῶν στρατιωτῶν Θάλαττα θάλαττα καὶ παρεγγυόντων. ἔνθα δὴ ἔθεον ἅπαντες καὶ οἱ ὀπισθοφυλάκες, καὶ τὰ ὑποζύγια ἠλαύνετο καὶ οἱ ἵπποι. (25) ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀφίκοντο πάντες ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον, ἐνταῦθα δὴ περιέβαλλον ἀλλήλους καὶ στρατηγούς καὶ λοχαγούς δακρύνοντες. καὶ ἐξαπίνης ὅτου δὴ παρεγγυήσαντος οἱ στρατιῶται φέρουσι λίθους καὶ ποιοῦσι κολωνὸν μέγαν. (26) ἐνταῦθα ἀνετίθεσαν δερμάτων πλῆθος ὠμοβοείων καὶ βακτηρίας καὶ τὰ αἰχμάλωτα γέρρα, καὶ ὁ ἡγεμὼν αὐτὸς τε κατέτεμεν τὰ γέρρα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις διεκελεύετο.

(27) μετὰ ταῦτα τὸν ἡγεμόνα οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀποπέμψουσι δῶρα δόντες ἀπὸ κοινοῦ ἵππον καὶ φιάλην ἄργυρᾶν καὶ σκευὴν Περσικὴν καὶ δαρεϊκοὺς δέκα· ἦται δὲ μάλιστα τοὺς δακτυλίους, καὶ ἔλαβε πολλοὺς παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν. κώμην δὲ δεῖξας αὐτοῖς οὗ σκηνήσουσι καὶ τὴν ὁδὸν ἦν πορεύσονται εἰς Μάκρωνας, ἐπεὶ ἐσπέρα ἐγένετο, ὄχετο τῆς νυκτὸς ἀπιῶν.

VIII. Ἐντεῦθεν δ' ἐπορεύθησαν οἱ Ἕλληνες διὰ Μακρῶνων σταθμοὺς τρεῖς παρασάγγας δέκα. τῇ πρώτῃ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἀφίκοντο ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν ὃς ὠρίζε τὴν τε τῶν Μακρῶνων καὶ τὴν τῶν Σκυθηνῶν. (2) εἶχον δ' ὑπὲρ δεξιῶν χωρίον οἷον χαλεπώτατον καὶ ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς ἄλλον ποταμὸν, εἰς ὃν ἐνέβαλλεν ὁ ὀρίζων, δι' οὗ ἔδει διαβῆναι. ἦν δὲ οὗτος δασὺς δένδροισι παχέσι μὲν οὐ, πυκνοῖς δέ. ταῦτα ἐπεὶ προσῆλθον οἱ Ἕλληνες ἔκοπτον, σπεύδοντες ἐκ τοῦ χωρίου ὡς τάχιστα ἐξελεθεῖν. (3) οἱ δὲ Μάκρωνες ἔχοντες γέρρα καὶ λόγχας καὶ τριχίνους χιτῶνας κατ' ἀντιπέρας τῆς διαβάσεως παρατεταγμένοι ἦσαν καὶ ἀλλήλοις διεκελεύοντο καὶ λίθους εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν ἔρριπτον· ἐξικουῶντο δὲ οὐ οὐδ' ἔβλαπτον οὐδέν.

(4) Ἐνθα δὴ προσέρχεται Ξενοφῶντι τῶν πελταστῶν ἀνὴρ Αθήνησι φάσκων δεδουλευκέναι, λέγων ὅτι γινώσκοι τὴν φωνὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. καὶ οἶμαι, ἔφη, ἐμὴν ταύτην πατρίδα εἶναι· καὶ εἰ μὴ τι κωλύει, ἐθέλω αὐτοῖς διαλεχθῆναι. (5) Ἄλλ' οὐδὲν κωλύει, ἔφη, ἀλλὰ διαλέγου καὶ μάθε πρῶτον τίνες εἰσίν. οἱ δ' εἶπον ἐρωτήσαντος ὅτι Μάκρωνες. Ἐρώτα τοῖνον, ἔφη, αὐτοὺς τί ἀντιτετάχεται καὶ χρήζουσιν ἡμῖν πολέμοι εἶναι. (6) οἱ δ' ἀπεκρίναντο Ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν χώραν ἔρχεσθε. λέγειν ἐκέλευον οἱ στρατηγοὶ ὅτι οὐ κακῶς γε ποιήσαντες, ἀλλὰ βασιλεῖ πολεμήσαντες ἀπερχόμεθα εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, καὶ ἐπὶ θάλατταν βουλόμεθα ἀφικέσθαι. (7) ἡρώτων ἐκεῖνοι εἰ δοῖεν ἂν τούτων τὰ πιστά. οἱ δ' ἔφασαν καὶ δοῦναι καὶ λαβεῖν ἐθέλειν. ἐντεῦθεν διδόασιν οἱ Μάκρωνες βαρβαρικὴν λόγχην τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες ἐκείνοις Ἑλληνικὴν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἔφασαν πιστὰ εἶναι· θεοὺς δ' ἐπεμαρτύραντο ἀμφοτέροι.

(8) Μετὰ δὲ τὰ πιστὰ εὐθὺς οἱ Μάκρωνες τὰ δένδρα συνεξέκοπτον τὴν τε ὁδὸν ὠδοποιοῦν ὡς διαβιβάσοντες ἐν μέσοις ἀναμειγμένοι τοῖς Ἕλλησι, καὶ ἀγορὰν οἶαν

ἐδύναντο παρεῖχον, καὶ παρήγαγον ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἕως ἐπὶ τὰ Κόλχων ὄρια κατέστησαν τοὺς Ἕλληνας. (9) ἐνταῦθα ἦν ὄρος μέγα, προσβατὸν δέ· καὶ ἐπὶ τούτου οἱ Κόλχοι παρατεταγμένοι ἦσαν.

[19] Next came a march of four stages (a distance of 20 parasangs) ending at a large, prosperous and settled city called Gymnias. The local governor sent the Greeks a guide to show them the way through an area hostile to the people at Gymnias, [20] and on his arrival he promised, on pain of death, that in five days he would get them to a place where they could see the sea. Under his guidance they entered the enemy territory and were encouraged to burn and pillage – which made it quite clear that this, and not any good will towards the Greeks, was his reason for being there.

[21] Five days later they reached the mountain; its name was Theches. When the men at the head of the column got to the top and spotted the sea a huge shout went up. [22] Hearing it, Xenophon and the rearguard imagined that some more of the enemy were attacking from the front – a reasonable assumption, since people from the burning territory in their rear were actually in pursuit, and the rearguard had laid an ambush in which they killed or captured a number of them and acquired about twenty wicker shields covered in shaggy, untanned oxhide. [23] But the sound was getting louder and closer – new arrivals kept rushing up to those who were already shouting, and so the noise kept growing as the numbers increased – and [24] Xenophon eventually decided something rather more serious was going on. So he jumped on his horse, told Lycius and the cavalry to come with him, and went up the column to help. Soon, however, they could hear what the soldiers were shouting and passing down the line, 'The sea, the sea!' At that, all of the rearguard joined the rush as well, and the pack animals and horses were driven forward. [25] When they had all got to the top, everyone – ordinary soldiers, generals and captains – they flung their arms around one another with tears in their eyes. All of a sudden, at someone's suggestion, the men started to collect stones and build a large cairn, [26] where they made offerings of a mass of raw oxhides, some sticks and the captured shields, which were cut into pieces by the guide and others acting under his instructions.

[27] Afterwards, the Greeks presented the guide with a farewell gift from the army's common stock – a horse, a silver *phiale*, a Persian outfit and ten darics – but what he particularly wanted was finger rings, and he got lots of them from individual soldiers. He pointed out to them a village where they could camp, indicated the route they would follow to reach the territory of the Macronians and then, when it was evening, went off into the darkness.

VIII. The Greeks then marched for three stages (a distance of 10 parasangs) through Macronian territory. During the first day they came to the river which separates the land of the Macronians from that of the Scythenians. [2] To their right they were overlooked by a piece of extremely difficult terrain, while on their left was another river. The stream marking the border flowed into this second river, and the Greeks had to cross it. Its banks were covered with bushes which, though not large, were densely packed, and as they approached the Greeks hacked at them in their hurry to get away from the spot. [3] The Macronians, carrying wicker shields and spears, and dressed in hair tunics, stood in battle line on the far side of the ford, shouting encouragement to one another and throwing stones – though these failed to reach their targets and fell harmlessly in the water.

[4] At this juncture one of the peltasts came up to Xenophon. He explained that he had been a slave in Athens, and said he recognised the language the people were speaking. ‘I think’, he said, ‘that this is my homeland, and if there’s no objection I want to talk to them’. [5] ‘Of course there’s no objection’, replied Xenophon. ‘By all means speak to them and find out first of all who they are’. He put the question, and they said they were Macronians. ‘Now ask them why they’ve deployed an army and want to be our enemies’. [6] ‘Because you’re attacking our land’, they replied. The generals told the man to say ‘we’re not here with any intention of causing damage; we’re simply on our way back to Greece after fighting against the King, and want to get to the sea’, [7] and when the Macronians asked if they would offer guarantees about this, the Greeks said they were willing to give and receive such guarantees. Accordingly they exchanged spears (which the Macronians said would do as tokens) – the Greeks getting a barbarian one and the Macronians a Greek one – and both parties called upon the gods as witnesses.

[8] As soon as the ceremony was over the Macronians mingled with the Greeks, helped them to cut down bushes and clear a way to the river, so they could get them to the other side, and even supplied what they could in the way of food for sale. They then provided an escort for three days until they had brought them to the Colchian border. [9] Here there was a high though accessible mountain, on which the Colchians had formed a battle line.

Appendix 2

Proposed sites for Theches can be distributed under six headings which, apart from (6), represent broadly contiguous zones. Our list is intended to be broadly illustrative rather than exhaustive.

(1) Western Sector *West of Torul* Segl 1925. (Manfredi 1986 maps it south of Toplukdüzü Tepe, ca 10km northwest of Torul). *Zigana* Chesney 1850: 1.287, 2.233; Gassner 1953: 18–19 (Abb. 10, 11), 27 (Abb. 17); Hoffmeister 1911: 141–42; 248; Lehmann-Haupt 1926: 26*, 1931: 786; Lendle 1995: 276–77, 279–80; Manfredi 1986: 225–27. (Lendle provides the simplest modern *Zigana* solution, using a route leaving the Doğankent valley west of the Korum river and crossing *Zigana Dağı* to reach the Macronian border southwest of Maçka near Hamsiköy. This puts Theches ca 4km east of the *Zigana* pass.)

(2) Central Sector (west) *Karagöl* Chesney 1850: 1.287, 2.233 (precise location unclear). *Çakırgöl* Manfredi 1986: 225 (precise location unclear). *Kolat* Strecker 1886: 13–14, Mitford 2000, 2018: 373–77, Manfredi 2003.

(3) Central Sector (east) *Unnamed* Gassner 1953: 29–32.

(4) Eastern Sector *Madur* Bilgin 2000: 16–23, Winfield 1977: 156, Brennan 2012: 325–26. *North of Aydıntepe (or Aydıntepe yaylası?)* Paradeisopoulos 2013: 667, 2014: 234.

(5) Southern Sector *Unnamed mountain near Gümüshane* Kinneir 1818: 494. (It is not clear this is far enough north to count as Central Sector (west).) *Gavur Dağı (southeast of Gümüshane)* Chesney 1850: 2.232–33. *Tekkiyeh / Takiya Dağı (northwest of Bayburt, near Gümüshane)* Ainsworth 1842: 2.396, Ainsworth 1854: 326–27. *Vavuk (west of Bayburt)* Boucher 1913: 233–35; *Briot, Lynch 1870. Kop Dağı (southeast of Bayburt towards Erzurum)* Ainsworth 1844: 188. *Unnamed location northeast of Bayburt (towards İspir)* Hamilton 1842: 167. (Manfredi 1986: map 16 and Gassner 1953: 13 wrongly suggest Hamilton put Theches in Central Sector (west). He explicitly rejects that location.)

(6) Outliers *Unspecified high mountain locations north or northwest of Yusufeli* Khoudadoff 1928; Koch 1850: 106–07; Robiou 1873: 63 (cf. Baddeley 1940: 253–54). *Toprak kale (east of Erzurum)* Fowler 1841: 286.

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