

Mapping the Black Sea: From the Sea to the Region and beyond

Maps and images as a whole have their own power in creating reality: Visualizations are always more than just illustrations or documentations.¹ “Mental maps”² have effectively been constituted by certain visual and/or discursive “frames” and specific map genres (maritime maps, continental maps, political maps of a state, etc.):

Since the late Middle Ages, maps of the continents became an authoritative frame for representing the territorial parts of the world: Within the genre of increasingly detailed and large world maps and the genre of continental maps in the atlas depictions of Asia, widespread since the seventeenth century, the Black Sea as a whole as well as all areas of its hinterland were included, but of course at such a small scale that hardly any details are recognizable. Maps of Europe, on the other hand, could include the Black Sea (as well as the entire Mediterranean), but then nevertheless lacked the Caucasian hinterland, not to mention the Caspian Sea.³ Later maps of Asia Minor, especially if in combination with the Caucasus and the Black Sea, came close to a complete representation of our focal region, however.⁴

Maritime maps, by their very nature, of course early on focused on the Seas: portolan maps were common to the Mediterranean region and mainly depicted coastal strips and the location of the most important port cities. But in the sixteenth century, Latin maps also combined the Mediterranean portolan map with the Black Sea and its shores.⁵ Ottoman maps of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean were strongly based on

1 Maps reproduced in this volume are mentioned here in the main text, while others appear in the footnotes only. Ute Schneider, *Die Macht der Karten: Eine Geschichte der Kartographie vom Mittelalter bis heute* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2004); Gerhard Paul, ed., *Visual History: Ein Studienbuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). This short sketch adapts and enhances Stefan Rohdewald, “Anhang A: Mapping Transottomanica. Anstelle einer transosmanischen Kartenkunde,” and Florian Riedler, “Anhang B: Transosmanische Räume, 1500–1900,” both in Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht Fuess, eds., *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken: Perspektiven und Forschungsstand* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 247–58.

2 Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “Mental Maps: Die Konstruktion von geographischen Räumen in Europa seit der Aufklärung,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002): 493–514.

3 E.g., Willen and Joan Blaeu, cartographers, *Europe 1643–50*, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://sanderusmaps.com/our-catalogue/antique-maps/europe/general-and-large-regions/old-antique-map-of-europe-by-willem-blaeu-27099>.

4 Edward Stanford, cartographer, *Asia Minor, Caucasus, Black Sea*, 1904, David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~314704~90083576>.

5 Mateus Prunes, cartographer, *Chart of the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and the coasts of Western Europe and Northwest Africa*, 1559, Library of Congress, accessed December 4, 2023, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g5672m.ct002457>. A collection of four early modern maritime maps including the Black Sea: “Old Mar-

these portolan maps common to the Mediterranean.⁶ However, some of these maps were apparently interested not only in the coastal strips, but also in the rivers flowing into the sea and their course, which they depicted as reaching deep into the hinterland and with their own fluvial port cities. Even fortresses and mountains quite far away from these rivers were recorded.⁷ Maps covering (and often titled) “The Environs of the Black Sea” or similar were printed from the eighteenth century onwards and often represented most parts of the hinterland, with a special focus on the expanding territories of the Russian Empire.⁸

Political maps of individual empires, for instance of Persia⁹ and also of the Ottoman Empire¹⁰ or the earliest Atlas of Russia,¹¹ hardly ever depicted larger neighboring territories, but regularly included the Black Sea and large parts of the hinterland by their very nature. Persia, for example, was only exceptionally depicted together with the Ottoman Empire: The Black Sea and also the Caspian Sea found themselves on such a map, published ca. 1730, but without really being the focus of interest: in the upper left-hand corner, instead of the Danube, longitude measures were explained, and the Ukrainian hinterland too is only partially recorded.¹² In the combination of

itime Maps of the Black Sea Region,” PeopleOfAr, last modified June 12, 2014, <https://www.peopleofar.com/2014/06/12/old-maritime-maps-of-the-black-sea-region/>. Cf. A. Gordyeyev, *Cartography of Black and Azov Seas: Retrospective up to 1700* (Moscow: self-pub., 2008).

6 On the map by Piri Reis, see Bülent Arı, ed., *Piri Reis: Kitab-ı Bahriye/Book of Navigation* (Ankara: Prime Ministry, Undersecretaryship of Navigation, 2002); generally: Pinar Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York: Ashgate, 2014); Ahmed Karamustafa, “Introduction to Ottoman Cartography,” in *The History of Cartography*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward, vol. 2, bk. 1, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 206–8; Cf. *Türkischer Portolan (Küsten des Mittelmeers, 1062 d.H. [1652])*: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cod.turc. 431, accessed December 3, 2023, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00009119-0>.

7 *Southern Greece and the Aegean Sea*, Wikimedia Commons, accessed December 3, 2023, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:16th-century_Turkish_portolan_map_of_the_Black_Sea.jpg.

8 For instance, Didier Robert de Vaugondy, cartographer, *Carte des environs de la Mer Noire où se trouvent l'Ukraine, la Petite Tartarie, la Circassie, la Géorgie et les confins de la Russie européenne et de la Turquie, dédiée et présentée à Monseigneur le duc de Choiseul*, accessed December 3, 2023, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53039400r>.

9 Cyrus Alai, *General Maps of Persia 1477–1925* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Cyrus Alai, *Special Maps of Persia 1477–1925* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

10 Ian Manners, *European Cartographers and the Ottoman World 1500–1750* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007); overarching: Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, eds., *The Early Modern Ottomans. Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

11 *Atlas Russicus*, 1745, accessed November 22, 2023, <http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN337625352>.

12 Reiner and Joshua Ottens, cartographers, *Regnum Persicum Imperium Turcicum in Asia Russorum Provinciae et Mare Caspium*, ca. 1730, accessed November 22, 2023, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1730_Ottens_Map_of_Persia_\(Iran,_Iraq,_Turkey\)_-_Geographicus_-_RegnumPersicum-ottens-1730.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1730_Ottens_Map_of_Persia_(Iran,_Iraq,_Turkey)_-_Geographicus_-_RegnumPersicum-ottens-1730.jpg).

a representation of Russia with Poland-Lithuania, the “Little Tartary” and the Black Sea, the Anatolian coast was only considered without its hinterland.¹³ Similarly, the first printed maps by Arab or Ottoman geographers appearing in the eighteenth century depicting the Ottoman Empire included the Black Sea and its coastlines.¹⁴ The Black Sea was also ‘added’ to a map of the geographically European part of the Ottoman Empire, albeit without consideration of the Caucasus.¹⁵ A map on the occasion of the Crimean War focused in oversized dimensions on the peninsula, but left other regions behind.¹⁶ Even more recent maps of the Black Sea clearly restrict the view to the maritime and coastal regions; only in a few exceptions is an approach integrating the hinterland regions recognizable.¹⁷

In historical atlases, even after the beginnings of Ottoman or Arab map printing, maps of Europe, possibly Asia Minor, including the Near East, but mostly excluding Persia, continue to dominate. Representations of “Eurasia”¹⁸ have been equally common since the invention of this historical spatial concept in the interwar period,¹⁹ but exceed our focus by a very wide margin. Maps of the “Middle East” or the MENA region or even “Eastern Europe”²⁰ mostly bracket each other out to a large extent, often with the common intersection of Turkey, or the Black Sea region, but again not with a clear

13 Herman Moll, cartographer, *Map of Moscovy, Poland, Little Tartary and ye Black Sea*, 1732, David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, accessed November 22, 2023, <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~277424~90050443>.

14 Cf. this later rendering regarded as the first map of Arabia in a European language to be compiled by a Turk: Abu Bakr Ibn Braham, cartographer, *Mappa dell'Impero Ottomanno*, 1740, accessed November 22, 2023, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1b/Abu_Bakr_Ibn_Braham_Mappa_del_Impero_Ottomanno_composta_da_Abubekir_Efendi_1740.jpg. First version published in Amsterdam in 1732.

15 Samuel Dunn, cartographer, *First part of Turkey in Europe ... to which is added the whole of the Black Sea*, New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bbe76f20-857c-0132-d31c-58d385a7b928>.

16 Thomas Packer, cartographer, *A Panoramic View of the Seat of War; the Crimea & the Principal Towns & Forts on the Shores of the Black Sea*, 1855, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://onb.digital/result/110DEE66>.

17 John and Charles Walker, cartographers, *The Euxine or Black Sea: From the Russian Gov. Surveys. With Additions by the Surveyors to the European Commission on the River Danube, 1870–73, 1893*, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://goobi-viewer.univie.ac.at/viewer/fullscreen/AC12006251/1/5>.

18 Mark Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space,” *Slavic Review* 50 (1991): 1–17; Stefan Wiederkehr, *Die eurasische Bewegung: Wissenschaft und Politik in der russischen Emigration der Zwischenkriegszeit und im postsowjetischen Russland* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

19 Within a historical atlas: Georges Duby, ed., *Atlas Historique Larousse* (Paris: Larousse, 1978).

20 Hans Lemberg, “Zur Entstehung des Osteuropabegriffs im 19. Jahrhundert: Vom ‘Norden’ zum ‘Osten’ Europas,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 33 (1985): 48–91; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

intention to represent it.²¹ In historical atlases, at most for antiquity, the Black Sea and also its hinterland are rather firmly established as the focus.²²

It is only lately that more cartographic representations of regional concepts emerge, which aim to consciously represent the Black Sea region as a historical space analogous to the Mediterranean region,²³ or the Caucasus region, “Southeastern Europe,”²⁴ or the “Balkans,”²⁵ but also “Kleinasien.”²⁶ Of course, maps in handbooks on the Black Sea as a region also consolidate this trend.²⁷

In summary: Maps focused exclusively on the Black Sea *and* its hinterland regions, that is, not typical maritime maps, remain very rare to this day. However, special thematic maps of, for example, the Crimean War or the export of oil and natural gas also focus on the Black Sea region including the networks using it as transregional hub. Moreover, within “New” or “Post Area Studies,” the mapping of networks and structures evolves with new priorities, looking beyond established container spaces. An example of this perspective is the “Transottoman” approach to spatiality, conceiving a Eastern European and Near Eastern shared history of actors, knowledge, and objects from 1500 to the twentieth century: The Black Sea region (including the Caspian Sea) figures as the natural center of such a larger interdisciplinary interest, and, thus, also in a map representing aspects of this broader approach.²⁸

21 Stefan Stautner, *Türkei: Europa oder Orient? Repräsentation der Türkei zwischen Europa und Orient* (Berlin: Rhombos, 2004).

22 *Pontus Euxinus et quae adjacent*, in *Atlas Antiquus*, ed. Carl Spruner (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1865), 24, Wikimedia Commons, accessed December 4, 2023, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1855_Spruner_Map_of_the_Black_Sea_or_Pontus_Euxinus_in_Ancient_Times_-_Geographicus_-_PontusEuxinus-spruner-1855.jpg.

23 Combined with the Ottoman Empire: Henri Abraham Chatelain, cartographer, *Carte de l'Empire Othoman Consideree dans les Etats de Cette Puissance, et des Etats qui L'avoisine ou qui luy sont Tributaries ainsi que deux Petites Cartes pour conduire à l'Histoire universel, et à l'Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand dressées sur les instructions les plus nouvelles*, ca. 1719, accessed November 22, 2023, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9c/1719_Carte_de_l%27Empire_Othoman_Consideree_dans_les_Etats_de_Cette_Puissance..._a_l%27Histoire_d%27Alexandre_le_Grand.jpg.

24 Cf. the maps for the handbook on the History of Southeastern Europe by the IOS Regensburg: *Handbuch zur Geschichte Südosteuropas*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer, Konrad Clewing, and Oliver Jens Schmitt, vol. 1, *Herrschaft und Politik in Südosteuropa von der römischen Antike bis 1300*, ed. Fritz Mitthof, Peter Schreiner, and Oliver Jens Schmitt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 38–59; vol. 2, *Herrschaft und Politik in Südosteuropa von 1300 bis 1800*, ed. Oliver Jens Schmitt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 949–69.

25 Holm Sundhaussen, “Europa balcanica: Der Balkan als historischer Raum Europas,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25 (1999): 626–53; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Maria Todorova, “Der Balkan als Analysekategorie: Grenzen, Raum, Zeit,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002): 470–92.

26 Karl Kaser, *Balkan und Naher Osten: Einführung in eine gemeinsame Geschichte* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), fig. 1.

27 Cf. the illustrative maps in the *Black Sea Encyclopedia* mentioned in our introduction: Sergei Grinevsky et al., eds., *The Black Sea Encyclopedia* (Berlin: Springer, 2015).

28 Cf. Rohdewald, “Anhang A: Mapping Transottomanica,” and Riedler, “Anhang B: Transosmanische Räume.”

The examples selected here are exemplary not only of visual discourses and structures that can historically document the evolution of the cartographic imaginability of a Black Sea region.



Fig. 3: Map of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea by Mateus Prunes (1559).

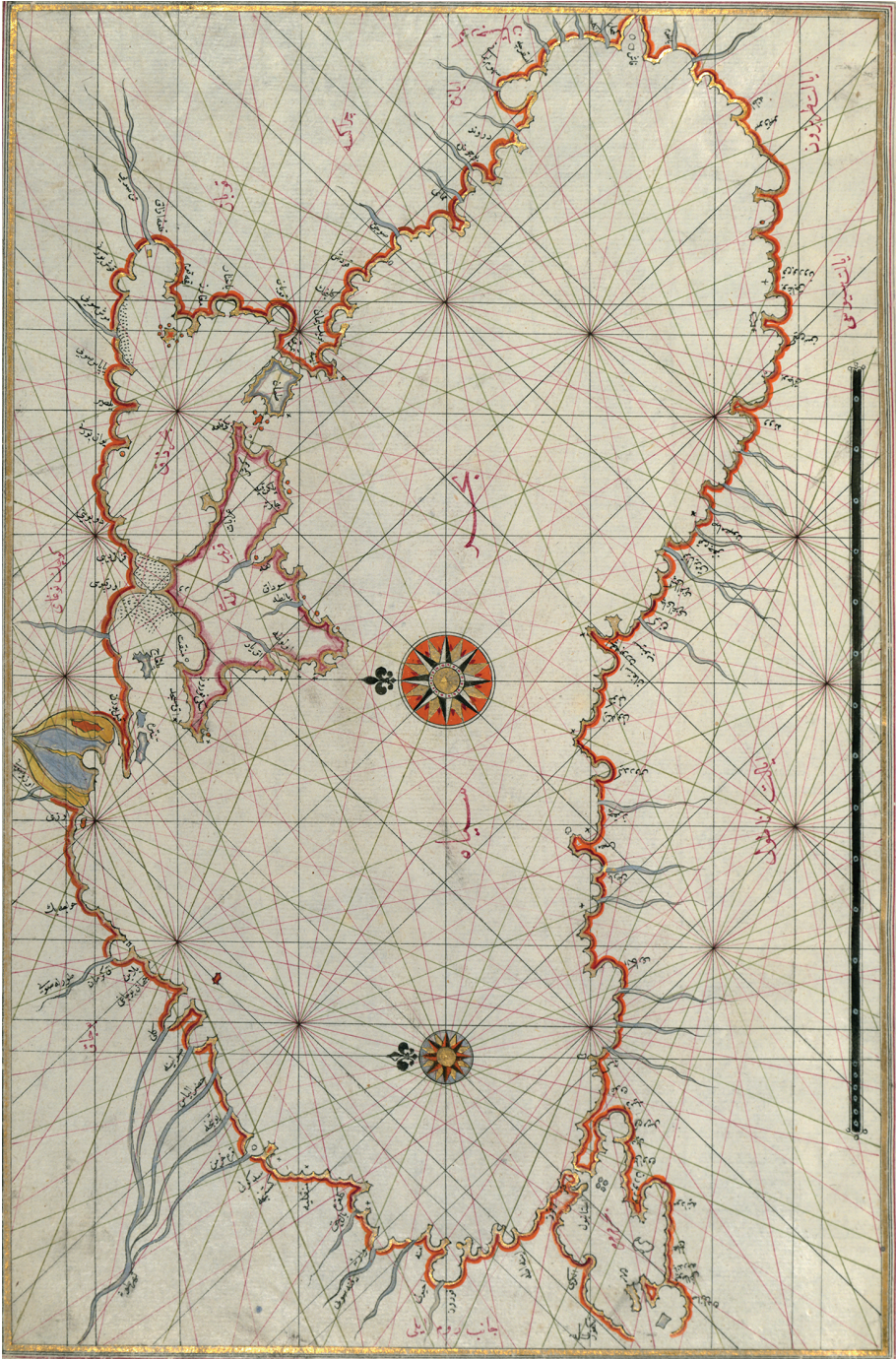


Fig. 4: Map of the Black Sea by Piri Reis.

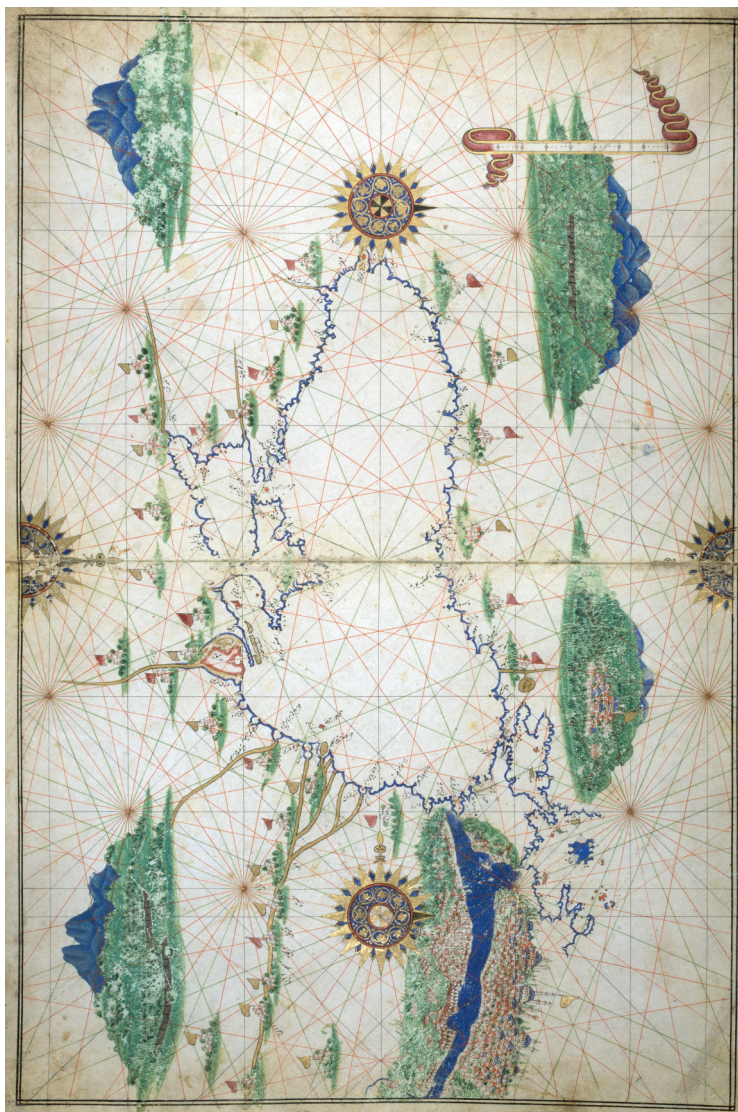


Fig. 5: Southern Greece and the Aegean Sea, anonymous artist.



Fig. 6: Map of the Ottoman Empire by Matthäus Seutter, ca. 1730.



Fig. 7: Map of Muscovy, Poland, Little Tartary and the Black Sea by Herman Moll, 1732.



Fig. 8: Map of the Black Sea by Didier Robert de Vaugandy, 1768.



Fig. 9: Map of the Black Sea by Samuel Dunn, 1788.



Fig. 10: Map of the Black Sea during the Crimean War, 1855.



Fig. 11: Map of the Black Sea in Ancient Times, 1865.

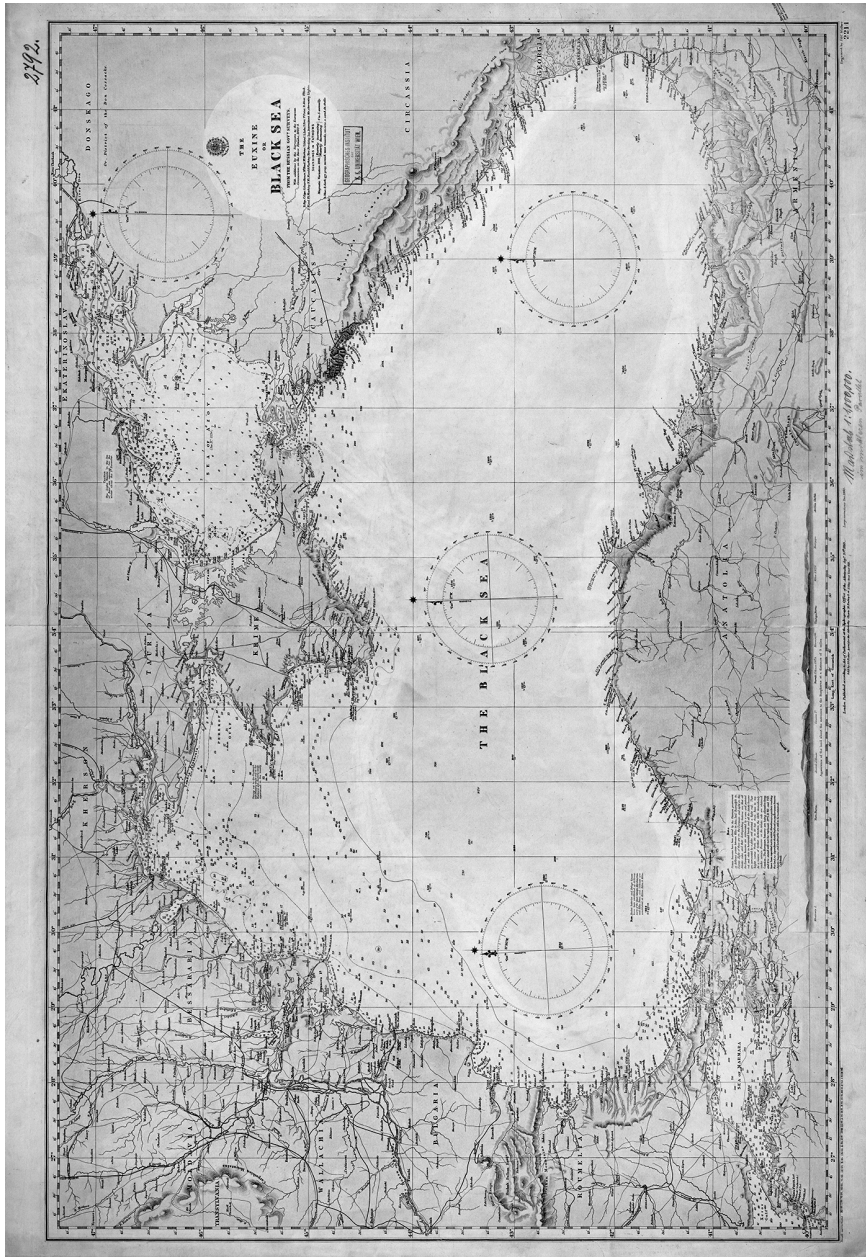


Fig. 12: Admiralty Chart of the Black Sea from Russian Government Surveys, 1893.



Fig. 13: Map of Asia Minor, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, 1904.

