

A Short Introduction to the Printed Mapping of Greece in the 15th - 18th Centuries

From the early days of map-making, cartographers have always manifested a keen interest in the mapping of Greece and the particular continental and insular Greek areas. In other words, the "Greek chorography", as it is often called, has been a cartographic item of special importance, both in manuscript and printed cartography, the latter having produced an impressive number of Greek maps, which are included in almost all the European atlases and travel books, since the first printed edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* in 1477. This prominent presence of Greece in the field of European cartography is due to various historic, political and cultural reasons.

In the first place, the Eastern Mediterranean basin has been for many centuries the centre of the civilized European world and, consequently, an area of special attraction. It was only natural, therefore, that, from the early days, journeys to Greece made necessary the cartographic description of the region. The relevant mapping of the ancients was followed up and developed by the efficient Byzantine administration, thus providing a rich material, which was later used by European cartographers of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The Eastern Mediterranean having become, in the meantime, of capital importance to the European maritime powers in their struggle to establish their political and mercantile hegemony and ensure their control of the route to the Near and Far East, the mapping of the Greek coastline and the Archipelago was confirmed, once more, as a main cartographic topic in the "modern" era of cartography.

Secondly, like any other scientific and artistic activity of the period under review, cartography was influenced by and reflected the intense interest in Greece, enhanced by the revival of Greek culture and the flourishing of classical studies during and after the Renaissance.

Finally, the prolific production of Greek maps is due to the fact that, quite often, cartographers used to delineate "historical" maps of Greece, with the ancient nomenclature and state structure, based mainly on the Ptolemaic cartography and the works of the classical authors, as well as "contemporary" ones, which were the outcome of the journeys of travelers, merchants and intellectuals of the time, usually depicting Greece as a province of the Ottoman Empire or the Greek islands as territories of the Venetian Republic. Hence the distinction between maps of "Graecia Antiqua" and maps of "Graecia Nova" or "European Turkey" or "Southern Part of Turkey in Europe" and the use of such Latin explanatory terms as "olim" (formerly) and "nunc" (presently) for the identification of places, according to their ancient (Greek, Latin) or contemporary (modern Greek, Turkish, Slavic, Italian) names.

It should be stressed, however, that the numerous maps of Greece and Greek areas do not all represent original cartographic work. It is true that most of them differ in style, depending on the particular period and country of their publication. But the real cartographic prototypes of the Greek maps are very limited indeed.

It is noteworthy, for instance, that, as far as continental Greece is concerned, only two basic types of maps can be identified:

Type A (pl. I) is based on the Ptolemaic description of Greece. It is included, of course, in most of the editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, but was also used in many subsequent geographic works. Due to the erroneous Ptolemaic calculation of the latitude of the Mediterranean, this map gives a distorted geographic outline of Greece, while the orientation of Crete is wrong, with a southwest - northeast direction, and the Chalkidiki peninsula, in northern Greece, is completely deformed. The maps based on this type could be called historical, because of the Ptolemaic origin of their prototype and their historical depiction of ancient Greece. Apart from the Ptolemaic editions of the 15th and 16th centuries, the above type was used for the maps of the 16th century Italian cartographers Sophianus, Bertelli, Luchinus, Salamanca, Vavassore, as well as in the works of the Dutch Ortelius, the English Speed and some French cartographers of the 17th century.

The map of type B (pl. II) is definitely more advanced and many errors of the previous type have been corrected, although the geographic distortion of the area is still quite obvious. It has been maintained that the first printed map of this type dates back to 1545 and belongs to the Italian Giacomo Castaldi. I would think that this is not absolutely accurate, although the Castaldi map is perhaps the most well-known specimen. As a matter of fact, the same type had been used earlier for the Venetian woodcut edition of the Ptolemy's *Geographia* in 1511. Later it was widely used by other Italian cartographers, contemporaries of Castaldi, by A. Ortelius, G. Mercator, J. Blaeu and, finally, by the majority of European cartographers up to the 19th century.

There are, of course, many variations of the above basic types of maps of Greece, with significant differences between them, depending mainly on style and prevailing artistic fashions. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the mapping of Greece has been generally based on these two prototypes, which were used until modern scientific means allowed the precise and faultless depiction of our contemporary maps.

The same applies to the printed maps of Crete, which I thought worth mentioning separately, since this island has always been a distinct cartographic item more than any other Greek area.

There are six basic types of maps of Crete:

Type A, early Ptolemaic, (pl. III) is the earliest one, used in the various editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia* with the exception of the 1511 Venice edition. The outline of the island is rather confused, without precise morphological description of the coasts. This type was also used by the Italian cartographers of the 16th century, as well as by Ortelius and all those who copied his maps.

Type B (pl. IV) is based on the manuscript maps by C. Buondelmonti and as far as printed cartography is concerned it has been used only by B. dalli Sonetti, P. Coppo and B. Bordone.

Type C, late Ptolemaic (pl. V) has been widely used from the 1513 Strasbourg edition of the *Geographia* to the second half of the 18th century after it was decisively promoted by Ortelius and Münster.

Type D (pl. VI), based on the manuscript maps by the Cretan cartographer Giorgio Sideri Calapoda, was adopted both by Ortelius and Mercator and, thus, was well established across time and space.

Type E (pl. VII), based on the manuscript maps by the Venetian engineer F. Basilicata, is unreservedly the best and most accurate outline of a map of Crete. It was first used in the printed



Plate I. Map of Greece - type A



Plate II. Map of Greece - type B



Plate III. Map of Crete – type A (The early Ptolemaic model)



Plate. VI. Map of Crete – type D (The Calapoda model)



Plate IV. Map of Crete – type B (The Buondelmonti model)



Plate. VII. Map of Crete – type E (The Basilicata model)



Plate V. Map of Crete – type C (The late Ptolemaic model)

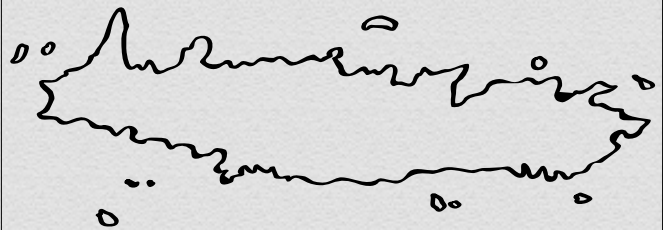


Plate. VIII. Map of Crete – type F (The "Portolan" model)

cartography by Boschini and later by Coronelli and a plethora of cartographers of all national cartographic schools.

Finally, type F (pl. VIII) is a "portolan" model with a "nautical" shape of Crete's outline and was used first by the Italian cartographers of the 16th century and then by the Dutch, French and English maritime map makers.

Based as they are on very few cartographic originals, the numerous maps of the Greek chorography have, nevertheless, their own characteristics both in the field of art and in the field of science. As in all forms of visual art, maps reflect the styles and artistic currents of the ages in which they were made. It is, of course, true that the cartographic subject of a map does not change according to the artistic fashion, but only because of gradual scientific progress, which permits a more accurate geographic depiction. What does change in maps, just as much as in pictures, is their style and their artistic and decorative features, which develop and give expression to themselves over the ages.

Various types of ornamentation were used for the decoration of maps, the most important being the cartouches, which contain the title, the key, the cartographer's name, the dedication etc. Knowledge of the development of the cartouche could be of considerable help, since style and ornament can provide at least a starting point in assigning a map to a period or a cartographer in cases of unsigned maps.

On the earliest printed maps, cartouches were very restrained and simple, although some were plainly decorated. Real elaboration and rich decoration of the cartouches came in during the second half of the 16th century and continued through the 17th century, as the artistic style of the period was increasingly influenced by the baroque. These cartouches are decorated with historical or mythological scenes, emblems, coats of arms, trophies, as well as with more naturalistic elements such as pictures of explorers trading with the inhabitants of the area portrayed or specimens of the local flora and fauna etc. Typical examples of these heavily ornamented cartouches are to be found on the maps by Blaeu (nos. 381/243, 384/245), van Keulen (nos. 1775/1172 and seq.), Laurenberg (nos. 1903/1275 and seq.), Visscher (nos. 3629/2352, 3631/2353, 3634/2356), and others. Later on, the rococo style was introduced at the beginning of the 18th century, in parallel with the fashion of cartouches ornate with romantic scenes with a background of real or imaginary ancient ruins (French maps of the 18th century, maps by Homann, Senex, Seutter and others, (nos. 1652/1083, 2914/1906, 3331/2171). Finally, towards the end of the century, the plainness of the cartouches predominated, as maps became more scientific in design.

Other decorative elements on the maps, which reflect the influence of the style of the various countries and periods, are the scales and the compass roses. These were of practical value, but often were used as ornaments of the maps. Especially compass roses were frequently beautiful objects in themselves. Many cartographers used a spire or the fleur-de-lys to represent the northern pointer and a cross to indicate the East, presumably because of the geographic position of the Holy Land. The number of points was always based on the number four, but many had eight, sixteen or even thirty-two points (nos. 1429 / 958, 1430 / 959, 3558 / 2314).

Ships, sea monsters and vignette views and scenes are yet another decorative embellishment on old maps. Ships were depicted on maps from early times. One interesting example occurs on Castaldi's map of Greece in his edition of

Ptolemy's *Geographia* (Venice, 1548), (no. 2818/1839). Other maps contained views of cities, such as the bird's-eye view of Constantinople on the maps of Greece by B. Randolph and J. Senex in the 17th and 18th centuries (nos. 2879/1879, 3330/2170), or inset views of forts and castles, which decorated the border of the maps, as it occurs on the F. de Wit's maps of the Morea and Crete, circa 1670 (nos. 3709/2387, 3714/2392), while, in some cases, maps embodied descriptive texts, usually referring to the population of the depicted areas (map of Greece by S. Münster and maps of Crete and Cyprus by M. Quad, nos. 2808/1834, 2873/1873, 2874/1874).

Another technique, which was frequently used towards the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century and which served rather decorative purposes, is the division of the cartographic page into two sections; one contained the map of the area and the other a view or a plan, usually of its most important city, as on the maps of various Greek islands, such as those of Crete with the view of Heraclion by Lotter, P. du Val and Visscher (nos. 2103/1380, 3558/2314, 3631/2353), those of Corfu by van Keulen, Ottens, Seutter and Weigel (nos. 1801/1185, 2523/1632, 3347/2179, 3664/2368), the one of Negreponte by Coronelli (no. 1091/676), etc.

The lettering on maps and the conventional signs or symbols employed to depict a variety of features such as towns, mountains and the sea, could also be considered as decorative cartographic elements.

The lettering, whether engraved or printed, follows the typographical and calligraphic fashions of the period and country of publication of the maps. In some early printed woodcut maps, gothic lettering is used wholly or partially (no. 2673/1808). But from the end of the 15th century, with the rise and influence of the great Italian printers, roman or italic lettering was used almost exclusively. The purpose of lettering on maps being to indicate clearly place-names, extravagance in style was usually suppressed. In some cases, however, more decoration was allowed and rather eccentric initial capital letters were used, as on the 17th century maps of the Archipelago by Laurenberg (nos. 1905/1276, 1906/1277) and Dudley (nos. 1429/958 and seq.).

Mountains were often represented by great slabs of rock of conical shape (no. 2754/1802), a convention that persisted until 1550. This gave way to a shaded representation and, later, to a representation by little hummocks or molehills (no. 2782/1823). Mountains started being depicted in the form we know to-day from about the end of the 17th century, by the use of lines of vertical shading.

The early representation of the sea showed dangerous waves, whirlpools, monsters etc. The sea was indeed a forbidding element in those days and was represented by swirling and billowing lines almost until the middle of the 16th century (no. 2782/1823). Later on, all water was shown stippled or dotted, while Dutch cartographers, such as Mercator, adopted the style of representing the water by a "moiré-watered silk" pattern (nos. 2206/1447, 2211/1451). But from the middle of the 17th century onwards, the sea itself was usually left blank, except for ships and monsters.

Finally, towns were shown, in the early days of map-making, as groups of buildings with towers surrounded by walls and dominated by the city castle. After the first quarter of the 16th century, the church and its belfries dominated the standard symbol of the town and this continued until nearly the end of the 18th century, after which it became the standard practice to use dots and circles to indicate towns and other communities according to size.

In order to facilitate the study of the evolution of Greek chorography and the identification of the numerous maps of Greece, cartographers, map makers and publishers are, usually, classified into national European schools of cartography, which flourished successively between 1477 and the beginning of the 19th century in Italy, Germany, Holland, France and England, and which reflect in their map-making the scientific progress and the artistic style of their respective period and country. There are some maps, however, which form a distinct group, irrespective of their country of origin or year of publication. They belong to the so-called Ptolemaic cartography and were published over a period of almost three hundred years, both in Italy and Germany as well as in the Low Countries.

It should be underlined, at this point, that the term of printed or even manuscript "maps of Ptolemy" is not to be taken in its literal meaning. As it is known, Claudius Ptolemaeus was a geographer from Alexandria, who lived about 150 AD. It has not been historically verified whether he had drawn maps himself. He did, however, write a book on geography, with the title "Γεωγραφικὴ Υφῆγησις", which was later called "Geographia" or "Cosmographia". It seems that, on the basis of this book, several manuscript maps were drawn later, which were preserved and copied by the Byzantines, who, themselves, used the same book by Ptolemaeus to draw additional maps. These maps were eventually transported to Europe by the intellectuals and monks of Byzantium, who fled to Italy after the fall of Constantinople. They constituted the basic material for the Italian and German cartographers of the 15th century and were included in the first printed edition of Ptolemy's "Geographia", published in Bologna (1477).

In all the 27 printed editions of the "Geographia" -out of which 15 differ among themselves - from 1477 up to 1730, there is a special map of Greece, the "Decima et Ultima Europae Tabula". In addition to it, they all include a map of Northern Greece and the Southern Balkans, the "Nona Europae Tabula", while some of the editions contain the so-called "modern" maps of the Balkans and Crete. These are not literally Ptolemaic because they were drawn by contemporary cartographers but, for practical purposes, they are considered to belong to the Ptolemaic cartography, since they are included in the "Geographia" and their style is typically Ptolemaic. They are to be found in the editions after 1513, with the respective titles "Tabula Moderna Bossine-Servie-Gretiae et Sclavonie" and "Tabula Nova Candiae" or "Tabula Neoterica Candie". Finally, in other editions of the "Geographia", and especially in the smaller size Italian ones of the 16th century, some new and different maps of Greece, Crete and Cyprus have been added, drawn by well-known Italian cartographers of that period.

The Greek Ptolemaic maps are both woodcut and copper-engraved, the first belonging usually to the German editions of the "Geographia" and the latter to the Italian ones. The Ptolemaic cartographic era ends, in a way, with the "Geographia" edition by G. Mercator, in 1578. His map of Greece retains the basic Ptolemaic style but, at the same time, reflects the skill and developed technique of the great Dutch cartographer. After Mercator, the publication of Ptolemaic maps continued for another 150 years. But these issues are of limited interest, being mainly reprints of the earlier ones. Eventually they were put aside by the map-making of the national schools of cartography, which, in the meantime, prevailed in Europe.

As regards the various European schools of cartography, it should be noted, very briefly, that the Italian school produced, already in the 15th century, the first printed Isolario of Bartolomeo dalli Sonetti (1485), dealing exclusively with the Greek Archipelago. The Italian School, however, flourished mainly in the 16th century and its contribution to the Greek chorography is indeed rich and interesting. It consists of maps of Greece or Greek areas by famous cartographers and publishers, such as Bertelli, Castaldi, Camocio, Ducheti, Salamanca, Vavassore, Luchinus and others. Most of these maps were individual loose sheets, since the first half of the 16th century saw no modern atlases. Maps sellers, nevertheless, bound up selections of these loose maps, probably to order, to form composite atlases, many of which are attributed to A. Lafreri, known as "Tavole moderne di Geographia". Apart from these maps, new Isolaria about the Greek islands appeared, the most famous among them being the works by Porcacchi, Bordone, Camocio, Rosaccio etc. Venice, however, was in decline and, towards the end of the 16th century, Italy ceased to be an important source of new Greek maps, with the exception of the "Arcano del Mare", by the exiled Englishman Dudley, and the various works of Coronelli, Boschini and Levanto, in the 17th century.

Map-making was now dominated by the Low Countries, but before coming to the Dutch cartographers, it would be more systematic to mention the German School, which made an earlier contribution to printed cartography. Important as it may be, the contribution of the German cartographers did not occupy a prevailing position in mapmaking, as it occurred, for a certain period, with the Italian and, later, with the Dutch Schools. The German School is represented in the 15th century by the woodcut Ptolemaic cartography, which was carried on after 1500, with important works by Münster, Honter, Matal and Quad. In the 17th century, the German cartographic production was rather limited, while, later, there was a considerable contribution by well-known cartographers such as Homann, Seutter, Lotter and others, whose maps are characteristic examples of the elaborated baroque style of that period.

The Dutch School represents the Golden Age of cartography, which started in the last quarter of the 16th century and lasted until the first part of the 18th century, bearing from the beginning the unfading mark and influence of its founders, G. Mercator and A. Ortelius, both of whom devoted a very important part of their cartographic work to Greece. Less famous, but equally important, was their contemporary G. de Jode. They were followed, in the 17th century, by skilful successors such as Janssonius, Hondius, Blaeu, Visscher, F. de Wit, who produced some of the most impressive and decorative Greek maps, and Laurenberg, whose cartographic work is almost entirely devoted to Greece and particular Greek areas. At the same time, Dutch maritime cartography flourished to an admirable level. Being an important maritime power, Holland had a special interest in the geographical area of the Mediterranean. Responding to this political and economic demand, an important number of cartographers such as Colom, Coos, Iacobsz, Doncker, van Keulen, Robijn and others produced excellent maritime charts of the Greek coastlines and the Archipelago. The decline of the Dutch cartographic preponderance started at the beginning of the 18th century, although cartographers such as P. Vander Aa and publishers like Covens, Mortier and others were still contributing to the Dutch map-making.

Prevalence, however, had already been given to the French School of cartography, which even used the Dutch Publishing

Houses to produce its own maps. The French cartographic production of the 17th century is dominated by the important work of the Sanson family and, to a lesser extent, of P. du Val. They all produced numerous Greek maps and were followed, in the 18th century, by Delisle, Jaillot, de Fer, R. de Vaugondy and by Grogard, Roux, Bellin in the field of maritime cartography of the Aegean, after the creation of the "Depôt des Cartes et Plans".

In order to complete the picture, reference should be made to the English School of cartography, although its contribution to the Greek chorography has been somehow limited. It produced, nevertheless, some important maps of Greece, as well as some maritime charts by famous map-makers such as Speed, Seller and Randolph in the 17th century and, later, Senex, Kitchin, Moll and others.

Last, but not least, special reference should be made to the sole Greek cartographer of the 18th century, Rigas Fereos Velestinlis and his twelve-sheet map of the Grecian East, which was printed in Vienna in 1777, followed, a few years later, by the similar map of Greece of Anthimos Gazis, published in 1800.

I would like to stress at this point that the above short introduction to the printed mapping of Greece aims only at providing very elementary data on the matter. It does not in any way pretend to exhaust so extensive a subject and is, therefore, limited to a brief outline of the purely cartographic and geographic production of the period under review, without any reference to maps contained in travel books, for which a special analysis would be appropriate.

C.G.Z.