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How the Cultural Heritage of Cartography and Maps may positively influence the development of a small society: The “Kozani Experiment” (2008-2010).

Abstract

Kozani is a medium-small sized city in the NW part of Greece, looking for plans and investments towards a “clever development” based on innovative concepts with cultural reference. Thanks to its population migration to Central and Eastern Europe especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, Kozani was privileged in getting back from its own people in Diaspora treasures of scholarship and knowledge. Thanks to these treasures a historic Municipal Library (ML) was created since the mid 17th century, considered today as one of the most important in the whole country, reflecting mainly the period of the European Enlightenment. The University of Thessaloniki proposed recently to the City of Kozani a two-year project in order to design, organize and implement a cartographic heritage-referenced project exploiting the small but historically important backlog of mainly 18th century maps and atlases kept in the ML. In the paper, the impact of the notion of cartographic heritage is discussed as a modern, fresh and innovative constituent of the overall cultural heritage resetting cartography and maps in its distinct place as an important product of human intellect and skill ever. The philosophy and the foundation of the Kozani project are then analyzed mainly as a scheme for the development of a viable example of good practice in the field of Cartographic Heritage. Relevant plans and actions as well as strategies and options are briefly described in order to show how cartography and maps could contribute in refreshing the profile of ML using the potentiality and strength of cartographic heritage as a pike of communication between the world of cartography and maps with the society.

Introduction

Kozani is a medium-small sized city in the NW part of Greece very close to the environmentally heavy charged area of the biggest brown coal power plant in the country, with all the associated severe problems constraining the everyday life and the future of the area. Historically, the city and the surroundings suffered a deep and long-lasting poverty which had as a result the heavy population migration especially since the 17th century mainly to areas bordering the Danube River (Livieratos et al. 2009). Today the city seeks for plans and strategies towards a “clever and alternative development” based on innovative ideas and investments. The task is not easy at all for the local authorities because the planning-choices are very limited. Kozani does not enjoy some rich and inviting natural landscape or urban attractions or any supporting major archaeological reference as many other places in the country. The city’s principal options for a future development is primarily based on alternative schemes referred to its human resources and surprisingly to a unique cultural background traditionally supported and reinforced by the richness of its famous Library with roots back in 17th century. This Municipal Library (ML) established and grown thanks to some prominent members of Kozani’s important Diaspora of the time, who migrated in major and minor Mid-European cities and towns especially in the surrounding areas of the Danube River, became soon an important cultural centre of scholarship famous far beyond its local limits. ML was privileged in receiving important manuscript and printed books in great numbers especially from Kozani-natives in Diaspora living in Vienna, Budapest, Zemun-Belgrade and in other smaller cit-

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ies along the Danube zone. These culturally prepared scholars and wealthy professionals sent back to their homeland books of any thematic content proud to make their city of origin an educational and cultural centre in the whole region. This tradition is still alive in the city and attracts the interest of Kozani natives living today in other parts of the country and abroad. Thanks to these personalities ML is now considered one of the most important and rich public libraries in the whole country, reflecting mainly the era of European Enlightenment. It is a real challenge for the local administration to design and plan the “clever and alternative development” based around the cultural goods offered by this important and powerful centre of tradition, culture and knowledge. The clue is thus, how to use this treasure of powerful cultural heritage as a multiplier for development. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) offered a view in this direction by proposing to the City of Kozani the development of a set of actions related to what is meant in the frame of ICA as Cartographic Heritage (Livieratos 2008d; Livieratos 2009). The idea started from the fact that among the treasures kept in ML there is a small backlog of some important maps, atlases and geography books and school manuals from that period, which unfortunately was never considered appropriately until now. The AUTH proposal was a very specific and operational two-year project in order to design, organize and implement a Cartographic Heritage-referenced project exploiting the small but historically important backlog of maps, atlases and relevant books kept in the library, focusing on cartographic heritage as an innovative and attracting modern cultural tool addressing the general public in an over-regional scale aiming at international partnership as well. In May 2008 a two-year research project agreement was signed between the Municipality of Kozani, the ML and AUTH aiming at the development of a new Municipal Map Library (MML, see Url 1, 2009) housed in the recently restored Georgios Lassanis Mansion (Url 2, 2009) at the centre of the city. The historic ML, with its roots in 17th century, keeps a small but important collection of maps, atlases and geography books, mainly from 18th century, referred to the period of Greek Enlightenment. For example, a copy of the 1797 Rigas Velestinlis *Charta* (Livieratos 2008a) as well as the extremely rare 1800 Anthimos Gazis world map (Livieratos 2008b) are kept there among other maps and atlases which were never before put in systematic evidence. The basic intend of the project is to document the existing cartographic material, to preserve it and to make it easily accessible for study and exhibition to the public. The agreement was unanimously approved by the Municipal Council in 12 May 2008 and the official opening of the MML was held in 11 October 2008. The MML project is two-streamed (Figure 1): One stream deals with the *organization* and the second stream with the *communication* and promotion.

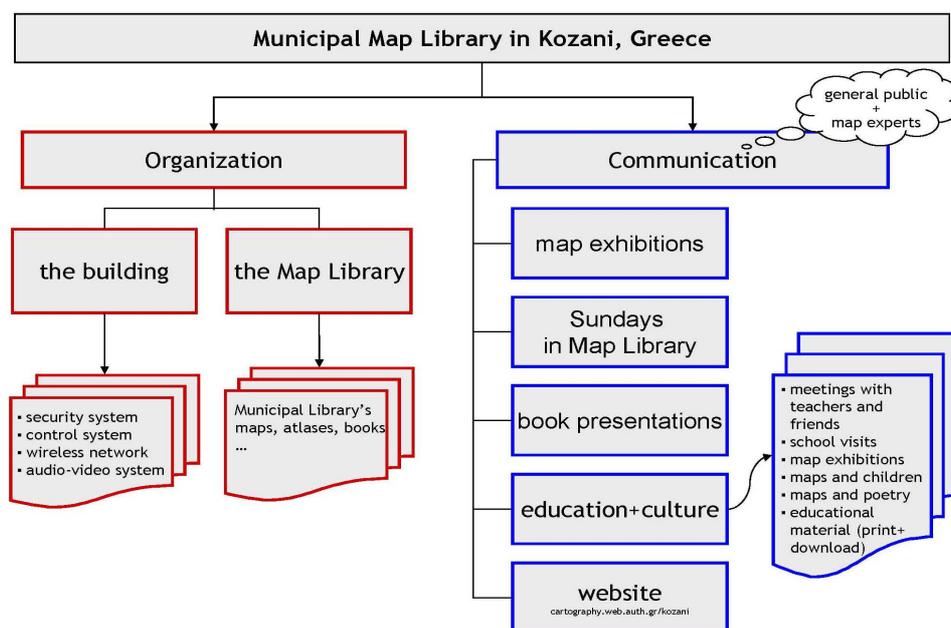


Figure 1. The general scheme of the MML project.

The *organization* concerns a) the proper setting of the building (the Lassanis Mansion) in order to house the MML and its activities and b) the proper archiving, documentation, conservation and digitization of the map and atlas collection. The *communication* concerns the introduction and implementation of all capable and necessary conditions and actions contributing in making the MML a Cartographic Heritage attractive centre of excellence for the benefit of the society.

The *Organisation* component of the MML project

The building

The first part of the *organization* stream deals with the setting of the MML housing in the Lassanis Mansion, a 18th century building recently restored from ruins. It is now available for cultural use by the City of Kozani, as a state protected historic building (Figure 2, left). In this mansion was born Georgios Lassanis (1793-1870), a scholar, politician and patriot (Url 3, 2009) involved as leading personality in the Greek Struggle for Independence (1821-1829). In the frame of the project a special study was made for the best possible use of the building as a multi-tasking house serving the MML plans mainly for *communication/promotion* purposes (i.e. permanent and periodic map exhibitions, conferences, workshops for children etc.). Some perspectives for harmless additions improving the functionality of the building were also proposed (Figure 2, right).



Figure 2. Left: The Lassanis Mansion hosting MML, before and after restoration. Right: An example of the proposals for improving the functionality of the building.

The building was supplied with proper security and control systems and a modern wireless network of audio-video supporting system was introduced canceling thus some relative inconveniences relevant to the complicated and strait setting of the original internal architecture. Modern audio-video technology improved the flexibility and the multi-tasking capacity of the building, giving alternatives in designing map exhibitions and other cartography related educational and cultural activities. An enthusiastic employee from ML was easily trained to run and supervise all the building-related MML issues.

The Map Library

The second part of the MML *organization* stream was concentrated on the identification, evaluation, documentation, archiving, restoration and digitization of the ML's cartographic backlog (maps, atlases, books) mainly dating from 18th century. This was the core activity in the MML because it concerns the major sourcing of the overall project. Most of the maps and atlases as well as of the books with geographic-cartographic content concern important chapters in the European History of Cartography, in the Enlightenment, with international dimension. But also concern the particularity of the important period of the Greek Enlightenment in 18th century, preceding and preparing, in some ways, the Struggle of Independence in the early 19th century. The possibility of studying and especially *promoting* such a cartographic backlog was more than challenging. The map collection in MML was thus the source for attracting research on cartographic history but also for making MML a new and modern centre for publicizing

and socializing cartography and historic maps attracting specialists, enthusiasts and the general public, through map exhibitions and specialized publications. The interaction of MML with ML was also functioning as additive value for both, especially when associating geography books from ML were coupled with relevant maps and atlases reconstructing fascinating stories from 18th century involving cartographers, authors, publishers, engravers, politicians, scholars, patriots in the tormented 18th century international scene of Europe.

Among other maps in the MML (see Livieratos et al., 2009), emphasis is given in two maps, probably the most outstanding pieces of the collection displayed in permanent exhibition: the 12-sheet map of Greece (Figure 3, see e.g. Livieratos, 2008a, 2008c; Boutoura, 2008) the famous *Charta* by Rigas Velestinlis (1748-1798), engraved by Franz Müller and published in Vienna (1796-1797) and the 4-sheet world map by Anthimos Gazis (1758-1828) engraved by Karl Robert Schindelmayer and published in Vienna three years later, in 1800.

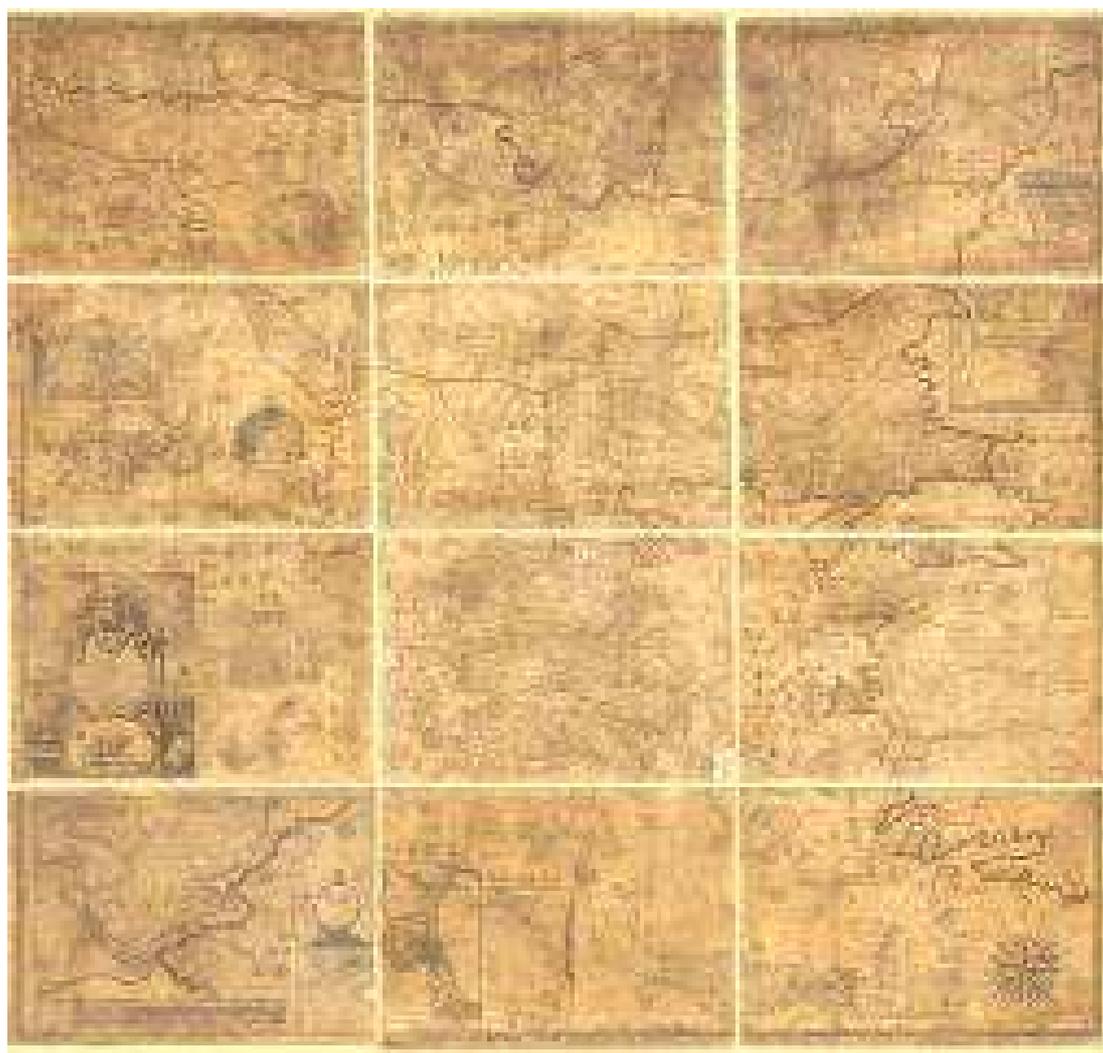


Figure 3. The twelve-sheet Rigas *Charta*. Kozani MML

The Anthimos Gazis world map (Livieratos, 2008b) which undergone a full conservation at the Thessaloniki Museum of Byzantine Culture (Figure 4) is of particular importance, considered as extremely rare and until now the only second known existing copy with the one kept in the National Library of Australia. These two maps together with a second Gazis' 4-sheet map, depicting Greece, engraved by Franz Müller and published also in Vienna in 1800 a virtual copy of which is digitally available by BNCF, the National Central Library of Florence, consist the basis of the first MML permanent exhibition dedicated to the cartography of Greek Enlightenment (Figure 5).

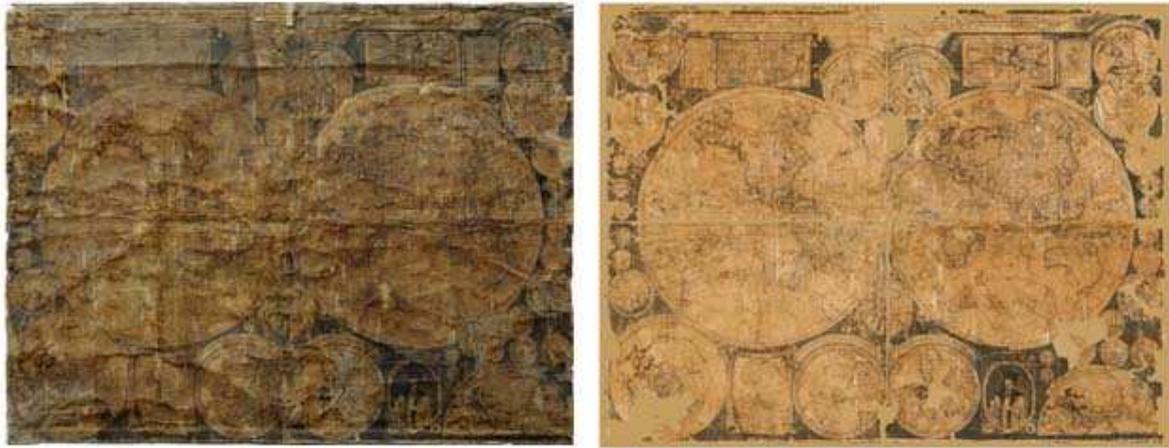


Figure 4. The rare world map by Anthimos Gazis before and after restoration. Kozani MML.



Figure 5. Views of MML permanent exhibition at Lassanis Mansion.

Important cartographic items in the MML are also the 8-sheet map of the Danube River *Navigationskarte der Donau*, Vienna 1789 (Figure 6, left) depicting the Danube fluvial course from Semlin-Zemun to the Black Sea (Besevliev, 1975; Livieratos et al., 2009) conserved thanks to a local generous private donation, the Franz-Anton Schrämbl's *Allgemeiner Grosser Atlas*, widely known as *Allgemeiner Grosser Schrämblischer Atlas*, (Figure 6, right), published as a complete work in Vienna in 1800 (Dörflinger, 1981), and atlases published by Homann Heirs.

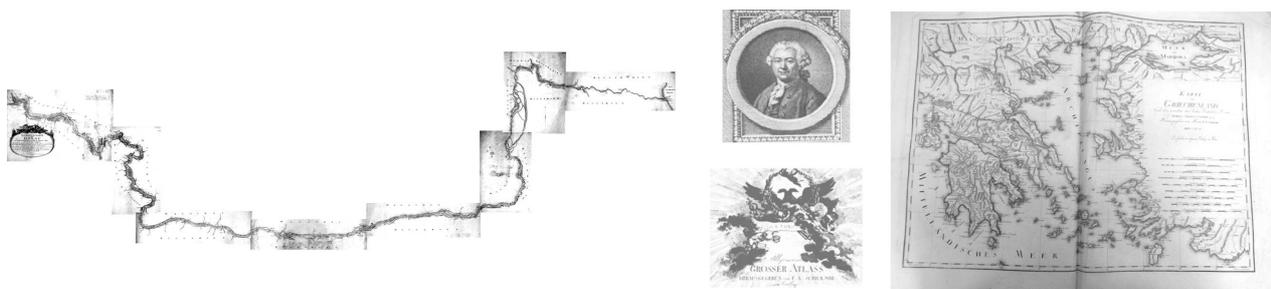


Figure 6. Left: The 8-sheet map union of the *Navigationskarte der Donau*. Right: Schrämbl's *Allgemeiner Grosser Atlas* (Vienna, 1800). The map of Greece engraved by Karl Robert Schindelmayer, according to d'Anville and Choiseul-Gouffier. Kozani, MML.

The *Communication* component of the MML project

During the first year of the implementation of the project, a number of actions took place, in the frame of a properly designed *communication* plan. This plan was focused on making MML known and a centre of attraction not only to a local scale (i.e. to the local education system and to the local general public) but also to a national scale, calling for the attention of experts, of national institutions and of the media. This was done by developing the agenda of a number of multi-thematic cartographic and/or cartography-related events addressed to a variety of target-groups, some times in association with other already scheduled events of national and international interest.

Map exhibitions

Of primer concern was the organization of a first map exhibition in association with the inauguration of the MML (October 2008) under the general title “*Kozani in the World of Maps*”. The maps and the geography books of the so called Greek Enlightenment, kept in ML, published mainly in the 18th century Paris, Venice, Padua, and Vienna, were exhibited in the Lassanis Mansion (Figure 7). This exhibition initially planned for almost three months duration was extended for almost a year period and a part of it is now permanent.

Two other map exhibitions covered the first period of MML life, one with a selection of reproductions of caricature maps concerning mainly the European history from 14th to 19th century (Figure 8) and the other with children’s maps from the Greek participations in the ICA’s Barbara Petchenik map contest since 1995 (Figure 9). Both exhibitions were linked to other events of local/national and international interest. The first associated to the famous Kozani Carnival festival (February 2009) and the second on the occasion of the World Day for Children's Book (April 2009).



Figure 7. Views from the first MML map exhibition “*Kozani in the World of Maps*”.



Figure 8. Exhibition “*Caricature maps of the World and History*”. Kozani MML



Figure 9. Exhibition “*Maps in children’s dreams*”. Kozani, MML. *Sundays in Map Library*

“*Sundays in Map Library*” was a series of open lectures addressed to the general public, which covered the whole first period of MML’s life from October 2008 to May 2009. In eight hourly lectures, assisted

by rich power-point presentations, the participants followed the history of cartography and maps from the very origins to the space era. Soon the lectures became popular, a sort of “Sunday *must* event”, with wide attendance attracting participation also from outside the city (Figure 10). The “Sundays” apart their cultural impact contributed also to make people familiar with the MML, attracted the interest of the media (Figure 11) and made the building, the Lassanis Mansion, a known site to visit in a Sunday city-tour.



Figure 10. “Sundays in Map Library”. Kozani MML

In the frame of the “meeting people events” the MML in cooperation with the ML organized two book presentations of major national interest: one related to the new book on the history of cartography of the Hellenic space (1420-1800), by the historian George Tolia, based on the important Samourka’s map collection and the second, a collective multi-thematic volume of papers, including the cartography component, on the history of Macedonia as far as the “identity” issue is concerned.



Figure 11. The press and the media often reported on MML.

The educational and cultural dimension of the project

From the very beginning of MML existence a special interest was directed to the educational dimension of the project. Well organized contacts with teachers of the local schools in the frame of dedicated courses introduced the MML to the educational society and got valuable feedback. MML became soon a *locus publicus* for organized school visits and the main result of this interaction was the planning and the implementation of two projects: the Barbara Petchenik-related map exhibition “*Maps in the dreams of children*”, on the occasion of the World Day dedicated to Children's Books, and the open-doors “game with maps” for children of primary education, entitled “*Mapping my city*” (Figure 12) attracting a great number of young pupils. Especially in the second case the city centre was invaded by school children who for two days, after an ad-hoc training in MML house, explored and mapped in their own way parts of the city.

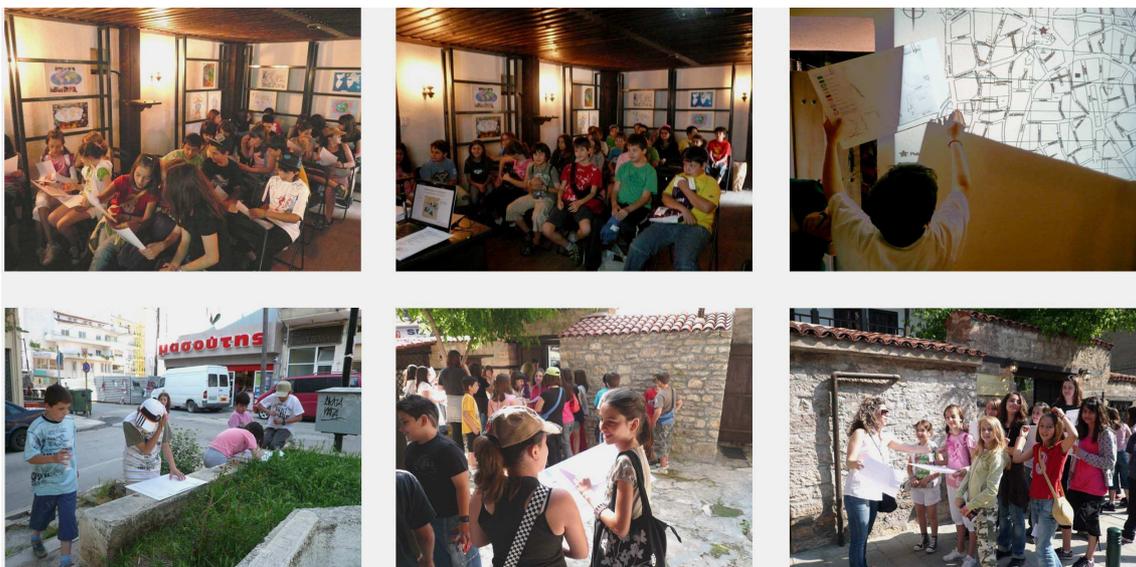


Figure 12. “Mapping my city”, a cartographic game for school children (June 2009)

In the frame of promoting and diffusing the cultural dimension of maps, the MML participated in the World Day for Poetry by dedicating a permanent space in its website entitled “Maps in poems”. In a selection of poems by prominent Greek and internationally famous poets, e.g. from Aristophanes and Shakespeare to Borges, Durrell and Elytis, the focus on map showed its strong metaphoric value introducing at the same time the basis for an anthology of poetry where the map is centered as a constructive element of artistic creation. This small anthology was set properly for easy downloading from the MML website (Figure 13, left) providing thus a small booklet with a collection of poems where the map is creatively referenced (Url 4, 2009).

The MML website was also used as a potential tool for providing, in specially designed standard A4 pdf form (Figure 13, right), easily downloadable free educational material, references and relevant free information on cartography and maps, related to the map exhibitions, lectures, workshops, meetings and other relevant activities, offering thus the possibility to everyone to create a personal and continuously upgraded folder by downloading the available supporting and reference material relevant to MML activities (see e.g. Url 5, 2009)

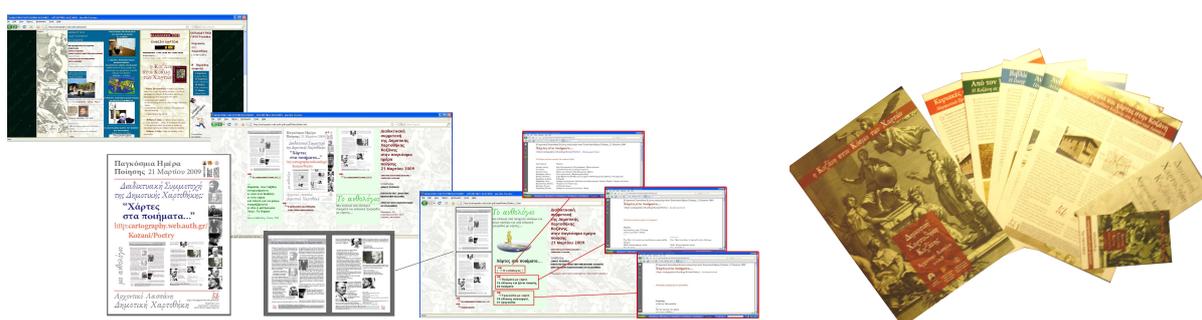


Figure 15. Left: The web-based downloadable collection of poems with reference to maps. Right: The specially designed supporting material in standard A4 pdf form downloadable from the MML website.

Concluding remarks

The Kozani project has been designed and implemented, as a possible example of good practice, according to the ideas, principles and methods proposed in the terms of reference of ICA’s plans, since 2005, for developing Cartographic Heritage assisted by digital technologies. Starting from the rigid grounds and valuable tradition of an important library we tried to test and to prove how Cartographic Heritage

could serve as a potential tool for implying a productive public interest in a small society with limited perspectives of development. After a year of systematic work, with a low budget, but with a strong political and social support from the local authorities and the local society, cartography and maps show to have a real impact in the life of the small city attracting the national interest and introducing the basis for international feedback as well. The results after a year of good work were surprising. The Kozani cartographic heritage experiment looks to take a central and dynamic place in the city life and tends to contribute as a multiplier in the development plans of the local administration. The ingredients for the success were simple: The given cultural and social power of cartography and maps; a clear, well defined and realistic plan; a solid institutional background i.e. the interaction with the existent important ML; a clever leadership in the local administration who understands, among other things, that development can also have a valuable and profitable cultural dimension and last but not least a local society open, intelligent, proud to keep traditions, curious and ready to sponsor and support new experiences.

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