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On the unveiling of two versions of Rigas Velesinlis *Charta*

Keywords: Rigas Velesinlis; Rigas *Charta*; 18th century cartography; rare maps; Greek cartography; Greek Enlightenment; Cartographic heritage.

Summary

In this short note it is put in evidence for the first time some important differences which exist in apparently two versions of Rigas Velesinlis *Charta*, the known major 12-sheet map of Greek Enlightenment published in Vienna in 1797.

It is shown that the two versions of Rigas *Charta* present striking differences in seven map sheets, namely in sheets No. 2, No. 3, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7, No.8 and No.9 in terms of existing and missing toponyms in the two map versions.

The important finding was made possible thanks to modern digital technology as applied to the study and analysis of historical maps and especially to the relevant technique of “digital transparency” which allows comparative studies of maps.

Introduction

It is well known and documented in the relevant literature that the Eighteenth century scholar and militant for the case of Greek Independence Rigas Velesinlis (1757-1798) published in Vienna in 1797 a great map, his famous *Charta*¹, in 12 sheets, engraved by Franz Müller. This map, with ordered sheets numbered from No. 1 to No. 12 (Fig. 1), represents Greece and almost the whole of Balkan Peninsula, a result of Rigas cartographic ability and his dynamic political activism.

Though the study of *Charta* and the references about this cartographic masterpiece are rather rich, it was never stated before the possible existence of more than one versions of this map.

The two *Charta* versions

Thanks to digital technologies² it is for the first time presented in this short note, that there are (at least) two different versions of Rigas *Charta*, called here **Version-A** and

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¹ See, e.g. J.-Y. Guiomar, M.-T. Lorain, 2006, ‘La carte de Grèce de Rigas et le nom de la Grèce’, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, Numéro 319, [En ligne], mis en ligne le : 11 mai 2006. URL: <http://ahrf.revues.org/document106.html>. Consulté le 25 juin 2007. Also G. Tolia, 2008, ‘Antiquarianism, patriotism & empire. Transfers of the cartography of the travels of Anacharsis the younger 1788-1811’, *e-Perimtron*, Vol. 3, No. 3.; E. Livieratos, 2008, ‘On the cartography of Rigas Charta’, *e-Perimtron*, Vol. 3, No. 3; C. Boutoura, 2008, ‘On the map projection of Rigas Velesinlis *Charta* the late 18th century cartographic monument of Greece’, *e-Perimtron*, Vol. 3, No. 3.

² The application of *digital transparency* following a best fitting process allowed the finding of the differences.

Version-B, as it is documented from the thirteen differences³ detected in seven map-sheets (Fig. 2).



Figure 1: Rigas *Charta*. The 12 numbered map-sheets.

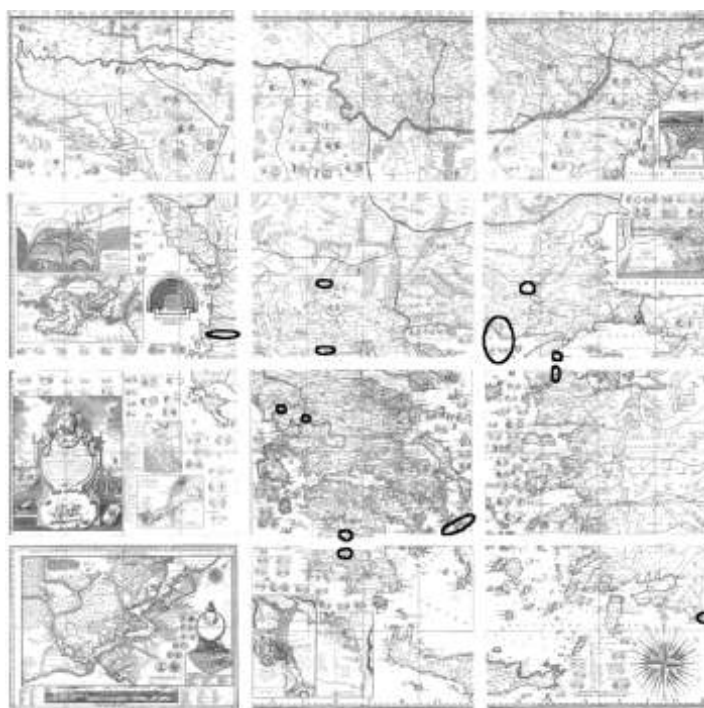


Figure 2: Rigas *Charta*. The thirteen differences detected in seven map sheets: one in No. 2, one in No. 3, four in No. 5, one in No. 6, one in No. 7, two in No. 8 and three in No. 9.

³ The first announcement of the results of this research was posted in "MapHist Discussion Group on History of Cartography" and in the author's website (cartography.web.auth.gr/Livieratos) on October 4, 2008.

These thirteen differences, four in map sheet No. 5, three in No. 9, two in No. 8 and one in map sheets No. 2, No. 3 and No.7, are mostly additions of toponyms in **Charta Version-B**, which are totally missing in **Version-A**, or texts and name corrections added in **Version-B** which are again missing in **Version-A**.

In the following series of images the thirteen differences constituting the two versions of Rigas *Charta*, marked in Fig. 2, are listed following the map-sheet numbering.

Sheet No. 2, one difference:



Version-B, sheet No. 2: toponym “ἦρα” with a mountain symbol below. The river is traced differently.

Version-A, sheet No. 2: toponym and mountain symbol missing. The river is traced differently.

Figure 3: Detail of sheet No. 2 (centre north).

Sheet No. 3, one difference:



Version-B, sheet No. 3: text “Φαίνεται μία καταποντισμένη πόλις εἰς τὴν Θάλασσαν.”

Version-A, sheet No. 3: text missing.

Figure 4: Detail of sheet No. 3 (east).

Sheet No. 5, four differences:



Version-B, sheet No. 5: toponym “νέδας. Π.”. The river above the toponym is traced differently.

Version-A, sheet No. 5: toponym missing. The river above the toponym is traced differently.

Figure 5a: Detail of sheet No. 5 (centre south).



Version-B, sheet No. 5: toponym “ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ”.

Version-A, sheet No. 5: The toponym “ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ” is split in two neighboring sheets, “Π” in sheet No.2 and “ΕΛΑΓΟΣ” in sheet No. 5.

Figure 5b: Detail of sheet No. 5 (southeast).



Version-B, sheet No. 5: toponym “παραμυθία Πανδοσία”.

Version-A, sheet No. 5: toponym missing.

Figure 5c: Detail of sheet No. 5 (northwest).



Version-B, sheet No. 5: toponym “Τρεμώ”.

Version-A, sheet No. 5: toponym missing.

Figure 5d: Detail of sheet No. 5 (northwest).

Sheet No. 6, one difference:



Version-B, sheet No. 6: toponym "ΠΟΝΤΟ".



Version-A, sheet No. 6: toponym "ΠΙΟΝ" ("ΤΟ" is missing).

Figure 6: Detail of sheet No. 6 (northwest).

Sheet No. 7, one difference:



Version-B, sheet No. 7: road symbol below "Απολλωνία Πόλινα".



Version-A, sheet No. 7: road symbol missing.

Figure 7: Detail of sheet No. 7 (southeast).

Sheet No. 8, two differences:



Version-B, sheet No. 8: toponym "Περλεπέ".



Version-A, sheet No. 8: toponym missing.

Figure 8a: Detail of sheet No. 8 (centre slightly west).



Version-B, sheet No. 8: toponym “Ξηρολίβαδον”.

Version-A, sheet No. 8: toponym missing.

Figure 8b: Detail of sheet No. 8 (south).

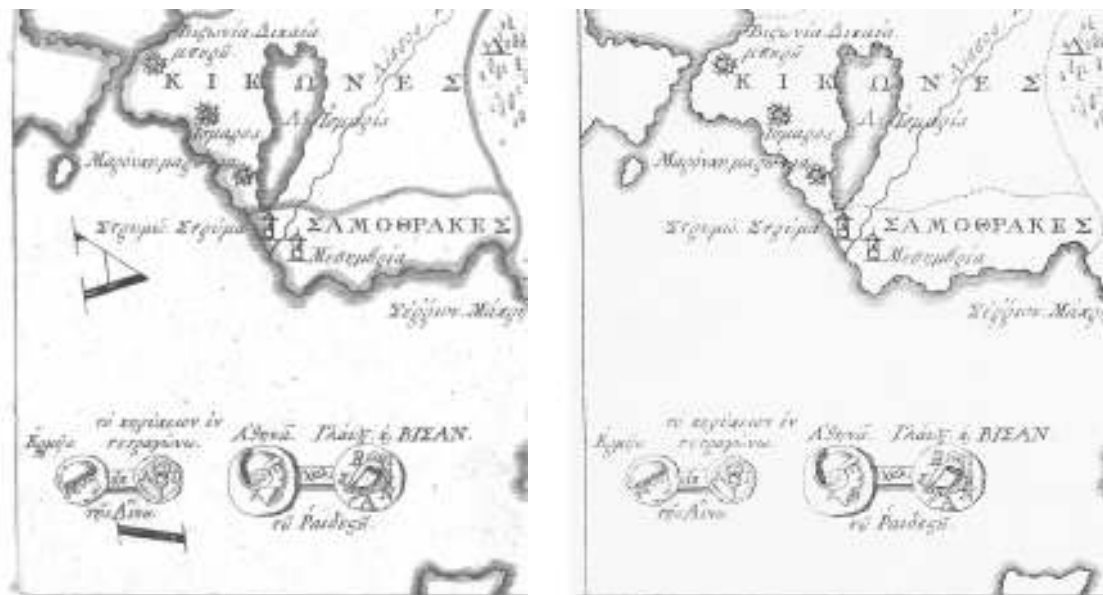
Sheet No. 9, three differences:



Version-B, sheet No. 8: letter “Σ”.

Version-A, sheet No. 8: letter missing.

Figure 9a: Detail of sheet No. 9 (south).



Version-B, sheet No. 9: the letters “ΑΙ” of toponym “ΑΙΓΑΙΟΝ” (the rest part “ΓΑΙΟΝ” is in sheet No. 6).

Version-A, sheet No. 9: the letters “ΑΙ” are missing. Here, in sheet No. 6 it is written only the part “ΓΑΙΟΝ”!

Figure 9b: Detail of sheet No. 9 (southwest).



Version-B, sheet No. 9: toponym “Αρτίσκος Π.”.

Version-B, sheet No. 9: toponym missing.

Figure 9c: Detail of sheet No. 9 (southwest).

The differences illustrated above, are summarized in Table 1, listed by map-sheet and map version.

Map-sheet No.	Version-B	Version-A
2	ἦρα [+ a mountain symbol] [a river traced differently]	Missing [missing] [a river traced differently]
3	Φαίνεται μία κατά- ποντισμένη πόλις εἰς την Θάλασσαν.	missing
5	νέδας Π. [river traced differently]	missing [river traced differently]
5	ΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ	ΕΛΑΓΟΣ
5	παραμυθία Πανδοσία	missing
5	Τρεμό	missing
6	ΠΟΝΤΟ	ΠΟΝ
7	a road below “Απολλωνία. Πόλινα”.	missing
8	Περλεπέ	missing
8	Ξηρολίβαδον	missing
9	Σ [the last letter of ΠΟΝΤΟ is in sh. 6]	missing
9	ΑΙ [the rest letters ΓΑΙΟΝ are in sh. 6]	missing
9	Αρτίσκος Π.	missing

Table 1: The toponymy differences in the two Rigas *Charta* versions.

Concluding remarks

In the bibliography about Rigas *Charta* was never stated before the existence or even the hypothesis about the possibility of two or more variants of Rigas *Charta*. This analysis confirms for the first time the existence of (at least) two Rigas *Charta* variants. In one of them, called here **Version-B**, eight additional toponyms are included in four map-sheets (Nos. 2, 5, 8, 9) plus a seven-word text in map-sheet No. 3, which are totally missing in the variant called here **Version-A**. Four toponyms in map-sheets Nos. 5, 6 and 9 marked

in **Version-B** are in incomplete writing in **Version-A** and the tracing of a geographic feature (a road) appeared in **Version-B** map-sheet 7 is missing in that of **Version-A**.

From the up to now investigation we carried out, in **Version-A** (i.e. the variant with the missing toponyms and some incomplete names) belong less copies of Rigas *Charta* comparing to the number of those belonging to **Version-B**, as it can be seen in the still provisional list of Table 2.

	<u>Version-B</u>	<u>Version-A</u>
<u>In Greece</u>	Library of Parliament	Library of Parliament
	National Library	National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation
	War Museum	Sylvia Ioannou Collection
	National Historic Museum (2)	Archaeological Museum of Andros isl.
	Gennadius Library	Paschaleios School of Kapesovo
	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	
	Municipal Library of Kozani	
	[<i>Under search</i> : Velestino; National Library (2?); Ambelakia; Tinos isl.; ...]	
<u>Abroad</u>	Bibliothèque Nationale de France	
	British Library (2)	
	Royal Geographical Society, London	
	Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm	
	[<i>Under search</i> : Vienna; Belgrade; Harvard; ...]	

Table 2: Provisional list showing the Rigas *Charta* complete copies existing in Greece and abroad, classified according to their Version (A and B).

The existence of Rigas *Charta* two versions, as proved here, requires a new thorough historical investigation on the possible sources of these two variants. A first approach leads to the logical conclusion that **Version-B** is a revisited, enriched and corrected re-edition of **Version-A** without knowing the time and the conditions of this re-edition from the existing historical evidence. Answers to the many questions opened by this research could be based on what was the luck of the copper plates after they first engraved in Vienna by Franz Müller, or on the results of a necessary analysis of the paper used for the printing of the map-sheets of both versions. Another issue deserving investigation is that the existing copies of **Version-B** seem to be more in number and that most of the copies in libraries outside Greece belong to this version⁴.

Acknowledgements

⁴ According to the available data records, the accession of Rigas *Charta* by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the British Museum (two copies are now with the British Library) as well as by the Municipal Library of Kozani in Greece is dated back to the middle nineteenth century (Paris 1847, London 1851, Kozani 1853).

This research was carried out, in its original phase, thanks to the availability of Rigas *Charta* copies offered by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Library, the Municipal Library of Kozani (*Charta Version-B*), the Sylvia Ioannou Map Collection, the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation–The Melas Map Collection, and the Paschaleios Scholē Library of Kapesovo (*Charta Version-A*).

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