

ΑΡΧΙΠΕΛΑΓΟΣ 1685-1687 ΣΤΟΥΣ ΧΑΡΤΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΛΟΥΔΟΒΙΚΟΥ ΙΔ΄

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΛΙΒΙΕΡΑΤΟΣ



Με ιστορικό διάγραμμα του
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The Archipelago 1685-1687 in the maps of Louis XIV

The Mediterranean naval policy of France under Louis XIV, in the second half of the 17th century, combined many strategic actions of a rather efficient administration for consolidating and reinforcing the country's defence in land and sea. The fortification projects and public works fulfilled foremost military needs but in the process transformed the amateur figure of engineers into skilled professionals, appointed by the king to solve technical issues of defence both on land and at sea. Among the highly rated skills of those select few engineers were surveying and mapping the land but also the coastal zones. The key political personality of the period was Colbert, the head of naval affairs, one of the many top political officers entrusted to him by Louis XIV. Colbert shifted France's focus on the Mediterranean, and made it his primary concern for the balance of power between France and the British and Dutch, in order to safeguard France's commercial privileges gained from the Sublime Porte, since the mid-sixteenth century. Colbert's endeavours in sea issues was associated with relevant previous activities for the advancement and popularisation of the sciences, as is evident in the institution of the *Académie des sciences* in 1666, where mapping and related topics held a prominent place. The progress in military engineering guided by Louvois, the head of war affairs, and Vauban, the highest in rank personality in engineering, as well as the development of ship building in the naval base at Toulon together with the innovative sea trade methods introduced by the Chamber of Commerce at Marseilles advanced France's interests and gave her a key role in the Mediterranean, fulfilling the aspirations of Louis XIV.

In order to implement these aspirations, the need for re-mapping the Mediterranean arose immediately, a long overdue and by that time mature project, which would in-

clude especially the man-made thematic elements (material and social) of the areas of interest, particularly along the coastline. This necessity of France's acquaintance anew with the Mediterranean called for new systematic mapping projects of the Mediterranean, according to the advancements of science. Starting in 1679 from the Mediterranean's western and central parts, sooner than later important geopolitical events called for the redirection of the campaign towards the East, the Mediterranean coasts of Asia Minor and the Holy Lands, the Dardanelles, Cyprus, Egypt and the Aegean Sea, focusing on the Archipelago of the Cyclades islands. This mapping activity (1685-1687) was the strategic prerequisite of an offensive (potentially) military operation against the Ottoman Empire engaged in the long war against the Holy League (1683-1699). This *seize-the-opportunity* type of plan was organised by high officials of Louis XIV's military establishment, among whom Étienne Gravier d'Ortières held a prominent role, but at the end did not materialise because Louis XIV's political pragmatism in foreign affairs prevailed.

The two cartographic Recueils presented in this publication belong to that *Vers l'Orient* period mapping activities in 1685-1687. The first made by the engineer Raseau (or Razaut or Razaud) is preserved in the *Tricoglou Library* of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Library and the second made by engineer Pétré is preserved in the *Service historique de la Défense* at Vincennes. The two cartographers implemented the mapping project of the Cyclades Archipelago in the Aegean, a part of a broader mapping campaign in the East Mediterranean coasts. They inherited us exceptional manuscript large dimensions maps, plans and views of detailed surveys for the representation of important geometric and thematic features, unique items of 17th century insular cartography of the Mediterranean.