

# **Geospatial challenges of the Revolution: the visions, the lands, Kapodistrias' utopia, the borders, the French cartographers and the subsequent chronic confusions of the state (until today?)**

Evangelos Livieratos

It is well known that industrial revolutions are based on technology. And much of the technology has to do with 'geospatial challenges'. Almost completely the *First* Industrial Revolution, to a large extent the *Second* and the *Third* and in other terms the *Fourth*, but equally connected with the geospatial issues. The Greeks in 1821 and the state created with a view to Europe had no experience of the *First* Industrial Revolution. They were very weak later during the *Second* and did not join successfully the *Third*. Maybe things are going better in the *Fourth*. However, the optimism for our successful participation in it will not be based on any of our deficient achievements so far in terms of the geospatial issues, but on the expectation of a good performance in the long-awaited, so called 'frog jump'... The geospatial challenge of the Greek Revolution and its aftermath could not have had better luck since its success presupposed a performance in technology, primarily related to the industrial revolutions. Technology has never been one of our priorities, perhaps because our talent for 'saying' and 'legislating' outweighed the difficult and tedious 'doing' and 'implementing'.

The term 'geospatial' has been used for the last forty years to define data sets and related technologies implemented to different geographical areas. It semantically and practically integrates the geographical depictions, the mapping and the maps, which are analytical and communication tools (among others) of diplomacy, international relations and the visual rhetoric, which is threateningly used nowadays in our geographical neighbourhood. The geospatial challenge of the Greek Revolution was double sided: the 'real', connected with the so call 'national lands', and the 'visionary' concerning the geographical embedment of the nation and the state territory.

The first concerned the Ottoman-owned territories that came under the jurisdiction of the Greek rule and state after the Revolution. It is a major topic, best known in historiography. The perpetuation of its solution and the upheavals in its confrontation were a thorn in the evolution of the Greek state and the political system. It has introduced, shaped and consolidated distortions, mentalities and entanglements that plague the country and create confusion to this day, contrary to the European acquits. The second concerned the visions of a rather vague (or even abstract) geographical definition of the desired geographical delimitation of the nation and the state territory. It was officially expressed by the Greeks first in Epidaurus (in early 1822), then in the proclamation to the Congress of Verona (in late 1822) and later in the Constitution of Troizina (in spring 1827).

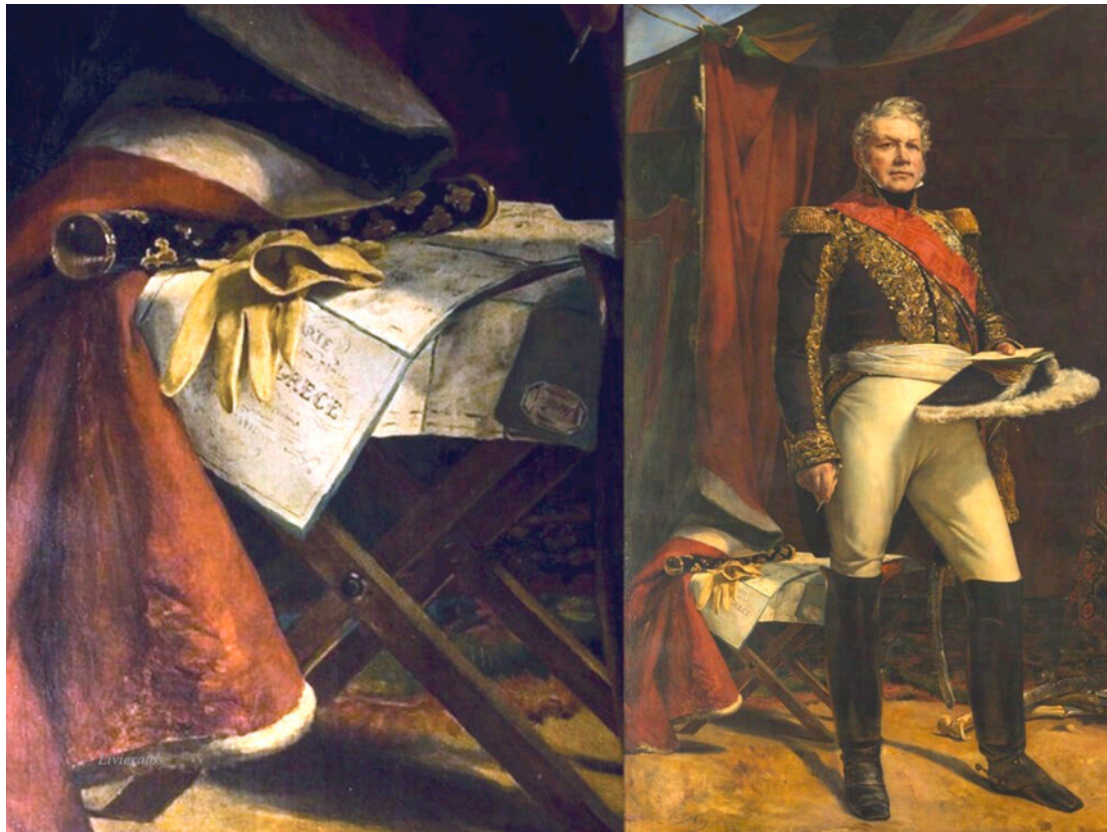
It is not known with certainty whether the Greeks used maps as aids for all this, as in their struggles. I have come across only two brief relevant French bibliographical references so far. They may have used mind maps (i.e. mental maps), for the proximal areas of their action, and not so real maps. In this context it is interesting to note that in no painting related to the Revolution and its Heroes do we see a map somewhere as we see e.g. in Cogniet's painting General Maison (Fig. 1), proud in his uniform next to a map of Greece. Only a well-known exception comes to mind: Hess's painting with Alexandros Mavrokordatos on the walls of Messolonghi wearing glasses and keeping a map in his hand...

The Warning to the European (royal) Courts of Kalamata in March 1821 does not mention territorial space. The Declaration of the First National Assembly of Epidaurus mentions four geographical areas and one etc.: "Eastern continental Greece<sup>1</sup>, Western continental Greece, Peloponnese, Islands, etc.". This "etc." perhaps it has since been an emblematic geographical definition of visions, desires and the perception of the Greeks about the private and public land. Could it have been otherwise then? When after the "etc.", towards the end of the same year (1822), the Greeks sent from Argos their unfortunate

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<sup>1</sup> Continental Greece stands here for 'Stereia Ellas' (literally 'Solid Greece'), as was called later. The Greek term 'χέρσος' used originally in Epidaurus is difficult to translate otherwise for giving proper meaning in English.

Declaration to the Congress of Verona, they become more specific geographically, except for the ambiguities about Thessaly: “Rivers of blood has flowed to this day, but the trophy flag of the life-giving Cross, raised, is already waving on the fortified walls of the Peloponnese, Attica, Euboea, Boeotia, Acarnania, Aetolia, most of Thessaly, in Crete and in the islands of the Aegean Sea.”



1

This geographical wording at the end of 1822, is probably depicted in 1824 on a map, part of the book by the ardent philhellene Blaquiere; The mainland borders between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, according to the ‘resolutions of the provisional government of Greece’ as written in the map, are the rivers Axios and Drin, based on the theory of security of natural strategic borders, while the insular ensemble as a whole includes the islands of the Aegean, Crete and Cyprus.

However, the British diplomacy insisted on the vague definition of river borderline ‘Sperchios – Aspropotamos’, but in their periods of negativity the Britons did not hesitate threatening the Greek side with the Peloponnesian coastline as a minimal border, with the addendum of the islands in the Argo-Saronic Gulf. From this point started at the Island of Poros the geospatial borderline negotiations of the three Protecting Powers diplomacy with Kapodistrias.

In 1823, in Astros, no geographical reference is made about the borders of the territory of Greece; the ‘national discord’ prevailed. In 1827, however, in the Constitution of Troizina there is for the first time a chapter per se on “Greek territory”, in fact the second, with three short phrases: “The Greek territory is one and indivisible” / “It consists of provinces” / “Provinces of Greece are those that took up and will take up arms against the Ottoman dynasty”. With Ibrahim already two years in the Peloponnese, the Third National Assembly in spring 1827 will invite Kapodistrias to rule a country whose geographical area is constitutionally defined by the lands, where the Greeks “took up and will take up arms against the Ottoman dynasty”. A visionary geography that referred to a mental map, rather than a real one. However, the diplomats of the three Protecting Powers with real maps talked, negotiated, planned, decided and compromised with each other (Fig. 2). And the language of real maps became often painful in the hands of British, Russian and French diplomats, who knew how to read and handle real maps.



2

The elaborate diplomatic negotiation for the geospatial boundaries of a Greek territory had reference to real maps, culminating in the meeting in Poros of the three ambassadors to the Sublime Porte (Fig. 3). This was a purely geospatial negotiation with Kapodistrias. The Frenchman Guillemot, a distinguished military cartographer and a protagonist in Waterloo, appears as a key figure in both of Lapie's maps of 1822 and of 1826 (Fig. 4), the second mainly concerning the Greek case.



3

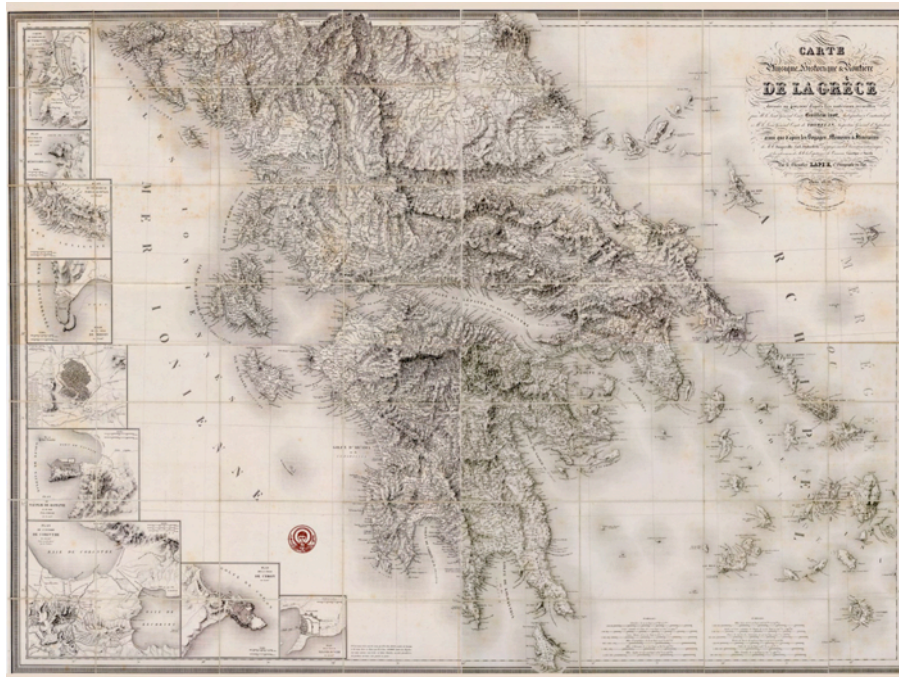
The resolutions of Poros (after the ratification in London), about the borders of the Greek state, implemented on the territory by the French military cartographers of the Dépôt, under Barthélemy, whose base was in Methoni for the historical mapping of the Peloponnese after debarkation with Maison's army.

Kapodistrias knew about the real maps and their role, not only for the determination of the geospatial boundaries of the territory, but also for the organization and development of the new state that started from scratch. The historic letter he wrote from Ancona in autumn 1827 to his old friend and supporter in Paris, General Loverdo (the only Greek name engraved in the *Arc de Triomphe*), shows Kapodistrias' knowledge of maps as the first letters in the alphabet of the birth of a European state (the known to Greeks king Leopold showed it in Belgium in 1831).

Kapodistrias asked for maps the French War ministry to facilitate his statistical and administrative work. The map is indicated for the first time in Greece as an essential tool of statistics and administration. In addition, in this letter, he shows his excellent knowledge of the scientific and special technical issues of



cartography, maps and their terminology (Fig. 5). Through the few lines of a letter he describes with precision, clarity but also a complete sense of the possible, what exactly wants from France. He knew the role of large-scale imaging and relief, the route of mountains and rivers, administrative boundaries and the metric framing of the requested map with meridians and parallels. With the political experience of the feasible and the practically urgent, Kapodistrias is content to have an enlargement of an existing map, “in the absence of a better solution”, as Lapie’s four-sheet map of Greece is aptly mentioned as a model; it was published a year ago, in 1826, on 1 cm to 4 km scale. Kapodistrias knew this map from his then visit to Paris. With his highly trained diplomatic language, Kapodistrias implies the need for a new, more precise map, *une Carte véritable*, as he writes, looking forward to urgent French assistance.



4

The French, with the apparent mediation of Loverdos, responded by sending ‘by the Governor’ of Greece, a four-member mission of military advisers in early 1828, among them the experienced lieutenant and distinguished geographer-engineer Peytier (Fig. 6) for the arduous and extremely dangerous work of mapping the country and deriving *une Carte véritable*.

... Permettez-moi de revenir par votre obligeante entremise, et auprès de S. E. le ministre de la guerre, sur l’affaire d’un **canevas de la carte géographique de la Grèce**; celle **de Lapie en quatre feuilles**, **faute de mieux**, pourrait servir de modèle. Je désire en avoir quelques exemplaires gravés en **grandissime échelle**. Ces exemplaires ne porteraient que **les contours, le tracé des montagnes et des rivières**, et celui des **différentes provinces**. Ces canevas offriraient un bon sujet de travail pour une **carte véritable**, et à son temps ils me faciliteraient des **travaux statistiques et administratifs**. D’un mot seul le ministre de la guerre me porterait un grand secours, et je l’espère de sa bienveillance...

Καποδίστριας προς Λοβέρδο, Αγκόνα 1827

5



*Jean-Pierre-Eugène-Félicien Peytier*

6

But Peytier was the only officer of the mission recalled to Maison's army, in summer 1828 joining the detachment of Dépôt surveyors. The other three officers who had been sent as advisers remained in the service of Kapodistrias including Stamati Bulgari known to the Greeks. The French with the distinguished presence of Peytier will map the Peloponnese with incredible difficulties, obstacles and human losses in an inhospitable environment, resorting to even ad hoc politico-military tricks, as did Barthélemy, the Dépôt detachment head, during the sad events of Kalamata in September 1831, just before the assassination of Kapodistrias. The result of Barthélemy's intervention was the mapping in Mani, completing thus the necessary topographic measurements for the *Carte de la Morée*.

The painstaking work of the French to complete an 'invisible' technological project (the mapping) led to the visible result of the eight-page important map of the Peloponnese and the islands (*Carte de la Morée*) issued in Paris in 1832 (Fig. 7) at the scale of 1 cm to 2 km, sent in just 100 copies to the king Otto's government. This, to Peytier's expressed disappointment, because the efforts, sacrifices and sense of mission and duty of cartographers to map the Peloponnese, instead of benefiting the Greeks and their new state with their maps, these maps ended up accompanying the publications of botanists, archaeologists and other scientists who followed the French army on behalf of the Academy of Paris.

It should be noted that the primary surveys of the country by the French, from which the final maps derived, were made on such a large scale (up to 1 cm to 200 meters) so that they could also be used for cadastral purposes, if the Greek government had provided the appropriate provisions.

Although Peytier formally remained 'by the Governor', his work became part of the Dépôt mission, primarily military. Therefore, Kapodistrias's plan to obtain *une Carte véritable* from the French (possibly also a cadastre, in next phase) ultimately remained utopia. As for the cartographers of the Dépôt, despite the hostility and armed actions against them after the death of Kapodistrias they remained, at the request of the Provisional Government and the Bavarians after, to build public works and to complete the dangerous mapping in Continental Greece (Sterea Ellas) and Euboea,



positioning geospatially all 92 points of the first state borderline, until 1840. The first scientifically constructed twenty-sheet map of Greece, on the same scale as the map of the Peloponnese, was published in Paris in 1852 (Fig. 8) on the eve of the Crimean War when France would now change its attitude towards Greece, which, according to Finlay, was “more generous of its three old allies”.



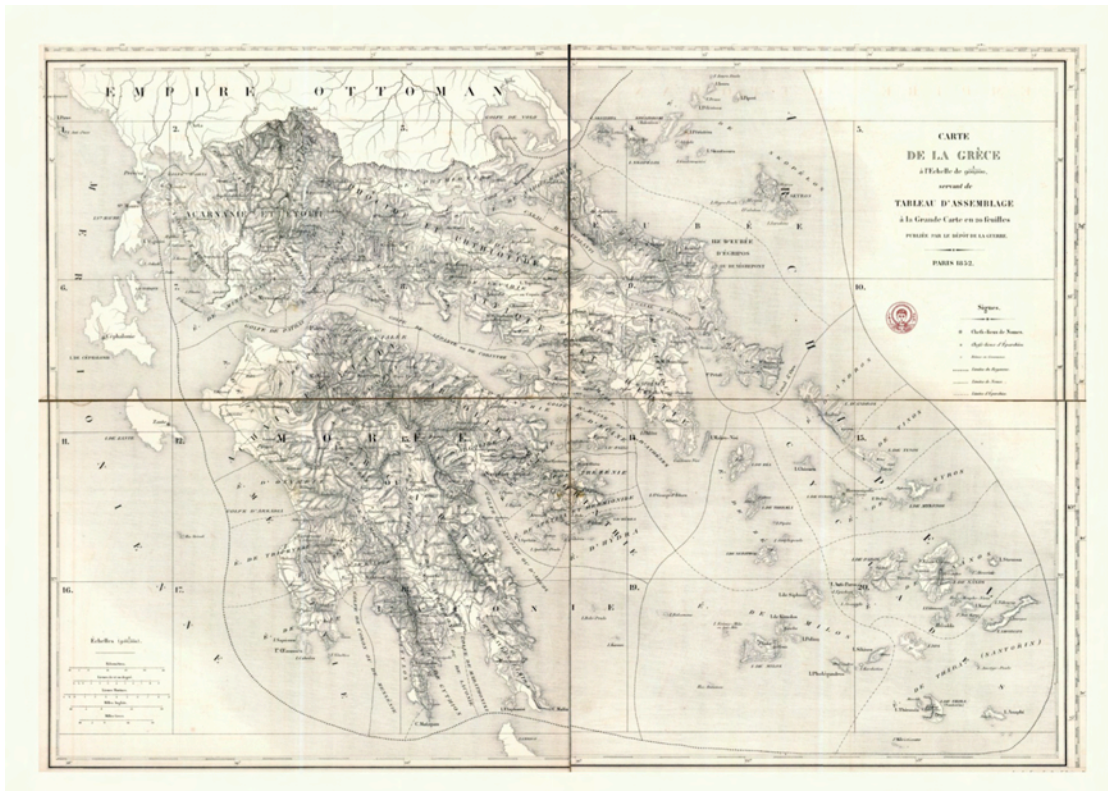
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The last geospatial challenge in the aftermath of the revolutionary period was the establishment of the pioneering Office of Public Economy in 1834 (Fig. 9) with the aim of introducing the cadastre and cartography disseminating technology and knowhow on land (infrastructures, agriculture, foreign rural settlement) and in the mapping of natural and man-made territory (including flora and fauna, archaeology, forestry, mining) according to the standards of a modern European state.

The Bavarian administration could not stand the strong technological nuance of the Saint-Simonists ideas in the Office (due to the presence of Eichthal), considered disturbing after their outbreak in Paris in 1831.

Besides that, the Greek political system did not accept technology, as did the majority of society. Infrastructure projects, especially road and railway works (Fig. 10) and the technological equipment of the country were considered from then until almost the end of the 19th century, as ‘unnecessary’ or ‘useless waste’, resulting, among other things, the mainland should not communicate with the coast, the agricultural land should not develop and robbery should prevail.

Despite the ambitious efforts of reformist politicians such as Koumoundouros and Trikoupis, inertness and perplexity over geospatial challenges will prevail until the great existential upheaval of the country in 1897, with a society increasingly flowing in search of ‘doing nothing income’, astyphilia and land abuse, taking advantage of the impossibility of geospatial modernization.



8

Γραφείο Δημόσιας Οικονομίας, 1834  
(Οι πρωταγωνιστές)



Saint-Simon

X



Eichthal



Κωλέττης



Maurer



Armansberg

Livieratos

9



# ΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ

Περὶ τῶν ὠφελειῶν Σιδηροδρόμου διερχομένου  
ἅπασαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα μέχρι τῶν πρὸς τὴν  
Εὐρωπαϊκὴν Τουρκίαν ὁρίων.

Εὐρεθεῖσαι

Ἐν τῷ γραφείῳ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου Φουρνέρ ἀξιωματικοῦ  
τοῦ Γαλλικοῦ Ναυτικοῦ, Διοικητοῦ ἐνδὸς τῶν πλοῖ-  
ων τοῦ ἀποβιδάσαντος τὸν ἐκδιώξαντα τὸν  
Ἰμβραήμ Πασᾶ γαλλικόν, Στρατὸν, καὶ  
Ἰππότην τοῦ ἀργυροῦ Σταυροῦ τοῦ

Σωτήρος, ἐν ἔτει 1873  
γραφεῖσαι.

Αλέξανδρος Φουρνέρ

Περὶ τῶν ὠφελειῶν  
Σιδηροδρόμου  
ΕΝ ΚΑΛΑΜΑΙΣ

Ἐκδίδεται δαπάνῃ

ΧΑΡΑΛΑΜΠΟΥΣ ΡΟΥΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ



ΕΝ ΚΑΛΑΜΑΙΣ

ΤΥΠΟΙΣ Γ. Β. ΑΘ. ΜΙΧΑΛΑΚΕΑ.

(Πλησίον τῶν Ταξιάρχων).

1882.

It would be considered paradoxical promoting and highlighting the word ‘cartography’ and its associated terminology in public speech in any European country today. I argue that the same should not apply in Greece. Not so much because the word is not understood, but because there is confusion about what a map is, namely the result of mapping, the geospatial representations; a very complex, specialized and laborious technological process in fieldwork and in the laboratory. If this were not the case, then it would not be necessary for the country to think about how to make maps after 1821, for two generations or more to pass, when Belgium, which became a state at the same time as Greece, immediately introduced at the same time a constitution and a cartographic service in 1831 (who knows if Leopold was aware of the damage he caused the Greeks with his choices...).



The Greek cartographic deficit can be attributed either to the structural inability to understand the problem related to 'hateful' technology or to the morbidity infested in the country by the ambiguity about the land property issues, e.g. the chronic backlog of the cadastral regulation of the national lands and not only, causing a general psychosis about the state-society relations vis-à-vis with the uncertainties and the pending issues concerning the national geographical visions and the extent of the state territorial borders.

From the beginning of the 20th century the geospatial challenges of the country were first 'sealed' and then developed in the military environment, out of public dialogue. It remained so until the last quarter of the 20th century, when emerged in the development plans and policies of the state but in a rather confusing, incomplete and finally unstable way. Maybe, because of the shortcomings affected the political, economical, social and cultural life of the country due to its absence from the *First* Industrial Revolution and the weaknesses of its endeavours to follow the *Second* and the *Third*. The hopes and efforts today to address the geospatial challenges are based on the promising terms of the *Fourth* Industrial Revolution. But is it enough? Or the echoes of the severe shortcomings of the past demand more and difficult things to do that take lots of labour, especially in terms of understanding, education and culture?

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City of Kalamata Cultural Centre

16 October 2021

Video (in Greek)

<http://cartography.web.auth.gr/Livieratos/Kalamata161021.mp4>

