

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE EUROPEAN CARTOGRAPHERS
WITH REGARD TO 15th-18th CENTURY MACEDONIA*

The dawn of the European Renaissance, the Fall of Constantinople, growing interest in the cultivation of classics in the West, the Ottoman Empire's subjugation of the Greek people, and concern in certain quarters for the fate of the enslaved Greeks all prompted a number of travellers to visit what Greek scholars term the Greek Levant. The rivalry between Holland, England, and France for control of the searoutes also generated no little European interest in the Greek islands and littoral.

Many of the European travellers came to Greece¹ filled with visions of ancient Greek culture; they turned a blind eye to the wretched situation which obtained at the time, and showed little, if any, concern for the fate of the *rayahs*. Very few European travellers were genuinely saddened by the enslaved Hellenism's tragic lot, for which, it must be said, Europe bore no small share of the blame. It had been a bitter pill for the Greeks to swallow: having systematically sucked the mediaeval Hellenic Empire dry, the West lost all interest in it and turned its attention toward the Ottoman Empire, from which it anticipated considerable gains. Nor was it disappointed. In the writer's personal view, European interest in Greece began to manifest itself after 1674, when Nointel and Spon-Wheler² first gave a clear picture of it. It was an incomplete picture, however, because, without exception, all the European travellers and cartographers focused their attention on the Greek islands and coastal areas, while the hinterland remained unknown and virtually inaccessible. On returning home, most of these travellers aspired to publish the impressions they had gained from their journeyings, frequently accom-

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1. Κυριάκος Σιμόπουλος, *Ξένοι ταξιδιώτες στην Ελλάδα, 333 π.Χ. - 1700* (Foreign Travellers in Greece, 333BC-1700AD), vol. I, Athens ⁵1984.

2. Λουκία Δρούλια, «Ο Spon και άλλοι ξένοι στην Αθήνα» (Spon and Other Foreigners in Athens), in *Περιηγήσεις στον ελληνικό χώρο* (Travels in the Area of Greece), Athens 1968.

panying the texts with maps of the places they had visited and woodcuts of what they considered to be the principal monuments. In this way much valuable evidence has been preserved about the places visited, and this evidence also provides indirect sources for a historical approach to the complex web of problems posed, even today, by each and every area of Greece³. Naturally, it was not only the travellers who took an interest in these matters: the consuls too, the missionaries, and agents of various kinds all had their own reasons for charting large and small areas of what we term the Greek Levant.

Many of the various travellers' reports to their superiors are now in European archives. From 1500 onwards they frequently include maps, drawings, and itineraries, many of which are real works of art. Nor was Greek interest in the subject entirely absent, though in this case its purpose was to keep their enslaved land alive in the hearts of the Greek people. One such scholar (whom I shall mention again later on) was a Corfiot named Nikolaos Sofianos (early 16th c.), who was interested in Ptolemaic geography (Ptolemy was discovered in Europe by Greek Byzantine scholars of the Renaissance, who brought about the so-called Ptolemaic Renaissance in Geography). Sofianos wrote a study of the astrolabe and constructed a map of the Hellenic territories, in which he correlated the ancient Greek and modern place-names, thus linking the ancient and modern Greek worlds.

As far as the mapping of Hellenic territory is concerned, there were a number of schools: the Italians, the Germans, the French, the Dutch, and the English all produced maps, which were Ptolemaic as a rule and with Greece sketched in very roughly: the borders confused and indistinct, the coastline clumsily depicted, the sea represented by parallel wavy lines. The principle type of map of Greece was the *Decima et Ultima Europa Tabula*⁴. With the appearance of modern maps, the numerous errors of the Ptolemaic versions were corrected, and the new type gave a much more accurate depiction of Greece. The new maps were based on such data as travellers' writings, information provided by merchants, and scholarly texts. Giacomo Castaldi produced one such map in 1545, and a number of well-respected later geographers (Ortelius, Mercator, Blaeu) based their own maps on it. These form the main body of the present edition.

3. H. Ommont, "Athènes au XVII^e siècle", *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 14 (1901), 270-294.

4. Χρ. Ζαχαράκης, 'Εντυπη χαρτογράφηση του ελληνικού χώρου από τον 15^ο μέχρι τον 18^ο αιώνα (Printed Cartography of the Area of Greece from the 15th to the 18th Century), Nicosia 1976, p. 10.

It was out of these two types of map that comparative geography and cartography developed (and it was only to be expected that maps of ancient and modern Greece —*Graecia Antiqua* and *Graecia Nova* or *Graecia Moderna*⁵— would be produced). Hence, in the series *Graecia Antiquae Tabula Nova*, ancient place-names are correlated with modern ones, using the Latin words *nunc* (now) and *olim* (before)⁶. Needless to say, the ancient and modern names provide valuable documentation of places which have disappeared and place-names which are no longer used. But there are also many instances of complete misunderstanding and confusion, because the mapmakers use Latin or Italian for place-names which are Greek or Turkish (e.g. Salonichi, Iskup). The older maps tend to use rudimentary symbols, but after the end of the sixteenth century elaborate ornamentation became the norm, with little pictures, allegorical drawings, emblems, and trophies. The basic drawbacks, however, were the erroneous mathematical calculation of the lines of latitude and longitude and the depiction of towns in the form of tiny caricatures. It was such famous geographers as Blacu, Laurembergius, and Dural at the end of the seventeenth century who were the first to divide maps up and produce more detailed charts of smaller areas; but still place-names were corrupted and the maps were decorated with little drawing of castles and towns.

The first, Ptolemaic, map of Greece was printed in Bologna in Italy in 1477. All subsequent maps (of ancient Greece) faithfully reproduced the ancient Greek borders, albeit with distortions arising from a lack of the necessary aids. In the many geographies containing chapters on Greece, the place-names used range from ancient Greek right through to contemporary forms, being based for the most part on comments by ancient and Byzantine writers in lexicons and other texts, rather than on personal inspection of the places concerned. One presumes that the research was all conducted in the work-room, rather than on the spot.

Another characteristic of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the inclusion of Ptolemaic texts in atlases, and in other works, which were then characterised as *Antiqua*, *Nova*, *Vetus*, *Neoterica*, or *Moderna*⁷, and heralded the rebirth of general geography: a combination of physical geography, astronomy, and history. It was not a new idea: in antiquity Ptolemy

5. Κωνστ. Θ. Κυριακόπουλος, *Μελέτιος (Μήτρος) Αθηνών, ο Γεωγράφος (1661-1714)* [Meletios (Mitros), Bishop of Athens, Geographer, 1661-1714], vol. I, Athens 1990• p. 453.

6. Ζαχαράκης, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

and Strabo, for instance, had given geographical studies a mathematical and a historical dimension respectively; and nowadays too, as studied and taught chiefly in foreign universities, geography is a multi-dimensional discipline. The important geographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included Gerhard Mercator (also known as the New Ptolemy), Abraham Ortelius (1527-1597), Petrus Appianus (1495-1522), D. M. Niger (c. 1490), Philipp Cluverius (1580-1622), G. A. Magini (1555-1617), I. B. Riccioli (1598-1661), and Vincenzo Coronelli. Their maps reveal their own personal interests (mathematics, history, economics, etc.), and include accounts of historical events, natural boundaries, distances, economic data, memorabilia, admirabilia, and propria, all designed to enhance the pleasure of geographical study⁸. All the same, even these capable mapmakers produced their share of errors and omissions.

Earlier on I mentioned the name of Nikolaos Sofianos. Let us now take a brief look at Greek ideas about geography in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is as well to remember that the Byzantines were particularly fond of geography, as we learn from chronicles, lives of saints, and other official and ecclesiastical documents. Much later, a Renaissance scholar named Georgios Trapezountios⁹ translated Ptolemy into Latin, and Georgios Amiroutsis¹⁰ published the translation. Georgios Gemistos Plethon drew up land surveys and lists of toponyms and read and studied Pausanias¹¹, whom the celebrated humanist Markos Mousouros¹² also systematically studied. Many scholars in the Ottoman period also turned their attention to geography: Georgios Alexandrou, Pachomios Roussanos, Ioannis Tarchaniotis, Thomas Diplovatatzis, and of course, the chief of them all, Nikolaos Sofianos. Other outstanding figure was Chrysanthos Notaras, later Patriarch of Jerusalem, who in 1700 helped Ioannis Komninos to draw the map of Wallachia¹³ and attempted himself to draw a map of the world¹⁴. He also translated N. Mile-

8. Κυριακόπουλος, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

9. Κ. Ν. Σάθας, *Νεοελληνική Φιλολογία* (Modern Greek Philology), Athens 1868, p. 41.

10. Θωμάς Ι. Παπαδόπουλος, *Ελληνική βιβλιογραφία (1466 ci-1800)* (Greek Bibliography, ci. 1466-1800), vol. I, Athens 1984, p. 27.

11. Κυριακόπουλος, *op. cit.*, p. 462, note 664.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 462, note 665.

13. Olga Cicanci - Paul Cernovodeanu, «Contribution à la connaissance de la biographie et l'oeuvre de Jean (Hierothée) Comnène (1668-1719)», *Balkan Studies*, 12/1 (1971), 174-175.

14. Χρύσανθος Νοταράς, *Εισαγωγή εις τα Γεωγραφικά και Σφαιρικά* (Introduction to Geography and Sphaerics), Paris (s.d.), f. 4^v.

scu's excellent *Description of China*¹⁵. It is no accident that Notaras studied astronomy at Paris under the great Cassinis he constructed his own astrolabe, and wrote works which included *Interpretation and Recording of the Quadrant and Introduction to Geography and Spheres*¹⁶. The same line of study was followed by Dimitrios Georgoulis-Notaras (Chrysanthos' nephew), Methodios Anthrakitis (1660-1730), and Meletios Mitrou (1661-1714), a Metropolitan of Athens, whose *Geography Ancient and Modern* was published in Venice in 1728¹⁷.

As far as Macedonia is concerned, it is interesting to note that according to the cartographers it extended as far as Mount Skardos (Šar Planina), which lies south of Skopje. This means that Skopje was outside the boundaries of historical Macedonia. Similarly, in the numerous maps of Modern Greece drawn when Greece was still under the Ottoman yoke, the country's borders are considerably extended both northwards and eastwards, which points to a significant Greek presence beyond the present borders of Macedonia and the River Evros, towards northern Macedonia, Northern Epirus, Eastern Thrace, and Asia Minor. In the two basic types of map (Ptolemaic and Sofianos'), Macedonia's eastern border is the River Nestos, its southern border Tempe, and it frequently includes Albania as its westernmost part. Both types of map show Greece as including Dalmatia, Moesia Superior (Serbia), Moesia Inferior (Bulgaria), the Pontus, Bithynia, Lycia, much of Pamphylia and Galatia, Thrace, Epirus, Macedonia, Albania, the Aegean Islands, Crete, and the Ionian Islands (for practical reasons Cyprus is not included). In the minds of the European cartographers, they were depicting the actual extent of Hellenic territory, corresponding, that is, to the broad spread which it maintained until 1922). In some maps Constantinople is presented as the capital; on the other hand, their *cartouche* allegorically depict Greece as a woman dishonoured by the Ottoman conqueror. The *Graecia* of the European maps embraced a vast area, which spread west to the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, south of Crete to the Egyptian and Syrian coasts, east of the Salty Desert in Asia Minor and sometimes as far as Romania and its coast, and to the north it reached the Albanian Alps and Mount Skardos. In other

15. Αθανάσιος Ε. Καραθανάσης, *Οι Έλληνες λόγιοι στη Βλαχία* (Greek Literary Men in Wallachia), Thessaloniki 1982, p. 118; Μ. Θ. Λάσκαρις, «Ο Χρυσάνθος Νοταράς και η Κίνα» (Chrysanthos Notaras and China), in *Ελληνική Δημιουργία*, 6 (1950), 435; Πηνελόπη Στάθι, *Το ανέκδοτο οδοιπορικό του Χρυσάνθου Νοταρά* (The Unpublished Itinerary of Chrysanthos Notaras), p. 127.

16. Καραθανάσης, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

17. Κυριακόπουλος, *op. cit.*, pp. 490-500.

words, the northernmost natural boundary of Hellenic territory (and therefore the northernmost boundary of Macedonia) was marked by Mount Skardos, as Strabo himself pointed out when he wrote "from the north, the imaginary straight line of Mount Bertiscus and Scardus and Orbelus and Haemus" (*Geographica*, Epitome, 329).

Rhigas Pheraios also portrayed this situation in a series of maps of Hellenic territory, which he produced in 1796-7, accompanying them with drawings of coins and prosopographies of famous figures from ancient history, culminating in that of Alexander the Great. Rhigas went with the current of his times, though he added an extra historical and ethnic dimension to his maps and went beyond the various artistic trends which were currently predominant in European mapmaking, and which included elaborate decoration, a manifest artistic sensibility, and the depiction of mythological scenes.

The most noteworthy feature of these maps, as far as Macedonia is concerned, is that in the minds of the cartographers this region of Northern Hellenism comprises, ultimately, the major portion of Hellenic territory; to such an extent, indeed, that in some cases, as in Sebastian Münster's (Basel 1540), *Macedonia is identified with the whole of Greece*¹⁸. In all maps concerning Ancient or Modern Greece, Macedonia, being the largest Greek region, is mentioned on top of all other provinces of Greece. It should be noted that the historical Greek identity of Macedonia is stated on the *verso* of many maps of the region. A further observation is that in these maps Macedonia borders on the neighbouring regions of Epirus, Thessaly, and Thrace as *Graecia pars Septentrionalis* — which is to say, Northern Greece. Also the maps of Macedonia are frequently accompanied by a headpiece depicting Alexander the Great. Finally, the cartographers call the Skopje region *Dardania* and always place it outside the bounds of northern Macedonia, beyond Mount Skardos. This mountain range also forms the border between Macedonia and Illyria to the west. Generally speaking, with their place-names, their fanciful drawings, their mythological references, and their depiction of the extent of Hellenic territory both ancient and mediaeval, these maps not only opened European eyes to the wretched situation of the inhabitants of contemporary Greece, but also filled the Greeks themselves with hopes and dreams — or at least the informed Greeks of the Diaspora and the very few who might have made use of them within Turkish-occupied Greece.

Portolans are navigation manuals, and their chief characteristic is that they are based on the cartographers' personal observations: islands, islets,

18. See maps 1-6.

shelves, reefs, ports, and havens are therefore marked with the greatest possible accuracy. Nor are they lacking in other information, concerning history, economies, folklore, and commerce, and they are thus valuable documents for our knowledge of coastal Greece. The *isolaria* belong in the same category and give accurate information about the natural geography and the wealth of place-names of insular Greece. The place-names they give are ancient, medieval and modern, and are accompanied by copious information about the history, mythology, economy and tradition of the area.

These maps were the basic means by which Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe was introduced to the Greek world; consequently they are for us today first-class sources for an understanding of various issues and problems relating to the broader Hellenic territories in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Regarding the maelstrom of ethno-racial strife in the Balkans after the middle of the nineteenth century, the maps also have another role to play; for, particularly when they were drawn by European cartographers and ethnologists, they were considered to portray the true ethnological situation in the Balkans. One striking example is that of Heinrich Kiepert, who drew an ethnological map of Eastern Europe in 1876, which was so full of errors prejudicial to Greek interest that it aroused the immediate protests of K. Paparrigopoulos. The Austrian cartographer and ethnologist was obliged to revise his views two years later in view of the crucial Berlin Congress¹⁹.

19. Μαργαρίτης Δήμιτσας, *Έλεγχος της αρχαίας γεωγραφίας Ε. Κεϊπέρτου ως προς την Μακεδονίαν* (A Critical Survey of H. Kiepert's Ancient Geography with Regard to Macedonia), Athens 1897; see also the paper by Κωνσταντίνος Σβολόπουλος, «Ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος και η χαρτογράφηση της χερσονήσου του Αίμου από τον Χάϊντριχ Κίπερτ» (Constantine Paparrigopoulos and Heinrich Kiepert's Map of the Balkan Peninsula), to be published in *Αφιέρωμα εις τον Κ. Βαβούρα*.



1, Claudius Ptolemy, *Geographia*, ed. G. Mercator - J. Hondius, Leyden 1618, Map of Ancient Greece



2. P. Cluverius, Introductionis in Universam Geographiam, Map of Macedonia and Thessaly.



3. J. C. Weigel, Atlas scholasticodeporicus, 1706, Map of Græciæ Septentrionalis Pars.



4. G. Hornius, *Hellas seu Graecia Sophiani*, 1654.



5. N. Sanson and Family, *Atlas Nouveau*, Paris 1636.



6. G. Delisle, *Atlas géographique et Universel*, 1700.