BETWEEN LAND AND SEA: CARTOGRAPHIC MODERNITIES AND THE BALKAN PENINSULA (15th–16th CENTURIES)[1]

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Despite their increasingly updated and expanded content, maps of the Balkan Peninsula in the Renaissance largely iterated the frame and format of an older, almost archetypal regional map, Ptolemy's *tabula nona Europae*. An agreed rationale behind Ptolemy's dominance is the collapse of antiquity into modernity through which humanists were able to establish the ancient cartographer as both a classical authority and a model for scientific renewal. Yet a closer look at these maps reveals a more complex history than the one suggested by univocal accounts of the origin of modern cartography. On the one hand, it helps relocate the Balkan Peninsula at the crossroads rather than at the periphery of the routes through which cartographic knowledge was transferred, circulated, and developed between East and West. On the other hand, it multiplies the range of places, actors, and motives involved in cartographic initiatives whose claim to modernity set them apart from other forms of mapmaking steeped in nautical and military practices. In this view, the philological quest which at the end of the thirteenth century led Byzantine scholar Maximos Planudes to rediscover Ptolemy's work would a century later give way to the political hopes of Manuel Chrysoloras and the ethical ambitions of Coluccio Salutati. Later, this legacy would be intercepted by the diplomatic and poetic goals of Francesco Berlinghieri, the search for empirical validation of Pietro Coppo, and the educational mission of Johannes Honter. All these encounters draw a compelling history of *cartographic modernities* that projected disparate motives, visions, and techniques on the geographical slate of the same region. Despite their common Ptolemaic cover, these maps ultimately escape the logic of a single narrative, diffracting and recomposing the highly articulated geographical space of a region that lay at the juncture between land and sea, Christianity and Islam, war and trade.

Keywords: Cartography, Balkan Peninsula, Modernity, Ptolemy, Renaissance.

[1] The notion of 'Balkan Peninsula' is intended here as a geographical reference, rather than a cultural one (the 'Balkans'). It is preferred over 'Southeastern Europe' for its narrower scope and its definition through both maritime and terrestrial features. Even in strictly geographical terms, both designations, coined in the nineteenth century, are problematic, with unstable borders being redefined and negotiated according to shifting political claims and cultural positionalities. Indeed, prior to these denominations, there is no evidence that these areas were considered a unified region, let alone a peninsula. For a survey and discussion of these geographical concepts and their history see A. Vezenkov, "Entangled Geographies of the Balkans: The Boundaries of the Region and the Limits of the Discipline", in R. Daskalov, D. Mishkova, T. Marinov and A. Vezenkov (eds.), *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Four: Concepts, Approaches, and (Self-)Representations*, Leiden and Boston, 2017, p. 115–164. Although anachronistic and contested, the reference to the Balkan Peninsula, reduced to its naked core, is useful in describing the maps discussed in this essay, which all give prominence to the same set of geographical features – the Balkan range, the Danube, the Adriatic, Ionian, and Black Sea coastlines – without necessarily characterizing them as borders.

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When I landed in Sofia in the fall of 2016 to start a period of research on the early modern maps of the region, I was greeted by the most appropriate cartographic auspice.[2] In the waiting hall of Terminal 1 of the International Airport, a building opened in 1947 and refurbished in the late 60s, two impressive mosaics overlooked and welcomed the flow of passengers. The murals, authored by Ivan Penkov in 1949, featured a schematic map of Bulgaria facing an equally stylized depiction of Europe. The first, through vignettes of chimneys, crops, forests, and monuments, illustrated with pride the country's sites of industrial, agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. The second map in turn placed Bulgaria firmly at the center-south heart of a borderless European continent that stretched from the Ural mountain range to the Atlantic coasts of Portugal. Here, the symbolic language of the map identified each country through its capital city and the silhouette of its most recognizable monument. Alongside Saint Peters, the Tour Eiffel, and the Kremlin, figured what was the most recent architectural accomplishment of the Bulgarian socialist regime in the late 1940s: the Vrazhdebna Airport of Sofia, designed by architects Nikolay Marangozov, Petko Tsvetkov, and Tsvetan Dobrev.[3]

Later that winter, another serendipitous cartographic encounter would deeply strike my imagination. During my first visit to the high spiritual center of the Bulgarian people, the Rila monastery, I was arrested by the moving presence, among the relics exhibited to tourists and pilgrims, of a hand-drawn globe. Created in the early nineteenth century by Neofit Rilski (1793–1881) to teach geography classes, the artifact, the first known globe to be made in the country, had now lost its original didactic function, but in turn had acquired a higher symbolic, if not sacred, status. The globe stands today in the monastery, enshrined in a glass case – as does its replica at the National Museum of History in Sofia – as if it were infused with the very ideas and the spirit of the monk who had crafted it. Neofit Rilski had indeed succeeded in making the old monastery, nestled in the mountains and tucked in snow, the center for the cultural and religious awakening of a nation that at that point had been oppressed by almost five centuries of Ottoman rule.[4]

The airport murals and the Rila globe are both compelling examples of cartographic images that embody and foreground processes of modernization: respectively, the socialist revolution, with its advancements in technology, communication and industry, and the Bulgarian National revival, which had

[2] I would like to thank here my host institution, the Center for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS), and the generous help and assistance from its scientific staff and fellows, in particular Nadezhda Alexandrova, Marina Baramova, Pantelis Charalampakis, Veronika Dimitrova, Dimiter Dimov, Tom Junes, Diana Mishkova, Elitsa Stanoeva, Elitsa Stoilova, Martin Valkov, Georgi Vladev. In addition, I am obliged to Eloise and Steve Grathwohl, Tommaso Maggiolo, Marica Milanesi, John Pickles, Michael B. Sullivan, as well as to Robert Born and Marian Coman for their invaluable help and stimulating suggestions.

[3] See the website of the Bulgarian Architectural Modernism Foundation, http://foundationbma.org/.

[4] Neofit Rilski was Rila monastery's abbot from 1860 to 1864, as well as the primary teacher in the first Bulgarian public school with modern curricula. On his role in the context of the Bulgarian national revival see R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria*, Oxford, 2008, p. 51; T. Kamenova, *Rila Monastery*, Sofia, 1988, p. 41.

emphasized education as a centerpiece of its emancipatory agenda.[5] Made by Bulgarians to empower the Bulgarian people, these maps also spoke of agency and integration in the broader Commonwealth of Nations. This integration, a political fact with the independence of Bulgaria in 1878, was anticipated by cartographic efforts that involved, along patriotic goals, the use of foreign printing facilities as well as data collected by foreign governments and travelers. In fact, although in 1862 Dmitar Angelidev had published in Plovdiv a map of European Turkey – the first to be printed in the country – in these years the major center for Bulgarian cartography was Vienna, where several Bulgarian scholars – among them, the prominent figure of Hristo G. Danov (1828–1911) – had access to the outputs of Austrian, Russian, and French cartographic initiatives in the region.[6]

At the origin of the entanglement of Bulgarian cartography with the West lies a complex relationality that historiographers have regarded as the engine fueling a broader, essentialist discourse whose regionalist scope reaches far beyond these national confines. On the one hand, this relation appears to result from a set of Western interests that led to the so-called "invention of Eastern Europe" in the eighteenth century and to the "discovery of the Balkans" in the nineteenth century.[7] At the origins of twentieth century Balkanism, these interests articulated geographically categories of race that had been developed within the European Enlightenment and implemented, especially in a colonial context, through the new discipline of ethnology.[8] The resulting discourse, stylizing the Balkans as the Orient of Europe, was instrumental in generating mental maps that sanctioned the peripheral position of the region, while positing and essentializing its backward, underdeveloped, and barbaric character.

[5] On the history of the concept of Bulgarian National revival and on the analogy, fabricated by the national-communist discourse, with post-war socialist transformations as processes of modernization and Europeanization, see R. Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans. Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival*, Budapest and New York, 2004, p. 46–47. On the key role of geography in nineteenth century Bulgaria, where it was mobilized earlier than elsewhere as "a primary resource for the homogenization of collective imagination and for national identity formation", see D. Lilova, "The Homeland as Terra Incognita. Geography and Bulgarian National Identity, 1830s–1870s", in T. Snyder and K. Younger (eds.), *The Balkans as Europe, 1821–1914*, Rochester, NY, 2018, p. 32; from the same author see also "National Identity as a Geographical Discovery: The Bulgarian Nation-Building Process in the Nineteenth Century", in M. De Dobbeleer and S. Vervaet (eds.), *(Mis)Understanding the Balkans. Essays in Honour of Raymond Detrez*, Gent, 2013, p. 75–86.

[6] It was in Vienna that Danov printed a map of European Turkey in 1863, "the best Bulgarian map in every respect up to 1878", see B. Bešević, "Basic Trends in Representing the Bulgarian Lands in Old Cartographic Documents up to 1878", *Études Balkaniques* 16, 1980, 2, p. 123.

[7] These discursive onsets have been the object, respectively, of Larry Wolff's and Maria Todorova's influential works: L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, CA, 1994; M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford, 1997.

[8] On the similarities and crucial differences between the orientalist discourse, as theorized by Edward Said, and the Balkanist discourse, see K.E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography", *The American Historical Review* 105, 2000, 4, p. 1218–1233; E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978.

On the other hand, this relation became even more urgent and productive *in situ* at the beginning of the nineteenth century, i.e., when ideas from Western and Central European Enlightenment, such as secularism, rationalism, and nationalism, found their way into the Balkans. Retrospectively, the reception of such ideas, like the nation-state model, has been interpreted as a shift in space – a process of Europeanization – or in turn as a leap in time – an "intrusion of modernity", as Richard C. Hall has termed it.[9] Rooting identity in history and geography, and vision in measurement, this process appears to have brought along notions of space and time that were until then seemingly alien to a larger part of the population apart from those who engaged in trade, pilgrimage, or studying abroad.

Traian Stoianovich (1921–2005) has gauged the efficacy for what he apprehended as "Balkan worlds" of anthropological distinctions like those that oppose historical, time-oriented, 'hot' societies – in the Balkans, arguably the Greeks – and unhistorical, space-dominated, 'cold' societies. Attesting to the persistence of Balkanist mental maps, in this discussion, he paints an early modern Mediterranean world moving at different speeds:

> Between 1400 and 1800, indeed, Europe's three Mediterranean peninsulas manifested three distinct perceptions of time and space: a simultaneously strong temporal or historical perspective and a strong spatial, optical, and cartographic perspective in Italy; an intense spatial perspective but a less well developed sense of chronometric time in the Iberian peninsula, lulling Spain into being content with vessels slower than those of their Dutch and English rivals; and not much of either a new temporal or a new spatial perspective in the Ottoman dominions.[10]

Yet, recent scholarship has increasingly softened the sharp contours of pre-modern Balkan cultural isolation, debunking national myths and deconstructing rigid antagonisms between Muslims and Christians, East and West. In the recently published *The Great Cauldron* (2019), Marie-Janine Calic has revisited the history of Southeastern Europe through the lens of a global perspective, highlighting the connections that tied the region to the rest of the world.[11] At the same time, a new light has been shed on episodes of artistic and scientific circulation, negotiation, and conversation across religious and political boundaries and within multiethnic and multilingual communities. In this view, Jelena Erdeljan has embraced Peter Burke's call to investigate the "hybrid Renaissance" as a phenomenon of transcultural interaction and cross-cultural exchange, and has argued that the Balkans did participate in a movement that developed far beyond the narrow confines of Western

[9] R.C. Hall, *The Modern Balkans. A History*, London, 2011, p. 44–62.

[10] T. Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds. The First and Last Europe*, London and New York, 1994, p. 251. On the isolation of the region from the European traffic, as well as on the geographical designations of the Balkans in scholarship, see A. Vezenkov, "Entangled Geographies of the Balkans…", p. 205–251.

[11] M.-J. Calic, *The Great Cauldron. A History of Southeastern Europe*, Cambridge, Mass., 2019.

Europe.[12] Similarly, Alice Isabella Sullivan has reassessed the monastic architecture of these times, especially in Moldavia, as the product of a distinctive visual eclecticism and stylistic plurality.[13] These examples, one might say, partly fall back on arguments that were used in communist times to stage the Europeanness of local artworks, in the attempt to interpret them as offshoots of the great (Western) epochs of cultural and art history, like the Renaissance and the Baroque. Nevertheless, these reinterpretations, in emphasizing the agency of mediators and the originality of outcomes, do not simply aim at undermining Balkanist stereotypes in order to highlight proximity to Europe. Rather, they try to move in a direction long pursued by scholars located in the Balkans, i.e., to go "beyond Balkanism", in the effort to reappropriate and refashion their regional self-designation.[14] At the same time, these examples are shaped and influenced by a thriving international discourse on 'Global Art', one that is still in the process of being theoretically comprehended.[15] In the last thirty years, indeed, this global approach has succeeded in shifting beyond Eurocentric boundaries the foci of many scholars, who have highlighted material exchange and cross-cultural interaction. Bastions of the Western canon, like Florentine Renaissance art, are thus being ever more reconsidered in light of episodes and patterns of cultural exchange, as well as responses to an expanding world of diplomacy and commerce.[16]

Along this line, my research in Sofia has confirmed that, despite the late start for the development of a local cartographic industry outside of Constantinople, Southeast Europe had been on the radar of European and Ottoman cartography for centuries. Since the fifteenth century, indeed, the areas of the Balkan Peninsula were at the center of cartographic initiatives that served competing interests and antagonistic imperial agendas, but that also involved the knowledge and expertise of disparate actors and mediators. Rather than peripheral, these areas were of primary importance, as they encompassed the most populated city of the continent, Constantinople, while being at the crossroads of major trade routes and military lines. Given such prominence, they figured in ambitious mapping projects that were driven by the will to innovate the field of cartographic knowledge and that explicitly characterized their format, content, method or scope as groundbreaking. In this view, and with respect to the diverse ends of these projects, the Balkan Peninsula can be seen as participating in a long and compelling history of 'cartographic modernities'.

[12] P. Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance. Culture, Language, Architecture*, Budapest and New York, 2016; J. Erdeljan, "The Balkans and the Renaissance World", *Art Studies Readings* 2017. I-Old Art, p. 193–208.

[13] A.I. Sullivan, "Architectural Pluralism at the Edges. The Visual Eclecticism of Medieval Monastic Churches in Eastern Europe", *sITA – Studii de Istoria și Teoria Arhitecturii* 4, 2016 (*Marginalia*. Architectures of Uncertain Margins), p. 135–151.

[14] D. Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism. The Scholarly Politics of Region Making*, New York, 2018.

[15] D. Savoy (ed.), *The Globalization of Renaissance Art. A Critical Review*, Leiden and Boston, 2017.

[16] S. Roberts, "A Global Florence and Its Blind Spots", in D. Savoy (ed.), *The Globalization of Renaissance Art…*, p. 17–44.

From the beginnings of this history come the examples that will be discussed in the following pages, examples that showcase a number of cartographic tensions and convergences between unequal motives, visions, and techniques. On the one hand, these episodes feature the rise of an 'antiquarian cartographic modernity' that would hold mapmakers hostages of rigid templates for centuries. This modernity was at the same time a crucial factor in the shaping of early modern statehood, as Ptolemaic cartography provided a seemingly rational tool, grounded in mathematics and quantitative thinking, to envision geographical space and exercise territorial command.[17] On the other hand, these stories speak to the identity of the states and empires ruling the region, how modernity was brought about in distinctive ways by the Habsburgs, the Ottomans, and the Venetians. Through the alternate lenses of antiquarian, continental, and maritime approaches, these maps ultimately diffract the geographical space of the Balkan Peninsula. A juncture between land and sea, Christianity and Islam, the region was thus charted in turn as a stage for warfare and religious confrontation, a terraqueous commercial network, a cauldron of peoples and toponyms, and a theater for political propaganda, diplomatic action, and cultural negotiation.

The first chapter of this history unfolds between an imperial metropolis bearing different names – Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul – and a powerful Italian city-state, Florence. However, its remote origins hark back to the second century AD, the city of Alexandria in Egypt, and the work of Claudius Ptolemy (*c.* 90 – *c.* 168 AD). At that time and in that place, Ptolemy was hardly the forerunner of a modern science. His *Geography* (*Geōgraphikè Hyphḗgēsis*), finalized around 150 AD, was in fact largely an update and a criticism of the earlier works of Marinus of Tyre (fl. 100 AD). As such, it drew on centuries of classical speculations on space, representation, and measurement. Rather than breaking with the past, it marked on the contrary, in O. A. W. Dilke's words, "a culmination as well as a final synthesis of the scientific tradition in Greek cartography".[18] Ptolemy's revised mathematical construction of the earth as a sphere, together with his instructions to create a gridded map of the then known world (*oikoumene*), were unequivocally the products of conceptual thought. Even the thousands of place-names and coordinates, provided to carve up smaller regional maps (*tabulae*), were only in a minimal part derived from the method he recommended for acquiring data, i.e., astronomical observation. In fact, scholars have recently argued that Ptolemy did not undertake a new and independent review of latitude and longitude

[17] M. Biggs, "Putting the State on the Map: Cartography, Territory, and European State Formation", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, 1999, p. 376–380; D. Buisseret, "Introduction", in *Monarchs, Ministers and Maps. The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe*, Chicago, 1992, p. 1; M. Escolar, "Exploration, Cartography and the Modernization of State Power", in N. Brenner, B. Jessop, M. Jones and G. Macleod (eds.), *State/Space. A Reader*, Malden, MA, 2003, p. 31–36.

[18] O.A.W. Dilke, "The Culmination of Greek Cartography in Ptolemy", in J.B. Harley and D. Woodward (eds.), *The History of Cartography* (from now on *HOC*), Chicago, 1992–2007, vol. 1, p. 177.

values, but rather relied on the small amount of astronomical reference data and geographical distance information that was available to him at the time.[19] These values Ptolemy would have used to initially construct locations on maps, while deriving the majority of his other coordinates from the insertion on the gridded framework of information found in travel reports and textual descriptions of coastal formations. Despite the scientific pretense of these maps – none of which has survived from antiquity – it is plausible that the *imago mundi* they conjured was at the same time strongly political, one that espoused the rhetoric of universalism that had been accompanying the irresistible expansion of the Roman Empire.[20] Though ideologically compatible with the structures of power at the time, the *tabulae* were addressed to an elite group of mathematicians and scientists, and had little use in administration or navigation. Therefore, notes Christian Jacob, they had little impact in the formation of an image of the world.[21] Tied as they were to a manuscript transmission, for which graphic reproductions were costly and demanding, these maps must have been perceived as accessory to the text they illustrated, and soon disappeared. But even if Ptolemy did not intend it, and attitudes of hostility toward the pagan world and scientific speculation would increasingly hinder the transmission of his work, he was ultimately destined to become modern, and in this new role, dominate for at least three centuries the cartography of the Balkan Peninsula.

Beginning in the ninth century, Arab translations had placed Ptolemy's works at the center of a broader intellectual renaissance that had flourished around the Mediterranean, from Baghdad to Cordoba, but never led to major outcomes in the development of regional cartography.[22] This Arab transmission nonetheless facilitated a renewed interest in the *Geography* among Greek scholars at the end of the thirteenth century, under the reign of emperor Andronicos II Palaeologus (r. 1282–1328). It is in the context of the Byzantine revival of scientific studies led by Maximos Planudes (*c.* 1260–1310) that the Ptolemaic maps, as they would become known a century later in Western Europe, were made. The question whether some of these maps, which were all compiled according to the instructions provided in the text, might present evidence of a tradition dating back to antiquity, is still unresolved and constitutes a highly debated issue.[23] In particular, a poem in

[19] G. Graßhoff, F. Mittenhuber, E. Rinner, "Of Paths and Places: The Origin of Ptolemy's *Geography*", *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 71, 2017, p. 483–508.

[20] D. Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye. A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination*, Baltimore and London, 2001, p. 42.

[21] C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map. Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History*, Chicago and London, 2006, p. 57.

[22] For a brief overview of Ptolemy's fortune and impact see J. R. Short, *Making Space. Revisioning the World, 1475–1600*, Syracuse, NY, 2004, p. 13–33; on Ptolemy in the Arab world see G.R. Tibbetts, "The Beginnings of a Cartographic Tradition", in *HOC*, vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 90–107.

[23] J.L. Berggren and A. Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography. An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters*, Princeton and Oxford, 2000, p. 45–50; O.A.W. Dilke and eds., "Cartography in the Byzantine Empire", in *HOC*, vol. 1, p. 267–272; I. Pérez Martín and G. Cruz Andreotti, "Geography", in S. Lazaris (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, Leiden, 2020, p. 255–258. Florian Mittenhuber has recently argued in

hexameters by Planudes himself, stressing the hard work involved in this process of rediscovery, has been used as an argument in support of the thesis that the oldest extant Ptolemaic maps were actually the products of the Byzantine scholar's exertions. J. Lennart Berggren and Alexander Jones have rendered in English the gist of the poem, titled "Heroic verses by the most wise monk Maximos Planudes on the *Geography* of Ptolemy, which had vanished for many years and then had been discovered by him through many toils":

> What a great wonder, the way that Ptolemy has brought the whole world into view, just like someone making a map showing just a little city. I never saw anything so skillful, colorful, and elegant as this lovely *geōgraphia*. This work lay hidden for countless years and found no one to bring it to light. But the emperor Andronikos exhorted the bishop of Alexandria, who took great troubles that a certain free-spirited friend of the Byzantines should restore a likeness of the picture worthy of a king.[24]

The interpretation of the poem is controversial, however, and depends on different understandings of the word *geōgraphia*. Taken as a reference to the book, it would imply that Planudes found an old manuscript already provided with maps, while interpreted, in Ptolemy's own language, as pointing to the crafting of a map, it would instead mean that the monk undertook under imperial patronage a whole project of cartographic reconstruction.[25] Despite this substantial ambiguity, the enthusiastic tone of the poem, which prefigures the Italian humanists' exaltation for book discoveries, is an eloquent commentary not only on the value of Ptolemy's work, but also on scholarly efforts that consciously foreground a 'heroic' agency over a broken temporality. In this view, one might say that the *Geography* started becoming modern when it encountered a deliberate and broad-ranging project of scientific and literary renewal, such as the one pursued at the time by Planudes.

favor of the existence of a map tradition dating back to antiquity, whose traces can be found in the oldest extant Greek manuscripts of the *Geography*, namely the Codex *Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 82* (Vatican), the *Codex Seragliensis GI 57* (Istanbul), and the *Fragmentum Fabricianum, Hauniensis Graecus 23* (Copenhagen), all drafted in Constantinople at the turn of the fourteenth century. See F. Mittenhuber, "The Tradition of Texts and Maps in Ptolemy's *Geography*", in A. Jones (ed.), *Ptolemy in Perspective. Use and Criticism of his Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, Dordrecht, 2010, p. 107–116; a more detailed analysis is provided by the same author in *Text- und Kartentradition in der Geographie des Klaudios Ptolemaios. Eine Geschichte der Kartenüberlieferung vom ptolemäischen Original bis in die Renaissance*, Bern, 2009. However, much of the evidence in favor of this thesis has been rejected by Renate Burri (*Die "Geographie" des Ptolemaios im Spiegel der griechischen Handschriften*, Berlin and Boston, 2013, p. 48–55).

[24] J.L. Berggren and A. Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography…*, p. 49. A commented edition of the poem, together with its translation in German, is in A. Stückelberger, "Planudes und die Geographia des Ptolemaios", *Museum Helveticum* 53, 1996, p. 197–205.

[25] Burri, who thinks that Planudes found a copy with at least one map – if not a whole set – has discussed in detail the role of the monk in the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geography*. R. Burri, "Die Wiederentdeckung der Geographie des Ptolemaios durch Planudes", *Antike Naturwissenschaft und ihre Rezeption (AKAN)* 13, 2003, p. 127–136.

In the principal manuscript tradition, the so-called A-Redaction, the ninth map of Europe covered a significant portion of the Balkan Peninsula, stretching on the west from present-day Hungary to the southern Dalmatian coast, and on the east from the Danube Delta to the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles. Scholars have thoroughly described the contents of the map, highlighting the military and administrative origin of many toponyms (e.g., the division of the territory in strategies), but also stressing the heterochrony of some outdated information as well as major errors in the orography of the region.[26] The rational cutout of the continent into ten same-scale maps further assigned the western and southern parts of the peninsula to the fifth and the tenth maps of Europe, respectively devoted to the regions leaning on the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea and to Greece. A secondary tradition, known as the B-Redaction, far richer in drawings, featured instead two more detailed maps, splitting the above mentioned ninth map along the Balkan Mountain range. This choice, though most likely motivated by editorial constraints, might as well have been reminiscing of the notion that in ancient times this mountain range, as observes Alexander Vezenkov, "coincided with the northern limit of the influence of ancient Greek culture, while the area to its north was only later Latinized under the rule of the Roman Empire".[27] The resulting two maps, however, fell somehow into oblivion until Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), published them in the late sixteenth century as the antiquarian maps of Dacia and Moesia (1595) and Thrace (1590).[28] Inserted in the *Parergon* of Ortelius's acclaimed *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, they became part of what is considered to be the first western historical atlas.[29]

It was a manuscript from the A-Redaction, rather than B-Redaction, that made its way from Constantinople to Florence in 1397, brought by the Greek scholar and teacher Manuel Chrysoloras (*c*. 1355–1415).[30] Historiographers have

[26] For a detailed description of the map and further bibliographic references see M. Grčić, "The Balkans on the Geographical Map of Claudius Ptolemy", *Bulletin of the Serbian Geographical Society* 98, 2018, 2, p. 83–117. See also B. Beševliev, "Basic Trends in Representing…", p. 100; M. Popescu-Spineni, *România în izvoare geografice şi cartografice. Din antichitate pînă în pragul veacului nostru*, Bucharest, 1978, p. 38–45*;* T. Veneri, "Framing Southeastern Europe. Patterns in Cartographic Regionalization (1477–1636)", *CAS Working Papers Series* 10, 2018, p. 7–10.

[27] A. Vezenkov, "Entangled Geographies of the Balkans…", p. 124.

[28] Of the two, it is the latter that will be quickly reused and modernized, in particular by the Cologne school of cartography, as in the map *Thracia et Bulgaria cum viciniis*, produced by Johann Bussemacher in 1596. The map features in the low left corner a medallion with the portrait of Sultan Mehmed III, ascended to the throne the previous year. The decoration thus makes it clear that the regions depicted must be seen as the immediate backcountry of the Ottoman imperial capital, to which significant prominence is given by the mapmaker at the eastern edge of the map. See T. Veneri, "Framing Southeastern Europe…", p. 33–34.

[29] J. Black, *Maps and History. Constructing Images of the Past*, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 9–10. On these maps see also A. Orachev, *Bulgaria in the European Cartographic Concepts*, Sofia, 2005, p. 76–78.

[30] P. Gautier Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's Geography (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 287–290. The manuscript, Codex

often characterized this arrival, and the subsequent translation of the *Geography* into Latin by Jacopo Angeli (*c*. 1360–*c*. 1410), as the events that marked not only the rediscovery of Ptolemy in Western Europe, but the very beginnings of modern cartography.[31] However, the idea of a single, integrated, Eurocentric master narrative of cartographic modernity, with its identifiable and symbolic birthplace in the cradle of the Renaissance, has been largely challenged. Studies have since revised this narrative, unearthing discontinuities, ideological motives, and cultural exchanges that had been conveniently obliterated in favor of a tale of European scientific progress and advancement away from the irrational conceptions of the Middle Ages.[32] Despite these much-needed revisions, many of these studies have in turn ceded to the holistic temptations of a new narrative of power and territorial command. In this view, we might question to what extent this recent, exclusive focus on the politically driven agendas of these artifacts has had the reverse effect of erasing forms of dissent and conflictive views from the surface of the map – or better, of the globe.

According to Denis Cosgrove, the so-called rediscovery of Ptolemy marked the beginning of modernity because it dramatically disclosed the possibility of the "Apollonian gaze", i.e., a view from a distance sufficient for the observer to see the spherical earth.[33] This modernity, explains John Pickles, was indeed "one which privileged a particular form of seeing (distanced, objective and penetrating), predicated on an epistemology and politics of mastery and control of earth, nature and subjects".[34] Ptolemy's quantitative space, charted as continuous, homogeneous,

Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 82 (Vatican) was compiled in Constantinople between 1295 and 1303 and includes a world map and twenty-six regional maps. Two other codices of the *Geography*, both without maps, can be linked to the activity of Chrysoloras: Codex *Vaticanus Graecus 191* (Vatican), created in Constantinople between 1296 and 1302 and featuring the Greek scholar's annotations, and Codex *Florentinus Laurentianus Pluteus 28.9* (Florence), most likely drafted in Florence in the early fifteenth century. See R. Burri, *Die* Geographie *des Ptolemaios…*, p. 188–200, 479–487, 497–504; S. Gentile, "Umanesimo e cartografia: Tolomeo nel secolo XV", in D. Ramada Curto, A. Cattaneo and A. Ferrand (eds.), *La cartografia europea tra primo Rinascimento e fine dell'Illuminismo*, Florence, 2003, p. 3–18.

[31] On this traditional association see F. Fiorani, "Mapping and Voyages," in M. Wyatt (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Italian Renaissance*, Cambridge, 2014, p. 59–83; C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map…*, p. 62.

[32] P. Gautier Dalché, *La* Géographie *de Ptolémée en Occident (IV*e*–XVI*e *siècle)*, Turnhout, 2009; M.B. Goldie, *Scribes of Place. Place in Middle English Literature and Late Medieval Science*, Ithaca and London, 2019, p. 16–17; J.A. Marino, "On the Shores of Bohemia. Recovering Geography", in J.A. Marino (ed.), *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, Kirksville, MO, 2002, p. 9–13; M. Milanesi, "La rinascita della geografia dell'Europa (1350–1480)", in S. Gensini (ed.), *Europa e Mediterraneo tra Medioevo e prima età moderna: l'osservatorio italiano*, Ospedaletto (Pisa), 1992, p. 35–37; J. Simon, "Chorography Reconsidered. An Alternative Approach to the Ptolemaic Definition", in K. Lilley (ed.), *Mapping Medieval Geographies. Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600*, Cambridge, 2013, p. 23–44.

[33] D. Cosgrove, "Contested Global Visions: *One-World, Whole-Earth*, and the Apollo Space Photographs", *Annals of the Associations of American Geographers* 84, 1994, 2, p. 271.

[34] J. Pickles, *A History of Spaces. Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World*, London and New York, 2004, p. 83.

and isotropic, would foster the development of linear perspective and the establishment of a coded spatial language governing a new foundational relationship between town, country, and political territory.[35] By linking vision and geometry, matter and extension, the space of Ptolemy, according to these views, would lie at the roots of modern territoriality.[36] It is at this point, around 1500, that Denis Wood posits the historical divide between a world that until then had virtually no need for maps, and a world in which maps started to be perceived as necessary and even natural. It is when they began to organize the interests of the state that these graphic notation systems, says Wood, actually became *maps*, i.e., systems of propositions about the territory rather than simple representations.[37] By performing the very shape of statehood, they brought the state into being, naturalizing its representation and obscuring its origins. Wood has further highlighted the global horizons of this change in the sixteenth century, due to worldwide socio-economic transformations, and denounced enduring European presumptions of exceptionalism and claims to scientific primacy:

> Greco-Roman contributions to the history of mapmaking have been unconscionably exaggerated […] nor was "European" mapmaking ever the "scientific" enterprise it has been claimed to be. It was first and foremost a highly utilitarian managerial activity and second a profoundly ideological one, serving national identity-building, colonial, and other interests; and it was preceded by similarly motivated mapmaking in China, and paralleled by it elsewhere in the world.[38]

Along this line of thought, decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo has also powerfully criticized the complicity of Renaissance humanism and cartography in collapsing a polycentric world and establishing a worldwide colonial order.[39]

Although they are overdue antidotes to dominant historiographical myths, and important incentives to new lines of research, these militant narratives, in foregrounding cartography primarily as an agent of oppression, nevertheless run the risk of flattening the very multivocal and layered nature of maps. To avoid this, John Pickles has advocated for a contrapuntal, counterhegemonic approach to the

[35] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA, 1991, p. 40–41. On the influence of Ptolemy's work and the development of linear perspective see also S.Y. Edgerton Jr., "Florentine Interest in Ptolemaic Cartography as Background for Renaissance Painting, Architecture, and the Discovery of America", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 33, 1974, 4, p. 275–292; K.H. Veltman, "Ptolemy and the Origins of Linear Perspective", in M. Dalai Emiliani (ed.), *La Prospettiva Rinascimentale. Codificazioni e trasgressioni. Volume I*, Florence, 1980, pp. 403–407.

[36] F. Farinelli, *Blinding Polyphemus. Geography and the Models of the World*, London, New York and Calcutta, 2018, p. 13–15.

[37] D. Wood, with J. Fels and J. Krygier, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, New York and London, 2010, p. 1–35.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[39] W.D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance. Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, Ann Arbor, 1995, p. 219–313.

history of cartography, one that would track the emergence of multiple modernities, deconstructing rather than inflating totalizing accounts, dismantling rather than erecting the leviathan of the early modern state:

> It seems to me that this multiplicity, and the differences it fosters, are at the heart of the problem of coming to grips with so ambiguous and complex a cultural object as the map. The still deeply rooted desire for totalizing monochromatic accounts that explain the map in terms of it being a socially produced symbolic object, a tool of power, a form derived from a particular epistemology of the gaze, or a masculinist representation, seem to me to miss the point of the post-structuralist turn: that is, that not only are maps multivocal, not only are the spaces they constructively represent complex articulations of coded and nomadic spaces, but so also must be our accounts of them.[40]

The invitation formulated by Pickles guides this essay in many ways. On the one hand, it substantiates the necessity to construct modernity as a plurality, while disentangling its multiple narrative conflations. This approach, in our case, opens up to the possibility of examining the various, plural instances through which maps of the Balkan Peninsula were presented or regarded as modern at the time of their production. On the other hand, it explains the winding itinerary structure of these pages, which after Florence, will move to Austria, Venice, back to Constantinople, now under Ottoman rule, and then on to Istria, Transylvania, Germany, and the Low Countries.

There is no doubt that Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), the Chancellor of Florence, and his fellow scholars who in 1397 had invited Chrysoloras in the Tuscan city to teach Greek, considered themselves modern. Their enthusiasm for classical antiquity far exceeded the curiosity of antiquarian erudition, and had crucial ethic, political, and practical ramifications. Salutati's explicit conviction that to imitate the past meant to produce something new rather than merely reproduce, instantiates well this ideological collapse of antiquity and modernity.[41] Kenneth R. Bartlett has perceptively characterized it as the "energizing myth" of Renaissance humanism:

> A self-perpetuating, self-defining belief that Italians of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were practicing skills or creating art and ideas that brought them close to the classical past and provided a guide to life and letters, education and politics, morals and ethics, art and learning. These ideals could be shaped into a functional code of behavior, a structure of belief—an ideology—to animate a ruling elite: the well-educated, independent, urban, mercantile, bourgeois inhabitants of the city-state republics, or the courtiers and clients of the petty despotisms of the Italian peninsula.[42]

[40] J. Pickles, *A History of Spaces…*, p. 19.
[41] S. Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*, New York, 2011, p. 124.
[42] K.R. Bartlett, *A Short History of the Italian Renaissance*, Toronto, 2013, p. 10.

In this context, the two-fold and paradoxical destiny of the Ptolemaic maps was prefigured by the divergent interests of the humanists. One the one hand, the arrival of Chrysoloras's copy was met with great expectations regarding the cartographic method employed by the Alexandrian geographer to represent space in a quantitative way. On the other hand, the maps and the gazetteer must have appeared a treasure trove of ancient toponyms that would finally allow them to locate with precision the events and places of Greek and Roman history. While the former, methodological instance would foster cartographic experimentation, the latter, antiquarian cult of the book was calling for its visual iconization. It is on this two-fold aspect of Ptolemy's work – its authority and generative power – that Byzantine scholars like Chrysoloras, Georgius Gemisthos Plethon (1355/1360–1453), and later cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472), knowingly capitalized during their travels to Italy.[43] Their goals were similar, but also different, from those of their Italian fellows, and in this view, they were all but impartial or passive mediators. Their contribution to the revival of Greek studies was, like that of the Florentines, motivated by the belief that education and culture were key for the survival of the state – in the case of Byzantium, an alarmingly fragile and threatened one.[44] The empire's survival, as was clear to them, was tied to the West, and to a program of cultural politics that could move the western political and ecclesiastical elites toward the idea that, if the rediscovery of antiquity was to reshape the structures of power and culture in Europe, Byzantium had the most important role to play in this process. Robert Nelson has noted that in this direction, before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 would sanction the historicization of Byzantine culture, Ptolemy's legacy in the West was instrumentally staged by Greek scholars as the expression of a living culture.[45] An eloquent material outcome of this agenda can be found in the splendid frontispiece, featuring Ptolemy's portrait accompanied by Greek and Latin epigrams, that adorns the copy of the *Geography* commissioned in Italy by Bessarion to the Cretan scribe Ioannes Rhosos (fl. 1447–1498). This lavish addition attests to the

[43] On the geographical contributions of Plethon, a key figure in the reception of Strabo in Italy, see A. Diller, "A Geographical Treatise by Georgius Gemistus Pletho", *Isis* 27, 1937, 3, p. 441–451.

[44] J. Hankins, "Chrysoloras and the Greek Studies of Leonardo Bruni", in R. Maisano and A. Rollo (eds.), *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in Occidente. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Napoli, 26–29 giugno 1997)*, Naples, 2002, p. 175–178. On the impact of Chrysoloras in Italy see also N.G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy. Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, London and New York, 1992, p. 9–14. On how the Ottoman pressure over the Byzantine Empire contributed to the revival of Greek studies in the West see M.D. Birnbaum, "What the West Has Won by the Fall of Byzantium?", *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 41, 2004, p. 469–474.

[45] R. Nelson, "Byzantium and the Rebirth of Art and Learning in Italy and France", in H.C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, New Haven and New York, 2004, p. 519–523. With a totally different perspective, aimed at relativizing the geographical interests of the humanists of the Quattrocento, characterizes as eminently antiquarian, Nikolaus Egel has discussed Bessarion's role in the reception of Ptolemy. See N. Egel, "Bessarion als Geograph? Bessarions Rolle in der Vermittlung der Geographia des Ptolemäus und ihre Aufnahme durch die italienischen Humanisten", in C. Märtl, C. Kaiser and T. Ricklin (eds.), *Inter graecos latinissimus, inter latinos graecissimus. Bessarion zwischen den Kulturen*, Berlin, 2013, p. 203–228.

efforts made by the cardinal, who had brought from Greece an old Byzantine copy of the book, to actively engage with the Italian Renaissance visual culture, while claiming some Greek agency over Ptolemy's fortune in a context that was as political as academic.[46]

Therefore, it is in accord, rather than in tension, with humanistic motivations, that the Byzantines' scholarly missions to Italy were entangled with important diplomatic efforts, aimed both at gathering military aid and furthering the union of the Greek and Latin churches.[47] In this view, the church councils of Constance (1414–1418) and later of Ferrara and Florence (1438–1445) came to be not only extraordinary platforms for the transmission of texts from East to West, but also hotspots for the exchange of cartographic information.[48] Here, in an unprecedented way, Italian humanists and geographers were able to discuss maps, philological and scientific issues with foreign scholars, like the French prelates Pierre D'Ailly (1351–1420) and Guillaume Fillastre (1348–1428) in Constance, or the already mentioned Byzantine envoys Plethon and Bessarion some twenty years later in Florence.[49] It is within the international intellectual network set in motion by these events that the first attempts to modernize and supplement the Ptolemaic maps were made and circulated. In particular, triggered by these conversations were two long-lasting contributions, respectively to the regional cartography of North and Central Europe, offered by Danish geographer Claudius Clavus (b. 1388) and later by German humanist Nicolaus Cusanus (1401–1464).[50] Between the former's visit

[46] The early fourteenth century manuscript of the *Geography* owned by Bessarion – *Marcianus Graecus Z. 516 (904)* (Venice) – was probably copied in Thessaloniki by a Frank named Andrea Teluntàs and includes illustrations whose origin and meaning have been matter of debate. See F. Lovino, "Un miniatore nella bottega degli Astrapas? Alcune osservazioni attorno alle immagini del Tolomeo Marciano Gr. Z. 516 (904)", *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 22, 2016, p. 384–398. On Bessarion's Greek library see B. Mondrain, "Le cardinal Bessarion et la constitution de sa collection de manuscrits grecs – ou comment contribuer à l'intégration du patrimoine littéraire grec et byzantin en Occident", in C. Märtl, C. Kaiser, and T. Ricklin (eds.), *Inter graecos latinissimus...*, p. 187–202.

[47] J.W. Barker "Emperors, Embassies, and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy", in D.G. Angelov (ed.), *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, Kalamazoo, MI, 2009, p. 158–179; R. Born, "Trojaner und Erbfeinde. Ethnographisches Wissen, kartographische Praxis und Propaganda in Europa und dem Osmanischen Reich in der Frühen Neuzeit", in S. Grunwald, K.P. Hoffmann, D.A. Werning and F. Wiedemann (eds.), *Mapping Ancient Identities. Methodisch-kritische Reflexionen zu Kartierungspraktiken*, Berlin, 2018, p. 42. http://www.topoi.org/publication/47494/

[48] J. Herrin and S.M. MacManus, "Renaissance Encounters: Byzantium Meets the West at the Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438-39", in M.S. Brownlee and D.H. Gondicas (eds.), *Renaissance Encounters. Greek East and Latin West*, Leiden and Boston, 2013, p. 35–56. On Bessarion, and the importance of the Council of Florence for the Greek Studies in Italy, see N.G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy*…, p. 63–77.

[49] On Fillastre's role in the reception of Ptolemy in France see D. Marcotte (ed.), *Humanisme et culture géographique à l'époque du concile de Constance. Autour de Guillaume Fillastre. Actes du Colloque de l'Université de Reims. 18–19 novembre 1999*, Turnhout, 2002.

[50] On Clavus's map of Scandinavia and Greenland see K. A. Seaver, "Saxo Meets Ptolemy: Claudius Clavus and the 'Nancy Map'", *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift – Norwegian Journal of Geography* 67, 2013, 2, p. 72–86. On Cusanus's map of Central Europe see D. B. Durand, *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus of the Fifteenth Century. A Study in the Transition from Medieval to Modern Science*, Leiden, 1952, p. 252–270; P.H. Meurer, "Cartography in the German Lands, 1450–1650", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1183–1188.

to Italy in 1424 and the latter's trip to Germany in 1451, Ptolemaic cartography became the object of further groundbreaking initiatives in the Benedictine abbeys of Klosterneuburg in Austria and Reichenbach in Bavaria. Here, a group of cosmopolitan scholars connected to the University of Vienna not only started updating the ancient *tabulae*, but went further and, for the first time, applied the Ptolemaic grid to a new regional frame, where they inserted a set of data and coordinates of entirely modern origin.[51] While their knowledge of the Balkan Peninsula was limited and did not allow for such a laborious project, the Benedictine monks must be credited for modernizing the toponymy of the region on their maps of Europe, as well as on the Trier-Coblenz map fragments, from which the section depicting the middle Danube basin has survived, while its southern homologue was unfortunately lost.[52] Luckily, another attempt at modernizing Ptolemaic cartography, one that shows a deeper knowledge of the Balkans, has survived. The *Harley Codex 3686* in the British Library, which includes the text of the *Geography* with a totally new set of maps, was most likely crafted in Venice between 1436 and 1450.[53] Largely drawing on portolan charts, the mapmaker manifests his sea-centered approach by incorporating the western part of the peninsula in a map of the Central Mediterranean Sea, while featuring the eastern counterpart on a map centered on the Black Sea. The maps, which mix ancient and modern toponyms, confirm an inferior knowledge of the hinterland with respect to the coasts, as the interests of the Venetians in the area at the time fell disproportionally in the field of maritime affairs.[54] Even so, as Marica Milanesi notes, an "unusual feature of the Harleian maps is the amount of detail for the Balkan Peninsula (f. 34v), where Bojana is both shown and named (*bojane* instead of the usual Lodrin), as is the Vardar river (*veria*)".[55] A variety of sources, available only at a crossroads of trade like Venice, must have been used by this anonymous cartographer, whose work according to Milanesi "constitutes one of the earliest examples of the synthesis of portolan chart, Ptolemaic map and medieval mappamundi that characterised fifteenth-century cartography and the only example of such a synthesis on a regional scale".[56] While in Florence, where no significant cartographic tradition existed before Ptolemy, major experimentations would be carried out by German mapmakers, like Nicolaus Germanus (*c*. 1420 – *c*. 1490) and Henricus Martellus (fl. 1480–1496), in Venice the encounter of the *Geography* with the nautical chart, an old and prestigious tradition capable of representing the

[51] In this view, the Klosterneuburg map of Central Europe can be seen as a forerunner of Cusanus's cartography. See D.B. Durand, *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus...*, p. 228–251.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 145–159.

[53] M. Milanesi, "A Forgotten Ptolemy: Harley Codex 3686 in the British Library," *Imago Mundi* 48, 1996, 1, p. 43–64.

[54] A. Ducellier, "La penisola balcanica vista dall'osservatorio veneziano nei sec. XIV e XV", in S. Gensini (ed.), *Europa e Mediterraneo tra Medioevo e prima età moderna: l'osservatorio italiano*, Ospedaletto (Pisa), 1992, p. 297–314.

[55] M. Milanesi, "A Forgotten Ptolemy…", p. 48

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

world both at the ecumenical and local scale, was to be otherwise productive, as the Harleian maps demonstrate.[57]

Further in the century, the tension between innovation and conservation in the circulation of Ptolemaic maps was magnified on the one hand by the introduction of hand-drawn maps in different state-led activities in Northern Italy – diplomacy and territorial management above all[58] – and the flourishing of a deluxe manuscript market on the other hand.[59] Since 1477, the printing press would accelerate this process: as noted by John Rennie Short, Ptolemy became, "after the Bible, one of the most important publishing ventures of the Renaissance" and at the same time "the primary impulse to the creative cartography of the sixteenth century".[60] Exposed to these contrasting tendencies, the Ptolemaic map of the Balkans would ultimately coexist in three different forms: the (almost) immutable, canonized illustration to the classical text; its modernized version, which introduced the current toponymy within the frame of the old template, occasionally modifying it; and a set of distinctively new products, deriving from the assembly or the cutout of different, modernized Ptolemaic maps. In each of the three strands, the cartographic outline of the peninsula was infused with different instances of modernity that had already shifted away from the expectations and goals of Early Quattrocento humanists.

The 'immutability' of the first group, i.e., of the maps canonized as an integral component of Ptolemy's text, should, however, not be taken literally. Indeed, the very first printed edition, complete with maps, of the *Geography* (Bologna, de Lapis, 1477) presents some intentional departures from the tradition, ones that in particular modify the cartographic display of the Balkan Peninsula. Besides the introduction of a few modern toponyms – *Costantinopoli*, *Grecia*, *Turchia* – here the major alteration consists in the relocation of Thracia and Chersonesus. Left blank in the ninth map of Europe, these regions were included instead in a new map, which covered Greece (the tenth map of Europe) as well as the Aegean provinces of Asia Minor (from the first map of Asia).[61] George Tolias has recently explained that through this re-grouping of provinces the editors, rather than attempting to modernize the text, sought to adjust the regional maps to the different astrological arrangement detailed by Ptolemy in his *Tetrabiblos*.[62]

[57] M. Milanesi, "Cartografia per un principe senza corte: Venezia nel Quattrocento", *Micrologus. Natura, scienze e società Medievali / Nature, Sciences and Medieval Studies* 16, 2008, 189–216.

[58] On this last aspect see E. Casti, "State, Cartography, and Territory in Renaissance Veneto and Lombardy", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 874–908.

[59] On the popularity of Ptolemy in Italian Renaissance courts and their demand for lavish manuscripts of the *Geography* see M. Milanesi, "Testi geografici antichi in manoscritti miniati del XV secolo", in S. Pittaluga (ed.), *Columbeis V: Relazioni di viaggio e conoscenza del mondo tra Medio Evo e Rinascimento, Atti del V Convegno internazionale dell'Associazione per il Medioevo e l'Umanesimo Latini* (Genova 1991), Genova, 1993, p. 341–362.

[60] J.R. Short, *Making Space…*, p. 23. See also C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map…*, p. 56–64. The first edition of the *Geography* (Vicenza, 1475) was printed without maps by Herman Levilapis.

[61] In this edition, however, unlike most versions, maps are not numbered according to the continent they belong to.

[62] G. Tolias, "The World under the Stars: Astrological Geography and the Bologna 1477 Edition of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*", *Imago Mundi* 71, 2019, p. 125–150.

If Ptolemaic cartography could play an important role in astrological practices of prognostication in Italian Renaissance courts, it could also provide the source for literary inspiration and diplomatic maneuvers. In this view, Francesco Berlinghieri's *Septe Giornate de la Geographia* (1482) exemplifies how a set of maps of the ancient world, already canonized by decades of manuscript production, could be endowed with invigorating new meanings and further novel claims to modernity. For in this book, they served as a visual illustration not only to the first fully realized vernacular rendition of the *Geography*, but also to a fictional conversation in rhyme in which the Florentine humanist and statesman (1440–1501) confronted the very authority of his poetic interlocutor, Ptolemy.[63] Berlinghieri's work was also unquestionably innovative for all the toponyms it translated and identified and for the integration of modern sources and references. Confected in the shop of a German immigrant, Niccolò Tedesco, it was also the first printed edition, together with the one published the same year in Ulm by Lienhart Holl (d. after 1492), to supplement the Ptolemaic atlas with *tabulae modernae*.[64] "These thirty-one, double-folio maps" according to Sean Roberts "represented the largest program of engraving undertaken in Renaissance Florence and must be counted among the most ambitious printing projects of the fifteenth century".[65] Although this edition did not include yet a modern map of the Balkan Peninsula, the verses that accompanied the ninth map of Europe occasionally bridged ancient geography and current historical events (fig. 1). While describing the map, the poet thus could venture in locating the place of origin of the Hungarian people, or tentatively identify the ancient Dionysopolis with the modern town of Varna. He would further characterize the Danube plain of Dacia as a military front between Turks and Wallachians, and finally point to Constantinople as the new center of a vast and expanding Ottoman Empire.[66] Beside the evidence provided by the literary apparatus, two further documentary anecdotes attest to how different, new readings of the Ptolemaic map were possible in a historically changed context.

Berlinghieri had made the interesting choice to dedicate his endeavor to Mehmed II (1432–1481), the Ottoman sovereign who brought an end to the

[63] S. Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World. Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, p. 2.

[64] The *Septe Giornate de la Geographia* feature indeed the first printed maps of modern Spain, France, Italy, and the Holy Land. See R.A. Skelton, "Bibliographical Note", in Berlinghieri, Francesco, *Geographia: Florence, 1482*, Amsterdam, 1966, V–XIII. The maps of the Ulm edition, which include five *tabulae modernae*, were based on the manuscript work of Nicolaus Germanus, a Benedictine monk who had worked in Italy, where he most likely gathered the source material, derived from Claudius Clavus, for an additional modern map of Scandinavia. See K.-H. Meine (ed.), *Die Ulmer* Geographia *des Ptolemäus von 1482: zur 500. Wiederkehr der ersten Atlasdrucklegung nördlich der Alpen. Ulm, Schwörhaus 11. Oktober bis 30. November 1982*, Weissenhorn, 1982. In addition, miniatures in manuscript copies of Berlinghieri's poem offer evidence for the existence, in the second half of the fifteenth century, of a wall map tradition, almost completely lost, of modernized versions of Ptolemy's world map. See C. Van Duzer, "The Ptolemaic Wall Map: A Lost Tradition of Renaissance Cartography", *Viator* 45, 2014, 1, p. 361–390.

[65] S. Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World…*, p. 4.

[66] See chapters XIX–XXII of F. Berlinghieri, *Geographia: Florence, 1482*, Amsterdam, 1966.

Byzantine Empire by conquering Constantinople in 1453.[67] A major patron of the arts, the sultan had since attracted to his new capital many artists and scholars from Western Europe, while appropriating and adapting, with the assistance of local intellectuals, Greco-Roman models of learning for the political ends of the empire.[68] Rather than endangering the survival of classical knowledge, Mehmed II, who is known to have commissioned atlases and a translation of Ptolemy, seems on the contrary to have initiated, in Pinar Emiralioğlu's words, a true "renaissance of Ottoman geographical consciousness".[69] When in 1929 Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937) identified the library of the sultan in the Topkapi Palace, he romantically described it as an attempt to unite the intellectual cultures of the East and the West.[70] The legend of Mehmed II as a well-rounded Renaissance man has since been thoroughly questioned, notably by Franz Babinger (1891–1967), together with his alleged mastery of western languages.[71] However, two extant Greek copies and two Arabic translations of the *Geography*, as well as evidence of a world map, now lost, derived from Ptolemy and commissioned by the sultan to the Greek scholar Georgius Amirutzes (1400–1470), attest to the sultan's lively interests in geography.[72] While these interests might have been motivated by military and political goals in the West, they have been shown to be at the origin of Mehmed II's patronage of classic Islamic cartographic material as well.[73] With these articulate backdrops in mind, a short handwritten inscription, found on the margins of the ninth map of Europe – the map of the Balkan Peninsula – in Lorenzo de Medici's personal copy of Berlinghieri's book, acquires unexpected relevance. Stating that Florence and Byzantium occupied the same parallel, the apparently casual note foregrounds a common intellectual legacy between the two cities, one that found in Ptolemy its prime champion.[74]

The untimely death of Mehmed II one year before the publication of the book did not remove Berlinghieri from his resolution to capitalize on such a potent

[67] See M. Milanesi, "Testi geografici antichi…", p. 352–359.

[68] J. Brotton, *Trading Territories. Mapping in the Early Modern World*, Ithaca, 1997, p. 91–93.

[69] P. Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 2014, p. 21–27; G. Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople", *Muqarnas* 29, 2012, p. 1–81.

[70] A. Deissmann, *Forschungen und Funde im Serai: Mit einem Verzeichnis der nichtislamischen Handschriften im Topkapu Serai zu Istanbul*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1933, p. 24. On Deissmann's discoveries see L. Bagrow, "A Tale from the Bosphorus", *Imago Mundi* 12, 1955, p. 25–29; A. Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist*, Berlin and New York, 2010, p. 198–201.

[71] F. Babinger, "Mehmed II., der Eroberer, und Italien", *Byzantion* 21, 1951, p. 127–146; C.G. Patrinelis, "Mehmed II the Conqueror and His Presumed Knowledge of Greek and Latin", *Viator* 2, 1971, p. 349–354.

[72] R. Born, "Trojaner und Erbfeinde…", p. 43–49; J. Raby, "East and West in Mehmed the Conqueror's Library", *Bulletin du Bibliophile* 3, 1987, p. 297–321.

[73] K. Pinto, "The Maps Are the Message: Mehmet II's Patronage of an 'Ottoman Cluster'", *Imago Mundi* 3, 2011, 2, p. 155–179.

[74] S. Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World*…, p. 20–21.

cultural connection. As a diplomatic gift, offered to strengthen mercantile and martial ties in a rapidly changing geopolitical scenery, the cartographic poem represented the goals and aspirations of the Florentine state in the face of a power that was reshaping all the equilibriums in the Mediterranean.[75] Florence, where earlier in the century an ecumenical council had vainly sought to bridge the Great Schism and unite the West and East churches, after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople had been slower than the Venetians and the Genoese, who could flaunt a centuries-long presence on the Bosporus, in establishing diplomatic relations with the Sublime Porte. By the end of the 1470s, however, when the war of the sixteen years between the Turks and Venice (1463–1479) was still raging, the court of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492) had already made a number of attempts, all secret and unofficial, to capture the sultan's good will. Most of these maneuvers – notably those of the Florentine poet, historian, and spy Benedetto Dei (1418–1492) – were made, like those of other Italian states, to weaken the Venetian Republic, whose increasing territorial power in Northern Italy was felt as a major threat.[76] In particular, the lord of Rimini and Fano, Sigismondo Malatesta (1417–1468), in 1461 had tried to gain the confidence of Mehmet II by sending the painter and sculptor Matteo de' Pasti (*c.* 1412–1468) to Constantinople, together with a military treatise (Roberto Valturio's *De re militari*), and a map, which however were both intercepted in Crete by the Venetian authorities.[77]

It was in the aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy (1478) that the Florentine approaches bore fruit, when the sultan in 1479 agreed to repatriate Bernardo Bandini dei Baroncelli, the murderer of Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's brother, who had found refuge in Istanbul. In the same way as these negotiations had been accompanied by diplomatic gifts aimed at pleasing the sultan's taste, only few years later, when another crisis presented Lorenzo with the possibility of gaining the favor of the sovereign, Berlinghieri's book would travel by means of the merchant and occasional diplomatic envoy Paolo da Colle. In 1481, after Mehmed II had died, being succeeded by his son Bayezid II (1447–1512), the brother of the new sultan, as well as rival heir to the throne, Cem (1459–1495), had fled the capital, ultimately finding refuge in Savoy under the protection of the Knights of Rhodes.[78] In this delicate and competitive context, in which Lorenzo was eager to play a role, Berlinghieri had copies of his poem re-inscribed and sent both to

[75] *Ibid.,* p. 5.

[76] F. Babinger, "Mehmed II, der Eroberer…", p. 146–161.

[77] A. Gatward Cevizli, "Mehmed II, Malatesta and Matteo De' Pasti: A Match of Mutual Benefit between the 'Terrible Turk' and a 'Citizen of Hell'", *Renaissance Studies* 31, 2017, 1, p. 43–65; S. Roberts, "The Lost Map of Matteo de' Pasti. Cartography, Diplomacy, and Espionage in the Renaissance Adriatic", *Journal of Early Modern History* 20, 2016, p. 19–38. On further bookish diplomatic gifts to Mehmet II see E. Jacobs, "Büchergeschenke für Sultan Mehemmed II", in *Festschrift Georg Leyh. Aufsätze zum Bibliothekswesen und zur Forschungsgeschichte dargebracht zum 60. Geburtstage am 6. Juni 1937 von Freunden und Fachgenossen*, Leipzig, 1937, p. 20–26.

[78] F. Babinger, "Lorenzo de' Medici e la corte ottomana", *Archivio Storico Italiano* 120, 1963, p. 305–361.

Bayezid II in Istanbul and to Cem in Savoy. Both copies included Ptolemy's ninth map of Europe, though the title was partially illegible due to a printing error: confusing the two continents divided by the Bosporus, the mistaken lettering *tabula nona d'Asia* had been interposed with the correct wording *tabula nona d'Europa*. For Jerry Brotton the typo could signal, beyond a comprehensible lack of familiarity with the new media, also uncertainty surrounding the identity of those areas, whose borders were on constant revision in the face of Ottoman territorial expansion.[79] More interesting and telling about shifting geographical identities is perhaps the fact than in Cem's copy, today at the National University Library in Turin, the re-inscription in gold leaf of the disorienting title had placed the Balkan Peninsula not in Europe, but rather in Asia.[80]

Accompanying texts, letters of dedication, handwritten inscriptions, differences in editorial contexts and cultural backgrounds can thus situate under new light the apparently uneventful iteration, during the Renaissance, of Ptolemy's map of Southeast Europe. Canonized by three centuries of manuscript transmission – codices of the *Geography* would be compiled well into the sixteenth century – the map was granted a further, unprecedented circulation by the printing press. Some forty illustrated editions of Ptolemy were published between 1477 and 1624, varying in size and format, engraving techniques, language, and decorative apparatus.[81] These editions, as we have seen, were almost immediately supplemented with modern maps of regions that had either not been covered by Ptolemy – like Scandinavia – or for which abundant cartographic information was available – like Italy, France, and Spain. Interestingly, the first modern correspondents of the ninth *tabula* of Europe are found outside this authoritative tradition, in two independent projects, animated respectively by the ambition to substitute Ptolemy, and to make geography accessible to a much wider audience.

At this point, to encounter these pioneering examples of cartographic modernization – our second group of maps derived by Ptolemy – we must travel away from the dominant centers of power and culture, and head to the northwestern and northeastern margins of the peninsula, respectively to the smaller towns of Isola in Istria and Transylvanian Kronstadt (Hungarian: Brasso, today Brașov, in Romania). It is in a secondary harbor of the Venetian *stato da mar*, in fact, that the first great attempt at compiling a modern atlas of the whole world, including the Americas, was completed around 1520 by notary and traveler Pietro Coppo (1470–1555).[82] As declared by the author himself, who had studied under famed humanist

[79] J. Brotton, *Trading Territories*… , p. 96–97; S. Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World*…, p. 92.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[81] P. Gautier Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's Geography…", p. 361–364.

[82] As noted by Roberto Almagià, before Coppo's atlas other attempts at putting together a collection of modern maps had been undertaken, in particular by Henricus Martellus (fl. 1480–1496), but none of them aimed at being as comprehensive as the *De toto orbe*. See R. Almagià, "The Atlas of Pietro Coppo, 1520", *Imago Mundi* 7, 1950, p. 48–50; G. Busetto, "Coppo, Pietro", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 28, Rome, 1983, p. 64; R. W. Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps. Bio–Bibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius, 1570*,

Marcantonio Sabellico (*c.* 1436–1506), this ambitious project in Latin, titled *De toto orbe*, built on decades of classical studies. In the preface to the book, after extensively mentioning all the known contributions of antiquity to the study of geography, Coppo legitimated his endeavor through his long acquaintance with the tradition: "I have attended, with the utmost diligence and desire, to this science for a long time now – from my younger years until my present age of fifty – having been imbued with the doctrine and trusting the authority of those who have achieved the highest reputation among the most learned". At the same time, Coppo sought validation also through his personal past of navigation, exploration, and collection of geographical information ("the long familiarity and experience of many things, in traveling all over Italy [...] as well as in navigating almost all the Mediterranean Sea"). These journeys had further led him to the dramatic encounter with the material antiquity of the Mediterranean, where his embedded knowledge of classical texts had confronted the remains of the ancient world, bringing his humanistic education to bear on physical evidence. Within the *De toto orbe*, Erin Maglaque has found an eloquent trace of this transformative encounter, one that collapsed bookish knowledge and empirical experience, in the map of Crete, the Greek island where Coppo had spent six years at the beginning of the century.[83] Here, the layering of ancient toponyms, ruins, mythical references, and modern cities and infrastructures, far from being the product of encyclopedic accumulation, should be rather seen as the result of a "provocative encounter between Venetian colonial governance and the physical stage of myth and history".[84] In a euphoric age for humanists and explorers, it is this two-fold pedigree that seems to embolden and justify, further in the preface, Coppo's unapologetic claim to modernity: "I have dared to tackle what few perhaps among us have previously dared: namely, the detailed description of the world and the figuration of the disposition of the earth".[85]

Although inserted in a non-Ptolemaic atlas, Coppo's map of the Balkan Peninsula framed the same area of the ancient *tabula*, while keeping many names from the old geographical nomenclature (fig. 2). To these, the map added a set of modern place-names, among which five regional names (*Ungaria, Servia,*

Chicago, 1993, p. 119–20. On Pietro Coppo's life and his regional description of Istria see A. Degrassi, "Pietro Coppo", *Pagine istriane*, s. 3, 1, 1950, 4, p. 87–92; Idem., "Di Pietro Coppo e delle sue opere. Documenti inediti e l'opuscolo *Del sito de Listria* ristampato dall'edizione del 1540", *Archeografo Triestino*, s. 3, 11, 1924, p. 319–387.

[83] E. Maglaque, *Venice's Intimate Empire. Family Life and Scholarship in the Renaissance Mediterranean*, Ithaca and London, 2018, p. 53–63.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[85] My translation. "Cum a teneris annis huiusmodi scientiae atentissima cura ac desiderio iamdiu operam dedisse usque ad hanc aetatem, qua annum quinquagesimum ago eorum doctrina imbutus atque auctoritate fretus, qui inter doctissimos summum nomen obtinere meruerunt. Nec non longa consuetudine ac rerum plurimarum experientia, tam in peragranda tota Italia provinciarum omnium longe clarissima, quam in navigatione totius ferme mediterranei maris [...] Ausus sum aggredi quae pauci fortassis antehac apud nos ausi sunt, descriptionem scilicet particularem mundi et situs orbis terrarum figurationem", P. Coppo, *De toto orbe* (*c.* 1520), Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, ms. A117, fol. 1v.

Valachia, Bulgaria, Bosnia) and the location of some strategic settlements along the Danube (*Strugonium, Buda, Belgradus*). While these additions attest to the limited information available to the compiler, they also show the difficulties Coppo encountered in plotting modern names on a pre-existing template. In fact, the erroneous placement eastward of the above-mentioned regions and towns ultimately reveals the failed superimposition of a whole modern 'grid' over the scheme of the ancient map. Despite these flaws, the atlas, which was destined to the press, represented a true novelty. For reasons which to this day remain unknown, it remained in a manuscript form, and more than twenty years would have to pass before another, more accurate modernized version of the tabula was published in an otherwise revolutionary editorial project.[86]

As Coppo himself had emphasized, his cartographic knowledge and data were not the exclusive result of bookish erudition, but stemmed from many peregrinations on land and at sea between Venice, Rome, and Crete. Similarly, years of professional itinerancy and activity at the universities of Vienna, Cracow, and Basel had advanced the cartographic skills and shaped the theological convictions of Transylvanian Saxon humanist Johannes Honter (Lat. Honterus, 1498–1549). More than anywhere else, the seeds of Honter's future geographical endeavors were planted at the University of Vienna, at the time a lively hub for intellectuals who sought to integrate different branches of knowledge in a single cosmographical system. There, the circle around Konrad Celtis (1459–1508), Johannes Stabius (1450–1522), and Johannes Cuspinianus (1473–1529) had called for the union of astronomy, mathematics, and poetry, while playing an important role in the reception of Ptolemy in Central Europe.[87] But above all, in Vienna it was Petrus Apianus (1495–1552) who exerted a strong influence on Honter, especially through his revision of Ptolemy's conceptual framework and his choice, for his popular introductory opus, the *Cosmographicus liber* (Landshut, 1524), of a language accessible to the layman.[88] Later in Basel, Honter was exposed to yet another cosmographical current – more historical, descriptive, and attentive to regions – that was pursued there by Sebastian Münster (1488–1552) and would achieve tremendous success with the publication of his *Cosmographia* (1544).[89] A fervent supporter of Protestant ideas to which he had been exposed during his academic *peregrinatio*, Honter also shared with theologian Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) the belief that cosmography had a high spiritual value, as the investigation of the world could provide access to the divine wisdom it expressed.

[86] R. Almagià, "The Atlas of Pietro Coppo…", p. 48.

[87] H. Meurer, "Cartography in the German Lands, 1450–1650", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1183–1188.

[88] Z.G. Török, "Honterus: Rudimenta Cosmographica (1542): kozmográfia és/vagy geográfia?", in A. W. Salgó and Á. Stemler (eds.), *Honterus-Emlékkönyv*. Budapest, 2001, p. 57–72.

[89] Z.G. Török, "Einführung zu einem Kosmographielehrbuch der Spätrenaissance", in J. Honterus. *Rudimenta Cosmographica. Grundzüge der Weltbeschreibung (Corona/Kronstadt 1542): Ins Deutsche, Rumänische und Ungarische übersetzte und kommentierte Faksimile-Ausgabe*, edited by R. Offner, H. Roth, T. Şindilariu, and U. A. Wien, Bonn, 2017, p. 48.

Energized by this belief, and imbued with a variety of learnings, Honter returned to his hometown, Kronstadt, in 1533 with the goal of founding a school that would correspond to his humanistic ideals, while setting up a printing press that would help him introduce the Reformation in Transylvania.[90] By that time, he had already major accomplishments on record. In 1530 he had published in Cracow the first modern geographical schoolbook (the small octavo *Rudimentorum cosmographiae, libri duo*). Two years later, his folio chorographical map of Transylvania/ Siebenbürgen (Basel, 1532) had marked an outstanding contribution to the regional cartography of Central-East Europe. Like Coppo, who in 1525 had published the first regional map of Istria, Honter had attributed to the mapping of his home country a pivotal role within the grander scheme of his cosmographic endeavors.[91] These efforts were to culminate in 1542 when Honter, by now a leading figure of the Reformation in the area, published a new enlarged version of his schoolbook (*Rudimenta Cosmographica*), not only including a longer text in hexameters, easier for students to memorize, but featuring also a whole set of modern maps.[92] Zsolt G. Török has well synthesized the impact and enormous success of the book, which would have at least 126 editions between 1542 and 1692:

> With the publication of this small, octavo book, Honter became a pioneer educator in the field of natural sciences. But its major innovation was cartographic, with the addition of sixteen woodcut maps at the end of the book. In effect, this systematic and uniform corpus of printed maps was the first non-Ptolemaic pocket atlas.[93]

[90] P. Philippi, *Land des Segens? Fragen an die Geschichte Siebenbürgens u*nd seiner Sachsen, Köln-Weimar-Wien, 2008, p. 115.

[91] Z.G. Török, "Renaissance Cartography in East-Central Europe, ca. 1450–1650", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 1828–1831. On the different versions of Honter's map of Transylvania (*Chorographia Transylvaniae*), which records almost only German settlements, while neighboring Wallachia shows bilingual place names, see G. Borsa, "Die beiden Ausgaben der 'Chorographia Transylvaniae' von Johannes Honter", *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 9, 1988, 2, p. 150–160. Further studies have confirmed that Honter made use of the map of Hungary compiled in 1528 by Lazarus Secretarius (*c.* 1475 – *c.* 1528), using the same Ptolemaic projection network though correcting its data and supplementing it with the results of his own survey. See Z. Bartos-Elekes, "Honterus Erdély-térképének vetületéről, pontosságáról", *Geodézia és Kartográfia* 61, 2009, 6, p. 15–18; L. Sebők, "Az első Erdély-térkép és előzményei", *Magyar Építőművészet* 81, 1990, 5, p. 30–31. The map survives in a complete copy in Budapest and in some other fragments of a different edition, whose order of publication has been recently reassessed. See K. Plihál, "Johannes Honterus Chorographia Transylvaniae Sybembürgen című térképeinek kiadástörténeti áttekintése", *Geodézia és Kartográfia* 66, 2014, 9–10, p. 7–14, and 11–12, p. 11–18.

[92] Recently, the book has been the object of a trilingual translation in German, Rumanian, and Hungarian, complemented with numerous essays, a facsimile edition, and a bibliographic survey: J. Honterus, *Rudimenta Cosmographica...*, 2017.

[93] Z.G. Török, "Renaissance Cartography in East-Central Europe…", p. 1831. On the *Rudimenta Cosmographica* see also R.W. Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century…*, p. 302–15; C.F. Capello, *Ioannes Honterus ed il suo atlante geografico scolastico cinquecentesco*, Torino, 1980, p. 17–39, 47–48.

However, most of the maps, cut by Honter himself, were untitled modern versions of traditional Ptolemaic frames, with a simplified design and a higher selection of toponyms due to the reduced format of the publication. Nonetheless, a significant increase in the presence of regional names characterized the map of Southeast Europe, where along few ancient toponyms, thirteen modern regions were outlined in capital letters (fig. 3).[94] Perhaps more than in any previous maps, the regions appeared here to converge and gravitate to a common axis, the hydrographic basin of the Danube, which seemed to orient and define the whole continental backcountry. Such reading was reinforced by the poetic text, which directed the gaze from west to east, following the course of the river, from Buda to the Black Sea, before disintegrating in the coastal margins of the map.[95] Moreover, instead of the usual peripheral position, the map occupied the very center of the atlas, reflecting the author's geographical and religious ethnocentrism.[96] Honter in fact positioned the Kingdom of Dacians in the middle of Europe, where he saw the beacons of the rising sun illuminate his hometown – Corona, Kronstadt – the first on the continent to follow the teachings of Christ.[97]

The following evolutions of the map showcase, beyond an increase in place-names, a series of significant interventions with respect to the two major structural, delimiting agents of the map, namely the title and the frame (or border).[98] The map would thus metamorphose, changing labels and re-adjusting its edges, in order to

[94] Ungaria, Bosna, Dacia, Servia, Transylvania, Rascia, Dalmatia, Macedonia, Thracia, Valachia, Moldavia, Bulgaria, Podolia.

[95] J. Honter, *Rudimenta Cosmographica*, Kronstadt, 1542, fol. 10r.

[96] However, at this stage of the implementation of the Reformation, less triumphant than Honter might admit, the interconnection between national and confessional identity in Transylvania was not as settled as it would be later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Lutheran would become a synonym for Transylvanian Saxon. Moreover, the Lutheran characterization of the Reformation carried out in Kronstadt at this time is problematic and has been questioned. See E. Szegedi, "Putem vorbi de Luteranism în Transilvania secolului al XVI-lea?", *Studii şi articole de istorie* 84, 2017, p. 7–17.

[97] "Europae medium Dacorum regna tenent"; "[….] praecipitique sitam sub monte Coronam, / Quam primam Europae Christi documenta sequentem / Sol oriens radiis lustrat propioribus urbem" (Ibid., fol. 7r, 10r). These lines, most likely inserted in 1542 to stage the current successes, are missing in the preliminary edition of the *Rudimenta Cosmographica* that was published without maps in 1541 and with only 1260 verses (instead of 1366). See I. Keul, *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe. Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania (1526–1691)*, Leiden and Boston, 2009, p. 64, note 40.

[98] According to Christian Jacob's phenomenology of cartographic perception, the title programs the gaze and orients the reading of the map, mobilizes memories and interpretation, creates expectation, fashions the meaning and organization of content. As a delimiting agent, the title autonomizes and reifies the entitled object, designates and identifies, while anchoring the map in time, history and language, and to the place of its enunciation. In regional maps, the border further "stresses that cartography is above all delimitation, selection, and abstraction of a part from the whole". At the same time, the border imposes a point of view, and gives autonomy to the representation, creating a distance that "transforms the simple glance into an edified and aesthetic gaze", C. Jacob, *The Sovereign Map…*, p. 103–118, 192–201.

reflect historically situated views and vested interests. Hence, in 1544 Sebastian Münster republished it as a map of Transylvania and surrounding countries,[99] while in turn Ortelius, shifting the focus eastward and problematically incorporating medieval information with modern data, redrew it as a description of Romania and neighboring regions.[100] Finally, it would be adapted and further popularized with a reduced coverage by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594) under yet another label, that of *Walachia, Servia, Bulgaria, Romania*.[101]

Parallel to these evolutions is the crafting of smaller-scale maps that resulted from the combination and cutout of several *tabulae modernae* – our third and last group of maps derived from Ptolemy. Interestingly, some of these attempts, in contrast with the unity of the region maintained by the tradition, divided the peninsula along the Danube and the Balkan range, reframing these areas as the peripheries of two distinct macro-regions. In the first case, they came to mark the southern confines of continental, Christian Central-East Europe, as in the maps published by Marco Beneventano and Giovanni Cotta in Rome in 1507, and by Martin Waldseemüller six years later in Strasbourg, maps which they included in their respective editions of Ptolemy. More than a simple operation of assembly, the maps incorporated content from various foreign sources, such as Nicolaus Cusanus's charting of Germany, or the Polish regional cartography of Bernard Wapowski (1450–1535).[102] In the second case, the same areas were instead depicted as the northern edges of a Mediterranean maritime region defined by the coasts of the Adriatic, Ionian, Aegean and Black Sea. Based on a lost prototype used in Florence by Henricus Martellus and Francesco Rosselli (1445–1508/1513), this map complemented the northern homologue in Waldseemüller's atlas, thus reinforcing the position of the Danube as a geographical divide.[103]

Later in the century, Venetian cartography, notably with the maps of the river's course by Giacomo Gastaldi (*c*. 1500–1566), would restore the unity of the region and portray the Danube as a major regional axis of communication and trade. In particular, a first large map in four sheets, published in Venice by Matteo Pagano in 1546 (*La vera descrittione di tutta la Ungheria, Transilvania, Valachia…*), of which only one copy survives, today at the Vatican Library, reveals the coordination of various sources, including nautical data, in order to correct

[99] "Siebenbürg mit allen umbligenden landeren", in S. Münster, *Cosmographia*, Basel, 1544.

[100] "Romaniae (quae olim Thracia dicta), vicinarumque regionum, uti Bulgariae, Walachiae, Syrfiae, etc. descriptio", in A. Ortelius, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Antwerp, 1584.

[101] Published at first in his *Italiae, Sclavoniae, et Graeciae tabule geographice* (Duisburg, 1589), the map would be included in Mercator's posthumous *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi*, Duisburg, 1595.

[102] Wapowski's work was also a source for Münster's map of Poland and Hungary, which in the *Cosmographia* functioned as a modern correspondent to the ninth tabula of Europe, though limited to the lands situated north of the Danube.

[103] R. Almagià, "On the Cartographic Work of Francesco Rosselli", *Imago Mundi* 8, 1951, p. 30–31; F. Banfi, "Two Italian Maps of the Balkan Peninsula", *Imago Mundi* 11, 1954, p. 24–31; P. H. Meurer, "Cartography in the German Lands, 1450–1650", in *HOC*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 1183–88.

Ptolemy's information.[104] As denoted in the cartouche, the map covers the entirety of twelve regions (*Ungheria, Transilvania, Valachia, Boemia, Slesia, Moravia, Austria, Bulgaria, Bossina, Servia, Romania, Schiavonia*) and portions of six other (*Polonia, Podolia, Rossia, Franconia, Baviera, Italia*). Worth of note, in the Adriatic Sea, is the depiction of a 'ship of faith', with the standing figure of Christ and a large towering cross, apparently sailing from the Dalmatian shore towards the West. Alluding to Venice's new position as the frontier of Christendom, the image, according to Palmira Brummett, "suggests a connection between the Christian populations of the Balkans and those of the Italian peninsula, a connection embodied in the cross, a standard marker on early modern maps of Christian space and the claims of Christian monarchs".[105] The map was redrawn by Gastaldi thirteen years later, in 1559, and printed by Fabio Licinio, incorporating new materials and emphasizing the role of three capital cities not only as edge-markers of the cartographic frame, but as centers of power and communication presiding over the whole region (*Dissegno particolare de regni et regioni che son da Constantinopoli a Venetia, da Venetia a Viena et da Vienna a Constantinopoli*).[106] While this cartographic portrayal of the Danube basin would further enter the European geographical imaginary in the following century through the extensive works of Dutch, German, and Swiss cartographers, Gastaldi's map would develop in another direction as well.[107] The following year, indeed, the two sheets of the maps were complemented with their southern quadrants, adding Crete as a fourth frame edge-marker, thus encompassing the Venetian maritime possessions in the Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean Sea.[108] As a result, the map not only deliberately highlights the importance of the two major axes of transport and communication between the East and the West – the course of the Danube and the sea route from Venice to Constantinople – but constitutes the only attempt from the period to delineate a Christian-Ottoman border area both on land and at sea, stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to Hungary.

At the same time, Ortelius's 1570 atlas, featuring the first comprehensive map of the Ottoman Empire (*Turcici Imperii Descriptio*), popularized the cartographic idea that these areas were part of a distinctive geo-body that stretched

[104] R. Almagià, *La carta dei paesi danubiani e delle regioni contermini di Giacomo Gastaldi (1546)*, Rome, 1939.

[105] P. Brummett, "Introduction: Genre, Witness, and Time in the 'Book' of Travels", in P. Brummett (ed.), *The 'Book' of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage, 1250–1700*, Leiden and Boston, 2009, p. 15.

[106] R. Almagià, *Carte geografiche a stampa di particolare pregio o rarità dei secoli XVI e XVII esistenti nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, vol. 2 of *Monumenta Cartographica Vaticana*, Vatican City, 1948, p. 27–28; R. W. Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century*…, p. 233–34.

[107] P. Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Cambridge, 2015, p. 266; T. Veneri, "Framing Southeastern Europe…", p. 29–32.

[108] The title of the resulting new map thoroughly describes its content: *Geographia particolare d'una gran parte dell'Europa, nuovamente descritta co i confini suoi, e prima verso levante e il meridiano di Constantinopoli, e da ponente il meridiano della magnifica cita di Venetia, et da tramontana il parallelo di Vienna in Austria, e verso ostro il parallelo che passa per il mezzo dell'isola di Candia* (Venice, 1560).

across three continents, from Belgrade to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.[109] However, the positioning of the map in the Asian section of the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, immediately after the map of Persia, suggests that Ortelius's original intention was probably to delegitimize the Empire. The presence of vignettes drawing on the medieval *topoi* of the Orient was further aimed at labelling the Ottoman empire as a non-European polity, while in the cartouche a classical quote from Sallustius ("Concordia parvae res crescunt, Discordia maximae dilabuntur" – "through unity small things grow, through discord they fall asunder") could easily be read as an allusion to a wishful anti-Ottoman crusade. In fact, the image was immediately followed by a map of the Holy Land, a not-so-subtle reminder that at the core of this monstrous Muslim Empire lay the geographical heart of Christianity.[110]

Despite Gastaldi's and Ortelius's terraqueous inventions, a further divide between terrestrial and maritime outlooks traversed the cartographies that had developed independently of Ptolemy. On the land, the military and political tensions in Southeast Europe had given impulse to the production of maps in which the depiction of flags, fortresses, and armies on contested territories served ideological as well as strategic purposes. An early example of this production, dating back to the fifteenth century, is the debated manuscript map included in the *Codex Latinus Parisinus 7239* of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, where it follows a military treatise titled *Tractatus de re militari et machinis bellicis* (signed by Paolo Santini da Duccio, but attributed to Mariano di Jacopo, also known as "Taccola", 1382 – *c.* 1453). The map, bearing no scale or graduation, covers the area between Belgrade at the West and Constantinople at the East, and highlights the disposition of towns and fortifications along the shores of the Danube and the Sea of Marmara, depicted as almost parallel thoroughfares, respectively bordered by the Transylvanian Alps and the Balkan range. The characteristic elongation of the map and the distortion of distances and orientation, together with some inscriptions in Venetian denoting an itinerary, emphasizes a focus on strategic mobility. The military motive of the map is further revealed in the urban vignettes, where flags, with crosses and crescents, clearly identify and oppose Christian and Ottoman outposts. Despite the attested presence of the map in the sultan's collection in the Topkapi Palace, the possibility that it was a gift to the sultan has been rejected, as the map seems to have been crafted in preparation or in commemoration of a Christian attack against the Ottomans in the Balkans – perhaps the unsuccessful Polish-Hungarian military campaign known as the Crusade of Varna (1443–1444) or the earlier Crusade of Nicopolis (1396).[111]

[109] I. Manners, with a contribution by M.P. Emiralioğlu. *European Cartographers and the Ottoman World, 1500–1750. Maps from the Collection of O. J. Sopranos*, Chicago, 2007, p. 36–40. On the different ideas conveyed by these operations of re-labeling, adaptation, and combination see T. Veneri, "Framing Southeastern Europe…", p. 12–37.

[110] I wish to thank Marian Coman for drawing my attention to these features and sharing his important observations on the map.

[111] F. Babinger, "An Italian Map of the Balkans, presumably owned by Mehmed II, the Conqueror (1452–1453)", *Imago Mundi* 8, 1951, p. 8–15; F. Banfi, "Two Italian Maps…", p. 17–34; R. Born, "The Ottoman Expansion and the Development of Cartography in East-Central Europe

Later in the sixteenth century, military maps would be prepared for practical use on both the Habsburg and Ottoman sides, as seen in the siege plans of Belgrade and Szigetvár illustrated by Ahmet K. Karamustafa.[112] At the same time, a propagandistic anti-Turk cartography would emerge under the aegis of the Habsburgs, one that would fully thrive only in the late seventeenth century, but would produce, already in the sixteenth century, an extraordinary piece of narrative and militant cartography, namely Johann Haselberg's wall map of the campaign of Suleyman I against Hungary and Vienna (1529).[113]

On the sea, maritime cartographies, though occasionally serving explicitly the cause of the Crusades, mostly prioritized the depiction of political and commercial rule over the coasts, islands, and waters that surrounded the peninsula.[114] In Venice, where the *mappaemundi* and the Ptolemaic tradition had been long contaminated with nautical models, Coppo had introduced a new frame in 1524 encompassing in a single map all the Venetian possessions of the *stato da mar* lying between Venice, Crete, and Constantinople.[115] A few years later, in 1539, Giovanni Andrea Vavassore (fl. 1510–1572) had further extended its coverage to comprise the Island of Cyprus (fig. 4). Moreover, detailed bird's-eye views of the Dalmatian coasts started to be drawn and archived for administrative ends, while their stylized counterparts were engraved, printed, and disseminated to a larger audience.[116] In depicting harbors,

(15th–18th Centuries)", *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 55, 2017, p. 126–127; M. Coman, "Sub flamura Semilunii. Europa otomană în cartografia occidentală (secolele al XV-lea – al XVII-lea)", in M.M. Székely and N. Zugravu (eds.), *Puterea cuvântului, a exemplului şi a simbolului*, Iaşi, 2016, p.181–182; K. Pinto, "The Maps Are the Message…", p. 157, 174 n. 12; E. Vagnon, *Cartographie et représentations de l'Orient méditerranéen en Occident (du milieu du XIIIe à la fin du XVe siècle)*, Turnhout, 2013, p. 318–326.

[112] A. T. Karamustafa, "Military, Administrative, and Scholarly Maps and Plans", in *HOC*, vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 211–215.

[113] On the "DESCRIPTIO EXPEDITIONIS TURCICAE CONTRA CHRISTIANOS" see in particular P. Meurer and G. Schilder, "Die Wandkarte des Türkenzuges 1529 von Johann Haselberg und Christoph Zell", *Cartographica Helvetica* 39, 2009, p. 27–42. See also J. Black, *Maps of War: Mapping Conflict Through the Centuries*, Oxford and New York, 2016, p. 14–15; R. Born, "The Ottoman Expansion…", p. 131–134; R. Born, M. Dziewulski and G. Messling (eds.), *The Sultan's World. The Ottoman Orient in Renaissance Art*, Brussels and Ostfildern, 2015, Cat. 5 and Cat. 6, p. 88–90. See also the contribution of Robert Born in the current issue.

[114] Notable examples are the world map drawn by Pietro Vesconte (fl. 1310–1330) for Marin Sanudo the Elder's *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis* as well as the Iesi chart, a portolan map stored at the Biblioteca Planettiana in Iesi, described by Patrizia Licini as "a manifesto for the 1464 Crusade against the Turks". See P. Licini, "European and Ottoman Landmarks from a Portolan Chart at the Time of Enea Silvio Piccolomini", in I. Baumgärtner and H. Kugler (eds.), *Europa im Weltbild des Mittelalters. Kartographische Konzepte*, Berlin, 2008, p. 218.

[115] L. Lago and C. Rossit, *Le "Tabulae" (1524–1526). Una preziosa raccolta cartografica custodita a Pirano. Note e documenti per la storia della cartografia*, Trieste, 1984–86, vol. 1, p. 225–234. On cartographic frames of the Venetian maritime empire see T. Veneri, "Theatrum Venetae negotiationis per Mediterraneum. Mise en cadre del viaggio (1524–1598)", *Studi Veneziani* 67, 2013, p. 351–381.

[116] K. Barzman, "Cartographic Line and the 'Paper Management' of the Early Modern State: A Case Study of Venetian Dalmatia", *Mapline* 122, Spring, 2014, p. 1–12.

coastal towns and fortresses as the backbone of a maritime and trading empire, they expanded a Venetian geo-political symbolism that had already characterized the local traditions of portolan chart-making and island books.[117] Though these traditions would feature an explicit military iconography only after the battle of Lepanto (1571), Marian Coman has convincingly undermined the idea that nautical maps and *isolari* would typically erase from their surface traces of conflict and antagonism. On the contrary, these traces were carefully subsumed in the maps through subtle strategies of interpretation that would direct the gaze, organize the reading, and make a discreet use of symbols and references.[118]

Adapted for the Ottoman ruling elites, maritime cartographies in turn supported and magnified the Ottoman investment in naval power, as seen in the richly decorated books of islands by Piri Reis (*c.* 1465–1554), or in the so-called *Walters Sea Atlas* (*c.* 1560). In the latter, the map of the Black Sea, traditionally placed at the end of Venetian nautical atlases, figured instead in the opening of the book, in order to stress the geographical importance of Istanbul. On the western portion on the map, a large, realistic, and detailed panorama of the imperial capital gave prominence to the Balkan Peninsula as the immediate backcountry of the city (fig. 5). The inclusion of the lavish illustration, according to Pinar Emiralioğlu, "suggests that the producer of the atlas wanted to present the city as the core of an empire that ruled the lands surrounding the Black Sea and the Mediterranean".[119]

These maps were all in their own way products and bearers of multiple modernities, which looked at the Balkan Peninsula as the proving ground for innovations in military techniques, territorial rule, political propaganda, mercantile and diplomatic agendas. In their geographically situated and utilitarian scope, they complemented and provided an alternative to the rhetoric of modernity that had accompanied the success of Ptolemy in the Renaissance. This rhetoric, as we have seen, was itself multifaceted and encompassed different ideological cores: a program to revive philological studies (Planudes), an ethically motivated will to recover classical knowledge (Salutati and Chrysoloras), the possibility to revise and challenge canonical authority (Berlinghieri), the urge to integrate empirical data in crystallized bodies of knowledge (Coppo), and the mission to educate a religiously emancipated community (Honter). Underneath the apparently monotone surface of this corpus of maps are thus embedded compelling stories of land and sea, war and trade, religion and power. These stories ultimately escape the logic of a single narrative and rather invite us to appreciate the diversity and richness of the cartographic knowledge that over time was devised to conjure this unique part of the world.

[117] M. Milanesi, "Cartografia per un principe senza corte…", p. 189–216.

[118] M. Coman, "The Ottoman Mediterranean and the Renaissance Venetian Isolarii", in *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 33, 2015, p. 127–148; Idem, "Sub flamura Semilunii...", p. 173–196.

[119] P. Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture…*, p. 104; on the atlas see also T.D. Goodrich, "The Earliest Ottoman Maritime Atlas: The Walters Deniz Atlası", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 11, 1986, p. 25–50.

Fig. 1. Ninth map of Europe in Francesco Berlinghieri's *Septe Giornate de la Geographia* (Florence, 1482). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Cartes et plans, GE DD-1990 (RES) (source: gallica.bnf.fr).

Fig. 2. Map of the Balkan Peninsula in Pietro Coppo, *De toto orbe*, *c.* 1520, Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, ms. A117 (Photo courtesy of the Library).

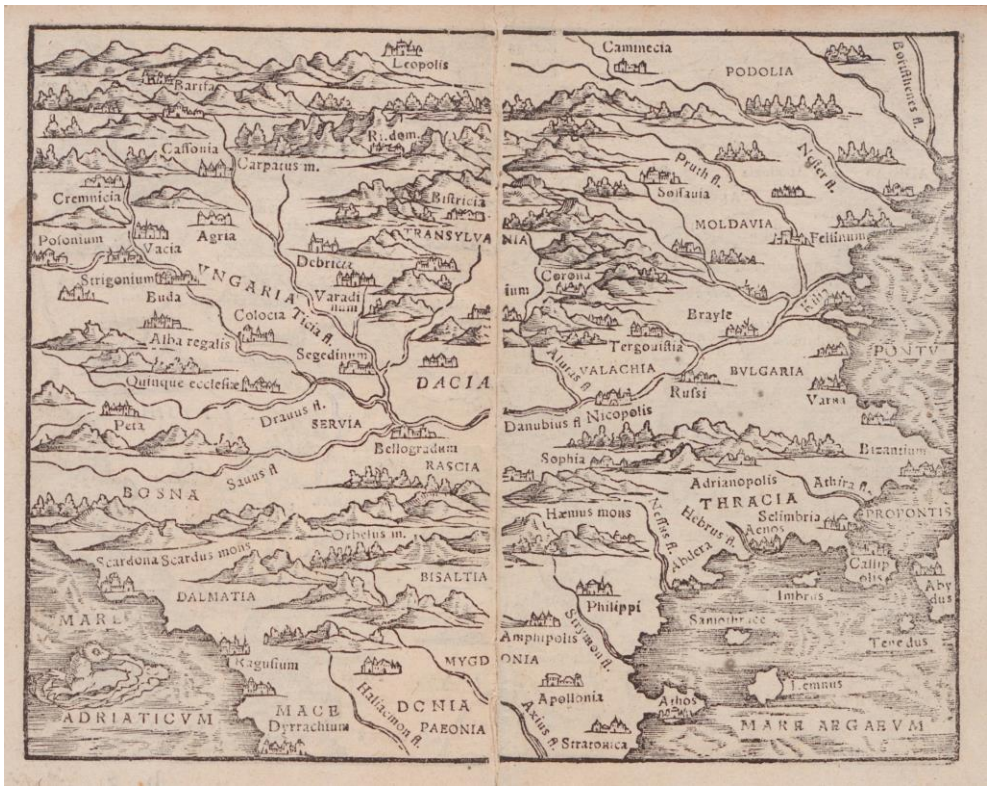

Fig. 3. Map of Southeast Europe from the Zürich edition of Johannes Honter's *Rudimenta cosmographica* (Tiguri, apud Froschoverum, 1546), Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, AW 789, Public Domain Mark.

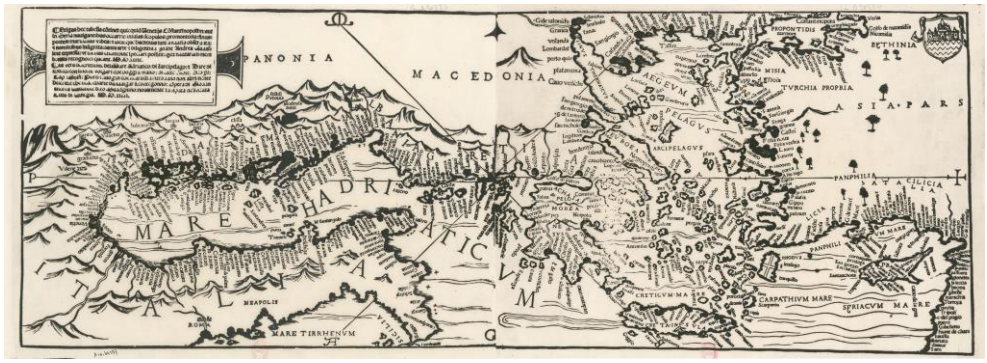

Fig. 4. Map of the landmarks encountered by seafarers between Venice, Constantinople, and Syria (*Exigua hec tabella continet quicquid Venetiis Constantinopolim: aut in Syria navigantibus accurit...*) by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore (Venice, 1539), Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Cartes et plans, GE D-20586 (source: gallica.bnf.fr).

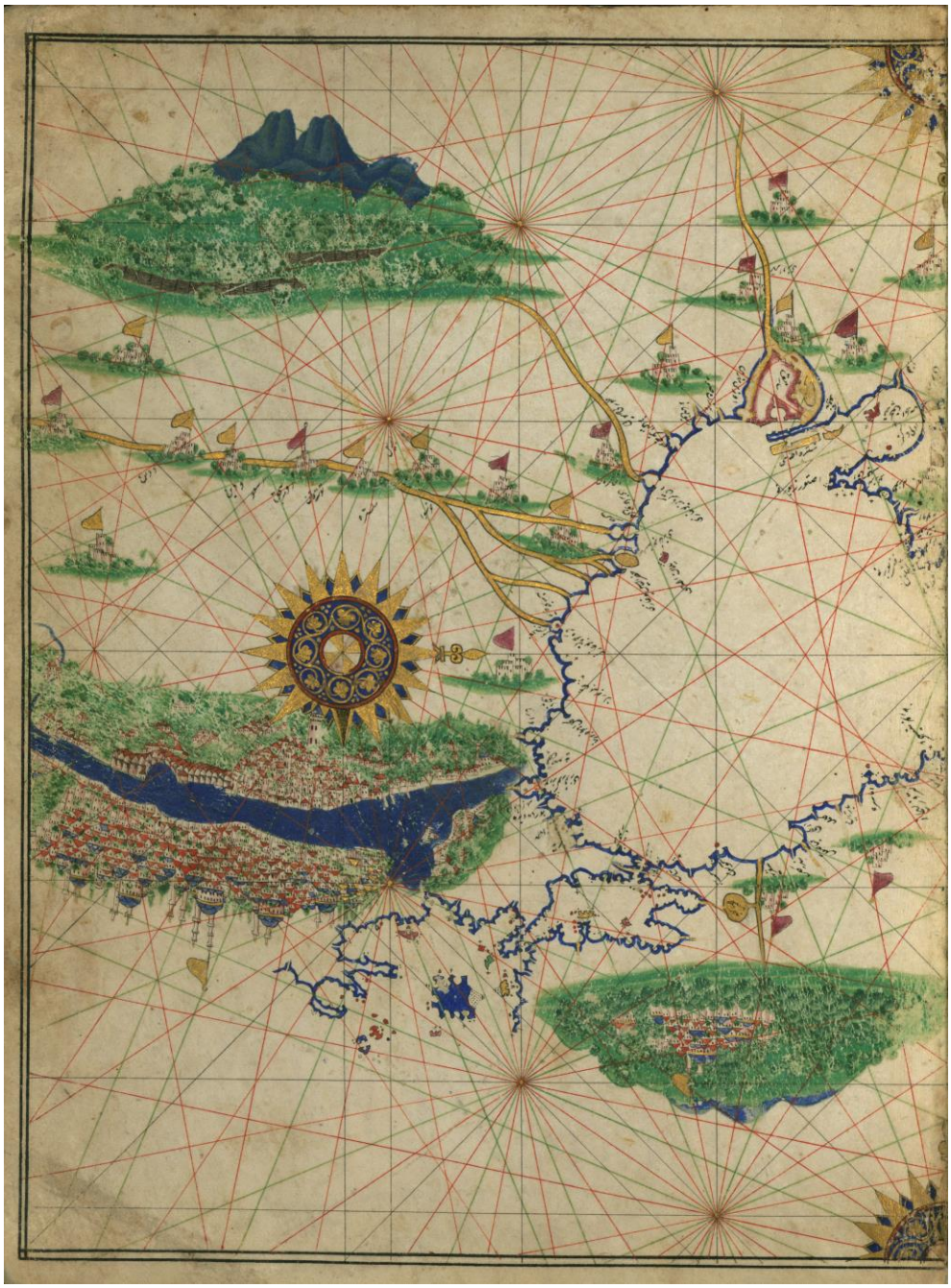

Fig. 5. Detail from the map of the Black Sea in the *Walters Sea Atlas* (*Deniz atlası*), *c.* 1560, Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.660, fol, 9a, © 2021 Walters Art Museum used under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.