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DESCRIZIONE
DELLA MOREA.

La Morea è una penisola, o (come diciam noi) poléni-
ne, poeta fra'l mare Ionio & l'Egeo, ove in'Arcipela-
go: & da tre parti è circondata dal mare: perciòche da Tra-
montana ha il golfo di Corinto, o di Patrás, & l'Illmo, o
Estamiglio, che congiunge la Morea con la Grecia: da Po-
nente & da Mezzogiorno ha il mare Adriatico, o di Vin-
tia: & da Levante il mar di Candia. Habbe in diversi tem-
pi diversi nomi: atteso che prima fu detta Apia da Apio
figliuol di Poroneo, di poi Pelasgia da'Pelasgi; indi Argo da gli Argini: e in
ultimo Peloponneso da'Pelopo: ma da noi uen domandata Morea. Ella è di
forma, secondo Strabone, simile alla foglia del platano; & gira di circuito
Dixiti miglia. E' divisa in otto province: delle quali ciascuna fu tanto pie-
nà di città, di terre, & d'abitatori, che se la Morea fosse molto maggior di
quel ch'è, pare che con difficoltà gli haurebbe potuti capir tutti. Quelle prouin-
cie sono Corinto, Siclionia, l'Acaia, Elide, la Meffenia, la Laconia, Argo &
13 Arcadia.
Mapping “Melancholy-Pleasing Remains”
The Morea as a Renaissance Memory Theater

VERONICA DELLA DORA

In the introduction to the English version of Vincenzo Maria Coronelli’s *Memorie istoriografiche delli regni della Morea e Negroponte* (1687), antiquarians and historians are promised “Entertainment in the Melancholy-pleasing Remains of past State and Glory, that were once the Scenes of the greatest performances the Mind of the man joined to active Bodies is capable of, and reflect on the fate of human Affairs subject all to Time and Chance.” On the accompanying illustrations (thirty-eight copperplate engravings), the peninsula and its cities are presented as a vast theater of the Venetian epic struggle against the Turks, a struggle of the Good against the Evil, of Christianity against Islam—of the Self against the Other. The Morea appears as a cartographic stage always observed from a distance. It is a territory visually mastered by allegories of Venice and by the reader through linear perspective and from above, usually from a high-oblique angle. The Morea is a historical stage that opens wide beyond the curtains of the present, echoing the glory of ancient enterprises and myths (fig. 1).

The first version of the *Memorie istoriografiche* was published in 1685, one year after the outbreak of the Ottoman-Venetian War of the Morea. The conflict, which saw the reconquest of the peninsula after over one-and-a-half centuries and the establishment of Venetian rule until its recapture by the Ottomans in 1714, stimulated an unprecedented flourishing of new myths and propagandistic narratives. These were inspired by older mythologies and iconographies and exercised an extraordinary appeal in Venetian (and Western European) popular imagination. The year before the outbreak of the war, the king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania, John III Sobieski, had defeated the Turks before Vienna, and the Serenissima knew that she would not lack allies. A “Holy League” (Sacra Lega) was thus formed among the emperor, Poland, and Venice under the protection of Pope Innocent XI in 1684, and the czar was specially invited

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years after the publication of the Memorie istoriografiche, Coronelli published his magnum opus, the Atlante Veneto, a thirteen-volume work that won him the title of “official cosmographer of the Serenissima.”5 Illustrations of the Morea from the Memorie and Atlante were later collated in a less known celebratory work he emblematically titled Teatro della Guerra, the “Theater of the War.”6 I say “emblematically,” because Coronelli’s work can

4 On Coronelli as a globe maker, see, for example, R. Almagià, Vincenzo Coronelli e i suoi globi (Rome, 1951); D. Cosgrove, “Global Illumination and Enlightenment in the Geographies of Vincenzo Coronelli and Athanasius Kircher,” in Geography and Enlightenment, ed. D. Livingstone and C. Withers (Chicago, 1999), 33–66; H. Richard, Les globes de Coronelli (Paris, 2006).
5 V. M. Coronelli, Atlante Veneto, nel quale si contiene la descrizione geografica, storica, sacra, profana e politica degli imperii, regni, provincie e stati dell’universo, loro divisione e confini, coll’aggiunta di tutti li paesi nuovamente scoperti, accresciuto di molte tavole non più pubblicate: Opera e studio del Padre Maestro Coronelli (Venice, 1692).
6 V. M. Coronelli, Teatro della guerra: Morea, Negroponte, & Adiacenze (Venice, 1708[?]).
such practices seem to have become quite common among rhetoricians. Mnemonic techniques were operated not only through imaginative or metaphorical spaces, but also through real ones. Cicero himself (106–43 BC), for example, was said to have a special circular room decorated with niches containing statues of deities to which the Roman orator similarly associated parts of speeches he needed to memorize. While the art of memory remained a common practice throughout the Middle Ages (and was often associated with meditative practices), it was in the Renaissance that the ancient memory theater was resurrected in its "physical" form. Memory theaters were constructed according to designs based upon the organization of the Greek theater in Vitruvius’s De architectura, which rested on the proportions of the world. At the same time actual theaters were often adapted into "memory theaters." A famous example is Andrea Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza (1579–80), a faithful homage to Vitruvius copiously decorated with symbolic objects and overrun by memory places enshrined in niches similar to those used by contemporary cartographers such as Ortelius and Gerardus Mercator to decorate the frontispieces of their atlases and the cartouches of the maps therein contained (figs. 2 and 3). In the memory theater, recollection was activated through a spatial exercise in which the embodied gaze of the viewer traveled through a sequence of loci memoriae as he stood at the center of the stage. The traditional function of these spaces was thus reversed: instead of the audience looking at the stage from their seats, the observer stood on the stage looking out into the audience.

Map historian Giorgio Mangani has reinterpreted the history of cartography up to the late seventeenth century as a preeminently mnemonic enterprise. From classical antiquity until the end of the Renaissance, geography was intended
as an encyclopedic system for information storage and memorization. While memorization of geographical texts was stimulated through different techniques, ranging from the “virtue of repetition” in Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* in the early seventh century AD to the rhyming verses in Bartolomeo da li Sonetti’s *Isolario* (1480), it was maps that acted as the privileged tools for memorization. Thanks to their compositional rhetoric and visual power, maps had the advantage of capturing the attention of the observer and imprinting a series of loci in his or her memory more effectively than pure written text. As Ortelius explicitly declared in the introduction to his *Theatrum*, the maps of his atlas “being placed as if were certaine glasses before our eyes, will the longer be kept in memory and make the deeper impression in us.” Sumptuous or weird cartouches, exotic people and animals, frightening sea monsters, as well as geographical objects such as mountains, islands, and rivers all served as *loci memoriae* analogous to the statues in the niches in Cicero’s memory theater, or in Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico.

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15 On Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies* and their mnemonic aspect, see Merrils, “Geography and Memory.”

One of the most distinctive features on any map of Greece, the Morea was (and still is) one of these loci. On Renaissance maps, however, the Morea was also a container of loci—it was a theater in itself. Topographies from different historical periods layered upon the eternal physical features of the peninsula: famous mountains, rivers, capes, the Isthmus of Corinth, and so on. Human and nonhuman Peloponnesian features became what Pierre Nora named *memory places*, sites that evoke a sense of continuity with the past and serve as starting points for historical narratives. But as historian of cartography Brian Harley and others after him observed, maps are incomplete objects by definition. Every map implies choices in its making. It is about inclusions and exclusions. At

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the same time it helps naturalize nonpresences thanks to its rhetoric of truth, thanks to its innate power to persuade. In other words, maps help us forget through selective remembering.

This chapter explores processes of remembering/forgetting the Morea on Western Renaissance maps. In particular, it shows their complicity in the shaping of the myth of a new “Venetian Morea”—a myth that spread from selected pre-existing myths (namely the crusades and classical antiquity) at the expenses of other myths. The chapter falls into three main sections that reflect the three different perspectives through which I approach “the Morea memory theater”: firstly, as a powerful locus memoriae and an emblem; secondly, as a container of loci, or visual palimpsest; thirdly and finally, as a stage for the exaltation (and memorization) of contemporary enterprises. My approach will thus be chorographic and topographic, vertical and horizontal, spatial and temporal.

The Morea as a Locus

The Morea (or Peloponnese) is a paradoxical geographical object. It is a peninsula that became an island and an island that is called peninsula. It is naturally separated from the rest of the continent by the strait of the Gulf of Corinth, and it is connected to it through the Isthmus of Corinth. Today it is artificially separated from the mainland by the Canal of Corinth (which was dug only in 1893), and for the past five years it has been joined to the mainland through the Rio-Antirrio bridge. From above, from space and from maps, the Peloponnese is probably, as I mentioned earlier, the most characteristic and visually recognizable feature of Greece. Ancient geographers compared it to a plane tree or mulberry leaf (μόρια). As Coronelli noted, its shape “gave sufficient ground to the later Emperors of Constantinople to entitle it Morea, tho’ some will not assent to this, but pretend to derive the Name from Romea, which by a transposition of the letters was changed into Morea, grounding themselves upon this: that the Greeks, while subject to the Emperor of Constantinople, and that the City was styled New Rome, were themselves also called Romei, as much as to say, Roman.”

While we do not possess maps from ancient Greece, we know that the peninsula was regarded as a discrete entity, as a geographical object easy to memorize. Γεωγραφία, the art of writing, or describing the Earth, was first of all the art of making things visible, and thus memorable. The images of geography aimed at identifying the structural scheme of the regions rather than describing their contours, which were scarcely known anyways. Their objective was not to provide the exact forms, but rather to imprint them in memory. Hence, the association of geographical forms to empirical objects: a triangle for Britain and Sicily, hedera for Italy, a Scythian bow for the Black Sea, an ox hide for Iberia, a bull for the Taurus mountains, and the plane tree leaf for the Peloponnese. Thus characterized, the forms were naturally detached and put forward before one’s eye.

As a visual cartographic image, the Morea also maintained its distinctiveness. On the Tabula Peutingeriana (Codex Vindobonensis 324), a medieval copy of the only known surviving map of the road network in the fourth-century Roman Empire (a roll originally measuring 675 by 34 centimeters), the Morea appears as an oblong island connected to the mainland through a thick central isthmus. Early Islamic maps, such as those by al-Idrisi, featured the Peloponnese in an oval, insular shape. Fifteenth-century Ptolemaic reproductions devoted a separate table to the peninsula (fig. 4). These last maps (to which I shall return in the next section) were built according to the instructions left by the second-century Alexandrian astronomer and geographer in his Γεωγραφικὴ ὑφήγησις. Ptolemy’s

19 Mangani, Cartografia morale, 42.
20 Coronelli, A Historical and Geographical Account, 2.
21 C. Jacob, The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History (Chicago, 2006), 138; Mangani, Cartografia morale, 42.
23 See, for example, the map of the Aegean in Al-Idrisi’s Nuzhat al-mustaq fi ihtiraq al-afaq (thirteenth–fourteenth century).
work, which explained how to represent the terrestrial globe on a flat surface and record locations through a system of coordinates, had been studied in the Byzantine Empire since 1300. It was also known in the Islamic world, but not in the West until the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras brought a manuscript to Italy in 1397, and his pupils translated it into Latin in 1409. In the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, Greek Uniate Cardinal Bessarion “Latinorum Graecissimus et Graecorum Latinissimus,” also commissioned from his scribes a lavish copy of the manuscript to be preserved in Venice, then a “second Byzantium” with a flourishing Greek colony of about four thousand inhabitants. The text has been traditionally defined as a turning point in the history of Western cartography. Reducing the Earth’s surface to a set of geometrical points, and the map to an “archiving device in which a maximal number of places can be catalogued,” the Ptolemaic system facilitated the emergence of a new mapping culture, as developments in art, science, and technology placed added emphasis and value on measurement. At the same time, it also established a spatial hierarchy in which geography provided geometrical images of the earth’s surface, and chorography pictured the form of discrete localized regions (such as the Morea).

The production of Ptolemaic maps in the West was paralleled by the emergence of another chorographic genre: the isolario, or island book. The first isolario, the Liber insularum archipelagi, was produced by the Florentine priest Cristoforo Buondelmonti in 1420. Unlike Islamic and Ptolemaic

24 No Ptolemaic map survived from antiquity, but twenty-six chorographic (or regional) tables and a map of the oikoumene (the ancient inhabited world) could be reconstructed thanks to the detailed instructions Ptolemy left, which included a list of eight thousand coordinates. See D. Cosgrove, Apollo’s Eye (Baltimore, 2001), 102–5; L. Bagrow, History of Cartography (Cambridge, MA, 1966), 77–110; G. A. W. Dilke, “The Culmination of Greek Cartography with Ptolemy,” in The History of Cartography, ed. B. Harley and D. Woodward (Chicago, 1991), 1177–200.


26 Jacob, Sovereign Map, 120.

representations, Buondelmonti’s island book did not feature the Morea in its entirety. It only represented the city of Methone, the “right eye” of the Venetians in the peninsula, along with the surrounding land and islets. Since the following century, however, the whole peninsula started to be represented in isolarii as a large island, or rather as a quasi-island. Island books were precursors of the modern atlas. They featured one or more maps of different islands on each page, complemented by historical and geographical notes as well as spare information about the islands’ economy and customs, legends and antiquities, and any other “curiosity” worthy of attention. Each island was depicted as a world on its own, onto which could be projected any of the diverse desires and fears that were being generated within Western Europe. The island was also an effective mnemonic tool. Its self-enclosed spatiality allowed the compiler to blend fact and legend, personal observation and hearsay, past and present; it gave textual coherence to disparate information. Islands constituted narrative cabinets of curiosities naturally delimited by their coastline. Thanks to their finitude they were easier to grasp by the eye and to imprint on memory than other geographical objects. They were basic narrative units held together like precious stones by the compiler’s island-hopping journey, a journey the reader reiterated as he leafed through the pages of the isolario.29

28 Mangani, Cartografia morale, 165. This vision dates back to Strabo and Pliny, who envisaged the world as a large island surrounded by the stream of Oceanus. See the preface to T. Porcacchi, L’isole più famose del mondo descritte da Thomaso Porcacchi da Castiglione arretino e intagliate da Girolamo Porro padovano con l’aggiunta di molte isole (Venice, 1575). On the world island in general, see J. Gillis, Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World (New York, 2004), 5–14.

In the sixteenth century, the Morea was not yet an island, but thanks to its fame and cartographic self-enclosure, it came to be narrated and represented in an insular fashion by Venetian compilers of isolari (see fig. 5). Both Benedetto Bordone (1528) and Thomaso Porcacchi (1575), for example, emphasized in their respective island books the plane tree leaf shape of the peninsula and exalted both its natural richness and the ancient fame of its provinces and cities. In this respect, Bordone described the Morea as “first among all the peninsulas of the world.” He also explained why it did not physically become a “real” island. Several ancient Roman emperors, he wrote, planned to cut the isthmus. However, the architects of Emperor Demetrios found that the level of the waters in the gulf of Legina was higher than on the other side of the isthmus. Thus, cutting a canal, they thought, would have caused the inundation of all the neighboring islands. And so the Morea remained a quasi-island (at least until the late nineteenth century).

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century atlas makers followed the example of Ptolemaic map makers and island-book compilers and continued to portray the Morea separately, as a distinct geographical entity, and often in a color different from the continent. Notable examples can be found in Gerardus Mercator’s and in Jodocus Hondius’s atlases published respectively in 1578–88 and 1606, as well as in more explicitly antiquarian works, such as the Introducit in universam geographiam (1652) by Philipp Clüver, the Leiden scholar and librarian known as the “father of historical geography.”

At the time of Coronelli and the Ottoman-Venetian War, the outline of the Morea was thus a well-identifiable cartographic emblem. For example, in his Ritratti di celebri personaggi, a compilation of illustrious men’s portraits and their accomplishments, Coronelli depicted the peninsula as a trophy embedded in the bust of its Venetian conqueror, Francesco Morosini (fig. 6). The image, which is also reproposed in the Atlante Veneto, is located at the center of a chronicle of Morosini’s deeds (“Ristretto di molte imprese del Serenissimo Francesco Morosini peloponnesiaco, principe di Venetia, &c.”). The Venetian hero is immortalized within a niche, “S. C. Iconis Aeneae.” He has become an allegory of himself, a locus within Coronelli’s memory theater. The Morea is an attribute analogue to those held by the allegories of the continents on the frontispiece of Ortelius’s Theatrum (fig. 7): the orb and the scepter held by regal Europe sitting at the top of the proscenium, the myrrh held by Asia (standing on the left), the laurel held by sun-burned Africa (on the right), the spear and human head held by savage and seductive America (sitting at the bottom of the proscenium), or the fire painted on the bust
of the not-yet-discovered Southern Continent (symbolizing Tierra del Fuego). Similarly, in Coronelli’s engraving the Morea is represented as the emblem of Morosini’s life-achievement, as a locus memoriae embedded within another locus.

The Morea was a popular icon in Venetian geographical imagination; it was not simply “Morea,” but “La Morea,” “The Morea,” as we read on the Morosini engraving. It was an icon that circulated not only on books, maps, and pamphlets but also on other media, such as commemorative medals, as it was the case on the 1685 exemplar coined by German artist Giovanni Francesco Neidinger (fig. 8). The inscription on the back of this bronze medal reads “Sparget et ultra,” meaning that Morosini’s fame will spread even further. Winged Fame flies above the clouds, triumphantly announcing the news with her trumpet. In her left hand she holds the shield engraved with the emblem of Morosini. On her helmet is St. Mark’s lion. At the bottom left is a globe, a traditional attribute of power since the times of ancient Rome. This time, however, the globe features the outline of the Morea, as a war trophy—it says: “Morea capta.” The peninsula is thus conflated with the earthly sphere and with human destiny. As Padua’s Bishop Gregorio Barberigo wrote in 1686, “the medal was the mother of history.” Medals were inherently celebratory. Their insistent materiality made the memory of events eternal. Their portable size and ability to be reproduced in great numbers

36 Ibid., 36.
37 Quoted in ibid., 33.
allowed rapid passage from one hand to another. Their limited space called for immediately recognizable iconographies. The outline of the Morea cast in bronze was to be forcefully imprinted on the minds of the beholder. Visual immediacy and diffusion allowed the familiarization and naturalization of this newly conquered domain in Venetian geographical imagination. As mentioned earlier, however, the Morea was not simply a \textit{locus memoriae}. It was itself a container of loci, a memory theater—and a theater for forgetting. I will now take a closer look at maps of the Morea and consider their multilayered topographies and silences.


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**Morea as a Palimpsest**

As the previous chapters of this volume have shown, the Morea is a place of extraordinary cultural stratification. It includes some of the most famous topographical names and iconic sites of antiquity: Arkadia, Mycenae, Sparta, Corinth, the isthmus, the theater of Epidaurus, the sanctuary of Olympia, and so on—in other words, the \textit{“melancholy-pleasing remains”} evoked by Coronelli. Different narratives have layered upon the material landscape of the peninsula: the Classical, the Byzantine, the Frankish, the Ottoman, and the Venetian. Hence, if the Morea as a cartographic emblem was a place to be remembered in Western Renaissance geographical imagination, at a closer look it was also a place for remembering—of course, selective remembering. In his \textit{Liber insularum} Buondelmonti, as I mentioned, described and represented only the loci surrounding Methone. This city was to be remembered for its fertility and richness in wine, the gift of Dionysos. The nearby city of Korone was to be born in mind for the olive trees, “the trees sacred to Pallas.” The island of Sapientia was to be remembered for its name, which derives from the prudence needed in the navigation of those treacherous waters. The surrounding islets were the loci of a failed attack on a Christian monk by the Turks, and so on. All these loci were said to belong to the region of the Morea, “anciently called Peloponnesus, from the name of Pelops, the son of Tantalus.”

For Bordone, the Morea was more than a region: it was, as I said, a discrete entity almost entirely encircled by the sea; it was a quasi-island. It was also a place of myth and, in turn, a container of myths. Most of Bordone’s description focused on ancient Corinth, which he defined as “the richest of the cities,” the “cradle of all sorts of arts,” and the site where games in honor of Venus were staged:

\begin{quote}
Et tutto di gli loro guadagni moltiplicavano e ancora molto di più per li giochi che quivi continuamente ad honore di Venere da gli uomini erano fatti, che da tutte le parti del mondo quivi concorrevano, per la qual cosa il tempio di Venere di tanta ricchezza divenuto era che più de mille giovane bellissime a guadagno teneva, la onde perció ne devine proverbio che non a tutti lecito era a coronto il navigare, le quali oltra il guadagno del
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
38 C. Buondelmonti, \textit{Librum insularum archipelagi e codicibus parisinis regii nunc primum tum edidit, praefatione et annotatione instruxit} Gabr. Rud. Ludovicus de Sinner (Lipsia, 1824), 15–16.
\end{flushright}
But the continuous fights with the Romans, Bordone later explained, reduced this fabulous city in ruin. Hence, contemporary Acrocorinth was simply a memorial of itself and of its past grandeur—a “memory pleasing remain.”

In Renaissance Italy any mapping of Greece was first of all an antiquarian rather than scientific enterprise. For example, in fifteenth-century Florentine humanist circles, the newly discovered Ptolemy’s Geography became popular initially for the lists of ancient place names it provided to poets and storytellers, rather than for the scientific treatise it was. Part of the Italian humanist project, Renaissance maps were indeed viewed as documents for historical-philological research and in a way reflected the old medieval delight in encyclopedias and visual memorization. On Pietro del Massaio’s Ptolemaic table (1470–80) (fig. 4), for example, geographical features such

corpo che facevano il resto del tempo che gli restava in lavorii di mano spendevano, onde uno di avenne che essendo una di queste dalle sue compagne di otio molto ripresa, da quella gli fu così risposto, quel giorno haver tre pecce di tela fillate, Queste giovane erano dagli uomini e dalle donne al tempio di Venere, per satifatione degli loro vuoti presentate, e per tal causa la città era divenuta ricchissima.40

40 “The profits [of the Corinthians] even further multiplied thanks to the games in honour of Venus that were continuously held there and attended by men from all over the world. For this reason, the temple of Venus had greatly enriched itself and hosted over one thousand most beautiful young women from which it profited—hence the saying that not everyone was permitted to sail to Corinth. Besides gaining profit from their body, [these young women] spent the rest of their time in handwork. One day, having been severely reproached by her companions, one of them answered that she had woven three cloths. These young women were presented to the temple by men and women who had made a vow. Thanks to them the city had become very rich” (ibid., 2:xxxviii; my translation).
as golden mountains and blue rivers, the most stable signs of nature, were set against the white peninsula of the Morea (which in turn stood out against the surrounding lapis lazuli sea) and thus operated as powerful loci, scattered with the names of the second century AD—the time of Ptolemy.

The choice of place names on a map, however, is never neutral, or innocent. It inevitably implies omissions and obliterations. It also implies naturalization, or taking for grantedness. It helps produce myths and impossible visions—and in this sense every map is a vision. On his famous map Totius Graeciae descriptio (1540) (fig. 9), for example, Nikolaos Sophianos, a refugee from Corfu who studied at the Quirinal College in Rome, portrayed an imagined “Ottoman-less” Greece, in which he linked the modern and the ancient, Orthodoxy and Catholicism, even paganism and Christianity. Sophianos’s project was deeply patriotic. By inscribing a contemporary and classical knowledge on the Ptolemaic model, the Greek scholar aimed to “give wings to his pitiable nation.” Greece was represented as an eternal living organism unified by prominent mountainous backbones and by a fluvial “circulatory system.” This immutable backdrop hosted the ancient vestiges of an accurately selected past epitomized by Athens and Constantinople, respectively the capitals (and icons) of Classical Greece and the Byzantine Empire. Geography unified history and resurrected Hellas’s defunct “body politic.”

Unlike Ptolemaic maps, Sophianos’s aimed to cover the entire span of ancient Greek history. All the locations and other geographical materials recorded on Sophianos’s map are those of antiquity. In particular, the place names are those relevant for the period from the Argonauts and the Trojan War (twelfth century BC) up to the late Roman period (fourth century AD). Sophianos drew place names from classical and medieval sources. Latin variants came from such authors as Virgil and Livy, and Greek variants mainly from the Byzantine scholars Eustathios of Thessalonike and Stephanos of Byzantium. Their modern equivalents did not feature on the map, but on a separate table. With the exception of “Byzantion-Constantinopolis,” no Byzantine, Frankish, or Ottoman names appear on the map. Troy (called Ilium on the map) is the sole settlement to be depicted as a ruin, since the site of the ancient city marks the oldest level of history represented on the map, indeed the starting point of Greek history. Such Byzantine fortified cities as Didymoteichon and Mistra are absent, as Bodonitza (Mendenitsa in Lokris) and Vostitza (Aigion in northern Peloponnese), Slavic settlements dating from the sixth and ninth centuries respectively, and built on ancient sites that became seats of important Frankish baronies. Tripolitza (Tripolis), the Ottoman capital of the Morea, is simply ignored.

Sophianos presented a utopian Greece from his idealized “insider’s perspective”—hence his choices. By contrast, on Western atlases, such as Mercator/Hondius, Frankish, and Slav, toponyms (like Vostitza) featured alongside the ancient (Cleone, Nemea, Mycene, etc.), but Ottoman places bore Greek or Latinized names (Napoli Vechio, Megalopolis, etc.). On Porcacchi’s map (fig. 5), inhabited centers featured all in the same fashion, regardless of their actual size, institutional importance, and dominating ethnicity. Only two stood out: Malvasia (Monemvasia) and Napoli (Nauplion), the two fortified cities the Venetians occupied in the early fourteenth century and handed over to the Turks in 1540, in exchange for a peace settlement. Their naming and pronounced presence on the map therefore

46 Ibid., 165.
47 Napoli (Nauplion) is located on a peninsula jutting into the gulf and forming a naturally protected bay. Napoli Vechio is situated a few kilometers northeast into the inland. Bartolomeo Minio mentions this city and a canal between Napoli’s fortified walls and the mainland in his correspondence, see D. Wright and J. Melville-Jones, The Greek Correspondence of Bartolomeo Minio: Dispacci from Nauplion, 1479–1483 (Padua, 2008), 2:138. Both cities are marked on Mercator’s and Porcacchi’s maps, whereas Sophianos’s features only Nauplion.
reaffirmed the myth of the ancient Venetian power on the peninsula.

On a map accompanying his *The Present State of the Morea*, Bernard Randolph, a merchant who lived in the Levant in the 1670s and later settled in England, presented, once again, a different view (fig. 10).48 Megalopolis, for example, he called Tripolitza, and explained in the text that it was inhabited by "very rich Turks, who have their Wealth in the Land and Cattle, most being Graziers and Husbandmen. This is the only place which deserves the name of the Town in the whole Province. The Great Moske was formerly a Heathen Temple . . . The Turks live most in their farms, which they call Chestlicks, not being in following the publication of the *Present State of the Morea* a companion volume appeared, the *Present State of the Islands of the Archipelago*. Both volumes are valuable sources throwing light on the Ottoman Empire in the early stages of its decadence.

48 B. Randolph, *The Present State of the Morea, Called Anciently, Peloponnesus which Hath Been Near Two Hundred Years under the Dominion of the Turks, and Is Now Very Much Depopulated: Together with a Description of the City of Athens, Islands of Zant, Strafades, and Serigo / Faithfully Described by Bernard Randolph, Who Resided in Those Parts from 1671 to 1679* (London, 1689 [1686]). In the year

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danger of Pyrats." On the map, two prominent loci memoriae helped convey the cultural complexity of the peninsula: a view of Turkish-dominated Malvasia, the last fortress to fall to the Venetians in 1690 (on the lower left corner of the map), and a shepherd in Albanian costume (on the upper right corner). This time ancient Greece was overcome by its Ottoman present. As Randolph explained in the text, the Morea was inhabited by different ethnic groups: the Turks, the Greeks, the Albanians, and the Tzackonians:

The Turks for the most part live in, or under the Command of Castles, and their Farms in the Country (where they sometimes are); they have Towers built about Thirty Foot high, the Door of which is about ten Foot from the ground; against which a Wall with stairs is built, about five feet from the Tower, to which Wall a Draw-bridge is let down from before the Door where they enter; 'tis every Night drawn up to secure them from Pirates. . . . Of Turks there are not above 30,000 Inhabitants; the Christians are three times as many. The Greeks have free Exercise of their Religion. Their Priests are very ignorant, scarce any understanding the old Greek; nor are they so Superstitious in their worship to Pictures as those who live under the Venetians. They have several monasteries. Near unto Vostiza is one which is called La Madona Spiglia, it being at the side of a Mountain in a large cave, where there is a Church, in which is the Picture of the Virgin MARY, which (they say) was brought hither from Constantinople, by Angels at the time when the Turks took that City. . . . The Albaneses are of the Greek Church. They generally live not in Towns, yet have several Villages; one of which is very large called Sylemen. . . . They live mostly in Tents, being for the most part Shepherds. The Tzackonians are mostly in Towns, they are a very poor people, serving as Porters, both Men and Women carrying very great Burthens. There are also a great many Jews, who for the most part are Merchants and Shop-keepers, living but poorly.

On another map by the same author (fig. 11), the Morea was juxtaposed to an extensive bird’s-eye view of Constantinople. Their “tripartite” topographies mirrored each other, with cape Maleas echoing Galata, cape Matapan the Seraglio, and Korone Chalcedon, as if the Morea were just a reflection of the capital of the Byzantine Empire sacked by the Crusaders in 1204 and now capital of the Ottoman Empire (as the innumerable minarets and crescents reminded the viewer).

As opposed to Randolph’s maps, those Coronelli produced obliterated the multicultural complexity of the Morea. The peninsula became nothing but a surface to be appropriated, partitioned, and reorganized, a region whose prosperity was sometimes echoed in elaborate cartouches and baroque ornamental frames. In the accompanying texts, Coronelli’s narrative reiterated that of the Franks of the Fourth Crusade—that of the Morea as a locus amoenus:

All Europe affords not a place comparable to this pleasant peninsula, enricht by Nature with so many qualities: its fruitful plains flourish with plenty, adorned with the charms of Variety; and its high hills, which might be thought an unpleasing Object for their cragginess, are yet made agreeable of rare and excellent plants and delicious fruits . . . its climate is soft, serene and temperate.

The virtues of the land were reflected on those of its inhabitants, who were said to have “a genius fit for great undertakings, and [be] inspired with a Martial soul” (unlike the ignorant Greeks Randolph described). As with Bordone and

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49 Randolph, Present State of the Morea, 12.
50 Ibid., 15–16.
51 “And after the Franks had won Kalamata, they saw the land was fertile, spacious and delightful with its fields and waters and multitude of pastures” (H. Lurier, trans., Crusaders as Conquerors: The Chronicle of Morea [New York and London, 1964], 121).
52 Coronelli, Historical and Geographical Account, 24.
53 Ibid.
Porcacchi, however, it was not contemporary Orthodox villagers, but ancient Greeks that Coronelli looked at:

[The cities of the Morea] have all once had glorious founders... This place has still had the prerogative, and had been chief over all Greece and indeed its main bulwark; a thousand illustrious monuments present our eyes with objects of beauty, grandeur, magnificence, splendour and glory; on the one side sumptuous and stately buildings raise their once proud heads; on the other side we have the melancholy pleasing view of the imperial seats of the Mycenians, Corinthians, Lacedaemonians, Elians, Arcadians, Pyleans and Messenians.\textsuperscript{54}

Coronelli built his \textit{Account} through associations between the signs of the land and Classical mythology. Every mountain, river, or cape served as a node within an extensive network of mythical memory places: Palus, or Morass of Lerna, was the place where Herakles killed the seven-headed hydra; on cape Omugnato once stood the Temple of Minerva built by Agamemnon; Olympia was the land of the centaurs; on Mount Mintia, now Olonos, Proserpina transformed her husband's mistress into mint; and so on.\textsuperscript{55} By locating these places on the map, the reader would memorize them more easily. According to Coronelli, the ancient state of the Morea, however, could only be restored by the Venetians:

The Virtues which have rendered Greece so famous, have indeed had their birth there, but they could never have grown to that height, if the Republic of Venice had not assisted and sustained them; for she has always been a good mother, and signaz'd her tenderness, by that strict alliance she has always had with Greece... There is no Empire, realm, or province of Greece where the Venetians have not left some marks of their Dominion. In the declining Graecian Empire, when it suffered several dismemberings, the greatest parcels thereof submitted to the Venetians... Modon is the usual place of the Sangiac's residence: the Republic of Venice, who only to maintain their Rights in this Kingdom, hath ever valorously been at war with the Turk, has been the first that have attempted its reconquest: and its arms had so great success in the campaign in 1685 as to be victorious over almost all the southern places... The Venetians Army will make this next campaign a more advantageous progress; which we are the more assured of from this hopes, that its arms are employed only for the great glory of the Catholick Religion, and to promote the ruin of infidels.\textsuperscript{56}

Coronelli's works were constantly updated. As the war progressed, Coronelli changed or adapted the engravings of battles, cities, and

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 9, 12–13, 16.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 29.
The land of the Pelops became a stage for the celebration of military victories.

The Morea as a Stage

Ptolemaic maps and early island books constructed an erudite geography for armchair travellers to Greece. Ortelius’s *Theatrum* and later atlases constructed an antiquarian geography, usually aimed at a peaceful neo-Stoic meditation of the world from a distance. Coronelli’s work, by contrast, constructed a highly dramatic geography made of epic enterprises and heroes. Gulfs, ports, and wide openings on bucolic landscapes and sea views were exploited as natural stages upon which the Venetian cosmographer set his dramas (fig. 13)—just as the scenery of the countryside surrounding Epidaurus had been conceived of as the backdrop of its famous theater in the fourth century BC. The drama Coronelli narrated was a continuous progression. As I mentioned, engravings of new conquests were constantly added to


58 See Cosgrove, “Globalism and Tolerance.”
previous ones. Leafing through the pages was a mnemonic act. It brought campaigns and places to life, before the eyes of the reader. The succession of newly added names and conquests on the map simply anticipated the succession of birdseye views in the book.

Besides general introductory maps of the region, other devices were exploited by the Venetian cosmographer to bring together and exalt the new conquests of the Serenissima. For example, at the opening of the Teatro della Guerra a table of medallions featuring twenty-four plans of newly conquered fortresses provided the reader with just as an effective “visual summary” and mnemonic device (fig. 14). The medals functioned as loci memoriae, which were in turn circulated on actual celebratory medals (and therefore probably already familiar to the reader).

Military precision and theatricality were at the core of Coronelli’s work. The former persuaded; the latter magnified. The friar had never been to the Morea, but he had full access to official sources of information. His views were based on plans by military engineers and surveyors. As Leonora Navari observed, the Venetian priest “must have had piles of leaves of maps and text in his laboratory describing places and battles, and he used these in various combinations according to the needs of the moment.”

As any scholar who has sought in Coronelli’s work a reliable source of topographic information can testify, in many cases, these representations did not bear the degree of geographical accuracy their rhetoric of truth seems to suggest. But this should not be considered as a weakness: after all, Coronelli’s work was not meant to help Venetian officers and settlers navigate the newly conquered lands, but rather to exalt events and places that most Venetian and Western European readers, like Coronelli himself, had never visited, and that were therefore alive only in their geographical imagination.

In a way, Coronelli’s theatrical representations were a reflection of a baroque Venetian culture that took every news of victory from the Morean front as a pretext for theatrical celebrations. Solemn ceremonies, regattas, fireworks, triumphal arcs, festoons, fountains, and other expressions of ephemeral art transformed the lagoon into a stage for feasting (fig. 15). The apex, we are told, was reached with the return of Morosini. A forty-foot-high triumphal arch was erected in Piazzetta San Marco. It was connected to Palazzo Ducale through a colonnade topped by hanging

60 Marasso and Sturaiti, Immagini dal mito, 88.
Veronica della Dora

also perceived as the cradle of epic and theatrical tradition—hence its double lure for Western mapmakers. For example, in the cartouche of his map of the Morea (fig. 17), Frederick De Wit, a Dutch cartographer contemporary of Coronelli, depicted an allegory of Venice (the winged lion of St. Mark) brandishing a sword and holding captive the Turks (two imploring, nude figures in chains), thus liberating Greece (three additional nude male figures) portrayed with the attributes of epic and drama (the theatrical mask and Medusa’s head). Once again, this binary narrative of “West versus East” struggle, here epitomized by the Lion and the infidel Turk, left no space to the Orthodox villager. Christianity simply equaled Roman Catholicism (here symbolized by the dome of St. Peter, set behind the Lion and juxtaposed to an Islamic minaret). And this was part of the reason why Venetian rule proved quite unpopular in the Peloponnese. In the early eighteenth-century a French traveler found the Greeks of Methone “praying for their return under Turkish domination, and envying the lot of those Greeks who still lived under it,” and complaining that “Venetian soldiers are quartered on

“trophies, war blazons, and elaborate heads representing the defeated Turks and prisoners”—the decorations Coronelli would normally use to adorn his maps and views. Theatricality boosted public enthusiasm, and public enthusiasm was essential to meet the costs of the war. Coronelli’s works were in fact commissioned by the very Venetian Senate to justify the enormous taxes that were imposed on the people and to convince them of the importance of the places that were now in the hands of the Serenissima.

While cosmographers like Ortelius had envisaged their maps as telescopes, or magic mirrors to explore distant lands, Coronelli and other contemporary mapmakers, by contrast, used their maps as instruments of power, unveiling new conquests, and at the same time veiling other power mechanisms (fig. 16). As we have seen, at the time of the Venetian conquests, Morea was a memory theater in which ancient dramas were being reenacted; at the same time, however, it was

61 Ibid.
63 See Mangani, Cartografia morale, 114–15.
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geographical imagination. This was a common mnemonic technique in Renaissance cartography: atlas maps (such as Jodocus Hondius’s, for example) were often surrounded by city views and figurines in their local costumes, which the armchair traveler would visually link to the places displayed on the map. These images, which acted as loci memoriae, were disposed in a frame that often resembled curtains of an actual theater opening on the spectacle of the world.

De Wit’s map continued to be reprinted into the eighteenth century. The copy displayed at fig. 17 (preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection), for example, is a reprint by Covens and Mortier, one of the most important firms in the early eighteenth-century Dutch map publishing business, and it probably dates to around 1715. On this reprint, the Duchy of Glarentza (the ancient

us, their officers debauch our wives and daughters, their priests speak against our religion and constantly urge us to embrace theirs, which the Turks never did.” Not only did De Wit’s map obscure the Greek point of view, but also it literally turned it upside-down.

This map was one of the many celebratory responses by European cartographers to the Venetian recapture of the Morea, and was inserted in a number of Dutch atlases, including Ottens’s, Jansonius’s, and Schenk’s. The map featured the Peloponnesian peninsula with its contemporary and ancient provinces and the nearby islands of Kephalonia, Zante (Zakynthos), Cerigo (Cythera), and St. Maura. The Morea was framed by a series of plans of the main fortifications captured by the Venetians, which functioned as an ordered sequence of icons to be imprinted in the Western

64 Le Motraye, quoted in Miller, “The Venetian Revival in Greece,” 362.
65 E. Casey, Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps (Minneapolis, 2002), 238.
Figure 16
Vincenzo Coronelli, Regno di Negroponte, in Memorie istoriografiche, 1685 (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice)

Figure 17
Johannes Covens and Cornelis Mortier (after an original plate by Frederick de Wit of ca. 1680) "Peloponnesus Hodie Moreae Regnum distincte divisum in omnes suas provincias hodiernas atque veteras cum ei adjacentibus insulis Cefalonia, Zante, Cerigo et Sta. Maura, Amsterdam," ca. 1710–20 (Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Washington, DC)
province of Achaia) and the islands of Cerigo (Kythera), Salamina, and little Cephalonia are hand colored in yellow—a later addition that is not present in other copies of the map. These yellow areas represented the last Venetian territories to fall to the Turks (Cerigo remained to the Venetians until the fall of the Serenissima in 1797, whereas Salamina and the remaining areas returned to the Ottomans in 1715). The original celebratory function of the map was thus overcome by a more pragmatic function: to acquaint the viewer with the last strategic sites remained to the Serenissima—the last bits of a myth that was about to die.66

It has been argued that a myth can spread from another myth, but in order to be transformed into ideology, a worldview directed at political action, the intervention of particular conditions is required.67 In the late seventeenth-century Morea all these conditions existed: the characteristic outline and physical geography of the peninsula helped easy memorization; its associations with ancient history and mythology provided “universal loci” shared by an imagined community of Western Europeans who envisaged their origins in “the Classics”; the memory of the Crusades provided the antecedent and the language for a “new Venetian Crusade,” one made of binaries perhaps even starker than those set by the Fourth Crusade, one in which the opposition between Venice and Islam obscured other othernesses, one in which, for example, non-Venetian Western fighters went unnoticed and, more significantly, local Orthodox inhabitants found no place. Through this language Venetians naturalized their place in the world and justified their “moral” right to control the Morea.

Maps are powerful representations. They conceal and reveal territory. We trust them—and here lies their force. Thanks to their rhetoric of truth, to their innate ability to persuade and naturalize, maps silently helped build the myth of the Venetian Kingdom of the Morea. They operated as media of communication more direct than written texts. As the late Denis Cosgrove noted, “the pictorial image veers towards the affective and sensuous rather than syllogistic and analytic, and in more than merely its aesthetic aspects. . . . While pictorial conventions are learned and culturally specific, pictorial combinations of line, form, composition, colour, and tone generate immediate sensual and aesthetic responses.”68 As the ancients speculated and Coronelli astutely understood, images are more forceful and easier to imprint in memory than words. The dramatic NASA satellite images of the fires (fig. 18) that made the world acquainted with the Peloponnese in August 2007 are perhaps the most forceful and persuasive proof of this point.

66 I would like to thank Georgios Pelidis for helping me trace the chronology of this map.