The two surviving copies of the 1525 Moscovia map by Paolo Giovio: A comparative study

**Abstract**

The first printed map carrying the name “Moscovia” in its title was compiled in Rome in 1525 by Paolo Giovio. He announced it in Libellus de legatione Russiæ magno (Rome, 1525), a book published based on his conversations with Dimitri Gerasimov, an envoy to Pope Clement VII from Grand Duke Vasily III of Moscow. The map’s importance transcended Moscow, extending to the other medieval Russian states, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Novgorod Republic, the lands of the sedentary and nomadic successors of the Mongol Empire (Tartaric), as well as the modern states of Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, and the Russian Federation.

For a long time, only several mid-century manuscript renditions of the 1525 map were known, while the original printed version was presumed lost. An article in J異史d Arb. Vol 72 (2010) reported the discovery of an original imprint of the 1525 map back up in 2006 at Biblioteca Marciana in Venice. In fact, there were two known imprints of the map: the first one was sold out Dec 7, 1993, by Sotheby’s in London and subsequently made its way to the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA) in Moscow. A comparative study of the two imprints leads to a conclusion that the RGADA copy is a proof pulled to make the necessary corrections, which can now be seen in the Venice copy. Based on a thorough analysis of Giovio’s printed map and other sources reveals that the title date, October 1525, corresponds to the time of the event, not the time when the map was created, and provides cartographic evidence proving that Dimitri Gerasimov contributed no cartographic materials and had no role in map compilation.

**Description**

A thorough study of the type test reveals the following differences.

**Comparative analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fragment</th>
<th>MOSCOVIAE Tabula ex relatione Desmetrii legati descripta sicuti ipse a Compiler</th>
<th>[M]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Tabula ex relatione De / mettri legati descripta</td>
<td>[M]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartouche</td>
<td>Vulgo for Rha finita</td>
<td>Vulgo for Rha finita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tameleon</td>
<td>Hic Bayzatora a Tameleon / a captis et iteri</td>
<td>Hic Bayzatora a Tameleon / a captis et iteri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can the temporal direction of these changes be established?

The first fragment is inconclusive: the typose defect apparent in [M] could have either been fixed at a later date or, conversely, appeared with time. The second fragment suggests a deliberate correction applied in [V] capital "q" in the middle of a sentence is replaced with lowercase q, and on three occasions an alphabet "e" replaced with a, achieving uniform spelling across the entire map. The third fragment, despite its symmetry, decisively confirms this suggestion: in all Agnese’s MS maps that contain the Tameleon legend, the word order matches that of [V]. Therefore, it is [V] that was ultimately published and became a base for derivative work.

We conclude that imprint [M] had been pulled as a proof which was used to make corrections to the movable type letters, later applied to imprint [V]. What word order in captis et iteri was changed, the accidentally scattered letters in the word "captis" were fixed, and other routine proofreading was made. The conclusion is supported by the irregular shape of the sheet, which has been preserved in the very form it came from the press. In a half a millennium of the imprint’s history, no one has ever tried to trim it and to bind it into a book.

Interestingly, the spelling of Tameleon offers an insight into the relationship between Gerasimov and Giovio as that of a talkative celebrity and a thorough critical interviewer. While they both were familiar with the historical episode (Battle of Ankara of 1402), the Moscow envoy confided Tameleon/Tamburinle, the famous founder of the Timurid Empire, and Temür-Khutlu, a short-term Khan of the Golden Horde. Giovio calmly recorded the confusion in his book, but it left out the test legend.

The test of Libello, which Barbausio’s words reads by Giovio, is perfectly faithful to the actual configuration of the rivers, including the mouth of Iausa being located closely infra urbem map compiler, who must have understood the expression "infra urbem".

At the very head of the city, the Neglanus stream... descends into the river Moscova forming a peninsula, on the extremity of which the castle with the towers and battlements of decorative beauty is erected by the genio of Italian architects... The city is protected also from the opposite side by another river called Izobre, which sinks into Moscow directly before the city.

Libello, as a known Libello copy seemed to contain a map, it had long been considered faulty in 1844 by Michel (Hamberg) discovered a manuscript copy of Moscovia matching Giovio’s description in a 1554 MS portolan atlas by Battista Agnese. He published it in 1857, and it contained the map, would have surely been among them, avoiding any confusion. Thus, the tributary sequence inversion proves their communication was purely verbal.

**History**

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Two copies of the original printed map were discovered in 1993 and 2006. Until the 2020 IM publication, the researchers in both Russia and Italy considered their copy to be the only surviving imprint of Giovio’s map.

**Select Bibliography**


Kordt V.A., Starkov V.F., Bagrow L., Meurer P.H., Select Bibliography on Giovio’s orders as a prototype of the printed map, but for some strange reason it was never improved. Michel also published a line drawing of the map. In 1899, B.A. Kostrizheva published a sketch of the map, making Michel’s ideas available to Russian readers. However, these ideas were proven wrong. Subsequent research on Agnese revealed that in 1535–1546 he made more than 70 MS atlases with the Moscow map present at in at least 14 of them. Besides, in 1525 it turned 11. Thus, Agnese’s MSS are the later derivatives.

**Personalia**

Paolo Giovi, (1460—1551) — Italian historian, physician, and author. In 1525 he invited Rome to an event from Grand Duke Vasily III of Moscow to Pope Clement VII. In Latin translation, his name was rendered as Paolo Giovio. His first name was translated as Demetrius, Bulosian, and Bulosan. His last name was translated as Giovio. The Russian khristerography dictionary lists him as the most important maps of that time. Identifying with several persons is the primary factor only by first name and assigning them into very certain groups. Information on his age, education, and diplomatic experience is primarily to Giovio.