



How to compare the faces of the Earth? Walachia in mid-19th century and nowadays

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In 1864 a detailed map was made about Walachia, its title is Charta României Meridionale (Map of Southern Romania), it has 112 map sheets, it is often called after his draughtsman: Szathmári's map. The map has an outstanding position in the history of Romanian cartography, because it indicates a turning-point. Before the map, foreigners (Austrians and Russians) had made topographic maps about this vassal principality of the Ottoman Empire. The Austrian topographic survey (1855–1859) – which served as a basis for this map – was the last one and the most detailed of these surveys. The map was made between the personal-union (1859) and independence (1878) of the Danubian Principalities. This map was the first (to a certain extent) own map of the forming country. In consequence of this survey and map, the Romanian mapping institute was founded, which one – based on this survey and map – began the topographic mapping of the country.

In the Romanian scientific literature imperfect and contradictory information has been published about this map. Only a dozen copies of the map were kept in few map collections; the researchers could have reached them with difficulties.

During our research we processed the circumstances of the survey and mapmaking discovering its documentation in the archives of Vienna, as well as using the Romanian, Hungarian and German scientific literature. We found the copies in map collections from Vienna to Bucharest. We digitized all the map sheets from different collections. We calculated the parameters of the used geodetic datum and map projection. We published on the web, such we made the map reachable for everybody. The map can be viewed in different zoom levels; can be downloaded; settlements can be found using the place name index; areas can be exported in modern projection, so the conditions of that time could be compared with today's reality.

Our poster presents on the one hand the survey and the map realized in mid-19th century and our digital methods, on the other hand presents the faces of the Earth in Walachia –comparing details of the geo-referenced map from 19th century with maps of nowadays.

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