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## **GEOGRAPHY OF INLAND MACEDONIA IN FRENCH CARTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS SINCE THE END OF 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY UNTIL THE END OF THE NAPOLEONIC PERIOD<sup>1</sup>**

The name of Balkan Peninsula is the example of a toponym the use of which became common because of the inadequate knowledge on the geography of the South-Eastern Europe. The chain of Haemus Mountains, known under the Turkish name of the Balkan was considered by German geographers from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a natural barrier which borders the peninsula from the rest of the continent. In fact there was no chain of mountains which divided this part of South-Eastern Europe, and there was no clear geographical frontier of peninsula. Thus, the inappropriate knowledge on the inland parts of this region of Europe, especially on Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia (through terrains of which the presumed chain of mountains should run) resulted with an invention of a term which meaning was hard to explain, and became semantically capacious, not only in geographic context, but also as a denominator of certain political, cultural

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and civilizational reality, which emerged within the gradual weakening of the position of Turkey in Europe<sup>2</sup>.

According to the French researcher Paul Garde not only the name of the Balkans itself was a medium for various meanings, but also the particular ethnonyms and toponyms from this area constituted a complex which can be labeled as “the Balkan discourse”<sup>3</sup>. In the attempt of decoding this discourse Garde tried to explain its different elements, including the name of Macedonia, which was considered as very important part of it<sup>4</sup>. Also, according to Božidar Jezernik the Western European understanding of the toponym of Macedonia, especially in its French reading, i.e. *La Macédoine* was a model exemplification of confusion which distinguished English, German or French image of the part of South-Eastern Europe labeled as Balkans<sup>5</sup>.

This paper tries to shade some light on the problem of the Western-European knowledge on the geography of the inland parts of the South-Eastern Europe on the example of Macedonia, which - as it was already mentioned - was representative for a more general issue of the emergence of the idea of the Balkans. The analysis is based on a very specific example of the French cartographic documents since the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the Napoleonic period. This example has been chosen because of its importance in shaping the whole idea of the Balkans<sup>6</sup> – the French were not only discovering themselves, but were also able to gather and compile the

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<sup>2</sup> Božidar Jezernik *Wild Europe. The Balkans in the gaze of western travelers*. London 2004, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Garde, *Discours Balkanique*. Paris 2004, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Истото*, 202-213.

<sup>5</sup> Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe...*, 172

<sup>6</sup> Maria Todorova, *Balkany wyobrażone*. translated by P. Szymor, M. Budzińska. Wołowiec 2008, 169.

information from German or Italian documents. Hence, this French example can be treated as representative for the whole Western European perspective.

The analysis concerns the long period in which France was more distanced observer and the short episode of the Napoleonic expansion in the Balkans and the creation of Illyrian Provinces (1809-1813). This wide chronological scope of the article allows to compare the influence of direct political presence of French in the Balkans on the process of the gathering of the knowledge on their geography (with special emphasis on Macedonia).

The coasts of the Adriatic or the Aegean Sea were well known by geographers since the water route was the most convenient way of communication. Thus, it should not be surprising that the territories of the inland Macedonia of today were not well depicted by French cartographers who concentrated mainly on the Adriatic shores, although sometimes they tried to describe territories which lied east to Dalmatia and Albania. Such was the case of the map of Dalmatia, which included also some inland Turkish territories (including Kosovo) issued in 1664, drawn by the „father of French cartography”<sup>7</sup>, Nicolas Sanson<sup>8</sup>. However this cartographic documents included very scarce topographic information – especially when it comes to the Southern part of Dalmatian coast and Albania, while their backlands contained barely any descriptions. The part of the map describing Serbia included only a few locations. The river currents or even the locations of larger water basins, like Skadar Lake, were depicted erroneously. The map

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<sup>7</sup> Christine Petto, *When France was king of cartography: the patronage and production of maps in Early Modern France*, Plymouth 2007, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Nicolas Sanson, *Coste de Dalmatie ou sont remarquées les places qui appartiennent à la république de Venise, à la république de Raguse et au grand seigneur des Turcs tirée de divers auteurs*. Paris 1664.

depicted also a small part of Macedonian territory since it showed the origins of the Drim River, although Ohrid Lake was not present on the map. The space between Kosovo and the abovementioned origins of the Drim River was almost blank, including only few cities that are hard to identify.

In the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century French cartography contributed largely to providing the maps of the Balkans with particulars, and thus the knowledge on the geography of Macedonia was also improved. The publications by French cartographer Guillaume Delisle deserve particular attention. According to American scholar Christine Marie Petto, he was a cartographer regularly striving to improve his maps, at the same time fighting against the widespread habit of cartographic plagiarism<sup>9</sup>. His efforts were acknowledged, as in 1718 he became the first royal cartographer *le premier géographe du roi*<sup>10</sup>. In 1703 he issued *Carte de la Hongrie et des pays qui en dépendaient autrefois*<sup>11</sup>, which actually depicts the map of the whole South Eastern Europe. On the Western-Eastern axis it contains the whole area from Croatia to Crimea, while on the Northern-Southern axis it includes the whole area from Poland to Greece. *Journal des savants* from 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1703 issues the letter by the cartographer, in which he shares his thoughts on the difficulties with putting this part of Europe onto the sheet: „It is certain that the countries included on this map are among those most neglected not only by contemporary but also ancient cartography and it is the strive for its

<sup>9</sup> Christine Petto, *When France was king of cartography...*,153.

<sup>10</sup> *ИСТОП*, 153-158.

<sup>11</sup> Guillaume Delisle, *Carte de la Hongrie et des pays qui en dépendaient autrefois – dressée sur un grand nombre de mémoires et cartes manuscrites ou imprimées, rectifiées par les observations du comte Marsilii et quelques autres*. Paris 1703.

better representation that drove me into this work”<sup>12</sup>. Delisle mentions the previous geographic representations of South-Eastern Europe, among others, the maps by Coronelli, and states that their authors often copy from each other – only some of them contribute anything new to the state of the knowledge<sup>13</sup>. The cartographer used the existing – not numerous – valuable maps while preparing his sheets. The information included in travelogues or other geographical studies was also very useful, for example this in the works by the priest Michel Antoine Baudrand: „The studies included many excellent fragments, partly included in maps, partly in dissertations touching upon Dalmatia, Albania, Bosnia and Bulgaria, the areas of which are the hardest to be depicted on this map”<sup>14</sup>. What is especially important in the context of the main topic of this article, the map of Delisle included also Macedonia. Delisle named the whole region as *La Macédoine nommée par les Turcs Comenolitari*. The name of *Comenolitari*, which appeared for the first time in 1590 on Jacomo Gastaldi’s map *Totius Graeciae Descriptio* and was rather of Greek than of Turkish origin<sup>15</sup> was explained in French literature generally only as a part of Macedonia (understood in the context of the ancient Roman province) and such explanation was delivered by Delisle himself in *Introduction à la*

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<sup>12</sup> „Il est certain que les Pays qui sont décrits dans cette carte, sont du nombre de ceux qui ont été des plus négligés, non seulement pour la géographie moderne, mais aussi pour l’ancienne; & c’est ce qui m’a déterminé à y travailler pour tâcher de les éclaircir” - Guillaume Delisle, “Lettre de monsieur Delisle sur la carte de l’Hongrie et des pays qui en dépendaient autrefois”, *Journal des savants pour l’année M.DCCIII*, 1704, 625.

<sup>13</sup> *Истото*, 625.

<sup>14</sup> „J’ai trouvé dans ces mémoires quelques excellents morceaux, partie en cartes M. S. et partie en discours, touchant la Dalmatie, l’Albanie, la Bosnie, la Servie & la Bulgarie, qui sont des endroits autant difficiles à démêler qu’il y en ait sur cette Carte” - *Истото*, 627.

<sup>15</sup> Basil Gounaris, “Macédoine ou Comenolitari? A Historical Comment on Early Modern Cartography”, *e-Perimetron*, 8 (1)/2013, 2.

*géographie avec un traité de la sphère*<sup>16</sup>, although on the analyzed map he decided to treat both terms synonymously. It should be noticed, that the understanding of Macedonia as a land which territory covers the ancient Roman province which had the same name was earlier present in European cartography: e.g. on a map of “Walachia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania” published in 1589 by Gerard Mercator in which Macedonian area was stretched between Aegean and Adriatic Sea<sup>17</sup>, although Delisle didn’t follow this example.

The borders of Macedonia according to Delisle were following: Rhodope mountains on the east and northeast, *Scopia* (Skopje) and its surroundings on the north (however the city itself was placed beyond the Macedonian frontier, in Bulgaria), Šar Mountain on the northwest, Black Drim and Ohrid Lake on the west. The southwestern frontier was not indicated, since the terrains south to Ohrid Lake were not showed on the map, but the shore of Aegean Sea with Thessaloniki was included as the south part of the region. The map presented the most important cities of Macedonia: apart from Thessaloniki, which were known because of its maritime location, it mentioned such centres as *Comanava* (Kumanovo), *Jesovo* (Tetovo), *Kaplanih, ou la Ville des Tigres* (Kaplanih or the city of Tigers – which most probably indicates Katlanovo), *Kaprulih ou la ville du pont* (Kaprulih or the bridge city – i.e. Veles), *Isbar* (Izbor), *Ocrida ou Hohori* (Ohrid), *Prilippe* (Prilep), *Manastir* (Bitola), and a few others. It is most probable that Delisle has taken an information on the geography of Macedonia from the travelogue *A Brief Account of Some Travels in Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia...* (1687) by

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<sup>16</sup> Guillaume Delisle, *Introduction à la géographie avec un traité de la sphère*. Paris 1746, vol. 1, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Gerard Mercator, *Walachia, Servia, Bulgaria, Romania*. 1589.

English traveler Edward Brown<sup>18</sup>, who mentioned most of the cities indicated on the map. Delisle located them more or less correctly, although some mistakes were hard to avoid: e.g. Kumanovo and Tetovo were placed in the south of Skopje.

Those territories, unknown to geographers and difficult to describe, are portrayed by Guillaume Delisle as „the lost countries” (*les pays perdus*). In the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century „the lost countries” include also Macedonia, and especially its inland, lesser known parts. Delisle’s map, for sure, was a step forward: it clearly showed the borders of Macedonia and enumerated its most important cities, although the large scale of the map don’t allows to verify how detailed the knowledge on Macedonia was in fact. However one important thing should be noted: the territory of Macedonia was described in less detailed way than any other area on the map, thus it is obvious that it remained least known known part of European Turkey.

The progress which was possible to observe in the Delisle’s map should result in better depictions of Macedonia on the maps of other cartographers which treated the work of the most famous French geographer of those times as a point of reference. However such regularity was not always possible to observe: e.g. the map published in 1721 by another French geographer, Nicolas de Fer, was as a step back in comparison to Delisle’s work. The map entitled *Le Golfe de Venise, Aux Environs du quel se trouvent a l'Orient partie des Etats du Turc en Europe...* was comparable to previous effort of Nocolas Sanson, depicting the territory east to the sources of the

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<sup>18</sup> Edward Brown, *A brief account of some travels in Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Friuli. As also some observations on the gold, silver, copper, quick-silver mines, baths, and mineral waters in those parts: with the figures of some habits and remarkable places.* London 1673, 44-45.

Drim River as almost blank, without noticing the existence of Ohrid Lake<sup>19</sup>. Another example of lack of progress in the matter of the geography of Macedonia was the map of *Turquie d'Europe et partie de celle d'Asie* (1783) by Janvier, which was only copying the map of Delisle, almost eighty years after its publication<sup>20</sup>.

Another problem which should be signalized while outlining the problem of the lack of progress in the cartography of Macedonia or the Balkans in general is the poor reception of the new maps by geographical literature. The fourth edition of *Méthode pour étudier la géographie* from 1768, by Lenglet du Fresnoy, enumerates cartographic discoveries, relevant to the geography of European Turkey and its bordering territories. In the preface to the seventh volume of the study the author mentions the available maps of this part of continent:

There are many maps of Ottoman Empire. Mr Guillame Sanson in 1689 issued the map of the whole Ottoman Empire, in two sheets. It is being sold at Mr Jaillot's. Mr Sanson also prepared two sheets of European Ottoman Empire, which Mr Jaillot published again in 1716. It is also necessary to mention that the same Sanson made also another two-sheet map of the Northern part of European Turkey, and the Southern part, also in two sheets. Mr Delisle is the author of two good maps of Ottoman Empire: of Hungary and the Northern part of European Turkey, in one sheet, issued in 1701, and the map of Greece, that is, the southern part of European Turkey, also in one sheet, issued in 1707. They are better than the previous ones<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Nicolas de Fer, *Le Golfe de Venise, Aux Environs du quel se trouvent a l'Orient partie des Etats du Turc en Europe*, 1721.

<sup>20</sup> Janvier, *Turquie d'Europe et partie de celle d'Asie*, 1783.

<sup>21</sup> „Nous avons plusieurs cartes de l'empire Turc. M. Guillaume Sanson a donné, en 1689, en deux feuilles, l'Empire Turc en général: Elle se vent chez monsieur Jaillot. Le même



As it is visible, the geographical manual from 1768 referred to the maps that, in the best case, had already more than fifty years. Moreover, all mentioned maps are very general. Northern Macedonia was depicted on the maps of „Northern part of European Turkey” – that is, together with Serbia, Wallachia, Moldova and Black Sea coast including Crimea. Separate maps depict „Southern European Turkey”, and this map included a part of Macedonia with Thessaloniki.

The reader of other school manual, *Géographie universelle en vers artificielles*, by Claude Buffier, had no chance to get acquainted with an accurate map of Macedonia or other inland regions of the Balkans. The sheet depicting European Turkey shows only one town shown on the territory of Bosnia – Sarajevo; the same is the case of Serbia – the map only shows the town of Belgrad. In case of Macedonia, which borders were indicated similarly as on the map of Delisle, the map mentioned also only one city – Thessaloniki<sup>22</sup>. By contrast, the map of Western Poland, included in this manual, was much more detailed<sup>23</sup>.

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M. Sanson a donné aussi en deux feuilles l'Empire du Turc en Europe, que le sieur Jaillot fit reparaitre en 1716. Enfin nous avons du même Guillaume Sanson la partie septentrionale de la Turquie en Europe, en deux feuilles, aussi bien que la partie méridionale, pareillement en deux feuilles. M. Delisle a aussi donné deux bonnes Cartes sur l'Empire Turc: la Hongrie et Turquie Européenne septentrionale, en un feuille, 1703, et la Grèce, ou Turquie Européenne méridionale, aussi en une feuille, 1707. On les préfère aux précédents” – Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy, *Méthode pour étudier la géographie ou l'on donne description exacte de l'univers, formée sur les observation de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, et sur les auteurs originaux*. Paris 1768, vol. 4, 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Claude Buffier, *Géographie universelle exposé dans les différentes méthodes qui peuvent abréger l'étude et faciliter l'usage de cette science*. Paris: 1783, 134–135.

<sup>23</sup> *Исторо*, 230–231.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century France begun to involve itself stronger in the matters of the region which later will be known under the name of the Balkans. This involvement included primarily the search for new trade routes and markets, but also resulted in strengthening the French diplomatic activity in the region of European Turkey<sup>24</sup>. This progressive growth of interest in the matters of this area resulted with its better geographical representations. Although the improvement of knowledge concerned mainly the eastern shores of Adriatic<sup>25</sup> the inland parts of European Turkey, including Macedonia, were also depicted better than before. This amelioration is visible e.g. in the map of M. de Laville, *Turquie d'Europe ou se trouve la Moldavie et les environs de la Mer-Noire*, published in 1781. This cartographic document showed an improvement in depicting the geography in Macedonia when it came to the quantity of mentioned cities, e.g. in comparison with the map of Delisle published almost eighty years earlier, however it changed the shape of the region: *Scupi* (Skopje) and Tetovo were considered as northwestern point of Macedonia (labeled as *Makidunia*), although lake of Ohrid and Black Drim were considered already as a part of Albania, while Sophia – contrary to previous work of Delisle – was included in Macedonia instead of Bulgaria<sup>26</sup>. Those changes show some kind of fluency in depicting Macedonia and its frontiers, and it is not really clear why they occurred – only two years after the publication of Laville's map Janvier issued a cartographic document which presented Macedonia in the same shape as

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<sup>24</sup> Midhadt Samić, *Les voyageurs français en Bosnie à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et au début du XIXe et le pays tel qu'ils l'ont vu*. Paris 1957, 55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Wojciech Sajkowski, *Obraz ludów bałkańskiego wybrzeża Adriatyku we Francji epoki Oświecenia*. Poznań 2013, 28-42.

<sup>26</sup> Laville, *Turquie d'Europe ou se trouve la Moldavie et les environs de la Mer-Noire*, 1781.

Delisle, i.e. Ohrid was presented as a part of it<sup>27</sup>. The map of Laville is also a very good example of the differences visible between relatively good cartographic representation of the maritime coast of Aegean Macedonia and poorer depiction of the geography of Vardar Macedonia.

In 1806 Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy acquired Istria and Dalmatia, those regions, along with Carniola, Carinthia, and Civil and Military Croatia became a part of Illyrian Provinces, which existed in years 1809-1813. This short-lasting period of French rule in the Balkans resulted not only with gathering the information on the territories governed by Napoleonic administration<sup>28</sup> but also on the whole area which later became known as the Balkan Peninsula, including Macedonia. It is visible on the example of a map published by Gaetan Palma in 1811, *Carte de la plus Grande Partie de la Turquie d' Europe*, which was dedicated to marshal Marmont, who was the first governor of the Illyrian Provinces<sup>29</sup>. The map depicted Macedonian territory in more detailed way than any maps that were published before, although the name of Macedonia wasn't mentioned directly. The improvement concerned especially the attempt of showing the detailed physical map of the area, and the most complete plan of the roads. The amelioration was visible at first sight, since *Carte de la plus Grande Partie de la Turquie d' Europe* contained information about the location of the cities which appeared on the French maps for the first time, e.g. *Istib* – *Štip*<sup>30</sup>. The

<sup>27</sup> Janvier, *Turquie d'Europe*....

<sup>28</sup> Midhadt Samić, *Les voyageurs* ..., 61.

<sup>29</sup> Maria Pazarli, "On the early 19th c. map by Gaetan Palma, printed in Trieste, 1811", *e-Perimetron*, 5 (3), 162.

<sup>30</sup> Gaetan Palma, *Carte de la plus Grande Partie de la Turquie d'Europe dressée sur d'anciens matériaux rectifiés par les observations Astronomiques faites récemment sur les Côtes et sur les nombreux renseignements fournis par divers Voyageurs* Dédée à S.E.M.gr le

example of the map prepared by Gaetan Palma shows that the direct presence of French on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea resulted with the attempts of better description of the whole area of European Turkey. Although – as it was signalized already a few times – the progress in cartography of the region wasn't something natural. The map prepared by Hérissou in 1813 (thus in the same year in which the Illyrian Provinces ceased to exist) might be treated as a sort of *résumé* of the information gathered by such cartographers like Delisle and Laville and did not contained many new information on Macedonia, which name wasn't also recalled directly. Instead Hérissou mentioned the names of *Comenolitari* and *Iamboli* which was also a referent to map of Giacomo Gastaldi from 1590<sup>31</sup>, and which borders were similar to Laville's depiction of Macedonia, although Sophia was considered as a part of Bulgaria<sup>32</sup>.

Summing up the analysis made above it is possible to draw the conclusion, that the geographical definition of Macedonia in French cartography since the last decades of 17<sup>th</sup> century until the end of Napoleonic period was rather clear and it concerned the territory between the Rhodopes, Skopje, Lake Ohrid and the Aegean Sea. Particular shape of the borders of this land could be slightly different according to different geographers. The reasons behind those differences are hard to explain, since it seemed to be a result of arbitrary choice of the cartographers, which draw their conclusions from maps prepared by other cartographers and travelogues.

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*Maréchal Duc de Raguse Grand Aigle de la Légion d'Honneur, Commandeur de la Couronne de Fer, Grand croix de l'Ordre Royal de Wurtemberg &c.&c.&c. Trieste 1811.*

<sup>31</sup> Basil Gounaris, "Macédoine ou Comenolitari? A Historical Comment on Early Modern Cartography", *e-Perimetron*, 8 (1)/2013, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Hérissou, *Carte de la Turquie d'Europe*. 1813.

The long chronological scope of the analysis made possible to show how the knowledge of French on the geography of Macedonia was improving along with the gradual growth of involvement of France in the Balkans affairs, which apogee was the creation of the Illyrian Provinces. However it is not possible to speak about some constant and systematic amelioration, and the new discoveries weren't automatically absorbed by the geographic literature. Although cartography was considered in the times of the Enlightenment as the "work of *enlightened* people seeking to cast light upon the darkest corner of the continent"<sup>33</sup> it remained into a large extent a speculative science, which was largely criticized already in 18<sup>th</sup> century, e.g. by Voltaire<sup>34</sup>.

However the most important conclusion which can be made after the analysis made above is that despite the progress which is visible in the cartographical representations of Macedonia, its inland parts remained lesser known than other parts of the European Turkey. This difference visible between the detailed depiction of the coasts and more general description of the inland regions left the geography of the Balkans open to future interpretations – not only geographical, but also political ones.

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<sup>33</sup> Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the map of civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford 1994, 194, 149.

<sup>34</sup> Voltaire, *Œuvres complètes*. Paris 1784, vol. 40, 458-459.

Војтех САЈКОВСКИ

ГЕОГРАФИЈАТА НА КОПНЕНА МАКЕДОНИЈА ВО ФРАНЦУСКИТЕ  
КАРТОГРАФСКИ ДОКУМЕНТИ ОД КРАЈОТ НА XVII ВЕК ДО КРАЈОТ  
НА НАПОЛЕОНОВИОТ ПЕРИОД

**-РЕЗИМЕ-**

Прилогот претставува обид за расветлување на проблемот за западноевропските познавања за географијата на копнените делови на Југоисточна Европа врз основа на примерот со Македонија. Анализата е базирана врз многу специфичниот пример на француските картографски документи од крајот на XVII век сè до крајот на Наполеоновиот период. Широкиот хронолошки опсег на статијата овозможува да се спореди влијанието на директното политичко присуство на Французите на Балканот на тоа како стекнувале сознанија за неговата географија (со посебен осврт на Македонија).