

Book review

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**SERBIA AND THE BALKANS ON THE OLD GEOGRAPHICAL MAPS
OF EUROPEAN CARTOGRAPHERS FROM THE 2ND TO THE 20TH
CENTURY BY THE AUTHOR MIRKO GRČIĆ, LJILJANA GRČIĆ**

- Book review -

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The geographical-scientific public is enriched by a complex and extensive scientific work (720 pages) of exceptional technical and graphic-illustrative design, characterized by high-quality encyclopedic editions. This extensive and diligent work is a kind of temporal evolution of cartography, but also a spatio-temporal analysis of the historical-geographical development of the Balkan Peninsula, presented through facimiles of 260 maps and their parts and 74 photographs selected from European and other libraries and archives. Carefully extracted were the works of the well-known maps by representatives of the most famous schools of cartography from antiquity to modern times, which depicted the Balkan Peninsula and Serbia on their maps.

Mirko Grčić and Ljiljana Grčić again before the readers and the scientific public amounts to interesting scientific reading, for the presentation of which several years of studio work on archival research of documentation of cartographic and other materials, especially historical-geographical character, was necessary. Decades of scientific experience of the authors have enabled a complex presentation of 18 centuries of the history of the Balkan Peninsula through the selection of maps, some of which are rights artificial works. Interpretations of the historical context of the maps, their symbolic elements and purposes required, as well as the knowledge of cartography, as a historical and political context of the maps in a particular time. Thus, the book before us is a kind of cross-section of geographic-historical and cultural development, political history, demographic, economic and other occasions in the Balkan Peninsula and its links with the rest of the world. The incorporation of extensive material facilitates the thematic consolidation in 12 chapters: theoretical-

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methodological introduction to the interpretation of ancient geographical maps; Geographical ideas about the Balkans in antiquity; Geographical ideas about Serbia and the Balkans in Arab maps in the Middle Ages; Serbia and the Balkans on medieval monastic maps of the world; Serbia and the Balkans on medieval portolan and other maps; Serbia and the Balkans on military-themed maps from the XV-XVI century; Serbia and the Balkans on geographical maps from the Renaissance period; Serbia and the Balkans on geographical maps from the 17th century. Serbia and the Balkans on geographical maps from the 18th century; Serbia and the Balkan Peninsula on geographical maps in the XIX and the beginning of the 20th century; Geographical maps of Serbian geographers in the XVIII - XIX century and geographical maps of Serbian cartographers at the end of the XIX and in the first half of the 20th century.

In conclusion, the authors point out that the Balkan region, including Serbia, is depicted as an integral part of the European cultural and geopolitical space on all maps from II until the 20th century. Kosovo and Metohija were always depicted as part of Serbian territory. The overview of selected maps forms the basis for future studies not only for geographers and historians, but also for other readers interested in social sciences on the historical-geographical, political and territorial development, as well as on the changes in the natural and cultural landscape of the Balkan Peninsula. The volume and relevance of the literature and sources used (902 bibliographic units) speak for a professional and sound approach to the topics studied. Easy to navigate in extensive maps and documentary material, the analysis and partial use of which at the end of the book provides a map index, the geographical terms and the index of names. The authors have not overlooked any aspect in facilitating the cartographic content, understanding the historical context of a map, components of geospatial and their purposes to the relevant sources, easier to find the desired time, cartographer or toponym. Before the eyes of the reader takes place the development of geographical maps from vješina to science. The complex political and cultural changes of the geographical space in the multi-layered historical-geographical development is presented in a textual analysis, which explains the cartographic and pictorial representation.

With this historical time history through the geo-space of the Balkan Peninsula, the readers were led through the actions of 366 cartographers since the first attempt of mapping the Balkan Peninsula in ancient times (Ptolomey) to the first survey of the Serbian cartographers. The analysed maps were presented from representatives of the known maps from Venice, Genoa, Rome, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, Paris, Nurnberg, and Vienna to the Arabic, Russian and Serbian cartographies. The development of Serbian cartography is traced from the first original Serbian map "Grunt Monastery Orfelina", which dates back to the 18th century, through cadastral and geodetic surfaces in the second half of the 19th century to the first survey of

the Military Geographical Institute in Belgrade. The review of the development of Serbian cartography ends with the development of thematic cartography in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Jovan Cvijić and his collaborators, including the Department of Geography, from which the Faculty of Geography of the University of Belgrade emerged. The comparison of the Balkan area and the maps of Serbia shows the geopolitical importance of this area, the emergence and disappearance of individual states, the interpenetration of various political and cultural influences. The continuity of the population and the complexity of the processes of assertion are reflected in the toponymy of the space.

The authors deconstruct the context of the maps on display, but as they note its hidden messages, “so the reader recalls that the map presented complex and looks for content and messages that are present and a careful observer visible”. The book “Serbia and the Balkans on the old geographical maps of European cartographers” Mirko and Ljiljana Grčić is a kind of journal of the past for researchers, both individual aspects of the historical development of space and the development of cartographic knowledge and opportunities in the cartographic knowledge and opportunities in the era Modern technologies give a new phase of development and application.