
To Remove the Anathema of the Balkans

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Summary

The main objective of this study is to outline some essential characteristics regarding the removal of the Balkans anathema.

This is primarily the question of the etymology of the word ‘Balkans’ and the disregard for the original name and the real geographic area covered by the Stara planina mountain chain.

The paper will focus on the error running through the related literature regarding the adoption and introduction of the word Balkans by the first European researchers.

Finally, the paper will discuss the problem of giving the name of the Balkan Peninsula to all the countries located today in that region on the basis of the incorrect geological and geographical conclusions of European researchers at the beginning of the 19th century.

In addition, the paper addresses some historical grounds concerning the nations in this area due to which the name ‘the Balkans’ has remained up to the present time. The paper presents a critical view on the current practice of utterly negative labelling of that region from the ethical standpoint, and gives an authentic value base for some future approaches to that area.

Place-name Balkan gainsay geological knowledge of that area

The name Balkan given in the old days to the territory of Stara planina in Bulgaria was based primarily on a historical fact connected with the Turkish rule over that territory. Its more intensive scientific investigations began at the beginning of the 19th century. The very first researches were done by German and French geographers and geologists. Later researches also included other natural scientific and social features of that and the neighbouring territories, such as vegetation, climate, pedology as well as ethnography, culture, history and anthropology. After those researches, the local name ‘the Balkans’ was extended to the whole adjoining region and the entire area was dubbed the Balkan Peninsula.

Unfortunately, the area was attributed a status of a volatile area due to all the historical events that have taken place in the closer or wider area over the past two centuries. Europe began to regard it in terms of repulsion and exclusion. The area was anathematized; consequently, this also happened to the nations that were far away from its origin in geographic and cultural terms.

The place-name the Balkans-Stara planina in Bulgaria usually refers to a wide area covering a geographic location of a series of countries such as Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania, Greece and all the countries of the former Yugoslavia (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1993)¹ That name commonly used in geographic literature, refers to the Balkan Peninsula whose peninsular meaning applies to the mountain range of Apennines and Pyrenees. In fact, the Pyrenees cut off Spain and Portugal from the Gascon plateau in France, and the Apennines in Italy are separated even more clearly by the Po valley and the Alps; no wonder then that those two areas are categorised as peninsular. Can such a physical-geographic term of peninsula be applied to Stara planina or the Balkans as it can to the Italian or Iberian Peninsula?

In geomorphologic terms a peninsula is a smaller piece of land connected to the mainland by a narrow neck, with the sea on three sides.

Accordingly, Arabia, Indochina, India and Labrador (Istria in Croatia) are considered the greatest peninsular lands, but nobody would say that Europe is a peninsula although it is surrounded by the sea on three sides and connected to European Russia only by its eastern part or more exactly the Urals-Caspian Sea line. It is said that Europe comprises the greatest peninsulas: Scandinavia (773,000 sq. km) and Iberian Peninsula with 584 sq. km (Pomorska enciklopedija 1983)². However, a question arises: why would the European “peninsula” not end on the eastern border of Poland and Rumania without adding to it the huge territory of the eastern European valley to the Urals and the huge Scandinavian area? Because this is a result of the conventions observed by geographers which are rooted in political, economic and historical factors!?

Consequently, we can assert that the land size of particular areas are nowhere determined exactly so as to be classified as peninsulas! *On the other hand, and on the basis of one mountain range (Stara planina), a huge territory was given the peninsular status utterly arbitrarily – the so-called “Balkan Peninsula”!* Moreover, the fact was disregarded that the mountain range Stara planina represented only a part of a huge area of the Alpine orogeny created during the whole Mesozoic period and reaching its peak during the Tertiary period – the Cenozoic, 65 million years ago! In addition, the Atlas Mountains in Africa, the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Dinaric Alps, the Pindus Mountains, the Carpathian Mountains, Stara planina, the Caucasus, the Pontus Mountains, the Tavor and Zagros in Asia Minor were made by the Alpine orogeny too, but nobody came up with the idea to name that territory the Balkans. On the other hand, the surrounding area that is 23 times larger than the mountain range itself was squeezed into the natural size of Stara planina which is about 20,000 sq. km! Such an enlarged area was called the Balkan Peninsula, which now covers an area of 476,000 sq. km. Also, the Balkan Peninsula is both small and big since the peninsula size has never been defined. It is seven times smaller than the peninsular area of India (of almost continental scale – 3.3 million sq. km) but is almost 150 times larger than the Istrian peninsula (3,100 sq. km)³.

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica (1993) Vol. 1, pp. 833-835.

² Pomorska enciklopedija (1983) JLZ Zagreb, Vol. 6, p. 236.

³ Opća enciklopedija (19779 LHZ Zagreb, Vol. 1, pp. 396-402.

The majority of place-names in Europe, especially those from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea testify to their Greek, Roman and Slavic heritage. Thus the name Stara planina is actually a slavified name inherited from the Greco-Roman civilization (700 B.C. – 300 A.D.), coming from the old Latin name Haemus or Greek Aimos meaning mountains, a mountain (Klaić 1978)⁴.

Therefore, the name of the Balkan Peninsula, named after Stara planina in Bulgaria, cannot be applied in any figurative way to the peninsular area because etymologically, the word 'Balkans' is not simply connected to the Slavic, Greek or Roman place-names but to the Turkish language which belongs to the Sunni religious group of the Arabic language. Thus, the word 'the Balkans' in Turkish means a mountain. The place-names of the Adriatic insular and continental areas were studied by our eminent academician Mr. Petar Skok. (1950)⁵.

Misquotations in the adoption of the term the Balkans

The term 'the Balkans', *as quoted so far*, was introduced into the literature by the German geographer August Johann Zeune in 1809, (1778-1853)⁶. He allegedly took it from the French geologist Ami Boué (1794-1881)⁷. Boué came upon the Turkish name the Balkans used for Stara planina during his travels across Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia. Zeune gave this name incorrectly to the whole area because of the central mountain ridge and *an incorrect assumption about the reach and the size of the Stara planina mountain range* (Rogić, 1972)⁸.

Obviously, all the authors in quoting the year of the adoption of the name Balkans by Zeune (1809) made a mistake!!! Why?

In 1830 Boué wrote about the social geography of France (Brockhaus Enzyklopädie 1987)⁹, but he explored the central part of Stara planina (the Balkans) from Pleven only in 1839, escorted and protected, of course, by armed Turks. Whenever he asked the soldiers how they called that area, they replied – the Balkans. A year later (in 1840), he wrote a study on European Turkey (Boué 1840). Due to this research, almost 30 years later, he also became a honorary member of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences (JAZU) in Zagreb, established in 1866 (today the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences /HAZU/). Consequently, the literary quotations running to the present day that Zeune took the Balkans over from Boué in 1809 are evidently incorrect because that

⁴ Klaić, B. (1978) Rječnik stranih riječi, Nakladni zavod MH, Zagreb, pp. 141, 511.

⁵ Skok, P. (1950) Slavenstvo i romanstvo na Jadranskim otocima, Jadranski Institut JAZU, Zagreb.

⁶ Zeune, A. (1809) Gea, Versuch einer wissenschaftlicher Erdbeschreibung, Berlin.

⁷ Boué, V (1840) La Turquie d' Europe I, Paris.

⁸ Rogić, V. (1972) Balkanski poluotok, Pomorska enciklopedija, Vol. 1, JLZ Zagreb, pp- 284-285.

⁹ Brockhaus Enzyklopädie (1987) Dritter Band, p. 576, Manheim.

year Boué was only 15 years old and he certainly could not make any research in the territory of Bulgaria at that age!

Also, Zeune's study Gea of 1808 (and not of 1809 as stated in the literature), confirmed that at first he named that area *Balkan Halbeiland* and replaced it later by *Balkan Halbinsel*¹⁰. After all, he was 30 years old at that time, twice older than Boué, and he could not have taken that name from Boué in 1809! Boué was born in Hamburg (Germany) in 1794 and died in Bad Vöslau (Austria) in 1881!

Consequently, Zeune's exploration of the Balkans took place considerably earlier than Boué's, at the very beginning of the 19th century, at the time when those territories were still firmly under the Turkish authority.

The Islamic Encyclopedia (1970)¹¹ states that some Turkish tribes lived on the territory of Bulgaria as early as the 11th century, and they called it Rumeli (Roman country). Later, the area received the name Emine Balkan, although in some Turkish dialects the word "dag" (pronounced as a long "daaa" with the mute "g") refers to a mountain! The Bulgarians replaced the Turkish name by the Emine Balkan.

Carl Ritter, a German geographer (1779-1859)¹² was not very content with Zeune's name 'the Balkans' and he proposed "*the Greek peninsula*". Many German geographers, such as H. Wagner and Th. Fischer, were not satisfied with that name either and preferred the name used for the first time in 1863 by the Austrian consul in Turkey I. G. von Hahn: "*Südostereuropäische Halbinsel*" i.e. "*southeast European peninsula*", (Islâm Ansiklopedisi 1970).

The Bulgarians still use the name 'Balkans' for Stara planina, even after 200 years!

Area and geological age of the Carpathian-Balkan arc and the Rhodope Mountains

Although the Carpathian-Balkan arc belongs to the Alpine orogeny in geological terms it still differs from the Alps tectonically because it is considerably degraded as regards the Western Alps (it can rather be compared with the Eastern Alps), but it is older than the Alpine system in its formation. The Balkans-Stara planina forms an over 400 km long mountain bulwark running from west to east to the Black Sea. Its western part begins in the eastern part of Serbia by the Midžor mountain (2169 m) and ends sloping down mildly to the Black Sea on the Bulgarian territory. The highest peak is Botev (2376 m), situated in its central part¹³; Stara planina's crystal base is covered everywhere by sediments that consist mainly of limestone¹⁴. The Balkan Mountains

¹⁰ Lexikon der Geographie (1968), Georg Westermann Verlag, Mannheim.

¹¹ Islâm Ansiklopedisi, 2. Cilt, M.E.B., Istanbul, pp. 280-285.

¹² Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie (DBE) (1999), Band 10, p. 648, München.

¹³ Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse (1982), Tome 1, pp. 999-1000, Paris.

¹⁴ Dictionnaire de Culture Générale 2, Paris (1991), pp. 166, 297-298, ed. Petit le Robert.

branch off into two sections in their central part, the western higher section and the eastern lower one, while the longitudinal upper Tundzha valley separates the Balkans-Stara planina, in the narrow sense, from the Bulgarian central mountain range and the Plovdiv plain¹⁵.

Stara planina, called the Balkans, and the southwest section of the Rhodope massif are bordered by the Danube in the north and the Morava-Vardar plain in the west, having absolutely no connection with the Dinaric and the Alpine area in geographical terms, and even less with the neighbouring countries that are still included in the Balkan Peninsula.

Even if we wanted to geographically define that area, it would actually comprise the easternmost part of Serbia (the Timok-Niš plain) and the area bordered by the Danube in the north and the Maritsa in the south, along the line Dimitrovgrad-Sofia-Plovdiv and Burgas at the Black Sea.

Of course, such a bordered territory would in no way belong to the category of peninsulas in geographical terms! On the other hand, the mountain massif of Stara planina and the Rhodopes, although in close vicinity, are essentially different systems in the terms of geology and stratigraphy. So the Rhodope Mountains are a considerably older range than its northern neighbour Stara planina. The Rhodopes belong to the *Hercynian orogeny* that lasted for 395 million years from the Devonian (the Paleozoic era) to the Triassic 225 million years (the Mesozoic era), unlike the considerably younger Stara planina which belongs to the Alpine orogeny that lasted for 190 million years from the end of the Triassic (the Mesozoic era) until the beginning of the Tertiary 65 million years (the Cenozoic era), (Herak 1984)¹⁶.

Therefore, to equate that inherited name of the Balkans with the two entirely geologically different mountain ranges, and – moreover – to include into it the whole surrounding area which has absolutely no connection with the original one, is utterly incorrect. To anathematise the Balkans for all that this term implies, extending it to the areas that once were parts of some countries, should stop once and for all and all, deleting the Balkans from all maps and atlases.

Historical background of the origin of the Balkans

The Muslim conquest of Asia Minor began by the forays of Muslim soldiers and Turkish nomad cattle-breeders at the beginning of the 10th century and ended by the foundation of the Turkish Empire by the victory of the Seljuk Turks (Iraq, Persia, etc.; the first important Turkish-Muslim dynasty from 1038 to 1194) over the Byzantines at the battle of Manzikert (today Malazgirt, north-west of the lake Van Gölü in Eastern Turkey). By 1566, during the reign of Suleiman I, the Empire reached its height and its power extended throughout Asia Minor, a part of Egypt down the valley of the Nile,

¹⁵ Opšta enciklopedija Larousse (1973) Vol. 3, Beograd, pp. 153, 113.

¹⁶ Herak, M. (1984) Geologija, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, pp. 127, 137, 190, 215, 378-379.

through North Africa and the entire S.E. Europe to Vienna until the end of the 16th century.

A new transformation of Europe began by Napoleon's conquest at the beginning of the 19th century and the Austrian expansion to southern Europe to the frontier of the rivers Sava and the Danube. The Turks controlled the entire territory south of the Sava and the Danube to the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea, except the Illyrian region on the east coast of the Adriatic from Istria to Kotor. The French Revolution 1798 overthrew the old regime and acted as a catalyst for the changes and the aspirations of the nations under the now defunct Ottoman Empire. Besides, at the end of the 18th century, there appeared another mighty power, this time of a Slavic provenance – the Russians – which represented a serious danger to the declining Ottoman Empire. The Russians had enticed uprisings in the Turkish provinces in the Balkans even earlier (1st Serbian Uprising 1804). After an agreement between Russia and Turkey, the independence of Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania and the diminished territory¹⁷ of the principality of Bulgaria (under the Turkish government until then), were fully recognized by the Congress of Berlin 1878. The long Turkish rule – for almost seven centuries – left many words of the Turkish etymology in today's countries of the so-called Balkans (more in the east and nearer to Turkey, bordered by the Black Sea, the Adriatic, the Aegean and the Ionian Sea, less in the west and farther from Turkey in geographical terms), e.g. in their toponymy, vocabulary, folklore, ethnography and, accordingly – the Balkans instead of Stara planina. Of course, the old Slavic names made a comeback after the recognition of independent countries. This was the case with Stara planina in Bulgaria, too, but unfortunately, the Balkans, used for many centuries and taken over by Boué and Zeune in the first half of the 19th century, has survived to the present day.

Stara planina – The Balkans in atlases

Editions of atlases all over the world simply retained the existing names due to the inertia as well as the ignorance of various editors who neither respected the original etymology of place-names nor thought of further consequences. Unfortunately, this was the case with Stara planina or the Balkan Mountains, too.

Namely, all the sources on the use of the Balkans in the literature so far become unreliable in some way if some older editions are consulted. Thus, the Islamic Encyclopedia (1970) states that the Balkans was used in literature to a large extent in the second half of the 18th century, more precisely in 1757, in the Grand Atlas¹⁸ edited by the French geographer Robert de Vaugondy (Gilles), who was born in Paris in 1688 and died in Paris in 1766. The maps from the Grand Atlas were made out very thoroughly

¹⁷ Atlas svjetske povijesti (1986), Cankarjeva založba Ljubljana, pp. 106, 108, 112, 120, 134, 170, 178, 204, 228, 306.

¹⁸ Grand Atlas, Ed. Robert de Vaugondy (Gilles), p. 1757, Paris.

and finished artistically but meridians and parallels were not always plotted (*Dictionnaire 1875*)¹⁹.

Consequently, the Balkans was in use in the publications of that time considerably prior to Zeune's and Boué's birth. Obviously, the geographers and cartographers respected the official place-names used in the states of that time. It is quite clear that Zeune, in 1810 a professor of geography in Berlin, used the previously published literature and material and, consequently the Grand Atlas of the French geographer Vaugondy of 1757.

Therefore, the introduction of the Balkans into the literature by Zeune in 1809 or its acceptance by Boué is absolutely out of the question (Rogić 1972).

More recent cartographic editions use the Balkans instead of Stara planina – and vice versa – differently. The *Encyclopedia Larousse* (1973) locates the Balkans only in Bulgaria while the name Stara planina stretches into N. E. Serbia. In the *World Atlas* (1988)²⁰ Stara planina is divided into several mountain chains with a series of place-names for them. The western part of this long massif is called St. Nicholas Mountain (1721 m), the central part Zlatiško-Tetvenska and Eleno-Tvrđič Mountain (1536 m) and the eastern part Kamčija Mountain (627 m) and Emine Mountain (520 m) by which the long mountain chain of Stara planina slopes down very mildly to the Black Sea. The chain divides the Bulgarian hydrological system into two river systems: the north one drained to the Black Sea by the Danube and the south one drained to the Aegean by the Struma and Maritsa. The Stara planina massif ends by the Sliven Mountain (1181 m) called after the place Sliven. Thus, the Sofia basin is located between Stara planina in the north and the Rhodope Mtns in the south and southwest. The *World Atlas* (1988) does not contain the Balkans anywhere!

The *World Geographic Atlas* (1989)²¹ gives both names, the Balkans together with the name of Stara planina in brackets, while the *World Atlas* (1980)²² gives the name of Stara planina, but also the toponym of the Western Balkans and Eastern Balkans for the western and eastern part of Stara planina respectively, the latter sloping down close to the Black Sea coast. In addition, a series of passes over Stara planina are mentioned: Petrohan, Botegrad, Trojan, Šipčen, Tvardiš, Kotlen and Sliven. All those place-names imply Slavic toponymy free of any addition of the words of Turkish origin.

A somewhat earlier edition of the *Great World Atlas* (1975)²³ includes Hungary, Rumania, the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece in the Balkans. Two names are given: Stara planina and Sredna gora beneath it. There is no mention of the Western Balkans although the name appears near the place Orizare near the Black Sea coast. The

¹⁹ *Dictionnaire* (1875) *Grand Dictionnaire Universel d XIX^e siècle*, XIII tome, p. 1255, Paris.

²⁰ *Atlas svijeta* (1988), JLZ Miroslav Krleža, Zagreb, map 44.

²¹ *Geografski atlas svijeta* (1989), Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, map 11.

²² *Atlas svijeta-novi pogled na Zamlju* (1980), SNL, Zagreb, map 55.

²³ *Great World Atlas* (1975), The Readers Digest Association London, Sydney, Montreal, Cape Town, VI revise, map 56.

Germans being the Germans are considerably more precise in the toponymy and their Meyers Neuer Handatlas (1974)²⁴ gives the following names for the Balkans: Westbalkan, Mittel Balkan and Ostbalkan. There is not a trace of the name Stara planina!

In the older edition of The Times Atlas of the World (1977)²⁵ there is no trace of the name the Balkan countries but the whole mountain range in the Bulgarian territory bears the name Stara planina. Obviously, somebody in that edition, as in the World Atlas (1988), consulted original place-names and did not attribute fully arbitrary names which do not pertain.

The Times Atlas of the World contains the name Balkány in Hungary and Balkany in Russia but those territories do not belong to the Balkan Peninsula in the political, economical and geographical terms.

The latest edition of the Hammonds Atlas (1999)²⁶ of exceptional quality, unfortunately does not mention Stara planina but only the Balkan Mountains; instead and moreover, it gives it a still more exaggerated name of Sredna Mtns. thinking probably of the Central Balkan Mountain. The Balkan Peninsula is represented only in short notes, mainly as some rough, rugged, broken and folded mountains and casual plains where various ethnic groups live divided by religious, historical and linguistic differences. And this grandiose edition has the cheek to state that it is meant for the 21st century!

Use of the Balkans in Bulgaria and its consequences for the present

The Bulgarian cartography, all their maps and atlases contain Stara planina with the addition, however, of the Balkans beneath it. Let it be known! In Bulgarian schools and in family communication as well, at least for two generations, they always use first the Balkans and then specify a particular place-name in the Balkans. The national anthem, however, does not mention the Balkans at all and sings of the proud Stara planina. On the other hand, the famous poet Hristo Botev (1849-1876) wrote only about the Balkans in his poems dedicated to the fight of the Bulgarian people for their liberation from the Turks although he perished in one of the battles against the Turks.

Bulgaria's nearest western neighbours, the Serbs and their writers, also wrote about the Balkans. The Serbian female author Desanka Maksimović (1898-1996) in one of her poems writes about a martyr's death of a number of high school pupils in the mountainous Balkans (the summary execution of pupils and teachers in Kragujevac during World War II)²⁷. Obviously, the Turkish centuries-long domination over the whole area

²⁴ Meyer's Neuer Handatlas (1974), Mannheim, Balkanländer, map 51.

²⁵ The Times Atlas of the World (1977), Times Book John Bartholomew & Son Limited, map 82.

²⁶ Hammonds Atlas of the World (1999), Second Edition, Hammond Incorporated, Maplewood, New Jersey, map 76-77.

²⁷ Priručni leksikon (1967), III prerađeno i prošireno izdanje, Nakladni zavod Znanje, Zagreb, pp. 146, 562.

of S. E. Europe left deep roots in its nomenclature and toponymy. The literary works of Meša Selimović, Ivo Andrić, i.e. all those authors, writers, historiographers who lived on the territories under the strong influence of the Turkish heritage, abound in words of the Turkish origin while, on the contrary, in the works by those who lived and created at some distance of that influence the Turkish words are incomparably less frequent or there are no such words at all. For instance, a completely different influence is felt in the works of the Croatian literary bard, Miroslav Krleža, that of Austria and Hungary, because their domination over Croatia, although shorter than the Turkish domination over Serbia and Bosnia, was very noticeable in all fields of social and political life. Therefore, German and Hungarian vocabulary permeates his work, giving the place-names all over our beautiful country which “adorned” the area during their domination.

Of course, in addition to a huge number of utterly odious connotations of Balkanism, the Balkan area also had some, what might be called bright moments.

Balkanology as a science gathered a number of scientists who established and explained both social and scientific attributions with reference to historical, linguistic, folklore and a great number of other issues using a comparative method of differentiating and integrating the Balkan nations. F. Miklošić can be considered the initiator of the modern Balkanology. He was followed by a number of anthropographers, among them J. Cvijić, historiographers K. Jireček, N. Jorgua, and linguists G. Weigand, G. Mayer, H. Barić, M. Budimir, V. Georgiev as well as P. Skok, a Croat, and many others.

Thanks to a great number of cultural workers and scientists the Balkan Federation (an unrealized idea since the beginning of the 19th century), the Balkan Communist Federation (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece) founded in Sofia in 1920, the Balkan Games (Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Albania) established in 1929, as well as many other agreements and associations such as the Balkan Entente, a defensive alliance formed by Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey and Rumania in 1934 and the Balkan Pact, a military treaty of an alliance among Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in 1954 (Opća enciklopedija 1977) are connected to the Balkans.

However, all those efforts and contributions to the scientific idea of the Balkan territory and nations squeezed into it neither dispelled nor abated all the accumulated negatives which anathematize everything connected with that area.

Historical background of the Balkan countries

It would not be possible to name a completely heterogeneous territory in every respect on almost 500 sq. km of the Balkan Peninsula if the Turks had not stayed there for several centuries. The right of giving one's own name to a mountain chain is not unjustified considering such a long stay. But to expand the name to an area 23 times larger than the original place, with over 40 million people, has absolutely no sense, the more so if an obvious error of the first researchers is taken into consideration. Even the Roman Empire that once dominated the whole Europe, North Africa and the huge territory of Asia Minor from the reign of Augustus to Justinian (31 B.C. – 565 A.D.) did not leave such heritage. It is interesting, however, that the name of the Balkan Peninsula has survived to the present day although there have been no Turks for almost a century! That

syntagm should be explained!? Who is to blame: only the Turks or the nations that established their countries there a long time ago or both of them? Would it have been the same if some other nations had survived and founded their countries in those territories?

At the beginning of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire was seriously weakened in spite of the reforms, and began to collapse.

Bulgaria as a Turkish province became autonomous in 1878 and united with Eastern Rumelia in 1885. In 1908 it was declared an independent kingdom. *Serbia* was also a Turkish province. It was recognized by Turkey as an independent state at the beginning of the 19th century. Its independence was fully guaranteed in 1878, somewhat earlier than *Bulgaria's*. *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, also a Turkish province, was occupied (1878) and annexed (1908) by Austria-Hungary. *Macedonia* was a Turkish province and since 1903 under a special control and government of the European powers. In 1913 after the II Balkan war it was divided among Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. *Greece*, the first to be liberated from the Turkish rule, already in 1821, in 1833 expanded territorially and gained independence. Of all the above mentioned countries, small *Montenegro* became independent very early. It was ruled by *vladikas* and after them by princes. In 1878 it became independent and in 1910 a kingdom (Atlas svjetske povijesti 1986). Among all the mentioned countries the Turkish Empire had exceptionally deep roots just in its closest territories: Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria. Therefore, no wonder that the Bulgarians themselves adopted the Balkan mountains for their local name Stara planina.

It can be said that the Turkish influence on Slovenia was negligible and very small in Croatia because the frontier between the Hapsburg Monarchy and Turkish Empire remained settled for 140 years (until 1878) at the Rivers Sava and the Danube by the Peace Treaty in Sremski Karlovci (1699) and especially after two Austro-Turkish wars (1716-18) and (1737-39) (Atlas svjetske povijesti 1986).

This short historical chronology points to an utterly unnatural inclusion of the Croatian and Slovenian territories into the so-called Balkans regardless of all the events that took place in the past 70 years when the territories were included into official state formations: the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) and the new Yugoslavia (1945-1990).

Consequently, when the Turkish Empire began to decline at the beginning of the 19th century, the nations under the Turkish rule for many centuries desired their independence within the framework of their ethnic and religious environments. From the beginning of the Empire's collapse to the Balkan Wars (1st and 2nd Balkan War) which preceded the independence of a number of the Slavic countries, especially the latest events since 1990, no wonder that the old Turkish name "the Balkans" has remained as a place-name for a chain of wooded mountains instead of the original name of Stara planina. It is certain that during the Turkish conquest of these territories, the Latin name Haemus, Greek Aimos (Klaić 1978) was replaced by the Balkans because the mountain massif was then really more wooded than it is today, and for the Turks it represented a natural barrier. Unfortunately, the name was adopted even by the Bulgarian local toponymy and has remained in use up to now as a synonymous adjunct for an uncivilized and savage behaviour of the Balkan peoples. Not wishing to justify in any way such a behaviour and coexistence of these peoples in the last century, we can't help but

wonder why similar barbarous behaviour among other peoples was not similarly stigmatized. For instance, among the Scandinavian people: Swedish wars against their neighbours, German and Italian Fascist expansions and relationship with their neighbours or the Jews during the 1st and especially the 2nd world war. Do the American policies and military savageries in Korea and Vietnam, the French ones in Algeria and those of today's Russia in Chechnya not belong to barbarous acts par excellence? Indeed, the said wars of the great and civilized people of America, Germany, Italy, Russia since 1914 until today far surpass all Balkan historical peregrinations and primitivism during the past centuries, from the 10th century to the present day, by their volume, brutality, destruction and the number of casualties among both the local populations and the aggressors!

Namely, it is characteristic of human psychology to favour what is bad and belittle good things. And what's worse, a term which has been in use for almost two centuries, stretches from its place of origin to a huge space having no connection with this locality! This also happens in science because two scientists, A. Boué (1794-1881), a French-German, and A. Zeune (1778-1853), a German, did not in the least nurture such negative implications in connection with the replacement of the Slavic place-name *Stara planina* by the Turkish *Balkan Mtns.*, although then the explored space in comparison with its present condition was really hardly accessible, utterly backward and primitive. As if there had been no such undeveloped and primitive spaces in France and Germany in that time? Nobody doubts the scientific heritage of those two scientists but one can't help feeling that the term with all its negative implications, recognized by many geographers, geologists and historiographers is still running strong in scientific publications.

This reminds us in some way of Ptolemy's geocentric concept of the universe (2nd ct.) according to which the earth is the centre of the universe, the theory which remained unchallenged for 14 centuries although the others had been aware of its shortcomings long before, until Copernicus (16th ct.) who put forward the ideas, revolutionary at that time, that the Earth and other planets orbit around the Sun and introduced the heliocentric theory of planetary motion. Is it necessary that the next 10 centuries pass for the anathema of Balkanism to be removed once and for all as an utter anachronism in time and space where it does not belong today? To achieve this, the name should be removed from all future editions of atlases and books by those who handed it down to us, i.e. geographers and geologists, as the *World Atlas* (1988) and *The Times Atlas of the World* (1977) did: map 83, in 1:2500000 scale, contains Greece Aegean and Bulgaria and does not mention the Balkan countries and gives the local place-name in Bulgaria: *Stara planina*! Also, map 82 gives proper nomenclature for the following countries: Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia and does not include them in the Balkan countries. The Bulgarian territory from the west to the east bears the proper name – *Stara planina*! Finally, all cartographers and geographers know that place-names should be written authentically and according to their original names, not leaving the inherited names that were introduced by foreign governments, and made worse by incorrect scientific statements about the size and significance of the area by the researchers from the early 19th century.

Historical heritage should be respected but it is utterly unjustified to imply in it all prejudiced negative attributions which survived by pure chance as a consequence of a

long-standing occupation. There have been such alterations of names in recent history, in thousands of places. Was Rijeka not Fiume, Ljubljana Leibach or Split Spalato almost until yesterday? There have been so many other changes of the original place-names as well, only because an area was occupied by a foreign state for a longer or shorter period of time. St. Petersburg was not under Russian communism for a short period of time – it was called Leningrad for almost 70 years! However, after the overthrow of the regime, it got back its old name! There are lots of such encroachments and modifications of original place-names, institutions, clubs and other names everywhere, but if we are consistent in respecting a scientific code in biology, astronomy and other natural sciences, let's follow the same policy with the name that not only acquired all the worst attributes that could go with it but also anathematized the whole area in its closer and wider neighbourhood. In order to assuage gradually the anathema of the Balkans and Balkanism, first it is necessary to perform a “cosmetic” surgery – remove the name from future cartographic publications. Geographers should agree upon the introduction of the original name – Southeastern Europe like Northern, Western or Southern Europe! To locate 45 million people, including the Albanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Bosnians and Herzegovinians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Slovenes and even the Rumanians and Turks into the Balkan countries represents an ethnographic, ethnogenetic, geographic and ethical nonsense presented recently in 25 lessons by American researchers which can be found on the web sites www (1999).²⁸

Conclusion

The name “the Balkans” and its extension to the Balkan Peninsula and all the countries in Bulgaria's geographic neighbourhood and its use in geographic literature dates from the beginning of the 19th century. Regarding its etymology, it derives from the Turkish word “Balkan”, meaning a chain of wooded mountains, a part of a range crossing Bulgaria parallel to the Danube from the Yugoslav border to the Black Sea called Stara planina. The German geographer A. Zeune (1778-1853) learned about the name Balkans probably from the Grand Atlas printed in France in 1757 by the French geographer Robert de Vaugondy. Later he himself made a tour of Bulgaria, escorted, of course, by armed Turks and on that occasion, he also became familiar with the term Balkans referring to Stara planina. After his research, he published the work *Gea, Versuch einer wissenschaftlicher Erdbeschreibung* in Berlin in 1808, suggesting the name *Balkan Halbeiland* or *Balkan Halbinsel* for that territory.

Much later, all the related data have stated incorrectly that Zeune was the first to use the term the Balkans in literature in 1809, having taken it from the French-German geologist A. Boué (1794-1881).

Was it possible? In 1809 Boué was 15 years old!!!

²⁸ www (1999) Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History: <http://www.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/> (Copyright 1966 by Steven W. Sowards)

The name has been used anachronistically up to the present day in the geographical, geological, ethnographic and historical terms, first of all due to the most recent events that took place on those territories, implying a great number of negative connotations.

Considering that the territory is a part of Southeast Europe, incorporating more and more into a unique economic and geopolitical area, similarly to the American, Chinese and S.E. Asiatic geographic space, it is necessary to remove the Balkans and all its accompanying negative attributes from all maps and atlases. This, of course, will not make the region more developed economically, nor will today's nations, considered a part of the Balkan environment, learn the art of peaceful coexistence immediately, but with time they will necessarily become less burdened by their name as they become a part of European cultural setting. Europe cannot renounce that territory regardless to its extension in circles from its source nor can this region be excluded from Europe. The of Europe's cultural heritage come from ancient Greece, a member of the European Union today but on the other hand, is branded by Europe a Balkan country! The very same European Union cannot use behave so condescendingly towards the countries of S. E. Europe in economic terms and needs free and fast traffic communication between the north and the south over the "Balkan" territories, connecting in this way the Baltic States with the Mediterranean, the west with the east, the Western Mediterranean and the Adriatic with the Black Sea. This is simply an imperative; the longer it is postponed or the more emphasized Balkanism gets, the more Americanism will gain the upper hand over Europe with its economic and military might to the detriment of today's Balkan countries.

Europe – "The Old Lady" – lost its head-start in bringing its southeastern part together in 1990 when it allowed the direct aggression of Serbia and Montenegro on Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The events of 1999 indicated even more the extended American presence on those territories by NATO's campaigns in Kosovo and Serbia which would not have been launched if there had been no naval, land and air services and cooperation by Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria. The American "protectorate" will necessarily include also these countries under its auspices in addition to their physical presence on the territories of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo. Thus, the Americans gained a tactical advantage over Europe which has not been able to cut the southeast Gordian knot since 1989 up to now. Instead of Alexander the Great, there came the U.S.A. and cut it by their military, political and economic authority. The future will show how much the strategic west-east structure or the Adriatic-Black Sea route will be passable after the physical departure of political participants of the bloody events in the Balkans.

Further developments in those disturbing territories indicate that the area will remain in the future primarily under the NATO's patronage and, secondarily, under the European Union.

Due to such European hesitation and the events that took place on the territory of the former Yugoslavia at the end of the millennium, the global link of Europe from the north to the south and from the east to the west has been left over to America's partial economic investments into the geographically remote territories with a major military

strategic option – to exclude Russia from the Mediterranean and delay the process of the full integration of Europe. After all, much more time, understanding, material resources and efforts by the European Union in the area will be necessary now in order to persuade a large number of newly established countries to cooperate on a common global objective. Old Balkanisms should not be emphasized any more, nor animosities and hostilities encouraged; they should be alleviated and eliminated by respecting national integrity so that all old historical legacies, especially the recent ones, connected to that inauspicious Balkanism could be replaced by work and mutual understanding as soon as possible. Europe will sooner or later necessarily become a “peninsula” called the United States of Europe opposite its overseas neighbour – the United States of America and the latest Gaddafi’s (Libyan President) initiative on the establishment of the United States of Africa presented at the 1999 African Summit in Tripoli.

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