



Topographic maps of Serbia prior to the WWI

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Compilation of high or medium scale topographic surveys always played an important role in the geosciences of newly independent countries. Serbia formally has gained back its independency from the Turkish Empire shortly after the 1878 Congress of Berlin. The newly founded Institute of Military Geography in Beograd made efforts to complete a topographic series of 1:75,000 scale. Actually two serieses have been completed prior to the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, one with Latin and the other with the Cyrillic name descriptions, in French and Serbian languages, respectively.

The scale of these map systems are identical to the Habsburg general mapping of Central Europe, covering also Serbia. As the Habsburg maps used the prime meridian of Ferro, their Serbian counterparts were using the one of Paris, which is a mere longitude shift of 20 degrees in round numbers. The geodetic basis behind the Serbian maps is probably the Habsburg triangulation in the Balkans (1871-75) – this would explain why the Vienna-centered Hermannskogel datum has been used also in Yugoslavia and Serbia even till nowadays.

The French language series has red planar graphic elements (only the names, elevations and the railroad lines are written or drawn in back), blue, brown and green prints were used for waters, contours and vegetation. The Serbian language series mostly reminds to the modern maps albeit it has only three colors (black, brown and green).