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A CENTENARY: TWO PARTITIONS OF EUROPEAN TURKEY. SAN STEFANO AND BERLIN—A COMPARISON

There exists an outstanding book, written by a distinguished Roumanian diplomat and historian, many years ago: *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie*, by Trandafil G. Djuvara¹. We can find there plenty of highly interesting details, among them of course a paragraph on the events of 1878. But owing to the extended historical frame of the work, the subject of this paper is there discussed in general lines. It deserves, however, to be presented in a more detailed manner.

And the centenary of two peace treaties signed in 1878—one of them abortive and the second having appearance of a definitive one—connected with the Ottoman Empire (mainly with its European provinces), seems to be an equitable reason for an analysis, in particular of their territorial settlements. There exists no such detailed survey in the historical literature, as far as we are informed². This paper should be a contribution to the diplomatic history of the Balkan Peninsula and to the domain of comparative method in historical research.

I

What was the geographic picture of the Ottoman Empire in Europe on the eve of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878? We can answer this question owing to a few sources which, however, do not seem to be fully reliable.

First of them is an official survey published in 1867 in Paris by the Ottoman Government, at the opportunity of an international exposition held then in the French capital. It was a work named: *La Turquie à l'exposition universelle de 1867*, signed by the Turkish commissioner for the Exposition, Salaheddin bey. It contains a list of administrative divisions indicating their area³. According to it, there were in European Turkey the following "vilayets" (denomination valid since 1864).

1. T.G. Djuvara, *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie (1281-1913)*, Paris 1914 (Alcan).

2. At least in the western languages; the author of this paper had published in Polish detailed territorial evaluations in his book: *Państwa bałkańskie 1800-1923* [The Balkan States 1800-1923], Cracow 1938.

3. The evaluation is only approximate as the author probably had missed any possibility of planimetric measurement (there existed no exact maps at the time).

	km ²
Adrianople (Edirne), including Constantinople (Istanbul)	24,7
Danube (Tuna), including most of Bulgaria	100,9
Prizren (Perzerin) and Tirhala (Thessalia), together given as Rumeli	48,9
Bosnia (Bosna) ⁴	69,3
Ioannina (Yanya) (=Epirus)	42,3
Thessaloniki (Selânik) (most of Macedonia)	31,5
Aegean Islands (Cezair) ⁵	30,8

Sum is: 348,4 thousand km² (with Grete: 357,2). Besides it there existed two vassal states: Roumania and Serbia. Added the area of them (here are the figures inexact⁶) we would have a total of more than 500.000 km².

With certain rectification, based on planimetric calculation, the above data appear also in the statistical survey of the famous German Justus Perthes Geographical Institute in Gotha, as reproduced in the *Almanach de Gotha* for the year 1870 and in its German edition⁷.

But nothing was steady in the Ottoman Empire: the administrative division was undergoing frequent modifications. According to the annual data published in the above quoted German statistical source, after 1870 some vilâyetes were diminished and a few new ones were established.

On the eve of the Russo-Turkish war there was the following administrative division in European Turkey:

vilâyetes	thousand km ²
Constantinople (Istanbul)	2,5
Adrianople (Edirne)	62,7
Danube (Tuna)	92,6
Prizren (Perzerin)	36,7
Scutari (İşkodra, Shkodër)	12,4
Ioannina (Yanya)	36,4
Bosnia (Bosna, with Yeni Pazar)	62,4
Thessaloniki (Selânik)	55,4
Aegean Islands (Cezair)	14,5

Total: 375,6 thousand km² (with Crete: 384,2).

4. Official name of that country is actually: Bosnia and Hercegovina, but under Turkish rule it had been simply Bosnia.

5. In this paper all Aegean Islands, as being a part of Greek ethnic territory, are taken into account together with the Balkan areas of Turkey; officially they counted as part of Turkish Asia.

6. Salaheddin gives to Roumania too little and to Serbia too much.

7. *Gothaischer Hofkalender nebst diplomatisch-statistischem Jahrbuch*.

We owe the above evaluation to a well known Austrian traveller and specialist in Turkish problems, A. zur Helle von Samo⁸. It is certainly far more reliable than the ten years older one, published by Salaheddin. With certain strictures, we might accept it as dimension of Turkish immediate possessions in Europe before the events of 1877-1878. A more accurate evaluation, however, necessarily will slightly reduce the above given total.

Our proceeding will be as follows. First we shall take the probably most accurate figures in the statistics from the end of XIXth century⁹, indicating Turkey's area after the Treaty of Berlin and we shall add to it the area of territorial gains obtained by that Treaty by Montenegro, Serbia and Roumania, together with areas of Bosnia and Bulgaria (with Eastern Rumelia) and eventually the Greek acquisition of 1881. Then we shall sum up all those figures together:

States	thousand km ²
Turkey's immediate provinces ¹⁰	177,1
Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia	96,3
Bosnia and Hercegovina	51,0
Acquisition by Montenegro	4,7
» » Serbia	11,1
» » Roumania	15,4
» » Greece	13,9
total	369,5
(with Crete: 8,618	378,1).

This is our final result which we can consider as definitive one.

Before 1877 the official Turkish statistics were including in the territory of the Ottoman Empire also all vassal states: Roumania and Serbia and even Montenegro. Helle von Samo gives us corresponding figures: 121.000 km² for Roumania and 43.000 km² for Serbia; he enumerates Montenegro too among the vassal states what is certainly not justified. According to Roumanian sources, the area of Moldavia (without southern Bessarabia but with the

8. A. zur Helle von Samo, *Die Völker des Osmanischen Reiches. Beiträge für Förderung orientalischer Studien*, Vienna 1877. In this book the statistical data regarding the area of Turkish administrative units are given in German geographic square miles (1 sq. mile = 55 km²). Those data are in this paper recalculated in square kilometers, as exactly as possible.

9. e.g. *Gothaischer Hofkalender* or *Almanach de Gotha* for 1899, where the official data are corrected on basis of planimetric measurement in the Perthes' Geographical Institute having the best available maps at their disposal.

10. With Aegean Islands but without Crete.

delta of the Danube) and Valachia was¹¹ roughly 117.000 km², thus slightly less than is given by the above quoted author. The difference is still greater for Serbia: according to official Serbian sources¹² that state had before 1878 only 37,740 km²/area. There seems to be no use in discussing the size of Montenegro in this connection as we cannot admit she was really in a vassal relationship to the Porte.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1877 the central area of the Balkan Pensinsula had been subjected to further administrative modifications: a new vilâyet was established, first with capital in Monastir (actually Bitola) and then in Ūsküb (actually Skopje); its name was: *Kosova vilâyeti* i.e. province of Kosovo but we are missing information on its area in 1877.

Of course, the denominations of Turkish provinces are not identical with those of historical entities, with one exception, that of Bosnia (including Hercegovina and also the adjacent district of Yeni Pazar, situated between Montenegro and Serbia). The administrative boundary of the province of Bosnia was roughly the same as that existing since a few hundred years¹³, excepted the rather unnaturally attached district of Yeni Pazar which had not belonged to historical Bosnia. New was the capital of Turkish Bosnia since mid-century: Bosna Saray (actually Sarajevo) instead of more ancient Travnik, former seat of Turkish governors.

Historical Macedonia was partitioned into two vilâyet: Kosova (formerly Perzerin = Prizren) and Thessaloniki (Selânik). Smaller portions of Macedonia could be temporarily found also in adjacent provinces; frequent modifications of administrative division in the Ottoman Empire together with lack of exact maps and lists of subordinate units (kaza) contribute to vagueness of our assertions regarding the period before 1878.

Ethnic Albanian territory¹⁴ was in its northern part included into the vilâyet of Scutary (İşkodra, Shkodër) and its southern part together with Epirus into that of Ioannina (Yanya). The latter comprised also Thessaly, after the abrogation of the previous province of "Tirhala", existing still in the late sixties. Thus large portions of ethnic Albanian and Greek territory were put together after reforms in mid-seventies.

Bulgaria's largest part belonged to the Province of Danube (Tuna vilâ-

11. Moldavia and Valachia were united since 1862 at first as "Principatele Unite" [United Principalities] and the name of Roumania was generally accepted after 1866.

12. Reproduced in *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, item "Srbija" [Serbia].

13. At least since the last Austro-Turkish war at the end of XVIIIth century.

14. This paper cannot get into details of the problem what is the ethnic Albanian area and the above used definition is meant generally without accepting any particular point of view.

yeti) with capital in Rusçuk (actually Ruse). But Dobrudja, both southern (predominantly Slavic) and northern (later given to Roumania) constituted a separate unit, District (Turkish: Sancak) of Tulcea¹⁵. Bulgarian area to the south of Balkan mountains was united with Thrace in the frame of the Province of Adrianople (Edirne). Again the region of Sofia constituted a separate unit (sanjak or paşalık).

All Aegean Islands belonging to Turkey and comprised in the Cezair vilâyeti¹⁶ (Province of Islands) were considered as a part of Asiatic Turkey. It should be mentioned here that the island of Samos constituted an autonomous unit listed separately in Turkish statistical surveys as "Sisam kaymakamlığı". The island of Crete enjoyed a restricted autonomy since 1868 and did not belong to any other province.

Remaining and purely formal vassal links between Serbia and Turkey were severed by the former in 1876 (declaration of war) and between Roumania and Turkey in 1877. Montenegro was never admitting to be in vassal relationship to the Ottoman Empire; the latter, however, continued to assert the contrary view until 1878.

II

The abortive treaty of San Stefano¹⁷, signed in the outskirts of the Turkish capital on March 3, 1878 (19 February v.s.), was composed entirely according to the views of the victorious Russian diplomacy, taking into account exclusively strategical interest of the Russian Empire, aiming at the supremacy of the Slavic populations (first of all of the Bulgarians) in the Balkan Peninsula and at the weakening of Turkey to the extremity. A partition of European Turkey was decided by the victors.

Montenegro was enlarged, almost trebled, in the north with portion of Hercegovina and in the south, with acquisition of an outlet to the Adriatic. A considerable increase of territory obtained Serbia to the west and south. Eventually Roumania had to cede to Russia a part of Bessarabia, lost by Russia in 1856, and "in exchange" for it the larger part of the above mentioned District of Tulcea (i.e. northern Dobrudja) was given to Roumania at the expense of Turkey¹⁸. Bosnia had to obtain a large self-government and similar

15. Since the Treaty of Berlin belonging in greater (northern) part to Roumania.

16. A particularity might be mentioned here: the island of Thasos had been between 1841 and 1902 linked with Egypt!

17. The former Turkish denomination Ayastefanos was in republican Turkey rebaptized into Yeşilköy.

18. Roumania's loss to Russia amounted to 9,125 km² and gain in Dobrudja brought

measures were foreseen for Greek districts remaining under Turkish rule (Thessaly etc)¹⁹.

But the most important part of that treaty was the constitution of a new state in the Balkans (it is true: under Turkish suzerainty): a Principality of Bulgaria, with an area larger than all three above-mentioned and already before the war existing Christian Balkan states. Without Eastern Thrace and a part of southern Macedonia (including Thessaloniki, left to Turkey), and without Albania—the new Bulgarian vassal state would comprise the most of Turkish pre-war provinces in the Balkans. To Turkey were left: Albania, Epirus, Thessaly, a part of southern Macedonia, Eastern Thrace, a narrow corridor between Montenegro and Serbia connecting Albania with Bosnia.

Great Bulgaria, fulfilling ambitions of that nation and having to serve Russia's aims (among others: two outlets to the Aegean, one to the west and other to the east of Thessaloniki), was not accepted with joy by the other already existing Balkan states. But no wonder that the most revolted was the Greek public opinion as it felt here a danger for the "Megali Idea" of Hellenism. Serbia was also outraged because the treaty was giving to Bulgaria some small areas conquered in the meantime by the Serbian Army.

Russian diplomacy succeeding at San Stefano, committed not only an error but also a political mistake. It was miscalculating the attitude of other European Powers and overestimating forces of Russia which could not oppose new enemies. Other Powers were requiring the revision of San Stefano treaty. The main awkwardness of the Russian diplomats consisted in deceiving Austria: there existed a concrete Russo-Austrian agreement concluded before the war²⁰ and stipulating the co-ordination of both Powers' interests in the event the war ended by a Russian victory. All that was forgotten by the negotiators in Stefano and the Government of Vienna, outraged, joined the western Powers (first of all England), opposing the new treaty. Russia had to give in. "Great Bulgaria", comprising not only present Bulgarian territory but also the largest part of Macedonia and even splits of eastern Albania, remained an unrealized plan, opposed by all other Balkan states. Neither Serbia nor Greece were satisfied by the promise of self-government for Bosnia and Thessaly; both

her slightly more: 12-13,000 km², but economic value of lost area was substantially more important.

19. The article 15 of the Treaty stipulated that the self-government in Thessaly and Epirus should be similar to that functioning in the island of Crete since 1868; as a matter of fact, it was abortive.

20. Agreement signed in Reichstadt (northern Bohemia, actually Zákupy in Czechoslovakia) on July 8, 1876, followed by two further acts, signed in Budapest on January 15 and March 18, 1878.

states did not trust Turkey that she would fulfill any promise, as it had been proven in the case of Crete since 1868.

The area of the planned Bulgarian state would comprise approximately 172,500 km². It was larger than the areas of the proposed in 1876 by the Ambassadors of the Powers in Constantinople (Istanbul) two provinces considered as Bulgarian and doted with a local autonomous administration, covering together some 150,000km², without any outlet to the Aegean²¹. The outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877 did not allow to start preparations for constitution of those units. There is no doubt that even such solution was hardly acceptable to already existing Balkan states: their claims conflicted with those of the Bulgarians.

If the Treaty of San Stefano had been put into force, the political map of the Balkan Peninsula would look as follows.

Turkey was losing two thirds of her previous territory in Europe, if we consider the separation of the Bulgarian areas as definitive. If, however, the latter as a tributary state, formally subordinated to the Sultan, would continue to be considered as part of the Ottoman Empire, the effective loss would be reduced considerably:

remaining Turkish territory	140,000 km ²
+ Bulgaria	172,500 km ²
total	312,500 km ²

Among the beneficiaries of proposed territorial cessions to other already existing states the most considerable portion had to be given to Serbia, estimated at between 14 and 15,000 km², what would equal to some 40% of Serbia's pre-war size. For Roumania, the increase of approximately 12-13,000 km², after deduction of area claimed now by Russia (some 9,000 km²), would equal roughly to 10 % of Roumanian pre-war territory²². On the other hand, Montenegro was proportionally the greatest winner, because the increase representing between 10 and 11,000 km² was tripling the pre-war Montenegrine territory.

As regards the planned autonomous (or semi-autonomous) province of Bosnia, after separation of southern Hercegovina in favor of Montenegro, it would be slightly smaller than it had been before the war²³. No exact fig-

21. Conference of Ambassadors in Constantinople, Dec. 23 through January 20, 1877: Noradounghian, *Recueil...*, III, p. 400ff.

22. See above, footnote 19; the part of Dobrudja given to Roumania in San Stefano had been smaller than that obtained at Berlin, because the former treaty was giving Mangalia to Bulgaria.

23. The Montenegrine troops occupied a larger portion of Hercegovina than their government could retain afterwards (because of Austrian protestation).

ures can be produced. Neither can we say anything more precisely about the size of autonomous (or semi-autonomous) Epirus and Thessaly, but we can guess that the area would be as large as that negotiated later between Greece and Turkey following the decisions of the Congress of Berlin, thus reaching 20-25,000 km² (according to the Greek claims)²⁴.

After deduction of those autonomous (semi-autonomous) areas, we shall see that the immediate possessions of Turkey would not exceed roughly 50,000 km², comprising: Eastern Thrace, southern Macedonia (mainly Thessaloniki with environments) and Albania.

III

Russian consent to the revision of San Stefano resulted into summoning at Berlin of an assembly of all powers having been signatories of the Treaty of Paris in 1856. In July 13, 1878, a new treaty was settling the Balkan problems. The representatives of the Balkan states were allowed to present their claims but otherwise they could not interfere with the discussions of the assembled Great Powers. Turkey was theoretically treated on equal level as other previous signatories from Paris but her point of view, although supported (not very strongly) by England, did not count very much. Bulgaria as not yet formally existing, could be represented only by Russia and the position of the latter was even weaker than in 1856, although then she had been defeated and now was victorious. Russia's adversaries were now stronger than previously. Therefore the results of San Stefano were mostly cancelled.

Large areas have been restored to Turkey. Territorial gains of Serbia and Montenegro were reduced and to the contrary that of Roumania slightly increased, on the expense of Bulgaria²⁵.

The latter as principal beneficiary of San Stefano, could survive as a state (under Sultan's suzerainty, as "*Principauté autonome et tributaire*") but in comparison with the previous treaty was subjected to a substantial territorial reduction, losing some two thirds of the area proposed at San Stefano. New Bulgaria could extend only between the Danube, the Black Sea, the Balkan Mountains and the eastern Boundary of Serbia²⁶. Even then, she would be larger than Serbia, in spite of the latter's territorial increase. In addition to it, a new administrative unit was established to the south of the Balkans and to

24. Vague evaluation of Epirus and Thessaly together, on basis of Greek claims presented to the Powers in Berlin.

25. Cf. above, footnote 22; in Berlin Roumania obtained Mangalia.

26. A small portion of the south-western boundary of the Bulgarian Principality was adjoining Macedonia remaining under Turkish rule.

the north of Thrace, as an autonomous province (where the Turkish troops were not allowed to stay), with an artificial name "Eastern Rumelia", but fully under Turkish sovereignty and not linked with Bulgaria.

Eventually two provinces were passing under foreign administration: Bosnia under that of Austria-Hungary and Cyprus under that of Great Britain²⁷.

Greece having not participated in the war, had however the possibility of presenting her claims to the Congress at Berlin. The Powers recommended to Turkey to initiate negotiations with the Greek government for a rectification of the Greco-Turkish border and advised Turkey to cede Epirus and Thessaly. (We know that this affair was settled only in 1881 and not fully to the satisfaction of Greece).

As result of the territorial stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, we can trace the new aspect of the Balkan Peninsula as follows:

I. A. Turkey's immediate possessions	thousand km ²
(including Eastern Rumelia but without Crete)	218,5
B. Tributary state: Bulgaria	65,7
C. Under foreign administration: Bosnia	51,0
D. Roumania	130,1
E. Serbia	48,3
F. Montenegro ²⁸	8,7
(G. Greece — no changes for the time being)	50,1
II. Definitive losses of Turkey	
1. To Roumania (Northern Dobrudja)	12,4
2. » Serbia (Nish and adjacent districts)	11,1
3. » Montenegro ²⁹ (a split of Hercegovina and Bar)	4,7
4. » Austria-Hungary (Spič on the Adriatic coast)	0,04
III. Seperate or foreign administration (as above: I, B, C)	
a. Bulgaria	65,7
b. Bosnia	51,0

The dimension of Turkey's immediate possessions in Europe (see above:

27. The problem of Cyprus cannot be treated in this paper.

28. In all pertinent statistical surveys there are most divergent data on Montenegro's area after 1878; there is the question of certain districts retroceded to Turkey and of acquisition of Ulcinj in 1880. See below.

29. The definitive frontier between Turkey and Montenegro could not be settled before 1887.

I, A) was in years and decades which had to come, gradually reduced, as consequence of different political events, such as cession of Thessaly to Greece in 1881, than that of incorporation of Eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria in 1885 (with return, however, of two small splits to Turkey in 1886). The loss in 1881 measured 13,852 km² and that in 1885-86 approximately 32,000 km². Lack of exact data regarding the exchange of some splits given in Berlin to Montenegro but not occupied by the latter, for the maritime area of Ulcinj (Dulcigno), performed in 1880, does not allow us to give precise figures of km² in this case.

Let us see now: what was the effect of international events upon the administrative division, after 1878. Of course, reduction of a state's territory necessarily brings about also diminution of such administrative units which are adjacent to changing frontiers.

Both treaties signed in 1878, in San Stefano and in Berlin, caused disappearance of the Province of Danube—Tuna vilâyeti, the area of which almost equalled that of Bulgaria to the north of the Balkan Mountains (62,000 km², Principality of Bulgaria: 63,000). We shall not find the Province of Danube in the Turkish statistical surveys after 1878 any more.

If the Province of Adrianople (Edirne vilâyeti) was halved after 1878 in comparison to its pre-war size, it is because the northern part of that province had to form the newly established autonomous unit, Eastern Rumelia.

After the separation of several northern splits from the Province of Scutari (İşkodra vilâyeti, actually Albanian Shkodër) in favor of Montenegro, that province was for some 10 % smaller than before 1878. More important was the diminution of the Ioannina Province (Yanya vilâyeti), which was halved because of the cession of Thessaly to Greece in 1881.

Other, centrally situated, provinces, were not subjected to amputations of any importance. There were, of course, certain modifications but not connected with international events.

Because of Austrian occupation of Bosnia, there existed no Bosna vilâyeti any more.

There is no doubt that tracing of international boundaries mostly did not take account of existing administrative frontiers and it is rather not very often that new international borders corresponded with previous administrative ones.

IV

Eventually we can proceed to a comparison between the territorial issues of both treaties, that of San Stefano and of Berlin; the figures below mean thousand aquare kilometers.

State	Area 1877	Acquis. San Stef.	Total	Acquis. Berlin	Total
Bulgaria	—	172,5	172,5	63,7	63,7
Montenegro	4,7	11,0	15,7	4,4	9,1
Roumania ³⁰	116,2	13,0	129,2	15,4	131,3
Serbia	37,7	15,0	52,7	10,6	48,3
Turkey ³¹	369,5	—			
		loss 211,5	loss ³² 94,9		
		remainder 158,0	remainder 274,6		

Note. If we consider the loss of Eastern Rumelia and Bosnia as definitive, then the territorial losses of Turkey resulting from the Treaty of Berlin will reach 178,500 km² and the remainder will be 191,000.

For comparison: Greece before 1881: 50,100 km², after: 64,017. Greece was larger than Serbia (and, of course, Montenegro) but smaller than not only Roumania but even Bulgaria after the latter's seizure of Eastern Rumelia (between 1881 and 1885 Greece was slightly larger than the original Bulgarian state).

* * *

The partition of European Turkey, carried out by the Treaty of Berlin (with subsequent rectification of the Greco-Turkish boundary) started the gradual realization of the right of self-determination of Balkan peoples. But large areas had still to wait for their liberation a rather long time, until the crisis of 1912-13. But certain sectors of boundaries traced in 1878 in Berlin subsisted and in few cases do subsist until the present time³³.

30. After deduction of area lost to Russia by the Treaty of Berlin.

31. With Aegean Islands but without Crete.

32. Totalled: definitive cessions to Montenegro, Roumania, Serbia and area of Bulgaria alone (as between 1878 and 1885).

33. See the author's paper, "Les frontières interbalkaniques tracées par le traité de Berlin et leur sort jusqu'à aujourd'hui", in: *Actes du Premier Congrès international des études balkaniques*, Sofia 1970, pp. 333-339.