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# Serbian Atlases in the 19th and Early 20th Century

Jelena Glišović<sup>a</sup>, Žarko Ilić<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> National Library of Serbia, [jelena.glisovic@nb.rs](mailto:jelena.glisovic@nb.rs)

<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, [zarko.ilic95@yahoo.com](mailto:zarko.ilic95@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract:**

Atlases published in the Serbian language in the 19th and early 20th century, with rare exceptions, had a clearly defined goal – to be used as an auxiliary teaching tool in geography and history classes. The large-scale use of atlases in Serbian schools began at the end of the 19th century, even though the first atlas in the Serbian language was printed and published in 1804 by Pavle Solarić in Venice. Merely a few copies of atlases for Serbian schools were published by the French cartographer Constantine Desjardins during his stay in Belgrade and work he did for the Serbian government in the area of cartography during the 1850s. After his work on the development of the atlas, they were not used as auxiliary teaching tool in Serbian primary and secondary schools until 1889, when Vladislav Titelbah and Petar Šreplović published in Belgrade the *Atlas of the Kingdom of Serbia with Maps. As per the curriculum for the III grade of elementary schools*. Since the geography of the Kingdom of Serbia was studied in the third grade, this atlas filled the gap created by the lack of atlases. However, the geography of the Balkan Peninsula and other parts of Europe was still being taught with the help of small-scale geographical maps. More studious work on atlas publishing intended to be used in Serbian schools started during the 1890s, with the brochure by Kosta Kovačević entitled, *What Atlas is Needed for Our Secondary Schools* in 1892. This brochure also served as a guideline for developing atlases in the future. One of the goals of this paper is precisely to demonstrate the path that Serbian atlases have passed, from a clear recognition of the need for them in schools, through defining the necessary conditions one atlas should meet, to their creation. Apart from school atlases, being the types of atlases in which the Serbian cartography made its first steps and which were used until the first atlases made by Jovan Cvijić, in the paper we will also consider atlases that aimed to show larger territories with a clearly defined topic, such as the *Geological Atlas of Macedonia and Old Serbia* published by Jovan Cvijić in 1903. In addition to the atlases used in geography studies, we will also analyze atlases with historical themes, where ideas about the past of the Serbian people had an important place. Apart from the analysis of the content of the work, the focus of the paper will be the analysis of the methodology used by various authors in the development of atlases. Based on unpublished archive material, we will point out the objections of atlas reviewers about the authors' manuscripts, before the publication itself, which will show certain beliefs prevalent in the Serbian cartographic school at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Ethnographic maps, being an integral part of atlases, had an important place in them, especially in those that depicted a wider area than the Kingdom of Serbia, where the territory inhabited by the Serbian people was shown. The analysis of this part of the atlas and indicating the importance they had in the national education of students in the relevant period, will be another assignment in the paper. The paper presents selected atlases of cartographic collections of the National Library of Serbia and the Matica Srpska Library, the most important collections in Serbia in terms of their scope and quality.