

THE KINGDOM OF GREECE AND THE FIRST BALKAN WAR:
ASPIRATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
КРАЛСТВОТО ГРЦИЈА И ПРВАТА СВЕТСКА ВОЈНА:
АСПИРАЦИИ И ДОСТИГНУВАЊА

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Abstract: Macedonian historiography, even though a relatively young scientific discipline compared to the other Balkan historiographies, has so far elaborated the main events and processes related to the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). However, it is understandable that in the future they all should complement each other with new findings and approaches derived on the basis of some new historical sources and analysis. The individual war actions of the Greek Army in the Ottoman Macedonia during the First Balkan War in the Macedonian historiography are not presented enough so far. Because of this, the purpose of this article is to explain the Greek national politics and aspirations of the official Athens regarding the Macedonian population and territory, with a special accent on the military and political strategy of Greece during the First Balkan War.

Key words: Greece, Ottoman Empire, Ottoman Macedonia, First Balkan War, Solun (Thessaloniki).

Апстракт: Македонската историографија, иако релативно млада научна дисциплина во однос на другите балкански историографии, до сега ги има разработено главните настани и процеси поврзани со балканските војни (1912-1913). Меѓутоа, сосема е разбирливо дека во иднина сите тие ќе треба да се надополнуваат со нови наоди и пристапи кои произлегуваат од одредени нови историски извори и анализи. Одредени воени активности на грчката војска во Отоманска Македонија во текот на Првата

балканска војна, до сега, во македонската историографија не се доволно претставени. За таа цел, оваа статија има намера да ја објасни грчката национална политика и намери на Атина во врска со македонското население и територија, со посебен акцент на воената и политичка стратегија на Грција за време на Првата балканска војна.

Клучни зборови: Грција, Отоманска империја, Отоманска Македонија, Прва балканска војна, Солун.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the First Balkan War marks the end of the Ottoman domination with the Balkan Peninsula. On the other hand, this marked the end of the territorial-ethnic integrity of the Ottoman Macedonia. Analyzed from a historical distance, the interests of the Great Powers in this period, mainly, determined the destiny of the already established Balkan nation-states, simultaneously showing indifference for the national-liberating movements of the other ethnicities which were still under the reign of the Sublime Porte. Understandably, there were exceptions, but we can always observe them throughout the prism of the global politics of separate European Empires.¹

The fact that the Great Eastern Crisis (1875-1881) and the Congress of Berlin in 1878 brought to allocation of the powers of the European continent until the First World War is indisputable. However, even though in a certain way The Treaty of Berlin suspended the agreed establishment of Vienna in 1815, also made some similar mistakes, especially when it comes to the nationalistic aspirations of the already established Balkan states, or the Balkan ethnicities that have pretensions to create their own state through the indigenous nationalistic movements in the Ottoman Empire (Παξιμαδοπούλου-Σταυρινου, 2009: 29). On the other hand, the establishment of the two European Alliances and the desire of redistribution of supremacy between the Great Powers (which started during the last quarter of the XIX century, and was copied through the political and military conflicts for territories and resources in the colonial countries) determined the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula until the Balkan Wars. The agreed territorial status quo regarding the Balkans between Russia and Austro-Hungary in 1897 had been unconditionally respected by the other powers as well, predictably, until the moment when they agreed on the basis of some other mutual interest.

1 So, for example, Austro-Hungarian empire and its strategy to support Albanian uprisings in the period 1910-1912, and promoted creation of the Albanian state, through which, she will establish her influence in this part of the Balkan Peninsula (Донев, 1988: 32, 33).

The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary in 1908 was an example of this kind of mutual agreements. After the initial intense pressure by Sankt Petersburg, a diplomatic agreement was reached by which Russia supported the Austro-Hungarian annexation on this part of the Ottoman Empire territory, while Vienna committed to help with opening the Ottoman Straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles) for the Russian military ships (Јелавич, 1999: 111, 112). Regarding the territorial aspirations of the small Balkan countries, or the liberating movements of a part of the population within the European part of the Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers always tried to prevent and neutralize, or, if necessary, allowed The Sublime Porte to deal with the problems on its own.

The social and political establishment of the Balkans, established after the Great Eastern Crisis, which had mainly concentrated on the interests of the Great Powers, inevitably increased the national antagonism within the Ottoman Empire, which became an arena of the propaganda institutions of the Balkan nation-states. It was obvious during the developing stages of the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian propaganda (which transformed from an educational and religious propaganda to an open paramilitary intervention against the population of the Ottoman Macedonia) that will culminate with an announcement of war of the Balkan countries against the Ottoman state. The preparations for the First Balkan War lasted for quite some time. The political elites in Athens, Sofia and Belgrade aware of the fact that they are not individually capable to confront military with the Ottoman Empire insisted on establishing mutual alliances, in order to accomplish their own expansionist aspirations.² Besides the fact that until the eve of the Balkan Wars a series of treaties were signed, such as, the one between Serbia and Bulgaria in 1897, resigned in 1904, the agreements were rarely, or to be precise, never respected in detail (Донеv, 1988: 51). Constant disputes were about the territory and the population of Macedonia. Namely, the Balkan nation-states always acted according their irredentist concepts³, which included the entire or the larger part of the territory of Ottoman Macedonia in the framework of their imagined "great" (in some medieval context) national states. They claimed their "historical rights to Macedonia" on the criteria established by themselves, and these varied with time, according to their latest nationalistic needs. But, there was one mutual constant criterion for the three Balkan counties – they

2 The first negotiations between Greece and Serbia had happened in the first half of 1861, but the alliance agreement was not signed because of the Serbian opposition of "oversized" Greek Government territorial demands (Јовановски, 2005: 71, 72).

3 The Serbian and the Greek greater state agenda are dating since 1844, the first also called "Nachrtanie", while the second one "Megali Idea". The Bulgarian one dates back to the period of the Great Eastern Crisis and the preliminary contract from San Stefano (March 3, 1878), which envisioned creating of Greater Bulgaria.

had declared Macedonia for “their own historical territory”, on which they “rightfully” claimed their rights. This fact was the reason that contributed, during the establishment of the Balkan Alliance (1912), for the ignorance of the question about the destiny of the “disputed area” – as Macedonia was usually referred to in the agreements or secret annexes, which were contracted between the Balkan states.⁴ These positions that Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia held undoubtedly caused the Second Balkan War.

THE KINGDOM OF GREECE: DEFINING THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE BORDERS

In the period before the Balkan wars, the imagined north border to which Greece had territorial pretensions, and it was, generally, pointed towards Ottoman Macedonia and Albania, stretched from Durrës to the Aegean Sea, crossing north of Ser (Serres) on the east, to Bitola and Ohrid in the west (Битовски, 2001: 57). These borders introduced the so called “minimalistic program”, which dated from the period of the Great Eastern Crisis, unlike the “maximalistic program” which included the entire territory of Macedonia. The Greek nationalism pragmatically decreased the territory of historical Macedonia for its needs, lowering its northern border towards south. Namely, after 1880, because of the fact that the claims towards the territories of northern Macedonia were estimated unsupported, official Athens changed the tactics, and declared the Macedonian population from those areas as Bulgarian or Serbian. Based on the requests⁵ of the Greek Prime Minister Harilaos Trikupis, and by initiative of the Thessaloniki’s consul Konstantinos Vatikiotis from the Greek Consulate Centers of the European part of the Ottoman Empire, Athens began to receive different suggestions related to the possible new territorial-administrative division of Ottoman Macedonia. The very interesting suggestion, through an adequate Memorandum from 2 July 1880, was sent by the Greek consul from Bitola, Petros Logotetis. He made the “division” of Ottoman Macedonia on two areas, north or “Bulgarian” one and south or “Greek” one. In his plan Logotetis took the political situation of the day as a basis, after the establishment of the Principality of Bulgaria and the “ethnic” questionability of the Greek arguments towards the

4 So, for example, in Serbo-Bulgarian agreement from march 1912 (in which there is included Secret Annex), was signed after long discussions and arguing and with help of Ambassadors of Russia in Belgrade and Sophia, were established two zones of action, Northern for Serbia and Eastern for Bulgaria (North from Shar Planina mountings and East from Struma river) and was established so called Contested Zone (most of Macedonia). The destiny of the last zone should be defined later after the war, and if necessary with mediation from the Russian Imperator (Павлович, 2001: 288).

5 In June 1880, H. Trikupis had send letters to the Greek Consulates in Solun, Bitola (Monastir) and Plovdiv (Philipopolis) with demand to give different suggestions and propositions for the issues of territorial reforms in Macedonia and the other parts of the Ottoman Empire, on the base of the Berlin Agreement framework (Јовановски, 2009: 321).

northern parts of Macedonia. Thus, the consul within the Memorandum stressed that: “the main ending borders which do not justify the Greek pretensions, and which must separate south from north Macedonia are: Krushevo, Prilep, Mariovo, the south part of Demir Hisar (Sidirokastro), Ser, and, finally, Drama” (Ιστορία του Ελληνικού έθνους, απο 1833 ως 1881, 1977: 379). Vatikiotis, within the Memorandum from June 1880, was more detailed, with an adequate analysis of the situation. As a division line he pointed out: “...the border between the Rhodopes and the Balkans continues to the mountain range Kresna and Malesh, crossing between Strumica and Radovish, then it continues along the River Vardar up to the mouth of River Crna, lifts around the area of Tikvesh and Bitola, leaves on the right the areas of Prespa and Ohrid, it includes, on the left side, the entire area of Korcha, and from there, across the Kolonja, Anaselica, and Grevena, it ends up on the new Greek-Turkish border line” (Βακαλοπουλος, 1990: 317). Logically, the Ottoman Empire, after the end of the Crisis, determined the administrative borders of the Thessalonki’s (and the other Rumelian) vilayet according to its needs. This idea of part of the Greek political elite remains to speak for their pretensions and the further plans and actions to rule over the Macedonian areas.

However, official Athens considered Bulgaria as its greatest danger when it comes to the territorial pretensions towards Ottoman Macedonia. It is known that during the negotiations for the establishment of the Balkan Alliance, the Bulgarian administration tried to impose the idea for creating autonomous administration in Macedonia and Edirne, which was followed by some fierce reactions by Serbia and Greece (Донев, 1988: 51-61). These last considered this act as a cunning diplomatic maneuver of the official Sofia, in order to create conditions for a repetition of the events from September 1885, when the autonomous area Eastern Rumelia was annexed to the Principality of Bulgaria. In parallel, the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos during the negotiations for concluding an Alliance with the authorities in Sofia refused to agree for the clear mutual demarcation of the Macedonian territories (Јовановски, 2013: 299). The Greek view was based on the fact that if negotiated on the issue of the demarcation, then a contract for Alliance would have never been reached. On the other hand, Venizelos was convinced that the Bulgarian army would point its troops mostly towards Edirne and river Maritsa, while the Serbs towards Skopje (which it really happened) hoping that in that way the Greek army would easily penetrate to Solun and Ser.⁶

⁶ In one of his speeches in the Greek Parliament, Venizelos states: “The Bulgarian none justify undermine the Greek army mainly because of her Thessaly defeat from the Turks in 1897. She (the army) should not be undermined and right away she will conquest the territories which present ours national aspirations. The future actions against Turkey probably will be in this order: The Bulgarians will focus their armies towards Maritsa valley and Edirne. The Serbs will move on Skopje. We will march on Solun and Ser. We will be there in the right time,

Finally, the mutual interest between the two sides to extinguish the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans prevailed, signing the agreement on 29 May 1912, leaving the question for the future territorial partition of Macedonia open (Стојанов, 1979: 77). However, if we observe the activities of the Greek authorities in the period before and during the Balkan Wars, it can be easily concluded that the line of the Greek territorial aspirations towards the Ottoman Macedonia had been almost identical with the one created at the time of the Great Eastern Crisis.⁷

THE WARFARE OPERATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF GREECE ON THE TERRITORY OF THE OTTOMAN MACEDONIA

The actual war preparations of the Kingdom of Greece for the following Balkan War started in 1910. The Prime Minister E. Venizelos, in order to secure more successful realization of the reforms in the army, and to purchase some modern weapon, personally conducted with the Department of Army and Navy. Likewise, French and British navy missions participated in the reforms of the Greek armed forces, while the budget surplus was used for a purchase of war equipment (Κιορ, 2000: 81). After the performed mobilization, seven divisions, two separate units, one cavalry brigade and a certain number of voluntary units were created (Φωτοπουλου, 2002: 12). The Greek army was divided on three parts. The first part or the, so called, "Thessaly Army" had been commanded by the Heir to the Throne Konstantinos, and the officer of the General Staff, the General Panaiotis Danglis. This army was composed of seven divisions, cavalry brigade and the volunteers, with a total of 93 000 soldiers.⁸ The soldiers from almost one division composed the "Epirote Army", with about 13 000 soldiers, under the conduct of the General Konstantinos Sapunzakis. While, the third part, so called, "The Navy", had been composed by four military ships, ten destroyers, one submarine, five torpedo ships, and a large number of auxiliary vessels, most of all, merchant ships (Ibidem). The total human resources of the Greek army counted around 110 000 soldiers. According to the military plan, "The Thessaly Army" should have operated towards Macedonia, while the "Epirote Army" towards the northern part of Epirus and south Albania. In the same time, and later the division of Macedonia will be on the base of occupied territories... ". (Стојчев, Ванче и Александар Стојчев, 2011: 52).

7 On November 2, 1912, during the First Balkan war, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lambros Koromilas, had shown to the Bulgarian ambassador in Athena, Hadzimishev, the territorial aspirations of Greek state, which were projected over the line: west from the town of Kavala, passing through the mountains of Bozdag and Belasitsa, through Demir Kapia and Krushevo, and to the Lake of Ohrid, and further more to the Adriatic Sea, next to the Albanian town of Valona (Марков, 1989).

8 "The Thessaly Army" on October 4, 1912, had had 49 infantry battalions, 6 volunteer battalions, 60 machineguns, 26 artillery batteries, 5 mountain companies, 7 motorized companies, 2 telegraphic teams, 2 engineer teams and 4 airplanes (Υπουργειον στρατιωτικων, Γενικον επιτελειον στρατου, 1932: 64).

the Greek navy fleet was planned to rule with the Aegean Sea, to block the Ottoman fleet at the Marmara Sea, and to prevent the transfer of the Ottoman troops from Asia Minor to the European part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Greek army, or precisely, the "Thessaly Army" had a certain subordinate significance in the military-operative plan within the alliance military actions against the Ottoman army in Macedonia, and the easiest military task when it comes to the occupation of southern Macedonia (Стојанов, 1979: 153). The Ottoman "Western Army", on the day of the start of the military actions on 18 October 1912, still had not finished with the mobilization, and from the planned military force achieved to gather only 188 000 soldiers, which had been a half from the planned mobile forces (Кочан, 2010: 106, 107). "The Western Army", led by Ali Riza-pasha, was composed of four parts and minor garrison units throughout the entire Macedonia, which were mostly concentrated on the defense of the northwest, north and northeast parts of the Empire, or precisely, against the Montenegro, Serbian and parts of the Bulgarian army. "The Vardar army", led by Zeki-pasha, was deployed on the front from Skopje to Kriva Palanka, while its southern group, reinforced with certain local garrisons, was dislocated in southern Macedonia, in order to confront to the "Thessaly Army" (Стојанов, 1979: 149)

The "attempts" for a diplomatic overcome of the differences among the Balkan allies and The Sublime Porte, with an arbitrage of the Great Powers, should be analysed solely through the prism of the military preparations and the search for a motive for a start of a military campaign. When all of the means for a peaceful solution of the differences had been exhausted, it became clear that they can only be solved with a military intervention. Greece declared war to the Ottoman Empire on 19 October 1912. Previously, on 8 October, Montenegro did the same, while Serbia and Bulgaria did it on 17 October (Стојчев, 2000: 518). Just before the start of the military campaign, the Greek King Georgios I announced, in front of the Greek nation, the Manifesto for War against the Ottoman Empire. What is characteristic for this Manifesto is that, besides the explanation of the military-political targets "for liberation of their brothers from the centuries of Turkish slavery", the Greek King did not point the Greek population that should be liberated in the Empire. Here he referred to the "Christians", especially referring to the members of the Rum-millet, thus increasing the range of the territorial gains which were planned for his country to gain in the war to follow.⁹

"The Thessaly Army" on 18 October, one day before the official Greek war announcement, crossed the Greek-Ottoman border. The first more serious military conflict

9 The all of this Manifesto was published by Petar Stojanov (Стојанов, 1979: 148).

happened in the Thessaly city of Ellassona, which the Greeks succeeded conquering without some serious difficulties. After the successful start, "The Thessaly Army" moved towards Sarandaporo, a significant strategic place, where two Ottoman Divisions were located.¹⁰ A front line on the position Sarandaporo-Serfidze (Serbia) had been created, however, it was forced through by the Greeks the night between 22 and 23 October, whereby, chasing the Ottoman army succeeded in conquering the city of Serfidze. After the conquering of the city, the largest part of the Greek army on 25 October located in the area of Kozani, while the 7th division, across the Petra strait moved towards the city of Katerini (Φωτοπουλου, 2002: 18).

In this period, during the stay of the "Thessaly Army" in Kozani, a sharp political confrontation between the Heir to the Throne Konstantinos and the Prime Minister Venizelos took place, on the issue of the further war actions plans. The Heir to the Throne being guided by a strictly military logics, however, at the same time wanting to secure the imagined northern border of the Hellenism, had in mind to continue the expedition towards the line Lerin (Florina)-Bitola, because there had been a possibility for the Ottoman forces to appear from that side, withdrawing from the "Serbian front" (the northern front) and continuing towards Kozani. Namely, the sixth Ottoman corpus counting 9 000 soldiers, which had been a part of the "Vardar Army", withdrew from the Prilep-Kichevo front, in order to encounter the Greek army (Кочан, 2010: 117). Likewise, Konstantinos did not have the necessary information where exactly are the remnants of the Ottoman army after the defeat at Sarandaporo (Φωτοπουλου, 2002: 19). For that aim, the very first day when Kozani was conquered on 25 October, the cavalry units were sent in vanguard towards the cities of Siatista, Kostur (Kastoria), Kajlari (Ptholemaida), Ber (Veria), and the village of Ostrovo (Arnisa), while in the area of Kajlari some minor military conflicts with the Albanian basibozuk, and the local Ottoman units took place (Υπουργειον στρατιωτικων, Γενικων επιτελειων στρατου, 1932: 169). Venizelos, who had a political way of thinking, but, primarily, far-reaching capabilities, sent a telegraph to the Heir of the Throne that he has to direct the army towards Solun (Ibidem). The reasons for this categorical command of the Greek Prime Minister, who had been led by the Greek national and strategic interests, were the information that the Bulgarian army and the Macedonian chetnik formations move fast from northeast to Solun. Besides the primary plans of the military administration to split the powers, in order one part to leave for Bitola, and the rest to Solun,¹¹ still, after Venizelos' strict order, the larger part of the "Thessaly

¹⁰ The village of Sarandaporo is located in the area of Ellassona. It is located on a strategic position at the eponymous strait, between the Mountains Kambubica and Pieria's mountain ranges. The strait "Sarandaporo" presents a natural border between Thessaly and south-west Macedonia.

¹¹ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, L. Koromilas, after the conquest of the town of Kozani, had

Army”, reinforced with the 7th division, which previously conquered Katerini, moved towards Solun. In the meantime, during the expedition to Thessaloniki, the 5th division headed north of Kozani, in a direction towards Kajlari, and on the 31 October arrived at the strait Kirli Derven. The orders of the General Staff of the Greek army allowed the division to act freely, or to continue towards Bitola, or, to hold defensive positions, protecting the “Thessaly Army”, respectively with the information received on the Ottoman forces. The leader of the division, not having the right information and believing that he will face some weak enemies, gave the order to move towards Lerin and Bitola (Φωτοπουλου, 2002: 21). At the very beginning of the expedition the division was attacked by some fierce Ottoman units coming from the direction of Lerin. This was an Ottoman army, which withdrew against the Greek division, and which in the same time was reinforced by the greater part that withdrew from the “Serbian front”. On 6th/7th November “The Sorovica (Amyntaio) Battle” took place. The 5th Greek division suffered a severe defeat, losing 3 000 soldiers, which resulted with a retreat towards Kozani, while the Ottoman army, using the railway Solun-Bitola, headed to the, so called “Bitola (Monastir) Front”, holding defensive positions against the Serbian forces (Кочан, 2010: 117). In any case, a real disaster of this part of the Greek army was escaped, especially because of the approaching of the 1st Serbian army to Bitola, but also thanks to the actions took by the chetniks of the IMRO in the areas of Kostur and Lerin.

In parallel with the war actions of the 5th division, the greater part of the “Thessaly Army” in the rapid expedition to Solun on 1 November, at the city of Enidze-Vardar (Giannitsa), confronted the Eight Corpus of Hasan Tahsin-pasha. The aim of the Ottoman forces was to prevent the further progress of the Greek army towards Thessaloniki. Still, it did not work. The Ottomans were defeated, which resulted with a retreat towards Solun, and in this way, all the connections between the two parts of the Ottoman “Western Army” were lost - the first in the area of Solun, while the other one in the area of Bitola (Ibidem). The number of the Ottoman forces after the defeat at Enidze-Vardar decreased to 20 000 soldiers, which along with a division of the Strumica corpus that counted 5 000 soldiers, retreated to Solun. Hasan Tahsin-pasha for the defense of the city had around 25 000 soldiers, which had been a minor number compared to the Greek and Bulgarian forces that moved in that direction. Still, Tahsin-pasha received a strict order by the Commander of “The Western Army” to protect the strategically significant city by any means (Ibidem, 118). The first armed forces that came near Solun were the chetniks of IMRO. Namely, on 4 November, under the command of Todor

send note to the Bulgarian Government that in direction of Bitola will be send 3 Army Divisions, and the rest of 4, including the 7-th Army Division, through the town of Ber will be directed towards Solun (Марков, 1989).

Aleksandrov they occupied Kukush (Kilkis), then headed towards Solun and liberated the village of Ajvatovo (Liti), but this is where they stopped, waiting for the 7th Bulgarian "Rila Division". When Aleksandrov received the information that the Greek army moves towards Solun, he informed the command of the 7th "Rila Division" to speed up towards the city (Стојчев, Ванче и Александар Стојчев, 2011: 55). The Bulgarian army moved towards Solun from two directions. The first group from Ser and Demir Hisar, while the second one from Kukush and Dojran. The Bulgarians, having about 70 000 soldiers, decided to enter Solun on 7 November (Марков, 1989). In the meantime, after the victory at Enidze-Vardar, the Greek army moved towards Solun with a great speed under the command of Konstantinos. On 5 October "The Thessaly army" had been already deployed at the city gates, while the Greek fleet blocked Solun's harbor, which enabled hampering the delivery of military material, and reinforcement of the Ottoman forces. In that moment, the diplomatic game between the Ottoman forces, representatives of the Great Powers, the Greek and the Bulgarian armies, which both wanted to occupy the city, took place. The political interests of the Great Powers and the Ottomans prevailed, being aware of the fact that if Bulgaria conquers this strategically significant city, then its powers and the influence at the Balkan Peninsula would increase. This did not suit the European countries, especially not The Sublime Porte, because in that moment the Bulgarian army headed towards Istanbul. Because of this, Tahsin-pasha decided to surrender the city to the Greeks without a battle, presenting the conditions he had to the Great Powers' consuls. On 8 November 1912, the Greek army triumphantly entered the city of Solun.¹² The next day, on 9 November, the chetniks of Jane Sandanski, Todor Aleksandrov and Dumbulakov, and a part from the Bulgarian cavalry entered the city.¹³ In this way, in the beginning, it was established diarchy, or a condominium in the city. This condition caused several minor military conflicts between the two armies. However, on 17 November, again with a strong influence of the consuls of the European Great Powers was decided Solun to be given to Greece. According to the treaty, it was decided the Bulgarian army to be transferred by Greek merchant ships from Thessaloniki to Dedeagach (Alexandroupoli), in order to participate in the military actions in eastern Thrace. Still, two units of the Bulgarian army remained in Thessaloniki, but were captured in June 1913 (Φωτοπουλου, 2002: 21).

¹² In his Memoirs, the retired major-general Kl. Kleomenos, tells that even on November 7, there was an order from the prince Konstantinos for beginning of the march toward Solun. But, after the arrival of the army on the town entrance, near the place "Solunski bavchi", a new order has been given by the prince, on which, every army movement has been stopped. Next day, on November 8, in the early hours of the morning began the entry of the Greek army in Solun (Κλεομενους, 1916: 5-6).

¹³ After the entry of the Bulgarians in Solun, a Serbian cavalry entered the city, as well.

After the conquering of Solun, the main actions of the "Thessaly Army" were to "clean the remnants of the Ottoman forces in the southwest Macedonia, also, to cut the path of the Ottoman Army, which after the defeat by the Serbs near Bitola (30 November 1912) withdrew towards Korce, which was of a strategic importance. There had been a possibility for furthering down of the Ottomans towards the city of Ioannina, which the Greek "Epirote Army" was trying to conquer for quite some time. In the other hand, the Greek state interests imposed the need for transfer of the army in the southwest Macedonia. Namely, after the conquering of Bitola, the Serbian cavalry units continued to south, "liberating" the city of Lerin.¹⁴ Thus, part of the "Thessaly Army" (two divisions and part of the cavalry) remained at Solun, where besides regulating the order within the city, had a task to expand the Greek authority, conquering the area of Solun and Chalkidiki while the other military forces were directed to southwest Macedonia across Voden (Edessa) and Ostrovo. (Ibidem, 23) After the battles at the villages of Gornichevo (Kelli), Cerovo (Klidi) and Koman (Komanos), the Greek army on 19 November conquered the city of Grevena, while on 23 November conquered Kostur. What it followed was a grouping of the Greek army in Lerin, whence it continued with the expedition towards the city of Korce, which was conquered on 19 December 1912, after which the Ottoman forces withdrew in the direction of Epirus, towards the city of Ioannina. After a siege few months before, on 6 March 1913, the Ottoman forces in Ioannina surrendered to the Greek Army. In parallel with the military actions offshore, the Greek navy fleet conquered the islands of Tassos, Chios, Limnos, Mitilini, and came near to the Dardanelles in the direction of Istanbul. (Σφετας, 2009: 492).

CONCLUSION

This paper reflects on new visions of interpretation of the First Balkan war, which were not incorporated into the Macedonian historiographical prism. The general preconditions of the First Balkan War are marked with the end of the political, social, and the economical establishment of the Balkan Peninsula, agreed at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Again, the scene had been taken over by the Great European Powers, which after the failure to localize the war between the Balkan allies and the Ottoman Empire in a "shortest possible time", also, because of the real threat the military conflict to endanger the "European peace", called the

14 After the Serbo-Greek agreement for demarcation, from April 22, 1913, the town of Lerin and with big number of Macedonian villages (8 villages in the area of Gevgelia, 20 villages in the area around Lerin, 7 from Bitola area, 38 in the area of Prespa and 59 villages in the area of Ohrid) were given to Greece (Стојчев, Ванче и Александар Стојчев, 2011: 61).

London Conference.¹⁵

The main focus of the paper was on military and diplomatic dilemmas with in the Greek army during the First Balkan war. For example we have noticed the case during the stay of the "Thessaly Army" in Kozani, when there was political confrontation between the Heir to the Throne Konstantinos and the Prime Minister Venizelos. Namely, on the issue of the further war actions plans, there was discussion on the future directions on the military action, toward Salonika or toward Bitola (Monastir). On the end, the political solution from Athena preferred Salonika as a priority, which strongly reflect on main Greek strategic and political goals projected with the Megali idea.

Later on, the territorial dilemmas were determined on the two conferences which were held simultaneously. At the first one attended the ambassadors of the Great Powers in London, while at the second one, which was also called "Peace Conference", attended delegates from Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ On the issue of the "Macedonian question", or in other words, on the destiny of the Macedonian territories and the Macedonians which were under Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek occupation, it had not been discussed at all during the conference. However, even though the question for the future of Macedonia and its population had not been officially presented, the main conflict among the Balkan allies had been about its territories, and about the city of a significant strategic importance, Solun. It had been clear that none of the countries was satisfied with the conquered on the territory of Macedonia, which was a reason for new realignment of forces, and for making military plans among the former allies. This situation caused the Second Balkan War known also as inter-allies war, in which the main target of the warring parties was the territory of Macedonia.

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¹⁵ On December 4, 1912, on the request of the Ottoman Empire, a truce was concluded, while on an initiative of the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, Edward Gray, on December 16, 1912, the London Conference began working.

¹⁶ The basic task of the first Conference had been to determine the western Ottoman border line, with the final status of the town of Edirne, to determine the question of the status of Istanbul i.e. the straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardaneli, Aegean islands, and final, to determine the final status of Albania. All of the second Conference has been devoted on the pre-conditions for establishing future peace between the Balkan allies and the Ottoman Empire (Стојанов, 1979: 169-171).

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