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In the early 20th century Macedonia, then an Ottoman territory surrounded by enemy Christian nation-states and Austria-Hungary, fell prey to its neighbors during the two Balkan wars. They continued bickering about the partition of this land during the Great War. The multiethnic and polyconfessional character of Macedonia, which for centuries was the norm across (mostly Central and Eastern) Europe and the Ottoman lands, abruptly came to be seen as "abnormal." The normative ethnolinguistic-cum-ethnoreligious homogeneity was opposed to the Macedonian diversity, with each neighbor (except for equally diverse Austria-Hungary) pent up on annexing Macedonia insisting that only its own homogeneity was appropriate for this land, meaning that all of Macedonia should be granted to this nation-state. However, other national polities disagreed. The subsequent cycles of conflicts (fueled by the Western European "Great Powers," alongside Russia and Austria-Hungary, supporting different local polities) resulted in expulsions of millions, forced assimilation and multilateral strife over the "correct" interpretation of Macedonia's past. The scores were largely settled early in the wake of World War II. The Cold War with its fault line of the Iron Curtain running in the Balkans across historical Macedonia stifled (with the use of nuclear deterrent) any further border changes. The fall of communism and the subsequent slow-motion breakup of Yugoslavia reopened this old-style contest that at present focuses on the name of the independent national polity of post-Yugoslav Macedonia, the name that is contested by Greece but, *nomen omen*, fully accepted in Turkey. At present the Macedonian nation-state actively espouses the antiquity of this historic land by overhauling it into the very basis of its own national master narrative, much to chagrin of Greece. Bulgaria which was the first state to recognize the independence of Macedonia in 1991, denies the existence of any Macedonian language or nation.

This century-long commotion is a function of the disagreement on the fact that a common past may yield separate presents. The book under review peers under the heated discussions and disentangles what actually underlies pet stereotypes and beliefs. It is a cross between a multi-author monograph and a versatile reference on matters Macedonian as set against the broader historical, social, ideological and ethnic context of the Balkans. The volume opens with the section on the "History" of Macedonia. Jacek Rzepka, on the basis of his close reading of Greek and Latin texts, offers a nuanced analysis of the inclusion and exclusion of (as yet non-Slavophone) Macedonians from the Greek ethnocultural commonality in antiquity. Irena Stefoska reflects on what various medieval authors understood under the name of Macedonia, while Dragi G'orgiev does the same for the modern period under Ottoman rule, where the use of the name Macedonia markedly declined in frequency. This section is wrapped up with the etymological and ethnological analysis of Macedonian, Turkish and Albanian terms employed for expressing territorial origin and ethnicity of human groups in historic Macedonia, as surveyed in the articles by Jolanta Sujecka, Olimpia Dragouni and Rigels Halili.

The other section, "Context," consists of three subsections on "Popular Literature," "Ideology," alongside "Language and Ethnos." In the first subsection, Katerina Mladenovska-Ristovska and Krzysztof Usakiewicz present the history and subsequent

dissemination of the Alexander Romance through centuries and languages across Christian and Muslim lands, before focusing on various political and legitimizing uses of the historical figure of Alexander the Great in the current age of nationalism among various Balkan national movements. This discussion appropriately opens the subsection on "Ideology." Sanja Roić and Maciej Falski delve into the early modern Latin- and Italian-language works on Slavs and their history in the Balkans, alongside the subsequent 19th-century uses of the narratives for nation-building purposes. Likewise, Wojciech Sajkowski analyzes the reception of these works in France during the Enlightenment, showing that it was the channel through which information and ideas on the Balkan (Southern) Slavs spread across Western Europe. On this basis, the four further authors from this section focus squarely on the various employments of the past for writing and legitimizing national master narratives in the 20th century. Bogdan Trifunović analyzes how the Serbian artist Paja Jovanović utilized Tsar Dušan and his medieval Balkan empire for building a Serbian national feeling through the medium of historical painting. Ermis Lafaznovski presents the emigration of Slavophone Macedonians from Greece's section of historical Macedonia (so-called Aegean Macedonia) in the wake of the Greek Civil War and its importance for the Macedonian national identity formation in Yugoslavia's Macedonia, while Alexandra Ioannidou probes into how the issue is reflected in the Macedonian-language novels by Taško Georgievski and Kica Kolbe. This subsection is concluded with Olimpia Dagouni's reflection on the image of Macedonia in Greek history textbooks, in which the objectivizing approach is rather discouraged in favor of solidifying a stereotype that reinforces the currently obtaining Greek national master narrative.

In the last subsection, on "Language and Ethnos," Marjan Marković and Irena Sawicka present the salient linguistic features of the Macedonian language on the basis of which they claim that Macedonian is the "most central" language in the Balkan linguistic area (*Sprachbund*), while extremely peripheral in the genetic family of the Slavic languages. Last but not least, Rigels Halili dwells on the history and present-day situation of Slavic-speakers ('Macedonians') in Albania, while Adam Balcer offers a broad-ranging annotated catalog of the main ethnoreligious and ethnolinguistic groups that nowadays live on the territory of historical Macedonia.

The objectivizing value of the book is improved by the use of illustrative quotes in original languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Latin, Macedonian or Serbian) rendered in their respective Cyrillic, Greek and Latin scripts, obviously with English translations promptly supplied in footnotes. However, surprisingly the same treatment is not extended to Ottomanica and Slavophone texts in Arabic letters, which in this volume occur only incidentally on the reproduction of an Ottoman map between pages 224 and 225. Given the comprehensive character of this reference-like tome, it would be of much value and help to have Albanian/Kosovan, Bulgarian and Turkish/Muslim views on Macedonianness discussed at length in separate chapters. The same is true of the non-state minorities of Roma (Gypsies) and Vlachs (Romacephones) who in various ways, but quite decisively, shaped and continue shaping various aspects of the broadly construed Macedonia. Yet, at present, the volume is the best available introduction to the broad interdisciplinary field of Macedonian studies.

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