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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Empires and Peninsulas: Southeastern Europe between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699-1829 by Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev, Maria Baramova and Vania Racheva

Review by: ALEX DRACE-FRANCIS

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challenging recent interpretations by scholars head-on and demanding that readers acknowledge the perpetration of violence and inequity lying in the enormous void between the Enlightenment's invention of human rights and French application of the principle.

Scholars may disagree with some of Dobie's textual readings, but the wealth of cultural detail in her book, its exacting synthesis of scholarship, and its powerful three-part argument on the cultural displacement of colonial slavery should resonate far beyond the field of eighteenth-century French studies.

PAMELA CHEEK

University of New Mexico

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Empires and Peninsulas: Southeastern Europe between Karlowitz and the Peace of Adrianople, 1699–1829, ed. Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev, Maria Baramova and Vania Racheva (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2010; pp. 279. Eur 54.90).

This volume gathers together twenty-eight papers delivered at a conference at the University of Sofia in 2009 by thirty scholars, mainly based in Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, but also from Austria, Bosnia, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Turkey and the United States. The editors cast the period under study in terms of a return to Europe, meaning that the south-east of the continent was steered 'back onto the rails of a common European history'. Not all contributors argue this or even address this theme, the premisses of which have not gone unquestioned (see e.g., Halil İnalçık, *International History Review* xix (1997), 904–07). As such, the volume is something of a curate's egg—a miscellany of more or less useful contributions, rather than a systematic attempt to rethink the eighteenth-century south-east's relations with, or position in, Europe. Still, there are numerous good individual papers.

Habsburg–Ottoman relations are a main theme: besides an overview paper on this topic by Charles Ingrao and Yasir Yılmaz, there are contributions on border disputes (Jovan Pešalj), military captivity (Will Smiley), Habsburg partition projects (Boro Bronza) and social modernisation (Harald Heppner for the Habsburgs, Marlene Kurz on the Ottomans, and a separate study on Crete by Manos Perakis). Some papers signal new sources or elaborate on those already known: Plamen Mitev presents a *Description géographique et historique de la Turquie d'Europe* (1829). Dean Sakel shows how a Greek-language chronicle from sixteenth-century Istanbul was subjected to ongoing revisions through the eighteenth century. Dzheni Ivanova uses the History of Silâhdar Mehmed Ağa to discuss the theme of banditry. Sergey Murtuzaliev presents V.A. Potto's five-volume, Russian-language interpretation of *The Caucasian War in Different Essays, Episodes, Legends and Biographies*, which appeared in St Petersburg and Tbilisi from 1885–91 with the aid of a grant from Emperor Alexander III. Of papers which reinterpret already well-known sources, that of Dimitris Michalopoulos focuses on the *Vision of Agathangelos*, attributed to a thirteenth-century Sicilian monk but widely translated, adapted and disseminated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, functioning as an apocalyptic political tract. Giacomo Brucciani's contribution is noteworthy for challenging prevailing views as to the absence

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of national sentiment in pre-nineteenth century Orthodox South Slav written culture. He probably goes too far the other way in emphasising the links between the church hierarchy and the peasantry, but his interpretation is significant and should provoke debate. Other papers provide surveys of topics such as the role of *Ayans* (Muslim notables) in eighteenth-century Rumelia (Maria Shusharova), the use of Greek language in Serbia (Ifigenija Draganić), the Greek War of Independence (Elpida Vogli), and the alleged 'revival of the nation-state'—a rather inapt term for developments in Serbia from 1804 to 1829 (Suzana Rajić).

While for the most part competent and informative, not all papers engage fully with historiography or enable recapitulation and advancement of existing knowledge. The volume concludes somewhat extraneously with a paper which claims to identify authentic 'historical' memories of the 1828 Bulgarian migration in accounts collected in the late 1990s from inhabitants of the Sliven, Dobrich, Varna and Silistra regions. An imposing appendix listing 'some publications of the members of the expeditions' unfortunately does not compensate for the lack of a methodology, circumscribing the value of such testimonies. Likewise, Snežana Vukadinović's paper on the image of Ottoman power in Serbian epic poetry takes its sources at face value with too little attempt at collation or analysis, feeling the need instead to commend their world view to twenty-first century readers (invoking Machiavelli, with whom the author is sure we 'would certainly agree'). And while Ingrao's and Yilmaz's opening paper on the motives and priorities of imperial actors is well versed in recent scholarly findings, the editors might also have supplied a longer historiographical introduction, tying together the older work—both analytical and synthetic—of scholars such as Sugar, Jelavich, Turczynski and Clogg with more recent attempts to evaluate the long transformation from Karlowitz to Adrianople. Of the latter, the most fecund have probably come from Ottoman studies, and the reconsideration of the nature of social, political and cultural change in that polity, notably in the work of scholars such as Virginia Aksan, Suraiya Faroqhi and Frederick Anscombe.

This is a set of materials towards a more up-to-date history of eighteenth-century south-eastern Europe, which itself remains to be written. The region as presented here is also rather limited geographically, with virtually no treatment either of westerly lands (corresponding to present-day Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania) or northerly ones (Hungary, Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia). Besides the paper on Crete already mentioned, there is one on the Crimea but, at three pages, it is nothing more than a tantalising glimpse, even if its theme (the juridical relationship of the Khanate to the Ottomans) is highly relevant and its presence also justifies the use of the plural 'peninsulas' in the book's title. These considerations should not obscure the value of the numerous individual contributions where there is a sense of genuine desire for conversation between different interpretative traditions (particularly between national and imperial historiographies), as well as a better standard of English and disposition to address an international audience; and these are signs to be welcomed.

ALEX DRACE-FRANCIS
University of Amsterdam

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