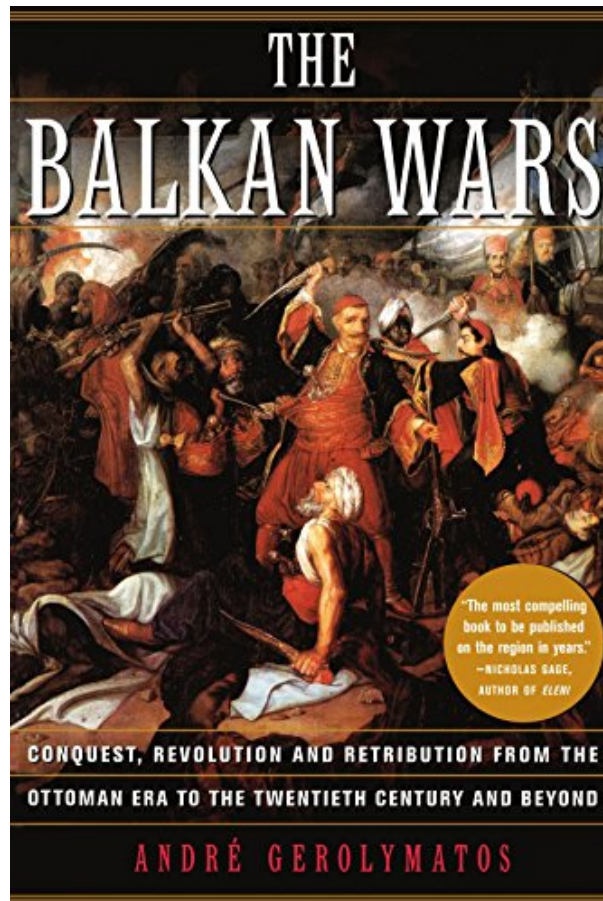
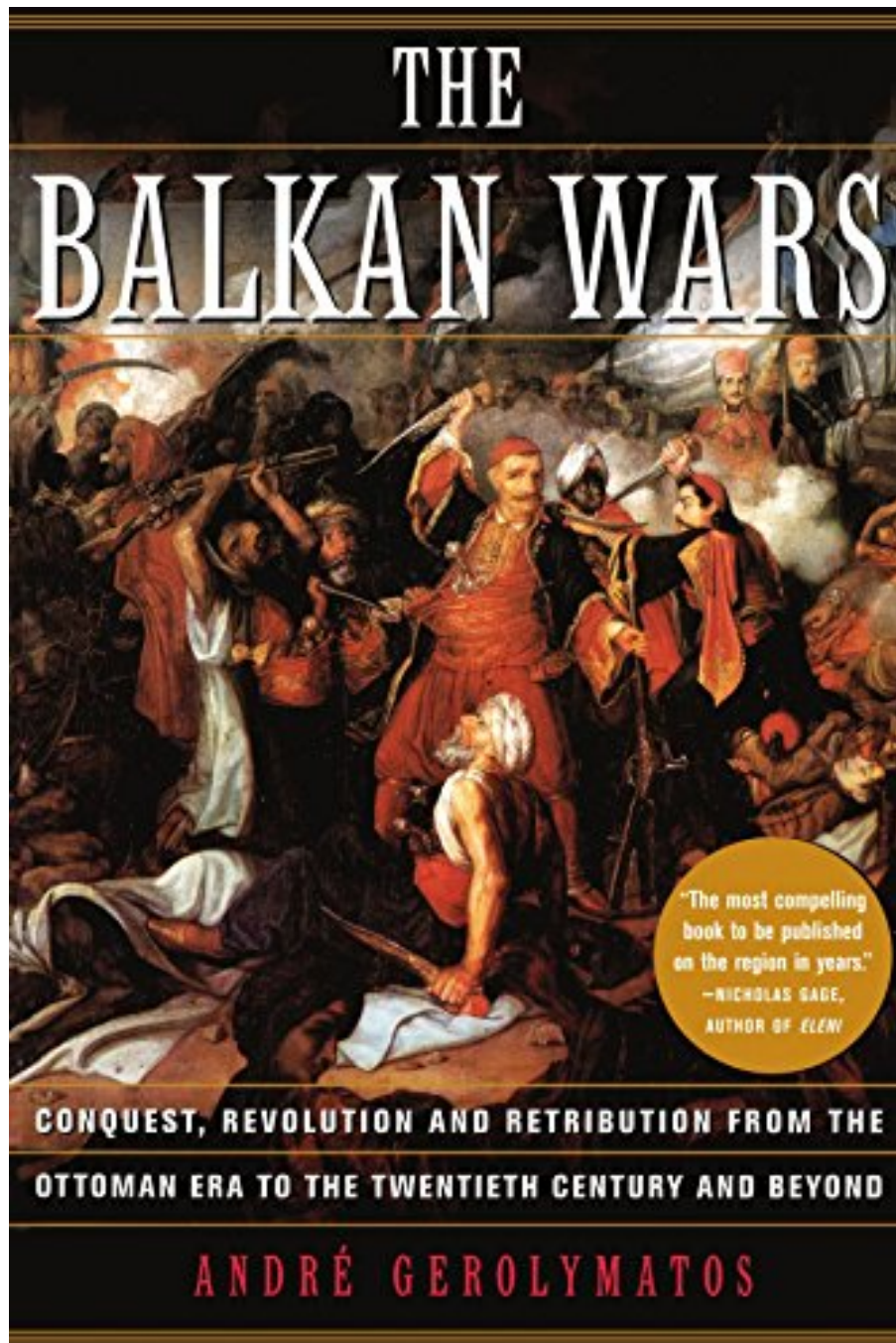


THE BALKAN WARS BY ANDRE GEROLYMATOS



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Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia. Today's headlines could have been written in the 1800s or in the 1400s. Conflict has raged unabated in the Balkans for hundreds of years and always, writes historian André Gerolymatos, over the same tired issues: nationalism and religion.

"Post-Cold War Europe and North America are at a complete loss to understand why these small countries are hostages to the past and seem so willing to fight the same battles all over again," writes Gerolymatos. This book attempts to offer answers, as Gerolymatos explores the ethnic and religious tensions that plague the peninsula--and that have been used by foreign powers (whether Ottomans, Hapsburgs, or NATO) to extend their hold on the Balkans. Along the way he examines events that have little meaning for outsiders, but that have signal importance for the region: the Battle of Kosovo and the strategically more significant Battle of Marica, the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in 1914, the collapse of Yugoslavia. Gerolymatos offers a useful essay for anyone who would seek to understand contemporary events in southeastern Europe, events with deep and bitter roots. --Gregory McNamee

From Booklist

The ethnic hatreds, war, and near genocide that have destroyed the former Yugoslavia over the past decade have their roots in events, perceptions, and myths that go back at least seven centuries. Gerolymatos, professor of Hellenic studies at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, has written a stimulating, engrossing, but ultimately discouraging history of the Balkan peoples since the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. In that battle, the flower of Serbian aristocracy fell to the onslaught of the Ottoman Turks; the resultant myths and hatreds that grew out of that defeat have inspired nationalist fervor and stoked ethnic hostilities up to the present time. Gerolymatos is a fine writer who interweaves fascinating vignettes about quirky personalities into the broader narrative, and his readers learn a great deal about the basis of the ethnic hatreds that still dominate the region. Yet, as Gerolymatos implies, knowledge of the causes is not enough to foster understanding, since the people of the Balkans seem willing to remain imprisoned by their past. Jay Freeman
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THE BALKAN WARS BY ANDRE GEROLYMATOS PDF

In this riveting new history of the Balkan peoples, André Gerolymatos explores how ancient events engendered cultural myths that evolved over time, gaining strength in the collective consciousnesses of Orthodox Christians and Muslims alike. In colorful detail, we meet the key figures that instigated and perpetuated these myths--assassin/heroes such as Milos Obolic and Gavrilo Princip and warlords such as Ali Pasha. This lively survey of centuries of strife finally puts the modern conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo into historical context, and provides a long overdue account of the origins of ethnic hatred and warmongering in this turbulent land.

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- Original language: English
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- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .83" w x 6.00" l, 1.10 pounds
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- 320 pages

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An impressive contribution to European History Studies

By Midwest Book Review

The Balkan Wars: Conquest, Revolution, And Retributions From The Ottoman Era To The Twentieth Century And Beyond by Andre Gerolymatos (Chair of Hellenic Studies, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada) is an intensely detailed chronology of bloodshed and territorial strife in the Balkans, ranging from the excesses and outrages of Ottoman era to the genocides of the twentieth century including the recent brutalities of "ethnic cleansing". Focusing primarily on the clashes between different ethnic groups over land (sea battles, according to the author, deserve separate and more detailed treatment), The Balkan Wars strives not only to present a straightforward account of a history free from exaggeration or myth making, and also answers core questions about the roots of the wars and ethnic violence that have habitually plagued the people of this land. The Balkan Wars is very highly recommended reading and an impressive contribution to European History Studies.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Vivid account of a tumultuous region

By A Customer

This is a fascinating and well-researched historical account of the Balkan region and how its legends and myths have fueled the historic and ongoing barbarity. Because of this focus, the author has chosen to organize the book thematically rather than chronologically, and I think the results are compelling. By examining each of the different cultural, religious, and political aspects and organizing the historical events and personages as evidence/illustration of what he's talking about, the author gives the reader a chance to more fully understand the complexity of the hatreds that have plagued these peoples for hundreds of years.

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

The Balkan Wars

By J. Lindner

Certain populations seem destined for greatness. Others seemed forever cursed by their very existence. Unfortunately for residents of Southeast Europe, the latter is much more the case than the former. In his important work The Balkan Wars, Andre Gerolymatos illustrates how war and brutality have made life for Balkan residents as bleak as their geographical landscape.

Gerolymatos randomly moves between the recent past and distant history to show how little has changed in the psyche of Balkan soldiers. Brutal murder and rape are not new concepts to the region. Ethnic cleansing is not a new concept, and has been around since Christian and Muslim first fought over disputed territory. Political upheaval through assassination, and suppression of nationalism through dehumanizing acts of violence, span the centuries in this war-torn region. The Great Powers are in part responsible as their only interests in this part of Europe seem to be when geopolitics suits their needs.

Gerolymatos covers his subject well, though he may give too much credit to Austria-Hungary as a true world power, and he rarely fails to mention the role sex played in the material he covers. He offers solid evidence of the role the Eastern Orthodox Church played in its unique position of dominance within a Muslim

imperial capitol city. Maps would have made the book more easily understood, but careful reading reveals the deep knowledge the author has of the subject.

This book is ready to take a prominent role in works on this subject, and offers some of the better details of the 1912-3 Balkan Wars that set the stage for World War One.

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