



The Balkans and the Byzantine World before and after the Captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453 (Byzantium: A European Empire and Its Legacy)

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This book represents the first attempt to analyze historical and cultural developments in late medieval and early modern southeastern Europe as a set of mutually intertwined regional histories, burdened by the strong dichotomy between the almighty center—Constantinople—and the periphery that is rarely visible in both contemporary sources and modern scholarship. This mosaic of original studies is devoted to various regions of the Byzantine Balkans and their historical, artistic, and ideological idiosyncrasies, mirroring the complex character and composite and fragmented structure of this vast region. The focal points of the book are the two captures of Constantinople in 1204 and 1453, and the contributors analyze the significance of these catastrophic events on the political destiny of medieval Balkan societies, the mechanisms of adapting to the new political order, and the ever-present interconnectedness of a lower, regional elite across southeastern Europe that had remained strong even after the Ottoman conquest.



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Editorial Review

Review

This volume, composed of contributions by an international team of established scholars as well as rising figures in Southeast European historical studies, demonstrates the value of abandoning a center-periphery view of the Byzantine world in favor of a regional investigation of southeastern Europe across the traumatic divide that was the Latin conquest of Constantinople. (Patrick J. Geary, Institute for Advanced Study)

These essays chart the ebb and flow of the gravitational pull that Byzantium exerted on the Balkans between the two conquests of Constantinople. They reveal the complex world that had always existed beneath the empire's centralizing aspirations, a multipolar and eventually post-Byzantine world. This timely collection explores the political, religious, artistic, and social history of the fascinating microcosms that emerged in the interval between empires. Written by both new and established scholars from the regions in question, this richly documented book makes the latest developments in Balkan research available to the English-speaking world and offers new interpretations of texts, events, and controversies. (Anthony Kaldellis, Ohio State University)

This is a new and dynamic approach to the relationship between Byzantium and its Balkan neighbors. Instead of seeing the history of these medieval Orthodox Slavic states as only explainable through their relation to the Byzantine imperial center, the contributions in this book place emphasis on their own agency in the political and cultural sphere. The plurality of the questions raised in this volume will undoubtedly contribute to new readings of this turbulent period in the history of Southeastern Europe between the fragmentation of political space as a result of the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and the reinstatement of a powerful centralized state under the Ottomans by 1500. This book examines an astonishing variety of materials from frescoes to liturgical manuscripts and from land ownership to heraldry. Most is little known and will therefore be very useful to scholars who work on questions of center and periphery in the pre-modern world. This is a new approach that emphasizes the emergence of regionalism in the area, of multiple, interconnected centers whose trajectories are independent and often unpredictable despite not being entirely free of the hegemonic Byzantine discourse. (Dionysios Stathakopoulos, King's College London)

About the Author

Vlada Stankovi? is professor of Byzantine studies and director of the Center for Cypriot Studies at the University of Belgrade.

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