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ing from the nature of an edited volume. However, along with all praises, there is a reason for some critical remarks. Thus, for example, a Serbian reader, especially the one interested in art history, might object to the poor presence of Serbian history topics, especially those concerning the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Even though such an objection might be described away as sentimental, it seems that it should be expressed nonetheless, along with drawing the attention to a number of studies by Serbian scholars that demonstrate the considerable importance of the “Serbian-Byzantine” and “neo-Byzantine” styles in the Serbian art and architecture of the late modern

and more recent periods.¹ The intention of this criticism, to be sure, is not to devalue an impressive scholarly endeavour, the contents of which we have sought to review in a general manner.

¹ For this particular occasion, one should mention only the most recent books which include relevant bibliographies: M. Jovanović, *Srpsko crkveno graditeljstvo i slikarstvo novijeg doba* (Belgrade 2007²); A. Kadijević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX – sredina XX veka)* (Belgrade 2007²); N. Makuljević, *Crkvena umetnost u Kraljevini Srbiji (1882–1914)* (Belgrade 2007).

STEFAN ROHDEWALD, *GÖTTER DER NATIONEN: RELIGIÖSE ERINNERUNGSFIGUREN IN SERBIEN, BULGARIEN UND MAKEDONIEN BIS 1944*. COLOGNE – WEIMAR – VIENNA: BÖHLAU VERLAG, 2014, 905 p.

Reviewed by Dušan Fundić* and Marija Vasiljević**

Stefan Rohdewald, Professor of Southeast European History at the University of Giessen, Germany, has since 2013 been co-editor of several publications that deal with various aspects of Eastern and Southeast European history: *Das osmanische Europa. Methoden und Perspektiven der Frühneuezeitforschung zu Südosteuropa*, eds. A. Helmedach et al. (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2014); *Religiöse Erinnerungsorte in Ostmitteleuropa. Konstitution und Konkurrenz im nationen- und epochenübergreifenden Zugriff*, eds. J. Bahlcke, S. and T. Wünsch (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013); *Litauen und Ruthenien. Studien zu einer transkulturellen Kommunikationsregion (15.-18. Jahrhundert)/Lithuania and Ruthenia. Studies of a Transcultural Communication Zone (15th–18th Centuries)*, eds. S. Rohdewald, D. Frick and S. Wiederkehr (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007).

His main areas of interest are discourses of remembrance, relations between European East and West in technology, science and sports, transculturality and transconfessionality.

The subject of the book reviewed here is the role of religious figures in the consolidation, transformation and restoration of collective identities from the middle ages to the middle of the twentieth century. Yet, the study is especially focused on the remembrance of particular figures during the formation of the independent states of Serbia and

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Bulgaria and its impact on the sense of national cohesion and allegiance. It may be pertinent to note that the name Macedonia in the book's title is bound to create confusion because it is the ancient name of a geographical region. A political entity under that name was formed only in 1945 (the People's, later Socialist, Republic of Macedonia) within communist Yugoslavia. The use of the name in reference to periods prior to 1945 creates additional confusion because the geographical region of Macedonia was part of several countries and empires, including medieval Serbia and Bulgaria. A portion of it was part of the Kingdom of Serbia from 1912 and of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from its creation in 1918.

The research is set in a regional post-Ottoman but also a wider European context in order to reassess the notion of the uniqueness of the case in question. The book is divided into seven parts designated with the letters A to G. Introduction (A) is accompanied by a review of the current state of research. It is followed by three central chapters (B–D) in which the author outlines his view of the problem and identifies three distinctive stages in the role of saintly figures of memory: Religious figures of memory until the eighteenth century; The invention of European Christian nations to overcome the “Asiatic yoke”: the long nineteenth century; and Mobilisation and sacralisation of the nation through religious memories (1918–1944). In these chapters, the author conducts a comparative analysis of the way in which local figures of memory are viewed in contemporary Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia. Detailed Conclusion (E) sums up the main findings put forth in the previous chapters. Given at the end of this extensive study are Bibliography (F) and Index (G).

The first chapter deals with a long period from the first South Slavic saints until the eighteenth century. The reason

for condensing such a long period of time into some hundred pages lies in the goal of the book: its main concern is the long nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. From that perspective, it has become possible to see nearly a whole millennium as a single, first, phase. The religious figures of memory are traced back to their origin, which is their inclusion among the saints. Consequently, the goal is to present the formation of saintly cults in their original historical context and in the first centuries of veneration. The author begins with the first Slavic saints in the Balkans, such as Sts Cyril and Methodius, St Clement of Ohrid, St Naum, Sts Boris and Peter, St Petka/Paraskevi, St John of Rila. The Serbian cults that are included are those of St John Vladimir, St Symeon (Stefan Nemanja), St Sava, the Nemanjić dynasty and, finally, St Lazar and the despots of the house of Branković. The examination of the cults is based on the texts written for the veneration of saints and, for later periods, historiographical works such as chronicles and annals, as well as epic poems. The vast chronological span and the complexity of the subject inevitably led to some shortcomings. One of them is an oversimplification of research questions, which has made it possible for the author to outline the examined cults. Another stems from the fact that an ample relevant literature which would have contributed to a deeper understanding of the problems under study has been left out.¹ If such flaws can be ex-

¹ Only a few works the peruse of which would have greatly contributed to this part of the book will be mentioned. The author obviously knows of Rade Mihaljević but passes over his book that deals with the formation of the Kosovo myth: *Junaci Kosovske legende* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989); and he seems unaware of Svetlana Tomin's

pected in an undertaking of such scale, what should not be expected is the failure to use rulers' charters as a source for the memory of saints given that they exemplify the use of saintly cults for ideological purposes. There are sixteenth-century Serbian documents of that nature which could have been used for this part of the study. The author's stronger reliance on the very fruitful scholarly tradition of studying and interpreting this kind of documents could have made it much better.² Nonetheless, the main directions of the development of memories of saints in the middle and early modern ages have been observed, which has provided a basis for further analysis. What may be seen as a merit of this chapter is that it introduces South Slavic figures of memory of the period in question to German-speaking readers.

After the introductory chapter, which seeks to give an overview of the cults of saints as a "symbolic capital", Rohdewald examines the most significant and popular ones. He discusses the ways in which the saints became religious figures of memory in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. The period of the creation and further development of nation-states can be described as marked by two major trends. In the context of nineteenth-century nationalism, the

important study on one of the last sainted members of the Branković family: *Vladika Maksim Branković* (Novi Sad: Platoneum, 2007). The author should have drawn more on several works by Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić and Miroslav Timotijević which are highly pertinent to the subject of his book.

² To mention but one monumental book that should not have been overlooked: S. Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarska ideologija Nemanjića. Diplomatička studija* (Belgrade: SKZ & Clio, 1997).

process of secularisation of saints takes place, while the period of 1918–1944 is marked by the sacralisation of the nation. These processes were championed and carried out by historians, journalists, politicians, statesmen and higher clergy through various associations and media. The essential goal of their endeavour was a rapid and energetic break with the Ottoman legacy. This kind of approach offers the reader an insight into the author's overall claims as regards the role of religious figures in the process of achieving political and social unity in Serbian and Bulgarian communities.

Throughout the book, the most influential religious figures of memory are comparatively analysed in Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian territories. The leading "secularised" saints in Serbia and Bulgaria were St Sava and St John of Rila respectively. Having been raised to the status of a national patron by the Serbs of Southern Hungary in the Habsburg Monarchy, St Sava became the patron saint of education in the Kingdom of Serbia in 1894. In the narrative of Bulgarian national ideology St John of Rila was elevated to a similar status, while the region of Rila was, since the 1860s, promoted as a "holy place" to all Bulgarians.

Another comparative analysis is focused on the legitimisation of the modern Bulgarian and Serbian dynasties which sought to strengthen their position and prestige through their imagined connection with medieval ruling families. The Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael was celebrated as the "creator of Bulgarian nationality", while in Serbia the Nemanjić dynasty was promoted as the predecessor of the new ruling dynasties. One of the earliest examples in modern Serbian history is the use of St Stefan the First-Crowned for the political mobilisation of the population in the early phases of the Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire. Religious figures

of memory could have been used as a means of justifying national assimilation. In order to legitimise their occupation of Macedonia in 1916 the Bulgarians celebrated St Clement of Ohrid as the “Alpha and Omega of Bulgarian character”. A similar method was used during the Bulgarian occupation of the same territory in 1941–1944.

After 1918 in both the Serbian and Bulgarian cases discourses of ideologisation, militarisation and sacralisation of the nation formed part of a widespread, “pan-European” phenomenon. The already mentioned process of de-Ottomanisation continued after the demise of the empire throughout the twentieth century. In addition to the Serbian and Bulgarian cases the author briefly looks at the publications of exiled Macedonian nationalists who sought to promote a rivalling discourse of their own. In order to underline the most important aspects of the politics of memory in twentieth-century Bulgaria and the newly-created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia) Rohdewald continues to use the approach of selecting memory discourses on the religious figures which he considers the most influential. St Sava (“svetosavlje”) and the perpetuation of the Kosovo myth now existed in a context that was broader and more complex than it had been in the pre-1914 Kingdom of Serbia. As a culmination of Kosovo discourse in Yugoslavia, the author points out the commemoration of the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1939. In Bulgaria, St Clement, Sts Cyril and Methodius and St John of Rila continued to be in the centre of a discursive narrative of religious memory figures. There is also an interesting analysis of the promotion of the Bulgarian ruler Boris III as a “God-sent leader”.

The author is of the view that there is a continuity of the role of religious fi-

gures of memory since the time of their creation in the middle ages. This view is disputable because as extensive a geographical, chronological and thematic research framework as the one the author chose to tackle but focusing on one particular period tends to lose sight of or ignore changes the veneration of saints and later religious figures of memory underwent in response to changing times and needs, religious, political, ideological, social and other (for instance, the concept of legitimacy of power is historically highly variable). As a consequence, by organising the book in the way he did and with its last pages the author seems to imply that the extreme nationalism of the 1980s and 1990s had its roots in the middle ages or in the early modern period. Such conclusions tend to lead to one-dimensional understanding of the topics that are very complex and require a more in-depth and balanced scholarly approach.

On the other hand, this kind of research is much needed because there are not many studies that deal with this topic in Southeast European historiographies. One of Rohdewald’s relevant conclusions, and one that will be useful for further research, is that a connection between modern national identity, politics and religion is not an Eastern European but a common European phenomenon. This is the reason why much of further research should be conducted using the comparative method.