Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question by Victor Roudometof. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002. (265pp., hardcover, $88.95)

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There have been two central Macedonian Questions in the 20th century. In the pre-1945 period and especially in 1913, when the relatively new nation-states of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece defeated the Ottoman Empire and began dividing geographical Macedonia amongst them, the question was to which of these three nation-states would the inhabitants of this region be drawn? Each nation-state attempted alternately to woo and coerce the inhabitants into their national camp through acculturation campaigns, violence, the establishment of schools, and control over religious institutions. In the end, the national narratives of the three powers appealed to too few of the inhabitants in the Macedonian region and alienated many.

As a result, the faint voice of a Macedonian nationalist movement, which had existed at least since the formation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) in 1893 and had found its loudest voice in the 1903 Ilinden Uprising, was heard again toward the end of World War II. This Macedonian national identity then established itself more firmly in the

post-1945 Yugoslav federal state, which granted Macedonians the status of a nation within the federation. Nonetheless, this national narrative remains *contested today*, as testified to by the difficulties that the newly independent Macedonian state has faced since independence from the Yugoslav federation in 1991.

Roudometof examines both of these periods in Macedonian history and situates his work in the literature on the social construction of nationalism and collective memory. He examines the development of the Macedonian identity over time, an identity whose boundaries, like all national identities, are defined by what he calls the "national narrative." The national narrative strives to define the origins of the people, to trace their unbroken and continuous existence through time, to chart their rise and fall, and to give an overarching meaning to their historical trajectory (8). Macedonian nationalists have tried to write this "natural" history of the nation. Writers held within the power structures of the Greek and Bulgarian national narratives deny the very existence of Macedonians, claiming that the people are simply Bulgarians or western Bulgarians. This is a defensive move by both states to deny the existence of a Macedonian national minority within their territory. In contrast, Roudometof writes of how we came to even talk of "a Macedonian history" today as a discursive object of inquiry. He uses Michel Foucault's archeology of knowledge approach to writing a genealogy of Macedonia and its various people. In contrast to the nationalist narratives, Roudometof writes a genealogy of Macedonia as a contested symbol.

Take for example the 1903 Ilinden Uprising. Something happened but what? Who revolted against whom and for what end? For Greek historiography, the uprising was not a Macedonian uprising (as the Greek national narrative consistently tries to suppress any talk of Macedonian nationalism to defend Greece's claim to Aegean Macedonia), but rather a Bulgarian revolt against the Ottomans (68). For Macedonian nationalists within the socialist Yugoslav federation, the uprising formed the core of their claim to have been a people suppressed and threatened by neighboring nationalities (59). In the Yugoslav framework, the failure of the uprising, compared to the success of the communists in 1944, showed the bourgeois-democratic roots of the revolt, which was out of touch with the people (61). These are examples of different narratives of the same event.

The philosopher of history F.R. Ankersmit has argued that as one moves from clearly defined historical statements (when, where) toward the creation of narrative substance (why, and in this case even the "who" is contested) and a picture of the past, politics and power necessarily begin to seep in to the writing of history. Roudometof uses Foucault and the theoretical literature generated by scholars writing on collective memory to theorize about this difficulty in representing the past, and by extension the nation. Toward this end, it would be useful to look further at the relationship and commonality between collective memory scholarship and the writings of philosophers of history such as F.R. Ankersmit and Hayden White.

Roudometof's work is a unique contribution to the literature on Macedonia and its people, however defined. Little is available on the Macedonian Questions in English, and Roudometof's placement of his work outside of the knowledge/power nexus of the region is most welcomed. One of the most striking aspects of the work is to note the difficulties local commentators and scholars have in trying to write outside or against their own national narratives. Roudometof gives ample examples of how limited and narrowly defined discussions of "Macedonia" and "Macedonians" are within the different national contexts, with many specific examples related to the production of knowledge in Greece and Macedonia.

The book deserves a readership beyond regional specialists. Those interested in the social construction of nationalism literature will find this a very stimulating case to examine, even if their primary geographical interests lie elsewhere. For those unfamiliar with the region, it could be useful to start with Mark Mazower's *The Balkans: A Short History* (2002), to help gain an overview of the region, as the text assumes some knowledge of the region and its broader historical development.