

*Istorija na Makedonskiot Narod**, volume I. A cooperative work published under the auspices of the National Historical Institution of Skoplje. Skoplje, 1969+ Pp. 346, 19 illustrations, 15 in black and white and 4 in color+2 maps.

This is the first volume of a general history of the Slavs of Macedonia published under the auspices of the National Historical Institute of Skoplje and written by a number of scholars of Yugoslav Macedonia. It is designed for the general public and its objective is no doubt to strengthen the awareness of the Slavs of Yugoslav Macedonia of their existence as a distinct nation. It is therefore of considerable importance because it may help to create attitudes and beliefs which may affect all the people of the Balkan peninsula.

The present volume covers the period from the most ancient times to the end of the eighteenth century. It is divided into four sections and each section into several chapters. From the point of view of the competence of the reviewer the most interesting sections are the first three. The first deals with ancient Macedonia, its geography and prehistory; the formation, consolidation, and expansion of the ancient Macedonian state; and finally its conquest by the Romans and Macedonia as a Roman province or Roman provinces. The second and third sections have as their subject the historical and cultural evolution of the Slavs in Macedonia. They include the following topics: the original habitat and early history of the Slavs; their appearance in the Balkan peninsula; their struggle with the Byzantines and their relations with the Avars; their economy and social organization; their settlement in Macedonia; their attempts to take Thessalonica; their weapons and military organization; the extension of the authority of Byzantium or that of the Bulgars over them; Christianity and the development of letters among them; the origin and spread of the Bogomiles; the kingdom of Samuel; Macedonia under Byzantine administration; the revolts against the Byzantines; Normans, Serbs, and Crusaders (First Crusade) in Macedonia; Macedonia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, political, economic and social conditions; the Serbs (Dushan) in Macedonia, the decline of their power and the conquest of Macedonia by the Ottomans. The point is made that the dominant element of the population of Macedonia was neither Greek, nor Serbian, nor Bulgarian, but constituted a distinct nationality, the Macedonian. The fourth section of the book deals with

*I do not read Slavic, but because of my interest in the subject I had the volume read to me by John Papadrianos when I was in Thessaloniki in July 1972.

Macedonia under Turkish domination to the end of the eighteenth century.

Thus the bulk of the volume deals with ancient Macedonia and the Macedonia in the Middle Ages. There is no need here to analyse in detail what the authors of the work say about the ancient Macedonians. Suffice to point out that they have reduced to the minimum, and essentially to externals, their connection with the Greeks, which in itself is a commentary on the general orientation of the work. Nor is it necessary to look into every detail, even though some of them are subject to criticism, which the authors have brought forth in the course of their narrative on the historical and cultural evolution of the Slavs in Macedonia. These details are well known. Indeed, as one reads the narrative one easily recognizes the sources on which it is based. Moreover, one gets the distinct impression that the work is a scholarly composition, an objective reconstruction of the historical and cultural evolution of the Slavs in Macedonia.

Yet there is something deceptive in the work. The deception does not lie in the stating or lack of stating on what the sources report or in the Marxist orientation of the work. It lies rather in the general tone of the work and its basic underlying idea. For in fact one can hardly speak of a Macedonian nation, certainly not after the destruction of the ancient Macedonian state. Even the ancient Macedonians, whatever their racial origins or the original nature of their language, early in their history became closely related to the Greeks, in time became identified with them and to the extent that they survived the collapse of the ancient world, they survived as Greeks just as the Illyrians survived as Albanians and the Daco-Thracians as Vlachs. Any view to the contrary needs to be demonstrated scientifically. Slavs, of course, came into Macedonia and came apparently in considerable numbers, but at no time during the Middle Ages did they constitute a specific "Macedonian" nation. Those who had settled in the coastal regions very early came under the effective jurisdiction of the Byzantine empire and in time most of them became hellenized, those who had settled in the interior were given their political and cultural orientation by the Bulgarians. They constituted in fact a part of the Bulgarian kingdom and nation. The assumption of the authors that the kingdom of Samuel was "Macedonian" and not Bulgarian in character has, of course, certainly in so far as one can judge from the sources, no basis in fact. The historian can understand, and even sympathize with, the desire of the Slavs of Yugoslav Macedonia to trace their

roots as a distinct nation deep into the distant past, but he cannot condone the artificial creation of any such root.

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Erich Trapp, *Digenes Akrites: Synoptische Ausgabe der ältesten Versionen*. (Wiener byzantinistische Studien Band VIII, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Kommission für Byzantinistik. Institut für Byzantinistik der Universität Wien. Wien 1971. Pp. 393.

Since the publication in 1875 of the Trebizond version of *Digenes Akrites* a number of studies have been devoted to that Byzantine epic. This was especially true for the period between the two great wars when men of the calibre of St. Kyriakides, Henri Grégoire and others made it an important objective of their investigations. In the meantime the other versions of the poem, including the Slavonic translation and the version in prose, were made available. Then in 1941 P. P. Kalonaros gave us a critical edition in two volumes of the Athens (Andros), Grottaferrata, and Escorial versions, plus a translation in modern Greek of the Slavonic version and a number of the Akritic songs.

In the preface to his edition Kalonaros writes: "The present edition of the texts of the Akrites epic is neither the perfect nor the definitive "synoptic" one which has been promised long ago and perhaps one day will be presented by more competent and knowledgeable scholars than the undersigned." Who was the scholar who had promised to bring out a "synoptic" edition of the Akrites epic Kalonaros does not say, but that promise has now been fulfilled by the appearance of Trapp's book.

Trapp's edition consists of a text, labeled Z, which is essentially the version of Athens; full references to the corresponding passages in the other versions, including Z when there is a repeat, and to the sources of the tale; and the presentation in full of the passages drawn from the other versions, notably the Escorial and the Grottaferrata which relate the tale more fully than is the case in Z. Trapp has thus produced an edition