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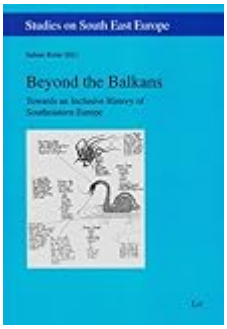

Sabine Rutar. *Beyond the Balkans: Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe.* Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013. 499 S. $74.95 (paper), ISBN 978-3-643-10658-2.

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Sammelrez: Südosteuropa transnational

The ambition of âInstitutionen und Kultur in SÃ¼dosteuropaâ is a conceptual-methodological and thematic extension of interdisciplinary Southeast European Studies. Appearing in the yearbook series of the SÃ¼dosteuropa-Gesellschaft, this German-language volume is based on discussions originally pursued during the 49th week-long international meeting (Hochschulwoche) of the Society held in Tutzing in October 2010. Drawing primarily on current trends in historical scholarship and political science, studies included in the volume employ and often combine comparative and transnational approaches, offering several sophisticated analyses of entangled histories and transfer processes in particular.

Several of the contributions identify competitions between various models and numerous potential paths. They trace in detail how transfers â mostly to, occasionally from or within Southeast Europe â depended on the activities of specific mediators. Transfers may also have gone through transformative intermediary stages, resulting in âconsiderate adaptationsâ and high levels of hybridity. Rather ironically, various Southeast European elite groups nonetheless cherished optimistic expectations towards the possibility of complete transfer from an imagined and often idealized West â a naive expectation subsequently debunked in infamous âDefizitgeschichtenâ. As the volume perceptively remarks, it was arguably the belief in wholesale reception resulting from the purported teleology and universalism of modernization which would lead, in a dialectical fashion, to such negative evaluations of Southeast European history.

Instead of perpetuating generalized contrasts between âmodelâ and ârecipientâ countries that would only help reproduce presuppositions of Southeast Europeâs permanent backwardness, editors Wim van Meurs and Dietmar MÃ¼ller suggest dissecting the shape and im-

pact of entangled local institutions while also analyzing the motivations, opportunities and practices of transnationally embedded actors. As van Meurs and MÃ¼ller conceive of it, research on the history of Southeast European institutions would need to incorporate cultural historical insights, especially those derived from new cultural histories of the political (Kulturgeschichte des Politischen). The agenda thus formulated relates to both imaginaries and structural determinants and promises to more fully capture the fraught interactions between modern institutions and citizens in Southeast Europe.

As the editors rightly emphasize, research into the judiciaries and especially the executive authorities in Southeast Europe had only rarely gone beyond the somewhat narrow interests of legal historians and specialists of administration. They can thus identify a wide range of opportunities for original research. More concretely, individual studies in the volume address specific institutions while the volume as a whole remains thematically broad. Innovative impulses are found in empirical researches on such diverse themes as citizenship (Constantin Iordachi), property relations (Dietmar MÃ¼ller), social security (Jovica LukoviÄ), corruption (Tina Olteanu) or psychiatry (Heike Karge), and their concurrent reflections on broader questions of belonging, legal expectations, economic reproduction, international regulations or discourses on health.

Heike Kargeâs insightful analysis of the establishment and transformation of South Slavic psychiatry (âPsychiatrischer Institutionenaufbau und sozialmedizinische Diskurse in Kroation-Slawonien und Serbien um 1900â) amounts to one of the key contributions. It reveals a frightening level of politically motivated adaptability of discourses and institutions. At the same time, Karge emphasizes that its conspicuous flexibility actually makes Southeast European psychiatry all but exceptional in its all-European context. Further highlights of the volume include Diana Mishkovaâs reflections on the transfer of 19th century liberal ideas and institutions (âDer Transfer politischer Ideen und Institutionen. Eine sÃ¼dosteuropÃ¤ische Perspectiveâ), which reveals the creativity and originality of Southeast European responses to the emergence of modernity with particular force. Mishkovaâs contribution also explains that the great local debate concerning the benefits and costs of development, the character of modernity and the goals of modernization was pursued between actors articulating complex, hybrid and at times rather paradoxical positions that disable any facile dichotomization of âmodern Westernizersâ and âtraditional autochtonistsâ.

The need to develop adequate concepts for a truly inclusive comparative history of Europe may be mentioned on the pages of the first volume under review here but the matter is treated in greater depth in the altogether nineteen contributions of the second one. If anything, the contributors of this major bilingual, primarily English collection aim more consciously at addressing subjects and presenting empirical findings that are of relevance in an all-European or even global framework to thereby help integrate a region that has all too often been excluded from wider considerations. Such a marked emphasis, reflected also in the title âBeyond the Balkansâ, may in part be the consequence of the original, January 2007 setting of the project when historians of Southeast Europe and Western Europe first gathered at the Institute for Social Movements in Bochum to launch dialogues about the current possibilities of historiographical integration.

Accordingly, in her substantial, though somewhat polemical editorial introduction, Sabine Rutar explores how mental maps favoring Western Europe continue to condition scholarly conceptualizations of the continentâs history. Claiming that the study of Western European societies would require references to Eastern Europe just as regularly as it is already the case the other way round, Rutar pleads for symmetry between large European regions in the name of their notable differences. However, besides such a powerful plea by the editor, contributors to âBeyond the Balkansâ often rather ambition a de-essentialization of spatial categories and recurrently reflect on the various scales of their historical analyses.

Beyond some overlap between the groups of authors, there is clearly much overlap of purpose between these two recent volumes on Southeast Europe. Perhaps most crucially, the scholarship assembled in âBeyond the Balkansâ also aims to show the potential inherent in comparative and entangled histories while focusing ample attention on questions of transfer and agency. The volume edited by Sabine Rutar offers some nuanced meta-reflections too while it also draws on a substantially larger corpus of original research than its shorter counterpart. Rutarâs volume is, however, not only a more richly rewarding collection, but a thematically even more diverse one than van Meursâ and MÃ¼llerâs. It covers a broad variety of topics in military, economic, media, labor and urban history with individual contributions addressing questions such as nationalism and imperialism, ethnicity and religion, democratization and dictatorship, collaboration and resistance, citizenship and state building, cultural reference systems and practices of remem-

brance, etc. â as Rutar rightly remarks, gender and womenâs history may well be the most significant omission.

The first part of the volume reflects on metahistorical issues in particular, such as the space and time constitution in Southeast European history on different scales (Diana Mishkova), the formation of nationalism in this part of the world in a global frame (John Breuilly), or certain elective affinities between the new Southeast European states and the declining Ottoman Empire (Vangelis Kechriotis). The second part in turn analyzes historical agency and âEigen-Sinnâ, drawing, among others, on varied sources in the history of labor (Sabine Rutar), the social history of peasants (Stefano Petrungaro), or imperial military history (Y. Hakan Erdem). The third part then addresses the construction and articulation of meaning, focusing on themes such as the media transfer of ideology (Stefan Ihrig), discourses and practices of veneration (Stefan Rohdewald), or alternative cultures under dictatorship (Amaia Lamikiz Jauregiondo).

âBeyond the Balkansâ admittedly offers a colorful spectrum of themes with more profound connections between the individual studies found rather on a methodological level. Falling short of being a thematically focused volume, it is through the quality of many of its individual contributions and their refined methodological choices that this volume truly integrates Southeast Europe into wider currents of European and global historical scholarship. This may not be sufficient to fulfill all its high ambitions, but the volume certainly makes a step in the right direction â something it eminently shares with âInstitutionen und Kultur in SÃ¼dosteuropaâ.

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