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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Noel Malcolm. *Bosnia: A Short History.* New York: New York University Press, 1994. xxiv + 340 pp. $26.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8147-5520-4.

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Published on HABSBURG (July, 1995)

Noel Malcolm, a former editor of the *Spectator* and currently a political commentator for London's *Daily Telegraph*, has undertaken to write a political and social history of Bosnia. According the book jacket, this work is the "first-ever full history of Bosnia", and it fulfills a need in light of the fighting that is taking place in Bosnia today. The motivation of this work is to place the current conflict in Bosnia-Hercegovina in the proper historical perspective. Specifically, Malcolm seeks to clarify the competing myths of the racial, religious and political history put forth by each side in the conflict. In his introduction, Malcolm writes that

the war...has added two melancholy reasons for examining its history more closely: the first is the need to understand the origins of the fighting and the second is the need to dispel some of the clouds of misunderstanding, deliberate myth-making, and sheer ignorance in which all discussion of Bosnia and its history had become shrouded. (Malcolm, p. xix)

The work is divided into the following sixteen chapters:

1. Race, Myths and Origins: Bosnia to 1180 2. The Medieval Bosnian State, 1180-1463 3. The Bosnian Church 4. War and the Ottoman System, 1463-1606 5. The Islamicization of Bosnia 6. Serbs and Vlachs 7. War and Politics in Ottoman Bosnia, 1606-1815 8. Economic Life, Culture and Society in Ottoman Bosnia, 1606-1815 9. The Jews and Gypsies of Bosnia 10. Resistance and Reform, 1815-1878 11. Bosnia under Austro-Hungarian Rule, 1878-1914 12. War and the Kingdom: Bosnia 1914-1941 13. Bosnia and the Second World War, 1941-1945 14. Bosnia in Titoist Yugoslavia, 1945-1989 15. Bosnia and the Death of Yugoslavia: 1989-1992 16. The Destruction of Bosnia: 1992-1993

The layout of the book is such that the reader is given a clear understanding of the course of Bosnian history. The historical progression helps to give an understanding of the development of the cultural, social, religious and political identity of Bosnia. The thesis of this work is that you need to understand the history of the Bosnia to understand the current conflict in Bosnia. The chapters present this information in self-contained, digestible chunks of information.

One element within each chapter, and one of the strengths of the work, is that when Malcolm presents an idea or a concept, such as the arrivals of Vlachs, he then ties it into the current conflict as a way of making historical fact immediate to today's situation. In this way, the reader is given the historical knowledge necessary to consider the claims and counter claims of each side in the Bosnian war.

Overall I found this work to be quite informative, and it would be an suitable choice for a graduate seminar. Given Malcolm's background as a journalist, this work is written in a concise, clear style. The work is extensively footnoted, drawing from a variety of sources, both across time and opinion. By using Serbian, Bosnian, European and other sources, Malcolm provides a balance in his approach to this work. For classroom use, this book differs in some ways from Donia and Fine's *Bosnia*and*Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (1994) (reviewed by Charles Ingrao) , which also addresses Bosnia and the current war. Malcolm's work overlaps Donia and Fine, especially with regard to the politics of the war. But Malcolm has placed more emphasis on the early history of Bosnia as well as the cultural and social influences of the groups that have come into Bosnia over time.

There are five maps that help to track the changes to Bosnia's borders throughout history. The book also includes an extensive bibliography. The bibliography would have been more useful had it been annotated. In addition, there is a useful glossary of terms that are seen within the work.

Given the scale of this work, it is quite concise at only 252 pages. In that space, Malcolm is able to lay out the history of Bosnia and effectively tie it in to a greater understanding of the current conflict. For those who study this area of history, the work provides and

excellent grounding in the political and social history of Bosnia, and give the information needed for a better understanding of what is a complex and sorrowful war.

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Citation: Drew P. Halevy. Review of Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History*. HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews. July, 1995.
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