Marie-Janine Calic. *The Great Cauldron: A History of Southeastern Europe.* Translated by Elizabeth Janik. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019. Maps. 736 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-674-98392-2.

Reviewed by Mary Elizabeth Walters (Kansas State University)

Crafting a narrative of southeastern Europe is a daunting task, yet Marie-Janine Calic has accomplished just that in *The Great Cauldron: A History of Southeastern Europe*. Calic's narrative transcends being a regional account and instead places southeastern Europe within the context of "translocal, transregional, and transnational relationships of exchange" (p. 2). Rather than a cultural and economic backwater or a mere backdrop for great power politics, the people and territories of southeastern Europe emerge as a fruitful borderland of ideas, religions, products, systems, and conflicts. Her approach weaves together global structural forces and individual choices; descriptions of world economic exchanges are seamlessly interspersed with historical biographies, revealing the interconnections between structure and contingency.

Calic begins with a broad overview of southeastern Europe up to 1500 CE, before diving into her narrative in the second chapter, "Rise of the Ottoman Empire." The narrative is sweeping yet detailed, providing the reader with a sense for both macro-level processes and what life was like for individuals like Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, born Bajica near Bosnian Višegrad and sent to the court of Sultan Süleyman I as part of the child levy. Bajica adopted a new name and a new religion and eventually became grand vizier, a position he used to

extend Ottoman power and sovereignty over southeastern Europe, but also to improve his homelands through sponsoring infrastructure and architectural masterpieces, including the "bridge on the Drina" made famous by Ivo Andrić's novel in the twentieth century (*The Bridge on the Drina*, translated by Levett F. Edwards [1977]). The chapter traces the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Europe and shows how that conquest transformed society and culture. Yet just as the Ottoman Empire reached its apogee in prestige and territory in the 1600s and entered a "phase of unprecedented prosperity" in which southeastern Europe played a central role, by 1650 European global expansion and shifting trade patterns caused an economic crisis within the empire that in turn triggered a crisis in Ottoman governmental structures (p. 113).

Chapter 3 continues to explore the growing challenges to the Ottoman Empire, both internally and externally. While Calic shies from describing Ottoman collapse as inevitable, she does argue that the empire had increasingly "few options" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the face of Habsburg expansion, a growing Russian threat, the continued movement of international trade focused on the Atlantic, and internal social and intellectual changes (p. 137). The exchange of new ideas from the Enlightenment, pro-

tocolonialism, and both Islamic and Catholic confessionalism reshaped the intellectual landscape of southeastern Europe. This growth of new intellectual modes coincided with an increased pace of corruption and collapse of Ottoman governmental structures fueled by military defeats and shifting international economic systems; these two phenomena combined to increase dissatisfaction within southeastern Europe with Ottoman rule, particularly among Balkan Christians.

The pace of this dissatisfaction picked up following the American and French Revolutions in 1776 and 1789, which is the topic of Calic's fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters. Rather than the bloody wars in southeastern Europe between the 1770s and the Balkan Wars being outliers, Calic argues that they must be understood within the context of a period of global revolutions that spanned Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas during the long nineteenth century. Calic identifies three general phases of the national movements in southeastern Europe, during which people in southeastern Europe were shaped by global shifts but also exerted influence on global changes. The first phase, covered in chapter 4, lasting from approximately 1770 to 1830, was a "scholarly" nationalism shaped by the Enlightenment in which intellectuals—including religious figures—worked to identify national features, including studies of geography and history, the identification or creation of national folk traditions, and the codification of language (p. 255). This intellectual movement occurred as the Eastern Question consumed European foreign affairs, as the Ottoman Empire continued to suffer military and diplomatic defeats at the hands of the Habsburg and Russian Empires, which in turn competed for influence in southeastern Europe. Nationalist movements in Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria attempted, with varying degrees of success, to take advantage of these imperial power struggles to rebel against Ottoman rule and establish independent states. Chapter 5 covers the second phase, spanning approximately from 1830 to 1870. Spurred by revolutions and up-

risings in 1830 and again in 1848 and Romanticism, scholarly nationalism transformed into a national movement that appealed to broader segments of society and encouraged more significant mobilization. Serbia and Greece, as well as other states as they increasingly gained autonomy, if not independence, established state institutions and modernized transportation systems, which helped to invigorate economies and drive urbanization. This new "bourgeois public sphere" encouraged mass mobilization and, by the end of the period, nationalism provided a "rallying point" for peasants as well (pp. 264, 276). Yet even as nationalist movements gained momentum, many explored alternatives to the nation-state. For example, Bulgarian nationalist Lyuben Karavelov believed the best chance to ensure Bulgarian rights was to join forces with other South Slav "tribes," and even Romanians and Albanians, in a US-style federal union (p. 302). Finally, chapter 6 concludes this narrative arc by tracing how national movements became "true mass movements" around 1870 but began to pursue two competing ideologies: ethnic nationalism and socialism (p. 256). The Eastern Question also entered its final period of crisis, with the Ottoman Empire losing all of its possessions in Europe except for Albania and the Russian and Habsburg Empires continuing to compete to fill the power vacuum left by the Ottomans. As European Turkey vanished from maps—mental and physical—the Balkans as a "primitive, anarchic, violent and vicious" place and people took hold (p. 376).

The Great Cauldron concludes with two sweeping chapters that cover the many, and often violent, changes of the twentieth century. Chapter 7 covers the period through the Second World War, while chapter 8 examines the rise of communist regimes and their collapse in the 1990s. Three primary themes unify these chapters. First, both periods were marked by the expansion of ethnic cleansing, which, rather than being a new phenomenon, Calic argues, was the "climax" of the creation of nation-states in the long nineteenth

century (p. 390). Second, the nations of southeastern Europe continued to lag behind development and economic levels of the rest of Europe despite making significant advances in industrialization. The growing gap between centers and peripheries was even replicated within states—most notably within Yugoslavia. Finally, a complex relationship between Balkan states and the international community emerged. These new countries viewed participation in first the League of Nations and later the United Nations and other international bodies as essential markers of their sovereignty and became staunch advocates for international cooperation, even during the communist period. At the same time, the international community explored new modes of conflict resolution in southeastern Europe, including humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping, nation-building, and even supporting forced population exchanges. Within this extended narrative, the genocidal civil wars that marked the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s were not aberrations or a "new war" but an outgrowth of almost two hundred years of violence aimed at creating a perfect nation-state (p. 531).

In an attempt to appeal to "the general reader," citations are minimal (p. 7). Specialists will find this particularly frustrating given the highly contested—and politically fraught—nature of much of southeastern European history. Given that *The Great Cauldron* is over seven hundred pages long, it is doubtful that more thorough citations would have significantly altered the experience of a general reader. *The Great Cauldron* is an engaging narrative, but the first chapter, "Southeastern Europe before 1500," fails to match the exacting standards Calic set for herself in subsequent chapters. The attempt to cover almost two thousand years of history in sixty pages lends itself to oversimplification, particularly on the backwardness of the Middle Ages.

The Great Cauldron is a welcome addition not only to the literature on the Balkans but also to global and European history. Unlike many attempts to create a narrative of southeastern Europe, which are centered on a particular country in the region, Calic has written a balanced regional narrative. She convincingly demonstrates not simply that the Balkans were the background landscape for imperial competition but also that the people of the region participated in transnational and international exchanges to further their own economic, political, and, later, national ends. Imperial rule, both Ottoman and Habsburg, both helped and harmed southeastern Europe. National identities emerged in opposition to "foreign despotic rule," imperial systems transformed landownership and social structures, and the rise of colonial forms of wealth extraction meant that a large portion of revenue went to imperial metropoles rather than staying in the region (p. 550). As a borderland between competing imperial systems, the people of southeastern Europe acted as "cultural brokers" with "cross-border" networks of trade, ideas, and religions. Calic has created a masterful narrative that reveals the interconnectedness of the Balkans with Europe and the world.

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