



## The Balkans in World History (New Oxford World History)

By Andrew Baruch Wachtel

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**The Balkans in World History (New Oxford World History)** By Andrew Baruch Wachtel

In the historical and literary imagination, the Balkans loom large as a somewhat frightening and ill-defined space, often seen negatively as a region of small and spiteful peoples, racked by racial and ethnic hatred, always ready to burst into violent conflict. *The Balkans in World History* re-defines this space in positive terms, taking as a starting point the cultural, historical, and social threads that allow us to see this region as a coherent if complex whole. Eminent historian Andrew Wachtel here depicts the Balkans as that borderland geographical space in which four of the world's greatest civilizations have overlapped in a sustained and meaningful way to produce a complex, dynamic, sometimes combustible, multi-layered local civilization. It is the space in which the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, of Byzantium, of Ottoman Turkey, and of Roman Catholic Europe met, clashed and sometimes combined. The history of the Balkans is thus a history of creative borrowing by local people of the various civilizations that have nominally conquered the region. Encompassing Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, and European Turkey, the Balkans have absorbed many voices and traditions, resulting in one of the most complex and interesting regions on earth.

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"Wachtel has an eye for the telling artifact, poem, ritual, linguistic feature, and custom, not simply the seminal event. He also has a fine sense of how much of the story has to be left out if a tight, fluent narrative is to be maintained."--*Foreign Affairs*

"A remarkable concoction. In a seemingly impossible bit of synthesis...this slim masterpiece gracefully navigate[s] potential nationalist objections with a slight of pen few could hope to accomplish...[the author] offers the targeted audience a first-class compliment to the world history textbooks taught in universities today." -- Journal of World History

"Wachtel's book not only dispels the myth of the Balkans as a land of violence and ancient hatreds, but also focuses on the gradual transformation of the region from a "land in-between" and borderland into contemporary Southeast Europe." --*Slavic and Eastern European Journal*

#### About the Author

**Andrew Wachtel** is Bertha and Max Dressler Professor of the Humanities; Dean of The Graduate School, and Director, Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies all at Northwestern University.

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