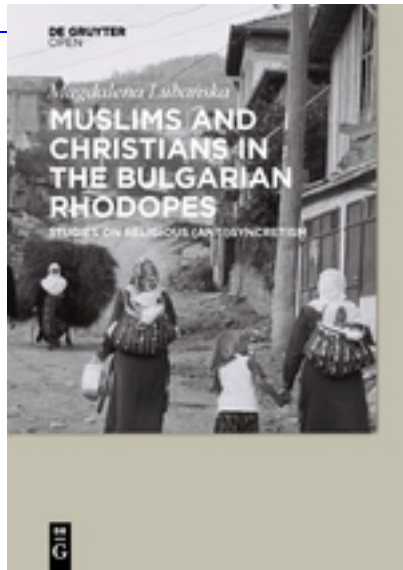


Muslims and Christians in the Bulgarian Rhodopes. Studies on Religious (Anti)Syncretism

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Lubanska Magdalena



[1]

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Magdalena Lubanska has written the most thorough and wide-ranging study in many decades of the religious beliefs and practices of mixed Muslim and Orthodox Christian communities in the Balkans, based on excellent, detailed ethnography. She has also made an exceptionally important contribution to developing theory on syncretism by seeing it as a cultural strategy that is used by members of religiously mixed communities to both manage and conceal their emotions in interactions with each other's practices and institutions, interactions in which relationships of power and dominance are critical. By analyzing syncretism as a strategy and paying attention to relations of power, Lubanska avoids adhering either to the romanticized models of supposed multiculturalism and traditional tolerance that have driven many recent studies of the region, or to the Orientalist models of earlier times. Muslims and Christians in the Bulgarian Rhodopes should set the parameters of the next generation of scholarship on the local interactions of members of different religious communities, not only in the Balkans, and invigorate the study of syncretism.

Prof. Robert Hayden, University of Pittsburgh

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