supranational culture and politics, and provides little incentive to venture beyond disci- 
plinary boundaries.

T. M. Wilson  
SUNY at Binghamton  
Binghamton, New York, USA  
[email: twilson@binghamton.edu]


This book originated in a Forum Against Ethnic Violence (FAEV) conference held in 
London in 1994. The time elapsed between the original conference and the book’s publication 
suggests some of the complexities of dealing with the ‘Macedonian question’. 
Only three of the contributors had papers at the conference (Rikki Van Boeschoten, 
Loring Danforth, Jonathan Schwartz), and the editor’s intention has been to expand the 
remit of the original conference into an inquiry into what constitutes ‘Macedonia’ or 
‘Macedonian’ and how these concepts are constructed, conceptualized and decon- 
structed. The book is short (seven chapters plus the Introduction), readable, and a very 
good introduction to a complex field of issues.

Jane Cowan and Keith Brown’s introduction provides a fair historical overview of the 
region, emphasizing the construction of ethnicity and deconstructing recent stereotypes 
like the myth of ‘ancient hatreds’. More contemporary antagonisms, like the war of 
words between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, are cited but perhaps sidestepped 
with the instance of Cambridge University Press’s 1995 withdrawal of Karakasidou’s 
Fields of Wheat: Hills of Blood in mind. I felt uneasy on noting that all three maps in the 
book refer to the Republic of Macedonia under its ‘provisional’ name (the Former 
Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) which was forced on it by Greek diplomacy and which 
still causes humiliation and offence to Macedonians.

The chapters in the book oscillate between history and ethnography, and the chapters 
make sense as a whole. Van Boeschoten explores the consequences of ethnicity in the 
district of Florina (Greece), while Danforth and Schwartz present the results of their 
research among diasporas in Canada and Australia. These contributions point to diffi- 
culties in deciding who ‘the Macedonians’ are; sometimes different identities and ethnic 
allegiances exist even within the same family. Piero Vereni writes about a Greek man 
whose first language is Macedonian, while Georgios Agetopoulos discusses multi- 
culturalism in Greece’s largest city, Thessaloniki. Iakovos Michalidis treats the post-
Second World War period in the Florina region while Brown examines the period 
prove of interest to scholars concerned with politics and identity in the region, while 
Michalidis’s critique of Greek historians’ attitudes and analyses in the wake of the war 
shows the roots of much contemporary Greek popular anxiety concerned with what can 
only be called a ‘lunatic fringe’s’ claims to a ‘Greater Macedonia’.

255
Perhaps because this is a relatively short book, it mostly considers Greek-Slavic Macedonian controversies. It would have been interesting to include views, attitudes and (most importantly) ethnographies from the Bulgarian and Serbian sides of the spectrum. Future study of the region must also look at the views of Albanians (considered a 'minority' in the Republic of Macedonia, but with huge political influence), as well as of ethnic groups like Roma and Turks. It is unfortunate that no Macedonian scholar is included; some, like Professor Dimitar Mircev, would have had useful contributions to make on the recent history of the region.

The concept of ethnicity is still very problematic in anthropological theory. Is it a concept or a methodological tool, something to be deconstructed or something that is just 'there' to be studied 'as such'? These are important questions, and although they figure in several chapters, the book does not pretend to answer them. Where I see the book's particular value is in problematizing 'ethnicity' (as well as 'identity' and 'difference') through actual ethnographic data (especially Van Boetschoen, Danforth, Schwartz, Vereni), and providing material based on which further, more theoretical, debates can follow. The complexities and paradoxes of the whole concept of 'Macedonia' are telling not only for the situation 'in the field', but also for the ways in which anthropologists construct what they study. I see the book Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference as an important prelude to a crucial debate about ethnic identities, allegiances and the problems with dealing with them. This is, however, a debate which has yet to start.

Aleksandar Boskovic
Rhodes University
Grahamstown, South Africa
[email: s_boskovic@yahoo.com]