

Acknowledgments

The decision to write this work began when the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Committee on Eastern Europe asked me to produce a major regional history of medieval southeastern Europe, as part of a series for which they hoped to receive outside funding. When their funding efforts proved unsuccessful, I decided to go ahead with my part anyway, because there had long been a need for a book such as this one. I divided the project in half, first surveying the period from the late sixth century to the 1180s. That volume, entitled *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* was published by the University of Michigan Press in 1983. The present volume is that work's continuation. And to prevent this already long volume from becoming any longer, I have kept the background material to a bare minimum. Thus readers seeking a more thorough background about the state of the Balkans in the 1180s than this work provides are referred to the earlier volume.

Like its predecessor, this volume is to a large extent based upon lectures for the course on the medieval Balkans that I have been giving for the past fifteen years at the University of Michigan. I owe a debt to my students' responses to these lectures; their comments and questions have compelled me constantly to rethink and clarify my thoughts.

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