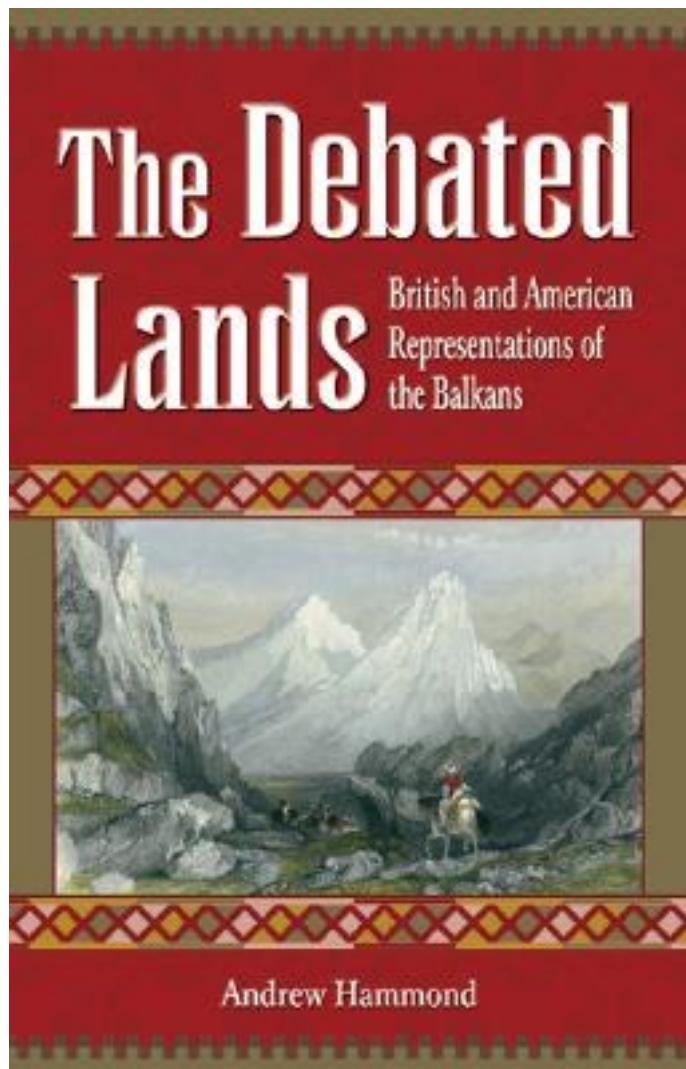


The Debated Lands



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出版者:Univ of Chicago Pr

出版时间:2007-2

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780708319659

For a decade and a half, the Balkans have formed one of the most disreputable regions in the British geographical imagination. In the post-Cold War period, between the demise of the Soviet Union and the rise of 'global terrorism', the region has been constantly criticised, vilified and viewed as a threat to Europe and to European values, becoming one of the most significant 'others' of Western civilisation. Nevertheless, there has yet to be written a comprehensive analysis of the complex forms and historical sources of the British concept of the Balkans, or of its frequently unexpected changes over time. "The Debated Lands" addresses that deficiency. Focusing on the popular genre of travel writing, the book examines over 400 British and American literary texts in order to outline and account for the multiple ways in which the Balkans have been represented from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. After sourcing Western conceptualisation in the imperial discourses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, attention is paid to the denigration of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the sudden military allegiances of the First World War, the romanticisation of the inter-war years and, after an ambivalent mixture of sympathy and disappointment during the Cold War, the return to vilification in the 1990s. Making use of post-structuralist and post-colonialist studies of cross-cultural discourse, "The Debated Lands" also analyses the politics of representation, and the way in which British support for Ottoman hegemony in the Balkans in the nineteenth century found its equivalents in the patterns of Western influence that the Balkans have been subject to in the twentieth century.

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