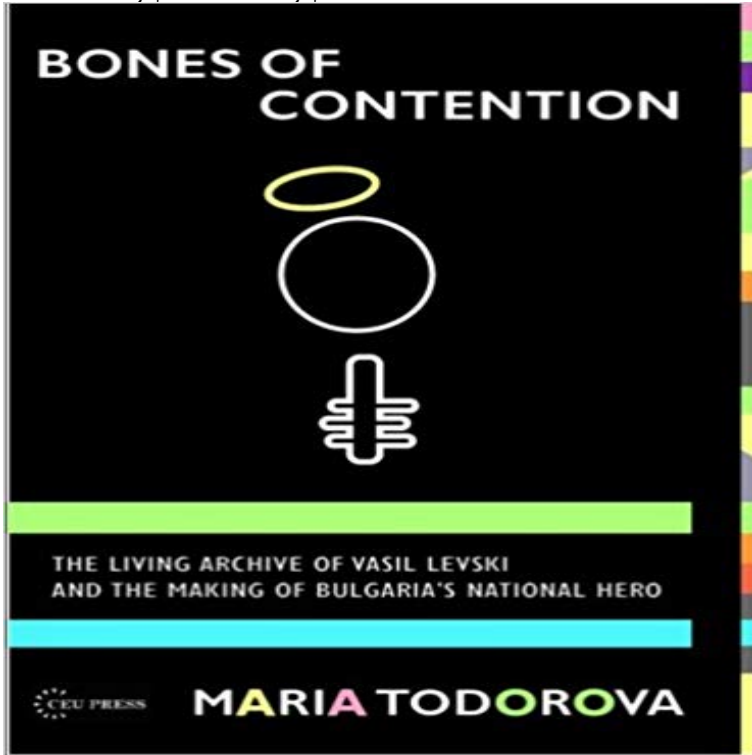


Bones of Contention: The Living Archive of Vasil Levski and the Making of Bulgaria's National Hero



This is a historical study, taking as its narrative focus the life, death and posthumous fate of Vasil Levski (1837-1873), arguably the major and only uncontested hero of the Bulgarian national pantheon. The main title refers to the thick description of the reburial controversy during the final phase of communist Bulgaria, which centered on the search for Levski's bones. The book gives a specific understanding also of the relationship between nationalism and religion in the post-communist period, by analyzing the recent canonization of Levski. The processes described, although with a chronological depth of almost two centuries, are still very much in the making, and the living archive expands not only in size but with the constant addition of surprising new forms they take. At another level, the book engages in a variety of general theoretical questions. It offers insights into the problems of history and memory: the question of public, social or collective memory; the nature of national memory in comparison to other types of memory; the variability of memory over time and social space; alternative memories; and, memory's techniques like commemorations, the mechanism of creating and transmitting memory.

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