

BOOK REVIEW

The Archaeology of Xenitia: Greek Immigration and Material Culture

Ed. by *Kostis Kourelis*

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This is one of the first works in the emerging field of the material culture of immigration, and more specifically the archaeology of immigration; to my knowledge, this is in fact, the first of its kind on Greek immigrants. The volume is comprised by seven chapters all of which are empirically based, and this is its incredible strength, as it allows the reader to look at precisely the nuances of material cultures as they are created by immigrants in the host and home societies. It is a significant volume for both Greek immigrant studies and ethnic studies and the archaeology of immigration.

The first chapter, by Susan Buck Sutton is on the “post-antiquity” rural ruins on the Cycladic island of Kea, the Argolid region of Peloponnesos and the Nemea Valley just south of Corinth. She examines the ruins left, strewn about in the countryside as populations moved in and out of the region, following work and labor flows which were structured by global economic forces, even as early as the mid-19th century. As Prof. Sutton points out, this dynamic is barely noticed in the dominant narrative through which Greek Americans are discussed and their experiences in the host society explained. The archaeology of the ruins left behind by migrants and emigrants enables us to look at another facet of immigration within the context of capitalism going global.

The second chapter, by Timothy E. Gregory and Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, looks at the material cultural exchanges of Kytherian immigrants to Australia, between the host and the home societies. The researchers discuss the differences in housing architectures preferred by earlier (more assimilated and acculturated) and more recent Kytherian immigrants to Australia. Furthermore, within the “wog” homes, i.e., the more recent immigrants, one sees material objects and decorations brought from the home society, while at the same time, housing built in Kythera by these same immigrants hold within them cultural artifacts from Australia. It is through these otherwise small details and choices that one understands that immigrants are truly of two worlds as they bring elements of one into the other.

Chapter three, by Phillip Duke, is on the Ludlow Massacre of 1914. Basing his chapter on the Colorado Coalfield Wars Archaeological Project, Duke argues that although the Colorado coalfield wars are a classic example of class conflict, it is also possible to locally contextualize this struggle and examine the ethnic traditions of the strikers; specifically he argues that the then current history of Crete’s and Greece’s struggles of emancipation from the Ottoman control “provided Louis Tikas and the other Greek miners with an example of how to overcome oppression, this time not Turkish in origin, but rather American.”

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The fourth chapter, by Kostis Kourelis, is on the history of the St. George Orthodox Cathedral of Philadelphia. The architecture of Greek Orthodox churches in the U.S. and of St. George as well in particular, is evidence to the fact that the religion is outside the architectural, (and perhaps by extension other cultural) guidelines of the Church in Greece and/or Constantinople. The wide variety of architectural types of the Greek Orthodox churches in the U.S. bespeaks to the fact that it is in the midst of a religiously pluralistic society, and it is the religion of an immigrant/ethnic group with specific, although complex assimilation trajectories. St. George, originally an Episcopal church, St. Andrews, was purchased and renovated by the Greek Orthodox. The renovated church maintained its classical face, Ionic columns, something out of the norm for churches in Greece. The immigrant and ethnic community, as seen here, combine elements of diverse and divergent traditions, secular and religious, in their institutions.

The fifth chapter is by Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan, which examines the relationship between the American School of Classical Studies (ASCS) at Athens and the Greek Omogeneia in the 1940s. The article examines these relationships through the processes by which the film *Triumph over Time*, produced by ASCS and in cooperation with Archaeologist Oscar Broneer, numismatist Margaret Thompson and the Greek American movie mogul Spyros Skouras, was introduced to the omogeneia. This is a historical article looking at some of the contributions of ASCS to Greece during WWII beyond the realm of academic and university life, contributions and activities which are informed by a deep respect and love for the Greece of today.

Eleni Gage, in the next chapter, writes of her experiences in rebuilding her paternal grandmother's house in Lia, Epirus. An Ottoman coin minted in 1856, an unexploded hand grenade, a gun, agrarian objects, tin plates and broken coffee cups, the lock from the exoporta, all of these and other unearthed objects tell her the history of the house and its inhabitants. It had been an international house, as the author says, connected to global processes since its construction. It is through the process of rebuilding her grandmother's house that the author also creates her own history and relationships in the village.

The final paper is written by Jack L. Davis, and is a commentary on the field of the archaeology of xenitia (immigration) and the diverse chapters in the volume. He presents us with a brief history of the role that ASCS, the University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition and the Argolid Exploration Project played in the development of "post antique" archaeology. This is a relatively recent area of exploration in Greece and its roots go back to the decade of the 1970s.

I have one problem with this volume: I wanted more! I wanted more papers, more topics, more of everything. All of the papers are thorough and well written, each giving us important information about immigrant experiences through the material culture immigrants construct. Much has been written on the non-material culture of immigration, this, the material part, is still a new approach to the area and long overdue. This volume is a must reading for all interested in issues of Greek immigration but also in the more general areas of ethnic studies and immigration.



*excellent resource for migration researchers
practitioners and students*

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