

participated in the Greek Revolution, American support for the Hellenic cause took the form of charitable contributions, rather than direct military assistance, while the American experience in Greece during this era—unlike its European counterpart—was relatively devoid of silly intrigues in Greece's domestic politics. Even though the United States did not formally acknowledge the political independence of the Hellenic government until 1837, the American populace exhibited a great interest in both the Greek Revolution and the Hellenic cause due to its appreciation of those ideals, including the concept of freedom, which evolved from the classical heritage of Greek antiquity.

This study has both its good and bad points, while it is not as unique as its author portends in the book's preface. Among the best sections in this study is the chapter concerning the controversy surrounding the construction of the Greek frigates in New York; yet, the topic is hardly unexplored since such historians as Douglas Dakin and William St. Clair have presented succinct accounts on the same matter. Similarly, the author's chapters on American policy and on the Philhellenic movement in the United States are excellent accounts from the standpoints of both research and narration; however, once again, detailed works on these topics have already appeared—particularly Myrtle Cline's *American Attitudes Toward the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1828* (Atlanta: Higgins-McArthur, 1930). Further, the author's use of Greek-language sources is commendable, but much of this material remains peripheral to the book's central theme, thus such English-language materials as archival collections and newspapers remain the author's primary sources.

Nevertheless, a number of both inaccuracies and shortcomings in this work deter its more favorable aspects. In his introductory chapter, the author displays a less than sound knowledge of Ottoman history and culture, exaggerates the role of Greek merchants in Levantine commerce, and also omits many salient points about the American, as well as the European, experience in the Levant—particularly during the Greek Revolution. Points concerning American neutrality, or even isolationist attitudes, require further elaboration for the enhancement of relevant sections in this book, while misconceptions which such American statesmen as John Quincy Adams held about Hellenic, or European, matters—e.g. the military strength of the Holy Alliance—could use an explanation to inform readers about the true historical facts. Even more disappointing was the author's failure to contrast further in this book's central theme such aspects as the Philhellenic movement in the United States and in Great Britain, especially since more than one Western state found itself involved with the Hellenic cause. Nevertheless, the author has produced a credible account about the United States and the Greek Revolution—a work now added to the small corpus of works in this field of historical interest.

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Loring M. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1982. ix+200 pp. \$ 30.00 (cloth) \$ 12.50 (paper).

The return of Greek-American photographer Alexander Tsiaras to his parents' village for a year-long visit in 1975-76 instigated this handsome and unique contribution to Greek ethnography. Around the superbly reproduced photographic essay of 31 plates portraying

the death rituals in Potamia village, located 25 miles southwest of Mt. Olympus, anthropologist Loring Danforth pivots a sensitive study of ritual and religious life in rural Greece. Danforth's 1979 fieldwork in Potamia, provides the primary ethnographic data that he presents, analyzes and interprets so illuminatingly. At several points he draws on published sources which describe both similar and variant rites.

How another culture deals with death has sometimes led anthropologists to focus on associated exotic and curious practices. Danforth deliberately avoids this pitfall by adopting a perspective that sees death as a universal human experience with which people cope through the use of symbols and the performance of rituals. In the end he succeeds, I believe, in leading the reader to see the meaning of what could have remained simply exotic—funeral laments, black mourning dresses, and exhumation rites—and even to grow in self-understanding and comprehension of the meaning of death.

To achieve this goal the book first gives a vivid image of the people and of death (Ch. 1 and the plates). Ch. 2 then examines the anthropology of death and provides an interpretive framework that considers the death rituals as rites of passage achieving the transition from life to death. The next chapter applies this framework to specific rites and practices. In Ch. 4 Danforth turns systematic attention to the symbolism of funeral laments sung by women. Finally, Ch. 5, "Wounds that Never Heal", examines how the death rituals initially permit bereaved ones to continue a relationship with the dead but eventually lead the former to construct "a new reality" that does not include the deceased.

This account is unique in several respects. Danforth presents not just one or some composite, typical cycle of the funerary, memorial, mourning and exhumation rites but rather several particular cases. This yields a realistic portrayal since at any given time the village is observing mourning rites for several individuals, each in a different phase of a five-year cycle. The reader thus sees how feeling and behavior vary according to the age and sex of the deceased, the personality traits of the bereaved living, and the phase of the mourning cycle. Also, the rich range of laments are presented both in Greek and in English translation. Throughout one sees with remarkable clarity the symbolism involved and its relationship to the personality of the mourner and the situation of the mourned.

The book of course is of great interest to anthropologists not only for the substantive data presented but also especially as an admirable example of the semiotic analysis of such data. Happily it also achieves this without sacrificing interest for other more general readers intrigued by either rural Greek life or by death rituals and the way they aid people in coping with the crisis of death.

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*1940-1941. Greek Diplomatic Documents Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Athens, 1980.*

This volume is the first official sequence to the publication under the title "Diplomatic Documents. The Italian aggression against Greece 1940".

The first volume covers the period immediately previous and up to the 28th October 1940 and proves the guilt of the Fascist Italian Government in provoking the Greek-Italian War in Albania (1940-1941).