

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).

The present volume, published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the war, contains selected Greek documents and dispatches covering the period between the 28th October 1940 and the 27th April 1941, the eve of the entry of German troops in Athens.

Much has been written on this critical period by Greek and foreign authors, mainly on the basis of foreign official sources and personal experiences. The present volume aims at covering the official Greek angle of this tumultuous period of World War II, when the British Empire was at its lowest and Greece her only ally still fighting on her own soil.

This volume corroborates, on the basis of Greek official documents, several historical facts of that period, some of which are little known:

1. As early as the 15th January 1941, the Greek Prime Minister declared to Field Marshall Wavell that "in the case of a German attack, Greece, even if left to her own resources, will not conclude a separate peace, but will fight back against the invader, for Greece is not fighting for victory but for honour".

2. British difficulties in supplying war material to embattled Greece.

3. Greek anxiety for nothing to be done—including the premature landing of British troops in Greece—which could give grounds to accelerating the German invasion of Greece.

4. The day to day wavering of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey, under German pressure, to come to the aid of Greece, with the final well known consequences of the occupation of Yugoslavia, the adherence of Bulgaria to the Axis and the neutrality of Turkey.

5. Complications to the planning of the defence of Greece, due to the indecisiveness of Yugoslavia and Turkey.

6. Turkish-Soviet relations during this difficult period.

7. Soviet displeasure at the German infiltration of the Balkans.

8. The first premonitions of the pending German invasion of the USSR.

9. British plans for the invasion of the Dodecanese as early as 1940. Greek proposals to participate in the operation.

10. Greek-British preparations for the evacuation of troops, the Royal Family and the Government from the Greek mainland to Crete. Discussion of Cyprus as a possible site for the Greek Government in exile.

The detailed catalogue of the documents published in this volume, as well as a second catalogue of the personae dramatis, will prove very useful in future historical research.

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Robert R. King, *A History of the Romanian Communist Party* (Histories of Ruling Communist Parties). Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1980, pp. xvi + 190. *Romania in the 1980s*, edited by Daniel N. Nelson (Westview Special Studies on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981. pp. xiii + 313.

As an East Bloc country whose relations with the Soviet Union have been less than amicable, Romania has become a subject of great interest to American scholars in recent years. Daniel Nelson writes in his preface: "Among communist states, Romania is, in several respects, a unique case. Romania has been the only Warsaw Pact member to deviate consistently from Soviet foreign policy norms....The leadership...has, meanwhile, governed