

Greeks and Egyptians, despite the occasional aberration, was on the whole positive and mutually beneficial, particularly as the twentieth century wore on.

K's discussion of the Greek response to the gradual decolonization of the Egyptian legal system and commercial world is illuminating. However, in grappling with the multifarious reasons for the Greek exodus from Egypt which started as a trickle in the 1930s and became a flood by the early 1960s, he has a hard act to follow in the form of Angelos Dalachanis' magisterial 2017 work on the subject. The reference to a 'forced departure' on the inside dust jacket of K's book is misleading. The Greeks of Egypt were never forced to depart, unlike British and French nationals and Egyptians of the Jewish faith.

It was somewhat surprising to discover that K's narrative breaks off rather abruptly after the exodus of the 1960s. The number of Greeks in Egypt remained above five figures well into the following decade, although it has dropped precipitately since then. One expected at least a few words about the Greeks who remained behind, their demographic and cultural characteristics, their economic activity, and their ongoing stewardship of the communal institutions founded by their predecessors. Some suggestions as to why their number continues to dwindle, despite almost complete social and linguistic integration, would have rounded out the story. That said, the history of the Greeks of Egypt has not previously been recounted so thoroughly in English, and in such an accessible form. This book has filled a significant gap in the secondary literature on the subject of ethnic minorities in the modern Middle East and will remain an important resource for the foreseeable future. One hopes it will also inspire closer study of the demography, social history and legacy of the Greek Egyptians.

George Vassiadis  
*Hellenic Institute, Royal Holloway, University of London*

Gonda van Steen, *Adoption, Memory and the Cold War: Kid pro quo?* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2019. Pp. 330, xx.  
DOI:[10.1017/byz.2021.15](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2021.15)

How many pieces of research, works of art, inventions and discoveries, come about by chance? 'Oh, I've got some old family papers in a box in the attic' – 'That's an intriguing tune' – 'What an unusual juxtaposition of colours'... In the case of the material in this book, as the author recounts in the Introduction, the topic 'found her', starting with an email in August 2013 from 'Mike'. His mother was one of the daughters (at that time seven years old) of a man executed in Greece in 1952 for supposedly being a spy. She had been adopted in the USA in 1955. Mike had sent the email to Gonda Van Steen, then President of the Modern Greek Studies Association, hoping that she could help fill in details of this past, which, thanks to the internet, and contacts in Greece, she was able to do.

From this beginning, the topic expanded, and as the title and subtitle of the book hint, it covers the memory (but also forgetting – and expunging) of the past, particularly that of the aftermath of the Greek Civil War and the context of the Cold War and anti-Communism. The ‘adoptions’ of ‘kids’ (babies and children) were not only those of orphans, but of illegitimate children in ‘homes’, and of those whose parents were in prison or exile for left-wing activities or sympathies, real or supposed. Many of these had taken part in the left-wing resistance organizations during the Occupation, organizations which were then declared illegal, with those involved vilified, imprisoned, exiled, even executed.

The placing of Mike’s individual story, and the stories of others, in the context of post-war Greece and in the context of the fear of the spread of Communism (indeed, of Socialism) widens the topic and truly illustrates the adage that ‘the personal is the political’. It resonates with many other cases: of Chilean children taken from their parents, of Irish babies removed from their unmarried mothers, and illustrates the control of institutions and the state over the lives of citizens, and the deliberate suppression of records and memories. A huge amount of detailed research forms the bedrock of this account, told with broad and deep scholarship and enormous human compassion, care, and understanding. As she writes: ‘How can one possibly remain a distant researcher when given the opportunity to touch lives?’ (xx).

What was the ‘pro quo’ that the sub-title points to? Not just the gain of couples and families able to welcome an adoptee into their family (and these were not always loving homes), but the co-operation of Greek organizations (and of entrepreneurs in the private adoption business, who often accumulated ‘donations’ towards costs and travel fares) with those in other countries, and the relationship of Greece with the United States, and with the associations in the USA of migrant Greeks. One of these, AHEPA (the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association) played an ‘important if not unblemished role’ (John Iatrides, Foreword, page xiv). Many of the cases here of the over 3000 adoptions (mostly into American homes, but there were also adoptions in the Netherlands and Sweden) are anonymized, or given pseudonyms, or identifying details are deliberately blurred – but some adoptees (and adopters) wanted their stories to be known. The testimonies of some of these (seven men and four women) are given in Part 3.

As someone who interviewed, in the 1990s, some of those who had been imprisoned or exiled during this period and earlier, I found myself in tears when reading parts of this book, and in other parts I was in awe of the careful research and scholarship which had gone into tracking down documents and evidence. The book begins with an Introduction (in four sections). Here a key aspect of the writing and presentation of the material is presented. This is ‘writing in the middle voice’. Scholars of ancient Greek will recognise the ‘middle’ as a verb form in which the subject is both the agent of an action and affected by and involved with it. Writing in the ‘middle voice’ blurs the distinction between insider and outsider, as Mike found as the story of his family

became, for him, part of the story of post-war Greece, and the author uses this ‘middle voice’ throughout her text.

After the Introduction there are three main parts. Of these, Part 1, ‘The Past that Has not Passed’, consists of seven sections, dealing mainly with the political background (the Greek Civil War and its aftermath) to Mike’s story. Part 2, ‘Nation of Orphans, Orphaned Nation’, has 16 sections concerning the legal and other mechanisms for adoptions. One aspect of the ‘demand’ in the USA for Greek children to adopt was that Jewish couples on the East Coast were anxious for adoptees ‘who looked like them’ (page 133). Part 3, ‘Insights from Greek Adoption Cases’, also has 16 sections, of which eleven are the testimonies referred to earlier. The Conclusion, ‘Greek and Greece, Where Home and History Rhyme’, is followed by a number of appendices, including one which provides ‘Practical Information for Greek-born Adoptees’.

This is a compelling and thought-provoking book, raising important and provocative issues not only for this past but for our present too.

Margaret Kenna  
Swansea University

Trine Stauning Willert and Gerasimus Katsan (eds.), *Retelling the Past in Contemporary Greek Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*. Lanham: Lexington Books, Pp. 276.  
DOI:[10.1017/byz.2021.21](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2021.21)

The longstanding obsession with history in Modern Greek literature and literary studies is intertwined with attempts to raise Greece’s cultural, political and economic profile internationally, whether through expressions of pride in a glorious classical past or by citing the Ottoman ‘occupation’ in extenuation of any perceived failings.

The present volume is no mere rehashing of the uses and abuses of history in contemporary Greek literature. Instead, it addresses tears in the historical fabric: Derridean ‘ghosts’ of history, Foucauldian ‘most uncompromising places’, or ‘[the] areas of human experience that tend to elude the archive’ (p.62). More importantly, it is about public versus official history, reassessed and re-mediated through the lens of contemporary Greece and its current ideological and cultural context. The editors aim to ‘present the reader with the way a set of contemporary storytellers in different genres have incorporated previously under-explored or little-known themes, events, and epochs in modern Greek history and to show how the past, by being interpreted and re-presented in the present, can teach us a lot about contemporary Greek society’ (p.3). The genres explored include prose fiction, poetry, graphic novels, drama, films, documentaries and TV series.

The book is divided into two parts: Part 1 accommodates the bulk of the chapters discussing different uses of the past in the various media examined, while Part 2