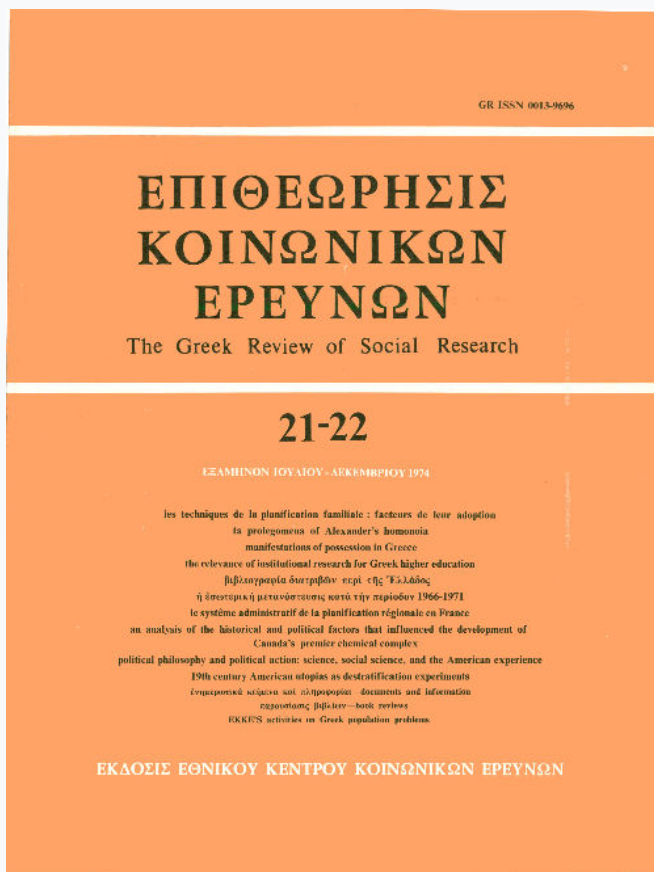


# The Greek Review of Social Research

Vol 21 (1974)

21-22



John T. A. Koumoulides, editor, Summer in a Greek village: student essays about life and costumes in a Greek Village

John E. Rexine

doi: [10.12681/grsr.233](https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.233)

Copyright © 1974, John E. Rexine



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

## To cite this article:

Rexine, J. E. (1974). John T. A. Koumoulides, editor, Summer in a Greek village: student essays about life and costumes in a Greek Village. *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 21, 294–295. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.233>

*Ἀνάμεσα στὴν Ὁμογένεια τῆς Ἀμερικῆς (Anamesa sten Homogeneias Amerikes)*, by Takis Doxas. Preface by Archbishop Iakovos. New York: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, 1972. Pp. 93. Illustrated. Paperbound.

It is always interesting to read how a distinguished Greek author from Greece views the Greek-American community. It is also true that a fair number of such books of impressions of America of varying length and differing insights have been published in Greece with differing results. This particular little book was inspired by a trip made by the author to America in March of 1971 at the invitation of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to deliver a series of twelve lectures in the New York, Washington, Boston, and Chicago areas. Returning to Greece at the end of April 1971, Takis Doxas published a series of articles in the Athenian periodical *Hellenika Thematata* (April-May 1971—May 1972). What the present book contains is a reprinting of these articles plus an article published in the periodical *Petraike-Patraike*. Consequently, the material contained here is not new but rather conveniently available in one handy package, so to speak.

The observer of the Greek-American scene will not find much here that he does not already know. The scope of the book is, in fact, quite narrow and superficial. It concentrates on the activities and institutions of the Greek Archdiocese in a highly flattering manner. The four main chapters consist of «A Conversation with the Archbishop»; «The Physiology of Greek Education»; «Church: The Beehive of Those Abroad»; and «Migrants: Our Brothers.» These sections are all centered, in one way or another, on the Greek Archdiocese and the work of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, whether this be in the area of the educational program of the Archdiocese, Hellenic College, the Academy of St. Basil, the publication of books, the organization of the Archdiocese, the Byzantine Fellowship, or the parishes. All in all, this is an uncritical collection of essays of the Archdiocese and should be so labeled, since it furnishes the reader with a general review of the work and institutions of the Archdiocese.

However, as a record of the life and activities of the Greek-American community, as the title would seem to imply, it is highly inadequate and grossly incomplete. The survey provided by the author is lifeless, and mechanical, though there can be no doubt about the author's sincere appreciation of the achievements of the *Homogeneia* in America. It is a pity that Mr. Doxas kept his scope so narrow, so limited to one aspect of Greek-American

life and that aspect unfortunately one that affects only a very small number of Greek-Americans in any substantial or significant way.

Prof. JOHN E. REXINE, Ph. D.  
Colgate University

\*

John T. A. Koumoulides, editor, *Summer in a Greek Village: Student Essays about Life and Customs in a Greek Village*. Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University, 1973. Pp. xi, 68. 2 maps, 27 figures. Paperbound.

Not too many years ago village life constituted the backbone of Greek life and students of modern Greece would argue that the real Greek was the Greek villager who manifested, maintained, and preserved many of the higher and more valuable qualities of the Greek people such as *philoxenia*, *philotimo*, and *eleftheria*. There can be no doubt that villagers constituted the bulk of the population and to get at the Greek character meant getting at knowledge of the Greek villagers. Now the balance has been inexorably, it seems, reversed. The bulk of the Greeks live in towns and villages and the process of economic development, so enthusiastically, even rashly, pursued has led to rapid social, political, religious, educational, and philosophical changes, some of whose results could have been readily predicted but preparation for which is never quite planned. Dr. Koumoulides, Associate Professor of History at Ball State University, who has organized various study groups in Greece, in July of 1972 brought together a diverse group of students from the United States, Great Britain, and Greece to do a field study program at the village of Aghia in Thessaly, at the foothills of Mount Kissavos (known as Mount Ossa in ancient times), approximately thirty-one kilometers northeast of the city of Larissa. Needless to say, the educational idea of having students penetrate the inner meaning of a culture by living in it is an excellent one. Providing those same students with a field experience after they have had some academic preparation (be it anthropological, historical, literary, archaeological, linguistic or what have you) should yield interesting, if not refreshing, insights. Seven students of differing academic backgrounds have had their observations published in this lit-

παρουσίασις  
βιβλίων

book  
reviews

tle book. They cannot be said to have discovered anything new for those already familiar with the village in Greece, but their brief contributions are useful additions, confirmations of the evidence that is already available. Seven of the articles are by students; the introduction note on the Krypho Scholio, «Greece, Summer 1972: Observations,» and Selected Readings have all presumably been contributed by Professor Koumoulides.

Ian C. Davis begins the series with «A Daily Account of the Field Study Project in Aghia» (1-15), which introduces the reader, in diary form, to the village being studied but also takes us on a trip to Mount Athos. The same writer's «The Community of Aghia» (17-24) provides us with a more detailed description of the village and its people, indicating clearly that «Aghia is on the road to becoming a town and its people are on the way to living in the same world as the Western Europeans or the Athenians or the rising middle class in the rest of the cities» (p. 24). Claudia Rex's «Aghia Observations» (31-35) gives us a more socially oriented description, while Janet Barch and Ginny Akin in «Women of Aghia» (37) conclude that «it is the women who do much of the work and bear responsibilities, yet have the fewest privileges and the least status.» Peter Delargy and Francis Moran provide a lucid account of the changing attitude toward the role of the Greek Orthodox priest and religion in their essay on «The Role of Religion in Aghia» (43-47). Kenneth Kelsey gives us a very brief glimpse of «Education in Aghia» (58-59), that merely outlines how many schools, classrooms, teachers, and subjects the locale contains—a sorely missed opportunity for an in-depth sociological analysis. Claudia Rex's «Athens» (62-66) tells us what it's like to be female and a foreigner in Athens. The final note bewails the effects of modernization and Westernization is having on Athos and Athens. The «Selected Readings» list is an excellent start for students of modern Greece and the pictures of the village locale, people, and activities are entirely relevant.

*Summer in a Greek Village* is a mere outline of a book that should be written synthesizing in some detail the results of the study of this village in transition. Needless to say, the seeds of a significant anthropological study are here and should be given the opportunity to burst into full blossom.

JOHN E. REXINE, Ph. D.

*Professor of the Classics and  
Director of the Division of the  
Humanities, Colgate University,  
Hamilton, New York, USA*

*The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, by Speros Vryonis, Jr. Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA, 4. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971. xvii + 532 pages. 12 illustrations; 3 maps. \$15.00.

The relation of Hellenism to Islam has long been a fascinating and crucial subject for intensive study but one that is unusually demanding in that it involves the preparation and resources of the Byzantinist, the Islamist, and the Turkologist. Despite Helmut Ritter's warning to the author in 1959 that it would not be possible to write a history of this transformation of culture, Speros Vryonis has accepted the challenge and has produced a truly monumental work that brings together his long-standing interest in the Hellenization of the Levant in antiquity and the centuries of confrontation between Byzantine and Islamic societies, which he describes as «the joint heirs of this semi-Hellenized Levant» (p. vii) and deals comprehensively with certain vital aspects of the decline of Byzantine Hellenism and the Islamization of Anatolia from the eleventh through the fifteenth century. The finished product, though without a select bibliography, gives evidence of enormous scholarship and even excessive «footnote-mania,» but the documentation and use of original sources is both judicious and exemplary. The text, though intended for the specialist, can certainly be selectively used by the interested layman. The organization of this massive study is around seven basic topics that constitute the seven substantial chapters of the book, namely, «Byzantine Asia Minor on the Eve of the Turkish Conquest»; «Political and Military Collapse of Byzantium in Asia Minor»; «The Beginnings of Transformations»; «Decline of the Church in the Fourteenth Century»; «Conversion to Islam»; «The Loss of Byzantine Asia Minor and the Byzantine World»; and «The Byzantine Residue in Turkish Anatolia.» The topical approach, which admittedly concentrates on the fate and Islamization of the Greek population in Anatolia almost to the exclusion of other Christian groups, actually makes it possible to read each chapter independently, if this should be the desire of the reader. The sum of the chapters, taken together, does, of course, produce a unified whole that painfully but vividly reconstructs the process by which the Greek-speaking population of the Byzantine Anatolian peninsula was gradually transformed into a Turkish-speaking Muslim population. This is an area of the Byzantine Christian world that had been militarily, economically, and religiously the most important of

the Byzantine provinces. Certainly Professor Vryonis's observation that Turkish conquest, settlement, and political unification was a long process, the final completion of which took place 400 years after the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert in 1071, is not an unreasonable one and is well supported by the facts that he has so carefully garnered.

Professor Vryonis's seven basic themes also focus on seven basic conclusions: 1) that Anatolian Hellenism was quantitatively and qualitatively significant during the Byzantine period; 2) that Turkish subjugation of the Anatolian peninsula and political unification of it was not achieved until the latter half of the fifteenth century; 3) that Turkish conquest and settlement was a major contributing cause to the major dislocation and destruction of a once stable and unified Byzantine administration which was replaced by innumerable smaller political units constantly at odds with each other and characterized by continuous military strife, disjunctive units serving to corrode Christian communal bonds and, together with Muslim hegemony, preparing the way for conversion to Islam, even though in the mid-thirteenth century the bulk of the Anatolian population was still Christian; 4) that Turkish military supremacy directly contributed to the destruction of the Greek Orthodox Church as an effective social, economic, and religious institution and was significantly related to the dissipation of the Byzantine character of Asia Minor; 5) that Anatolian Christian society, severed from the cultural and religious capital of Constantinople and the ecclesiastical and cultural leadership that it provided for the provinces, subjected to severe disruptions and dislocations by constant Turkish military aggrandizement, was, thanks to the support of Muslim religious institutions (including the economic possessions and revenues formerly in the hands of the Christian Church) by economic and political favors to, the various Turkish principalities, provided the groundwork for conversion to Islam; 6) that the great military disasters (for the Byzantines) were interpreted by the Turks as manifesting the religious superiority of Islam and by the Greeks to be punishment of a sinful Byzantine Christian society or the actions of an impersonal *tyche* that elevated and destroyed empires, while others looked forward to a resuscitated Greco-Christian empire; 7) and that formally replaced by Islamic high culture, Turkish folk culture was undoubtedly influenced by Byzantine culture.

Certainly this study by Professor Vryonis is an excellent example of cultural change in the Mediterranean basin. As Dr. Vryonis so aptly puts it in the first chapter of his *magnum opus*, «For the student of cultural change, the Islamiza-