

conception of cultural groups as populations; b) in projects considering ancestry for biomedical research, and c) in the outline of global migration and patterns of ancestry. She shows how mapping and other representational strategies within these projects produce a fiction of haplogroups (i.e., genetic markers and statistical differences) as human groups (i.e., bounded populations).

Chapter 2 “Mapping the Global Human Family: Shared and Distinctive Descent” goes deeper into these dynamics by looking into the “Genographic Project,” one of the largest undertakings in genetic ancestry testing worldwide. The Genographic Project, a collaboration between the geneticist Spencer Wells, a huge scientific consortium, the *National Geographic* journal, and the high-tech firm IBM, aims at a global map of ancient human migrations and contemporary patterns of settlement. The project produces a clear narrative of scientific progress and antiracism. In practice, however, it falls back into representational strategies of evolutionary progress, colonial frontier adventures (centring on the self-styling of Spencer Wells as a kind of 21st-century Indiana Jones), imperialist nostalgia (through the trope of the vanishing indigene), and Western paternalism (with the so-called legacy project).

Chapter 3 “Our Genetic Heritage: Figuring Diversity in National Studies” zooms in to Britain. This move enables the author to carefully consider the differentiated production of whiteness – in and through various associations of place and ancestry as well as normative assumptions about nation and migration. The UK has been home of a number of genetic ancestry projects, including “The Face of Britain,” “The Viking DNA Project,” and others. In her analysis, Nash pays particular attention to sampling strategies: Who is taken in and on what grounds? She demonstrates the troubling conceptualisations of white indigeneity as they occur within the projects as well as in media representations and public debates – where the *Sunday Times* could publish a headline like “British Genes Are Invasion Proof” (115), and the right-wing National Party could use the results of such studies as evidence in their anti-immigration discourse. Even if geneticists are careful to point out that there is no such thing as a “pure genepool,” Nash shows how traces of typological thinking shape these projects. The association of biological markers with the affective dimensions of belonging and relatedness produces a problematic genetic model of the nation. Far from mirroring a “natural order” of national belonging it obscures “how geographies of genetic variation grade across space rather than correspond to bounded groups, and discounts the complex mobilities that complicate any assumption of the purity of groups in the past and in the present” (122).

The ways in which these “complex mobilities” are gendered is further scrutinized in chap. 4 “Finding the ‘Truths’ of Sex in Geographies of Genetic Variation.” Here, Nash counters assumptions about reproductive fitness and genetic mobility, ideas about “sexual success” and gendered geographies by showing how such genetic accounts (and their parallels in evolutionary psychology) naturalise a specific version of genealogy (Eurocentric,

androcentric, and heteronormative) that does not account for the richness of human practices of kinning and relatedness.

While writing this review I received a letter by a former student of mine who now works as a trainer in “intercultural competence” for employees of the German administration (job centres, etc.). She told me of a curious incident in her new work environment. In a “train-the-trainer” seminar they watched a recent YouTube hit – “The AncestryDNA Journey” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw7FhU-G1\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw7FhU-G1_Q)). The clip starts with a challenge: “Would you dare to question who you really are?” It then continues with a highly emotional contrastation of people’s self-identifications and political views with the results of their genetic testing: You don’t like your neighbours? But see, you are genetically connected! The supervisor of the seminar enthusiastically recommended to use this example in their daily work in order to create empathy and awareness about cultural diversity in their target group – the German administration workers. It should help them (the workers) to become sensitive to the superficial nature of cultural differences and make them feel closer to their “foreign” clients. Apparently, none of the future consultants questioned the antiracist message of genetic ancestry testing or its profound significance as a marker of belonging and relatedness. Nash’s book complicates this widespread narrative of “feel-good genomics.” She convincingly demonstrates how the association of bodies, genes, and geographical places as well as the underlying conceptions of ancestry re/produce troubling versions of multiculturalism and sexual reproduction that actually reify biological and cultural difference – despite their claims to the contrary. This is an important read – for anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and STS scholars, students and academics alike. It is written in an accessible and engaging style that also reaches out to audiences beyond the social sciences: practitioners and consumers of genetic ancestry testing as well as trainers in “intercultural competence.” Perhaps, next time somebody will recommend Nash’s book instead of a commercial video on genetic ancestry testing. This would certainly be desirable.

Katharina Schramm

**Nitsos, Nikolaos:** *Tales, Rituals, and Songs. Exploring the Unknown Popular Culture of a Greek Mountain Village.* Translated by Panayotis League. Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2015. 347 pp. ISBN 978-1-935317-54-8. Price: \$ 39.95

This ethnohistorical work was originally published in Greek in 1926, and then republished in 1992, after being found in a flea market in Athens. It is of great value, both concerning the presentation of the author’s native village and, not least, as a contemporary historical description from southeastern Europe in the beginning of the 20th century, as seen by the scholar Nikolaos Nitsos (1865–1940) of the village Tsamantas, in Epirus, present-day northwestern Greece, as well as the reflections from one of those who had to leave their beloved polis after the Greek catastrophe in 1922.

The volume, which is dedicated to the Greek immigrants coming from Tsamantas to Worcester, Massachusetts, and their descendants, encompasses two forewords. The first is authored by the Tsamantiot Professor Dimitrios Konstadakopoulos (University of the West of England, Bristol), while the second is written by the fellow-villager Nikos A. Skopas and was originally written to the second edition in 1992. Next is a preface by Soterios Zoulas, executive editor of this 15-year translation project, followed by a short prologue by the author dated 1925. Following are 13 chapters discussing various topics from the mountain village of Tsamantas, and 3 appendixes, the second of these with newer additions to the lexicon, proverbs, and songs dealt with in former chapters, and the last is an epilogue which includes several letters and comments illustrating contemporary positive reactions to the work.

The translator notes, as do the authors of the forewords, that, since Nikolaos Nitsos “was a man of his time and place, and his writing reflects ... popular prejudices” that people today may find offensive (x). However, the translation intends to be faithful to the original Greek text, a good choice, which makes the text especially lively. His personal life mirrored the turbulent times of the early 20th century, and he is not afraid of telling his standpoints, such as in the discussion with contemporary Albanians living in the region. This is also reflected in many of the letters published in the epilogue, which moreover are especially concerned with the aforementioned lexicon (ch. 12), and so is of linguistic value concerning the many local idioms and expressions.

According to the author, “[a]fter the liberation of Epirus” (li), he desired to leave Constantinople and visit his native village for some months. As already mentioned, he never returned to Constantinople nor Asia Minor (modern Turkey) where he had lived since childhood, due to the Greek defeat against the Turks, and started instead to collect and study the history and customs of his village. The result of his endeavor is presented in the 13 chapters, starting with “Ancient Antecedents and Topographical Details” (ch. 1). The second chapter concerns “The Modern Village of Tsamantas.” The next four chapters are relatively short: ch. 3, “Politics and Religion,” ch. 4: “Schools and Education,” ch. 5: “Intellectuals and Scholars,” and ch. 6: “Financial Matters.” Nitsos’ greatest contribution to ethnohistory is the description of the customs of people, found in the following seven chapters and appendixes, containing a substantial collection of folklore material from Tsamantas and surrounding communities. Chapter 7: “Ethos and Customs Concerning Religious, Family, Social, and National Life,” gives a rich description of rituals and beliefs, often while comparing with ancient customs, which was popular among folklorists as well as classicists at the time, or in the words of the author: “most of the beliefs and a great deal of the customs of defeated paganism remained unchanged through the ages and live on in the midst of today’s Greek culture” (99). Although he, as a man, mostly writes in a typical male way, the chapter deals with several topics especially related to women. He presents the life-cycle passages

from childbirth, via baptism, marriage, and “The Woman as Wife and Homemaker – Conjugal Relations,” to burial and the following memorial services. Following is a section dealing with celebrations and feast days, also including several songs and proverbs. After a short photo section, in which two of the three scenes from Tsamantas unfortunately are without captions, follows ch. 8 dealing with “Linguistic Features.” We are, inter alia, informed that “[t]he vocabulary of the women of Tsamantas is extraordinarily rich in curses, especially considering the relative modesty of their everyday speech” (158). Chapter 9 concerns “Folk Wisdom and Philosophy in Tsamantas,” in which 69 proverbs are recorded. Chapter 10 deals with “The Popular Muse in Tsamantas,” including folk songs. It is interesting to note the focus on eyes in many of the songs. The topic of ch. 11 is “Fairy Tales, Riddles, and Word Games,” while the next constitutes a “Lexicon,” as already noted. The chapter deals with “those modern Greek words, used in Tsamantas and the area, that have a more or less idiomatic local meaning” (207), and are listed according to 8 different classes, varying from “[w]ords with Ancient Greek roots” to “Words of unknown origin” (208). As this section is quite extensive, and there is no unified universally accepted system for transliteration of written and spoken Greek, the book would have profited from having a note on the transliteration system which is used by the translator. Although I have read books using several systems, and also use my own, I often became quite confused when reading this section (such as 232 f.). Throughout the book there are, unfortunately, several unnecessary mistakes in spelling as well. When arguing for the Ancient Greek origin of the word *kivouri* (grave, tomb) on page 225, contra C. Christovasilis’ conception of its Arabic origin, we learn that “the grave is considered sacred [in Epirus], and no word from the language of the Turkish infidels would be used for it” (225)! Anyone who has visited, for example, Konya in modern Turkey, would, of course, have another view here. Chapter 13, “On the Slang of the Tinkers of Tsamantas and the Surrounding Area,” sets out to give a Greek version of secret languages which other European peoples possess, such as the French (257). When reading this introduction to the chapter, it seems clear that the author separates Greece from the rest of Europe, as do many other Greeks in times of crisis, both during this and later periods of Greek history. Unfortunately, this chapter also reflects the problems following from a lacking note on transliteration already mentioned (e.g., p. 260). Concerning the three “Appendixes,” the first contains various explanations and additions to information given in the preceding 12 chapters, among other subjects letters sent by the author to the New York newspaper *Atlantis*, where he evidently published many articles and notices telling about his home village. The first one (263–267) gives a lively description of the Spanish influenza, also plaguing Epirus, and comparing it to Thucydides’ description of the plague of Athens during the Peloponnesian War. In this “Appendix,” I especially liked his comparison of handwritten notes in liturgical books, an important part of his sources, to the Arabs’ saying, “Writing is eternal, life is temporary” (274). As he

was childless, the importance of his writings to compensate for lack of progeny is also found in several places in the work. Regarding the exchange of the Muslim population of the area (284f.), he is, inter alia, concerned with stating, that “[t]he Treaty [of Lausanne] does not speak of deporting the ‘Turks’ of Greece’s new territories, but of ‘Muslims’,” since “there are almost no ethnic Turks in these regions ... only Muslim converts of Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian, etc. extraction” (285), a topic to which he often comes back concerning the relation between Greeks and Albanians from the former’s point of view, but also regarding the traditional customs preserved by the Greek converts, such as in connection to death rituals (302). Although the author generally is eager to point to differences, similarities among the people are written between the lines, and this is one of the reasons the book is especially interesting as a documentation of life, customs, and thinking in Epirus around 100 years ago. All in all, I have learned much from this work, and commend it highly.

Evy Johanne Håland

**Obizaan Staples, Lee, and Chato Ombishkebines Gonzalez:** *Aanjikiing. Changing Worlds. An Anishinaabe Traditional Funeral.* Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 2015. 170 pp. ISBN 978-0-921064-22-0. (Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics Memoir, 22) Price: \$ 30.00

While the premise for this book is rather simple, it contains a wealth of information of great benefit for individuals seeking to understand not only Anishinaabe funeral practices but other, larger aspects of the culture as well. At its most basic, the book provides instructions on how to conduct an Anishinaabe funeral. As Obizaan Staples writes, he wants to share his knowledge about how to conduct an Anishinaabe funeral so that the information will be available for the Anishinaabeg in the future (5). In reality, the book offers so much more than that.

One problem common to books claiming to present the spiritual life of Indian people is that the authors are necessarily to be trusted. It is not uncommon to see what sometimes is referred to as “plastic medicine men” writing books on Native American spirituality purely for profit and otherwise engaged in the selling their services to conduct “authentic” Indian ceremonies. So, first and foremost, the credentials of the authors of this book needs to be established. Lee Obizaan Staples and Chato Ombishkebines Gonzalez are two of the best choices to write a book of this nature. I am especially impressed by the approach Obizaan Staples takes to conducting himself. According to my own late spiritual advisor, Greg Kingbird, Sr., an Anishinaabe spiritual leader is not to ask for money to help people. Instead, if someone provides so much as a pinch of tobacco, the spiritual leader is supposed to answer the call. As discussed in the “Preface,” Obizaan Staples is just such a spiritual leader. He “has answered the call of the tobacco that always seems to find him and never seems to cease” (xi). There is no evidence he wrote this book for profit or that he otherwise sells his services. A pinch of tobacco is enough for him to go to

work for his people. This is the mark of an authentic Anishinaabe spiritual leader. As such, the words he presents in this book can be completely and thoroughly trusted.

For his part, Chato O. Gonzalez falls in the same vein as Obizaan Staples. As he writes in the “Acknowledgements,” he has spent many hours driving Obizaan Staples around Anishinaabe country, assisting him in and learning the ways of the Anishinaabe spiritual life. More to the point, he has spent countless hours doing the hard work necessary to learn the Anishinaabe language. Such dedication indicates his heart is with the Anishinaabe people and he, too, can be trusted to provide an accurate account of their spiritual life. So, the authenticity of this book cannot be questioned and we can look to it to find some very good information about Anishinaabe funerals and their spiritual life in general.

The basics of the funeral are rather straightforward. Starting with the pre-funeral feasts, the process then moves on to the wake. The funeral proper comes next in order, followed by the post-funeral feast. Finally, if the family of the deceased so chooses, there may be a memorial feast one year after the funeral as well.

Since it is considered imperative that an Anishinaabe funeral be conducted in the native language, the book is bilingual. The left verso contains the Anishinaabe while the right verso provides the English translation. However, it should be noted, that, as explained in the “Preface,” the English serves more as an explanation of the Anishinaabe language content rather than being a translation (xvi). Additionally, the Anishinaabe language presented in the text is more formal than what a native speaker of the language is likely to use at an actual funeral.

Given the above, the book helps anyone so interested to learn the basics of conducting an Anishinaabe funeral. So, in that regard, the book can be considered something of a primer. In fact, if one were so inclined, one could memorize the Anishinaabe language portion and be well on the way to being able to conduct an Anishinaabe funeral. However, it is very important to note simply learning the basics of the funeral ceremony, even memorizing the Anishinaabe language part of it, is not enough to qualify an individual to actually conduct a funeral. As Obizaan Staples discusses in the “Introduction,” if an individual is really interested in conducting funerals, first and foremost, that individual should not pursue the matter. Instead, “the Manidoog [spirits] will find a way for you to begin helping in this way” (5). Such an individual also needs to find qualified teachers, and Obizaan Staples ends his “Introduction” by saying if one is truly interested in this calling, one can offer tobacco to himself or O. Gonzalez (27). So, it is possible to start to learn how to conduct an Anishinaabe funeral with this book. But, the book is just a beginning of a life-long journey for those called by the Manidoog to serve the Anishinaabe people in this manner.

From a wider perspective, the book also overturns some of the scholarly literature on the afterlife of the Anishinaabe. The journey to the land of the dead is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon. As generally presented in the scholarly literature, the four-day journey