

Exile and migration of Pontic Greeks: the experience of loss as the presence of absence

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the experience and significance of absence in the lives of Pontians who live in Adelaide. Pontians are descendants from colonies of Greeks who, for at least 3000 years, inhabited the area bordering the Black Sea in northern Turkey in an area once called Pontos. Their underlying and ongoing sense of absence derives from two historical events of loss. One is from a genocide and enforced exile from Pontos wherein 350,000 of their people died between 1917 and 1923. The other is from voluntary migration when some of the Pontic Greeks who had settled in Greece, and/or their descendants, came to Australia as part of the mass migration of peoples in the mid 20th century. The memories and narratives of the traumatic loss of people and place from Pontos, and the experiences associated with migration to Australia, have played a pivotal role in the construction and experience of absence for Pontians and is an important dimension of their identity as Pontians. The memory of loss is always in the present and is evoked by present experiences and sensed through a multi-faceted expression of emotions. It is embodied in a variety of corporeal practices such as commemorations, dance, community gatherings and return visits and is experienced as an absence. Given that many of my informants have lived in Adelaide for up to fifty years, a central question of this thesis is, how do they continue to remember the loss of their former homelands and why does this elicit an often deep emotional response? In this thesis, I explore how social memory, emotions and embodiment intertwine in the practices of commemoration, dance and journeys to show how loss from the past events of exile and migration are brought into the present to be experienced as both an absence and the presence of that absence. Focusing on how the body experiences being-in-the-world through temporally and historically informed sensory engagement, as well as drawing on a conscious as well as an unconscious reservoir of meaning, loss is not only tied to past events but in and through the body becomes both an absence of a presence and the presence of an absence.

Thesis declaration

I, Valerie Liddle, certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Valerie Liddle
February 2013

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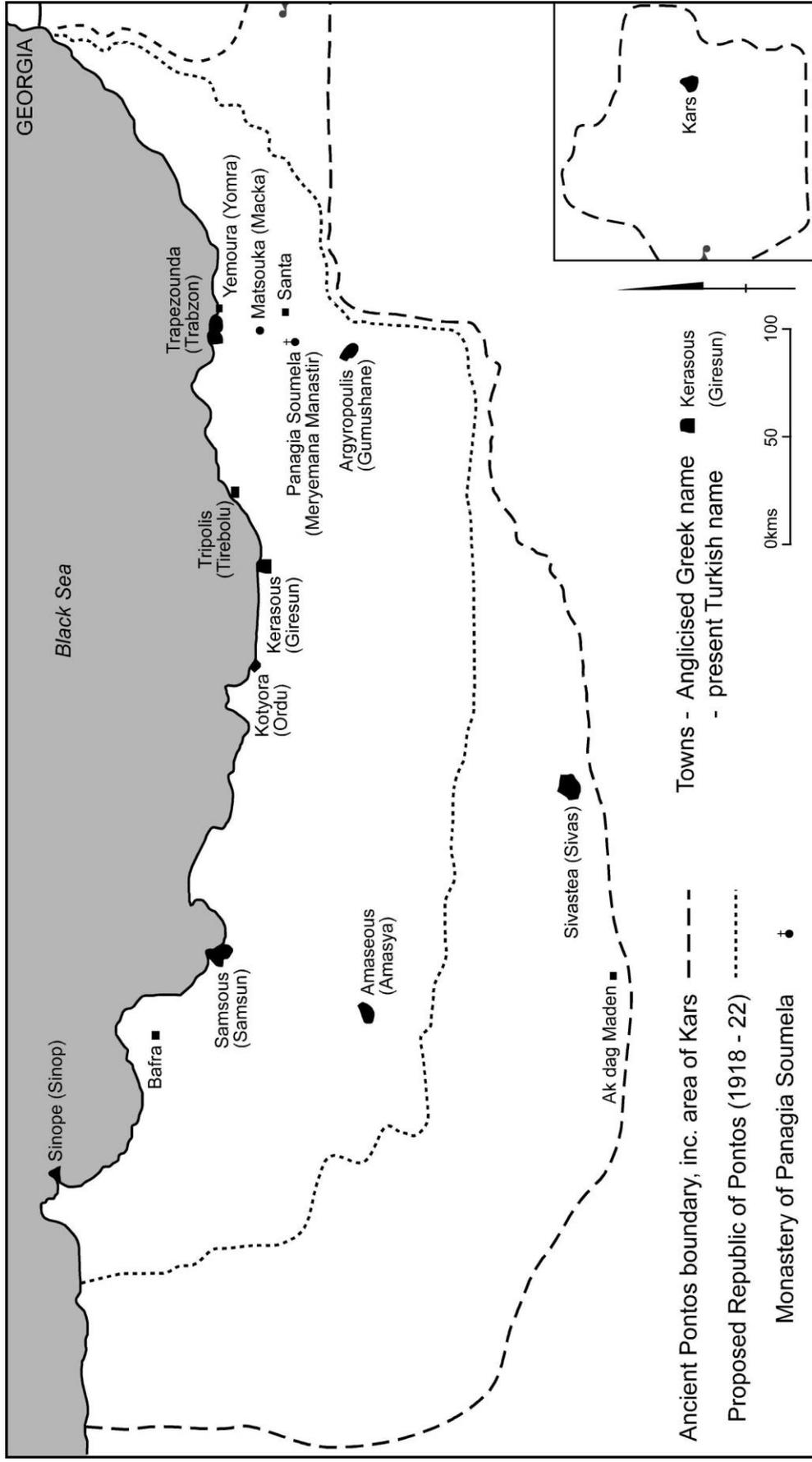


Figure 1: The Pontos region

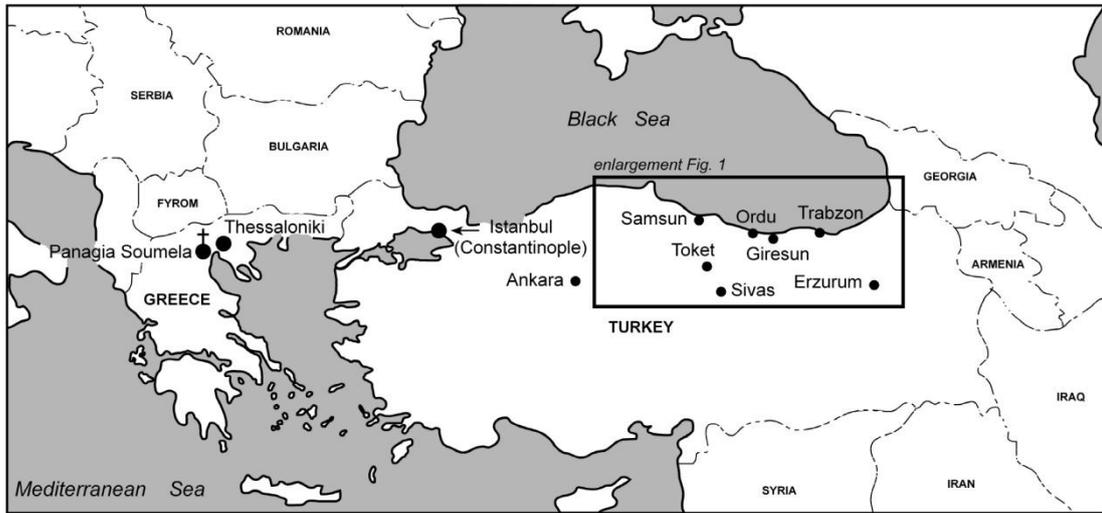


Figure 2: A regional map showing present-day Greece and Turkey

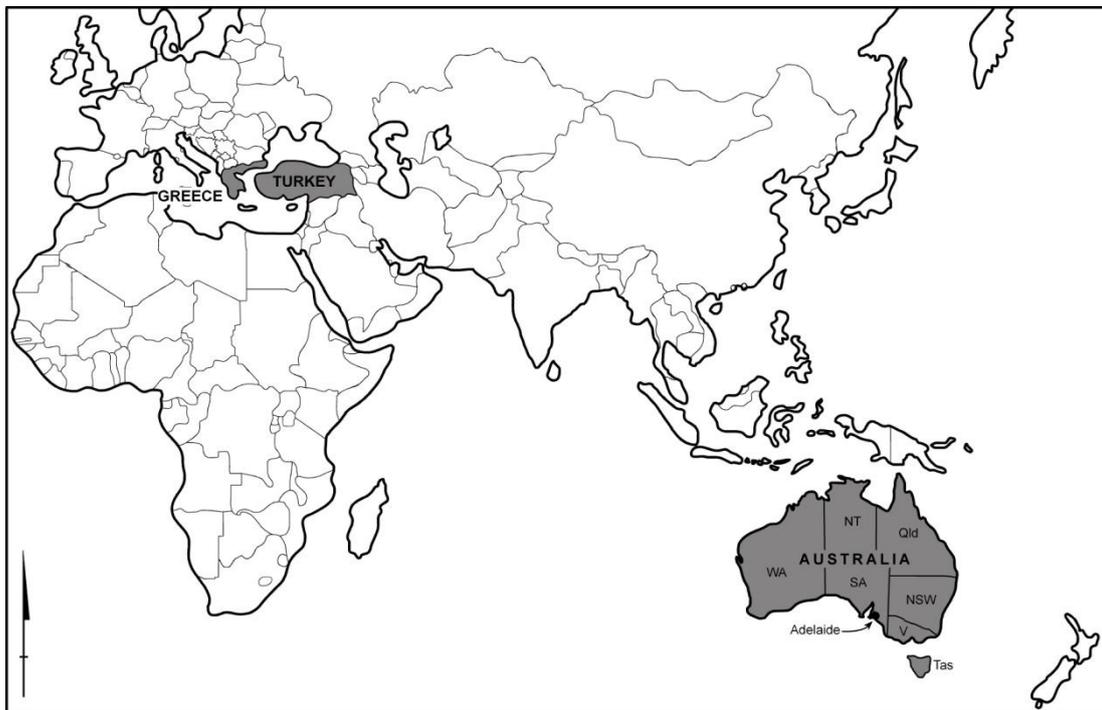


Figure 3: Exile and migration destinations

1 **Introductory chapter**

In this thesis, I explore the experience and continuing significance of loss and absence in the lives of Pontians who live in Adelaide. Pontians, or Pontic Greeks, are descendants from colonies of Greeks who, for at least 3000 years, inhabited the area bordering the Black Sea in northern Turkey in an area once called Pontos (see Figure 1). Named Pontos after the Greek 'Euxenos Pontos' (the hospitable sea), it stretches for a distance of almost 600 kilometres along the Black Sea coast from Sinope in the west to the border of present day Georgia in the east. It includes a flat coastal region, which extends inland for a few kilometres before rising sharply to a mountainous region, dissected by steep valleys and reaching to 4000 metres at its highest section in the east. (Bryer, AAM 1980c: 34). These Pontic Alps give Pontos its southern borders. In present day Turkey, the area is no longer defined as a specific region but Pontians still refer to it as Pontos (see Figure 2).

The underlying and ongoing sense of loss felt by Adelaide Pontians derives from two historical 'ruptures'. The first arose from a genocide under the Turkish government and an ensuing enforced exile of survivors from Pontos, the other from a process of voluntary migration when some of the Pontic Greeks who had settled in Greece, and/or their descendants, came to Australia as part of the mass migration of peoples in the mid 20th century (see Figure 3). The accusation of genocide is a serious one and the term can have emotional and political overtones. Therefore, at this stage of the thesis, I need to explain how the term 'genocide' entered common usage and how it has come to be adopted by Pontic Greeks at the present time.

It is considered by some Greek historians that between 1912–1922 a total of 1.4 to 1.5 million indigenous Christians of the then Ottoman Empire lost their lives through 'massacres, deportation, compulsory labor, or flight under extreme weather conditions' under the nationalistic aspirations of the Turkish government of the time to rid Turkey of its Christian population (Hofmann 2011: 104). However, given the demographic inaccuracies of the time, Hofmann considers that the number could be closer to 3.5 million, comprising '1.5 million Armenians, 1.5 million Greeks and half a million Aramaic speaking Christians (Aramaicans, Assyrians, Chaldaeans and other denominations)' (2011: 105). Of the 1.5 million Greeks, Tsirkinidis estimates that

approximately 353,000 victims died in Pontos¹ in what he considers to be genocide (1999a: 308). Further information about the violence in Pontos at this time and about the forced exodus of survivors is provided in Chapter 2.

The word 'genocide' only came into the English vocabulary in 1944 (see Moses 2008: 8). Before that time, members of the League of Nations saw the violent massacres in the late 19th and early 20th century as 'crimes against humanity', a term 'introduced into International Law by The Hague Convention, [and] adopted by the First and Second Peace Conference at The Hague (1899 and 1907)' (Hofmann 2011: 106). Consequently,

'The wartime atrocities committed against the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire [was] met with a joint declaration from the governments of France, Great Britain and Russia, dated 24 May 1915, asserting that "[i]n the presence of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the allied Governments publicly inform the sublime Porte that they will [hold] personally responsible for the said crimes all members of the Ottoman Government as well as those of its agents who are found to be involved in such massacres"' (Schabas 2000: 16).

The large numbers of Armenians killed at that time became the focus of worldwide attention. However, Pontic Greeks and the Assyrian Christians were also part of the same assault on Christian minorities, but did not receive the same international recognition. Although a prime intention of The Hague Convention was to 'civilize warfare between states...there was [at that time] no appropriate legal tool for the punishment and prevention of massive violence caused by a state and directed against its own citizens...' (Hofmann 2011: 106).

The word genocide, from the Greek *genos* (race or tribe) and the Latin *caedere* (killing), was first 'coined' by Raphaël Lemkin (1900-1959), a Polish-Jewish lawyer, in response to the holocaust of the Jews in World War II (see Hinton 2002: 3; Schabas 2000: 25). As a law student in the 1930s, Lemkin's interest had been sparked by the inability of the international courts to bring to justice those responsible for the earlier massacres in Turkey (see Schabas 2000: 25). From that time on, he continued to press the international community to recognise these killings as a particular crime and, in the face of the atrocities committed against the Jews, he campaigned for the term 'genocide' to be recognised as a criminal act and punishable under interna-

¹ The balance comprised Greeks from East Thrace and Asia Minor.

tional law. In December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which came into force in January, 1951.

'In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group'

(Article 2 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* 1948).

De Zayas points out that the 'Genocide Convention did not "create" the crime of genocide, but was intended to strengthen the pre-existing claims of victims of genocide, including the victims of the Armenian genocide and of the Holocaust' and because it is 'declarative of pre-existing international law...it can be applied retroactively' (2011: 312). Since the inception of the Convention recognising the crime of genocide, descendants of the victims of the Turkish violence have continued to argue that the traumatic death of their peoples can be regarded as genocide. This is in the face of ongoing denial by the Turkish government and some scholars (see for instance Lewy 2005).

The Armenian community has been particularly active in seeking recognition of the genocide of its peoples (see the works of Akçam 2006; Dadrian 2003b; Hovannisian 2008; Libaridian 2000). In 1997 the International Association of Genocide Scholars unanimously affirmed that:

'...the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide' (quoted in Dadrian 2003a: 80).

From the 1970s, Pontian historians such as Fotiadis (2004), Tsirkinidis (1999a) and Diamadis (2004), have accessed European archives to show that Pontic Greeks also suffered in the same genocide. Pressure from Pontian scholars and politicians was instrumental in having the Greek Government pass a motion on 24 February 1994 that the 19th May be a day of commemoration for the Pontian genocide (see Chapter 3). Further, in 2007 the International Association of Genocide Scholars widened its earlier resolution to include other minority Christian groups, passing a resolution that:

‘...the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks’ and calling ‘upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocide of these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps towards restitution’ (quoted in Charny 2011: 33).

By the end of 2009, the governments of Greece, Sweden, Cyprus and ten states in the United States of America and one Australian state have passed resolutions recognising the Pontian genocide. (For further details of the South Australian recognition, see the Concluding chapter to this thesis.)

I understand that the word genocide can be perceived as an emotive one, firmly connected to the deaths of approximately six million Jews in World War II and to massacres in the latter part of the 20th century. I accept that some Pontian organisations use the term to urge nation states to put pressure on Turkey to acknowledge that what happened in the early 20th century to Pontians was indeed genocide and thereby to attain some form of compensation. By using the word genocide in this thesis I do not seek to use it in this political sense. Rather, I use it as the term continually used by my informants to characterise what they believe Pontians suffered under the Turkish Government. My interest is to show how that belief presences itself in Pontic practices.

The memories and narratives of the traumatic loss of people and place from Pontos and the experiences associated with migration to Australia, have played a pivotal role in the construction and experience of absence for Pontians and is an important dimension of their identification as Pontians. A central question of this thesis is, given that many of my informants have lived in Adelaide for up to fifty years, to what extent do Pontians remember the loss of their former homelands and why does this continue to elicit an often profound emotional response? I, therefore, explore how

social memory, emotions and embodiment intertwine in practices of commemoration, dance and visits to former homelands, to show how loss from past events of exile and migration are brought into the present to be experienced as a presence of that absence. Taking a phenomenological stance, I focus on how the body experiences being-in-the-world through 'temporally and historically informed sensory presence and engagement' (Csordas 1994: 10). I argue that loss is not only tied to past events but, in and through the body, becomes both sensed as absence as well as an active presence of absence.

In this thesis, I make a distinction between loss and absence. While loss can be the disappearance or deprivation of a valued person or thing, it always refers to something that happened in the past. Thus, it is 'situated on a historical level and [as] the consequence of particular events' (LaCapra 1999: 712). My focus in this thesis is on how loss, as a result of catastrophe or a shared traumatic event, what LaCapra terms 'historical trauma' (1999: 722), continues to have significance for a community of people over time and space. The approach to severe loss in the literature often ranges from the psychological, which includes 'stages' within the grief process (Archer 1999; Boss 1999 ; Harvey 2002) to the pathological, which analyses notions of melancholy and nostalgia as developed by Freud (Eng & Kazanjian 2003). It is also discussed in relation to mourning practices (Brennan 2008; Danforth & Tsiaras 1982; Jonker 1997; Schieffelin 1977). Even when there is research on communities who suffer traumatic events, the focus is often on the effects of loss on the person. Abuk (2003), Behar (2003), Tilbury, (2007) and Eisenbruch (1991), for example, explore personal grief or mental illness as the result of the loss of place within the migration experience.

However, it is the ethnographic study of a Greek village in Cyprus by Loizos (1981) that most resonates with my own work. Loizos researched the effects of loss when the Turkish military invasion of Cyprus in 1974 divided the island into Turkish and Greek territories and displaced Greeks from their villages. He showed that there are resulting on-going long-term effects from the loss of homes and family members (2007, 2008). My study of Pontians in Adelaide also focuses on a Greek community and one, too, whose forebears suffered as a result of conflict with the Turkish government. But while my research considers the effects of loss as a result of exile, as did Loizos, it adds another dimension: that of migration. I show that loss is also integral to the migration process for Pontians who migrated fifty to sixty years ago and suggest that although Pontians experienced loss through two discrete historical

events—exile and migration—the focus of each was different. The reaction to the first loss was immediate; one that looked back to what was lost in Pontos. Its sentiment had a moral component; particularly that of outrage at the injustice of what had happened. While voluntary migration to Australia originally involved the immediate separation from family and friends, it also had the element of looking forward to starting a new life in a new land: the second sensation of loss, then, developed over time and space into a sentiment of sadness at the gradual realisation that this separation would be ongoing. For Pontians, however, the palimpsest nature of the prior loss of exile remains and is present in the second experience of loss resulting from migration. This conception of loss is pivotal to the way Pontians define their own identity. As the two losses co-mingle, each preserves distinct but intersecting sentiments—those of the anger of injustice and the sadness of separation.

The concept of absence is different from that of loss. In contrast to loss, LaCapra sees absence on a ‘tranhistorical level’ in that it is ‘not an event and does not imply tenses (past, present, or future)’ (1999: 700). While what was lost occurred in the past, the experience of loss is not simply tied to the past. It is brought into the present as a sense of lack or absence. These absent things or relationships evoke certain thoughts, emotions and practices that may remain after the thing or relationship is lost. When such losses are tied to a traumatic event, absence is linked to ‘structural trauma’ and ‘becomes the basis for collective and/or personal identity’ (LaCapra 1999: 724). Paradoxically, therefore, absence of a presence can also be the presence of absence. The ‘absent elements are sensuously, emotionally and ideationally present to people, and are articulated or materialized in various ways’ (Bille, Hastrup & Sørensen 2010: 3–4). Although what is lost might be gone forever, through the emotions attached to the memory of it and the performance of certain rituals and practices, the sense of absence is evoked and re-ignited. For Pontians, the ‘presencing’ of absence occurs through narratives, commemorations, religious rituals, dance and returning practices.

Although ‘presencing’ can involve the action of making something present, throughout this thesis I will use the word both as a noun and a verb to mean something other than just the intentional act of making something present. I do not consider the presencing of absence that Pontians experience to be intentional or deliberate. Nor is it simply tacit. I use the word in a similar fashion to that of ‘beingness’. Just as being is a primordial action of being human, so, too, presencing is a primordial action of presence. While always part of action then, presencing in this sense is not the

deliberate act of making something present. For Pontians, a sense of absence ‘slips and slides over again’ (Handelman & Shamgar-Handelman 1997: 114) into the presence of absence in a paradoxical way. For instance, in commemoration ceremonies the memories and the emotions focus on sufferings and loss of peoples and homeland, the absence of a presence. Alternatively, in dance, loss can be perceived as the presence of absence. Here, the memories and emotions might be those of happiness. While in these discrete practices, the response evoked might appear converse, nevertheless, both responses are affected by their opposite element, leading to a dynamic between the negative emotions associated with deprivation, such as sadness, regret or anger, and the positive responses associated with survival, as for instance, relief, contentment or happiness. Rather than being in binary opposition, however, the elements of absence as a presence and presence of an absence are in a paradoxical relationship. Both, as Bille et al contend:

‘...inherently depend on one another for their significance to be fully realised and even conceptualised, and that the processes through which the properties gain significance are local, complex and not necessarily consistent’ (2010: 4).

Hence, the ever-present, multi-faceted nature of the experience of the presence of absence and the emotional preoccupation with it over a long time span show a capaciousness rather than an emptiness that accommodates a whole range of responses. Loss sensed as both an absence, and a presence of that absence, is reproduced through the intersection of memory, emotions and embodied practice.

Methodology

My interest in Pontic Greeks began when I visited the former Pontos area in 2005 on a study tour of archaeological sites. In retrospect, I realised that the Pontos area was different from many of the other ancient sites we had visited elsewhere in Turkey. The Pontic Greeks who had once lived in there had been forced to leave in quite recent times—some eighty years before my visit—leaving behind evidence of their presence in their buildings. On reflection, I remember three sites that reflected not only the past presence of this community in that place but also its absence.

One such site was at a lonely promontory on the Black Sea, west of Kerasous. Reflecting the belief that the Argonauts of Greek mythology sailed into the Black Sea and that Jason recovered the Golden Fleece in the eastern part of this region, the

promontory is called Jason's cape.² Here there was a solitary, deserted building now called Jason's church, which is being developed as a museum site by the Turkish Government. According to Bryer (1985), for Christian Orthodox Greeks, this cape was once a significant religious centre with a number of churches in the area.³ This former Greek Orthodox Church was built in the 19th century and would have had the name of a Christian saint.⁴ In renaming the church 'Jason's church', and thus linking it with the ancient Greek mythology, the Turkish Government denies a much more recent, intervening history: that of the now absent Greek Orthodox community for whom this particular area had its own historical and religious significance.



Plate 1: A Greek Orthodox Church at Jason's Cove

The second place was the monastery of Panagia Soumela⁵, a site of religious significance for Pontic Greeks. It is set at about 1150 metres above sea level in the

² In the province of Ordu, it is known by its Turkish name of Yason Burnu.

³ According to Bryer the cape had been a significant religious centre with a number of churches once in the area. 'Clearly there were several churches on the cape. It was variously reported to us on different visits that there were four, twelve, and even thousands more churches' (Bryer, A & Winfield 1985: 122). Records show that in 1357 the emperor Alexios III celebrated the feast of Epiphany in one of the churches there (Bryer, A & Winfield 1985: 119). However, when I was there, I saw no other church ruins or evidence of former settlements.

⁴ Bryer (1985: 120) dates the building of the church at 1868. He suggests that it is the church of St. Andrew. Hionides refers to it as the church of the Dormition of Theotokos ('The Falling Asleep of the Godbearer') and also as the church of Panagia (Hionides 2003: 83, 311).

⁵ Panagia 'refers to one of the manifestations of Mary and has no equivalent term in English. *Panayia* – the all holy one, the foremost among the saints – is the most commonly used term for Mary in Greek' (Dubisch 1995: 263). Soumela is a contraction of σ σου ('s sou') in the Pontian dialect meaning 'of the' and Μελά 'Black Mountain, so the title means the Virgin Mary of the Black Mountain (Miller, W 1926: 62).

mountains 50 kilometres from the coastal city of Trabzon.⁶ Clinging to the steep-sided rocks of Mount Mela, the monastery is believed to have been established in the 4th century CE, with buildings added over the subsequent centuries. It has fallen into disrepair with vandals causing further damage to some of the inside of the building. In recent years, the Turkish government has been restoring the monastery under the auspices of UNESCO with the aim of turning the site into a museum. It is now no longer referred to it as the monastery of Panagia Soumela but by its Turkish name of Meryemana Manastir⁷. Later, through my research I came to understand that this had been a major religious and cultural centre for Greek people who lived in the area. Pontic Greeks in Adelaide spoke of the importance of the former monastery as a pilgrimage site for their parents and grandparents. Now, a monastery of the same name in northern Greece, built in the 1950s, still continues to draw Pontic Greeks from all over Greece and from overseas (see Figure 2).

⁶ This is the Turkish name for the modern city of Trabzon on the Black Sea coast. The Greek name for the city is either Trapezounda or Trapezous but it has also been known as Trebizond. I will refer to the city as Trapezounda when referring to a time of the Greek presence there. When referring to the city as it is today, I will use the word Trabzon.

⁷ In translation the Turkish words are: 'Manastir' (monastery) of 'Meryem' (Mary or Miriam) 'Ana' (Mother).



Plate 2: The former monastery of Panagia Soumela in Pontos

There are no thriving Greek settlements and communities remaining in the Pontos region: only the buildings bear testament to their former presence. It was the third site—the place known as Atatürk's⁸ house—that made me particularly conscious of the demise of the former Greek community in Pontos. Set in the steep lush foothills overlooking Trabzon, the house was once the summer residence of a prominent Greek banker of Trapezounda, Kapagiannidis (Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 56). This house of Greek architecture was a sign of the dominance of wealthy Greeks in Trapezounda. Now, as a museum for the possessions of

⁸ A Turkish political and military leader, known as the founder of the modern nation of Turkey, 'Mustafa Kemal [1881–1938] assumed the name of Atatürk—Father of the Turks—bestowed on him by the National Assembly in 1934' (Karpas 1985: 895).

Atatürk used in his military campaigns, it is both a sign of the appropriation of such properties as a result of conflict and the exile of minority groups by the dominant Turkish state.



Plate 3: Atatürk's House

Only later in my fieldwork did I come to understand how these images—the deserted buildings, the desecrated religious sites and the evidence of the erasure of a Greek presence in Turkey—reflect something of the loss that Pontic Greeks still continue to feel. But Desjarlais asks ‘To what extent can a person participate in another’s feelings or ideas?’ (1992: 35). As I continued to meet with Pontians and understand something of their history, I became annoyed and disappointed that I did not realise the importance of the place when I visited it in 2005. I have become angry that very little was said by our guide at that time of the former Greek community in Pontos and certainly nothing was said of the genocide or how those who survived were forcibly removed. Because of these strong feelings it might be possible to say that I have empathy with Pontians’ sense of loss. However, the feelings I have about Pontos as a person from an Anglo-Saxon background are different from those of Pontians and as with all fieldwork, ‘my experiences never [escape] the prism of my own cultural reality’ (Desjarlais 1992: 18).

My original research plan was to focus on Greek migrants in general who had come to Adelaide in the post-World War II period, looking specifically at how the original

homeland of Greece was remembered in practices in the new place of migration. Using a phenomenological approach and through participant observation, I wanted to look at how the body in place remembers through its engagement with activities and objects in both the home and the church and how these memories help create a feeling of 'being-at-home-in-the-world' (Jackson 1995: 123). Because the Greek community in Adelaide is a diverse one, comprised of people from many different regions of Greece, I began to see that my approach needed to be confined to one group. Through a chance meeting with a woman from the Pontian Brotherhood later in 2005, I remembered my visit to the Pontos area. I then decided to concentrate my research on one group, the Pontic Greeks, believing that this would be a more focused way to address the issues of two remembered places.

During fieldwork, I conducted research into the history of the Pontos region, the Pontian genocide, the re-settlement of Pontians in Greece and the events that resulted in many migrating to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. I also researched the history of the Orthodox Church and attended Modern Greek classes at the University of Adelaide. I also conducted participant observation research and interviews. I attended Greek senior citizen groups in the Adelaide metropolitan area and participated in their activities. I observed religious rites at church liturgies on Sunday mornings and on other feast days, and participated in a number of activities within the Pontian community such as commemorations, community gatherings, funerals, weddings, private parties and exhibitions. I observed the dancing group of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia at dance rehearsals and at Greek festivals, such as Glendi, the Dimitria Greek festival and the Unley Greek festival⁹. This dance group was invited to perform at a number of venues in Greece and I was able to accompany the dancers, their parents and grandparents on this tour. Over a two week period, I travelled by bus with the group, danced and ate with them and observed their dance performances. I walked with them in religious processions, took part in village festivals and went with them to ancient Greek sites. I then remained in Greece for another seven weeks: for two weeks I lived with a number of Pontians at a house on the grounds of the reconstructed monastery of Panagia Soumela; and for another three weeks observed the dance rehearsals and performances of the dance group of the Black Sea Club in Veria in northern Greece. Interviews formed the third area of my research. I interviewed people from a wide range of ages in the

⁹ Glendi is a yearly festival in Adelaide that aims to promote Greek culture through a presentation of its history, arts, music, dance and food. The Dimitria Greek festival, organised by the Pan-Macedonian Association of South Australia, showcases cultural activities from northern Greece. The Unley Greek festival is held in the vicinity of St. Spyridon's Church in that suburb of Adelaide, as part of the Greek cultural month.

Pontian and the wider Greek community, often on more than one occasion. Overall, in Adelaide I interviewed forty-five Pontic Greeks and twenty-four non-Pontic Greeks, as well as sixteen people of Pontian background in Greece. Through my fieldwork experience, I began to appreciate the effects that the exile from Pontos and subsequent migration to Australia—has had on the lives of Pontic Greeks in Adelaide and how these are brought into social memory and practice.

Ruptures and the Pontic diaspora

Throughout this thesis I will use the term ‘rupture’ to refer to spatio-temporal ruptures, that is, an irretrievable break that occurs over space and time for people when, as the result of some form of disaster, they are forced to move away from their former homelands (see Malkki 1995a). In some cases, natural disasters are the cause of these spatio-temporal ruptures but, in this thesis, the focus will be on those resulting from political uprisings, genocide and wars. Scholars who view rupture from a spatio-temporal perspective often focus on disjuncture and discontinuity, but Malkki critiques this view: her argument is that because nations are ‘conceived as discrete spatial partitioning of territory’ (1992: 26), ‘people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness’ (1992: 27). This view can lead, she argues, to a ‘cultural essentialism’ whereby culture is seen as sedentary and tied to ‘concrete localities’. Thus, in the discourse on displacement ‘arborescent root metaphors’ (1992: 27), are often employed, such as ‘roots’ in the ‘soil’ of the mother or father ‘land’ to describe a ‘metaphysical sedentarism’ (1992: 34). Similarly, the separation of peoples from their former homelands is often described in botanical terms, such as ‘uprooting’, ‘scattering’ or ‘displacement’. Re-settling in new places is often described as ‘regrounding’ or ‘transplanting’ (Ahmed et al. 2003; Cohen, R 2008). These terms, as Malkki points out, assume that people and their culture are seen as firmly tied to the land of their birth and, once uprooted, their culture disappears and they are perceived to have become ‘rootless’ (1992: 32). Rather, she argues that displaced people ‘invent homes and homelands in the absence of territorial, national bases...through memories of, and claims on, places that they can or will no longer corporeally inhabit’ (Malkki 1992: 24).

This thesis will show that although the spatio-temporal ruptures Pontic Greeks experienced through exile and migration were a traumatic break from their former homelands, their cultural practices did not disappear. They did, however, undergo a

change as each rupture had a significant effect on how Pontic Greeks constituted and experienced their new places. It was, however, the continuities and conjunctures of their beliefs and practices formed in a prior place, and retained and adapted in a new one, which enabled them to survive as a diasporic community, first in Greece as exiles and later as migrants in Australia.

‘Diasporas are dispersed networks of peoples who share common historical experiences of dispossession, displacement, and adjustment’ (Ilcan 2002: 56). The term ‘diaspora’ comes from the Greek words *dia* and *speirein* meaning ‘to scatter, ‘to spread’ or ‘to disperse’. Originally, the word ‘diaspora’ was used to translate a Hebrew word *galût*, meaning ‘banishment’ and ‘exile’ and was used in relation to the exile of Jews to Babylonia in 586 BCE (Cohen, R 2008: 22). Reflecting the wide scale movement of peoples in the 20th century, the term diaspora began to take on broader and more inclusive aspects (Cohen, R 2008; Gilroy 1994; Safran 1991). Safran, for instance, lists certain criteria of contemporary diaspora. These are that members of a diaspora, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from an original ‘centre’ to two or more foreign regions; they retain a collective myth about their original homeland; they believe that they will remain partly separate in their host country; they idealise their ancestral home and have a commitment to either the maintenance or restoration of their former homeland; and, that this commitment to their homeland defines their identity (Safran 1991: 83–4). Cohen adds to this list by including those who disperse voluntarily often for trade or labour opportunities. Within a transnational identity, these people see the positive virtues of retaining a diasporic collective identity that retains the ‘bonds of language, religion, culture and a sense of a common fate’ (Cohen, R 2008: 6–8). This second, more contemporary meaning of the term diaspora includes the re-settlement of ethnic groups of peoples—migrants or refugee groups—who still retain a strong attachment to their former homeland, whether or not they are denied the possibility of return. My research suggests that Pontic Greeks in Adelaide are members of a diaspora, in both the prototypical and contemporary meanings of the term and, further, that the experiences of the first affect those of the second.

First rupture: a prototypical diasporic community

‘Over the centuries the term diaspora assumed a predominantly negative meaning used to capture the various misfortunes that afflicted this [prototypical] group’ (Cohen, R 2008: 21–2). Pontic Greeks who suffered the first rupture can be considered members of this type of diaspora when, in the early 20th century, they consid-

ered they were victims of genocidal practices and were traumatically dispossessed of their land and forcibly exiled to another place. As a result, they became a dispersed group. Large numbers of Pontians fled to Russia after the retreat of the Russian army from Trapezounda in 1917, believing that their shared Orthodox faith would give them protection in Russia.¹⁰ Most, however, went to Greece as refugees under the 1923 Exchange of Populations convention brokered between Greece and Turkey.¹¹ Of the estimated 400,000 Pontic Greeks who came to Greece many were dispersed into far flung settlements in the north of Greece. At the time, they did not think of themselves as a diasporic community *per se*, but continued to refer to themselves as refugees and were referred to as such by mainland Greeks. Initially, Pontians did not see Greece as their home but continued to look to Pontos as the homeland to which they sought to return.

Second rupture: a contemporary diasporic community

The Pontic diasporic community in Adelaide relates more closely to the contemporary concept of diaspora where people move 'from a homeland in search of work, [and] in pursuit of trade' (Cohen, R 2008: 17). In this second rupture, Pontians were economic migrants and their migration to Australia and settlement can be perceived as voluntary: unlike their forebears, they were not forcibly dispossessed of their land and a return to Greece was possible. Although once they might have referred to themselves as migrants, present day Pontic Greeks in Australia do not now see themselves as such. Having had forty or fifty years to establish themselves in Australia, they refer to themselves as Greek Australians or as part of the wider Greek diaspora in Australia. However, they have remained a distinct group within that Greek diaspora. They remember that their forebears were refugees and, in their 'social memory', they remember how they were treated when they came to Greece. They also retain the memory of being migrants in a foreign land. Thus, the notions of dispossession and dispersal arising from the rupture of exile and migration are pertinent to the sense of who Pontians are and their movement to and re-emplacment in two foreign places define them as a diasporic people in a particular way and as a distinct group within the Greek diaspora in Australia.

¹⁰ Karpozilos states that '[d]uring this time a steady stream of refugees began to flow across the Russian border: from the area of Trebizond around 100,000 people and from Eastern Pontos another 100,000 or so. The exact number of refugees crossing into the Caucasus during this time is not known' (1991: 139). After perestroika at the end of the 1980s many of these so-called Russian Pontians migrated to Greece.

¹¹ This is explained further in Chapter 1.

Conceptual themes

In this thesis, I explore in particular three conceptual themes: social memory of loss; emotion of absence; and embodiment and the senses.

Social memory of loss

As part of this thesis, I consider how the memory of the losses associated with former homelands constitutes a social memory of loss for Pontians. Many recent studies on memory refer to Halbwachs' earlier work on collective memory (Bahloul 1996; Casey 2004; Climo & Cattell 2002; Connerton 1989; Fentress & Wickham 1992; Olick & Robbins 1998). While not denying that individuals have private, personal and unique memories of their own, Halbwachs argues that these memories are acquired within a social framework. These collective memories come through or with family members, friends or others who recollect the past with us (1992: 22). Following on from the work of Halbwachs, later theorists have used different terminology to describe this concept of collective memory. Fentress and Wickham (1992) see that there is the danger that the concept can be perceived as 'disconnected from the actual thought processes of any particular person [thus making] the individual a sort of automaton, passively obeying the interiorized collective will' (1992: ix). They, along with Olick & Robbins (1998), prefer the term 'social memory' to 'collective memory' (see also Connerton 1989). Others, while adopting the former term, use the two interchangeably (Climo & Cattell 2002).

Casey's work clearly differentiates between individual, social and collective memory (2004: 21–5). He sees individual memory as the unique memory of the person, who recalls what or how something happened in the past. While these individual acts of remembering are 'saturated with social and collective aspects, as well as with cultural and public determinants' (2004: 21), they remain in the domain of the individual. As distinct from individual memory, collective memory, according to Casey, taps into a memory that is *distributed* over a given population or set of places' (2004: 23, italics in the original text). Those who are remembering 'are remembering the same thing' (2004: 23–4). Casey makes a further distinction between collective memory and social memory. He contends that in contrast to the former, social memory is a shared memory 'held in common by those who are affiliated either by kinship ties, by geographical proximity in neighbourhoods, cities, and other regions, or by engagement in a common project' (Casey 2004: 21). He says that social memory is held by:

‘...a given group or [those] who live in the same place remember what has happened to that group or in that place (and often both). This does not mean having the same *experience* of remembering...but instead [remembering] something (some event, some occasion, some physical thing, even some thought) that others in one’s kin or place-group are also remembering at the time or could do so’ (2004: 22).

It is in this sense that I make use of the term social memory to refer to the shared memory of Pontic Greeks who, as a group of people, have a shared history, a common place of origin and similar experience. Such a social memory developed over time and provides an agreed explanation of what has happened to them as a group of people. Its formation is facilitated in three ways.

First, as Pontians they share the same history even though this might be ‘via the proxy of another family member’ (Casey 2004: 22). There are very few in the Pontian community in Adelaide who remember the experience of being exiled from Pontos. This particular ‘[h]istorical trauma is specific and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject-position associated with it’ (LaCapra 1999: 722). Yet while they are not in the same position as their parents or grandparents, they have learnt of the exile and reflect back on what was lost through the prism of others’ memories. Here it becomes for them a ‘transhistorical’ trauma in what LaCapra (1999: 721–2) terms ‘structural trauma’, which within Pontian social memory, contributes to the formation of Pontian identity.

Secondly, there were common places where ‘that history was enacted and experienced’ (Casey 2004: 22). For Pontians, this is both Pontos and Greece. Many of my informants were born in Greece but they remember how the exile affected them. In particular, many told me about the discrimination they felt as being part of Pontian refugee families where they were forced to feel inferior to other mainland Greeks. They also remember the poverty under which they lived and the effects that World War II and the Civil War had on their lives. In addition, for many of the Pontians I spoke to, the memory of their migration to and settling in Australia is a first-hand, personal memory. Their memories of this time are vivid, the experience of migration coming at a time in their young adult lives when significant events have the potential to make a lasting impression (see Bahloul 1996; Schuman & Scott 1989).

Thirdly, Pontians are ‘able to bring the history-in-that-place into words or other suitable means of communication and expression’ (Casey 2004: 22–3). What happened

to their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents is communicated to subsequent generations of Pontic Greeks. This can be through narratives that incorporate personal memories or family stories as well as accounts embedded within a social memory. Sometimes there is a strong desire to record some of these experiences for future generations. The work of Thea Halo (2000), George Andreadis (1993), Savvas Avramidis (2005), and Mary Odontiadis (2008) are examples. As these stories, now in written form, are passed down to subsequent generations, Pontian social memory becomes further constructed and reconstructed over time.

For Pontians, the exile experience in which their forebears were ill-treated or died comes to be encapsulated into the social memory of genocide. This remains as the prior experience of loss and colours the later loss caused by separation from families and homelands as it becomes incorporated into the social memory of the migration experience.

Emotion of absence

Emotions play an important role in the construction of the memory of loss and in its transformation into a presence of absence. While the memories attached to the narratives may appear to be travelling back in time, this is a perception in consciousness only. Memories always occur in the present: they are evoked and felt in the present. As these feelings become linked to the memories of past feelings, they often produce intense emotions for Pontians. Yiorgos was a very young child when he came to Australia with his parents. As a ten year old boy, he accompanied his parents to Greece on a return visit. He told me that he remembers listening to his grandfather's stories at that time. He went on to say that now he does not remember the specifics of those stories but what he does remember is the way they were told and the emotions associated with them. Then, with strong conviction, he added that he does not now need to do historical research on the genocide: he knows it is true because he remembers the emotion with which his grandfather talked to him about it.

Emotion is often addressed in the literature within a psychobiological approach that concentrates on the construction of emotion within the self. This casts emotion as confined and expressed within the body, moving from within to be discernible on the exterior of the body. Arguing against this universal construction of emotion, Lutz and White contend that such an analysis gives priority to the western concept of 'highly individuated concepts of person and motivation' (1986: 429), and argue for a per-

spective that sees emotions as socially constructed in a way that gives ‘emphasis to the public, social, and cognitive dimensions of emotional experience’ (1986: 429). Furthermore, Lutz and Abu-Lughod see that emotions are formed through and by social discourse. They contend that ‘[e]motion can be said to be *created in*, rather than shaped by, speech in the sense that it is postulated as an entity in language where its meaning to social actors is also elaborated’ (Lutz & Abu-Lughod 1990: 12, italics in the original text).

Emotions are not only created and shaped by narrative but take ‘into account the play, however hypothetical, between language and [bodily] feeling’ (Desjarlais 1992: 101). Similarly, Lyon (1995) argues that ‘emotion is more than a domain of cultural conception [where it becomes]...subsumed to the concept of person as culturally constructed’ (1995: 247). She argues that an ‘expanded understanding of emotion must take account of the body *qua* body not simply as it is mediated by “mind” but as part of the conception of emotion itself’ (1995: 256). Such a view sees that emotions are generated in and through bodily practices as well as in memories. Pontians, therefore, not only produce their emotions through narrative but through other corporeal practices such as ritual, food, dance and music. Such bodily performances ‘are never simply individual ones; they are always associative and therefore communicative, a process in which emotion is ever implicated’ (Lyon 1995: 256). From this perspective, emotion becomes ‘the experience of embodied sociality’ (Lyon & Barbalet 1994: 48).

In this thesis, I argue that emotions are emergent within a social and relational environment. While to a certain extent I rely on the articulated memories of my informants’ experience of their loss, I also show how the emotions attached to loss are produced through many retained corporeal practices. Further, I maintain that the palimpsest qualities of the emotions evoked by the memories and practices attached to the exile and loss of people and place continue to generate an emotional response in Pontians today and that Pontians cling to these emergent emotions as evidence of their loss.

Embodiment and the sensory presence of absence

In addition to social memory of loss and emotion of absence, the third intertwining theme of this thesis is that of embodiment. Csordas sees embodiment as the ‘existential ground of culture and self’ (1990: 5). Basing his arguments on the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu, he argues that such a ‘paradigm of embodiment’

(1990) allows the dualisms of mind and body to be collapsed. Merleau-Ponty, relying on the concept of perception, maintained that the body is in a relationship with the social world ‘by the mere fact of existing, and which we carry inseparably with us before any objectification’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 362). On the other hand, Bourdieu turned to the notion of practice to address the issue of dualism. For him, the body for Bourdieu is ‘the *socially informed body*’ (Bourdieu 1977: 124, italics in the original text) which he sees constituted through the concept of *habitus*, ‘systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*’ (Bourdieu 1977: 72, italics in the original text). Using both these theorists, Csordas argues that being-in-the-world the body has a tacit understanding of it through a ‘temporally/historically informed sensory presence and engagement’ (Csordas 1994: 10). Casey (1993, 1996) also refers to the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu but sees rather that embodiment is encapsulated in the term ‘emplacement’, where the body perceives the world in the world through its ‘*own lived body*’ (1996: 21, italics in the original text). In critique of Csordas, Howes also prefers emplacement.

‘While the paradigm of “embodiment” implies an integration of mind and body, the emergent paradigm of emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment...Bringing the issue of emplacement to the fore allows us to reposition ourselves in relationship to the sensuous materiality of the world’ (Howes 2005: 7).

In this thesis, I understand the notion of embodiment to be how the body emplaced in a physical and social world forms that world, as it is formed by it, through a sensory engagement with it. The thesis addresses themes of displacement and re-emplacement in new places and shows how the senses are engaged to create new physical and social environments. Further, in return visits, the experience and sensual engagement of actually being at these places produces a different bodily sense of what it means to be Pontian Greek. Through practices such as commemorations and dance, in the interrelationship between memory, senses and emotions, loss is experienced in the body as an ongoing a presence of absence. Thus, as an emplaced body in the world, a Pontian person ‘not only “has” a body, but “is” a body...that feels, knows, tastes, acts, and remembers’ (Desjarlais 1992: 31).

Overview of chapters

The themes of memory, emotion and embodiment recur throughout this thesis and although one of these may be emphasised at one time, the others are still present.

After this introduction, the next two chapters cover the rupture of Pontians from their homes and in particular the role memory plays in presenting the absence of their former homelands. *Chapter Two* of this thesis focuses on the first rupture for Pontic Greeks and their subsequent re-settlement in Greece. First, I give an overview of some of the conditions under which Pontic Greek refugees came to Greece and show that what remained with them was an enduring feeling of absence resulting from the destruction of life and place. I then discuss how it was the presenting of the absence of many domains of their former life that enabled Pontians to resume their lives in Greece. Using the work of Das and Kleinman (2001: 3) I outline four ways in which Pontians were able to return to a semblance of normality in the face of the trauma that they had suffered. While they presented the loss they had suffered through a narrative, they also presented the absence of Pontos in the construction of new places and religious sites in Greece as well as in retention of certain cultural practices. It was through these cultural constructions that something of this sense of absence was transmitted to the next generation. The second part of this chapter relies heavily on the memories of one member of that next generation, whose narrative of the absence of Pontos incorporates both his own individual memories as well as that of a Pontian social memory.

The *third chapter* discusses the genesis of absence caused by the second rupture. After thirty or forty years, settlement in Greece for some Pontians was further disrupted when they or their descendants decided to migrate to Australia after World War II and the Greek Civil War. At that time, they experienced loss associated with the migration, which is common to all migrants—that of distance from the place of origin, the loss of close contact with family members and wider social contacts and of a way of life, together with the changes that occur inevitably over time. Many remained in Australia to make a home for themselves in what, at first, was an unfamiliar place. Using the concept of home as that of the ‘lived relationship’ between ‘belonging’ and ‘autonomy’ (Jackson 1995: 123), I describe how Pontic Greeks in Adelaide moved from an initial position of alienation and disempowerment to a sense of ‘being-at-home-in-the-world’ (Jackson 1995: 123). This occurred through a proactive ‘home-building’ exercise (Hage 1997: 102) whereby they used physical structures, such as their homes and churches to present the absence of Greece. Through this presenting, Pontic Greeks gained a sense of belonging and autonomy that contributed to the sense of feeling at home.

The next two chapters focus on Pontic practices in commemorations and dance where, in each, an aspect of emotion contributes to the ongoing formation of Pontian social memory. *Chapter Four* is concerned with commemorative practices that reproduce a social memory of loss. Commemorations bring people together at particular places in order for them to remember together. Although each individual may remember the particulars of their own family's loss, the circumstances in which the losses occurred are shared. In this chapter, I explore how the components of annual commemoration—place, banners, religious and memorialisation rituals, as well as shared meals—not only enable people to grieve together but facilitate the incorporation of loss into the social memory. The focus of this chapter, therefore, is on how the memories and emotions of loss evoked through commemorative practices intersect to continue to form Pontian social memory.

Pontic dance developed over many centuries in the Pontos area of northern Turkey. As one of the most visible and lasting cultural remnant from Pontos, their dance practices survived genocide and exile from that region as well as their migration from Greece to Australia. Individual dances, their characteristic movements as well as distinctive costumes and musical instruments connect Pontians to their social, geographical and historical background. Pontians assert, however, that it is necessary to have a certain 'feel' in order to dance these dances in an authentic way. They insist that this comes from an inner feeling of which they have a tacit knowledge but can only describe by reference to the outward body. In *Chapter Five*, the theme of emotion is again picked up. Using Langer (1953), I explore how Pontians' most intense emotions and memories are generated and expressed through dance and how it gives a physical form to the feelings of loss they experience as a result of their two ruptures.

The focus of the last two chapters is on the journeys that Pontians make to their former homelands. Here the notion of embodiment comes to the fore. I show how the act of actually being in their former homelands and the sensual experience of it, constitute the nature of these journeys. In *Chapter Six*, I explore the nature of short-term visits to Greece. I show how the nostalgia that they produce is different for two separate generational groups who make these journeys. The return visits that first generation migrants make to their former villages in Greece and to Pontian religious centres are nostalgic journeys, not just a 'painful yearning to return home' (Davis 1979: 1) but to the time and place of their youth. They are also ways of attempting to allay the sense of loss brought about over time and space through the process of

settling in the diaspora. In bringing their children with them back to Greece, first generation migrants not only attempt to impart to them their sense of what has been lost through migration but they also want them to experience it. The short-term visits that second generation migrants make to Greece are not nostalgic journeys but rather ones in which they find their roots where they claim both the place and the peoples as a way of defining a new sense of what it means to be Pontian Greek. However, for first generation migrants and their children alike, it is often in the journey back to Australia that a profound sense of absence is realised. These visits do not overcome the loss brought about through the rupture of migration but act rather to presence it, thus creating the nostalgic desire to return again.

In the *seventh chapter*, I consider the effects that making short-term journeys to the Pontos area in northern Turkey have on Pontic Greeks. Through a temporally and historically 'informed sensory presence and engagement' (Csordas 1994: 10) these journeys, which I have termed pilgrimages, are acts of affirmation that intertwine memory, sensory experience and emotion. These visits are intensely emotional experiences and transformative ones for Pontian pilgrims. By being in the place of Pontos, seeing the former villages and religious sites of their forebears and meeting people who share some of their cultural heritage, Pontians affirm that they have a unique relationship to Pontos through the emotions their presence there evokes. In the face of the permanency of the loss of their former lands, pilgrims not only experience the feelings of loss of peoples and place, but through the emotions that their presence and engagements arouse, gain a different sensory awareness of what it means to be Pontian.

2 Exile from Pontos: presencing absence in a new place

Introduction

Pontos was lost for Pontians in the most traumatic and final way with the death of family members and friends, destruction of villages and the forced eviction from their former land. This chapter focuses on this first rupture for Pontic Greeks and their subsequent re-settlement in Greece. I have divided the chapter into two sections. In the first, I give a historical background of Pontic Greeks in the Pontos region and then outline the events that led to the first rupture for Pontians—that of genocide and exile. Once Pontians came to Greece, the losses that occurred were experienced as an ongoing and pervasive sense of the absence of Pontos. Apart from the traumatic loss of family and friends, there was the absence of a familiar way of life and of a particular status attached to their Hellenism within the Ottoman Empire. The differences in cultural practices in the form of language and other areas, such as food, music and dance, often perceived to be associated with Turkey, resulted in the isolation and discrimination of Pontians in Greece.

In the second section of the chapter, I discuss how it was the presencing of the absence of these domains that enabled Pontians to resume their lives in Greece in the face of the trauma that they had suffered. Das and Kleinman (2001) outline four ways in which those who have endured traumatic disruption to their individual and community lives can return to a semblance of normality. First, they contend that this is facilitated through the relationship 'between collective and individual memory' (2001: 3). Rather than collective memory, I use the term 'social memory', that is, the memory of a particular people who can remember the same event that affected their group (see Casey 2004: 21–2). It not only relies on historical accounts of the time, but on the narratives of personal memories of what happened, which also become incorporated into the social memory of the whole group. I set out three personal descriptions: one is a firsthand account; the other two are second-hand ones. I discuss how the social memory of the event of genocide and exile contributed to the identification of Pontians as a distinct refugee group and how this assisted them in re-settling in Greece.

Secondly, Das and Kleinman argue that ‘the creation of alternate public spheres’ enables a return to a sense of normality (2001: 3). Pontians not only established new villages and religious sites, but constructed them to resemble those in their former homelands. Because of this, they were able to incorporate familiar practices evocative of old ones, which not only helped them settle in Greece, but aided a ‘re-making of everyday life’—the third of Das and Kleinman’s criteria for the return to normality (2001: 1). In these everyday practices, they not only presenced the absence of their former place and lifestyle and the emotions associated with them, but also employed them in order to settle in a new place. Finally, Das and Kleinman (2001: 3) argue that ‘the retrieval of voice in the face of the recalcitrance of tragedy’ enables traumatised groups to return to some semblance of normality. There are many different ways in which Pontians retrieved their voice to express the enormity of a tragedy that had happened to them personally and as a community. Such ways include commemorations, the celebration of Pontic cultural identity and return visits to Pontos. These are discussed in later chapters. In this section, I describe how some Pontians found the autonomy to express their grief and their resilience in a way that enabled them to cope with persistent and intractable personal and community suffering.

The remembrance of the losses suffered remained with Pontians when they came to Greece but in their re-settlement process these were experienced as absences. It was, however, the presence of these absences that were employed to remake their everyday lives. By evoking and narrating memories, building familiar village structures, establishing religious sites and by the incorporation of everyday and religious practices, Pontians were eventually able to create a new life for themselves in Greece.

The first rupture

Pontians trace their history back to colonies of Greeks who, for at least 3000 years, inhabited the Pontos region. According to Kokkinos, there is ‘archaeological evidence of their presence in vital trading centres around the Black Sea as early as the 8th century BC’ (1991: 313). Greeks who had emigrated from mainland Greece to settle at Melitis on the Asia Minor¹² coast later moved into the Black Sea area and set up a colony at Sinope. From there, further colonies were established at various

¹² Once known as Anatolia, Asia Minor is the western-most extension of Asia and equates to approximately two-thirds of present day Turkey.

settlements along the Black Sea with such coastal towns as Samsous, Kerasous, Bafra, Tripolis and Trapezounda becoming regional trading centres, flourishing at some times and waning at others. (Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 57; Fann Bouteneff 2002: 21; Miller, W 1926: 8).

From the 1st century CE, Greek people began to be evangelised by Christian missionaries¹³, with Christianity being adopted as the state religion under Emperor Constantine in 325 CE. One of the significant monasteries of the Pontos area, Panagia Soumela, is believed to have been founded by two monks from Athens, Barnabas and Sophronios, in the reign of Theodosius (379-95 CE), the last emperor of the combined eastern and western Roman Empire (Miller, W 1926: 11). The monastery became renowned for its icon of the Panagia believed by Pontians to be one of four painted by the 1st century CE Christian Apostle Luke. With the split between Eastern and Western Christianity in the 11th century CE, Pontic Greeks became devoutly Greek Orthodox. After this time, the monastery of Panagia Soumela came under the patronage of the Komnenoi dynasty (1204–1461 CE) with some of the restorations being attributed to Grand Komnenoi, Alexios III (1349–90) (see Bryer, A & Winfield 1985). The Komnenoi Empire of Trebizond was the last surviving Byzantine Empire¹⁴ and in coming under Muslim Ottoman rule in 1461, outlasted the one centred at Constantinople by eight years. After that time, monasteries such as Panagia Soumela,

‘...kept the Pontic Greek world thriving intellectually and religiously. Able to obtain special privileges from the Ottoman sultans and owning large tracts of land farmed by Greek peasants, the monasteries were institutions of stability and continuity through times of peace and turmoil’ (Augustinos 1992: 17).

The Ottoman Empire lasted until the early 20th century. During the Ottoman rule, non-Muslim minorities were divided into religious communities known as *millets*.

‘The *millet* system was part of a theocratic framework within which the Sultan ruled the communities of his non-Muslim subjects. Orthodox Christians, Gregorian Armenians, and Jews constituted separate *millets*...In this system the non-Muslim sub-

¹³ Evidence of Christian influence is shown in the Acts of the Apostles, where reference is made to the area of Pontos (*Holy Bible: The new revised standard version* 1993: 119).

¹⁴ ‘Byzantium is the name we have given to a civilization which regarded itself, and was regarded by those around it, as the heir to the glories of imperial Rome. Its character was defined by its cultural synthesis of the traditions of Greece, Rome and Christianity’ (Mazower 2006: 23).

jects of the Sultan enjoyed a degree of fiscal and juridical autonomy' (Kontogiorgi 2006: 25, n. 37).

Orthodox Greeks were known as the *Rum millet*, a name derived from the Roman Empire once centred in Constantinople. 'The Turkish word *millet* has no religious connotation, it is simply the word for "people" or "nation." The Muslim rulers of the Ottoman Empire took for granted that there was an identity between a people and their religion' (Petrovich 1980: 385).

Having a certain degree of autonomy under such a system, however, did not prevent Pontic Greeks from suffering sporadic outbreaks of persecution that varied in intensity from time to time under different overlords. To avoid persecution and the stringency of Turkish rule, at certain times Pontic Greeks moved higher up into the Pontic Alps and established villages there. Inland towns such as Amaseous and Sivastea became thriving centres with a significant number of Pontians living in them. Employment in the silver and tin mines at places such as Argyropoulis and Ak dag Maden also supplemented subsistence agriculture. In the 19th century, some leniency was shown by the Ottoman rulers to the Pontic Greek community, allowing them to build new churches and schools. This, along with the waning of the Ottoman Empire by the beginning of the 20th century, raised Pontians' hopes of having their own political autonomy in the region (see Figure 1). This dream, however, was not to come to fruition.

At the turn of the 20th century, a group with rising nationalistic aspirations within the Ottoman Empire surfaced. The Committee of Union and Progress, commonly known as the 'Young Turks' sought to overthrow the rule of the Ottoman sultans and to establish a Turkey solely for the Turkish people and free from Christian influence. As a result, the safety of all Christian minority groups in Asia Minor and the Pontos area was increasingly threatened. Between 1915 and 1922, Armenians in Asia Minor suffered genocide wherein a million and half of their people were killed or died under harsh conditions. A similar fate awaited the Pontic Greeks. In the interim, the brief occupation of the Russian army in the Trapezounda area in 1917 was welcomed by Pontic Greeks and further raised their hope of an independent Pontic state. But with the retreat of the Russians, at the time of the Bolshevik uprising in Russia in 1917, Pontic Greeks were left exposed. Their difficulties were further exacerbated in the

aftermath of the Asia Minor ‘catastrophe’¹⁵ and the consequent defeat of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish war of 1920–2 when Christian minorities were seen as enemies of the nascent Turkish state.

Between 1917 and 1922, boys were taken and trained to become Turkish soldiers, men were conscripted into labour camps where many died under extreme circumstances and young women were taken into Muslim households and forced to adopt Islam. Whole villages were destroyed, women were raped and large numbers of men, women and children were killed by Turkish soldiers or police. Those who survived, often women, children and the aged, were evicted from their homes and suffered the ‘White Death’. This was a practice wherein Turkish soldiers forced people to leave their homes in winter and walk in snow over the Pontic Alps to central Turkey or even as far as the Syrian Desert, with little means of protection and minimal provisions. Under the extreme weather conditions, many people died from cold and disease, others through brutality and/or starvation, or by being preyed upon by roving bands of outlaws. Those who could not walk were left to die or were shot. The violence against Pontic Greeks is detailed in eye-witness accounts (see Ecumenical Patriarchate 1920), official documents, newspapers of the time as well as in biographies such as Andreadis (1993) and Halo (2000), and in scholarly works such as Fotiadis (2004) and Tsirkinidis (1999a). Some surviving Pontic Greeks fled to Russia but the majority went to Greece, leaving behind their land and homes and most of their possessions. Overall, as the result of the severe violence against Pontic Greeks about half of their population died, under conditions that many of their descendants now perceive to be genocide as set out under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Finally, in response to the situation, an Exchange of Populations was brokered between Greece and Turkey. The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol was signed at the Lausanne Conference on 30 January 1923, ratified by Turkey on 23 August 1923 and by Greece on 25 August 1923. The Exchange took place along religious lines. It was decreed that those of Greek, and therefore of Christian background, still living in Asia Minor, the Pontos area and eastern Thrace would be repatriated to Greece (see Conference of Lausanne 1923: 77, Article 1), and those of Turkish ethnicity, and therefore of the

¹⁵ This refers to the defeat of the Greek government’s attempt, promoted by prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, to establish the *Megali Idea* or *Great Idea* an ‘elusive vision...incorporating all areas of compact Greek settlement in the Near East within the bounds of a single state, with its capital in Constantinople’ (Clogg 1999: 6).

Islamic faith living in Greece, approximately 356,000 people, would be forced to leave their ancestral homelands in Greece and be repatriated to Turkey (see Naimark 2001: 54). This caused a massive dispersal of peoples. It is estimated that between 1922 and 1923 more than a million people arrived in Greece, and that Pontic Greeks accounted for about a quarter of the total refugee population. At this time, the population of Greece was less than five million. By the time the Exchange of Populations Convention was signed large numbers of Greeks from Asia Minor, the Pontos region and eastern Thrace had already fled their homes and so the Treaty only ratified what was already taking place.

‘The first official figure of the total number of refugees in the 1928 population census [of Greece] records 1,221,849 persons (1,104,217 were from Asia Minor, Pontus, and eastern Thrace). There can be no doubt, however, that this is lower than the number of people who actually entered Greece and received aid. The census figures do not take account of high mortality rates or the emigration of thousands who left Greece after a few months or years to settle in other countries...It is impossible to know the actual number of refugees who entered Greece but certainly it was considerably higher than the census figure of 1928, and was probably in the order of 1.25–1.4 million’ (Hirschon 1998: 37).

Although America, Britain and France gave refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontos area diplomatic protection, many were not safe even once they were aboard the ships these countries provided. Often sailors charged exorbitant rates for the relief supplies provided by the Greek Government and by philanthropic agencies. Many refugees were unable to afford these, a factor that contributed to the high mortality rate on board ship, of people who were already physically weakened by their ordeals (Giannuli 1995: 275). It meant that many refugees arrived in Greece sick, malnourished and without adequate clothing. After visiting the port at Thessaloniki, the American Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau wrote:

‘I went down to the quay and saw a shipload of refugees land. A more tragic sight could hardly be imagined. I saw seven thousand people crowded in a ship that would have been taxed to normal capacity with two thousand. They were packed like sardines upon the deck, a squirming, writhing mass of human misery. They had been at sea for four days. There had not been a space to permit them to lie down to sleep; there had been no food to eat; there was not access to any toilet facilities...They came ashore in rags, hungry, sick, covered with vermin, hollow-eyed, exhaling the horrible odor [sic] of human filth—bowed with despair...’ (cited in Pentzopoulos 2002: 96).

One of the main gathering points for refugees was in Kalamaria on the outskirts of the city of Thessaloniki in northern Greece where huts, which had been used as army barracks in World War I, were converted into temporary accommodation for refugees. But once there, the plight of the refugees did not markedly improve. The low lying swampy nature of this area was a breeding ground for mosquitoes and because of poor hygiene, lack of clean water and nutritious food, and the general poor state of health, many people succumbed to malaria as well as to typhus and dysentery. The inadequacy of the medical supplies, personnel and facilities exacerbated the situation (see Kontogiorgi 2006: 267).

Most of those fleeing Pontos looked to Greece to give them refuge and to re-settle them. Greece, however, because of its weakened position after its recent military defeat in the Greco-Turkish war, was not in a strong financial position. It lacked the infrastructures to cope with the immense numbers of sick, destitute and traumatised peoples coming to its shores in such a short of period of time. It had to rely heavily on Greek voluntary associations and international philanthropic agencies such as the American Red Cross, Near East Relief, and American Women's Hospitals (see Giannuli 1995: 280). These organisations generally sought to provide for the immediate needs of people for food, shelter, clothing and medical assistance but because assistance from these agencies only lasted nine months, it was left to the inadequate Greek medical and welfare systems to continue to cope with the enormity of the refugee situation.

In 1924, the Greek Government established the Refugee Settlement Commission whose overall task was to assist refugees financially and aid them re-settle in Greece but in the process to do this swiftly, some lost their accustomed means of livelihood. Often those who had professional skills were sent to work on the land in rural villages whereas some of those used to a peasant lifestyle were forced to remain in the towns. This meant that 'the refugees themselves could not exploit the opportunities that existed and were unable to earn a living' (Pentzopoulos 2002: 102). The problem was further exacerbated by the higher percentage of females to males in the refugee population, as many males had been killed or were detained in labour camps in Turkey (see Giannuli 1995: 276). The scarcity of working-age men meant that women and children needed to rely on state welfare assistance for a longer time and could not be easily re-settled in rural villages (see Clark 2006: 151). Thus, 'significant numbers of refugees still remained either without shelter or were forced to remain in the refugee camps for years after the refugee exodus had ended' (Giannuli 1995: 280). The drain on the Greek economy was severe.

'[B]etween 1922 and 1932 it is estimated that the programme of supporting and settling refugees absorbed more than forty per cent of the country's ordinary budget and accounted for a similar proportion of external borrowing' (Kontogiorgi 2006: 331).

The Commission encouraged Pontians to establish villages in the sparsely populated, remote and rural areas of northern Greece near the borders with Bulgaria and Albania and away from the disease and overcrowding in refugee settlements, such as Kalamaria. Also, it was expedient for the Greek Government to have refugees settle in these isolated areas in order to act as a buffer against any possible advances south by Greece's northern neighbours (see Cowan 1990: 44; Kontogiorgi 2006: 287). Furthermore, it would be more difficult for a dispersed Pontian population to form any adverse political force within the Greek state. According to Kontogiorgi (2006: 286), 20,000 pastoral settlers, mainly Pontians, were settled in 123 colonies in this area, but because of the remoteness and rugged nature of the countryside, severe winters, and the difficulty of farming the land, the project was not very successful and many newly established villages were abandoned. For Pontians as a diasporic group, it meant that they settled in small, sporadic and disparate communities in many different places. This isolation, lack of communication and the stringency required to maintain even subsistence levels meant that families often were not reunited for many years. For instance, one of my informants said that his father did not have enough money to travel from Veria to Drama to see his brother for eighteen years. He also said that in 1960 he remembered seeing a reunion of a family at the monastery of Panagia Soumela who had not seen each other since the 1920s.

Apart from being perceived as a significant drain on the struggling Greek economy, Pontians were also a source of resentment because they were seen to be competing for the scarce paid employment or for viable farming land. Some Pontians settled in villages, often in the more fertile areas of northern Greece, vacated by Muslims of the Greek state forcibly expelled to Turkey. After 400 years of Ottoman domination and with Greek independence from the Turks coming as late as 1912 in the north of Greece, that Pontians were perceived to have a close association with Turkish culture, did not endear them to mainland Greeks. It was often resented that Pontians were given some of the prime land that they had hoped would be theirs once the Muslim people vacated the villages. On the other hand, Pontians, as refugees, believed that they were entitled to be recompensed for the loss of their land in Pontos and did not feel that they were always adequately compensated. Further, the

division of land sometimes made farming difficult. In Adelaide, Haralambos told me that when he first went to Greece with his father and mother and three sisters, they went to Kalamaria for two to three months and then to Grevena near Kozani in Northern Greece. This was an abandoned Turkish village that had had 300 families living in it. They were given farms by the Greek Government to settle there. His father was allocated a two-storeyed house with a very big block of land as well as eighty sheep, goats, cows, bulls and a horse. However, Haralambos said that they were given only 65,000 square metres whereas in Ak dag Maden they had 250,000 square metres. Further, the land in Grevena was not all in one allotment: it was broken into separate blocks and, therefore, was not as easy to work the land as it had been in Pontos. Therefore, despite the fact that they received some compensation, for Haralambos's family, it did not make up for the loss of the farming land they had in Pontos.

Pontians' practices often differed depending on the region they came from in Pontos. The scattering of people meant that in some cases they had to share villages with people from different parts of Pontos. They had to accommodate to different ways of doing things, different customs and sometimes different languages. Another of my informants in Adelaide said that there was a mixture of people in his village in northern Greece, with eighty percent speaking Turkish compared to twenty percent who spoke Pontian. As evidence of this diversity, he added that at weddings some dances were danced in a particular way and others in another way, reflecting dance practices of the inhabitants' original villages.

As Pontians began to settle in Greece, the loss of Pontos, therefore, began to be experienced as a persistent sense of the absence of a past familiar way of life and everyday practices. One of these was the inability to speak their familiar language freely. When Pontians came to Greece, some spoke the Pontic dialect. This is 'a genuinely Greek though very peculiar and idiomatic dialect closer to Ancient Greek than is standard Modern Greek, and often unintelligible to native Greeks' (Kontogiorgi 2006: 96). In promoting a homogenous population in Greece, the government promoted the use of the Modern Greek language and discouraged the speaking of other languages. It made communication between Pontians and other Greeks very difficult and also hindered Pontians learning and using standard Modern Greek 'swiftly and correctly' (Kontogiorgi 2006: 167). The government insisted that Modern Greek be spoken at schools. Anna told me that although she enjoyed her schooling in Greece, there were language difficulties. At home, her parents and

grandparents only spoke Pontian but the teachers spoke only Modern Greek at school. Anna said that they would say to her, 'I don't understand you. You don't know Greek'. Anna said that it was hard for her family because the teachers told her parents, 'Look, we don't like you to speak Pontian in the house because your kids have got a problem because they don't understand Greek. They can only say the words in Pontian.' So they tried to stop her and other children speaking Pontian; even in the playground they were expected to speak Greek. 'And slowly, slowly', Anna said, 'now not many kids speak Pontian.' Nowadays, she thinks that, although the people with whom she went to school still understand the dialect, many are too embarrassed to speak it. However, when Anna goes back to Greece, she continues to speak it. Some of them say to her, 'You're not embarrassed to speak Pontian?' 'I'm not', she says, 'I love to speak Pontian and I love my language and I don't feel embarrassed at all'.

However, when Anna was growing up, she remembered that because Pontians were in the minority, they were made to feel as second-class citizens. She said that they were made to feel that they had to be Greek. In addition, she remembered that Pontians became the butt of discriminatory jokes. Because mainland Greeks could not understand their language, Pontians were thought to be dull and stupid. Other Pontians, depending on where they came from in Pontos, spoke the Turkish language as well as the Pontic dialect whereas others spoke only Turkish. This further added to the suspicions of the local people. Kontogiorgi noted that 'Turkish-speakers and Pontians mention that they faced more difficulties, rejection, and discrimination from the local population than other Greek-speaking refugees, since, culturally speaking, they stood out more' (2006: 166).

'One appellation which the refugees found particularly disturbing was that of "Turkseed" or "Turksperm" (Turkospermata) meaning, of course, that the Asia Minor Greeks [including Pontians] were in some vague racial sense not really Greek at all, but the bastard children of the Turks' (Salamone 1987: 101).

Pontians were ostracised for many decades despite the Greek Government's attempt to encourage a homogenous society. Instead of a place of refuge, they found one that was unwelcoming, foreign and discriminating against them. So,

'[e]ither as active players in a complex ethnic, religious, and cultural clash, or as its tragic victims, [Pontic] Greeks paid a high price: loss of life for some, debilitated health for many, and for the large majority financial disaster, deprivation of social

status, psychological trauma, cultural dislocation, and alienation' (Giannuli 1995: 283).

Pontians were unable to return to or reclaim their former lands in Pontos and, with the signing of the Friendship Accord between Greece and Turkey in 1930, had their hopes of returning to former homelands dashed and so had to be resigned to remaining in Greece (see Clark 2006: 215).

Nevertheless, Pontic Greeks brought to Greece a myriad of domains associated with their homeland such as different styles of dances, attire, wedding customs and specific food preferences that were unique to the Pontos region. Despite the fact that these were a source of contestation and ostracism, being able to retain many of these practices assisted Pontians in making a new life in Greece and a return to some semblance of 'normality' after suffering the traumatic rupture of exile.

Returning to 'normality'

When people have suffered traumatic events, it would seem trite to suggest that they could return to 'normality'. Their lives are changed irrevocably and they struggle to live with the burden of tragic loss. Yet 'in the midst of the worst horrors, people continue to live, to survive, and to cope [which] is indeed an achievement' (Das & Kleinman 2001: 1–2). But, as Das and Kleinman point out, returning to normality is more than surviving. It is 'resuming the task of living [that] asks for a renewed capability to address the future' (2001: 4). Thus, following Das and Kleinman, I will employ the term 'normality' in relation to the re-settlement of Pontians in Greece as that act of resuming the task of living that incorporates the capability of seeing a future for themselves and for their children. In the first instance, however, it was important that they addressed the past and, by engaging in personal accounts, create a social memory whereby they could explain to themselves what had happened to them.

Individual and social memory of loss

'Finding one's voice in the making of one's history, the remaking of a world, though is also a matter of being able to recontextualize the narratives of devastation and generate new contexts through which everyday life may become possible' (Das & Kleinman 2001: 6).

As well as relying on historical accounts of the time, I set out three personal accounts of the events: one is a firsthand account, the other are two second-hand

ones. 'As stories are layered upon other stories, the categories of history and myth collapse into each other' (Das & Kleinman 2001: 7) and form the basis for a social memory of loss for many Pontians. It is not necessary for all Pontians to have 'the same *experience* of remembering' but they, along with other Pontians, can remember the same genocide and exile (Casey 2004: 22).

While there are narratives of the genocide and exile (Andreadis 1993; Halo 2000; Tsirkinidis 1999b), and individuals know the recounted stories of their parents' or grandparents' suffering, nowadays it is rare to hear first-hand accounts from eyewitnesses who experienced some of the events of the time. Most people have died or those who are still alive were too young at the time to remember. But one of my informants in Adelaide, a man, whom I call Haralambos, was born in Ag dag Maden in Pontos in 1903 and gave me a firsthand account of what happened to him when he was a young man. He said that one day when he was living in a village near Ankara, he and other men were rounded up and forced to march twelve days into central Turkey. If one of them fell and another person went to help, he was beaten. At one stage, they were ordered to build a bridge across a river. It was October and the weather was becoming very cold. As the river was freezing over, the men had to take it in turns to go into the river and break the ice in order to construct the bridge. When one man could stand the cold no longer and fell, another one took his place. One day a Turkish soldier brought them to another river bank and asked them: 'Now, do you know why we have brought you here?' They said that they did not know. 'Today you are all going to die here,' he told them. By that, he said, they understood they would all be massacred. Later, a priest who was on good terms with the Turkish leader, Kemal Pasha, persuaded him to rescind the order to kill them. So, Haralambos survived.

At another time, Haralambos was travelling with his parents on the back of a cart with Turkish soldiers. Somehow, they had sacks of bread with them. Along the road came a great number of Greek people. He said they were wild looking people in rags, with their feet bleeding and bandaged. They were crying out for food. Those on the cart started to throw some of their bread to them but one of the soldiers told them to stop because he said that those people were less than human. But Haralambos' mother turned to the soldier and said, 'These people are hungry and you cannot deny hungry people bread when you have it yourself.' So they tipped out the two sacks of bread for the people and the Turkish soldiers ignored the action.

Haralambos's recollection can be described as individual memory. He is the 'unique rememberer', recalling *that, how or as something happened* to him (Casey 2004: 20). Despite this, his recollection is 'saturated with social and collective aspects, as well as with cultural and public determinants' (Casey 2004: 21). It taps into the events of the time: it demonstrates Pontic Greeks' relationships with the Turkish authorities and in his story of giving bread to the hungry reflects the social aspects of Greek Orthodoxy, that is, the importance of giving charity to the needy. While this is based on individual memory, in narrating the story to his children and his grandchildren, who were present at the time of my interview and who had heard the story on other occasions, the story contributes to the social memory that Pontians have of the genocide. Thus, as the individual rememberer reminisces about what or how something happened in the past, language is introduced into memory. These 'unique' memories of individuals become narrative and thereby move into history. These, according to Casey, are the 'prop of social memory' (2004: 21), the ways whereby social memory is produced, sustained and supported.

The second account as a shared family memory moves into the category of social memory. 'Eleni', is the granddaughter of 'Evdoxia' and 'Stathis', and the following is her account of what happened to her grandfather:

'One day, Evdoxia called to her husband: 'Stathis, the Turks are coming, go and hide'. But Savvas did not believe that he was in any danger because he was not involved in politics or in any insurgence against the Turks. But when he heard the gun shots he went outside to hide in the garden amongst the beanstalks. He waited there until he thought that the Turks had gone but when he came out they were waiting for him. They took him away into the mountains, mutilated and then killed him. When Evdoxia and her family went to find him, their dogs had already found his body and led them to it. This happened in 1922. After that time there were constant upheavals and massacres and so, in 1924, Evdoxia escaped at night time with her four children—three daughters and a son. Along the way, the daughters were taken by an American agency to an orphanage in Greece. Evdoxia, however, kept her son with her but he died on board the ship taking them to Greece. Evdoxia did not know where her daughters had been taken and it took her eight months to find them and for the family survivors to be reunited.'

In contrast to Eleni's story, the following account of the exile of the village of Santa in Pontos has not come as the personal experience of family members but from the story common to the descendants of that village. It is a more widely held social memory. Pavlos is now a man in his sixties and the following is his account of the

exile from Santa, the former village of his parents who themselves were not involved in the exodus of its inhabitants:

‘When the Turks came to the village of Santa they gave those remaining there up to three hours to gather together their belongings. Then 720 people were forced to leave the village and to march up over the mountains. This was at the beginning of September when the weather conditions were becoming very harsh. Often it was said that if a storm came at that altitude after October no human being could survive in the open. Once they stopped overnight at a small church to protect them from the snow. But the church was five metres by three metres in dimension, far too small to accommodate all the people and so some were forced to camp outside in the snow. At another time the people had to cross a wide river where the water came up to the people’s necks. None of those from Santa could swim and so the soldiers tied them together in pairs: if one fell, the other perished as well. Twenty seven people died crossing the river while the Turks crossed over the river by the bridge. When people died often those with them were not able to bury them. Even those who brought gold with them to support themselves on the journey were often robbed by the soldiers or police. As well as forcing the people to march, the soldiers kept moving them from place to place. Just as the exiles thought they had come to the end of their journey, they moved them on. They went to Kromni, then to Argyropouli (Gümüşhane) and then to Erezerum, travelling over 400 km in all. In the end, only half of those who set out survived.’

These three stories—one based on personal memory, the other two from the memories of others—contribute to the social memory of Pontians, a social memory ‘derive[d] from a basis in shared experience, shared history or place, or shared project’ (Casey 2004: 23). When Pontians came to Greece they did so with recent traumatic memories of what had happened to them, to family members or fellow villagers. As their personal memories were shared and intermingled with those of others, a social memory of what happened to them as a particular group of people was formed. These memories were of a particular time and at a specific place. They did not have to be identical, but they were of similar remembered experiences (see Casey 2004: 22). Hence, when Pontians say, ‘This is what happened to us’, they draw on a social memory of the genocide and exile from Pontos that incorporates individual or family stories, as well as accounts from other people. Furthermore, through a recontextualisation of ‘the narratives of devastation...new contexts’ (Das & Kleinman 2001: 6) were generated which contributed to a Pontian identity as strong survivors despite the losses of genocide and exile and made it possible for them to the return to some semblance of normality.

Creation of alternate public spheres

The primary and urgent task of Pontians when they came to Greece was to re-establish themselves in new villages where they could provide for themselves and their families. New villages were established in different ways and under different circumstances (Cowan 1990: 29). Some Pontians sought their own locations seeking as much as possible to re-settle with people from their former villages (see Tamis 1994: 191). Some moved from place to place looking for somewhere to settle that was reminiscent of their former homeland.

Establishing ‘alternate public spheres’, according to Das and Kleinman (2001: 3), assists the re-settlement process of those who have been traumatically displaced from their homes. The memory of the landscape of Pontos was crucial for Pontian refugees when establishing new villages. Landscape in this context suggests the potential that people see when they perceive their physical surroundings and it is this, according to Stewart and Strathern (2003), that helps them to create a sense of place in a new land. So, they suggest, the concept of home might not travel with the migrant, but instead, a particular notion of landscape that helps them to create a sense of place in a new land. Hence, they

‘suggest that persons travel with their own inner landscapes. They remember particular places through images of how they looked and what it felt like to be there; or they develop such images through photographs, films, or narratives from others. What they are remembering or creating here are landscapes, to which they have a connection; and such landscapes can travel with people, giving them a sense of “home” when they are not “at home”’ (Stewart, P & Strathern 2003: 4–5).

In the following sections, I use the recollections of one of my informants from Adelaide to show how one group of people used their sense of an ‘inner landscape’ to establish a new village and later a religious site. This not only reflected their former village, but through presencing the absence of it in its location and design, the resumption of some of the everyday and familiar practices of Pontos was made possible.

Over a number of interviews, Pavlos recounted to me how his village in northern Greece, which I will refer to as ‘Neachorio’ (‘New Village’), was established.¹⁶ Pavlos was born there in 1940. He grew up and went to primary school in the village and later attended secondary school in a nearby town. The layout of his village, its

¹⁶ Often, refugees used the prefix ‘Nea’ (New) to name their villages in Greece, such as Nea Santa, Nea Nikomidia and Neokafkacos (New Caucasus).

buildings and its practices at the time of his youth are clear in his memory and through the intermingling of his individual memories and Pontian social memories, he gave me a detailed account of how his family settled there and how life was lived in that place. Those who established his village all came entirely from the former village of Santa in Pontos and Pavlos stressed many times how the new village in Greece was modelled on it.

His parents were born in Santa but, at some stage the family moved to the Black Sea coast where they grew hazelnuts. Pavlos said that in their new place on the coast they came under the protection of a Turkish neighbour for a while but as the violence towards Pontians increased, around the 1920s, this neighbour told them that he could no longer protect them. At that stage, his grandparents, along with Pavlos's parents moved to Sokhum in Georgia where they stayed for five years avoiding the violence of 1920–2. Then, under the Exchange of Populations Convention his parents, now with two children, came to Greece and were housed in the refugee settlement in Kalamaria. From there, they moved to a mountainous area, south of Thessaloniki, where they and others from Santa, established their village. After the Civil War in Greece, it was not acceptable to express opposing views about history other than the one promoted by the state. Greeks who had come from Russia, as his parents had, were often suspected of being communists or communist sympathisers and so they had to keep a low profile. Pavlos finished secondary school in 1958 but he explained that because he had been outspoken about Pontian history, he was not able to continue his education at tertiary level nor was he able to find suitable employment. This situation led to his decision to migrate to Australia.

Because Pavlos did not experience the founding of the village firsthand, he relied on his parents' memories of how they based it on life in Santa. He said he lived with stories about Santa all the time.

'I was hearing stories from Santa every single night...a lot of times they were arguing about some things that were not important...I was watching...with a bit of humour...but there were sometimes things about tragic matters which our family never went through.'

Giving an account of how his parents came to settle in his village, Pavlos has had to access the social memory within his village in Greece to 'know' how it was established in the 1920s and how life was lived there up to the 1940s. He related how his parents had found the living conditions in Kalamaria near Thessaloniki so desperate

that they and others from Santa decided to send groups out to search for a location that would be similar to that of their village in Pontos. They were told that along the main road between Athens and Thessaloniki there was such a place. It was in the forest high up in the mountains with plenty of water with no permanent residents. Pavlos's family and a group of other people from Santa decided to move up into these mountains to be away from the low-lying swampy area of Kalamaria where malaria was rife. Many families were losing their children to malaria and Pavlos's sister was sick and not expected to live. Subsequently, they moved out of Kalamaria, and travelled through Veria and then up the steep mountain side to the place they had selected. Pavlos said that as soon as his family got into the forest area of the mountain, his sister opened her eyes, her health improved and she went on to survive. Even now, Pavlos said, 'as soon as you strike there, a different air gets on you.' They found a place that had a good water supply, with six or seven continuously running springs. There was nothing there except an old building on the side of the road and, higher up, a cottage used by Sarakastani¹⁷ shepherds when they brought animals up for summer pastures. It was not an area that had been previously occupied by Turks.

As there were no other buildings apart from the shepherds' cottage, people had to build their own village. For one year Pavlos's family lived in a tent, coping with severe weather conditions during the winter months. The government gave them the authority to claim the land and set out the boundaries of the village but the people themselves, not the government, designed and built the village because many of them were stonemasons in Santa. A committee drew up allotments according to the numbers of families and then used a lottery to allocate them. Pavlos said that his father told him that in Pontos they preferred farms to be in a square shape and so they had a common boundary with the house facing into the centre common area for safety. In Santa, this was to safeguard against theft by the Turks. A similar practice was followed in the new village, but not so much for protection but to be close to the school and the church and, especially, to the water supply. While in Santa the land was stony, in this village there was more space to build and to farm with additional farming land being allotted on the outskirts of the village. In 1925, Pavlos's father built the family house with some of the repatriation payment that he had received from the government. The house was made of stone and mud bricks and plastered on the outside. It was replaced ten years later by one built of fired bricks and plas-

¹⁷ This is an isolated, autonomous and Greek-speaking transhumant community (see Campbell 1964).

tered with lime. The timber was taken from the forest and rocks on the mountains were dynamited to make stones for the village buildings. These buildings, Pavlos said, were replicas of the buildings they had in Santa with an upper area that was used to store dry food in the severe winters. Other constructions, such as a stone wall and a tap in front of his family home were modelled on similar constructions in Santa. Everything, Pavlos asserted, was based on the former home in Santa and their way of living was the same.

The original settlement of Santa was in the mountainous Pontic Alps at 2,000 metres above sea level just below the summer pastures (see Figure 1). It consisted of seven main villages each and other outlying settlements. Bryer argues that it is most likely that Santa was established in the late 17th century by Pontians who sought to remove themselves from the severe demands of local feudal overlords when, for the first time Pontic Greeks were in danger of becoming slaves (Bryer, AAM 1980a: 122, n. 26; 1980b: 177). Living in such a remote area enabled Santa people to be free from much of the interference of the Turks in their daily lives. Apart from paying their taxes to the Sultan, they were able to develop their own village organisation and an independent lifestyle in which a central committee looked after a range of administrative and juridical affairs. Pavlos said that in the early 1920s they came under attack from Turkish soldiers and while their resistance fighters held out for a long time, eventually Santa was destroyed and its remaining inhabitants sent on the march of exile into the hinterland of Turkey.

The site of Neachorio was not just chosen because it was away from the malaria-borne swamps of Kalamaria but because its high altitude and terrain were reminiscent of Santa. The River Yambolos dominated the terrain in Santa with its swift running, rocky nature with most settlements of the village on one side and a few on the other. In Neachorio there was no river and the settlement depended on a number of springs for its water supply. Nevertheless, for those who selected the site of Neachorio, its height and remoteness was a metonymical landscape, one that stood for the isolation and independence of Santa. In Pontos, Santa was a place where its people could live an almost completely independent life away from Turkish rule. The remoteness of this new village allowed them to design and build their own village based on their former village without government interference. Pavlos said that they believed that they had been tricked and mistreated by the Turkish Government so when they came to Greece they were also wary of the Greek Government, particularly in the early days. It also allowed them to set up their own form of governance and to live without harassment from others. As well, Pavlos told me, the Santa peo-

ple were cautious and often suspicious of other people. In their terms, foreigners were not just Turks or even Greeks but included Pontians from different regions. This caution may have been one of the reasons why they kept the village entirely for Santa people, an exclusivity that was retained well into the 20th century.

As well as establishing villages, building religious sites assisted in the return to normality for Pontians. In the late 1940s, at the instigation of Dr. Filon Ktenidis (1889–1963), author and playwright, many Pontians in Greece looked to establish a religious centre based on the original monastery of Panagia Soumela in Pontos. The selection of the geographical location of the proposed site of the new monastery was important and eventually an area in the Vermio mountain range was chosen because it was reminiscent of the terrain of the Pontic Alps where the original Panagia Soumela was located.¹⁸ In 1951, the council of the adjacent village of Kastania agreed to donate 50 hectares of land to establish the monastery with the Ministry of Lands of the Greek Government supplying the rest of the land. A small church was built on the site and opened in 1952. As a young boy, Pavlos was present at its construction and for him it is the stonework that epitomises the former monastery in Pontos. He explained that Pontian stonemasons from his village had cut every single stone, being very selective about the best ones to use. When the young people carried stones to them, they would tell them to take particular ones away because they could tell that these were unsuitable for the job. Pavlos said,

‘Everything was done by eye and experience to get everything straight and at the right angle. All the cement was prepared by shovel and not a mixer...I remember those old people. They were so keen on their job.’

¹⁸ ‘Four other of the chief monasteries of the Pontos have been reconstructed in Greece in mountain locations similar to their original sites: St. Geore Peristereota, St. John Vazelon, Panagia Goumera, and St. Theodore Gavras—all in the thirty years between 1950 and 1980’ (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 114).



Plate 4: The small church of Panagia Soumela in Greece

Later, in the 1970s, a larger church was built next to the original small one to cater for the large numbers of people coming to the monastery, particularly on special feast days. The icon of the Panagia was saved from the monastery in Pontos and eventually brought to Greece in the 1920s and kept in the Byzantine Museum in Athens. Later, it was installed in the larger church along with other religious items of significance such as a gospel and cross donated to the original monastery by the Emperor Komneni, Manuel III (1390–1417) (Bryer, A & Winfield 1985: 284). As Dubisch observes:

‘Icons are also connected with other social units, and may take on particular importance as the focus of community identity in situations of upheaval and migration. In such circumstances, displaced groups may carry their icons with them, making them the spiritual center of a new community’ (1995: 73).

The monastery in Greece was perceived by Pontians as an attempt to replicate the original Panagia Soumela, despite the differences in the two landscapes. The terrain in Greece was only metonymical of the area in Pontos, where the monastery was built into the side of a very steep rocky mountain. In Greece, both the small and large churches were built on a larger area of level ground excavated out of the side

of the mountain. The architecture of the sites differs. While both buildings were constructed of local stone, the small church was a simple building whereas the large church was built in the form of a Byzantine church, but neither of them resembled the architecture of Panagia Soumela in Pontos. Furthermore, although it was called a monastery, Panagia Soumela in Greece was never intended to be a working monastery where many monks lived and were trained. Instead, it appoints a priest who is of Pontian background. Yet despite these differences, the monastery in Greece remains a constant reminder of the original monastery in Pontos for Pontians.



Plate 5: The new church of Panagia Soumela in Greece

Even though Pavlos migrated to Australia in 1960, Panagia Soumela remains an important religious site for him. He told me that he took his two children back to Greece to have them baptised at the monastery. Yet, despite the beauty of the larger church, Pavlos reserves his most intense feelings about Panagia Soumela for the small, original church built by the stonemasons from his village. ‘I love that small church,’ he said, ‘you can read on it a lot of men’s trades. Particularly, the cornerstones have a nice straight line [made] with a chisel—those people were genuine Pontian. They came from Pontos. They were doing the same job there.’ For instance, he said, the same sort of craftsmanship is evident in the original monastery

of Panagia Soumela in Pontos. He said that when he visited the former monastery in Pontos he could not find any cracks in the walls, even though it is built on the side of the cliff face. He feels that Panagia Soumela in Greece has lost an architectural connection to Pontos now that the focus has turned from the small church to the newer, larger one. He said,

‘I’ve seen the new church. It is beautiful, big and well decorated but for me ... it is mute. The small church speaks out loudly of people’s speciality; their pride. You can see that people offered their ability to build something. Every single stone has been worked out by the old people.’

The building of the monastery of Panagia Soumela has played a significant role in giving Pontians a way to return to some semblance of religious normality through being able to resume some of their religious practices that their parents or grandparents had carried out in Pontos. In Adelaide, another of my informants, Alkis, said that his grandmother told him that going to Panagia Soumela in Pontos was like going on a pilgrimage because often people had to travel a day or two to get there. The monks would always prepare something for them to eat and give them accommodation. Visiting Panagia Soumela was not something they did on a regular basis as they had their own church in their village, but visiting Panagia Soumela was always something special. He went on to say:

‘Panagia Soumela ... it holds us, it binds us, they believe in it. In the time before the genocide and during that time, it was the thing that kept them together. It was their focus and their strength.’

The significance of Panagia Soumela has continued for Alkis. He said that, either in the year 1952 or 1953, before his family migrated to Australia, his father took him and his brother to Panagia Soumela in Greece. Alkis remembers seeing a photograph of them with others from his village, taken in front of the little old church.

‘So that was something that stayed with me and it was something that was very important, very special. So when we went back to Greece in 1982, which was about 28 years later, my first visit back, my son was eight, my age when I left, and my daughter was six so it was essential for me, it was one of the things that I had to do was to visit Panagia Soumela. So we all went up there. It was very, very special.’

For Alkis, therefore, thoughts, memories and the emotions converged when he spoke about Panagia Soumela. He remembered the role the original monastery

played in Pontos for his grandparents. Its significance became overwritten by his own visit to the monastery in Greece as a child before he migrated. Later, another memory and an intensity of emotion were added to the previous ones, as he remembered how important it was for him to take his own children to visit the monastery on a return visit to Greece. Even though Alkis made a place distinction when he spoke about the two monasteries, the name 'Panagia Soumela' retains the significance of the monastery. The thoughts and emotions attached to the original Panagia Soumela do not disappear as people remember the place the monastery played in the lives of their family members in Pontos: they remain despite the absence of the monastery and are incorporated into the replicated monastery in Greece.

For present-day Pontians, Panagia Soumela in Greece continues to be what the former monastery was—a religious, educational and cultural gathering place—and it becomes the receptacle for further memories and emotions. Nowadays, descendants of Pontian refugees travel from all over in Greece to visit the monastery of Panagia Soumela in Greece and to venerate the icon. Large numbers come for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on the 14th and 15th August.¹⁹ Thirteen days later, Russian Pontians come to celebrate the same feast.²⁰ Apart from the feast days, the monastery sees a steady stream of visitors. In 2006, I observed many people coming on weekdays or on weekends either in private cars for short-term visits or on organised bus tours, when they stayed overnight in dormitory accommodation. Mostly, they were older people but there were some family groups. Inside the church, all venerated the icon of Panagia Soumela by kissing the covering glass screen and making the sign of the cross three times on themselves, some stooping down to the ground while they did this. When families came to venerate the icon, very often they lifted up their children to kiss it. As well as visiting the main church, most people went to the older, smaller one. Outside the churches, people tended to collect what they believe is holy water from the fountain opposite, filling containers of water to take with them to drink or to sprinkle on themselves or around their home.

¹⁹ The literal translation of this term is 'the falling asleep of the God-bearer', or the Mother of God. This is a feast day to celebrate the death of the Virgin Mary and her bodily resurrection and assumption into heaven.

²⁰ When I was staying on the monastery grounds, approximately 5,000 Russian Pontians came to celebrate the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary on the 28th and 29th August. The so-called Russian Pontians are descendants of those who decided to go to Russia in the 19th century or at the time of the retreat of the Russian army in 1917 and, who after perestroika in the late 1980s, migrated to Greece to avoid suffering harassment and discrimination as a minority group in the newly independent Russian states (Agtzidis, Vlasis 1991: 379–80; Vergeti 1991: 387–9). Russian Pontians follow the 'old' religious calendar that celebrates major feast days thirteen days later than most Greek Orthodox people who follow a new calendar introduced in the 1920s.



Plate 6: The icon of Panagia Soumela

While those who live in neighbouring villages might not attend the monastery when there are large crowds present for the feast days, it is still important to them. One couple I spoke to told me that when they are in their village in July and August, they do not go to Panagia Soumela but to their local village church where they have their own priest. However, at the beginning of each month, it is their normal practice to drive up to visit the monastery and to get a supply of holy water from the church for the coming month. Through a constant stream of visitors, the monastery continues to accumulate considerable wealth but despite this, another person said that the monastery as a business was not important to her. To her, it was the icon that was important, as for all Pontians, 'because we adore the Virgin'. Establishing a replica of the monastery of Panagia Soumela, therefore, enabled Pontians a return to normality by allowing them to continue their religious devotion to the icon of Panagia Soumela. There were, of course, numerous everyday practices other than religious ones that enabled Pontians to resume their lives in a new place.

Returning to everyday practices

Das and Kleinman maintain that the resumption of everyday practices enables those who have been displaced to return to a semblance of normality (2001: 3). Because of the landscape of Neachorio, those in the village felt able to engage in similar

practices as those in Santa, in such areas as employment, foods and education. Their building and stonemasonry skills enabled them to construct their houses on the steep slopes of Neachorio just as houses had been constructed on the steep slopes of Santa. Originally, Santa men moved to other areas for seasonal work. Because they could not support themselves simply through cattle raising in Santa, most Santa men sought itinerant seasonal work in other places in Turkey or in Russia as 'stone cutters, brick layers, miners or contractors...They used to come home in winter and stayed with their families from Christmas until Easter', but apart from that time of the year, 'only old men, women and children lived in Santa' (Hionides 2003: 208–9). Similarly, in Greece because the new village was comparatively close to the town of Veria, the men worked there as stonemasons thereby supplementing the subsistence agriculture.

Those establishing Neachorio saw that the landscape would allow them to produce the sorts of foods they had eaten in Santa. They could keep cows as they did in Santa and these provided their dairy products—milk, yoghurt, butter, and cheeses—particularly for the winter months when Neachorio, like in Santa, would be 'snowed in'. They did not grow their own cereals but bought them from outside the village to make foods for the winter months, again a reflection of practice in Santa where it, too, was too high to grow cereals. Pavlos told me that when he was growing up in Neachorio he can remember there being a very large number of dishes made from wheat, barley, corn, rye and oats. For example, a soup was prepared from cracked wheat and dried yoghurt and herbs. Boiled wheat with an egg or cream was cooked to make porridge. Corn was used to make flour and from this they used to make their own form of spaghetti. Often fruit salads were used to moisten the cereals. So these, along with dairy products, formed the basis of their diet, particularly in winter. As in Santa, fasting through the religious season of Lent was difficult because much of their diet depended on proscribed foods, such as milk and eggs, and twice a week they had to refrain from using olive oil.

Food can function 'as a mnemonic device' (Kravva 2001: 137) whereby the practice of preparing it along with its cooking aromas become associated with the 'smells of one's natal home and more generally the 'taste' of one's homeland' (Miller, D 2001: 9). For example, Warin and Dennis (2005) show how Iranian women remember their home through the production and consumption of sweets. But, sometimes, because in a new place the available ingredients are grown in different soils, the prepared food does not taste the same. Many of my informants told me that their parents or

grandparents always said that the taste of the food in Greece did not taste the way it did in Pontos. For Pavlos, too, some of his fondest memories in Adelaide are of the foods he tasted when he was growing up in Neachorio. He told me how he remembers the meal his mother used to cook for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos when some of their relatives would come and stay in his village in Greece for the celebration. Pavlos said that every year his mother took a very large pan, normally used for making cheese, and prepared a large dish of lamb and green beans. He remembers the taste of that meal. 'You never had a tastier bean,' he said. Unlike the visual and aural senses that remain intact outside the body, taste and smell can only be objectified and articulated once they are incorporated into the body (see Borthwick 2000). Hence, there is now no other way for Pavlos to record the taste of the beans of Neachorio, other than through the processes of his memory (see Iddison 2001: 116). However, in doing this, the foods of Neachorio for Pavlos become an embodied way in which the home of his youth is both remembered and becomes absent to him.

There were, however, other non-tangible things that were valued by Santa people, which were presenced in Neachorio helping them to resume their everyday lives. 'First education, second a sense of independence, third their religion'—these are the three things that Santa people value, an informant told me when I was in Greece. As evidence of Pontians' commitment to education he told me that there are certificates that show that children learnt to play the piano and to speak French and English in Santa over a hundred years ago. Hence, when establishing Neachorio, building the school, as well as the church, were seen as high priorities and, as in Santa, the two were together in the centre of the village. According to Hionides (2003: 207) there were no schools in Santa until 1863 but by 1914 there were nine, one of which was a girls' school. Therefore, for those who had grown up in Santa and who then subsequently established Neachorio, education was of high importance. Pavlos said that there was a great emphasis on education in his village and all children were encouraged to finish their secondary schooling and many did so. This emphasis on education is likely to be greater than in a number of other parts of Greece as legislation was only passed in 1976-7 that required 'compulsory school attendance be extended from six to nine years' (Massialas 1981: 1). Pavlos said that in Neachorio there were four primary school teachers and two high school teachers who were trained in the Frontisterion, a well regarded academy established in 1682 in Trapezounta. He assured me that these teachers were far above the standard of those trained in Greek universities. Pavlos stressed on a number of occasions that there

were many educated people in Neachorio—children were encouraged to go on to tertiary institutions and, in some cases, to postgraduate studies. One afternoon when I was visiting the village, I met three women who had grown up and attended school in Neachorio. Without prompting, they all spoke to me about education. Koula said that at the time she went to school in the 1940s there were about 120 children, with both boys and girls being enrolled. Aphrodite also told me that all the people in Neachorio educated their children. She said that when children finished their primary schooling both boys and girls were sent to Veria for their secondary education. There, their parents had to hire houses for their children to live in during the school terms and had to send money and food to support them. At that time, she said that the products they grew for cash were ‘only very cheap things’ such as potatoes and beans along with cut wood. So it was always a struggle for parents to find the money to educate their children. Chrysoula interrupted at this point, ‘There are no uneducated people here,’ she said. Later, we met two children of one of the very few families who now live permanently in the village. Chrysoula told me that she is always urging these children to achieve in their schooling.

While the resumption of employment practices, food preferences and education opportunities were important for Pontians in the process of returning to normality, these were carried out knowing that their lives had been severely and irretrievably disrupted. The memory of loss of the tragic loss of life and homeland remained and particularly those who had lost close family members and friends needed to find a way to face this tragedy.

Retrieval of voice in the face of recalcitrance of tragedy

Das and Kleinman maintain that the ‘retrieval of voice in the face of the recalcitrance of tragedy’ (Das & Kleinman 2001: 3) is an important way whereby those who have suffered traumatic loss are able to return to some semblance of normality. For some Pontians voicing grief was one of the ways of addressing this ongoing pain of loss that was difficult to bear.

Pavlos told me that for him the emotions associated with the loss of Santa developed over a long period. As a young boy in the village, he had little awareness of what had happened to some of his fellow villagers. This was because Pavlos’s family did not suffer in the same way as some other villagers. He said that he can remember the first time that he became aware of the traumatic loss other villagers of Neachorio had suffered. He told me that he remembers as a young child of no more than ten years of age hearing a woman crying and moaning whenever she went into

the forest to collect wood. Pavlos said that he could not remember much of what she was saying except one phrase that remained with him over the years. She used to say repeatedly, 'I couldn't even light a small candle on you.' He could not understand what she was doing and so he asked his mother, 'What's wrong with Aunt Maria? Crying all day?' His mother told him that this woman had lost two sons in the exile from Santa and she could not bury them. His mother told him that it is the worst thing for a parent to do to have to watch their children die. This woman had seen her sons dying next to her and, because she was too ill herself, she had been unable to help them.

Having children die and not be able to bury them was not uncommon on death marches. In a biography of her mother, Halo (2000) describes the conditions on these marches. She relates one incident where the Turkish soldiers refused to let her mother's parents bury one of their daughters, and so had to leave her body on a stone wall by the roadside (2000: 139). For Pavlos, however, it was his first experience of the intensity of mourning. But, he said that, later, when he heard other women doing the same, he knew what they were doing and so he began to understand something of the loss they were experiencing. That understanding later motivated him, as a young man, to read more of the history of Santa.

Nowadays, Pavlos's explanation for the woman's distress was that she was feeling guilty. Looking back, he said:

'The feeling, the impression I got in those years was that, all right, they lost their loved ones, but the more important thing for them was that themselves they felt guilty because they did not do the right thing for the dead and regardless of whether they could or not. In my mind those people, they were feeling guilty'.

Part of this guilt stemmed from the fact that the woman was unable to perform the Orthodox funeral rites and therefore failed to fulfil her obligations towards the dead. Danforth and Tsiaras (1982: 119) show how it falls to Greek rural women to perform certain rituals towards the dead. Apart from the religious requirements, women often make daily visits to graves, cleaning and scrubbing them, taking flowers, lighting candles and at times speaking to the dead as if they were alive. The grave site, therefore, becomes the place where they can perform certain acts that are not only religious but serve to maintain the social relationship that they once had with the deceased person (1982: 127–143). The woman in the forest in Neachorio was not only grieving for her sons but was also mourning the absence of a place. There was no

grave where she could continue to show the maternal care for her dead children and so a death in a foreign place ‘where no one is obligated to perform the necessary rites’ (Danforth & Tsiaras 1982: 125) was particularly hard to bear. The situation for the mourning mother, however, was particularly dreadful: Das and Kleinman make the point that ‘one of the most difficult tasks before survivors is to remember not only objective events but also one’s own place in those events’ (2001: 14). Hence, for the woman it was more than the inability to perform the Orthodox ritual. As a mother she needed to come to terms with the difficulty of knowing that she did not fulfil her responsibility as a mother to her children in life and that she cannot fulfil that responsibility towards them in death. Furthermore, upon her own burial in the soil of Greece, she will be forever separated from them in death. In order to ‘continue to live, to survive, and to cope’ (Das & Kleinman 2001: 1) in the face of the recalcitrance of tragedy her voice was only that of the wailing of mourning. Thus, as Das and Kleinman contend:

‘It is this sense of presence, this idea that the events of violence are not past, that they have the potential of becoming alive any moment, which might explain how hard the survivors had to work to generate new contexts in which enough trust could be created to carry on, once again, the work of everyday life’ (2001: 18).

Conclusion

Not all retrieved voices were those of grief: there were ones of joy in the face of survival. Pavlos related that one night in Neachorio, in a small room at a house near his aunt’s home, there were eight to ten older people between sixty to sixty-five years of age—his parents, aunt and uncle, and neighbours. He, as the youngest of his family, was there with his sister. Everyone had just returned from the taverna ‘in good spirits.’ With them was a man who used two pieces of wood to pretend he was playing the *lyra*²¹ while making the tune and rhythm with his mouth. Someone else kept time by beating on an oil tin-can. And every person in the room got up and danced. They danced for over an hour and, Pavlos said, in such an emotional way that the memory has remained with him. Pavlos was uncertain what his parents were remembering but he could see they were ‘voicing’ their emotions through the expression of the dance. He said:

²¹ The *lyra* is a three-stringed, bottle-shaped instrument about 45–60 cm in length and about 7–11 cm in width. It is played with a bow by the musician who, either sitting or standing, holds the instrument in an upright position in front of him.

‘Their faces are in front of me now. How happy they were. Something had been awakened in them. Maybe they thought back to the old days, maybe to some relationship. They danced with such enjoyment on their faces and slowly. Those people felt something and they expressed it. They had gone through such difficult days and at that stage they just wanted to dance.’

The dancing of his parents had awakened some memories of the past: the experiences of the pain of exile, the hardship of settling in Greece and the joy of survival attached to their particular memories. Pavlos could not tap into those memories because they were not his but somehow he absorbed something of the resilience and strength of his parents in the way they danced. Although he was a witness to his parents’ emotions he could not share in their emotional experience, but the emotion that Pavlos experienced then is not only associated with that event. Now when he dances or even when he sees others dancing, the emotion associated with the memory of that one night when in his village he saw his parents and elders dance has remained with him.

Pavlos constructed a narrative that incorporated both his individual and social memories of his village to describe its process of returning to everyday ‘normality’ after the tragedy of genocide and exile. By retrieving the voices of the past, Pavlos found his own voice to narrate an enduring sense of absence. His memories came with a fullness of emotion as he told of his great fondness for Neachorio, an appreciation and admiration of his parents and an enthusiasm in recalling what he knew of Santa. Formed in the conscious experience, his narrative had ‘...an orientation to past, present and future, the three always existing in a relationship of tension but always forming a cognitive whole’ (Cohen, AP & Rapport 1995: 8). In narrating how the establishment of Neachorio was based upon the former village of Santa, Pavlos was also telling me that both places have been lost to him—Santa is in ruins and deserted, Neachorio, while his former home and still regarded as his village, is no longer the place where he lives, and, because of migration, has not lived there for fifty years. With the present as ‘the decisive moment in the narrative’ (Cohen, AP & Rapport 1995: 8), Pavlos finds his own voice to narrate an enduring sense of the presence of absence, through which his parents and he, much later in another country, embraced the task of living and creating a future.

3 Migration: presencing the absence of home

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the second rupture that Pontic Greeks experienced when they migrated to Australia—a migration period that extended over three decades from the 1950s to the early 1970s. Because this rupture was mostly undertaken voluntarily, it was not as traumatic as the forced exile from Pontos. It did, however, come as the result of a number of traumatic events, such as World War II and the Civil War in Greece, and the ensuing social upheaval that intensified already existing poverty. In coming to a foreign place, the loss of home in Greece was perceived as absence in a variety of ways. Part of it was a welcomed absence of the extreme poverty arising from the lack of employment prospects in Greece. Other absences, however, such as being away from home, family members and community—the overall feeling of not being ‘at home’—were more difficult to bear.

The concept of ‘home’ has been explored from a number of different perspectives. Mary Douglas (1991) saw home as encapsulated in the number of familiar practices within a particular location such as a house. In eschewing the notion that home is necessarily closely tied to a physical place or building, Rapport and Dawson argue that in a time of movement, the sense of home travels with the migrant. Home when one moves to another place can be the ‘environment...in which one best knows oneself’ (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 21). This rather cognitive connotation of home does not appear to take into account the particular feelings that are connected with home or the social constructs that have an effect on these feelings. Defining the concept of home as the place of social relations, Olwig contends that it is:

‘...created through social relations as they unfold in the give-and-take of ordinary everyday life. Whereas home may become a fairly abstract space of self-knowledge in narratives, it is a very concrete place of mutual relations of exchange, usually involving concrete rights and obligations, in the social life of narrators’ (1998: 235).

Jackson (1995) broadens this idea of home to include the past and the future. For him, home is a ‘double-barreled word’.

'It conveys a notion of all that is already given—the sedimented lives of those who have gone before—but it also conveys a notion of what is chosen—the open horizons of a person's own life' (1995: 122).

This is particularly pertinent for immigrant populations. For instance, when most Pontians migrated to Adelaide, they came from villages in Greece that were established by their parents/grandparents from the 'inner landscape' (Stewart, P & Strathern 2003: 4) of their places in Pontos. These 'sedimented' concepts of home included the importance of the family, marriage customs and experience of village life with its particular religious practices. However, when Pontic Greek immigrants came to Australia they not only travelled with this 'given' concept of home, but also with the sense of being able to choose the future in a new place. Home does not necessarily have to be in a motionless place, as Jackson found from his study of what home means to the Warlpiri people of Central Australia. Divorcing the concept of home from a dwelling, Jackson explored the concept of home when it is not synonymous with a structure such as a house (1995: 4). From this he concluded that, rather than define what the essence of home is, it is more useful to describe it as 'the lived relationship suggested by the phrase "being-at-home-in-the-world"' (1995: 123). Therefore, to him, 'this sense of "at-homeness" suggests an elusive balance which people try to strike between being acted upon and acting, between acquiescing in the given and choosing their own fate' (Jackson 1995: 123)—between a sense of belonging and a sense of autonomy.

When Pontians migrated to Australia from Greece most had the autonomy of choosing to migrate but once in Australia they faced certain restrictions, particularly in regard to travel, the choice of housing and employment. In addition, they did not always experience a sense of belonging in Australia, which appeared to them to be a foreign place where they experienced prejudice and language difficulties. In a place where they often felt more acted upon than being able to act independently, having a physical place of their own was important. Home, therefore, was one place where they could feel that they had some self-determination and where they could incorporate certain practices that would make them feel as if they belonged, even if initially they felt estranged from the wider Australian community.

Gibson's study (1967) showed the importance of home-ownership for Greek people. Compared with Dutch immigrants to Australia who mostly chose to move into public housing or rental accommodation, the Greek people she surveyed sought to buy

their own houses and pay for them as soon as possible. Of the Greek immigrants Gibson surveyed, many owned their homes within six years of their arrival in Adelaide (see Gibson 1967: 82). Thus, when Greek immigrants spoke of home it was not in an abstract sense. It involved a particular building where, through the exchange of social relations, they could exercise autonomy and gain a sense of belonging. Such a physical place was important to them and was one of the structures that enabled them to eventually build the feeling of being at home. When talking to the older Pontians who had been in Australia for forty or fifty years, I often asked, 'When did you realise that you would be settling in Australia and would not be returning to Greece permanently?' The answer invariably was 'after I bought my home and had my children.' After much hard work, Pontic immigrants gradually gained a sense of being at home, not least through establishing a physical place where they and their family felt they belonged and had a sense of autonomy.

In this chapter, I use Jackson's notions of 'belonging' and 'autonomy', describing the 'lived relationship' between these two notions to explore how Pontic Greek immigrants gained a sense of 'at-homeness' in a new place. First, I outline the losses that led up to the rupture of migration. Secondly, I discuss how the lack of the sense of belonging and autonomy was experienced as an absence for Pontians attempting to settle in a strange land. Thirdly, I examine how through their notion of home Pontians actively built structures that made them feel at home in Australia, and through these, presented the absence of their former homes in Greece.

The second rupture

Greece

Twenty years after Pontic Greeks arrived in Greece as a destitute refugee population, that country experienced the devastating effects of World War II (1939–44) and then the Civil War (1946–49) that followed it. Whilst present before and during World War II, the tensions arising from the political differences between the Nationalists (supporters of the monarchy) and the Communists or members of socialist-based parties, came to a head in the Civil War. Whilst my informants' recollections of these wars are often based on their own fleeting memories or those of their parents' memories, the emotions attached to these conflicts remain. For many of my informants, the Civil War was remembered as a more bitter conflict than World War II and one that seems to have had a greater impact on their lives. This 'filthy war', Alex told me, was one that 'separated brother against brother.' Another informant,

George, said that with the Germans and Italians you knew who your enemies were but in the Civil War you did not know and even members of your own family could be fighting for the other side. Alexandra said that she knew of people who had partisans come to their houses. They would be masked so they could not be recognised; they could have been their neighbours. Sometimes they would break down the door and take the husband or the son. Then a few days later the villagers would find them killed. 'It was a horrible life,' she said. Something of the bitterness of that conflict is remembered today. Once when I visited Irini, she showed me a photograph of her father in uniform. She said that he fought in World War II only to be killed by the Communists during the Civil War. Irini was about eighteen months old at the time of his death. Her mother had gone to ask her father to come home but he waited just one more day and was killed. Irini said that ever since she has hated Communists for killing her father because she grew up without ever knowing him.

The two wars in Greece took the lives of many, particularly those of young men, and disrupted a country that was already struggling to provide elementary infrastructure for its peoples. When I asked Vaggelis why he decided to migrate to Australia rather than stay in Greece, he said, 'And do what?' He said that in Greece they had experienced first the Second World War then the Civil War for three years. So, he said, 'We had nothing. The whole village was destroyed completely, twice. Once, by the Germans, and then by the partisans... So what are you doing there?'²² His daughter told me that at the time, they farmed the land but they had no money. Making a living from farming the land was difficult. Distribution of land to peasant people, such as Pontians, from the 1920s had resulted in,

'...farm fragmentation [where] it was virtually impossible to develop effective irrigation systems, improve livestock, intensify cultivation, or rotate crops. Moreover, farming was to become even more inefficient over the years to come as fields were further parcelled out among the peasants' heirs' (Kontogiorgi 2006: 331).

Overall, the two wars came as a further disruption to the efforts of Pontians to establish themselves both financially and socially. At the end of the two conflicts the country was devastated, political, socially and economically. For those contemplating migration, there was very often the choice between remaining in extreme poverty in Greece or taking the chance to make a better life in countries such as Australia.

²² That is, staying in Greece

Vaggelis had wanted to join the army but his father refused because he wanted him to work on the farm. At that time, Vaggelis had heard that he could get a free passage on board a ship to Australia and saw an opportunity to get away from life on the farm. However, because he was twenty years of age, he needed his father's permission to leave. Vaggelis asked the village priest and teacher as well as his godfather to persuade his father to sign the papers. Once Vaggelis saw that they had been signed, he took them immediately to the post office and within a few months he received notification that he was accepted to migrate to Australia. When I asked whether it was hard to leave, Vaggelis said, 'Let's put it this way, I never regretted that I came here'. He said that he has had a good life in Australia. 'Maybe', he said, 'it would have been all right in Greece, but it's something that I cannot know. So I am happy here, because I have got my whole family.'

For someone like Stavroula, migrating to Australia was also seen as an opportunity to get away from the hard life on the farm. Stavroula's education had been interrupted during World War II and as the eldest daughter in the family, she left school to help look after the younger children as well as to work with her father in her parent's tobacco fields near Kavala in northern Greece. Stavroula told me that it was a hard life in her village. She used to carry water from another village to her own with buckets on a stick across her back. This was in addition to picking tobacco leaves and stringing them up to dry. She said that at the time she was married she did not own a pair of shoes and had to hire her wedding dress. Stavroula said that when she was coming out to Australia, people in her village were apprehensive about the sort of life she was going to lead, but she was pleased because she was leaving tobacco farming behind.

Thus, in this second rupture for Pontic Greeks, migration was often welcomed as a way of leaving the poverty and lack of opportunity in Greece at that time. The hope of a better way of life attracted them to Australia. Although some saw it as the chance of making enough money to return after two years and re-settle back in Greece, in reality most remained to establish their homes and families in Australia.

Migration to Australia

By the mid 20th century, in Adelaide in South Australia there was already a small Greek community. Their numbers were to increase significantly after the Second World War. In the late 1940s the Commonwealth Government of Australia began to implement migration policies to overcome the labour shortages in manufacturing in-

dustries and in the development of major infrastructure. Initially, these policies targeted people from the United Kingdom, but later included others from northern Europe under the Displaced Persons Scheme. Only in the 1950s did the policies extend to include those from southern Europe and it was not until 1952 that Greek people were actively encouraged to migrate to Australia by offering them assisted passages. Many of my informants told me that they did not take advantage of this assistance but were sponsored by family members or friends. 'The large influx of Greeks in the 1950s and 1960s fuelled the growth of manufacturing industries' and so they 'were more likely to be wage labourers, production or process workers' (Bottomley 1992: 94). The numbers of Greek-born immigrants in Adelaide increased significantly from 2,073 in 1954 to 7,463 in 1961 (see Gibson 1967): included in these were a number of Pontian people, particularly from northern Greece (see Tamis 1994: 191). The 1986 Australian Bureau of Statistics census showed that 29,815 claimed to have Greek ancestry and of that number 11,882 were born in South Australia (see Hugo 1989: 20). In the 2006 census that latter figure had risen to 37,240 people (see Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). Out of the total Greek population in Australia in 2006, it is estimated that 65,000 were of Pontian descent and of these about 7,000 lived in Adelaide.²³

Young Pontian men very often migrated first. Hindley Street, in Adelaide's city centre, became a place where many gathered for support and to learn of accommodation options or employment opportunities. Once they had settled in Adelaide, some would sponsor their fiancés or their wives and children at a later time. Paraskevi told me that her husband decided to come to Australia to visit his brother thinking that he would stay for two years and then return to Greece. However, he liked the place and so it was left to her to sell their farm and equipment, arrange for her and their five children to migrate and join him in Australia. Remembering the distance in time between her home and Australia, she said that she spent thirty-five days and eight hours on board the ship, the *Patris*, and was seasick for most of the time along with most of the other passengers. Other young men, once established in Adelaide, returned to Greece to marry. Christos was nineteen years of age when he arrived in Adelaide in 1960 having been sponsored by his brother. At first, he worked at a steel mill and then later he and his brother brought a market garden property. In order to pay the mortgage on this, Christos worked at times at three jobs: tending his market garden in the morning, working at an engineering firm from 9 am to 3 pm, and then

²³ Interview with Makis Kasapidis of the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria on 1 May 2006.

at a factory between 3.20 pm and midnight. It took him fifteen years to be free of debt at which time he returned to Greece, married and then came back to Adelaide with his wife.

When young Pontian unmarried women came, they were either accompanied by family members or friends or were sponsored by relatives already in Australia. Theodora's older brother sponsored her migration and she was accompanied by her aunt. As a sixteen and a half year old young woman, she remembers travelling on the ship to Australia as a very bad time. Not only did she have to share a cabin with three strangers, she did not have any money to spend on the ship: she was always hungry and would wait impatiently for each meal. In retrospect, she thinks that her brother would have known that she needed money but the fact that she was not given any was probably a reflection of the extreme poverty of her family. Other single women came to marry their fiancés, often meeting them for the first time when they arrived in Australia. Ekaterini, a non-Pontian, had corresponded with her future husband for two years. She remembers that she arrived in Melbourne on 1 January 1948, travelled with her aunt and her uncle to Adelaide and then to Port Pirie, where she was married two weeks later.

Stavroula, on the other hand, came as a wife and mother. She migrated with her husband and their four children. Her husband had worked as a clerk in Greece but lost this position when he undertook compulsory National Service. He decided to migrate because he had heard that there were employment opportunities in Australia. He thought that if they stayed in Greece his children, as adults, would have difficulty finding work. Stavroula said that because of the poverty in Greece she was happy to leave even though they did not know where they were going. They arrived in Australia with one suitcase.

The practice of chain-migration meant that family and friends very often sponsored others from their own village or area and these immigrants sought to buy and settle in the same areas as those who sponsored them. In Adelaide, the western suburbs of Thebarton, Hindmarsh, Brompton and Bowden, and parts of Unley, to the south of the city, began to have a high density of Greek-born people living in them in the post World War II period. The Thebarton area, once a predominantly Anglo-Saxon area immediately west of the city, is now home to a vibrant Greek community comprising a Greek Orthodox Church, a Greek school, and many Greek cafes, social and sporting clubs and Greek-owned businesses on its main arterial road. At present, the

federal government electorate of Hindmarsh has more than 10,000 Greek Australians living in it and its federal member is of Greek heritage (Kelton & Shepherd 2007: 13). In buying their homes in this area, Pontic Greek immigrants were not able to create replicas of the kinds of villages that many of their parents or grandparents had been able to establish after they had been exiled from Pontos. Even though there is a high-density of Greek-born people living in this area and they live in fairly close proximity to each other, Pontians live in streets with other people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Hence, in the migration process Pontic Greeks lost the familiarity and closeness of village life.

Both Pontians and non-Pontic Greeks had similar reasons for migrating to Australia and they both experienced the same losses integral to the migration experience. These comprise the loss of place, the loss of close or wider family relationships with people left behind and, associated with both of these, the loss of a way of life they had known in Greece. This included a close attachment to the church. There is, however, one difference between the migration experience of Pontians and non-Pontic Greeks. Pontians recall another time in their recent history when, as the result of genocide and exile, they were forced to move to Greece. As a refugee population, they had experienced the absence of the original place of Pontos, death of kinsfolk in both Pontos and Greece, the disruption of social life, and, often a loss of a viable means of livelihood in poverty stricken Greece. The palimpsest quality of this loss remains and sets Pontians apart from other Greek immigrants. Unlike the experience of being forced to move from Pontos, however, Pontic Greeks who migrated to Australia came with the understanding that it could be possible to return to Greece at some later stage. They were not forcibly removed from Greece and, as a place it did not appear lost to them in the same way as Pontos was lost to their parents or grandparents. Nevertheless, the difficulties many went through in migrating and settling in Australia brought about a different set of absences further accentuated by their prior experience of being refugees.

Absence of belonging and autonomy

‘Movement constrains and enables the formation of relationships. It brings with it a sense of loss of both the expectations and the possibilities that come from belonging with people and to places while opening up new possibilities as well as shaping new vulnerabilities, since one may no longer know what to expect or what is expected’ (Ilcan 2002: 35).

While the possibility of a better life in Australia was attractive to Pontians, migration brought the experience of different vulnerabilities from the ones they had known in their former homelands and led to a feeling of not being 'at home'. Life for Pontians in Greece had been affected by the turmoils of the recent wars, often causing them to be suspicious of other Greeks from different regions of Greece. As well, there was sometimes tension between newly arrived immigrants and Greek families who had settled in Adelaide in the 1930s. Often, established Greeks viewed immigrants with suspicion because of their peasant background and because of political and socio-economic differences from their own. In addition, those immigrants who had supported the Communist movement during the Greek Civil War experienced a sense of unease particularly because of the strong anti-Communist feeling being expressed in the Australian community from the 1950s onwards, as the Cold War developed between the West and the Soviet Union.

The Australia to which they migrated was constructed from a predominantly Anglo-Saxon perspective and this affected the way in which Pontians could exercise their autonomy and how they could make it a place to which they felt they belonged. At first, the sense of alienation took the form of the lack of the familiar way of life, where they did not always 'know what to expect or what [was] expected' of them (Ilcan 2002: 35). This and the racial prejudice of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon population, combined with the inability to easily communicate in an English-speaking society, meant that that it was difficult to strike a balance between the sense of belonging and autonomy that characterises the feeling of 'at-homeness' (Jackson 1995: 123). This lack of the familiarity of home was experienced as the absence of home as it was known in Greece.

Sharing with strangers

Because most Greek immigrants came with very little money, many, like Stavroula, told me that at first they had no option but to share a house with other Greek families. Often this meant living in rented accommodation in cramped and difficult circumstances. Alexandra's experience was typical of that of a number of older Greek women I have spoken to about their accommodation when they first came to Adelaide. She told me that they first lived in a house along with seven other families. They lived with another family in one room: this couple had four children, and Alexandra and her husband had two. So that meant ten people lived and slept in one room. No one had beds; there were only blankets on the floor. For this room, they

paid £3²⁴. At that time, rooms were very hard to find and so they were compelled to stay there for three months until they found something more suitable.

Others were concerned that they were forced to share accommodation with other Greek immigrant groups. Informants told me that not knowing who they were living with or about their background was an added problem. Anastasia said that at first it was very difficult because they were mixing with people from different areas of Greece. When I asked whether that was a problem, Anastasia explained that it was hard because they did not know who these people were. Reflecting something of the suspicion of strangers that came to the fore during the Civil War, Anastasia said, 'Maybe good, maybe bad, we did not know.' She said that at first they went to one house in the city where there were already three other families. They lived in an open, central room. It was often difficult to sleep because there were always people coming through their room. After this place, they moved into another house in the city, again with three families and three bedrooms. Anastasia said that they used to do things by 'turns': 'turns' for the bathroom and 'turns' to use the kitchen. She and her family always ate in the bedroom—for breakfast, lunch and dinner—and never in the kitchen because it was always someone else's 'turn' in there. They stayed for nine months but when the owner wanted to sell the property, they had to move again.

When Stavroula and her husband and family first arrived they were sent to Townsville where her husband worked in the sugar cane fields and the family lived in hostels. Her husband knew someone who had relatives in Adelaide and so they contacted this person and asked him to sponsor their family. Stavroula said that this was the only way immigrants could move from place to another because they had received a free passage to Australia and so were contracted to work in certain areas. When they arrived in Adelaide, there was no room in their sponsor's house and so they had to move to a hostel in the city until they found a house at Kilkenny in the western suburbs. With the help of a Salvation Army pastor, they secured better, less crowded accommodation and eventually were able to put down a deposit on their own home. This meant that they were able to gain some autonomy; they could be safe from the whims of the landlords. In their own homes they did not have to accommodate the demands of strangers, they could grow their own produce, eat the

²⁴ Three pounds relates to the Australian currency before 1966. In 1950 for a male the weekly living wage in South Australia was £7.18s rising to £12.11s in 1957. (Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics (Australia) 1958: 171, 184).

kind of food they preferred and speak their own language without embarrassment. They could begin to build a place to which they could feel they belonged.

Community prejudice

The geographic isolation of Australia meant that, on the whole, the predominantly Anglo-Saxon population had little knowledge or experience of peoples from other places. In promoting their migration policies, governments of the day urged the Australian population to welcome newcomers and view them as ‘New Australians’: it expected that immigrants would assimilate into the Australian community. In practice, however, a residual prejudice remained that affected the immigrants’ acceptance into the wider Australian community. According to Appleyard:

‘Greeks in Western Australia before 1950 were targets of abuse mainly because they were one of the few ethnic minorities in a solidly Anglo-Australian society. They weathered the taunts because of their determination to succeed and their pride in Greek culture. First generation Greeks made their mark in small businesses; their children and grandchildren made theirs in the professions and skilled occupations, unimpeded by inability to speak English or their “Greek appearance” (Appleyard 2005: 284).

Informants gave me examples of how this discrimination continued well into the post-World War II migration period in Adelaide. The display of difference—in Greek customs and in language—was often the catalyst for verbal abuse in one form or another by members of the Anglo-Saxon population. Greek immigrants were called ‘wogs’, ‘dagos’ or ‘oily Greeks’ and at times their eating habits were ridiculed. School-age children of these immigrants often bore the brunt of this discrimination as their lunch boxes displayed the signs of difference in food preferences. They experienced the discrimination in other ways. Alkis related how one day at school his teacher told the class about the Olympic Games and how they had originated in Greece. Alkis said that that had made him feel very proud. But in the next breath, the teacher, looking at Alkis and the other Greek boys in his class, said, ‘But you guys, you can’t play football.²⁵ You can’t play football at all.’ He stood on his toes and put his hands behind his back and said, ‘You are a bunch of ballerinas.’ In implying that those who played Soccer were effeminate, the teacher both humiliated and embarrassed the children of immigrants in his class and demeaned those who had an adherence to that code of football. Alkis said that from being ‘up there’ in re-

²⁵ In this instance, football refers to Australian Rules Football, which in comparison to soccer or association football, is more of a contact sport.

lation to the Greek origins of the Olympic Games, he was 'brought down low.' By retelling this incident to me on two separate occasions, it was clear that Alkis still clearly remembers the humiliation he felt at that time. In Australia, often racial prejudices revolved around the issue of practices and language as indicators of difference. While most mainland Greeks experienced this prejudice for the first time when they came to Australia, Pontic Greeks, however, remembered a prior occasion when they themselves, their parents or grandparents had been exposed to discrimination; first, being ostracised and ridiculed because of language differences in Greece. They then suffered a similar discrimination in Australia.

In Australia, Pontic Greeks did not just experience prejudice from Anglo-Australians. They also faced ongoing prejudice within the wider Greek community that stemmed from their prior exile and re-settlement in Greece where they had been denigrated. Because local mainland Greeks could not understand the Pontic dialect, they thought Pontians were dull and unintelligent. Many times during my fieldwork, I was told by both Pontic and non-Pontic Greeks alike that Pontians still bear the brunt of jokes. Yet while Pontians in Australia know that other Greeks make fun of them, they believe that they are inherently different and in some way culturally superior to other Greeks. They hold onto this differentiation as a means of affirming their identity. One of my Pontian informants, Alexis, expressed it like this:

'Pontian Greeks speak a different language and their mannerisms are different. A way of expressing themselves or a tone in the voice will tell other Greeks that they are Pontians. Even the way they look tells other Greeks that they are Pontian. The Pontians are viewed in the same way as the Irish are seen by other British people...They were the underdogs. But Pontians are more fun loving and very passionate and more emotional than other Greeks. They are kinder and more generous and more friendly than other groups...Pontians are more traditional: they hold on to their traditions more than non-Pontian Greeks. They are more prouder of their traditions. They can come across as less sophisticated and that is why they are sometimes made fun of.'

Language difficulties

Migrating to a predominantly English-speaking country, Greek immigrants, who mostly spoke Greek, but not English, lacked the ability to communicate effectively in the wider Australian society. This contributed not only to their sense of alienation but also to their lack of autonomy. Alex, who migrated in 1954, said that being lonely in

a strange country without your friends and relatives as well as being unable to speak the language, was very difficult. He said:

‘The language was a big factor. You listen to the wireless and you listen to a different language. You hear that they are laughing there and it must be a joke there, and you don’t understand why they are laughing. It was very difficult, and, and, the work...really they give us the worst of the jobs because they had some excuse, for instance, we couldn’t speak the language and it is not easy for them to teach us what...to do.’

On many occasions older Greek people told me how hard it was for them to learn to understand and speak English when they first arrived in Australia. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was little assistance given to immigrants to learn to speak English and although some may have had a few English lessons on the ship on the way to Australia, most arrived not being able to speak the language. Many told me stories of the difficulties they experienced because of language problems and how it affected their day-to-day lives in those first few years. Women told me of catching the wrong bus or tram and not being able to converse with the driver, and how afraid they were of being lost in a strange place. Others told me how hard it was to ask the butcher for meat or to go the ‘corner shop’²⁶ and buy the correct grocery item. Many experienced embarrassment and difficulty in not being able to communicate or understand what was being said to them when visiting doctors either for themselves or their children or when giving birth in a strange hospital environment.

Victoria told me that her mother, Athanasia, was eight and half months pregnant when she arrived in Australia. She should not have been allowed to travel on the ship but by the time the ship’s doctor found that she was pregnant, the ship was well on its way. In Australia, when she came into labour everyone at the hospital was coming to her with masks on saying, ‘Where is your history? Who are you? Where did you come from? Who is your doctor?’ But she was unable to respond to them. Then she saw this man who spoke to her in Greek saying, ‘It’s going to be all right, Athanasia. It’s going to be all right’. She thought, ‘Oh, a Greek doctor. God has sent him.’ Then she recognised his collar and realised that it was her husband. After the birth, because she had no breast milk she tried to give the new born baby watered-down cow’s milk. No one told her about formulas and because of the language barrier, she could not go to a chemist to ask what to do.

²⁶ Before the days of large supermarkets, grocers served individual customers with all their grocery needs at small, local shops often on the corners of streets.

Often school-age children who had learnt to speak English more quickly and proficiently had to take time off from school to accompany their parents or other friends to appointments. Even if English lessons were available, the degree of poverty that forced both husband and wife to work in more than one occupation during the day and night meant there was little time (or energy) left to go to English classes. The difficulty of learning English was further compounded by the fact that very often Greek immigrants worked with other Greek immigrants or were in positions where they were not forced to learn to speak to English speakers. Many of the older women were in such positions and I found that many of these women, now in their sixties and seventies, were still embarrassed and uncomfortable about speaking to me in English. Others, realising the disadvantages of not being able to speak English made extra efforts to learn. For example, Antonis told me that he changed jobs when he realised he was not learning English because he was mixing with only Greek-speaking people at his place of employment. When Alexandra, at the age of twenty-seven, came to Australia with her two children, she knew no English. Before migrating, she said that officials had told her that she would not have to worry about speaking the English language because there would always be an interpreter available in the shops and in the offices. She found that this was not the case. 'There is nothing worse', she said, 'than living in a country and not being able to speak the language.' She discovered that some of the women at the house where she and her family were staying had been in Australia for up to a year and still were not able to speak English. She told me that she remembers saying to herself, 'Oh, my God, how are we going to live like this?' To overcome her lack of English, Alexandra found a young man who had been in Australia for a while and paid him to teach her the basics of the language. After a while, even though Alexandra was the last one to arrive in Australia, the other women used to rely on her to take them shopping because she was the only one who could speak some English. Hence, Alexandra went from feeling restricted by her lack of English to a sense of gaining some independence and autonomy through her positive action to learn the language. It was a small step on the way to feeling 'at home'.

Limited employment options

In Australia, Greek immigrants had limited employment options open to them and because of this were vulnerable to exploitation or to the lack of promotion or choice. To fulfil the bond associated with their assisted passage some I have spoken to were sent to designated areas of employment, such as cutting cane in Townsville or working in a very remote area on the railway line between Adelaide and Perth. Even

when they had fulfilled the condition of their bond, the employment options open to them were limited to unskilled work in the manufacturing or construction industries or in agriculture. These were often seasonal or short term positions. When Vaggelis arrived in Australia, he, along with many other immigrants, was sent to Bonegilla²⁷ in Victoria for his papers to be processed. From there he was sent to the Riverland town of Berri in South Australia to pick grapes. At Berri, he and his friends were separated because individual farmers were given three or four immigrants each. Then, after the grape picking season ended, the government paid his fare to come to Adelaide where he got a 'pick and shovel job' with the railways. He told me that he still has not received his pay for that work because he did not go and ask for it. He then had a job at a quarry in the Adelaide hills. After an accident, he left there and worked at a car manufacturer but because they did not offer him enough overtime work, he went to a factory which manufactured agricultural machinery, where he stayed for about eight years. He then had to return to Greece for family reasons and when he returned to Australia, his employers told him that he had lost his long service leave entitlement and so he left that job.

Although the Australian government sought to fill the labour pool through immigration, concern was still expressed by established Australian residents over the possible loss of employment for Anglo-Saxon Australians in favour of newly-arrived immigrants. In practice, immigrants were often forced to accept the unattractive, menial and low-paid jobs that other Australians did not want. 'It wasn't easy jobs we were doing. We did very hard jobs. Work hard,' said Alex. Often immigrants had to remain in such jobs because language difficulties or lack of qualifications prevented them from applying for work in other areas. This vulnerability in the workplace gave them the feeling that they were being acted upon rather than being able to act independently. For Pontians, in particular, this mimicked the treatment of their parents' or grandparents' experience of settling in Greece.

If then the feeling of 'at-homeness' entails a sense of belonging and a sense of autonomy, as Jackson (1995) argues, then initially Pontic Greek immigrants did not feel at home. Limited employment opportunities along with widespread prejudices and language difficulties exacerbated the feeling of restriction and lack of autonomy. From the Greek point of view,

²⁷ Bonegilla in the north-east of Victoria was a migrant reception and training centre from 1947 to 1971. It was responsible for the initial processing of migrants and offered basic English lessons as well as allocating jobs to newly-arrived migrants.

‘the host society...was found wanting, at least by Greek standards, in several important qualities and human values including the close family and kinship ties and the reputed Greek quality, *philotimo*, which literally means love of honour, but which is probably better interpreted as “doing the right thing” (Tsounis 1971: 494-5).

Therefore, Greeks initially felt that they did not belong in such an unfamiliar and often hostile social environment. Although in migration the absence of Greece as home was experienced, it was, however, the presencing of this absence that enabled Greeks to settle in Australia that ultimately gave them a sense of autonomy and belonging.

Presencing absence: homes, family and church

Purchasing a house was an important step for Pontic Greek immigrants in their efforts to settle in Australia. But it was not just about buying or building a house: there is a difference between ‘house building’ and ‘home building’, as Hage (1997: 102) suggests. From his study of Lebanese immigrants in western Sydney, he concluded that in order to make this migrant group feel at home in Australia, they engaged in an exercise of ‘home building’, which was more importantly *‘the building of the feeling of being “at home”’* (Hage 1997: 102, italics in the original text). Four key factors were involved in this pro-active work: ‘security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility’ (Hage 1997: 102). These factors incorporate the two aspects of belonging and autonomy that I use to describe how Pontic Greeks used actual physical places in the ‘home-building’ exercise as they endeavoured to make a home for themselves in a new land. First, through a sense of what was possible in a new land, being able to purchase a house gave a secure place where they could establish a home for their family, maintain kinship ties and incorporate important Greek qualities and values. Secondly, the building of churches gave them a sense of the familiar religious rites as well as a feeling of belonging to a community. It was, therefore, in and through these physical places that Pontic Greeks presented the absence of their former home in Greece.

Home as house

Hage argues that a feeling of security is one of the basic aims when attaining a physical place that we call home. It is not enough, he says, for it to provide shelter but it needs to be a ‘space where we feel empowered to seek the satisfaction of our needs and to remove or exclude threatening otherness’ (Hage 1997: 102). That is, it

needs to be a place to which a person feels that they belong as well as where they can feel they are able to make their own decisions. For Pontic Greek immigrants, the purchase of a house meant a home—‘a place governed by what we consider to be “our law”’ (Hage 1997: 102).

Purchasing a house, however, not only enabled Pontic Greeks to have a sense of security, it also gave a sense of permanency. It was different for other migrant or displaced Greeks in other countries. Loizos’s study of the displacement of people from the village of Argaki in Cyprus in 1974, shows that at the time, those people thought they were leaving their village ‘for a few days’ (Loizos 1981: 204) and hence, did not do anything to settle in a particular place in the hope of returning. In reality, the Argaki people continued to remain separated from their village in a divided Cyprus. Many Greek people I spoke to initially thought that their stay, too, in Australia would be temporary and that, after two years, they would make a fortune and return to Greece. For a number of reasons this did not occur, not least being the distance between Australia and Greece. Unlike their fellow countrymen who migrated to Germany and who were not allowed to buy property, Greek immigrants, on the whole, bought houses and remained in Australia and with their families made determined efforts to settle in Australia: marrying, establishing homes and giving their children opportunities and financial benefits unavailable in Greece at that time.

The notion of home ‘always begets its own negation. Home may evoke security in one context and seem confining in another’ (Jackson 1995: 122-3). The houses they tended to buy were of solid brick construction, structurally sound but in need of considerable repair. There was the general expectation that other Greek people would help in their restoration. It often meant committing to large repayments in order to pay mortgages in the shortest possible time, requiring both husband and wife to work long hours often at two jobs or doing overtime. This monetary stringency mostly precluded a return to Greece. An alternative was to take in boarders. Christina told me that when her parents managed to pay a deposit to buy their own home in the city, they immediately took in young men as boarders and she had to continue to share a bedroom with her parents. She said that it seemed a long time before she had a bedroom of her own.

Nevertheless, buying a house was seen as important because it not only provided a home for their growing families, but it was also seen as a source of future financial security and contributed to a feeling of permanency. Coming from a country where

the currency had frequently been devalued, investment in property was seen as protection against this. In addition, for a large number of Greek people who came to Adelaide at this time, providing houses for their daughters was an integral part of the dowry system. It was not only vital to own their own houses but additional houses needed to be purchased for some time in the future when their daughters married. Although some felt that they were relieved of this inflexible requirement of the dowry system by coming to Australia, others still continued to provide a property for their children when they married. Commenting on this wider attachment to place, through buildings other than just their own home site, Vassiliki said that she cannot understand why Australians criticise Greeks for owning more than one house. She said that to do that 'Greek people have had to work hard and save every penny'.²⁸ She and her husband have already provided each of their three children with their own house. She cannot understand why Australian people do not give something that lasts to the next generation.

The physical place of home continues to give a sense of security and permanency for Pontic Greeks. Alex and Voula's house is typical of the kinds of houses Greek immigrants bought when they settled in the inner suburbs of Adelaide. The house itself is a symmetrical villa constructed of red brick with a freestone front and a wide veranda spanning the width of the front of the house. It sits on the usual quarter acre block typical of housing allotments in the 1920s when their house would have been built. The size of the backyard and the Mediterranean climate of Adelaide mean that Alex can grow many of the fruit and vegetables that were grown in Greece. These allow Alex and Voula to prepare Greek food with its distinctive taste and familiar flavours at minimal cost. It gives a sense of security against rising costs of living and provides them with the means reciprocity, as any abundance of produce can be shared with the family, friends and neighbours. Furthermore, in replicating the gardening practices of Greek villages, their home presences the absence of Greece in a place to which they now feel they belong and in which they feel they have some independence.

Home as family

From her study of Greek immigrants in the city of Toronto, Nagata observes:

²⁸ Part of the Australian currency up to 1966 when at the time of the introduction of decimal currency, one penny was equivalent to one cent.

'At the core of the social network of most Greek immigrants is the family. Within the extended family which may extend as far as the first collateral line or first cousins, the family is customarily both close-knit and male-dominated. It is also the realm in which Greek culture probably persists most tenaciously, particularly those customs pertaining to sex, courting and marriage preferences, language, food habits, patterns of authority and recreational pursuits' (1969: 54).

In my research, I observed that the same applies to Pontians in Australia. The strong attachment of Greek Pontians to their Australian family compensates, in some ways, for the absence of their wider family social structures in Greece. Many family photographs are displayed either on walls or on mantelpieces of Australian Pontic Greek homes as evidence of this strong attachment to family. As I was about to leave the home of Konstantinos and Paraskevi, Konstantinos was insistent that I look at all the photographs of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren displayed in their formal sitting room. This strong attachment to family life is shown in the closeness between the generations. During my fieldwork, I observed that grandparents, parents and children attended Pontian community functions together. I saw young people openly displaying a genuine fondness and respect for their grandparents by greeting and kissing them. Grandparents often took a dominant role in caring for their grandchildren. Theodora, for instance, told me that she retired from work when her daughter's children needed to be cared for in the daytime. She told me this in such a way that it was clear that she thought that this was the natural thing for a grandmother to do. She now collects her grandchildren from school every day and minds them until their parents arrive from work. In addition, she washes their clothes and when she goes to her daughters' homes, she helps by doing any domestic chore that is needed. When older women, like Theodora, came to Australia it was often necessary for them to work long hours often in several jobs, in factories or as cleaners. Because of the long hours or shift work, they often reluctantly had to leave their children with strangers or in the care of older children. Theodora made the comment that she thought that people in Greece do not have the same attachment or commitment to their families as Greek people do in Australia. From my observations, it seemed that the extra effort that these women made on behalf of their own grandchildren reflected their desire to prevent their own children experiencing the same absence of wider family members as they, as immigrants, had when they first came to Australia.

Marriage is an important concept in the establishment of a Greek family. In the past, it was the accepted view that all men and women would marry (apart from 'the physically and mentally handicapped and those who entered celibate monastic communities' (Hirschon 1998: 107)). Young people, particularly women, were expected to live at home under the care of their families until they married. Parents took a major role in arranging suitable marriage partners or employed the services of a matchmaker to do so. It was expected that they would provide an acceptable trousseau for their daughters on their marriage.

Marriage continues to play an important role in Pontic society as it does in the wider Greek society (Bottomley 1992; Fann Bouteneff 2002; Hirschon 1998). Often parents expressed two concerns to me: they want their children to marry, and they want them to marry within the Greek community. In Greece, marrying outside the Greek community is not a concern as it has been, up to now, a mostly homogenised population. This is not the case in multi-cultural Australia where young people have contact with those from many different ethnic backgrounds and where there is a range of views on marriage. Within this situation parents feel that Greek culture and its close family values are vulnerable despite the fact that, according to Bottomley, Greek Australians,

'have the highest rate of in-marriage of any ethnic group, and spouses are usually chosen from a narrow range of candidates. Participation in extensive kin and social networks, a proliferation of organisations such as regional and church-based associations maximise the possibility of falling in love with someone who will also fulfil the requirements of a similar ethnic background, a shared religion, and an equivalent socio-economic status' (1992: 95).

I observed that marrying within the Greek community was a particular concern for many of my Pontian informants, even though marrying another Pontian 'would be asking too much of them' as one of them said.²⁹ Paraskevi was definite that she wanted her children and grandchildren to marry within the Greek community.

'Even though my granddaughter might say to me, "Yiayia,³⁰ this man he is a very good boy." Maybe he's a good boy...but I don't like it. But if a person is Greek, she speaks differently to the person and it's not that the Greek person is good and the Australian is bad. Greek people have bad people, too. But it is different if your

²⁹ This is because of the relatively small number of available young people of Pontian background.

³⁰ The Greek word for grandmother.

daughter marries my son. She might say, "Mrs Paraskevi" but the Greek boy will say, "Mum, Mum", and it feels different. If you are [called] "Mum", you feel different.'

One of the issues for Paraskevi is that she would not feel comfortable with someone outside the Greek community: she would lose the sense of the familiar. As well, because there is such a close connection between religion and Greek culture, she did not see that the 'outside' person could easily belong in her Greek family: the non-Greek person may not understand or adhere to the requirements of the Orthodox religion. Her daughter, Stamatoula, confirmed this attitude. She said that the young people in her family were brought up to know that it was expected of them that they will marry a Greek person. She was quite definite about this, saying that the outsider would not be accepted. She added that Pontians are a very close community and strangers are readily included. Stamatoula gave me the definite impression that her children would not go against her wishes and that if they did there would be consequences. 'They know what the position is. We have told them,' she said.

Many of the customs and practices are no longer followed by young people, nevertheless, traditional wedding practices are still remembered and spoken about. Some are performed on stage in both Greece and Australia to the delight of their twenty-first century Greek audiences.

One afternoon I was taken on a brief tour of Neachori in Northern Greece to meet some of its older residents. One of these, Koula, was born and had grown up in the village. She happily told me many of the wedding customs and superstitions that had come from the village of Santa. She said that she can remember them being observed in Neachori all the time she was growing up and only waning in the 1960s when Pontians began to marry outside the community. Two weeks later, when I was with the Veria Black Sea Club dance group I found out that they were to perform a segment presenting some of the traditional Pontic wedding dances in the Veria Civic Centre for the commemoration of the genocide of peoples from Asia Minor. They were keen that I, along with my husband John, take part in this performance: we were to act as the groom's parents. Fortunately, before the performance, we were given a small practice session on the basic steps of the four wedding dances. We were also supplied with traditional costumes and instructed on how to wear them.

Five weeks later, back in Adelaide, I was an observer at another performance of a traditional Pontic wedding arranged through a Greek women's organisation, with

about thirty members of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia providing the participants. The performance took place at a historic building in western suburban Adelaide in front of about seventy people. A lawned area was set up with three large umbrellas—each with chairs and tables covered with white clothes—one for the bridal party, one for the groom's and the other for the celebration after their marriage. The performance highlighted a number of traditional Pontic wedding rituals that I had heard from Koula and seen performed by the Veria dance group. These included the dressing of the bride; the shaving and dressing of the groom and the other more frivolous customs involving the payment of money by the groom's party. The performance concluded with the lyra player singing a traditional song that 'tells the bride to prepare herself, bid farewell to her parents, and replace them with her husband's' (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 84). Many of my informants told me that this was a particularly sad song for them. Effie, the person I was sitting next to at the performance turned to me with tears in her eyes and told me how emotional she felt listening to this song. She remembered it being sung at her wedding. The performance in Adelaide was undertaken with very little rehearsal, the participants seemingly knowing what to do when prompted by the script. This is not surprising since most of them had attended a Pontian family wedding six weeks before where some of these traditional customs would have been observed.

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Plate 7: The bridal party dancing on arrival

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Plate 8: The bridegroom's party dancing on arrival

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Plate 9: Shaving the bridegroom

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Plate 10: The bride with her parents preparing to leave her home

According to Fann Bouteneff, such community performances allow ‘the audience to witness the unbroken continuity of Ponticness’ (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 85). Nevertheless, Pontians know that these traditions are vulnerable especially when one party marries someone from another part of Greece. For instance, six weeks after the performance in Adelaide I attended a celebration for a Pontian groom on the night before his marriage to a non-Pontic Greek person. On this evening, the traditions similar to the ones in the performance were carried out but only those relating to the groom—the groom was shaved and people danced around him with one person holding a pita bread. As well, that night, following another Pontic wedding tradition, some of the guests raided the bride’s home and stole some items bringing them back to the party with great glee.³¹ The next day the groom’s family and friends performed another Pontian tradition. They gathered two blocks away from the church and, to the accompaniment of the *daouli* and clarinette, danced down the middle of the streets leading to the church. Despite all the loss of life and place occasioned through the exile from Pontos and the re-settlement in Greece, and now in Australia, these practices present the social order of Pontic life, of which marriage is an important continuing part. These rituals are a way of remembering their almost lost wedding customs and bringing those that are vulnerable, to the present. Also, in presencing the absence of Greece, these performances present the familiar and contribute to the sense of belonging that give Pontians the feeling of ‘at-homeness’.

Home as religious practice

‘The feeling of community is also crucial for feeling at home. Above all, it involves living in a space where one recognises people as “one’s own” and where one feels recognised by them as such. It is crucially a feeling of shared symbolic forms, shared morality, shared values and most importantly perhaps, shared language...It is a space where one knows that at least some people can be morally relied on for help’ (Hage 1997: 103).

Apart from providing homes for their families, it was important for Greek immigrants to establish local church buildings in Adelaide as part of their proactive home-building exercise. Not only did the Church provide the characteristics of community as outlined by Hage above, it gave them both a religious and a community gathering place, which it contributed to a ‘feeling of being “at home”’ (Hage 1997: 102). As physical places, Casey maintains that buildings, ‘are among the most perspicuous

³¹ It is the belief that if the new bride in the groom’s home recognises these items, she has been trained to be a good housewife.

instances of the thorough acculturation of places. *A building condenses a culture in one place*' (1993: 32, italics in the original text). While home buildings do this, the Orthodox Church building is a most conspicuous example of the bringing together of Greek culture into one place. In relation to immigrant communities, Nagata contends:

The Greek Orthodox Church is remarkable for its qualities as a Greek culture-preserving institution. It attempts to maintain Greek loyalties by providing essential social services, by its Greek language classes, its stress on ties with the homeland, and by its patronage of the ethnic associations' (1969: 55).

Pre-World War II Greek immigrants had to establish the Orthodox Church in Adelaide through their own efforts unlike, for example, Italian immigrants who came to a well-established and well-defined Catholic system of churches, schools and parishes. However, whereas Italian immigrants initially had to fit into a Church where Catholic Irish people were over-represented, Greek immigrants had the autonomy to establish their Church within the Orthodox tradition remembered from Greece. Those who migrated prior to World War II built Adelaide's first Greek Orthodox Church, in Franklin Street, which was officially opened in 1938. In addition to raising funds to build the church, Greek people also financially supported a priest and ran Greek ethnic schools for their children. When large numbers of Greek immigrants began to arrive in the 1950s, the Franklin Street Orthodox Church gave immigrants a familiar place in an unfamiliar religious landscape. Apart from sponsoring immigrants, the Church and community assisted in finding accommodation and employment. It also helped with language difficulties and sometimes provided monetary support to supplement the meagre incomes of new arrivals.

The immigrants who came in the 1950s and later did not always have the same commitment to the Franklin Street church as those who had established it. Settled in areas away from the city environs, many post-World War II immigrants began to support the building of local churches nearer their homes. One of my first informants, Katerina, described how she and her family settled in one of the inner suburbs of Adelaide nearly fifty years ago. At that time, she said, she and all the other Greek immigrants were all buying or building their own homes as well as raising and educating their children. To begin with, Katerina's local Greek community met at the local Anglican Church hall and celebrated liturgies with borrowed vessels from other Greek parishes, but in September 1969 they purchased two houses that were converted into what they called a 'house of prayer' (Drapaniotis 1997: 59). Later, after

much hard work and efforts to raise money, the two houses were demolished and a church was opened in December 1972. As evidence of the keen desire of people to establish their church, some people provided the titles of their houses to the bank as surety on the church's mortgage. Later, in 1991, the parish priest, Father Drapaniotis, arranged to have icons in the form of frescoes painted on the wall of the church at a cost of \$90,000 (Drapaniotis 1997). Katerina said that Father Drapaniotis used to go around to people's homes, 'like a beggar' asking them to donate money to have the icons painted in the church. He suggested that they choose a saint that was significant for them or one after whom a particular family member was named. The name of the family or person who donated money would then be painted next to the icon. The cost of a large icon was considerable and even a small one was about \$1,000 at that time. Their willingness to donate such a sum was evidence of the people's devotion to the saints and allegiance to Greek Orthodoxy. For Katerina, the icons in the church, as well as being the foci of devotion, point to the permanency of the church. 'Those things you have to treasure. They are there to stay; they symbolise the saint,' she said.

Each of the Greek villages that immigrants had come from had its own church and so the newly established churches in local communities tried to reproduce the role that these churches played in local villages. They provided a familiar environment and mutual community support at a time when immigrants were establishing their homes and families in an unfamiliar land. In Orthodox churches, Greek people entered a space where there were recognisable symbolic forms. The architecture of the church with its dome and *iconostasion*³² provided a recognisable landscape just as participation in the Orthodox liturgy continued familiar practices. The physical place of the church gave immigrants somewhere they could gather together and a place where they could speak Greek together. Often an adjacent hall provided a place where their children could learn the Greek language and other aspects of the Greek culture in an educational setting. For Greek people such a place was to a certain extent a re-creation of the central place of the church and school in village life. But in Adelaide where it was impossible to replicate a Greek village, it was as if the church became the 'village'. The familiarity of village life in Greece became presenced in the landscape of the church in Adelaide.

³² The *iconostasion* is a screen with a number of significant icons that separates the nave of the church and the sanctuary.

Establishing a religious community, however, was not without its difficulties. Although the Greek Orthodox Church community has the potential to unite Greeks, in Adelaide it is a source of division. As new Greek Orthodox churches were built in Adelaide from the 1950s onwards, two distinct groups emerged—Community Churches, such as the Franklin Street Church, (with community ownership and local control) and Archdiocesan Churches (ownership and control by a wider church organisation). As in other parts of the world, a bitter schism arose between the two (see Tsounis 1971). Pressure was brought to bear on the Community Church to come under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, who sought control over church property and denied the valid ordination of their priests. For Greek people, this meant choosing to be a member of one or the other church. By staying with the Community Church, they were vulnerable and risked being excommunicated by the Archdiocesan Church. In practice, this meant that in the eyes of the Archdiocese their marriages and their children's baptisms were invalid and, therefore, not recognised by the Greek state. This affected the status of Greek people when applying for visas to travel to Greece, either to visit family members or to claim land there. Very often children had to be re-baptised and wedding vows renewed in an Archdiocesan church.

Hence, the division caused by the schism did not promote a united community feeling. Its ramifications were severe and the acrimony continues to the present. In Adelaide there are now ten Archdiocesan Churches and four Community Churches and they all include both Pontic and non-Pontic Greeks members. The two sides keep their distance from each other. For instance, while on the same day each year they both observe the same Feast of the Epiphany, wherein one of the practices is for young swimmers to dive off the local jetty to retrieve a cross, the members of Archdiocesan Churches observe this rite at the Glenelg Beach jetty whereas those of the Community Churches conduct it from the jetty at Henley Beach.

Hence, although communities, such as the church and other support associations, were important in the home-building exercise for Greek immigrants, these did not always unite them. The ongoing tension caused by the schism in the Church was one of the factors that hindered Pontians establishing their own particular religious site.

Pontians came as part of the immigrant contingent from different parts of Greece. In Adelaide they became involved in the establishment of churches in the areas where

they lived and did not form a specifically 'Pontian' Church. At the church I attended regularly during my field work, those who were Pontians were an integral part of the whole congregation and did not outwardly display any specific practices within the church that set them apart from others there: I could only begin to identify who were Pontians as I gradually got to know them. Nevertheless, Pontians do retain and display a great devotion to Panagia Soumela as the site of the icon of the Virgin Mary. Tamis comments on this devotion as follows:

The Pontian immigrants and their children continue to honour and respect their religious rituals and to conduct their *χαράν* (wedding) in the same manner as their forefathers. It is still the dream of the average Pontian settler to conduct their children's wedding at *Panagia Soumela Monastery* in western Macedonia, the sacred place for all Pontians in Greece as well as in the diaspora' (1994: 192, italics in the original text).

As a consequence of this devotion, in the mid 1970s the Committee of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia decided to build a church in the Adelaide hills to replicate the monastery of Panagia Soumela. After searching for a suitable site, a seventy-nine acre property at Birdwood, forty-five kilometres north-east of Adelaide, was purchased for a cost of \$40,000 (see Tamis 1994: 197). According to my informant, Christos, the land that was purchased in the Adelaide Hills resembled as much as was possible the landscapes of Panagia Soumela in Pontos and Greece. It was envisaged that the church would not be a physical replica of the original monastery, but it would be a small church of about five metres by ten metres in size and would retain all the intricacies of a Greek church including the domes and arches. It would, however, be given the name of Panagia Soumela with the hope that the religious basis of the place would attract members of the Pontian community and unite them. This was not just about maintaining religious beliefs: it was seen as continuing the traditional religious focus of their parents and grandparents in both Pontos and in Greece. It was an attempt by many Pontians to further enhance the social memory of the religious place and by its familiar presence compensate for the absence of the two other monasteries.

Christos told me that over this time the Brotherhood Committee actively promoted the project. It had the wider support of the Pontian community with many people willing to donate money. Such was the enthusiasm that with donations and money raised, the debt on the land was paid off in two years. Furthermore, it was thought that the Greek government would have sponsored the venture as would other

Pontian groups in Australia with people coming from interstate for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on the 15th August as well as for other liturgies throughout the year. When the Brotherhood submitted their building plans, the Gumeracha Council rejected them. The Brotherhood sought legal advice, employed environmental engineers and a town planner, and in 1979, when they took their case before the district court, the Brotherhood won their appeal. Christos said that after this they proceeded to the stage where the foundations were laid and two large dams were excavated. Christos also added: 'We organised in those years to get an image of the icon brought from Panagia Soumela in Greece, through the Bishop of Veria' as well as for a Pontian priest originally from Pontos for come for the opening of church. 'We had some dreams,' he said.



Plate 11: A model of the proposed church

While these plans were being made, there were some Pontian community members who had a different opinion of what was needed in the Brotherhood. Some thought that they did not need a church but that a community hall was of a higher priority. At a meeting of the Brotherhood, the President and the executive committee, which had supported the development of the Panagia Soumela project, were voted out of

office and the committee disbanded. As a consequence, work on the site stopped. The Brotherhood continued to hold the property until late 1987 when it was sold.

The project to develop a Panagia Soumela site in Adelaide did not go ahead for a number of reasons but the main one was the divisions within the Pontian Brotherhood in Adelaide which have existed from its inception. The Brotherhood was established in December 1958 but by the following March, rifts in the membership were already evident with the President and his committee being voted out of office. From then to August 1959 four extraordinary meetings were called and three new committees formed (see Tamis 1994: 197). According to my informants, the two factions within the Brotherhood are mostly associated with the right and left wing of politics, a longstanding effect of the Civil War in Greece. In Tamis' view these political tensions were resolved in Greece after the overthrow of the dictatorship in 1974. The 'inner landscape' of deep political division caused by the Civil War travelled with Greek immigrants. The tensions between the two sides,

'were more vivid in Australia given the fact that the Greek Australian settlers, living many thousands of miles away from the Metropolis, were not involved in the uninterrupted development of contemporary Greek politics. Most of them maintained the impression of a war-torn Greece, transplanting their differences to their new country' (Tamis 1994: 189).

Much of the bitterness associated with this conflict has remained unresolved in Adelaide and was, according to Tamis (1994: 197), a contributing factor that led to the cessation of plans for construction of Panagia Soumela.

The other issue in the conflict was the schism in the Adelaide Greek Orthodox Church. One of my informants told me that one group in the Brotherhood generally belong to the Community Church and the other has allegiance to the Archdiocesan Church. As a consequence, further division was caused over which church would own the deeds to the property and which priest would be chosen to perform the liturgies at the proposed replica of Panagia Soumela—one from an Archdiocesan or one from a Community Church.

Thus, these two combining factors—political and religious—have been significant in preventing the presencing of Panagia Soumela in Adelaide. Many Pontians were devastated by this turn of events. This was not just because they had invested time

and money in the project but because they were looking forward to having a religious site, which could have become a focal point for Pontians in Australia, as Panagia Soumela is for Pontians in Greece. Furthermore, this loss meant that the potential for the accretion of further memories and emotions that would have been associated with this site was lost with it. For Pontian Greek families in Adelaide, Panagia Soumela in Pontos had been lost to them through the exile. Its equivalent in Greece is remote to a diasporic community in Australia. Now, for many of them it has, in a way, been lost again in Adelaide. Those who saw the possibilities that could have been opened up by the project were also vulnerable to the effects of past events and issues beyond their control—discord caused by the divisiveness of both the conflicts of the Civil War in Greece and the religious schism in Adelaide. Both of these have hampered the community-building process whereby Pontians could have constructed a familiar religious site that had the potential to enhance their sense of belonging.

Home as the sense of the possible

In spite of the divisions in the Church and in community organisations, many Pontic Greeks chose to remain in Adelaide looking to ‘the open horizons’ (Jackson 1995: 122) of their lives and recognising the possible opportunities for themselves and for their children. According to Hage (1997), this sense of the possible is one of the key factors that is employed by immigrants in building a sense of at-homeness. He says that the,

‘homely space has to be open enough so that one can perceive opportunities of “a better life”: the opportunity to develop certain skills, the opportunity of personal growth and more generally, the availability of opportunities for “advancement” whether as social mobility, emotional growth, or in the form of accumulation of symbolic or monetary capital’ (Hage 1997: 103).

Apart from the prospect of personal gain, Pontic Greeks saw that the education system in Australia could open up possibilities for their children unavailable in Greece at that time and ones that had been denied to them.

Second generation Pontian immigrants living in Australia have gained a much greater sense of autonomy than their parents: through education they are able to speak the English language fluently, have higher paid employment or professional careers, and can negotiate the Australian society in a way that was not available to

their parents when they arrived. Commenting on the importance that Pontians place on educating their children, Tamis observes:

‘The close-knit character of the Pontian family and the longing of the parents to provide a high quality of education for their children must be considered as the two major reasons for the high number of Australian-born Pontians attending tertiary institutions and succeeding professionally’ (Tamis 1994: 192).

Looking back at what her parents did, Stavroula’s daughter, Antonia, now realises the advantages that she has had in her life because of her parents’ decision to migrate, and through their hard work and the sacrifices they made on behalf of their children. She and her siblings all have had a tertiary education and work in professional positions. She realised some of the advantages that she has had in Australia only when she returned to her parents’ village in 1973 and observed the lifestyle there. She remembered that the whole family would sit in a circle and with a needle and thread would string the tobacco leaves together. Antonia said:

‘The whole family! It doesn’t matter what age you are, you sit there and you string these tobacco leaves on to the thread...You get yellow fingers. There are different qualities. When the exporters came, they would lift them up, not from the top where they are strung up, but from the tail and then shake them. If they fell apart, they would be of substandard and so you would not get as much money. So you would have to be careful because maybe they would not buy them at all. It was hard work.’

Antonia added, ‘I just did it for fun but if you did it for a living...!’ Antonia’s story highlights an aspect of migration that although Greek people experienced significant losses in migrating to Australia, the absence of the hard work and poverty of village life is not regretted. Migration to Australia has given the children of many Pontic Greeks opportunities that may not have been open to them had they grown up in Greece and through these possibilities they and their children have been able to build the feeling of being at home in the world they now call Australia.

Conclusion

This and the previous chapter outlined the losses that Pontic Greeks experienced from two ruptures, that of exile from Pontos and that of migration to Australia. I have shown that these losses were experienced as absence in their new homelands and argued that through presencing these absences Pontic Greeks were able to settle and build homes for themselves. In Greece, by creating new villages, re-establishing

a significant religious site and gradually resuming everyday practices they found they could return to a semblance of normality. In Australia, the absence of Greece was made present through developing a feeling of 'at-homeness' that incorporated a sense of autonomy and belonging. In this 'home building' exercise they established their homes, families and local churches and saw the possibility of educating their children. The presencing of absence did not end once Pontians were established in Adelaide. Re-presencing absence continues in practices such as commemorations and dance. The next two chapters focus on how these ongoing practices continue to construct a social memory of loss as well as presencing the feeling of absence.

4 Commemorations: social memory of Pontian loss

Introduction

Both in Greece and in the diaspora in Adelaide, Pontians organise annual commemorations to remember the loss of people and ancient homelands as a result of the Pontian genocide. In this chapter, I discuss how commemorations continue to presence the absence of Pontos and how Pontian social memory is constructed and reconstructed through these events.

During my fieldwork, I attended a number of these commemorations: in this chapter, I focus on two of them. One in Adelaide was organised by the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia and was held in the week of the 19th May. Pontians worldwide reserve this date each year for commemoration because it is remembered as the day when Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) came ashore at Samsun and under his command, according to Pontians, began the assault on the Pontos region. The other commemoration I attended was in Greece where people commemorated the exile of their ancestors from the village of Santa in Pontos. Santa people, while recognising the 19th May as a solemn day of Pontian commemoration, add another date to their calendar of annual commemorations. On the first weekend in September, they come together to remember those who were killed when Santa was destroyed, as well as those who died on enforced marches from there to the interior of Turkey. A plaque on their meeting place reads:

‘Every year on the first Sunday in September people who originate from Santa but live in any other place come here to this hostel and in front of the memorial for the dead make a commemoration for the victims who died during the destruction of their martyred home.’

Commemorations are public events, which enable people to gather together in one place at specific times to remember the life of a person or a past event. Handelman argues that public events, which are distinct ‘from the living of mundane life’ (1990: 11), have a certain ‘logic of composition’ (1990: 17), which is linked to their structures.

'These structures have relatively high degrees of replicability. That is, whenever a particular occasion is enacted, it is put together from more-or-less similar elements; it is performed by more-or-less the same cast of characters; and it passes through more-or-less the same sequences of action' (Handelman 1990: 12).

The Pontic commemorations I attended were replicated at certain time intervals, performed in a predictable and stylised manner, were sequential and proceeded to a culmination. Both the Adelaide and the Santa programme of events had similar components. They each included seminar sessions, church liturgies, memorial rituals and shared communal meals. Handelman argues that by identifying these 'logics of design', which 'themselves are embedded in cultural matrices', one can understand how the designs are imbued with significance and are put 'to work in cultural ways' (1990: 7). Although he contends that it is important to recognise that public events 'do' something (1990: 7), Handelman fails to show how emotions and memory are implicated in this process. I argue that because emotions and memory are integral parts of commemorations, it is important to analyse what they 'do' in these public events.

Connerton contends that the repetitive nature of commemorative ceremonies 'automatically [imply] continuity with the past' (1989: 45). Even though commemorations, by occurring at regular intervals and at significant dates, are reminders of the past, more than remembering the past takes place in commemorations. According to Casey, commemorations become sites of '*intensified* remembering' and that this takes place '*through*' specific texts, '*in*' rituals and '*with*' other people' (2000: 217–8, italics in the original text). In this chapter, I also show how being *at* designated commemoration venues also contribute to the 'intensified' remembering process. The word 'commemoration' has the connotation of remembering with others and just as '[f]estival means being there; there is no festival at a distance' (MacAloon 1984: 270), so too, to commemorate means being together at a particular place to remember. Now, every first weekend of September, I remember that the Santa people will be holding their annual commemoration ceremony at a specific place and I make contact by telephone with some of the people I met at that time. But, because commemorations demand 'engaged participation' (MacAloon 1984: 270), I am not fully commemorating. I cannot now join in the various activities associated with the commemoration. One can only do that by being with other people at the place of commemoration. Hence, although 'ritual and text become efficacious only in the presence of others, *with* whom we commemorate together in a public ceremony' (2000:

217–8, italics in the original text), this occurs at sites that are designated as places of significance for those commemorating.

In addition to ‘intensified’ remembering, emotional intensity is also evoked in and through and with others in the practices of commemoration. Lyon maintains that an ‘expanded understanding of emotion must take account of the body *qua* body not simply as it is mediated by “mind” but as part of the conception of emotion itself’ (1995: 256). Thus, the concept of emotion needs to be seen as not emanating from within and expressed on the body of an individual but rather as social and relational. Because commemorations are communal, their practices not only intensify remembering, but also contribute to the intensification of emotions. This relationship between memory of the loss of Pontos and the emotion it evokes is reflected in the comment of one of my informants, Stavros. As we were standing on the balcony looking at the people gathering for the Santa commemoration, he turned to me and said, ‘When you think of the bad luck of Santa, first you cry and then you think, “I must light a candle for my parents”’.³³ Then he added, ‘These are people who come here to remember their parents. Pontos is finished. It is now almost a fairy tale. It is not now our country’. He and those who gather together at Pontian commemorations remembered a historical event that is deeply etched into their social memory—a genocide in which their family members and others of their community suffered and died, and in which they were exiled from their traditional homeland. The remembrance of these events evoked the emotions associated with a sense of loss and this mood permeated the commemoration in Greece and as well as in Adelaide. A range of emotions were connected to this loss, such as: horror at the atrocities committed, anger at the injustices and empathy with the suffering of their ancestors. Because emotion is relational, the ‘intensified’ remembering that occurred through commemorations was social remembering. Thus, as the commemoration took place in the solidarity of their community, the private and unique memories of individuals and their emotions became further incorporated into the social memory of Pontians.

The focus of this chapter, therefore, is on how the memories and emotions of loss are evoked through the significant elements of commemorations. These include such things as: sites where the commemorations take place; the banners that are displayed; the speeches, laments and rituals; and the consumption of food at the conclusion of the ceremonies. As integral to the commemoration, these elements are linear and proceed to a culmination. The process, however, whereby social

³³ Lighting candles in church is an Orthodox practice to remember and pray for dead family members.

memory is formed through commemorations is relational. In this chapter, I show how, as the Pontian community participates in commemorative practices, it produces both intensified remembering and intensified emotional engagement. A constant interaction between memory and emotions, therefore, contributes to the continual construction and reconstruction of Pontian social memory of genocide and through it, to presence the absence of Pontos.

Sites of the commemorations

Santa commemoration

The Santa commemoration was held entirely on the grounds of the monastery of Panagia Soumela in northern Greece. The religious rituals were held on the Sunday morning in the monastery church of Panagia Soumela. All of the other components of the commemoration, such as the seminar, mourning rituals and communal meal, were held inside or adjacent to a place called the House of Santa. This building was constructed some forty years after people had come from Santa in Pontos and settled in Greece. Its purpose was to give the Santa community a meeting place where they could come together under one roof. On the ground floor there is a large meeting room, together with kitchen and bathroom facilities. The upper section of the building has overnight dormitory accommodation for about twenty people. As the house was not envisaged as a hostel but rather as a gathering place, big enough to cater for the large numbers of people who visit at special times, such as for the commemoration weekend, there is a large, outside undercover kitchen, adjoining a separate bathroom and storeroom. The site is important to the descendants of Santa people and they come from many places for the commemoration weekend. After speaking to a woman who had come from Alexandroupoli, approximately 370 kilometres away, Stavros said that she came 'to honour and remember her parents...They do not [always] know each other but they feel something special here. This is the heart. Santa people feel very strongly about their house.'



Plate 12: The House of Santa on the monastery grounds

The geographical orientation of the building on the side of a hill above the monastery is significant in recalling the former village of Santa. This was situated in the Pontic Alps at an altitude of 2,000 metres above sea level whereas the monastery of Panagia Soumela was lower at a height of about 1,150 metres. The secretary of the monastery told me that, in Pontos, Santa was the closest village to the original monastery and that partisans from Santa protected the monastery for a long time. Groups from other former villages in Pontos also have houses near the monastery grounds but they are outside the entrance gates. Only the House of Santa is visually prominent from the church and so is a constant reminder to the wider Pontian community of the specific role Santa played in the history of Pontos. Thus, being placed in a strategic site on the monastery grounds overlooking the church, the visual and physical location of the House of Santa is reflective of the geographical relationship between the village of Santa and the original monastery of Panagia Soumela and of its protective role.



Plate 13: The dome of the church of Panagia Soumela from the House of Santa

While the aspect of the house might reflect the geographical location of Santa, the house is a memorial to its loss. The historical account of that loss is engraved in marble plaques on the outside of the building at the side door of the house.



Plate 14: Marble plaques at the House of Santa

The smaller of the two plaques has the inscription 'The House of Santa' (ΤΗ ΣΑΝΤΑΣ Τ ΟΣΠΙΤ) written in the Pontic Greek dialect. The larger plaque (see Plate 14) written in Modern Greek describes the composition of Santa and its destruction, as follows:

Santa of Pontos

The seven villages of Santa of Pontos lay 50 kilometres south of Trapezounda in the Pontic Alps before it was completely destroyed by the Turkish army in September 1921. It consisted of seven villages and five small settlements. Today only the ruins exist.

The seven villages (parishes) were

Pistofandon	[with its church of]	St. Christopher
Ischanandon		St. Kyriaki
Terzandon		St. Theodore
Zournatsandon		St. Constantine
Pinatandon		The Prophet Elias
Kozlarandon		St. Peter
Tsakalandon		Life-giving Spring ³⁴

Santa was a prototype of community with a Greek and Christian ethos. It was 'the Souli'³⁵ of Pontos and a saving ark for every Greek Christian who was persecuted by the Turks. It held and preserved the Greekness and Orthodox Christian faith of its inhabitants up to the date it was destroyed. Its inhabitants fought heroically in their struggle to protect and save it.

But Santa did not withstand. It was destroyed and became a holocaust.

Those of its inhabitants who were saved were forcibly displaced and dragged to exile and to the 'White Death'. Those who survived were exchanged in the compulsory exchange of population. They took the walk of the great exodus and came as refugees to Greece in 1923.

Such a permanent marker in marble makes a public statement,

'...about what the past has been, and how the present should acknowledge it; who should be remembered, who should be forgotten; which acts or events are foundational, which marginal; what gets respected, what neglected' (Hodgkin & Radstone 2003: 12–3).

One of these events is the heroic escape under the leadership of Captain Efkleides who, with the Santa guerrilla fighters had attempted to protect the village. It is a

³⁴ This refers to a natural spring in a church in Constantinople dedicated to the Virgin Mary where people went for cures and where many miracles were believed to be performed.

³⁵ Souli was a village in Epirus in Greece that was well known for its heroic fight against the Turks during the Greek War of Independence. It became an example of strong resistance. Bryer observes: 'Anyone who has heard the ballads of Santa and seen the abandoned villages of that valley will not be surprised that the Santaoi, the "Souliotes of the Pontos," took to their guns rather than be expelled in January 1923' (Bryer, AAM 1980b: 184).

story that expands the authoritative account of the fall of Santa set in stone on the outside plaque:

‘Santa has a terrible history. The Turks sent thousands of soldiers with heavy weapons. There were 300 women and children and 120 fighters. Captain Efkleides and other fighters told the women to go to the mountains. They all withdrew to one cave where they were attacked by the strong Turkish forces. There was only one passage out of the cave and into the forest. Everyone was in danger of being detected from the cries of the babies so they killed them. One mother had seven children. She strangled the youngest with her own hands. She said, “I will sacrifice the one to save the others.” This is a very terrible thing. That night there was a very big rain and the women and children escaped to the forest undetected by the Turks. The next day the Turkish soldiers found the children killed. The Turkish general said that it was clear that these were strong people and would not surrender. The group of women and children who were saved then went in small groups to Trapezounda...The story of Santa is a very big story.’

I heard this version of the story, in Greece, from the great-grandson of Captain Efkleides but I have heard other accounts from Santa people. Although there were some variations, the story always had the same elements of fighters with women and children hiding in a cave in the mountains, the Turkish army surrounding them and the Santa men, women and children escaping by night into the forest but only by sacrificing the youngest. It is told to emphasise the heroism of the fighters and the strength of the Santa people in their resistance against the Turks.

The mourning rituals for the loss of Santa were performed at a monument adjacent to the House of Santa, a monument, which in a sense incorporates and becomes a communal tombstone for all those who died in the genocide.³⁶ This monument consists of grey stone with white marble inserts and is surrounded by a stone and wrought iron fence and gate, which sets the site apart as a place of remembrance. Just as the location of the house is geographically significant so, too, is the positioning of the memorial monument. Its physical setting visually represents the geographic layout of Santa. Six of the villages—Pistofandon, Ischanandon, Terzandon, Pinatandon, Kozlarandon and Tsakalandon—were on one side of the River Yam-bolis and Zournatsandon was on the other. This is symbolically represented with six pine trees at the back of the monument and one in front of it. These trees not only

³⁶ Reflecting the fact that monuments represent tombstones, another monument on the monastery grounds had an ossuary with the bones of Captain Efkleides and on the Saturday afternoon of the commemoration weekend there was a short memorial ceremony there.

physically represent the geographical location of the villages but being native to the Santa region the trees themselves are a permanent and living presence of its absence.



Plate 15: The Santa monument showing the layout of the pine trees

The inscriptions on the Santa monument are mainly pictorial in the form of reliefs in white marble against the grey stone. The top one depicts the one-headed eagle. This symbol has its ancient roots in the Pontos area: coins dating from the 4th century BCE have been found from this region bearing the inscription of a one-headed eagle. (see Hionides 2003: 113-4). Later, the Byzantine Empire took as its emblem the two-headed eagle but the Empire of Trebizond (1204–1461 CE) under the Komnenoi dynasty adapted the emblem and adopted a one-headed eagle as a mark that both associated it with the Byzantine Empire but also differentiated it ‘as an independent state within the Pontos, but not a claimant to the throne of Constantinople nor as a rebel province within the Empire’ (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 23). Having this emblem at the top of the monument makes a public statement that although it commemorates what happened to Santa people, this was part of what happened to the whole Pontian community.



Plate 16: Motifs on the Santa monument

The middle relief depicts the suffering of the Santa people as they leave to go on the 'white death' marches. It shows men and women carrying whatever they can on their shoulders or in their hands, some bent over with their burden or in grief. Two of the men are looking back. One old man with a walking stick looks back over his shoulders and in a gesture appears as if he is waving to his former home, or maybe it is a gesture of defiance. One woman is carrying a young child. Those children who are old enough are walking but two of them are clinging to their mothers as if in fear. Central to this group is an Orthodox priest positioned as if he is blessing the people as they are exiled. When I asked a Pontian priest for his interpretation of the relief on the Santa memorial he said, 'The people are going into exile and are being persecuted and in the middle is the priest representing Christ with his arms open to embrace all the persecuted and martyred people'. An informant of Santa back-

ground gave an alternative interpretation of the motif, one which focused on the suffering of the people. After hesitating for a while, he said that he thought the people were saying 'My God, what have we done that we suffer so much?' His answer resonated with the protesting element of laments, a theme, which I will discuss later.

The bottom section of the Santa monument has three motifs cut carved out of white marble. The left hand side depicts a Santa man dressed as a fighter holding a rifle and the motif on the right shows a Santa woman dressed in traditional Pontic costume. Both have their heads bowed facing the central Christian cross. Motifs of women are not often included on Pontian monuments. Perhaps this one of a woman looking towards the cross, as a symbol of death and sacrifice, reflects the heroic actions of mothers who had to sacrifice their young children in order to save the others escaping from Santa.

In contrast to the words on the marble plaque at the House of Santa, this monument has only one short directive:

'In silence, passer-by, stop and with piety meditate on the holocaust of the heroic seven villages of Santa of Pontos in 1921'.

The House of Santa and its environs, therefore, is not only a gathering place but is a memorial site. Through its position, motifs and its history engraved in the permanency of marble, the memories of the pain and suffering of Santa people and the emotions attached to those memories are evoked in a most visible way.

Adelaide commemoration

Whereas the significance of the House of Santa and the monastery of Panagia Soumela dictated that the commemoration be held at that site, the three venues chosen by the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia for its commemoration were selected to serve other purposes. First, the meeting place for the seminar for the Pontian commemoration took place at clubrooms belonging to a different Greek association in Adelaide. Despite the fact that Adelaide Pontians had their own clubrooms, they chose this alternative venue because at the time of this commemoration, plans to replace the Pontian clubrooms were re-igniting longstanding disputes in the Brotherhood. Secondly, the church of St Demetrios in Salisbury, a northern suburb of Adelaide was chosen for the religious memorialisation ceremonies. Most members of the Pontian community did not live in this parish, but the liturgy was

held there because the priest there was of Pontian background. Thirdly, for ease of catering a meal was served to those attending the liturgy in a hall behind the church.

However, a consistent feature at each of these three venues was the banner of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia (see Plate 17). It was displayed at the seminar, in the church and at the communal meal. While the venues were not particularly significant for Adelaide Pontians, displaying the banner in public places at the commemorative events was a way of stating that the activities occurring in them would be particularly Pontian. The banner not only encapsulates how Pontians are different from other Greeks but also brings together the memory and emotions of loss.

Banners of commemoration

‘Things congeal the places we remember, just as places congeal remembered worlds—and as the present of remembering congeals the past remembered. *Things put the past in place; they are the primary source of its concrete implacement in memory*’ (Casey 2000: 206, italics in the original text).

The banner displayed at the Adelaide commemoration has the words ‘The Pontian Brotherhood of S.A., Inc.’ in English and in Greek. Its colours are yellow and black, which are the colours of the former Byzantine Empire to which Orthodox Pontians in Pontos had a close affiliation. To the left is the Pontic emblem of the one-headed eagle. This motif of the one-headed eagle and the colours of the banner are not only a reminder for Pontians of the past empire but also a reminder of the loss of the historical Pontos. This is encapsulated in the small words, which are written across the centre of the banner: ‘η ρωμανία κι αν επέρασε, ανθεί και φέρει κι άλλο’ (‘Even if Romania³⁷ has passed away, it will flower and bear [fruit] again’). This is the concluding line of a well-known Pontic lament known as the Song of Agia Sophia or the Lament for the fall of Constantinople. It refers to the demise of ‘Romania’ or the Byzantine Empire and the hope that Constantinople would once again come under Christian influence.³⁸ Although all Orthodox Christian people were once referred to

³⁷ Romania is from the word ‘Roman’ and is a reference to Orthodox people in Pontos being known as *Rum* as part of their millet delineation.

³⁸ The full text of the lament is as follows:

‘A bird, a good bird, left the City,/it settled neither in vineyards, nor in orchards,/it came to settle on the castle of the Sun./It shook one wing, drenched in blood./It shook the other wing, it had a written paper./While it reads, while it cries, while it beats its breast./“Woe is us, woe is us, *Romania* is taken.”
‘The churches lament, the monasteries weep./And St. John Chrysostom weeps, he beats his breast./Weep not, weep not, St. John, and beat not your breast. *Romania* has passed away, *Romania* is taken./Even if *Romania* has passed away, it will flower and bear again’ (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 108 n. 9).

as *Rum*, in recent times Pontians have appropriated the word to apply to themselves. The concluding line of the lament is used, therefore, as a catchphrase, which refers to the demise of Pontos and the hope of its rebirth (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 104–5). This motto resonates with Pontians in Adelaide who referred to it on a number of occasions. Thus, the banner encapsulates ideas associated with the genocide of Pontian people and the loss of their former lands.



Plate 17: The banner of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia

Similarly, the banners that were flown at the Santa commemoration were also linked to the genocide and the exile from Santa. Descendants from Santa know that it was comprised of seven main villages and they still remember the names of those from which their family members came.³⁹ Even though those villages no longer exist, it was important that these former villages were acknowledged at the time of commemoration. One of the ways in which this was done was to erect eight banners from metal poles in the area overlooking the side entrance to the house. Seven of the banners each bore the name of one of the villages of Santa and the eighth one represented the other five outer settlements. The banners were in the Pontian colours of yellow and black and pictured the Pontian symbol of the one-headed eagle. Flying these banners indicated that it was a commemorative time when the loss of the seven villages of Santa and those who lived in them, along with the manner of their deaths, would be remembered.

³⁹ As an example of the interest in the villages of Santa, a local newspaper from the Northern Greek village of Nea Santa, called *Ta Nea* and dated August 2006 produced a table that showed the number of people from Santa and their villages and the Greek villages where they settled between 1913 and 1940 (see Appendix 1).



Plate 18: Banners representing the seven villages of Santa

Banners do not simply consist of material of certain colours with specific designs. Just as a flag of a country is a means of identification and represents its ideals and sentiments, so too, the banners that are displayed or flown at Pontian commemorations identify them as Pontians, or in the case of the Santa commemoration, as Pontians but from Santa. As well, the banners incorporate ideas about the former land of Pontos, its ideals and, because it is no longer theirs, feelings and memories of its loss. Through intensified remembering and arousing emotions, the banners displayed at commemorative sites are a physical way in which Pontian social memory continues to be formed.

Words of commemoration

Referring to the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of commemoration as ‘the action of calling to the remembrance of a hearer or reader,’ Casey contends that, ‘there is no commemoration without calling, which occurs in and through language’ (2000: 232). ‘In being inescapably communal, commemoration is at the same time discursive: that is to say, a matter of language, dependent upon language, taking place *through* language’ (2000: 232–3, italics in the original text). Language, in the

form of texts of one kind or another is, therefore, central to commemorations. It calls to mind for the listeners the purpose of the commemoration through various texts such as speeches, eulogies and songs. While different texts of commemoration appeared in each of the components of the Pontian commemorations, in this section I focus on those that they were predominant in the initial segment of each commemoration, that of the seminar sessions.

Santa seminar

The large meeting room at the House of Santa was the site of the seminar session for the Santa commemoration. On all the walls of this room were many memorial artefacts of Santa. As well as maps, photographs and other representations of Santa there were photographs of prominent leaders in the community and acknowledgements of those who supported the founding of the building. In readiness for the seminar, rows of plastic chairs had been set out in the main body of the room. These faced a topographical representation of the seven villages of Santa showing the icons of each village church. A speaker's lectern stood to one side at the front of the room. A room set up in such a manner for a commemorative event indicated that those attending would be listening to someone who would speak about the exile of Santa.

At the seminar session of the Santa commemoration in 2006, the guest speaker was Popi Ksakmakidou-Kotidis, a writer and poet based in Thessaloniki.⁴⁰ In her lecture covering her research into the plight of some Santa people who went to Kurdistan in the exile, her spoken words were the media whereby a further aspect of the genocide was added to the already well-informed, personal knowledge of those present. Hearing factual evidence of the genocide from a person who was perceived to be an authority on the subject and having it presented as a formal lecture, reaffirmed the reality of the genocide. Further, as similar types of texts about the genocide are reiterated in the same way each year, the knowledge that they expound becomes incorporated into the social memory of Santa people.

Adelaide seminar

The seminar session in the Adelaide commemoration took a slightly different format from the Santa one and used additional ways to inform listeners about the genocide.

⁴⁰ Loosely translated, the programme on the Saturday night for the 85th commemoration of the exile of Santa reads as follows: 'An account of the history of Santa people of Pontos and Greece, given by the scholar and writer Popi Ksakmakidou-Kotidis'. Ksakmakidou-Kotidis has published a book entitled *Οι Γυναίκες της Σάντας του Πόντου* (The Women of Santa of Pontos).

A visiting speaker, a journalist from Thessaloniki in northern Greece, gave details of the atrocities against Pontian people as reported by the newspapers of the time. But, the Adelaide commemoration also incorporated poems, a performance and laments⁴¹ into its seminar evening.

The room for the Adelaide seminar session was also arranged for a formal speech, 'encouraging comparatively passive roles of listening and spectatorship' (Casey 2000: 221). Four rows of chairs placed in a semi-circle faced a long trestle table where the guest speaker, president and other invited guests were seated. As an 'authority' on the subject, it was expected that the speaker would give information, facts and opinions about an aspect of the genocide. The older people listened intently to the speaker, who either confirmed what they already knew or gave them further information about the sufferings of the time. It was also used to instruct the younger generation of Pontians in attendance. Many were in their teenage years or early twenties and of these, the greater proportion were dancers from the senior dance group who, I was told, were expected to be there. One of them said that although she could not easily understand what the speaker was saying,⁴² what had made an impression on her was seeing her grandmother crying. She recognized how the suffering of the genocide was conveyed through the intensity of his spoken words and could see how this affected her family and other members the Pontic Greek diasporic community in Adelaide, even though what happened had been in a foreign place over eighty years ago.

After the lecture, a vignette depicting the suffering of Pontians as they left Pontos was performed. Each actor represented a particular group of the Pontian community—a man, a young person, a pregnant woman, a mother with a child and an elderly person. The performers all wore dishevelled clothes with rags wound around their feet, indicative of their long and arduous journeys. One by one they moved into the centre of a small stage saying their prescribed lines with passion and sadness. They then either leant against the wall at the back of the stage or sat in a dejected state. One of the performers then read a poem entitled 'The Bell of Pontos'. This poem about the exile from Pontos was written in 1955 by Dr. Filon Ktenidis who

⁴¹ I will leave an analysis of Pontian laments for a later section of this chapter.

⁴² A visiting speaker is not always easily understood by younger members of the Greek community in Adelaide because often they are not as fluent in the Modern Greek, which is spoken in Greece.

published it in his own magazine named *Ποντιακή Εστία* (Pontian Home).⁴³ The following is a short synopsis of the poem given by one of my informants, Theodoros:

‘Everything has been left there. Everybody went and only the bell of Pontos is waiting until the migrants return and establish again and pull the bell to start again. The bell is without its tongue and even though the sweet, strong air gets through and cries until the time comes for the migrants to return.

Every single village was uprooted and they were taking every single thing with them. They were going along the road to the sea. They were all coming together along the road from all the villages of the area.

The people go to the sea and they are complaining to God, ‘What did we do wrong? Leave us here where we have buried our ancestors, our fathers and grandfathers. Where are you taking us? You are taking us into the sea where we can’t even light a candle or burn incense. We left everything in the village. We had little calves to be fed. The lambs need their milk. The winds will blow and put out the candles in front of the icons.’

According to Theodoros, this poem was about fifteen pages long and was written completely in the Pontic dialect. He remembers when he first read it in his village in Greece. At the time, there were only about three or four people who could afford to buy Ktenidis’s magazine. One of these was a blind man, a former teacher who was a koumbaro⁴⁴ of the sister of Theodoros. This man used to go to his family’s home every night and one evening he brought the poem for Theodoros to read to him. Theodoros remembers that, as he was reading it to his parents and the koumbaro for the first time, all three started to cry. He said that he was surprised that those people who were so strong could be so upset. Now when he reads or hears the poem, which he said might be a hundred, one hundred and fifty, or two hundred times, and although he knows it so well, he said that every time he cries. ‘It is so sensitive—it hits where the pain is.’ Even after all this time, hearing it now still makes him ‘wake up all his Pontian feelings’. Feeling so strongly about the poem, he wrote his own poem based on that of Ktenidis’s, which he recited at this commemoration seminar. Loosely translated his poem is as follows:

‘All those people they left from there. One day something different happened. The weather was smiling. All those bodies that had been left in the valleys and on the hillsides, they started to stand up and all the blood that had been spread all over the

⁴³ The magazine was issued every two months to raise funds to support the founding of the monastery of Panagia Soumela in northern Greece (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 114).

⁴⁴ This is a term of respect or endearment. A koumbaro is someone who has either acted as one’s best man or as the godfather to one’s child. In so doing he forms a close relationship to the family.

place, started to move from the feet up to the brain. The villages started to be restored and the churches were repaired and the bells were restored in their places. The Pontians with their costumes appeared and the ladies quickly started to make their houses look like they once did. And in the end, a big voice from the sky came down as God was saying, 'I never forgot you. Now is the time when the migrants will return back to the place where they buried their ancestors.' All the bells of all the churches started to sing, to spread out the good news. The dead and the living will dance. First, they will make a liturgy in the church to thank God and then they will dance *Sérra*.⁴⁵

Just as Theodoros was impressed by his parents and the koumbaro crying when he first read Ktendis's poem, the young people present told me that they, too, were impressed by seeing the reaction of their parents and grandparents at the seminar in Adelaide.

After the poem, one of the women came forward, donned a shawl over her head and sang a Pontian lament. The following is a translation:

Once again in my life, from the water in my yard, I wish I could drink/ and with that water to wash my eyes [to wash away the tears] Oiee, oiee.
 I lost my country/ I cried and felt pain/ I am melting from pain and my heart is in great pain and I can't forget. Oiee, oiee.
 Deserted churches and monasteries without candles/doors and windows they left half opened. Oiee, oiee.

This was sung to the accompaniment of the *lyra*, in the Pontic Greek dialect and rendered with great passion, the high pitched refrain, 'oiee, oiee', especially expressing intense pain⁴⁶.

The various words of this commemoration accomplished different things. The words spoken through the format of a lecture gave factual information about the genocide but, poems, while using language, were on a different plane and served a different purpose. Langer asserts that poems 'articulate knowledge that cannot be rendered discursively...they compose the dynamic pattern of feeling. It is this pattern that only non-discursive symbolic forms can present' (1953: 241). Poems, she maintains, do

⁴⁵ *Sérra* is a distinctively Pontian dance. It is considered to be derived from ancient war dances called *Pyrrhichios*, mentioned by Plato (427–347 BCE) and Xenophon (430–347 BCE) (Hionides 2003: 191-2).

⁴⁶ This lament was sung to prepare dancers for their performance of the *Sérra* at the Veria Civic Centre on 17th September 2006 (see 'Choreographed dance' in Appendix 2).

not use 'genuine discourse' but create 'an illusory "experience"...by means of discursive language' (1953: 252). She says that the poet creates an 'appearance of "experiences," the semblance of events lived and felt, and [organises] them so they constitute a purely and completely experienced reality' (1953: 212).

Poets in these laments used words to create an illusion of life. This is evident even in the loose translation of the Ktenidis's poem or in the lament. In one, it is the symbolism of a bell, reflective of the bells of the Orthodox churches of Pontos but, in this instance, a bell without a tongue represents an empty Pontos. Similarly, in the other, we are taken in imagination to a yard where the poet could wash away his tears. The feeling expressed in this non-discursive symbolism is not that of the poet's but the feeling is in 'the meaning of the symbol' (Langer 1953: 211). Thus, Langer contends that a poem as art 'expresses the *not* actual feeling, but ideas of feeling; as language does not express actual things and events but ideas of them' (1953: 59). Evagelia, a second generation Pontian in Adelaide, explained that the reason why she now cries when she hears of the genocide is not that she cries so much for what happened but rather seeing her mother cry when she tells her about it. She said that she cries for the pain that her mother feels, that is, she is crying because of the idea of the feeling of pain. Thus, the emotions about the genocide, which cannot always be expressed through words that give information, are given a form in Pontian poetry. They 'wake up' Pontian feelings.

Rituals of commemoration

As well as the texts of commemoration, rituals of memorialisation are an important way in which '*intensified* remembering' (Casey 2000: 217, italics in the original text) and the awakening of emotions take place. After discussing the difficulties scholars have in defining ritual, Lukes suggest that it can be seen a 'rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance' (1975: 291). It is, therefore, a formal act of significance whereby appropriate symbols engage the participants' attention and involvement. Casey asserts that rituals in commemorations involve 'an act of reflection or an occasion for such an act...an allusion to the commemorated event or person that precedes or sanctions the ritual itself...bodily action...and collective participation in the ritualistic action' (2000: 223). In following section, I discuss the role of one specific ritual, that of the provision of the special memorial food, known as *kollyva*, which was a focus of both commemorations. Its

main ingredient is wheat, which is soaked and boiled to soften it, and then other ingredients such as sugar, pomegranate seeds, nuts, raisins and spices can be added to make it more palatable.

Religious rites

Having had a time to reflect on the genocide through the seminar sessions, Pontians both in Adelaide and Greece, attended Greek Orthodox churches in order to take part in liturgical memorial rituals. The Adelaide Pontians attended a Sunday morning church liturgy at the church of St Demetrios. Midway through the liturgy the president of the Pontian Brotherhood led six members of the Pontian Brotherhood dancing group dressed in Pontian costumes to the front of the church. Three of the dancers carried flags—one the banner of the Pontian Brotherhood and the others, the Greek and the Australian flags. They all continued to remain in place at the front of the church facing the congregation until the time of the memorial ceremony at the end of the liturgy. At this time, they stood on either side of a table on which was placed the memorial food, *kollyva*. Then a number of people of Pontian background moved down to the front of the church. Prayers were said for the dead over the *kollyva*, the priest stating that this memorial was ‘to remember those who had died in the Pontian genocide by the Turks.’ Afterwards the memorial food was distributed to all those who had participated in the liturgy.



Plate 19: The prepared *kollyva* for the Santa commemoration

The *kollyva* played a more prolonged role in the Santa commemoration. It was moved from place to place for each of the commemorative ceremonies of the weekend. On the Saturday afternoon, before the evening seminar, the *kollyva* was decorated and then blessed by the priest. The prepared mixture of the *kollyva* had been formed into a round shape about 50 centimetres in diameter rising to a mound of about 16 centimetres in the centre. It was covered with toasted sesame seeds. The man who was decorating it outlined two crosses—one a Byzantine shaped one and the other with straight sides—with silver-coated sweets. Then he painstakingly proceeded to fill in the outline of the crosses: one with ground red peppers and the other with green powder. He then decorated the circumference of the *kollyva*, again with silver-coated sweets. Finally, as this was the 85th anniversary of the exile from Santa, he added the dates of 1921 and 2006. Decorating the *kollyva* was a serious task and one that was not carried out hastily: in the end it took over three hours to complete the decoration. While this was happening people would come quietly into the room, go up to a large candle holder at the front, make a monetary donation, take and light a candle and then go and sit quietly in the room or watch the *kollyva* being decorated. There was an overall subdued atmosphere in the room even

though all the while newcomers were served with coffee, liqueurs, chocolates or biscuits. Sofia explained the reason for the atmosphere in the room. She said, 'People come to light a candle and pray at this time and remember their family.'

Santa people also attended an Orthodox liturgy on the Sunday morning of their commemoration weekend. As in the Adelaide commemoration, midway through the liturgy two young people, a man and a woman, dressed in traditional Pontian costumes, came into the church and stood either side of the *kollyva* where they remained for the memorial blessing at the conclusion of the liturgy. Instead of the *kollyva* being eaten after the liturgy, as happened at the Adelaide commemoration, it was taken back to the House of Santa for the afternoon ceremonies.

Such rites may evoke the feelings of loss, but this is not the reason for the practice. Rather, the rituals connected with the *kollyva* 'are deliberately observed to denote feelings' (Connerton 1989: 44). For those remembering the death of family members and others, these memorial practices symbolise the feelings of remembrance of the loss of life in the Pontian genocide.

Following Connerton (1989), I make three points about the significance of the memorial rite of the *kollyva* in Pontian commemorations. First, it is a formalised act and as a liturgical rite, it is 'stylised, stereotyped and repetitive [and]...not subject to spontaneous variation. (1989: 44). The main ingredient of *kollyva* is always wheat and its provision at a church liturgy is always intrinsically linked to death. Often it is formed into a mound representing the shape of a grave and covered with white icing sugar and decorated. A *kollyva* is prepared and offered to those attending a Greek person's funeral where the practice is repeated at specific defined intervals, such as at three, nine and forty days after death and thereafter at yearly intervals. At these times of annual remembrance of the dead, a memorial service is held at the end of a liturgy on a Sunday morning. At this time, candles are lit and family members and friends of the dead person then come to the front of the church. The priest then moves to the table and says the prescribed prayers for the dead person. It is always a quiet time and an emotional one for those who are recently mourning the loss of their loved ones. The *kollyva* is then taken from the church, spooned into paper bags and distributed to all who have come to the church. For people who want to remember their family members who have been dead for a longer period of time, the Greek Orthodox Church offers a liturgy three times a year called Soul's Saturday. Instead of one large *kollyva*, each person or family brings their own bowl of *kollyva*

with a candle in the centre and in a similar fashion to a Sunday liturgy, the priest prays for all who are being remembered. At the end of the ceremony each person collects their own bowl of *kollyva* and takes it home to share with other family members. Because these particular memorials are made for family members who have been deceased for a longer period of time than three years, these memorial services bear a closer resemblance to commemorations than do the usual Sunday ones.

Secondly, for Pontians the provision of a *kollyva* at times of commemoration is not a mere formality. It may seem that observing the rite of memorialisation is observed because it is an obligation that is required at a commemoration but, as Connerton asserts, 'to enact a rite is always, in some sense, to assent to its meaning' (1989: 44). The significance of *kollyva* lies in its religious origins, as a Greek Orthodox priest explained to me:

'The wheat in the *kollyva* is a symbol of resurrection on the Last Day.⁴⁷ A seed of wheat has to be placed in the ground before it can grow into new life. So unless we die and go to the ground we cannot be born to a new life. The centre of the Christian faith is the victory of life over death.'

The symbolic springing to life as the seed germinates is 'good to think with' (Bloch 2005) for Greek Orthodox Pontians who believe that the dead have life in the unseen next world. Thus, the everyday elements of wheat and spices of the *kollyva*, in the sacred space of the church, become consecrated as the priest intones the stipulated words of blessing. In this way, the *kollyva* becomes linked to the transcendental issues of life and death and is effective for remembering those who died in the genocide, even though their deaths occurred eighty to ninety years beforehand.

Thirdly, the effects of the memorial rituals are not limited to commemorations.

Although demarcated in time and space, rites are also as it were porous. They are held to be meaningful because rites have significance with respect to a set of further non-ritual actions, to the whole life of a community' (Connerton 1989: 44-5).

When a *kollyva* is provided at a commemoration, the focus moves from that of personal memories to incorporate the memories of all community members who died in

⁴⁷ Wheat is used because it alludes to a saying attributed to Jesus Christ in reference to his own death and resurrection: 'Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (*Holy Bible: The new revised standard version* 1993: 106).

the genocide. Thus, as a means of focusing remembrance of that event, the *kollyva* becomes the medium whereby remembering is intensified. In this way, it contributes to the continuing production of Pontian social memory of the genocide.

Mourning ceremonies

Public memorial ceremonies are a way in which Pontians can bear witness to the effects of the genocide and exile. Oliver (2001: 7) argues that it is through being able to publicly express the pain and oppression they have suffered and have this acknowledged that those who suffered trauma and oppression find a voice. She calls this the process of bearing witnessing whereby the oppressed and powerless can address others and have them respond.

Although almost all present day Pontians did not experience the immediate traumatising effects of the genocide and exile from Pontos, they have heard what happened from their parents or grandparents and from such things as lectures, poems and the texts on monuments. As well, they have formed their knowledge from hearing how their families suffered when they came to Greece and so are affected by the intensity of the emotions that are attached to their parents' or grandparents' stories. I have already described how Adelaide Pontians incorporated some mourning practices into their seminar evening, and so, in this section I focus mainly on the Santa public mourning ceremonies as a way of bearing witness to what happened to their people.

After the church liturgy, people started to gather at the monument adjacent to the House of Santa. They either quietly talked amongst themselves or greeted others, while women continually came out of the house with plates of food to offer to those who were assembling. A number of items for the ceremony were already in place. Wreaths made of fresh laurel leaves with blue and white wide ribbons and with the names of those who donated them, had been placed against the metal fence surrounding the memorial monument. To the left of the monument, chairs for the official guests had been set up under a temporary shelter. More chairs for other people were set out under the trees nearer the house. The *kollyva*, which had been brought back from the church, was on a table covered with a red cloth. Television cameras were being set up to record the event. Two flags were flying—the blue and white Greek flag and the black and yellow and black flag of the Association of the Seven Villages of Santa.⁴⁸ Official guests, including members of the clergy, army officials

⁴⁸ This association is responsible for maintaining the House of Santa and organises the annual commemoration weekend.

and leaders of Pontian organisations, began to walk up the steep path from the church to the monument and took their places under the shelter. A small band of young people from the village of Nea Santa assembled near this area. Two lecterns were set up in front of the monument, one for the speakers and the other for the compere. A soldier stood either side of the monument along with two young people, a man and a woman, in Pontian costume. By the time the ceremonies started, there were about 400 people gathered near the monument or around the house.



Plate 20: Crowds gathering for the commemoration near the House of Santa

The ceremony began with a further blessing of the *kollyva* by the bishop and another priest. This was followed by a number of speeches and then the laying of wreaths. The names of people or organisations responsible for the wreaths were announced at which time a representative came up, took the wreath and laid it at the memorial. People clapped at each presentation. After all the wreaths had been laid, a man played the *lyra* and another sang two laments. This was followed by one minute's silence in remembrance of those who had lost their lives. The band then played the National Anthem to complete the memorial ceremony.



Plate 21: The ceremony in front of the Santa memorial monument

While there were a number of aspects associated with this component of the Santa commemoration such as, wreath-laying, the speeches, the one minute's silence, the presence of the armed forces and the playing of the National Anthem, which made it a time of public mourning. I want, however, to focus on the sung laments as a particular way of mourning. These laments are not an obligatory part of the commemoration ceremonies as the *kollyva* is. They are included because they evoke emotions in a different way from the rituals around the *kollyva*. Most people listened to the laments in hushed silence. Some sang or responded with tears: one an old man near me had tears running down his cheeks. Why do laments, therefore, have power to evoke the feelings of Pontians in such a profound way? First, as words of poetry, they take the listener 'from actuality to fiction' (Langer 1953: 213), as, through one of the laments, the hearers' imagination is taken to the mountains of Santa and Captain Efkleides:

Seven years in the resistance/in the mountains of Santa
 Seven years you were torturing/the Turkish souls
 Captain Efkleides, where are you now?
 You who never had a fear/of swords and knives
 How did it happen/and you fell, into the death's hands

Captain Efkleides, where are you now?

The words took the listeners back even further in history in the second lament. It spoke of a soldier who although he had been killed, was heroically brave. In its original form, this was not about Santa or even Pontic resistances fighters. It was one of a collection of poems that focused on Akritas, a mythical character who was portrayed as a brave border guard protecting Orthodoxy in general.

The eagle was flying high in the sky/his feet were red and his head was black
 He was holding in his nails arms, arms of a brave man
 'My eagle, give me that you hold, or tell me where he is lying'
 'From what I hold, I don't give you, but his body is lying across the mountain'
 But make a steel walking stick and copper sandals
 And take the road to the mountain, behind the pine tree on the other side,
 Black birds eat him and white fly around
 'Eat my birds, eat, eat him, the man who has no one to assist him,
 At the sea [he was] a good swimmer, and on the plains a wrestler,
 At the war [he was] thirty times Greek, Greek brave man

Over time and through the work of Pontic writers, Akritas has become synonymous with the heroic guerrilla fighters of Pontos, so that now at times they are called the Akritas of Pontos or the Border guard of Pontos (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 148). Akritas, once a mythical person in antiquity, has become concretised in the figure of the brave Pontian fighter who is pictured with the unique Pontian headband, dressed for battle with a leather belt that held a sheath for a big knife, a pistol and a cartridge belt. It is this visual representation that now appears on many Pontian monuments. For instance, the Pontian monument in Veria, erected in 2000, has a large figure of such a Pontian fighter.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Below the statue is the following inscription:

'The Border Guards of Pontos
 We watered the land of Pontos with blood and perspiration, who knows for how many thousands of years:
 And years and times came...we were uprooted and came back in holy and resurrection lands born the
 new Argonauts for the new fate of our race.'

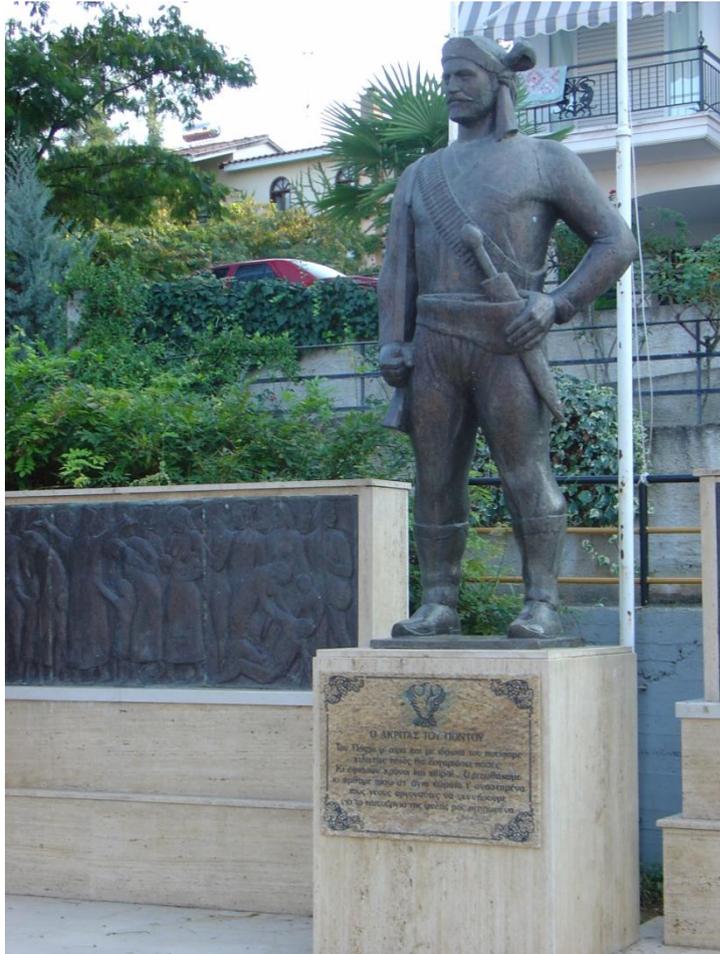


Plate 22: Pontian memorial monument in Veria

At the commemoration, these poems were presented in the form of laments. The practice of lamenting as an expression of pain has a long history in Christianity and its precursor, Judaism (see Johnson 2008). As well as expressing grief and pain, laments can also have overtones of complaining to God and questioning why such painful things are happening to them. This element of laments is evident in the poem of Ktenidis, 'The Bell of Pontos' when he speaks about those who are being evicted complaining to God.

When spoken words of lament are set to music, however, the art form is changed from a poem to a song. Langer makes the point that the 'essential contributions of voice and instruments, respectively, come from opposite poles in the realm of music' (1953: 143). She says that because of their structure, musical instruments can develop 'flexibility...distinctness...tonal and rhythmic accuracy' that exceeds that of voice (1953: 143). On the other hand, she contends that the 'chief and irreplaceable asset of vocal music [is] the element of *utterance*' (1953: 143, italics in the original

text), which an instrument can only approximate. Nevertheless, as instrument and voice come together,

‘...music swallows words; not only mere words and literal sentences, but even literary word-structures, poetry. Song is not a compromise between poetry and music, though the text taken by itself be a great poem; song is music...not speech’ (1953: 152).

At the Santa commemoration, the specific instrument of choice that produced the music of the sung laments was the *lyra*. Its slow, high-pitched wailing sound ‘swallowed’ the words and produced music and not speech. This instrument is used in the Pontian community in a number of different settings, each invoking different responses. For instance, the lively sound of the *lyra* at a community function makes people want to dance. Alternatively, at a restaurant table people will sit and quietly listen to the subdued tones of the *lyra* as the player sings. At a wedding, the *lyra* evokes the pathos of parting when it accompanies the traditional song sung when the bride prepares to leave her family home. When it is played at a commemoration ceremony for a lament, it creates a mourning mood. Because of their poignant sounds, laments accompanied by the *lyra* ‘reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach’ (Langer 1960: 235, italics in the original text). They evoke and form the feelings of the loss of Santa and its peoples, which allow people to cry and mourn. Further, they sanction other emotions of injustice, anger and powerlessness. Why, if Captain Efkleides was so brave, was he unable to protect the village of Santa and why did Akritas fall despite his strength and heroism? Perhaps, remembering and lamenting, as the main elements of mourning, may be the only options open to people when faced with overwhelming catastrophes. Perhaps one can only do what the brief inscription on the Santa monument asks, and the one-minute silence required—to stop, and mediate in silence.

Those who remember coming from Pontos are becoming fewer as the years pass. While these ‘first-order’ memories of Pontos are fast fading, the ‘second-order’ memories become more complex as, year after year, memories of previous emotional responses to their parents’ and grandparents’ suffering are brought to mind and mingle with their own reactions to previous commemorations over the years. Attending a commemoration publicly affirms their expression of pain and suffering—depicted pictorially in the second motif on the Santa monument and portrayed in the vignette at the Adelaide seminar. Both the rituals of the memorialisation and the la-

ments of mourning enhance the memories of the genocide and give form to the feelings associated with it. Rather than waning, memories and emotions are intensified through such commemorations as the ‘images of the past are implanted and cathected in memory of the present’ (Handelman & Shamgar-Handelman 1997: 113), and thus become embedded into the social memory of Pontians.

Food of commemoration

In both Adelaide and in Greece, a communal meal was the culmination of the commemorative events. Although the actual food that was consumed differed slightly at the two locations, in both, the food was symbolic—served not just to satisfy hunger.

It was through the meal after the church liturgy for the Adelaide commemoration that I became aware of the religious and symbolic nature of the food that is provided as the culmination of commemorative ceremonies. The mid-day meal prepared by members of the Adelaide Pontian Brotherhood in the hall behind the church consisted of a plate of fillet of fish and calamari and salad served with a white bread roll followed by fruit. Red wine was served and later, cups of Greek coffee. Unsure of whether people had paid in advance for this meal, I asked Anoula if I needed to pay for my meal. She told me that the Pontian Brotherhood had provided the meal for those who had come to the church to remember the genocide. She said that the food was given to everyone to eat and to remember those who had died and to pray for the forgiveness of their sins. I realised then that the consumption of food on that specific occasion had more than a sociable and hospitable element to it. The meal was an extension of the *kollyva*, which had been distributed and eaten immediately after the church liturgy. It became the memorial food that was provided to accomplish something—that of remembrance and prayers for the dead. It was through this meal in Adelaide that I was later able to come to an understanding of the significance of the meal at the end of the commemoration in the House of Santa.

Food plays an important role in social life and is an important element of Greek hospitality. At the Santa commemoration it was in abundance and was offered to visitors at various times throughout the weekend. But, I do not want to analyse the provision of food as hospitality but rather concentrate on the purpose of the two different types of symbolic food that were consumed as the culmination of all the weekend’s ceremonies.

One of these was the *kollyva*. After the memorial ceremonies had finished, it was taken and tipped into a large container and from there ladled into small plastic bowls and served for people to eat. The other was Pontian soup, a traditional soup made from strained yoghurt, soaked wheat, butter and spearmint. The soup was cooked in large copper pots similar to those used in Pontos and kept at the house. It again was spooned into small cups for everyone to drink. This soup together with the *kollyva*, while having all the constituents of food, was not meant to be a meal: the small portions served to each person showed that it was not meant to satisfy hunger—the purpose of the food provided earlier in the weekend. As these two types of food were eaten, two different forms of remembrance were consumed.

‘Generated by religious ritual and validated by religious belief’ (Danforth & Tsiaras 1982: 139), the purpose of the *kollyva* was to remember the dead and also to pray for the forgiveness of their sins, as Danforth observes:

‘Everyone who is given food at a memorial services utters a wish that God may forgive the deceased. This practice suggests that food is distributed and eaten not only to feed the dead but also to assure the proper completion of the passage that takes place at death’ (1982: 105).

Danforth (1982), in his study of rural Greek funeral rites, not only makes a metaphorical relationship between human life and plant life, but also shows how the metaphor of the human body as food ‘attempts to mediate the opposition between life and death’ (Danforth & Tsiaras 1982: 103). In the grave, the body decomposes and becomes ‘food’ for the earth, giving it nourishment and, therefore, new life. The process of decomposition is also necessary for the moral benefit of the dead person. It enables the soul to be released from the body, thus bringing new life for the dead person in paradise. It is part of Orthodox belief that the living on earth have a responsibility to the dead to facilitate this process to new life and that in some way the dead are dependent upon the living for this. The prayers for forgiveness and the good works carried out in this life are believed to affect the souls of the dead and assist them along the path to their final destination in heaven. Thus, provided as good works and consumed on behalf of the dead, the *kollyva* eaten at a monument, evocative of a communal gravestone, finds its way to the other world and nourishes the souls of the dead, enabling them to enter a new life.

While the consumption of the ritual food of *kollyva* was to remember the dead, sharing out and partaking in the ritual food of the Pontian soup was a community remembrance of the place of Santa where it would have been a common place meal. Acknowledging the significance of both, one of my informants told me: 'This was a traditional Pontian meal, both the *kollyva* and the soup'. Sharing out and partaking of ritual food in commemoration, therefore, 'reasserts the community of the living' (Sutton 2001: 39).

'It is an embodied aspect of creating the experience of the whole. Food is not a random part that recalls the whole to memory. Its synesthetic qualities, when culturally elaborated as they are in Greece, are an essential ingredient in ritual and everyday experiences of totality. Food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation' (Sutton 2001: 102).

Whereas individual people might pray for their deceased family members, through the provision of such food at commemorations the focus becomes broader to encompass the shared grief and loss of the whole Pontian community. Just as eating in the Eucharist is important transcendentally to them, so is eating the *kollyva*, which, along with the Pontian soup, represents the loss of life and place in the Pontian genocide. In the rich interplay of symbol and practice, the eating and sharing of ritual food enforce and re-enforce social as well as personal memory for Pontic Greek people at commemorations. The food becomes in fact 'embodied memories' (Qureshi 2000) that are realised through the way the physical senses relate to material objects and corporeal practices. The eating of food thus acts as a medium whereby as the culmination of the commemoration, through absorbing the memories of the past and consuming food in the present time, the genocide is embodied to continue to form the social memory of Pontians. Thus, in commemorations, the bodily consumption of food is not just an individual practice. Rather, it is communal and relational, a process in which there is a continual interrelationship between emotions and memory.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how commemorations act to further develop the social memory of genocide for Pontians. Pontic commemorations are solemn times that intensify memory of the genocide as well as evoking the emotions of sadness at the loss of life and the absence of Pontos. The course of commemorations is linear and proceeds to a culmination, with each element having activities that elicit facets that

contribute to the whole. Nevertheless, the emotions and memories evoked in these activities are relational and in nuanced ways they continually contribute to the social memory of Pontians. As year after the year the commemorations come and go, the memory and emotions that form Pontian social memory continue to presence the absence of Pontos and its people.

Commemorations are annual events. In the next chapter, I discuss how dance, which occurs on many occasions throughout the year when Pontians of all ages gather together, continues to presence not only the absence of Pontos and but also of Greece.

5 Pontic dance: feeling the presence of absence

Introduction

During my fieldwork I observed Pontic dance many times in many different places and performed by members of the whole community or as choreographed routines in front of audiences (see Appendix 2). I saw it danced at Pontian dinner dances, at other Pontian community functions, at religious festivals, at wider Greek festivals and as part of commemorative events. Pontians also danced at restaurants, in streets as they led the bride and groom to the church, at wedding receptions and at private homes to celebrate birthdays or forthcoming marriages.

Pontic dance has a characteristic style that developed in the Pontos region and which differs from that of Greek mainland or island dancing. The dances range 'from the most languid, slow, relaxed, effortless, shuffling steps to the most frenetic, tense, physically demanding and almost violent movement' (Kilpatrick 1975: 104). All dances have a set number of intricate and complex steps that are repeated over and over again. The dancers' feet are kept close together and cover a small area of ground with their arms and hands keeping the same rhythm of the dance. In addition, there is flexing and rotation of the upper torso referred to as shimmying, which is a particular characteristic aspect of Pontic dance. Almost all dances are performed in a closed circle with dancers holding hands in particular ways. There is no leader or any variation in steps that cannot be performed by all in the dance (see Kilpatrick 1975: 105-6). Of all the different dimensions of Pontic life that I observed, it seemed to me that dance was to Pontians themselves the most quintessential expression of what it means to be Pontian. It was a means by which they displayed their Ponticness and through which memories were evoked and intense emotions both shaped and expressed.

Pontians assert that, in order to perform dances in a Pontian way, it is necessary to display a specific characteristic, which they refer to as the 'feel' of the dance. One night at a practice session of the senior dance group of the Pontian Brotherhood in Adelaide, I noticed that one dancer did not quite have the same movement as the other dancers even though she was performing the same steps. They were dancing *Samsón*, a dance with a particular bounce that comes from the dancers having

straight legs and moving swiftly from side to side. When I asked why this dancer was not displaying the same action as the other dancers, Anoula told me that this dancer was new and had not yet learnt to execute the steps but that, more importantly, she was not yet 'feeling' the dance. She said that this was important for Pontic dance. 'You have to feel the dance inside,' she commented while indicating her heart area.

Similarly, in Greece, I was told about this 'feel' of Pontic dance. Dimitris told me that at the Veria Black Sea Club they encouraged dancers to feel the dance rather than just executing the steps and keeping in time and in line with the other dancers. At my first interview with Dimitris, he told me how the *Omál* should be danced. 'First,' he said, 'I will show you how a non-Pontian person dances the *Omál*.' So Dimitris slowly danced the six steps of the *Omál* moving around in a circle. 'He can make the moves but he cannot put in the soul.' Then he said, 'Now I will show you how a Pontian person dances the *Omál*.' This time he repeated the same slow six steps but his whole upper torso was moving backwards and forwards. At the same time his arms, bent at the elbows, moved in and out from his upper body. The steps of the dance were just as slow and smooth as in the first version but the movement of the upper torso gave the impression that the dance had increased in vitality. It appeared that the incorporation of the upper torso into the dance gave the 'feel' to the dance. But just as I was beginning to think that he was telling me that if I learnt the correct bodily movement I would be able to get the 'feel' he was demonstrating, Dimitris added, 'Something is happening inside us.'

Because words about the 'feel' are not the same as the experience of the 'feel' itself within the immediacy of the dance, both Anoula and Dimitris could not articulate what they meant by the 'feel' of the dance. Reflecting that they knew 'more than they could tell' (Polanyi 1967: 4), both Anoula and Dimitris could only indicate in their bodies what this experience, as expressed in the dance steps, meant to them. They had a 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi 1967) of the 'feel' of the dance that they could not express verbally. Anoula touched her heart area to indicate that the inner feeling is expressed in the dance. Dimitris, on the other hand, had to demonstrate it in his dance steps, although these visible movements were not themselves the 'feel'. Ultimately, for both of them the 'feel' came from an inner experience.

Recent theories approach dance from a variety of perspectives. As a cultural manifestation (see Kaeppler 1978) and the 'embodiment of cultural memory' (Buckland

2001), dance is seen as a 'rhythmic movement done for some purpose transcending utility' (Royce 1977: 5). Other writers study dance from the perspective of 'the moving body' (Farnell 1999), its unique manifestation forming one part of the whole sphere of human movement (see Williams 1997, 2004). Hanna describes the multi-sensory nature of dance and lists its components as 'purpose, intentional rhythm, culturally patterned sequences, and extraordinary nonverbal movement with inherent and aesthetic value' (1979: 24). All these writers describe the various aspects of dance and its multi-sensory nature, and the extent to which these generate the feel of the dance. However, none sufficiently explain what the dancers feel when they dance or what the audience feels when they watch them and how these feelings are produced by dance movements. In this chapter, I rely on the work of Langer (1950, 1953, 1966) to elucidate the process whereby the feel of the dance is shaped by both dancers and their audience.

Langer (1966) sees dance as an art-form along with other works of art, such as painting, sculpture, music, drama or architecture. She understands art as 'the practice of creating perceptible forms' (1966: 6), which embody and express human feeling. 'Feelings' for Langer are multi-faceted. They include 'dynamic forms of our direct sensuous, mental, and emotional life' (1957: 25), that is 'everything that may be felt' (1966: 6). Langer uses the term 'form', particularly expressive form, as something to be seen as a whole in the sense of 'an apparition given to our perception' (1966: 7). Thus, whether the art-form is permanent as in the plastic arts or transient as in dance, it is 'always a perceptible, self-identical whole' (1966: 7) and is expressive of human feeling.

Both Langer (1960, 1966) and Hanna (1979, 2001) refer to dance as a non-verbal expression. Hanna argues that dance is a form of language where certain components 'are selected in much the same way that a person would choose sequences of verbal language' (2001: 41). For Hanna, dance resembles verbal language in that it has meaning, ambiguity, emotion, symbolism, grammar and context and is different in that it occurs in time and space, and communicates in the modes of sight, sound, closeness and touch, whereas language communicates through the modes of sound and sights only (2001: 42). Langer, on the other hand, distinguishes between the 'discursive' symbols of language and the 'presentational' symbols of art (1960). Language is,

‘our prime instrument of conceptual expression...without words, sense experience is only a flow of impressions, as subjective as our feelings; words make it objective, and carve it up into *things* and *facts* that we can note, remember, and think about. Language gives outward experience its form, and makes it definite and clear’ (Langer 1966: 8).

Langer says that apart from the cognitive, there is ‘an important part of reality that is quite inaccessible to the formative influence of language’ (1966: 8). This is the life of feeling and emotion, the inner life experience, the formulation of which ‘is impossible to achieve by discursive thought, because its forms are incommensurable with the forms of language and all its derivatives’ (1966: 9–10). Hence, contrary to Hanna who argues that dance is a means of communication through modes that resemble discursive language, Langer suggests that the primary function of the art-form of dance is to objectify the inner life experience and to give form to its feeling.

The basic materials that are used to create the art-form of dance are the rhythmic movement of physical bodies moving through patterned sequences of steps in time and space. This rhythmic motion is what is actually happening and is the physical reality of the art of dance. In dance, however, these basic materials are perceived as gesture. Gesture is more expressive than language. It can be given as a non-verbal sign whose intent someone understands and at the same time, it can be given in such a way that it conveys the feelings of the person. Dance gesture then is expressive and conveys ‘*ideas of emotion*’ (Langer 1953: 175, italics in the original text).

This chapter focuses on how the inchoate ‘feel’, which Pontians insist is central to Pontic dance, is given form through expressive behaviour of dance gesture to produce an emotional sense of being Pontian. I show how the feelings associated with the absence of Pontos and of Greece are given a physical form in the embodiment of dance—through the execution of the dance steps, in seeing, wearing and feeling the costumes and in hearing the sound of the music. Thus, when Pontians dance, either as part of community celebrations or in choreographed routines, dance shapes these emotions and it becomes a lived experience of the presence of absence. Nick Zournatzidis, a well-known Pontic Greek dance teacher and researcher⁵⁰, reflected this idea when he said, ‘Now Pontos does not exist. It doesn’t

⁵⁰ Nick Zournatzidis who has carried out research for over thirty years on Pontic dance, has identified and classified eighty-three separate dances, where they originated and the types of musical instruments that accompanied them in Pontos (see Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003).

create dances anymore. But you have to carry the love of Pontos in your heart. You have to love the culture.'

Development of two modes of Pontic dances

Pontic dances developed over many centuries in the highly dissected geographical terrain of the Pontos region. Because some isolated villages had little contact with other villages or regions, a variety of distinctive dances evolved that often had slight variations in their steps and way of dance.⁵¹ Not all the dances that were danced in Pontos survived the genocide and exile from Pontos: the knowledge of some dances or their particular mode of execution disappeared when whole villages were destroyed. Those that did survive continued to retain their important place in religious and communal village life in Greece and later in the diaspora. With the waning of some other cultural expressions, such as language and food, dance became an important means whereby Ponticness was preserved and expressed as well as through which the absence of Pontos was presented.

In Greece, after 1923, Pontians tended to be wary of outside political influence and sought to retain their ethnic boundaries despite the pressures to assimilate into mainstream Greek culture. The tendency to remain separate was further exacerbated in the 1930s when their hopes of being fully compensated for their lost property in Pontos were not realised. From this time on 'many Pontians became ethnicists, actively interested in maintaining their cultural community' and preserving their 'traditional heritage' (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 47). However, the style of Pontic dance, continued to gradually change and develop. By the 1950s, when Pontians started to marry out of their community, teaching dance to the younger generation was seen as one of the important ways in which some aspects of Pontic culture could be retained. While community dance continued, gradually the many clubs and organisations, which were originally formed for Pontian community support, began to teach choreographed routines of Pontic dance to their young people, routines that could be performed in front of an audience. Hence, out of the movement to preserve Pontic culture and to pass it on to the younger generation, a second mode of dance began to emerge.

⁵¹ Vasilis Asbestas from the Black Sea Club of Veria contends that his research points to the fact that there are about twenty main Pontic dances and that the others are variations. These variations result from the different musical instruments that were used and climatic, geographical and political conditions (Field notes, 5 September 2011).

For the Pontian migrant community in Adelaide, a gap also occurred between the founding of their Brotherhood for mutual support in 1958, and the establishment of their dance group in 1972. By this latter time, the need for communal support of the migrant group was not as pressing, and less families and young people were involved in the Brotherhood. Some young people whose families did not attend Brotherhood functions grew up without knowing how to dance Pontic dances. While for other young people, who were exposed to Pontic dancing through family and community functions, dancing did not now play the same part as it had in the village lives of their parents or grandparents growing up in rural Greece. To counteract these trends, a dance group was formed in the Pontian Brotherhood in Adelaide where Pontic dances could be taught by a specific dance teacher in a more formal setting. Maria, a former dance teacher, told me that when the dance group started, they relied on the dances that their parents were doing at the community dances, those dances that they, in turn, had learnt in their villages in Greece. She said,

‘But the dances their parents learnt would have been fairly basic dances. There wouldn’t have been people specialised in knowing all the different dances and besides their parents grew up during war times, so a lot of it would have been lost, both coming from Pontos to Greece and then during the wars.’

Occasionally, she said, someone would remember another dance or other dances were learnt from other dance groups, so slowly a repertoire began to build up. As a performance group, they tended to perform more energetic dances, reflecting their audience-focused nature. Maria commented:

‘Most people know Pontian dancing as the *Tik*, the *Sérra*, the *Kótsari*, the faster, shakier dances. These are the ones that people like to see on stage. Fiery and exciting. Nobody wants to see the same step for the next five minutes.’

From the 1970s in Adelaide, two modes of Pontic dance emerged at Pontian functions—the usual dance where the whole community participated; and the newer choreographed dances. This reflected a trend, which had already occurred in Greece, some twenty years earlier.

Folklorists studying the effects of an audience on various ethno-dances note the development of the two modes of dance over time and distinguish between them in various ways. Hoerburger (1968: 30) refers to them as, ‘folk dance in its first existence’ and ‘folk dance in its second existence’, Shay (1999: 33) as ‘dance in the field’ and dance as a stage performance and Nahachewsky (1995) speaks of them

as ‘participatory’ and ‘presentational’ dance. Although Nahachewsky’s terms succinctly differentiate between the two, the term ‘presentational’ does not take into account Langer’s specific use of the word where she distinguishes between the “discursive” symbols of language and the “presentational” symbols of art’ (Langer 1966: 8). In making such a division between a dance that is in front of an audience and one that is not, folklorists such as Nahachewsky fail to take into account the function of dance as a ‘perceptible, self-identical whole’ (Langer 1966: 7) where it formulates and presents the feelings of the inner life experience, regardless of whether the dance is in front of an audience or not. However, having said that, at Pontian functions both of the two strands of Pontic dance will mostly occur. I will refer to them as *participatory dance* where the whole community joins in the dance and as *choreographic dance*, when it is performed in front of an audience, requiring prior planning and rehearsal. However, I understand them both to be within the same art-form. Indeed, Pontians themselves do not make a distinction between the two. They never intimated to me that that one was more ‘Pontic’ than the other or that one had a higher value than the other.

Two modes of dance at a Pontian community event

At one of the first Pontian events I attended I observed these two modes of Pontic dance. This was at a dinner dance held in August to honour Panagia Soumela, that is, the Virgin Mary, patron of the original monastery in Pontos, on the feast of her Dormition, traditionally held on 15 August each year. It was typical of other later Pontian community gatherings I observed both in Adelaide and in Greece. This particular event was held at a function centre in Adelaide large enough to cater for the 900 people who had purchased tickets. The interior of the hall was decorated with balloons in the Pontian colours of yellow and black and the banner of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia hung from the stage. Round tables with seating for ten to twelve people were set around a central dance floor. The majority of those who attended were of Greek background with those from the Pontian community predominating. Other invited guests included Orthodox Church dignitaries, members of State and Federal Parliament, and leaders of the Greek and Armenian communities. People of all ages attended this function—babies in pushers, young children, teenagers, young adults, parents and grandparents: at our table there were three generations of the same family. Gradually people arrived at the hall and once having purchased their meals, they brought the food to their tables where it was shared with other members of their family and friends. At the end of the meal, the compere for

the evening, George Doonikian, a well-known television presenter, read from a letter of apology from the local Federal member who wrote:

‘Knowing where we come from helps us to know who we are generation after generation...Those who have learnt about the genocide from their parents or grandparents have an obligation to speak up against injustice wherever they see it...But despite all the aggression and persecution they have suffered, the Pontian ‘Hellenes’ have never forgotten their Pontian Hellenic culture. They have learnt well that survival of their culture depends on mutual respect of all mankind and human rights of all people. Tonight is a night to celebrate the Pontian Hellenic culture and rejoice in the way, through our youth, Pontian Greeks continue to flourish in Australia’.

George Doonikian, who is of Armenian background, then went on to describe how the traumatic events of that genocide continued to have an effect on him and his family. At the end of his speech, the president of the Brotherhood then asked everyone to stand for a minute’s silence to remember those who had died in the Pontian genocide. After that, it was announced that, as entertainment, three groups of the Adelaide Pontian dancers would perform a number of dances.

In time with the *lyra*’s introductory notes and the strong *daoúli*⁵² beat, the junior dancers, ranging in age from five to ten years, slowly danced onto the dance floor. Dressed in the club’s black and yellow tracksuits and holding their hands at chest height they moved gradually around the outside edge of the dance floor and proceeded to dance the slow steps of the *Dipát* and *Omál*, finishing with the dance *Ebbr’ Opís* to take them off the dance floor.

Once the juniors had finished their performance, the intermediate group of dancers between the ages of eleven and thirteen years, straightaway moved onto the floor. In contrast to the juniors, these dancers wore traditional Pontic costumes. The girls wore gold satin skirts over which was draped a patterned, fringed scarf with a short maroon jacket on top. They wore maroon silk scarves over their heads with gold-coloured coins attached. The boys wore black trousers with a black jacket and a black head covering with bandoliers, containing imitation bullet cartridges, over their shoulders. This group performed a wider range of Pontic dances than the junior group, including a number which were more energetic and required more intricate steps.

⁵² The *daoúli* is a two-headed drum played with a stick or the hand’ (Kilpatrick 1975: 279).

The dancers of the senior group were the last to perform. They moved on to the dance floor, the women from the right and the men from the left meeting together in the middle of the floor and joining hands, with men and women interspersed. This group comprised thirteen dancers, seven men and six women. They also wore traditional Pontic costumes. Their dancing steps were much more complicated and performed more expertly than the previous two groups. In one particularly vigorous dance, the *Sherranítsa*, the six women moved forward and performed very spirited movements: their steps were quick and small, their arms moved backwards and forwards and from time to time they stamped their feet. After they had finished this segment, the women receded and the men moved forward. Once again, their dance was very energetic with their hands and arms moving backwards and forwards and then up over their heads. At one stage, they turned to the right and then the left, stamping their feet in each direction and all with a shimmying of their upper torso, characteristic of Pontic dancing. They then moved back and joined the women and moved around the edge of the floor in a circle with their arms interlocked at shoulder level. The men then moved forward and performed another dance with their hands held high, finishing by kneeling on the ground. To end, a knife dance, known as *Piçak Oyünü*, was danced. In this performance two men wielding knives danced improvised steps of attack and defence. Their steps were small and again there was the shimmying of the upper torso. Although at this event, the two men supposedly killed each other, in other versions I saw in Greece, the men pitted themselves against each other in a show of strength as in preparation for battle but at the end embraced. Throughout all of these performances, but particularly for the most vigorous dances, the audience responded enthusiastically by cheering, clapping and whistling.

When all the dancers had left the floor and the applause had died down, the *lyra* and the *daoúli* started to play again. This time there was no particular announcement by the compere or general invitation to join in the dance but people knew that this was the time for them to dance together. At this particular community function, many people, men and women, young and old, started to get up to dance, the first dancers forming a circle around the outside of the dance floor. When anyone wanted to join in the dance they moved in between two other dancers, unclasped their joined hands, linked up with the dancers on either side and continued the same hand movements quickly picking up the rhythm of the dance steps. Similarly, individuals chose when they would leave the dance circle. Soon there were more than a hundred people on the dance floor and three concentric circles had been formed to ac-

commodate everyone who wanted to dance. The *lyra* and the *daoúli* set the pattern and rhythm of the dances. At first, there were the slower dances such as *Omál*, *Dipát* and *Tik* and later the faster dances such as *Tik Tónyia* and *Kotsari*, the steps becoming smaller to accommodate the quicker rhythms. Often a segment of dance lasted up to forty minutes with the same sequence of steps being repeated over and over again. Late into the night, many people still continued to dance. It was obvious that this participatory dancing and socialising with each other in this way was a most enjoyable experience for all taking part and it formed the longest part of the evening's entertainment.

Giving form to the feeling of absence

Although the Pontian dinner dance was a joyous occasion, a mood of sadness pervaded one segment of the evening when the speaker recalled the genocide. Through the discursive symbols of language, his ideas and feelings about that traumatic event were made objective. They were put into 'things' and 'facts' to 'note, remember, and think about' (Langer 1966: 8) in the one minute's silence, which followed his speech. In conclusion, he said that this night would 'give all people a sense of who Pontian Greeks are, where they come and what it means to be from Pontos.' But this sense of Ponticness did not only come from his words. Through presentational symbols within the art-form of dance, the 'idea' of the feelings associated with being Pontian were given form. Although words can describe what happened, the intensity of the feelings attached to the genocide cannot be easily articulated.

Dance, however, can give form to these feelings in a way that language cannot. It was the performance of some of the more vigorous dances that gave form to the inner feelings that Pontians have about conflicts with the Turks, which have existed for many centuries. It was in the performance of one of the warrior dances, *Piçak Oyünü*, that the movements of the two dancers particularly indicated the movements of combat and were a further link to genocide. Pontians believe that this dance, and the other better-known warrior dance, *Sérra*, are derived from ancient war dances called *Pyrrhichios*, thought to prepare soldiers for war by performing in advance the movements that they would use in combat. *Sérra* is most closely associated with Ponticness and its tempo and movement are particularly aggressive and very physically demanding. Pontian associations worldwide nowadays require that *Sérra* be danced only by men. Although the Pontian Brotherhood dance group allowed

women to dance as men in its other dances, it did not have enough men to perform *Sérra* at that time. The performance of *Piçak Oyünü* was the closest they could come to performing one of these warrior dances. But other dances such as *Létchi*, *Letchína* and *Sherranítsa*, which both men and women dance, have come to resemble more and more the combative nature of these warrior dances and always evoke an enthusiastic audience response. The choreographed dances, presented with traditional Pontic costumes and musical instruments, were influential in shaping the feel of the loss of Pontos. There is, however, a difference between the dancers' experience of the dance at rehearsal compared with their performance of it in front of an audience.

Choreographic dance

A public performance of dance requires choreography: what is to be danced and how, needs prior planning and rehearsal within practice sessions. Polanyi argues that dance as an art, on the whole 'cannot be specified in detail [and] cannot be transmitted by prescription, since no prescription for it exists. It can be passed on only by example from master to apprentice as an art' (Polanyi 1958: 53). At practice sessions, both in Adelaide and Veria, the teachers paid close attention to the bodily movements of the dancers. In Greece, I watched Maria teach Pontic dance to a class of children, aged between four and six. They began with the dance, *Omál*. To begin, Maria encouraged the children to move to the right for the first two steps of the dance while she counted—'one, two.' She then added the next two steps—'three, four'—that continued in the same direction but with a slight pause on the fourth step. The last steps—'five, six'—moved slightly to the left finishing with the weight in the left foot. These steps were practised for about five minutes with Maria counting and encouraging the children to count as they moved in time but it was difficult for them to incorporate the 'pause' into their steps. Although words can be used to refer to the various steps and how they were to be performed, these new dancers began to acquire the skills to dance by imitating the teacher and with practice would come to move their bodies in the correct way. They would gradually unconsciously pick up the rules of the art, which may not necessarily be explicitly known even to the teacher. According to Polanyi 'these hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who surrenders himself to that extent uncritically to the imitation of another' (Polanyi 1958: 53). Geurts (2002: 50) argues that sensoriums may be different in different cultures. From her study of the Anlo-Ewe people of south-eastern Ghana, she shows that a sense of balance and bodily adaptability, termed '*seselelame*', is important for the Anlo-Ewe and as a bodily feeling is taught from an

early age. In the Pontian community, young dancers 'learn' in their body a dance 'sense' that becomes part of them. A certain sense of balance is required in order to maintain an upright stance by keeping blocks of body weight, particularly head and chest over hips. Furthermore, a certain sense of rhythm—when to pause or not to—is required for Pontian dancing, which also has to be learnt through the body. This particular way of '*sensing...*[defined] as "bodily ways of gathering information," is profoundly involved with a society's epistemology, the development of its cultural identity, and its forms of being-in-the-world' (Geurts 2002: 3, italics in the original text). In fact, the comments that Pontians make about their dance often imply that only Pontians can authentically dance Pontic dance.

The practice sessions in Adelaide also placed emphasis on practising and perfecting the bodily techniques of the dance, even for senior dancers. At one of these rehearsals, I noted some of the dance teacher's instructions:

'Bend over from the front waist but keep your shoulders firm'; 'Arms straight up'; 'Lift your feet so the steps can be seen'; 'Make your feet movements nice and clean, girls'; 'Forty-five degree turn of the head'; 'Shoulders nice and steady'; 'Look straight ahead'; 'I need to see the right foot come forward then the left one come forward'; 'Stiffen your arms'; 'Nice and sharp', 'Point your toes, not your heels; 'Don't drag your feet back but lift them.' (Field notes, 27 March 2006)

The emphasis in practice sessions was on perfecting the techniques of the bodily movement of the dance. In contrast to a one-off performance in front of an audience, mistakes could be made and the same dance could be repeated many times until its moves were correct. At rehearsal, the parts of the body were viewed as objects: shoulders were steady whereas heads were to move in a particular way, arms had to be stiff, toes pointed, and feet lifted. Dennis makes a similar point about rehearsal of police bands where the instruments and sounds are viewed as objects and musicians 'feel sensually-corporeally disconnected from their instruments' (2002: 24). She says '*There is no "feel" for band members in rehearsals*' (2002: 24, italics in the original text). In a similar way, there is no 'feel' in dance rehearsals. Although there were onlookers, such as parents and grandparents sitting to one side of the hall, they were not perceived to be an audience. The dancers did not face them or perform to them and, because there was no 'feel' in the dance, the onlookers did not respond with applause at the end of the practice sessions.

At the community function, there was an audience, which experienced choreographic dance in a different way. They saw the basic materials that were used to create these dances, such as the patterned sequence of the dance steps, rhythmic movements, slight rotations of the torso and movements of the arms and hands and with the older groups, the shimmying of the shoulders and upper body, and knew them to gesture to Ponticness. They responded by clapping to the same beat of the rhythms of the dances often as a way of encouraging the younger dancers. Because in the diaspora there is the constant concern that Pontic culture will not be retained, part of this response of the audience was pleasure in seeing the next generation dancing Pontic dance, in traditional costume with Pontic musical instruments and absorbing what it means to be Pontian. But when the older dancers performed, and particularly the senior group, the audience responded even more enthusiastically by clapping, whistling, cheering and stamping their feet. The intensity of this response increased as the dances became more energetic and the rhythms and movements more vigorous.

In fact, they did not just see dancers 'running around or twisting their bodies' (Langer 1957: 5) but, what Langer calls, 'Powers'. These are 'forces that seem to operate in the dance', the relationship between the dancers that may appear as 'powers in conflict, in balance, or in union' (1950: 226). These powers are not 'the physical forces of the dancer's muscles' (1957: 5), but are forces that form a '*dynamic image*' of the dance (1957: 5, italics in the original text). The actual physical movements of the dance are real but the dynamic image is virtual or an illusion. To the viewer, these physical movements disappear when, 'the more perfect the dance, the less [is seen of] its actualities' (Langer 1957: 6). Thus, as the actual movements become more in accord with the idea of Ponticness, the perception of the actual movements disappears and the image of Ponticness becomes apparent. In comparison with younger children who performed the steps but could not display 'the feel', the performance of the senior group was perceived to be more perfect, thus stimulating the vigorous response of the audience. At that time, '[w]hat the audience see[s], hear[s] and feel[s] are the virtual realities, the moving forces of the dance, the apparent centers of power and their emanations, their conflicts and resolutions, lift and decline, their rhythmic life' (Langer 1957: 6). This created apparition shapes and gives form to the emotions that a Pontian audience describes as the 'feel' of the dance.

This is reflected in Evagelia's reaction to seeing some of the vigorous Pontic dances. She wrote the following in an email to me:

'I wondered if one source of the 'strength' of the Pontian is from the dance. Both men's and women's dances are quite aggressive and fast paced in most instances. I know how I feel when I watch them or when I dance some of them. One feels invigorated and energised. It's a much more visceral reaction than just joy of music. It's more about the grunt and the call in the dance, the pound of the foot on the ground, the unified turn and stare of the dancers—a call to action perhaps? The deep primal drumming of the *daoúli*. I think that when you put together the stories of the genocide and a strong aggressive dance, perhaps we see that as strength in numbers and community.'

While Evagelia could say that these dances made her body feel 'invigorated' and 'energised', she could not completely describe her feelings about them. For her, the 'idea' of the emotion connected to the genocide was presented in the image or virtual entity of the dance. It was expressed by the 'grunt' of the dancers, the 'pound' of their feet and the 'stare' of their eyes. Seeing them as gesture, she gave meaning to them and perceived that the movements signified the loss of Pontos and the genocide of Pontian people. In so doing, they formed and shaped her emotions.

For Mihalis, however, 'the feel' of the dance is not just displayed in the body or in the steps. He linked it to what he called the 'soul' of the dancer or what he or she feels in their 'heart':

'A Pontian does not dance with his feet. First, his soul is supposed to dance, and then, his body and his feet...you must perform what you feel in your heart and your existence...I have seen my mother dancing. I didn't see my grandmother but I have seen other grandmothers hardly standing on their feet, but they were dancing.'

Pontians like Evagelia and Mihalis said that when they watched the 'most frenetic' to even the 'most languid' of Pontic dances (Kilpatrick 1975: 104), whether in choreographic or participatory dance mode, they detect a something that is within the dancers themselves that is expressing what it means to be Pontian. They interpret this as the 'feel' and in doing this, they 'see' and 'hear' a dynamic image of Ponticness. However, because the practised techniques of the dance produce an intense emotional response in Pontians, the audience assumes that the dancers are feeling the emotions that they are expressing through the gesture of the dance. But the dance gesture is a 'virtual' gesture. The audience actually sees it but as one 'sees' a rainbow or an image in a mirror. It does not actually exist but appears to be so. An audience may respond in an emotive way, but it is the gesture they see that shapes and gives form to their actual emotion—their idea of the 'feel' of the dance.

On the other hand, the dancers themselves experience the dance in a different way. For them, it is an embodied form, something they feel within their bodies. The physicality of Pontic dance, such as the characteristic shimmying of the upper body, the vigorous contortions of the shoulders, the leaps and the stamping are actual movements but they are experienced as the spatial patterning and kinetic energy of the dance. In the execution of them, they produce 'a new body-feeling, in which every muscular tension registers itself as something kinaesthetically new, peculiar to the dance. In a body so disposed, no movement is automatic' (Langer 1953: 203). In experiencing the dance in this way, a body-knowledge is formed that defines the dancer's understanding of what can be physically achieved in the dance. For the dancers, this is the experience of the 'Powers', a 'relation of forces' (Langer 1950: 227) where they learn what their bodies are capable of doing with others within the dance (see Dunagan 2005: 31). This may be sensed as a new body-feeling but the ability to perform the movements comes from practising the techniques of the dance.

Langer maintains that it is not possible to dance and at the same time personally feel the actual emotion attached to the dance without affecting its performance in some way. Giving the example of the ballerina Pavlova performing the 'The Dying Swan', Langer makes the point that the dancer could not actually feel sick or the emotions attached to near death. If she did she would not be able to execute the dance with the dancing expertise it requires. The dancers, therefore, cannot experience the actual intensity of emotion they are portraying and still maintain the actual practised techniques of the dance at the same time. Indeed, if they were feeling the emotions expressed in the more vigorous dances, it may have been possible to see that intensity displayed in the faces of the dancers. On the contrary, I noticed that the facial expression of the dancers did not change when they moved from a sedate dance such as *Omál* to the more vigorous ones of *Kótsari*, *Moscof*, *Létchi*, *Letchína* and *Sherranítsa*. Their faces remained composed as they concentrated on the dance itself. The specific emotion of loss that Pontians feel is not experienced by the dancers when they dance: what they say about the experience of the dance is not the same as the feeling of it at the time of the dance. This is not to say that the dancers do not respond in an emotional way, but rather it is an inchoate emotion that comes out of the kinetic experience. This is somewhat similar to musicians who experience 'a particular performative kind of emotion' (Dennis 2007: 23), which is different from that of the audience. Dennis argues that what musicians feel is 'meta-emotion'—emotion about emotion and hence a generalised emotion. After dancing

at Panagia Soumela, one of the dancers said that she had experienced a feeling that she had not felt before—‘something in me and that this felt good. Like, this is where I should be...It was quite emotional, really.’ She could not say what this emotion was but attributed what she felt to the crowds, to the way the compere introduced them, and the hype about them coming all the way from Australia. She could say afterwards that she felt something but this is not the same as what she actually felt at the moment of the dance. ‘Just to be in this country and to dance on this stage, made it surreal’, she said.

In summary then, a generalised emotion, rather than actual emotion, becomes the ‘feel’ for dancers in choreographic dance. The physical movements become virtual gestures that express ideas of emotion connected to the loss of Pontos and the genocide of its people. For the audience, the presentation of these gestures shape and give form to an inner experience of what it means to be Pontian. Hence, at a Pontian function where choreographic dance is performed, it is a presentational symbol of the loss of Pontos. This is not only formed through the execution of the dance steps, but in seeing the costumes and in hearing the sound of the musical instruments that accompany the dances.

Pontic costumes

Langer contends that in the dance, the dancers,

‘must transform the stage for the audience as well as for themselves into an autonomous, complete, virtual realm, and all motions into a play of visible forces in unbroken, virtual time...Both space and time, as perceptible factors, disappear almost entirely in the dance illusion’ (1953: 204).

In choreographic dance, Pontic costumes⁵³ play an important part in creating the transformation of the stage into an image that does not physically exist but appears to do so.

The costumes themselves consist of certain kinds of fabric and other materials. When these basic materials are fashioned into a particular style of clothing they are not only recognised and understood as specifically men’s and women’s Pontic costumes but they also signify Ponticness. In this, they become ‘materials memories’

⁵³ Following Eicher and Sumberg I see such costumes as ethnic dress, that is, ‘those items, ensembles and modifications of the body that capture the past of the members of a group, the items of tradition that are worn and displayed to signify cultural heritage’ (Eicher & Sumberg 1995: 298).

(Terdiman 1985: 20) of Pontos. Qureshi (2000), following Terdiman, argues that such memories have an 'inherent conservatism' that 'literally embody the past in the present' (2000: 811).

Pontic costumes reflect this conservatism. While there would have once been a variety of styles of dress, most performers wear only one particular style of costume that has come to be recognised as Pontian. Mostly women in Pontic choreographic dance wear identical costumes that often extend to uniform colour and style. Generally, the women's costumes represent the traditional costume of the *zoupoúna*, a formal garment worn by Pontic Greek women of the coastal and urban centres of Pontos. The name of the costume is derived from a distinctive garment, a *zoupoúna*, a long-sleeved cloak-like overcoat that is Byzantine in origin. It also included wide pantaloons and short shirt, a velvet jacket with gold or silver braids and a head ornament called a *tápla*. Older women added a striped, silk apron or replaced the short jacket with a short or long fur-trimmed jacket. A scarf worn around the middle of a woman was worn high up on the body to give support to the breasts and to hold the garments together. An indication of the wealth of a woman was the expensive material of her *zoupoúnas* or her jewellery. There are other costumes from other regions but these are rarely worn in performance dance. One of these is the *tsókha*, a festive costume of the Santa region consisting of a long, felt overcoat worn over two or three different *zoupoúnas*. On top of these garments was added a small felt apron and a tied scarf on the head. Another costume is that of the Matsoúka region. This is a shorter and tighter costume with a vest over the *zoupoúna* covered by a simple jacket, a woollen or cotton scarf tied around the waist, woollen socks and with two tightly wrapped scarves on the head completing the costume (Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 69). Men also wear a distinctive traditional Pontic costume, which is comprised of various items of clothing—the *zípka*, a pair of trousers tight around the legs with wide folds in the seat, a shirt, a vest, a sash, a short overcoat, low-cut shoes, long knitted or leather spats and a unique headband called a *koukoula* or *pashlík*, which can be tied around the head in various ways (Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 70–1). Depending on the occasion, the *zípkas* are complemented by various accessories and jewellery such as a silver chain and talismans and a tobacco pouch. At times, other items, such as a gunpowder box, a bullet cartridge belt, a leather belt with a sheath for a big knife and a pistol are added.

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Plate 23: Traditional Pontic women's costume

These costumes form part of the dynamic dance image that is perceived to give a visual portrayal of how dances might have once looked when danced in Pontos, where the costumes were worn as part of everyday life. When these costumes are worn in the choreograph mode, there is the illusion of a conflation of time and space between what was in Pontos and what is now, forming an image of a continuous, seemingly unbroken timeline. In reality, by the end of the 19th century, women, particularly the wealthier ones living in areas near the coast, began to wear western dress. Traditional costumes were retained as it was customary for a bride to provide two of these in her dowry: one a wedding costume with a veil and the other the formal traditional costume. Men in the main cities of Pontos, by the beginning of the 20th century, also 'had already adopted in part or in whole the European way of dressing' but their traditional dress continued to be worn 'mainly by young Pontians

living in agricultural areas and to a lesser extent by those living in the cities' (Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 70). By the time, Pontians came to Greece both men and women had adopted a European way of dressing, either in part or in whole, and the distinctive traditional Pontic costumes were reserved for choreographic dance. Thus, the performance in Pontic costumes reinforces a particular conservatism whereby the past costumes continue to be embedded, as well as embodied, in the present.

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Plate 24: Traditional Pontic men's costume



Plate 25: The *tsókha* of the Santa region

Plate 26: The costume of the Matsouíka region

This embodiment of the past is sensed in different ways in choreographic dance. For the audience, the costumes are sensed from a visual perspective. The colour and texture of the luxurious silks of the *zoupoúnas* are reminders of the wealth of the Pontic Greeks of the coastal Trapezounda region. By contrast, when other costumes are worn a different image is presented. For example, the heaviness of the Santa costumes or the texture of the woollen socks of the Matsouka costumes reflects the low temperatures of these mountainous regions. For the dancers, the embodiment of the past is sensed in a different way. Just as musical instruments are extensions of their players, as Dennis (2007: 117) argues, so, too, the costumes are experi-

enced in a physical way and become part of the dancing body. The performing dancer's body is different from the rehearsal body. It has to take into account the layers of garments and their weight and design, which can restrict the bodily movement of the dancers and how they can execute the dance steps. For instance, when the Veria Black Sea club obtained original costumes from the Pontos region they found that the bodices of the women's costumes were very tight in order to support the breasts. For women, modesty demanded that in the dance they did not fling their arms about but kept them close to their sides; this was reflected in the design of the clothes. As the costumes cover the dancing body or are attached to it they become part of the dancing body that embodies the absence of Pontos while they also sensually presence its absence. Thus, for the dancers the Pontic costumes 'as performative, embodied practices' (Qureshi 2000: 811) become 'materials memories' (Terdiman 1985: 20) through the medium of sight and touch.

Referring to musical instruments, Qureshi argues that music 'becomes as much a political tool as it is a language of feelings' (2000: 811). A similar argument can be made for costumes as repositories of the memories of the past and the conflicts associated with it. When Ponticness is being portrayed in monuments, plaques or logos it is often depicted as a man dressed in traditional costumes (see Plate 22). Sometimes on plaques or logos, only the distinctive man's head scarf is depicted (see Plate 30). Men dressed in traditional Pontic costumes portray the Pontian warrior and evoke the mythical person of Akritas who has become synonymous with Pontian fighters. Male dancers in traditional men's costumes with their bandoliers and knives are visual reminders of armed conflicts with the Turks over many centuries and of fierce Pontian fighters. These ideas and emotions encapsulate the essence of the Pontian male and excite audiences, particularly when vigorous dances are performed.

Thus, in combining movements and costumes, choreographic dance evokes a passionate response from the audience that helps to transform it into dance as gesture. Dressed in traditional costumes, the dancing body materialises the past and so the costumed bodies become not only the 'repositories of cultural meaning-memory' (Dennis 2007: 163), but as they are incorporated into the dance gesture express the 'feel' of Ponticness.

Participatory dance

Many of my informants first learnt to dance as part of community celebrations in northern Greece. Whereas choreographic dance is instrumental in shaping the feel of the loss of Pontos, participatory dance and the emotions it evokes, shape the feeling of the the absence of the way of life in Greece.

Participatory and choreographic dance modes differ from each other in two significant ways. First, dancers wear everyday clothes for participatory dancing and not traditional costumes as in the choreographic form. Regardless of this, the dance remains as 'a perceptible, self-identical whole' (Langer 1966: 7) that is recognised as Pontian. Dance without costumes indicates that it belongs to the present time. Secondly, there is no audience for the participatory mode. At the Pontian dinner dance, as at many others similar functions I attended, the audience who showed such an enthusiastic response to the choreographic dance later became the dancers in the participatory form of the dance. The basic materials of the dance remained the same. It had the same rhythms and bodily movements and many of the same dances even though the most popular were the slow Pontic dances—*Dipát*, *Omál* and *Tík*. Each of these dances lasted much longer than the choreographed versions and with the steps being repeated over and over again sometimes a trance-like appearance came over the dancers. However, even when the vigour of the dance increased in such dances as *Kótsari* and *Tík Tonyia* as the culmination of some segments, this did not stir up the same intense emotions as when they, as the audience, had responded to the performance of these in the choreographic mode. It was as if the energetic, emotional response was absorbed into the dance and expressed in a different way.

Much of Langer's study refers to the classical art forms of dance such as ballet, creative dance or ballroom dancing, all forms of dancing that include an audience of some kind. She does refer briefly to what she called tribal dance, which she says includes 'all persons present, leaving no spectators at all' (Langer 1953: 195). To a certain extent what Langer says about tribal dance can be related to participatory dance. Although not all join in the dance at a Pontian community functions, those remaining apart from the dance turn their attention to socialising with others and do not act as an audience for those dancing. Nevertheless, participatory dance, like all dance, 'is essentially addressed to sight' (Langer 1953: 196) and despite the fact that the dancers never see the performance of the dance in its entirety, their imagi-

nation allows them to 'see' the dance 'sufficiently' 'to grasp it as a whole.' The dancer, Langer says,

'with his own body-feeling...understands the gestic forms that are its interwoven, basic elements. He cannot see his own form as such, but he *knows* his appearance...He sees *the world in which his body dances*' (Langer 1953: 197).

Because gesture can be both visual and a 'muscular phenomenon' (Langer 1953: 196), gesture may be made in terms of visual or kinaesthetic appearance. The kinetic energy of the dance, then, is the major way in which dancers experience the participatory dance mode. However, if dance is a presentational symbolic art-form that gives form to human feelings, what feelings were being shaped and how were they expressed in this participatory dance mode?

As argued earlier, dancers in the choreographic mode do not experience, at the time of dance, the emotions that they are perceived to be displaying. So, too, dancers in the participatory mode cannot experience the intense feelings associated with loss of the peoples and place of Pontos, and the absence of Greece, and continue to dance. Evagelia told me that her father would rarely dance at community functions. This was because on the occasions he got up to dance, he could only stay on the floor for a few minutes before he was in tears and was unable to continue. She believed that this was because the dance, for her father, evoked the emotion and memories of the genocide. In a similar vein, informants told me that when Pontians visited the monastery of Panagia Soumela in Pontos, some were so overcome with emotion that they were not able to dance. Referring to the experience of dancing choreographic dance in Greece and participatory dance in Pontos, Athina said, 'Here in Greece it is dance, not a feeling,' but she said that when she visited Pontos it felt as if her body was in pieces.

As with dancers who perform choreographed routines, dancers in the participatory mode of dance have learnt the characteristics of Pontic dance—the steps of the dance, its basic rhythms and movements of the body. They too, experience the dance as kinetic energy and spatial patterning that not only constitutes an embodied knowledge of what it is to dance Pontic dance but which takes them into the immediacy of performing (see Langer 1953: 196). However, for many older people who participate in the dance, the experience of learning to dance is different from that of many of those who learnt to dance in Australia and hence, their embodied experi-

ence of the dance is different. They were not taught in practice mode, in classes where particular parts of their bodies were objectified, but they learnt as young people by participating with others of their community in their village celebrations in Greece.

Functions, such as the Pontian dinner dance, are attempts to recreate in some way the celebrations of Greek rural village life in which participatory dance was an important feature. Despina, who has been in Australia for over fifty years, recalled how she danced from a very early age in her village in northern Greece. She said:

‘At night time, to amuse ourselves my father would sing (we could not afford to have a *lyra*) and our whole family would dance. We danced the usual dances—*Tík*, *Omál*, *Dipát*, *Kótsari* and *Karsilamá*. The neighbours would often say to us how they were happy to see us all dancing. Always during the summer there would be festivals where there would be dancing. We would go to different villages or people would come to ours. I can remember my mother and grandmother dancing on occasions such as weddings. These days are gone and will not come back again.’

In 2006 in northern Greece, I caught a glimpse of how this might have been for those like Despina. A festival at the village of Agios Bartholomaeus was held to celebrate the feast day of the saint after whom the village is named. The Adelaide Pontian dancers had been invited to perform there. When we arrived it was late afternoon and already there were some men sitting around tables outside the taverna. Gradually, more and more families arrived. Some of these were local people, others came from adjacent villages. The festival celebrations took place on and around a roadway adjacent to the tavern with chairs and long trestles set out under the trees. By the time the dancers were ready to perform, many of the older people were sitting on chairs placed in a semi-circle waiting for the performance. As well, there were young children running around and others riding their bikes in and out of the gathering people. After the performance, it was time for people of all ages to dance; first the older men got up, followed by the women. Although some children continued to ride their bikes around the village square, most children even as young as two or three years of age, joined in the dance. These children were not segregated from adults but danced alongside them. Sometimes parents or grandmothers took the hands of the young children, or sometimes they were placed in between their siblings. Often they were tugged one way and then the other as they watched, copied the steps of the other dancers and tried to keep up with them. But although no adult was formally teaching them, they were not only learning the steps of the dance

but they were gradually absorbing through of the embodied practices of dance how the dance gesture was expressive of what it means to be Pontian.

In participatory dance, the body-feeling is experienced as a generalised emotion and gestures to the sociality of dance. This is shaped by memory. In reply to my question about what he feels in the dance, Mihalis said that when he starts to dance it brings back all his memories. He continued:

‘...as soon as I get into the dance, the first thing that gets into my mind a picture that’s my village where my mother, my father were dancing that simple dance. And then all the memories come of all those people united, they call to each other, they lived together, they suffered together, they helped each other, they shared the happiness and the hard times together, they felt the necessity to exchange with their friends or their neighbours they lived with. So all those memories they come in my mind and I say first of all what I feel er something like I’m getting warm, gets into my body and...and I’m feeling something, something which brings me upside down and I have to concentrate on that picture where I’ve seen my parents, I’ve seen my village where they were there, and the picture in there is all those people there in that particular time when they were entertaining themselves and they left everything behind, all the differences if they had any between them, all the difficult times, all the suffering they had through the years. That particular time it was only for the entertainment, they are giving their soul to the dance and with that picture it drags all the history behind it...What they suffered, where they came from, how they used to live, how hard their life was, what they did.’

For Mihalis his emotions were aroused through the memories he had of dance in his village but he was not able to put these exactly into words. The ‘discursive’ symbols of language (Langer 1960) were unable to exactly describe his feelings when he danced. It was ‘something like’ he was ‘getting warm’; seemed to get into his body; and bring him ‘upside down’. But what he described were bodily sensations rather than the emotional feeling itself. Rather than concentrating on that ‘something’ he turned his attention to remembering his village and how his parents danced. For him, in the ‘presentational’ art symbols (Langer 1960), the dance ‘drags’ into the present the memories of his parents and the way they danced in his village and their struggle to survive in Greece. Rather than a presence of the loss of Pontos, as in choreographic dance, the participatory mode evokes the memories and emotions that are connected to the social nature of Pontic dance. Older Pontians, particularly those who learnt to dance in Greek villages remember the physicality of dancing with their parents and grandparents. It is this physicality of participatory dance that

helps to shape the 'feel' of Ponticness and incorporates the absence of the presence of Greece.

This feeling of sociality is shaped through the particular mechanism of dance where dancers 'attend' to their own bodies 'in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others' (Csordas 1993: 138).

'Because we are not isolated subjectivities trapped within our bodies, but share an intersubjective milieu with others, we must also specify that a somatic mode of attention means not only attention to and with one's own body, but includes attention to the bodies of others' (1993: 139).

This is particularly so in participatory dance where it is danced with others within a circular formation. According to Sachs (1937), the circle dance is the oldest dance form, one that Langer claims 'divides the sphere of holiness from that of profane existence' (1953: 191). Some traces of the ancient nature of dance remains in Pontic dance. According to Agtzidis et al, 'Pontians believed that the circle had the ability to protect anything inside it against evil spirits' (2003: 81). Nowadays, for Pontians the closed circle differentiates those in the circle from those outside it and promotes a sense of their separate identity. 'Pontians', one of my informants said, 'are a very closed community and strangers are not included readily.' Thus, the circle gives a tangible form of the sense of community for those within it. They are able to see who is in the dance and to make eye contact or smile in recognition of them. It makes communication between the dancers closer and more immediate than dancing in a straight line, as mostly happens in choreographic dance in front of an audience.

The sense of touch is a major way that dancers attend to the embodied presence of others. The dancers in most Pontic dances are in close proximity to each other. They join hands by placing their right hand on top of the left hand of the person next to them and keep their upper arms close to their bodies with their elbows bent, allowing the lower arms to move backwards and forwards. In the more vigorous dances they raise and lower their arms in time with the quickened tempo. The sense of touch, however, where the 'skin mediates between the body and the surrounding environment' (Rodaway 1994: 42), is not only achieved through the fingers. Rodaway (1994) and Fisher (1997) argue for the use of the term 'haptic sense' to describe a fuller kind of communication between a person and the world than a sense of touch usually implies. The haptic sense comprise,

'...the tactile, kinaesthetic and proprioceptive senses...[and] functions by contiguity, contact and resonance. The haptic sense renders the surfaces of the body porous, being perceived at once inside, on the skin's surface, and in external space. It enables the perception of weight, pressure, balance, temperature, vibration and presence' (Fisher 1997: 4-11).

In Pontic dances, this sense of touch occurs through the perception of movements within their own dancing bodies and in relation to other dancing bodies. The musical instruments not only set the rhythm of the dance, their sound and vibration 'renders the surfaces of the body porous' and appear to enter the dancers' bodies. In some Pontic dances, the dancers' hands are placed on the shoulders of the person next to them intertwining their arms at shoulder level. Here they experience more than the touch of the person's fingers next to them: they feel the shimmying of the upper torso of those next to them. When I was dancing Pontic dance, I became aware of the weights that the dancing bodies support: the pressure brought to bear on the arms and hands by other dancers either side of me; the sense of balance in relation to various dancing surfaces; as well as the awareness of the rise in temperature of the dancing bodies and the quickness of the breath as the tempo of the dances increases.

The haptic sense, however, is more than corporeal positioning. Acknowledging that 'to touch is always to be touched' (Rodaway 1994: 41), Wise further contends that 'touch is one of the most intimate and reciprocal of senses [and]...can evoke a whole gamut of emotions and associations' (2010: 917-937). Through the haptic sense, Pontic dance is the 'experience of embodied sociality' (Lyon & Barbalet 1994: 48).

'[M]ovements are never simply individual ones; they are always associative and therefore communicative, a process in which emotion is ever implicated' (Lyon 1995: 256).

Reflecting on the past as well as the present, Mihalis says:

We old people, how do we feel it when I see our youngsters dancing? I bring in my memory the old days when I've seen my grandmother dancing, my grandfather, my mother, my father, the villagers, all, and then of course when you get old when you see the new group you remember yourself, you remember your age...and say how we danced, how we entertained ourselves...and shared the happiness together.'

In the dance, therefore, this experience of embodied sociality stretches over generation and shapes the feel of what it means to be Pontian. The kinds of festivals in village settings where dance played a key role in social and religious celebrations can no longer be experienced by Pontians who live in the diaspora. As Despina said, 'These days are gone and will not come back again.' Nevertheless, for older members of the migrant community when they dance the same dances, to the same musical instruments as they had in their villages, the movements, rhythms and patterns of the dances not only evoke memories of the past but express through their bodies the sociality of dance as a way of expressing the 'feel' of being Pontian. This notion of Ponticness, however, continues to be transmitted to the next generation in a Pontic milieu in the diaspora. Although the children and grandchildren of Pontian migrants might be taught the steps and movements of the different dances for choreographed routines at formal dance classes, when they join with others in participatory dance at community functions, they can 'feel' as an embodied experience, the image of the inner expression of the social nature of Ponticness.

Sound of the lyra

The high-pitched sounds of the *lyra* introduced and accompanied all the Pontic choreographic and participatory dances I witnessed. Other regional Greek dancers often danced to pre-recorded music, but Pontians always danced to the live music of the *lyra*. Whereas costumes form part of choreographic dance only, the music of the dances is common to both modes of dance. Although it was one of a range of musical instruments that were played in Pontos, the *lyra*⁵⁴ is now the most recognised and most loved of all the Pontian instruments and it makes the dancers ready to 'feel' Ponticness. Because its sound does not carry far, it was often played within the circle of dancers. Now it often needs to be amplified if it is played at a distance from the dancers as it was at the dinner dance. The other instrument that is most often played in conjunction with the *lyra* is the *daoúli*, which is used to keep the beat of the dances. Other instruments were played in different parts of Pontos to accompany the dances, such as: the *clarino* (clarinet); the *zourná*⁵⁵ (woodwind instrument); the *touloúm* (bagpipe); the *kemené* (a five-stringed instrument larger than but of the same shape as the *lyra*); and the *óuti* (oud) (see Agtzidis, Vlassis, Zournatzidis & Kalpidou 2003: 74–78).

⁵⁴ Also known as the Pontic *kementjé*.

⁵⁵ Vasilis Asbestas of the Black Sea Club of Veria said that it is now coming to be recognised that the *zourna* would have once been more widely used than the *lyra* to accompany the dances in Pontos in the open air because its sound was more intense and carried further (Field notes, 5 September 2011).

NOTE:

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Plate 27: The *daoúli* and *lyra* musicians

Many informants spoke about the effect that the *lyra* has on them. One of the young Adelaide dancers, Elisavet, told me how she reacts when she hears the *lyra*. Something inside her, she said, makes her want to dance. Elisavet has been dancing with the dance group for six years but she has heard the *lyra* since she was a baby when she was taken to Pontian parties. Now when she hears the *lyra* she feels 'goose bumps' on her skin. Referring to a bodily sensation to describe a feeling she has within her, she said, 'You feel like dancing. You want to let it out.'

Speaking to Voula in Adelaide about joining in with the participatory dance at community events, I said, 'So, what happens when you hear the *lyra*?' 'Oh,' she said, and her eyes lit up, 'We all want to get up and dance'.

'So the moment we hear it, we all want to get up. You can't sit through it. It doesn't matter how tired you are, or...anything. It is when it is this kind of dancing, the Pontian, everybody is up.'

Similarly, Elly in Greece remarked: 'Our legs might be hurting but the sound of the *lyra* makes us want to dance. We have something inside us.'

Another informant, Marianna, said, 'If I hear Pontian music I fire up. I don't know why I fire up, I really do fire up, truly.' Marianna told me that, as a child, she had not been taken to traditional Pontian functions but the first time as a young woman she heard the music she thought, 'This is it, this is me, this is my thing, this is my music. I understand this.' She said that her husband, whose family comes from another part of Greece, dismisses the *lyra* saying, 'Oh, that screeching stuff.' But she says, 'Can't you hear it? Can't you hear the song in there? Can't you hear the story, the fight, the determination, fierceness? It's just so moving, I can't just keep still if I hear it.'

As the quintessential Pontic musical instrument for Pontians nowadays, the *lyra* has become the

'material repositories of past meanings, and their visual representations serve to define sonority through historically situated social practices and aesthetic codes...In Western art music discourse, the historicized relationship between an instrument's affective, embodied, and social meanings and the discursive representations of such meanings is what endows an instrument with a standard musical identity' (Qureshi 2000: 811).

Qureshi further asserts that instruments have meaning that is acquired through cultural knowledge. 'To one enculturated in Western music, the sound of a trombone may send shivers of awe of divine power, a horn sound may evoke the coolness and mystery of forests or a harp the erotic, feminised glitter of high society' (Qureshi 2000: 810). For Pontians, the *lyra* has become the instrument that most encapsulates the 'material repositories of past meanings' as it has survived exile and migration. Its particular sound condenses Pontian memories and experiences and makes the dancers ready to form the feeling of what it means to be Pontian.

While the dancers danced to the music of the *lyra*, they did not express the music of the *lyra* in their dance. Langer points out that there is a false assumption that the 'dancer expresses in gesture what he feels as the emotional content of the music' and is, therefore, 'dancing the music' (Langer 1953: 169). Langer argues that music is a separate created work of art form from that of dance which, she argues, is not 'a gestural rendering of musical forms' (Langer 1953: 169). While Pontians have a great love for the *lyra*, they do not 'dance the music' of the *lyra*. The *lyra* is an adjunct to the dance. It invites them to dance by beginning to elicit the feelings connected to Ponticness. It does not form the feeling as the dance does, but its sound begins to make the dancers ready to present the idea that expresses a life of emo-

tion and the feeling of what it means to be Pontian. As one of my informants described it:

‘You are a Pontian. The Pontian dances first with his heart and soul, and then with his body...When you hear the *lyra* you must dance from the inside out.’

Conclusion

Both the participatory and choreographic modes of Pontic dance play an important role at Pontian community functions. Through the dances, distinctive costumes and the musical instruments, these dances not only connect Pontians to their social, geographical and historical background but also gesture to loss that has been shaped prior to the dance by the effects of genocide, exile and migration. Although Pontians assert that it is necessary to have the ‘feel’ to dance Pontic dances this is an experience of an inner feeling of which they have a tacit knowledge and can only describe by reference to the outward body.

In choreographic dance, both dancers and audience might share the same underlying emotion of the loss of Pontos but there is a difference between how the audience and dancers experience this emotion. In the performance the dancers are engrossed with the actual bodily movements of the dance, the textures of the costumes and the rhythm and tempo of the music and experience this feeling as kinetic energy. Their response is a generalized emotion. The audience’s enthusiastic response is of a different nature. They see the actual components of the dance, but ‘see’ and ‘understand’ them as an emotional display of Ponticness.

For migrant Pontians, participatory dance, on the other hand, through the intersection of memory, emotions and embodied practices shapes the feeling of the absence of Greece. In the physicality of the dance, it comes to embody the communal nature of Ponticness. The ‘feel’ of the dance, therefore, becomes a physical way that presents to Pontians the inner sense of what it means to be Pontian when time and time again dance is performed by the community at Pontian functions. The emotions that are evoked by touch and through memories are not individual but have a sociality that condenses the sense of absence and makes it present. It is this sense of absence that return visits seek to address when old and young make short-term visits to Greece, which is the focus of the next chapter.

6 Nostalgic visits: presenting the absence of Greece

Introduction

It was early morning in Athens on another clear-blue-sky day with the temperature already hovering around the 30° Celsius mark. I was with the dancing group of the South Australian Pontian Brotherhood on their two-week tour of Greece. The dancing group comprised eleven dancers one of whom was the dance teacher, and a *daoúli* player. The rest of the tour party were parents, grandparents, siblings and friends. I had persuaded the organisers to allow myself and my husband to be included on the tour, making a party of thirty-three people in all. On this day we were assembling in the foyer of the hotel waiting for the bus to arrive to take us on another day tour. This time we would travel for two hours to spend the day at the ancient fortress city of Nafplion, a former capital of Greece on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese peninsula.

Eventually the bus arrived, and we made our way on to it—the older members of the tour spread out in the front seats of the bus and the young people sitting in pairs at the back recovering from visiting clubs the night before. While the leader of the tour knew that he would not be able to prevent them from attending nightclubs when in Athens, he, however, let it be known that he was cross and disappointed with them for sleeping and not taking in the sights along the way. Once at Nafplion, the group again divided into two with most people choosing not to climb up the some thousand steps to the first level of the citadel but to spend the time at the beach. Those of the second generation who had not been to Greece before felt obliged to engage with the history of the place in a physical way and climbed to the top of the citadel. Apart from a remarkable view over the harbour, the major attraction of the climb was to see the place where Kolokotronis, one of the heroes in the 19th century Greek War of Independence against the Turks, was imprisoned.

What then was the purpose of this trip to Nafplion? The Pontian Greek dancers from Adelaide had been invited to dance at a number of venues in northern Greece, the most important of these being the monastery of Panagia Soumela. They were to perform there on the 14th and 15th August for the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. As a focal point for Pontians, many dance groups from all over Greece and

from overseas are invited to perform there at that time. That the Adelaide group had an invitation to perform at this feast was seen as something special and it formed the focus for all their prior practice sessions. Apart from these performances at the monastery, the dancers were to perform at other venues in northern Greece: the village of Agia Bartholomaeus, a festival at Kria Vrissi and at Langada. So, if the focus of the tour was for the dancers to dance at Pontian events and to link in with Pontian culture in Greece, why was the dance group taken to Nafplion and to other sites of broader Greek historical and religious significance? Why were these other places included in the itinerary of the tour and why was the leader so annoyed with the younger participants when they did not take sufficient interest in these? In this chapter, I show that some of the answers to these questions lie in the way that such visits are nostalgic and manifest the presence of the absence of Greece in various ways for the different age groups on the tour.

The tour members comprised two main groups. Twelve members of the party were generally older, first generation Greek migrants to Australia. They were parents, grandparents and family friends of the dancers. All had been born in Greece and most had migrated to Australia as young people. Apart from one couple, most had returned to Greece before. Nevertheless, for all of these first generation migrants, the tour was a nostalgic return visit to their birth places.

The second group of nineteen were 'second generation'⁵⁶ Australian Pontic Greeks. They comprised four parents, eleven dancers with three of their siblings and a friend. While it is accepted that the term 'first generation' applies to those who migrated, what constitutes 'second generation' is problematic when considering the status of young children who migrated with their parents. Although there are complexities in its meaning, I adopt Baldassar's classification that the 'second generation is generally defined as those born to the first generation in the host country, and it also usually includes individuals who migrated as young children' (Baldassar 2001: 3). These are children up to the age of twelve who were educated and socialised in Australia (see Burnley 1986: 66; Price & Zubrzycki 1962). Out of the nineteen that I term 'second generation' on the tour, five came as young children and thus had their primary education in Australia. These second generation migrants on the tour, were, therefore,

⁵⁶ Even though, strictly speaking, five of this group could be termed 'third generation', I will include them in the second generation group because their diasporic experience is similar to that group.

‘situated between a variety of different, often competing generational, ideological, and moral reference points, including those of their parents, their grandparents, and their own real and imagined perspectives about their multiple homelands’ (Levitt 2009: 1238).

But I never heard any of the second generation refer to Greece as their homeland. As the birthplaces for most of them were in Australia, they did not consider they were returning home rather than they were returning to the home places of their parents or grandparents. Even though eleven of the ‘second generation’ group had visited Greece before, many as young children with their parents, this tour was not a nostalgic return visit for them. Nevertheless, the tour was organised in such a way that it would foster in the younger members this sense of nostalgia. First generation members of the tour sought to do this by taking the second generation to historical and religious sites as well as to the places where they would dance. In doing this, the first generation wanted their children and grandchildren to feel the same longing for and yearning to return to Greece as they had. The tour leader, therefore, was angry and disappointed because the second generation did not appear to be absorbing the same kind of nostalgia that he felt about Greece. In fact, the nostalgia, which the first generation felt and wanted to pass on to their children, was different from the nostalgia that the second generation would come to feel. Consequently, because the nature of nostalgia differs for the two groups, the absence of Greece was presented in differing ways.

Nostalgic returns of first generation Pontian migrants

The word ‘nostalgia’ has taken on different meanings over time (see Davis 1979; Lowenthal 1985; Stewart, K 1988; Wilson 2005). First used in 1688, the word was coined by Johannes Hofer when he combined two Greek words ‘*nostos*, to return home and *algia*, a painful condition—thus meaning a painful yearning to return home’ (Davis 1979: 1). Initially, it described a phenomenon where ‘once away from their native land, some people languished, wasted away, and even perished’ (Lowenthal 1985: 10). From this time on, nostalgia was viewed as homesickness, a physical disease, which doctors thought could be fatal (see Starobinski & Kemp 1966: 95). By the beginning of the 20th century, nostalgia began to be perceived as a mental disease and so moved into the realm of psychiatry. By the late 20th century, the word has ‘a pejorative connotation: the word implies the useless yearning for a world or for a way of life from which one has been irrevocably severed’

(Starobinski & Kemp 1966: 101). It has often become ‘the universal catchword for looking back’ (Lowenthal 1985: 4). But there is a difference between remembering the past and nostalgia. The nostalgic person not only remembers but ‘conjures up images of a previous time when life was “good”’ (Wilson 2005: 21). Nostalgia,

‘...is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love, and the like, in sum, any or several of the *positive* affects of being. Nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative—for example, unhappiness, frustration, despair, hate, shame, abuse’ (Davis 1979: 14, italics in the original text).

This ‘good’ time is often connected with the home place of one’s youth (Wilson 2005: 22) but whereas it is possible to return to the physical place of one’s home, it is impossible to return to the time when it was good to be there. Particularly for first generation migrants, there is also the sad realisation that loss has not only occurred over of time but over space as well, a loss that cannot be repaired. This is highlighted by actually being in Greece: by travelling through the land; sensing the heat, the sights, smells, sounds and tastes of Greece; meeting family and friends; and experiencing the religious milieu. This all-encompassing experience is out of the normal everyday routine. It requires planning, a certain period of leisure time as well as an outlay of money. Because such visits are often in holiday mode, when they are over they also are perceived positively as a time ‘when life was good’. Yet despite this, they do not take one back to a past time of one’s youth or even to the past time of a good holiday. Thus, these visits often create the nostalgic yearning to return but because one is not able to go back in time, nostalgia is filled with an ever-present sense of the absence of the absent.

In the first years after their migration to Australia, because of limited financial resources, first generation migrants mostly were not able to make frequent return visits. However, because air travel is now relatively affordable and safe and because many first generation migrants are retired from full-time employment, Greek people are able to make short-term return visits. Some go every two years or even more frequently. Dimitris has the opportunity to go to Greece more than the customary biennial visits. He migrated in the late 1960s, but he said that he has probably returned twice every year for the past fifteen years. I asked him why he wants to return so often. He said:

‘I ask myself that. We all love Australia but I reckon when you grow somewhere and you actually enjoyed yourself where you [were], you can never forget your memo-

ries, isn't it. I could go around the world...There is no country around the world I haven't been [to]...Why [do] I go back to Greece? I think Greece is still my home. I wouldn't live in Greece, put it that way...I don't know. Maybe because I still haven't broke away. You know. Is it because I have good memories? Is it because I love Greece? Is it because I'm Greek? I don't know. What makes me go back there? I haven't got anyone there. Ah, when I say I haven't got anyone, I have [my wife's] parents but in any other way, people wouldn't see that as a reason to go back twice or three times a year...Why do I keep going back to Greece? I don't know, maybe because I am still a village boy. I don't know maybe I haven't broken away yet. That's why [I retain] my accent because I never actually broke away to come back here and mentally change. Something keeps pulling me there. I go there and stay three or four weeks, and I have had enough.'

Regardless of the fact that he has his own family, his parents and all his siblings living nearby in Adelaide, he nevertheless, feels an urge to return to Greece and particularly to his village. Dimitris goes back to what he calls 'home' but in fact his return visits are nostalgic ones where he attempts to go back to the place of his youth and the times of his 'good memories'. But he finds that he is unable to do this and leaves after three or four weeks only to be 'pulled' back to that place at a later date to seek again that elusive time.

Of the thirty-one Greek members on the tour to Greece in 2006, twenty-nine were of Pontian background and came from or could trace their families to villages in the north of Greece. Because the main focus of the tour was in this region, almost everyone had a chance to meet with extended family members and to visit their former villages, which most of them took the opportunity to do either during or after the official tour was over. This aspect of the tour was happily anticipated, their memories stirred through recalling past sensual pleasures. During the flight to Greece, Anastasia told me that she was looking forward to meeting her sisters and returning to her village. She said that she liked to stay there because it was quiet and the air was fresh. 'When you wake up you can hear the fowls in the morning', she said. Iosif was returning after leaving Greece when he was fifteen and a half years of age. At the time he was working in Thessaloniki, and although he does not remember much about his village, he told me that the area had a lot of water and many different sorts of fruit were grown there—apples, pears and peaches. 'You can smell the delicious apples when you drive along the road,' he said.

But there is a difference between the yearning to return to a remembered place and the reality of the visit to it. Often, because of the inability to return to the time and place of one's youth, the presence of an absence is experienced. Nina had not returned to Greece since she migrated to Australia when she was eleven years of age and was eagerly looking forward to returning to her village. The tour with the Pontian dancers was an opportunity for her and her husband to take their children to their former villages. Nina and her husband stayed in her village for eight days. On her return to Australia, Nina told me that early every morning she would enjoy leaving the house where she was staying and wander about the village. People would speak to her and ask her if she was new. When she told them who she was they would remember her parents but they could not recognise her because she was very young when she migrated to Australia. However, she remembered where her home had been and recognised many of her neighbours. Her godmother who is now in her eighties still lives in the village. Nina said that it was very emotional meeting her again and spent a lot of time with her, 'kissing her for all the years she missed seeing her'.

Nina said that her village had changed a lot and while she vaguely remembered some of the places from her childhood it was 'like a dream'. Her parents' house belonged to her uncle and after they left, it fell into disrepair and has since been demolished. So there was no building for Nina to return to, but there was a big tree which she could remember from forty years ago, still growing on the property. Nina showed me a copy of an old photograph that she was given in Greece that shows the tree as it was in 1964. The photograph showed Nina with her two sisters and her mother stringing tobacco leaves together to be dried, with the tree and the house where they lived in the background. She said that she can remember that the tree used to have a hole in it—and indicated that place on the photograph—where she and her brother used to hide things. The hole has now gone as the tree has grown. 'Now it is different', she said. When she saw the tree she cried. 'Next to the tree I was so emotional,' she said and added that it was more distressing for her than she expected. In seeing how the tree had grown, Nina became aware particularly of the effects of change. Thus, in becoming aware of her loss over time and place, Nina's journey was indeed a nostalgic one—a visit that had been joyfully longed for but one that became tinged with pain. It brought home to her the realisation that while she could return to the village of her birthplace, the visit could not compensate for all the time she had been away from it.

First generation migrants become aware of how time brings about perceived changes in the way people behave compared with how they remember their behaviour from their youth. In Adelaide, Evangelos told me that he had spent eighteen months renovating his father's house in Greece, making it like an 'Australian house, with a separate bathroom.' At a later time, he said that he had put this Greek home on the market. When I asked Evangelos why he did that and whether he would consider living in Greece, he told me that he could not live in Greece because the Greek people there are different from the Greeks in Australia. When pushed further on this, he told me that the Greeks in Greece have lost 'respect.' Evangelos explained that when he was growing up there, people would help each other. For instance, if a bus came with a woman on board, she would hardly have to ask someone to go to her family and ask someone to bring the donkey. He said, 'He would have already gone and done it. But nowadays, people say, "Do it yourself!" Besides, now the cost of living had gone up in Greece since the introduction of the euro.' Evangelos then said that the trip that they were making with the Pontian dancers would be his last one back to Greece. He said, 'When I leave, I hurt. All my time in Australia which I love, but I can't forget...I can't forget the way my father brought me [up].' He was quite definite about not returning and became quite emotional, wiping away his tears. In renovating his father's house, Evangelos attempted to hold on to Greece even though the renovations were reminiscent of an Australia he knew. Once back in Australia he remembered how he lived in Greece as a young man. When returning to Greece, however, he found that he can no longer live there permanently because the change has become too great for him. The Greece he attempted to hold on to is no longer the home of his youth and he realises that he cannot return to it. For Evangelos:

'Home is always lived as a relationship, a tension. Sometimes it is between the place one starts out from and the places one puts down roots. Sometimes it is between the experience of a place when one is young and the experience of the same place when one is old' (Jackson 1995: 122).

The ties to the place of his origin remain as do the ties to the country where he settled. Visiting the former is an attempt in some way to overcome the loss that is inherent in the rupture of migration and, as this is not possible, home becomes experienced as the presence of an absence.

Return visits cannot make up for the passing of time and the inevitability of death of family members. Returning for older Pontic Greeks was often tinged with a keen sense of the loss of time over the years, time that they had been unable to spend with their parents and other family members. A number of older people on the tour had migrated as single people leaving behind their parents and some of their siblings: for two of the members of the group, returning meant visiting the graves of family members. Anastasia, for instance, told me that she was taking a photograph of her mother to go inside the receptacle on her mother's grave to replace the photograph that had deteriorated over the years. Despina also was going back to visit her parents' graves. She had migrated to Australia from the north of Greece as a single person when she was sixteen and a half years of age. At that time her parents and some of her siblings remained in Greece. On the occasions she spoke to me about her impending visit to her village in 2006, her eyes would fill with tears. Although she was keenly looking forward to visiting the village of her youth, two changes had occurred that made the thought of returning distressing for her. First, she was unable to be in Greece at the time of her father's death. Both of her parents are now dead and so when she visited the village she would not be seeing them but would be going to their graves. Secondly, her sister had demolished the family home in the hope of building a new modern home for herself. She said that it is hard going back when your parents have died and there are no parents to go to. Going to the village of her childhood was important but the place of home, perceived as being with her parents, was no longer there. She said that she felt that the only home she has in Greece is the grave site of her parents.

Roots-finding visits of second generation Pontians

Levitt (2009) argues that it is not only first generation migrants who retain strong attachments to their former homeland. She contends that although the second generation may not engage with it with the same intensity or regularity as the first generation, they, nevertheless, are part of 'strong social networks' that cover both those in the former homelands and in the host country. She says:

'When children are brought up in households that are regularly influenced by people, objects, practices and know-how from their ancestral homes, they are socialised into its norms and values and they learn how to negotiate its institutions' (Levitt 2009: 1225).

Taking advantage of this socialisation with the ancestral home may change over a person's life time. Some of those of the second generation who took part in the dance tour had visited as young children but, now as single young adults, they were at an age when such a visit had the potential to make a lasting impression on them (Bahloul 1996; Schuman & Scott 1989). Many were the same age as their parents and grandparents when they migrated but these young people were without the strains that come with settling in a new land or even the ties and financial restraints that come with establishing their own homes and families. They were old enough to appreciate many aspects of Greece giving them the opportunity of further negotiating the social networks in Greece into which they had been acculturated and through which they would gain a deeper understanding and experience of their roots. Rather than 'roots-seeking' (Levitt 2009), I contend that this trip was a 'roots-finding' one that enabled young Australian Pontian Greeks to discover an extended dimension to their Greekness.

The second generation looked forward to the tour with just as much eager anticipation as the first generation. The dancers diligently practised their dance routines in preparation for their performances and talked excitedly about the things they would do in Greece. Once in Greece, they experienced Pontic Greekness in a fuller way than they could in Australia. They did this primarily by visiting the former villages of their families, meeting extended family members, experiencing Athens nightclubs, and to a much lesser extent by visiting historical and religious places of significance. In these ways, they also became more fully aware of an absence of a Greek way of life that cannot be replicated in the diaspora. Thus, for second generation Pontians these roots-finding visits were a way of becoming aware of an absence brought about by migration. As a consequence of the tour, many of the second generation became more aware of the presence of the absence of Greece and yearned to go back again. This produced a different kind of nostalgia from that of the first generation. The going back was not to a *place* and *time* they knew, as in the case of the first generation, but to a *place* where family connections and wider Greek lifestyle gave them a deeper knowledge and understanding of their Greek identity. Their visits were not in the sense of looking back to a past time but rather a looking forward to coming to know extended family members and engaging with Greek culture; they were a way of opening up possibilities for the future.

The notion of 'knowing' plays an important role in these roots-finding visits. Antonia, a Pontian informant who has returned to Greece on a number of occasions, explained that this acquisition of 'knowledge' was important for second generation

Pontic Greeks in the diaspora. She said that when a Greek person grows up in Australia they grow up in a 'foreign milieu', one that is different from that in Greece. She said that when she and others go back to Greece they immerse themselves in the Greek milieu and get what she called 'knowledge', which in return they bring back to Australia. It is like yeast, she said. 'We bring back a little yeast to make a little more bread and then we go back and get a little more yeast the next time.' In actually being in the *place* of Greece, they get to 'know' their relatives and the lifestyle of Greece. Once an absence, this 'knowing' is now experienced as a presence.

'Presencing' the extended family and Greek lifestyle

Nowadays, many young people of migrant families have visited Greece either with their parents as young children or by themselves as young adults. Victoria described the effect that her first visit to Greece had for her. While she was not on the dance tour, it was typical of other accounts I have heard. Victoria is a woman now in her thirties. She was born in Australia of Pontian parents and now lives with her husband and two children in Adelaide. She has only been able to visit Greece once, travelling there by herself at twenty years of age. A lasting memory of this trip was the exposure to a broader Pontian lifestyle than she had experienced in Adelaide. Among other family members, she visited her maternal grandmother's family, who, she said, 'were very Pontian.' On the weekends, they used to take her to a Pontian club. She said,

'On a Saturday nights all they would play would be live Pontian music and I was in heaven when they took me there. I was in heaven. As far as I was concerned I could die and die happy when they took me there. Like on a Saturday night, eat, drink and Pontian music—drum, guitar accompanying the *lyra*, and dance until 7 o'clock in the morning. And I did.'

It was, however, the visit to her father's village that seemed to have made the most lasting impression on Victoria. She told me that after spending two weeks with relatives in Kalamaria in Northern Greece, she left to go to her father's village. She said that when she saw the sign of the village, she thought, 'finally it's my turn and I can't believe that I can finally put a face to the name.' Although her father came from there and had many relatives in the village, she only knew one of them. So she went to that one person's place but, she said, one of her cousins,

'...caught a whiff that I was there, I'll never forget him,...so he was just running to me and panting saying, "You're here, you're here." He grabbed me with open arms and that was it. My life had just begun. It was just a brand new experience, one after

another, after another, after another. It was amazing. It was amazing to go back to your parent's history and yet it was so much yours. But what right do I have to it, apart from genes. That's all. But it was certainly my history and nobody could take that away from me. It was a passionate thing. That's why I would like to go now a bit older because I think I would appreciate it differently.'

Apart from experiencing village life, one of the most important aspects was getting to know who her extended family members were. Victoria said that now because she has been to Greece and has actually met her grandmother's brother and her grandmother's sister's children and their children, she can visualise them. From that time on they became a very big part of her life. 'I've been there, I've met them and I know where they have come, which side of my family they come from.' She said that she can now recollect her father's uncle's children even her grandfather's brother's children and know who they all are, making it easier to maintain the relationships. Going to Greece, therefore, at that time of her life was important to Victoria and other second generation Greeks I have spoken to. The warm reception they received from their extended family members and the lifestyle in Greece made a lasting impression on them. More than that, people like Victoria knowing where they belonged in the family and being able to claim a Greek background for their own has become important. As Victoria said, '... it was certainly my history and nobody could take that away from me.'

These short-term visits to Greece are not only a way to come to terms with the loss that comes with the migration experience, they also act to bring a sense of a nostalgic loss into the present. Before they travelled to Greece for the first time or even as young adults, many second generation Pontians were unaware of Greek Ponticness. The visits created its presence once in Greece and on returning to Australia, they experienced the absence of its presence. Manolis told me that he first visited Greece with his parents when he was fourteen years of age. His father's village was in the north-west of Greece. At that time it was still very rural. They had their own cows and from the milk they made their own dairy products, such as yoghurts, butter and cheese. For Manolis then this was an experience of a different lifestyle. As well, while he was there he was caught up in the Easter celebrations in a small village setting. However, like Victoria and others I interviewed, what was overwhelming for him was the warmth he had felt from his extended family members giving him a sense of belonging that he had not experienced before. He said, 'It was though I had been away and had come home.' On the last day of his trip, he can remember that

he locked himself in his bedroom and would not come out. He told his parents that they could go back to Australia but that he wanted to remain in Greece. For Manolis the experience of loss was expressed in the great desire to remain in Greece. This was not possible for him at that stage of his life, but the initial visit produced a nostalgia whereby the presence of the absence of Greece has motivated him to return on four separate occasions.

'Presencing' religious roots

The 'knowledge' associated with the place of Greece also included becoming aware of different aspects of religious life. As stated earlier, it was my observation that the first generation members of the tour were more interested in the historical sites than the second generation ones. However, all the tour members willingly visited religious sites and performed the customary Orthodox practices such as making the sign of the cross, lighting candles and venerating the icons. The tour organisers arranged for the group to visit the monastery of Saint Irini of the Golden Apple in Athens. Saint Irini is believed to cure women's ailments particularly difficulties in conceiving, as well as healing childhood illnesses. Although some members of the party went to the monastery for particular personal reasons, all, both young and old, seemed happy to take part in this visit. They purchased candles at the entrance to the monastery and were content to wait for hours in line in a large crush of people slowly moving towards the entrance of the chapel. Afterwards, one of the young dancers told me that visiting the church was an emotional experience for her and her sister and they were both very impressed with the beautiful mosaics and the gold in the church.

When asking one of the dancers about what impressed her about visiting the churches in Greece, she said that she thought the churches such as that of Agios Germanos, an 11th century church in north-west Greece, 'seemed more authentic. It was older and it was as it was built then. It was not like in Adelaide where all the churches are the same.' In Adelaide, most Greek churches are not more than fifty years old and their architecture is similar, as are the mosaics on the walls. However, in Greece it is possible to see very different old churches, some still in use, some that have been restored and others in ruins. Greek visitors from the diaspora become very aware of the richness and ancient nature of the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece—of its historical depth and complexity, its architectural diversity, and the age and range of its icons. Seeing such churches highlights a certain absence in the diaspora. All the participants on the tour were devoutly Orthodox and followed the religious practices of that tradition in their churches in Adelaide but they came from

a place where Orthodoxy was a minority religion whereas in Greece, it is all-pervasive. On a tour of Greece, one gets accustomed to seeing many churches in the cities and towns as well as a variety of small wayside chapels, having one or two icons, where people can go and light a candle as they pass by. Each village has its church. On the road sides there are often small replicas of churches at places where people have been killed in vehicle accidents and where people come to remember and light candles. Priests take prominent roles in all major events whether religious or secular and large crowds attend monasteries on special feast days. In Australia such an all-encompassing presence of the Orthodox religion is absent. For those who had grown up in Australia, visiting a monastery such as that of Saint Irini gave them a different dimension of their religion.

It was, however, through the physical experience of dancing at the monastery of Panagia Soumela that the dancers engaged in identifying with their family roots and discovered a different dimension of what it means to be of Pontic Greek background. On questioning the dancers afterwards about what it meant to them to dance at Panagia Soumela, some of their answers revolved around the realisation that they were performing at a particularly important religious site for Pontians and how that was an honour for their dance group. Sofia said, 'If you are a dancer and particularly if you are a Pontian dancer, it is your dream to dance there.' Anna, another dancer, also said that the highlight of the tour for her was dancing at Panagia Soumela but her reaction was expressed in terms of her 'roots.' She said that when she was dancing she thought, 'This is who I am. I am making my father proud.' She went on to say that the trip confirmed her identity as a Greek person and reinforced the connection with the place of Greece. When she was growing up in Adelaide, Anna remembered that her father, who had migrated at an early age, often spoke of visiting the monastery in August for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Anna went on to say that as a young person she was brought up in a home where her parents spoke Greek to her and insisted that she went to Greek school on Saturday mornings and learn Greek dancing. She did not always want to do this and would rather have played sport with her friends. Many of them did not understand why she had to go to Greek school or why she did not go to their birthday parties unless there were Greek people present. Even as a young woman, her brother would be required to accompany her if she went out on Friday nights to town with her friends. Maybe she will not be as strict with her own children, Anna said, but she appreciates the way her parents brought her up and imbued in her a sense that be-

ing a Greek person has to do with faith, morals and family respect. Living in a Greek-speaking home enabled her now to converse with her extended family in Greece and returning to her father's village and seeing his former home, she said, gave her the opportunity to know and understand where her roots are. It also gave her the reality of an interconnected social network that encompasses both the first and second generation (Levitt 2009: 1226).

Taking the children back

Speaking about taking his daughter back to Greece, one of the parents said:

'You have to give them something, not written. It's why we keep telling them stories. We keep telling them how beautiful Greece is and I thought "If they don't actually live it they will never feel it"...What can I do for my daughter. I can tell her how beautiful my village is,...I can tell her all these things but it's only a story...The minute you go there and you live it yourself and you come back, it's actually like a stamp, a seal, stamp ... it's stamped, it's there.'

This parent was hoping that his daughter would see the beauty of Greece as he sees it, and seeing it, that the presence of the absence of Greece would remain with her forever. But more than that, this parent was hoping that the 'stamp' or the transformation that would occur in his daughter, and that the visit would impart something of the same sense of nostalgic loss of Greece that he, as a first generation migrant, feels on his return to Australia. He hopes that she, too, would yearn to return.

So, ostensibly, although the purpose of the tour in 2006 was to give the dancers the opportunity to dance at a number of venues in Greece, it was also seen as an opportunity to expose them to elements of Greek culture that are lost to them through the rupture of migration. Furthermore, it was hoped that it would expose them to aspects of Greece that they may not experience on private trips. One of the tour organisers explained it like this:

'We went there for a mission. We went for a reason...That's why I was hounding them, "You get up. You do this, you do that". I did not want them to sleep and so the trip to Nafplion was to give them more information. The visit to St. Irini's was to absorb the culture. They [would] never have gone there by themselves. These kids would never go and see these things. We are coming back to culture things, to the basics. I believe these kids, it doesn't matter what age they are, they will still remember [this trip]. It was "one-off". It was an experience.'

Thus, the nostalgia that first generation migrants are trying to produce in the second generation is a yearning to return back to a *time* linked to the place of Greece in the past. Interestingly, in order to do this they chose to take them to sites of historical importance and religious significance—sites that are linked to a significant past for them.

Visits to sites of historical and religious significance

In addition to the visit to Nafplion, the itinerary included another all day excursion to the Prespa Lakes in the far north-western part of Greece, bordering Albania and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. The tour guide for this day explained the geography of this northern Macedonian region as well as its history and politics. This included the role resistance fighters played in securing its independence in 1914 and in defending it in World War II. Religious sites were also visited on that day, sites such as the church in the village of Agios Germanos and the ruins of the 10th century basilica of Archilleios on an island in the Prespa Lakes. Later in the tour, the mayor of Thessaloniki arranged a trip to Vergina, the place believed to be the burial site of Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. These sites of historical and religious significance were chosen because they produced a particular nostalgic imaginary return to a *time* when these had particular relevance for first generation Pontic Greek migrants. As young people growing up in Greece, they were very aware of the importance of the War of Independence from the Turks and often had firsthand experience of the effects of World War II and the Civil War on Greece. Although living through the *times* of these conflicts was not pleasurable yet from a time span of fifty or sixty years, the visit to these sites were a particular nostalgic imaginary return to the *time* of these events, which for them aroused a patriotic pride in their country of their origin. It is impossible, however, for the second generation to return to the same *time*, even in their imagination.



Plate 28: Crowds waiting for the Metropolitan of Greece to arrive at Panagia Soumela

For Pontic Greeks, Christianity, as it is expressed through Greek Orthodoxy, is a fundamental dimension of what they understand to be Greek culture. Hence, the highlight of the trip for all was the visit to the monastery of Panagia Soumela in northern Greece on the most important date of its religious calendar, that of the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary on the 14th and 15th August. Every year at this time, this replication of the original monastery in Pontos, attracts Pontians from all over Greece as well as from overseas. It is difficult to know the numbers who attended the monastery in 2006 but the secretary of the monastery later told me that there would have been somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 people. Although there is dormitory accommodation built on the monastery grounds to cater for the many visitors to the monastery throughout the year, this can cope with only a small fraction of the people who come for the feast. People bring their own camping equipment and every available place for up to one kilometre on each side of the road leading to the monastery was taken with tents, vans, caravans and makeshift covers. On the evening of the 14th, a church liturgy was held in the presence of the Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece (1998–2008). High ranking military personnel, members of the clergy, political leaders, security officers, members

of the press, photographers and television crews were also in attendance. The church liturgy was followed by a procession of the icon through the monastery grounds and after this the entertainment for the rest of the evening took the form of Pontic dance and music. There was another liturgy on the next day which again was followed by performances of dancing.



Plate 29: Adelaide Pontian dance members preparing to lead the procession of the icon

This was the first time that a dancing group from the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia had been invited to dance at the monastery of Panagia Soumela, and so it was an important event in the life of the Brotherhood. Before the tour, the older members of the committee stressed to the dancers how it was such a privilege for them to dance there. It was expected that they would practice hard to attain a high degree of dancing expertise. Watching the dancers at one of their last practice sessions in Adelaide before the trip, one of the mothers said, 'Give us a Panagia Soumela performance!' Only the forthcoming performance at Panagia Soumela was mentioned but never the other venues where they would also perform. One of the mothers of the dancers turned to me and said, 'They will be so nervous when they are performing at Panagia Soumela...and so will we.' Part of this was her anxiety

that the dancers would dance well and would not disgrace them. It also reflected her concern that their performance in Greece would demonstrate that Pontians in the diaspora and their children had retained Pontic Greek culture, particularly that of dance.

The Adelaide dancers gave two performances, one in the evening on the 14th and one in the middle of the day on the 15th August. On the 14th, I was sitting with the grandparents and older members of the tour watching as the dancers come onto the open-air stage. They danced a routine of dances, which I had seen many times before at practice sessions and at many performances at Pontian events in Adelaide. But this time it was different. I knew it was the highlight of the tour and the most important reason why the dancers had come to Greece. It was the culmination of their planning and fundraising activities to enable them to make the trip. I could feel the tension coming from those with whom I was sitting, hoping that the dancers would dance at their best. Later, Despina said that she started to cry when she heard the people sitting behind her at the performance of the dancers, saying how surprised they were to see the Adelaide group dancing so well. Even though they were second and third generation children in Australia, they said, 'yet, they keep everything.' She told me that overhearing mainland Greeks complimenting their dancers on their dancing had made her feel very proud that she had been able to pass Pontic culture on to her children and grandchildren. The dancers had shown in a most public way that Pontic culture had been retained in the diaspora and they had displayed this in the most significant of places—at Panagia Soumela in Greece, the present focus of worldwide Pontic culture.

Baldassar's research on the return visits of Italo-Australian migrants of Western Australia bears a close correlation to the return visits of Pontic Greek Australian migrants in that the migration experience of the two ethnic groups was very similar. Baldassar argues that it is important for first generation Italian emigrants to bring their children back with them to Italy as 'a symbol of a successful migration' (Baldassar 2001: 288). This notion of success includes establishing a home and raising a family that retains the Italian culture. For first generation Pontic Greek migrants, taking their children back to Greece had a subsidiary aim. By their children dancing at Panagia Soumela and at other venues, it displayed that they, as first generation migrants, have retained Pontic culture in the diaspora and passed it on to the next generation. A display of Pontic dance might be a symbol of success wherein Greeks in Greece see time and space merge, but the loss caused by the

rupture of migration remains with Australian Pontic Greeks and produces a nostalgia that mainland Greeks cannot experience. Pontic Greeks in Greece might have a nostalgic desire to return to the place of Pontos but they do not experience the intensity of yearning to return to a time of their youth, which is heightened by the rupture that migration brings. Hence, by bringing their children to Panagia Soumela first generation Pontian Greek migrants try to instil into their children the significance of the place, which is tied to both the impossibility of returning to the time of their youth, and to Pontos. In condensing the loss of place and people in this one place, it makes the absence of the original monastery ever-present.

Second generation responses to visiting Greece

After the tour, Despina took her daughter and grandchildren to her former village in the north of Greece on the shores of Lake Prespa. Her family was poor. She told me that she remembers fishing with her father and rather than the fish being for the family, it had to be sold for money so the family could survive. She remembers walking to school across the frozen lake in winter. When she was telling me something of her childhood, there was no indication that it was an unhappy time. My impression was that, despite the poverty, living in the village was a good time in her life. But she cannot go back to that time but only to the place where that time occurred and to the imagined time when she was with her parents and brothers and sisters.

Her daughter, Marianna, had a different view of her mother's village. She saw the place but could not imagine the time in the past. Before the tour began, Marianna had had an enjoyable time visiting her other relatives in Greece but she had a different reaction to her initial visit to her mother's village. She said that she was appalled at its current state and did not know how the people could continue to live there in their wooden houses with ill-fitted shutters. Marianna went on to say that there were a number of snakes in the area and that they were able to come inside the peoples' homes. On the other hand, their church was well built and maintained and while it is closed because there is no priest there, the people had a key and were able to visit it when they like. There were only a few old people living in the village now and apart from their own gardens, there did not seem to be any other source of income: one man had to travel to a nearby town once a fortnight to buy groceries for the whole village. Overall, she said she thought that these village people had a terrible existence. While it was important for Despina to return her former village and particularly to visit the site of her former home and the graves of her parents, it was not a good experience for Marianna who said that she had to take sticks to move the

snakes away from her grandparents' graves in order to keep her own children safe. Although the village that Despina returned to and Marianna visited for the first time was the same physical place, the 'imaginary landscape' (Hodgkin & Radstone 2003: 12) of that place was different and evoked a different response from each of them. Even though the village had changed over the time that Despina had been away, she yearned to return to the imaginary *time* of her youth. To her, it was the same village she left as a young person despite the fact that her parents and her home were no longer there.

Hodgkin and Radstone point out that:

'Images of the lost homeland...can be passed down generations, summoning up loyalties and nostalgia. In some cases this may produce a powerful identification with the parents' lost physical environment, as nostalgia, or as charge: to go back, to reclaim what was lost. In others it is a more reluctant and ambivalent bond: the children who have come to belong somewhere else will not readily be summoned back. In either instance, what is returned to will not be the same' (2003: 12).

For Marianna, even though it was her mother's village and where her grandparents were buried, it did not produce the nostalgic desire to return there. Marianna had been to Greece on three previous occasions—as a child, then as a teenager and later with her husband and one of her children. On those occasions she had stayed with her father's relatives and got to know them well. When Marianna spoke of her visit to Greece, she spoke of meeting these relatives and it was her contact with members of her extended family that was important to her. The visit to her father's relatives was an enjoyable time for her because she could take her youngest daughter to meet them for the first time. It was not the visit to her mother's village but rather, the roots finding and maintaining that produced for her a nostalgic desire to return on another occasion.

Yearning to return

While 'the material of nostalgic experience is the past' (Davis 1979: 8), it is a past that one has experienced. Before second generation Pontic Greeks visited they did not have the firsthand experience of Greece. The 'stamp' of transformation occurred for them when, after making these roots-finding visits, the desire to return was sealed in them. This then becomes a form of nostalgia: the yearning to return to the past that they have now experienced but without the aching longing that the first

generation holds. Rather than tied to a *place* and *time* of the past, the nostalgia of the second generation is tied to a *place* linked to a certain Greek lifestyle and the possibility of the future.

On her return from Greece, Niki expressed how the trip had changed her:

‘I have been part of the Pontian Brotherhood dance group for a number of years. It has been my dream and that of others to dance at Panagia Soumela. This dream came true when we visited Greece in August of this year. It was my first time to go to Greece and a big opportunity for me and for my parents to go back to Greece. I cannot explain fully the feelings I had, knowing that I was in Greece with my family and friends. I learnt so much about their life there by staying with my family. I have become more proud of being Greek. I want to return. I will definitely be going back.’

For Niki the trip has meant that she has been able to sense more fully what being a Greek Pontian means. This change had occurred through a process of getting to know and experience the way of life of her extended family and by making a sensual connection, through dance, at the significant Pontian site of Panagia Soumela. While visiting historical sites was important to their parents, what appeared to make a profound impression on those like Niki, Manolis and Victoria was meeting extended family members for the first time and the warm welcome they received from them. Having grown up without a wide extended family network in Australia, this ready acceptance into their families in Greece sometimes made them feel more at home there than in Australia and has helped to produce the nostalgic yearning to return.

After their visit to Greece in 2006, many of the Pontian dancers expressed their desire to return as soon as possible to reconnect with family members and to experience the Greek lifestyle. One of them, Sofia, had visited Greece once before but only as a young child. Talking about her recent visit as a young adult, she said,

‘That was a big eye-opener...It was a bit of shock, actually. It was like, where am I? How come, I am here now? Why didn’t I come earlier? Or like...why did it take me ten years to come back to Greece?...Now it’s like, I want to go every year...I think it is because to keep in touch with the culture, the Greekness.’

Baldassar observed that second generation Italian migrants not only seek their roots at significant places, but also through increasing ‘their knowledge of “popular” consumer Italy’ (2001: 331). For second generation Australian Pontian Greeks, one as-

pect of popular culture that they ‘consumed’ was the night club life. It was important for them to see a live performance by artists in the night clubs of Athens. Visiting Greece gave them the opportunity to see performers that they had heard, or seen through the media, but whom they would not have had the opportunity to see in a live performance in Adelaide. Highlighting the absence of such popular Greek culture in Adelaide, one young dancer commented ‘there is nothing in Adelaide that makes up for what is in Greece.’ Seeing these artists perform in the ambience of different venues in Greece was ‘important to their ethnic identification’ (Baldassar 2001: 331), particularly by being able to refer to them once they were back in Adelaide.

Antonia described such visits to Greece as like going to meet her lover. When you are in love everything is fine and there are no negatives. That is how she said she feels when she is in Greece: everything is good and there are no bad things. Then, at the end of the visit, she says, ‘Well, my love, ... until next time!’ Such short-term visits often coincide with holiday periods in Greece and visitors at this time may experience a more relaxed side to Greek culture that is different from the reality of working and living in Greece that could face those who return to Greece to live on a permanent basis (see Christou 2006: 840; Wessendorf 2007). Hence, the nostalgia of the second generation that is tied to a *place* is often linked to an imagined Greekness that is sometimes wider than a specifically Pontic Greek one.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that there is a difference between the nostalgia experienced by the first generation migrants compared with that of the second generation. Returning for the former brought to the fore the loss of a Greece that they left as young people. For first generation Pontian migrants these were nostalgic visits as they attempted to return to the time of their youth and assuage the loss that the rupture of migration had caused over time and space. In taking their children back to Greece, parents hoped to instil in them the same kind of nostalgia that they have. But this is impossible because their nostalgia is of a different form from that of their children. For first generation migrants, it harked back to the *place* and good *time* of their youth, both of which are impossible to return to or take their children to. For the second generation on return to Australia, these short-term visits created a nostalgic desire to return to the *place* of Greece and to the lifestyle of Greece that they had experienced there. This nostalgia is not so much a desire to deal with the pain of

loss experienced by their parents, but rather a way to address the presence of absence over time and space. It is, therefore, nostalgia without the painful longing for something that is not possible to return to. The type of nostalgia experienced by second generation Australian Pontic Greeks looks more to the future than to the past. The statement by Niki—'I want to return. I will definitely be going back'—is the anticipation without the aching; it is the nostalgia without the pain. However, the short-term visits that both first and second generation Pontic Greeks make to Greece, do not ultimately alleviate the loss inherent in the migration experience but for both generations, young and old, act rather to reproduce its absence in the present leading both groups yearning to make further nostalgic return visits. The presence of the absence of Greece produced by these short-term visits is different from that produced through commemorations and dance. It comes from actually being in Greece and absorbing the Pontic Greekness not available in the diaspora. The next chapter also deals with short-term visits, those to the Pontos region, but these produce the presence of absence in a different way.

7 Pilgrimages to Pontos: affirmations of Ponticness

Introduction

'Who would go back to Pontos to see Pontos? The English? The Germans? The Americans? Nobody. The Greek Pontians will go because it's their roots there, and their roots pull them back' [From an interview with Fr Christos, a Pontian Greek Orthodox priest].

The descendants of those who were exiled from Pontos are 'pulled back' to Pontos, not by Turkey, but by the connections they retain to the land and its peoples. This is in contrast to their ancestors who were 'pushed out' of Pontos by Turkey as powerless victims of the Exchange of Populations. I carried out detailed interviews with ten Pontians who had visited Pontos; two lived in Australia and the remainder in Greece. They had visited the area in a variety of ways. Those I spoke to mostly went as part of a group on organised bus tours but there were others who had made private visits by car. While Pontians are free to visit, they can now only make short-term visits and cannot settle there permanently. What then is the nature of these roots-seeking visits?

Basu (2004) uses the term 'roots-tourism' to describe similar visits that diasporic Scots make to Scotland. In them, there is often the quest to travel to various sites of their ancestors and to find their villages. When standing at these places, Scots from the diaspora experience a unique sense of coming home, that is, to a place that seems familiar to them or where they could imagine their former family members. For many, they envision these journeys as a form of pilgrimage. Thus, Basu argues, these journeys encompass the metaphors of "homecoming", "quest" and "pilgrimage" (2004: 15).

In this chapter, I argue that the short-term visits that Pontians make to Pontos are primarily pilgrimages but with their own 'historically and culturally specific behaviours and meanings' (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 3). I did not perceive a 'homecoming' element in these visits: the birth places of the second or third generation Pontian visitors were either in Greece or in Australia and they spoke of those places as home. The visits I refer to in this chapter were similar to those that Schramm (2004) de-

scribes where members of the African diaspora visit their former homeland of Ghana, and which she terms 'pilgrimage tourism.' In these, Africans from the diaspora returned to what they perceived to be the place of their origin. Likewise with Pontians, but their pilgrimages have significant differences.

The traditional practice of pilgrimage was seen as primarily a sacred undertaking. It usually meant a journey to a place or shrine of particular religious significance to the pilgrim. Often these journeys were made under difficult circumstances, with privations that ultimately contributed to some spiritual gain or physical healing, as the result of the journey or at the pilgrimage site itself (Coleman, Simon. & Elsner 1995: 6). In their seminal work on pilgrimages, Turner and Turner (1978) considered these aspects of pilgrimage particularly from a western Christian perspective but, in late modernity the view of pilgrimage has been extended to encompass secular aspects that can include a spiritual and/or experiential perspective rather than a specifically religious one (Dubisch 2004; Reader 2007: 213). Where ease of travel and the availability of leisure time combine, these secular types of pilgrimages can include the short-term visits that people make to their former 'homelands' or those of their ancestors.

There are three aspects of the journeys to Pontos that show that these short-term visits come somewhere between the traditional and the secular view of pilgrimages. First, the journeys themselves do not involve the physical suffering of many of the traditional pilgrimages as, for instance, the walking of the 800 km of the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage (see Frey 1998) or the austerity and sleep deprivation of that of St Patrick's Purgatory (see Turner & Turner 1978). But there is a form of suffering attached to these journeys back to Pontos in the sense that participants imagine and vicariously feel the pain that their family members endured.

Secondly, these visits are not viewed explicitly as sacred journeys by Pontians. Rather, they see the goal of these pilgrimages as a way to experience Pontos in its many facets rather than to travel to a sacred shrine. Despite this, the participants are of the Greek Orthodox faith and any pilgrimage to Pontos by Pontians is likely to include a visit to the former monastery of Panagia Soumela. However, the aim in visiting it is not to gain spiritual enlightenment or physical healing. All the same, there is a different mood to these journeys compared with those that Pontians of the diaspora make to Greece: there is a seriousness about them as participants realise that they are going back to the place of their origins as well as to the site of geno-

cide and exile. The intense mood of the pilgrims in which they face these journeys imputes a sacred nature to them. Noting the difficulty in defining 'the sacred', Morinis sees that 'it is the pursuit of the ideal (whether deified or not) that defines the sacred journey' (1992: 2). In the light of this, the pursuits of the Pontian pilgrimages, which incorporate both quest and activities, can be seen as sacred, similar to those of African pilgrims to Ghana who experience 'the sacred' in the drinking of the water of the 'last bath' (Schramm 2004: 147). For Pontians, the quests of the pilgrimage included searching for the sites of family homes and engaging in ritual practices at places of religious significance. In these, the sacredness is not in the pilgrimage *per se* but is infused into a particular place or set of activities.

Thirdly, even though Coleman and Eade (2004) argue for the consideration of 'various forms of motion—embodied, imagined, metaphorical—as constitutive elements of many pilgrimage' (2004: 3; see also Dubisch 1995: 35), the focus in Pontian pilgrimages is not on movement as such. Travelling to Pontos, or walking or touring whilst there, is not a major emphasis even though these practices do occur. Rather than movement, I propose that it is the immediate sensual experience and engagement (see Csordas 1994: 10) with the place of Pontos that most captures the nature of these pilgrimages. Although the metaphors of homecoming, quest and pilgrimage apply to roots-tourism, as Basu (2004) argues, these do not go far enough in characterising Pontian pilgrimages.

In pilgrimages to Pontos, there is an interrelationship between memory, the senses and emotional engagement that is vital to understanding these particular journeys and what they mean to Pontians. Rather than these pilgrimages 'bearing witness' (Oliver 2001) to the suffering of their forebears as in the case of memorial ceremonies, I contend that it is through the intertwining of these three elements that second and third generation Pontians make an act of affirmation in these pilgrimages. I use the noun 'affirmation' in the sense of a positive action that asserts or declares the truth of something rather than in the sense of supporting something. The pilgrimages not only affirm the truth of their parents' or grandparents' accounts of the genocide and exile from Pontos but through their own sensory engagement with the place and its peoples and the emotions that these arouse, Pontians come to experience the place of Pontos for themselves and come to feel a deep connection with their ancestral lands and its peoples. Combining both sacred and secular activities—finding family villages, performing Orthodox rituals, speaking with some of the local people who speak the same Pontic dialect, dancing familiar dances with them to the

same musical instruments—the visitors affirm both to themselves and others that they have an inalienable connection with Pontos and its peoples, that they are truly Pontians even although they are members of the second or third generation of those who were exiled from Pontos.

Social memory of Pontos

Social memory is one that is 'held in common by those who are affiliated either by kinship ties, by geographical proximity in neighbourhoods, cities, and other regions, or by engagement in a common project' (Casey 2004: 21). Pontians, and particularly those who are associated with Pontian community associations, are well aware of the details of their history. In conjunction with personal narratives passed down through the generations since the exile, these associations are instrumental in helping to produce a social memory of Pontos as the pivotal place of origin and the place where 'history was enacted and experienced' (Casey 2004: 22). Having not lived through the genocide and exile, those who go on pilgrimage to Pontos, particularly for the first time, rely on this social memory of Pontos.

The same social memory is also fostered over many years through their family narratives and can create a desire to make the pilgrimage. Reminiscing with others, according to Casey, 'is a primary prop of social memory; and it introduces the crucial factor of language into memory, and thus narrative and history' (2004: 21). Such a social memory can help to convince some Pontians that by going to Pontos they will make a unique connection with the land and its history. Many of those I interviewed told me how their parents or grandparents constantly talked about Pontos. Their stories were not only of the suffering endured through the exile period but were also about the beauty of the land and how they lived there. It was this, Stavros said, that gave him the great desire to make the pilgrimage to Pontos and gave him a great love for the village of Santa. Hence, it is not only the narratives but also the emotional attachments to them that contribute to a social memory for Pontians, like Stavros.

When he was young, Stavros was given to his grandmother to rear because his brother was born only eleven months after him. The grandmother's brother, Nicolaos, who lived with them had come from Santa and often told him and his brother about his country. Stavros said that, as a child, instead of hearing fairy stories he

heard the stories of Santa. His people, he said, always wanted to speak about their country.

‘Always the old people say fairytales to the kids...but our people, Santa [people], don’t say fairytales, they are speaking always about Santa. Their love to their country was so, so big and they wanted to speak always about Santa, about their country, where they were born, of course.’

When Nicolaos died, Stavros remembered his last words: ‘Santa, Santa, Santa, my country Santa.’

Before Stavros made his first visit to Pontos, his brother had been very sick and in the long nights when he was with him, he would often encourage him by saying that they would both go together to Santa. His brother died in 2003 and, after he had made the forty-days *kollyva* remembrance for his brother, Stavros and his wife left for Pontos, ‘to see Santa, only and especially to see Santa.’ Stavros told me that by this time, he already had a picture of what Santa was like in his mind. So when he came there on his first visit he knew he was there: he felt it inside.

‘And I know Santa without seeing the place...I understood I was in Santa because in my mind, I have in my mind the picture of Santa and when I went there, I understood, I felt it, I know I am in Santa from inside. I felt it. Now [it] is Santa.’

A first visit often triggers the desire to re-visit. For instance, Stavros has returned once after the initial visit and was planning another visit. On his second visit, Stavros was accompanied by his friend, Panagiota. Together they stayed in Santa with one of the Turkish families⁵⁷ for seven days. Panagiota had visited Pontos two times before. Her family had also come from the village of Santa and her grandfather had been a leader of the village resistance fighters. Acting as her interpreter, her son told me that after Panagiota turned forty-five years of age or so, she had a great desire to learn about her background and began to question her own mother about Pontos and in particular, about her birthplace of Santa. He said that now, even though Panagiota was born in Greece, she feels that she belongs in Pontos because all the history of the family is there. Before Panagiota went to Pontos, she was informed by a particular Pontian social memory. Later, through her experience

⁵⁷ These families are part of a transhumant community who only live in the area for three months, bringing their cows up to the summer pastures.

whilst there and by reminiscing with others afterwards, the social memory upon which she had relied was further enhanced.

Although there are Pontians, like Stavros and Panagiota, who make private visits to Pontos, very often people make the pilgrimage to Pontos as part of a bus tour organised through a Pontian organisation. Two months before my visit to northern Greece, a group from the Black Sea Club of Veria had returned from a pilgrimage to Pontos. On that occasion, the party consisted of parents with young children and dancers in their teen years as well as older members, making up a total of thirty people.

Because the Turkish government continues to deny the claims of genocide that the descendants of their former citizens make, Pontian pilgrims are not completely free to openly speak about the pain and suffering of their parents and grandparents. They still remain as visitors in the land that once belonged to their ancestors. Hence, in the face of the ongoing tension between Greece and Turkey, a certain degree of unease and ambivalence is felt about visiting Turkey. Some of the tour group said that they were concerned about their safety, the reception they would receive from the local people and about being under the surveillance of the Turkish authorities. Speaking of her concerns, Vassiliki, one of the young members of the Black Sea Club of Veria, told me that the tour of Pontos was the first time that she had been outside of Greece. When she passed the border, one side with the blue and white flag of Greece and the other side with the red and white flag of Turkey, she felt apprehensive. Going together in a large group gave her a sense of security but, on the other hand, she said that the large group was more noticeable than those who go in private cars. They always stayed with the group and if they went out they went with at least five other people and always an adult.

The production of a social memory where the emphasis is on the atrocities of genocide and the sufferings of exile does not necessarily foster a desire to visit Pontos. For some Pontians, it often increases their hatred and distrust of the Turkish population and contributes to their refusal to make the pilgrimage to Pontos. When I asked Despina if she would like to go to Pontos, she immediately answered that she would, but on further reflection said that she would be unwilling to spend the money to support the Turkish military. Vaggelis was more definite in his reply: 'Why should I go there and give the Turks my money to buy some bullets?' Sometimes people said that they would not feel safe because they did not trust the Turkish people. Others felt that they did not belong. Lazaros, for instance, has returned to Greece

five times and has visited Jerusalem three times but he has never been back to Pontos, even though he was born there. When asked whether he wanted to go there, he answered, 'No, that's Turkey now.' Others have a dream that the land that once belonged to Greek people in Pontos will one day be restored to them and they will not return there until this has happened. Gregoris told me that he did not want to go to Pontos until he can go to Trabzon and buy some land or a property in memory of his grandparents. Others see no reason to visit there. A second generation woman in reply to my question if she would ever visit the Pontos area said most definitely, 'No ... why? Who do we have there [to visit]?' Others had wanted to visit, but the obligation to visit relatives in Greece often made the further trip to the north of Turkey out of the question, so far as time and money were concerned. Some who have attempted the trip had been turned back at the border or had been advised against it because of tense relations between Greece and Turkey at the time.

Nevertheless, some second or third generation Pontians were persuaded to make the pilgrimage to Pontos. Through their presence in a land where they did not feel completely free to act, and by their practices whilst there, they affirmed the right to be in the land of their forebears. This affirmation was to the Turkish state, the local people and, above all, to themselves. After the pilgrimage, they came back with a different sense of what being Pontian means. The pilgrimage did two things. In gaining first-hand evidence of the loss of Pontos, the pilgrimage further affirmed that what they had heard from their parents or grandparents about the genocide and exile, as well as the beauty of Pontos, was true. Secondly, it gave them their own personal unique memory of the place, which again added to the social memory of Pontos. Included in that was not just the memory of the place but how they engaged with it through their senses and through their emotional involvement. In these ways, Pontians gained a deeper understanding of their connectedness to the land, which affirmed to them in a profound way that they are of Pontos even though they were not born there.

Sensory presence and emotional engagement

The dance teacher from the Black Sea Club of Veria said that he told the dancers beforehand that after they went to Pontos they would know why they dance. He said,

'We tell people we are Pontian but we didn't know how Pontos was, where it was, how were the villages, the people, the area ... everything. Now [when they return] they have the visuals.'

The 'visuals' referred to were more than visualising Pontos through memory or even through looking at photographs or videos after the visit. Classen argues that although the 'proliferation of visual imagery in modernity promotes the notion that the world is, above all, something to see', there are other ways of experiencing the world that give preference to other senses (2005: 147, italics in the original text). She shows that the so-called 'oral cultures' give primacy to a variety of different senses. Furthermore, Geurts (2005: 167) shows that *seselelame*, a sense of balance within the body, that the Anlo-Ewe people of south-eastern Ghana include in their sensorium, covers a range of bodily reactions. In a similar vein, the 'visuals' referred to in the pilgrimages to Pontos included more than the sense of sight. They were a metonym for the complete sensual experience of the place of Pontos. It was not only seeing the countryside but walking in it. It was more than seeing the former villages of their families; it was being able to touch and feel the buildings. Likewise, it was being able to hear and speak in a common language, hear familiar music, dance the same dances to the same musical instruments, and engage in religious practices. Just as a commemoration implies 'being there', so, too, there is no pilgrimage 'at a distance' (MacAloon 1984: 270). 'Being there' means that the senses as well as the emotions are engaged in a whole of range of activities. Through a process that is integral to the embodied experience of pilgrimage, the 'visuals' of this pilgrimage were the sensual experience of 'being there' in Pontos.

Finding family villages.

I was always struck by the apparent intensity of the emotional experiences that every one of my informants described when recalling their visits. Very often these emotions were associated with the sensory engagement of finding family villages. Most of those who visited Pontos knew the names of the villages of their parents or grandparents. Finding these was an important task but, after more than eighty years, it was not always easy. When Athina and her husband Petros went to Pontos with the Black Sea Club of Veria they visited Petros's village but could not find the former family house. Relatives of theirs, who had travelled to the village fifteen years before, had found it, but Athina and Petros presumed that by the time they were there the house had been demolished. For them, the absence of the family home evoked the emotions of disappointment and sadness. Olga knew that her grandpar-

ents' village was high in the Pontic Alps but was unsure of its name and therefore, she could not locate it on a Turkish map. It could be that the village had disappeared or that it had been renamed, but because of the pressure of the tour schedule, she did not have the time to follow this up. She would have had to rely on Turkish people to take her there to search for it and beside this, language difficulties would have caused problems.

For others, finding sites of their parents' former homes was an exciting discovery and for many it was an important part of engaging with the 'visuals' of the pilgrimage. Pavlos said that on the morning they went to Santa he was so excited when they got there. 'I forgot everything. I left the ladies on their own right in the middle of the mountain and I [started] filming.' Santa is very steep and he said he went up to the highest spot and then cut across and came to where his mother's family home would have been—a place with six or seven beautiful big pine trees. Picturing in his mind, he said that the houses would have been made of wood covered with clay plaster. The top part of the house would have been used for drying and crushing cereal and the lower section to house the animals. Pavlos remembers that his mother told him that the house was only used in summer as in the winter they went down to live in Yemoura⁵⁸ on the Black Sea coast. Although Pavlos was capturing one form of the 'visuals' on video, the 'visuals' which he could not capture but would always remember were the sensual acts of climbing the steep mountains, smelling the pine trees, finding and standing on the site of his mother's home, all of which for him were an important part of his pilgrimage.

Whereas Pavlos felt exhilarated when he found the site of his mother's house in Santa, he experienced different feelings when he visited his paternal grandparents' house in the village of Yemoura. He told me that his grandfather's house was on its own as if, he said, it had been on a farm. But the houses in the area were not maintained; they were not painted, the fences were crooked and many of them were falling down. Most of the Turks he spoke to were helpful and directed him to the mayor of the village to seek permission to visit his house. As it was getting dark, the mayor offered him accommodation in the village but as Pavlos was part of a tour, it was necessary for him to return to Trabzon. The next day he visited Yemoura again and went to his family home. The Turkish occupant, however, was reluctant to allow Pavlos to enter the house. This refusal, Pavlos said, could have been due to the rumour that circulates among Turks that the reason why Greek people return to their

⁵⁸ Present day Yomra in Turkey.

villages is to look for hidden gold that their families had left behind (see also Öztürkmen 2003: 185). Pavlos explained that all he wanted was to get a stone or a branch of a hazelnut tree to place on his father's grave. He was allowed to do this but could not go inside the house so he only managed to get a photograph of the house as a reminder of it.

Pavlos explained how he felt differently about his former village in Greece. After he migrated to Australia in 1960, Pavlos did not return to Greece until 1977. He said that over those seventeen years he had missed being in his parent's home. His family home was vacant at the time of his visit and family members and other people in the village had invited him to stay with them. However, he wanted to spend the first night back alone in his former home. That night he went all around the house, from room to room, touching everything. He even went outside to see the smoke coming out of the chimney. He said, 'I felt it like mine.' However, he added,

'When I went to Turkey and I have seen it, [his grandfather's home], [I felt] like an orphan.'

The pain he felt about this was reflected in his demeanour and in the tone of his voice as he went on:

'Someone lives in there but not us...If it was in Greece, and it was my father's house but another Greek was living in it...I believe I would not feel as bad as was when I was in Turkey and saw my father's house and my father's property, with people, they were friendly...but you haven't got the comfort to get close to it, to feel it, to touch it, to visit it...You can't feel it as yours anymore.'

The distress that people feel in Pontos is not just their inability to locate their former family homes or over ruined buildings. Nor is it the stark reality that the lands are no longer theirs. Even if they stayed in a village for a period of time, as Stavros and Panagiota did at Santa, they felt as if they were foreign visitors there.

For Pontian people, these are more than nostalgic or roots-finding visits. They are acts of affirmation. By standing at the former sites of their family homes, they make a physical affirmation, firstly to themselves and then to the local Turkish people, that Pontic Greeks were once part of Pontos and had been for over three thousand years. Despite the distrust of the local people at Yemoura and being denied access to his grandfather's home, Pavlos's physical presence on the land was a declaration

that he was a descendant of the family who had once lived and shared village life at that particular place.

The loss caused by the rupture of exile becomes presented in a sensory way. The 'visuals' of the sensory experience are encapsulated in and through the mementos that people bring back with them. Panagiota found the home of her mother and took a stone from the wall which she placed on her mother's grave in northern Greece. She also collected specimens of the pine trees from the high country of Santa and planted them in her home garden. Five of them are now growing there. Most come back with photos or videos of their trip. Stavros told me that he returned to Greece with five hours of video tape. But that was not all. He went on, 'memories and memories and memories and crying and pain and pain and pain and pain...The pain is still [there now] when I remember this place.' All come back with their personal memories, but these are intertwined with the sensory and emotional engagement that forms the experience of these pilgrimages to Pontos.

Attending religious places

Although Pontians are sometimes denied access to their former family homes, they are free to visit the former religious sites of their ancestors. Some of these are in ruins; others have been converted to museums. The place of most religious significance for visiting Pontians is the original monastery of Panagia Soumela. Its buildings have fallen into disrepair since the genocide and exile with many of the frescoes of the saints having been defaced. The Turkish government is now restoring the monastery with the aim of turning the site into a museum. It now has a Turkish name, Meryemana Manastir (Bryer, A & Winfield 1985). Such a re-naming, as Hogdkin and Radstone point out, is,

'...one of [nationalism's] most powerful and contentious tools, as well as one of power's most explicit attempts to rewrite the past, literally inscribing the surface of the world, and changing the name on the map' (2003: 12).

Despite the power of the Turkish state to rename the monastery, Pontians still address the site as Panagia Soumela. They do not see it as a museum. To them it remains a consecrated, religious space reflective of its former importance to Pontic Greeks in this region.

Walking is often a major component of religious pilgrimages. While this form of movement was not a primary focus of this pilgrimage, the act of walking was undertaken in relation to the monastery. The road to it from Trabzon follows a winding river valley up to an elevation of about 900 metres above sea level. From there the road becomes so steep that no buses, but only cars, can negotiate it. The members of the Black Sea Club of Veria, however, chose to walk up to the monastery from that point, through the forest, following the tracks they believe the first monks took. One of my informants said that along the twenty-minute walk they sang Pontian songs and danced and, in addition, people collected dirt, rocks and bits of forest to bring back home. But, more than walking occurred as participants made their way to the monastery. Walking brought to mind the memory of the original monks. As well, the 'visuals' of the multisensory experience of walking included such things as the exertion of climbing and dancing, hearing as well as participating in the singing, the smell of the forest, and the feel of the soil and rocks on their shoes. At the monastery itself, they felt the roughness of the building walls, the sight and smell of candles and oil lamps burning, and the sight of the icons.

One of the young dancers told me that she had seen different pictures of the monastery on postcards but, when she went inside and saw it for herself, she could not believe she was there. Apart from some of the buildings being destroyed, what distressed these pilgrims the most, she said, was that the icons on the walls had been defaced: many had bullet holes where once their eyes were. She explained that to her the eyes of icons are very personal. 'When you look at them, you have a contact,' she said. Another dancer said that even though it was no longer a church, they treated it as such. They took oil and lit candles and the kandelis,⁵⁹ venerated the icons and prayed for others who were not there. These were the only Orthodox rituals they could perform because at the time of their visit, the Turkish government did not allow priests to conduct the full Orthodox liturgy.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the visiting Pontians engaged in practices that showed that they believed they were at a sacred site. After the religious observances, they danced. The practice of including dance might seem to suggest that this pilgrimage was combining both the sacred and the secular but this was not so. Dance performed at the conclusion of Orthodox rites forms an integral part of many religious feast days. For instance, dance was part of

⁵⁹ Kandelis are oil lamps, which are lit and burnt in front of the icons in Orthodox churches and in Greek homes.

⁶⁰ The Turkish Government gave permission for an Orthodox liturgy to be celebrated at Panagia Soumela in Pontos, for the first time for eighty-eight years, in August 2010 (Athanasiadis 2010).

the celebrations at Panagia Soumela in northern Greece on the 14th and 15th August as well as at the Feast of the Epiphany in Adelaide on 7 January 2007.

Being at the original monastery of Panagia Soumela was particularly emotional for the older people, who had dreamt for a long time of visiting this place. Although they lived close to the monastery of Panagia Soumela in Greece, the realisation that they were actually at the original monastery was a moving experience for them. That they were able to see and touch what in the past they had only heard of, affected them both emotionally and physically. Many cried. Some were so overwhelmed, a young dancer said, 'that they did not have the courage to step up and dance...[Others] touched the ground like it was very precious.' Such bodily movements 'are never simply individual ones; they are always associative and therefore communicative, a process in which emotion is ever implicated' (Lyon 1995: 256). Thus, at the monastery, the combination of social memory, multisensory experience and the outpouring of intense emotional feeling, made this a sacred pilgrimage for Pontians.

Other religious practices were performed by Panagiota on her third trip to Santa. She found the sites of the churches and cemeteries in each of the seven villages. Her companion, Stavros, had asked her to learn some Turkish words in order to speak to the local people but rather than do this, she decided to learn the specific prayers for each of the seven churches.⁶¹ Stavros said that when they came to a particular church site, he would say, for example, 'Panagiota, now we are in the church of St. Christopher.' 'Oh, now I am singing the Gospel of St. Christopher,' she would say. Chanting the appropriate prayer for the saint's name of the church was her way of affirming that the place she was standing on, although in ruins, was still a sacred, consecrated Orthodox site and, as a Pontian, one to which she had a profound connection because, as her parents were from Santa, they would have worshipped at these churches.

Visiting these religious sites affirms to Pontians the longevity of Orthodoxy in Pontos and how its presence still remains in the ruins of churches and monasteries, a presence that exile has not been able to expunge. In response, Pontians engage in a multisensory ways in the 'visuals' of pilgrimage practices, and through these the second or third generation Pontians affirm that they are not merely tourists but they are Pontians who have a unique connection to the religious sites of Pontos. They

⁶¹ Fr Christos told me that these prayers are called the 'Apolytikion' or dismissal hymns. These are specific to each church as they describe the characteristics of the saint after whom the church is named.

prove this by recognising the sacredness of these religious places, by performing Orthodox practices in them and through an emotional attachment to them. Thus, as Pontian social memory, sensory practices and emotion intertwine through the pilgrimage, Pontians affirm to themselves that they remain truly Pontians despite the exile of their ancestors from Pontos.

Relating to those who remained

‘What about those who stay?...Are they not connected to the people who fled? In many works of refugee studies, there is an implicit assumption that in becoming “torn loose” from their cultures, “uprooted” from their homes, refugees suffer the loss of all contact to the lifeworlds they fled. It is as if the place left behind were no longer peopled’ (Malkki 1995b: 515).

Whether from Greece or Australia, when Pontians visit Pontos they not only seek out significant places, but assert that there are some people there who they identify as ‘their own people.’ This is because they speak the same language, dance the same dances to the same musical instruments and continue some shared religious practices.

Clark (2006) points out that an ambivalent relationship remains between Greek and Turkish people despite the atrocities that each side has committed against the other. Because the two peoples have a long shared history, this relationship has not been easily eradicated by their separation under the Exchange of Populations program brokered at the Lausanne Conference of 1923.

‘Whatever agonies they had suffered during the final years of their co-existence people on both sides of the Aegean did not react to them simply by regarding one another with hatred, or by giving thanks for the day when the two nations had been physically separated. Those sentiments did exist, of course. Yet mingled with the memories of terror and betrayal, feelings and recollections persisted which somehow transcended the Greek-Turkish divide; personal friendships, commercial partnerships, a sense of common participation in a single world, constituted by landscape, language, music, food and all the trivia of everyday life’ (2006: 10).

Thus,

‘...when the Aegean peoples were prised apart, each lost a part of its own identity, and hence lost the ability to understand itself. This paradox has found poignant expression in the arts—novels, songs and films—which hark back to a world in which

Greeks and Turks, Anatolian Christians and Anatolian Muslims recognized each other as human beings rather than enemies' (Clark 2006: 19).

Sometimes the ambivalent relationship is resolved by making a distinction between the authorities and the local people. When I told Fr Christos of my hopes to revisit the Pontos area, he said:

'You will not have any problems when you go there in Pontos, in Trabzon, in Panagia Soumela. You won't have any problems from the people, no problems. Maybe from the authorities because the people identify the pilgrims [sic] as their own and they are happy seeing their own kind but the authorities, many times are hostile because they are thinking, "What are you doing here? What are you doing here? You're back. This is not yours anymore".'

However, the complexity and perplexity of the relationship between the two peoples continues to be experienced even by those who have not visited Pontos. Something of this was expressed to me by Marianna, a young woman of Pontian background in Adelaide, when she watched the film 'A Touch of Spice', a film about tense Greek/Turkish relationships in Constantinople in 1955. The film opened with a Greek priest ringing a church bell and Marianna thought: 'This is beautiful, I am in Greece.'⁶² And then the scene changed to a muezzin's call to prayer. She said that at that time:

'I just went ah, ah, and shivers went up my spine. That I relate to. That sound is what I recognise as being something I belong to. And I am not Muslim and I don't know anything about Islam but it was just the sound called to me. The Greek bell is something I know now but the sound of the muezzin calling was something I knew then...I just knew it. I just know it. I just feel an affinity with it. It's home in me.'

Perhaps Marianna's sentiments reflect her close association with her grandmother who had come from Pontos as a seven year old child but, I think they are reflection of a close, yet ambivalent relationship that continues to exist between the two peoples.

Although the relations between Greece and Turkey are troubled and at times hostile, and even though some Pontians visiting Pontos were wary of the local people, they still spoke about connections with some of them. Vassiliki said that a few shopkeepers were not happy when they heard them speaking Greek. Voula said, 'We were

⁶² She added that she hears that sound almost every day because she lives near her local Greek Orthodox Church.

afraid and we tried not to speak Greek out loud. We wanted to avoid problems.’ She sensed that some Turkish people seemed to be afraid of having anything to do with the visiting Pontians. She said that this was because their tour was under surveillance by the authorities and its movements were closely monitored by the Grey Wolves⁶³ along with the police who had warned the local people not to talk to the Pontian visitors. She remembered an incident in Tonyia where, she said, there were a lot of Greek Pontians.⁶⁴ She said that when some of the tour members went into a bakery, the baker averted his eyes from them. However, under his breath he told one of them that he was Pontian as was his mother, and although he wanted to speak to them he would have trouble with the police if he did so. Despite the unease between the visitors and some of the local people, almost every person I spoke to who had visited Pontos told me that in some places their ‘own people’ still live there.

I spoke to many Pontians in Adelaide and Greece who told me that there were some people in Pontos, referred to as Crypto-Christians, who, although outwardly following Islamic practices, retain their Christian beliefs and practise Orthodox religious rites in secret (see Clark 2006: 116–19). The phenomenon of Crypto-Christians first appeared towards the end of 17th century when mass conversion to Islam occurred within the Ottoman Empire (Bryer, AAM 1980c: 43; Dawkins 1933: 258; Hasluck 1921: 199). Bryer (1980c: 43) notes that there is evidence of Crypto-Christians in remote settlements in the mountainous area south of Trapezounda and this is confirmed by the historical writer, George Andreadis (1995) whose family is descended from Crypto-Christians from the region of Kromni.

Contrary to Dawkins’ assertion that ‘the Crypto-Christians of Turkey have now disappeared for ever from the land’ (1933: 274), many Pontians assert that such people still exist in Pontos. Even those who had not visited Pontos had heard stories from others who had encountered such people there. Pontians interpret a display of Christian practices as evidence that these people have retained an allegiance to Christianity, and so perceive them as their own. ‘There are people of ours there still,’ Fr Christos said. He said that when he was in the Greek army, his commander, who was a Pontian Greek, told him that once when he was going up to the monastery of St. George in Pontos on the Saint’s feast day in April, there were buses coming to the monastery, not with people from Greece but with Turks. One Turk approached

⁶³ A nationalistic youth movement.

⁶⁴ By this she meant Turkish people who retained the Pontian language and possibly other Greek cultural and religious practices.

and came very close to him and said quietly in Pontic Greek, 'We are, too, from your own root...from your own kind.' Vassiliki also said that when they were at Panagia Soumela, there were people there who had ancient Greek names, such as Aristotlidis. She said that they were Christian: they wore small crosses inside their clothing and they made the sign of the cross. In Turkey, where only the practice of Islam is condoned, Pontian visitors rejoiced when they met those who also performed some of their own Orthodox religious practices.

Up to now, in this thesis, I have discussed rupture in terms of exile and migration. This spatio-temporal rupture involved a displacement of people from their homelands resulting in some disjunctions and discontinuities. But, a religious rupture is also embedded in the social memory of Pontians. This is not in relation to the rupture of their religion once they came to Greece. The beliefs themselves were transportable and could be reconstituted in another place such as Greece where Orthodoxy was the recognised state religion. The religious rupture that I discuss is in relation to the conversion from Christianity to Islam for some Greeks who were able to remain in Pontos at the time of the exile.

Anthropologists have generally considered religious conversion from the point of view of rupture. While conversion might require converts to make a complete break from their former beliefs and practices, many anthropologists question this assumption. Austin-Broos (2003) sees conversion as a passage of enculturation, whereas Coleman (2003) describes it as a continuous activity on the part of the convert and those who facilitate it. Others show that cultural remnants continue in some form or are incorporated into present religious beliefs in specific ways (see for example Dundon 2011; Lampe 2010; Meyer 1998). Robbins (2007: 10–14) critiques this view of cultural continuity and argues that differences between Christian converts and anthropologists arise from a different concept of time and belief. He contends that Christianity is predicated on disjunction and discontinuity not only from a personal perspective of conversion but from a historical perspective that incorporates both Christianity's origins and its belief in disjunction at the end of time. Robbins (2007: 16) also points out that much of the focus on the disjunction and discontinuity of conversion is in relation to Protestant or Evangelical Christianity. There is much less emphasis on conversion in Catholicism or in Orthodoxy where more focus is placed on the process whereby a person enters and remains in the religion through the sacraments such as Baptism and Confirmation. Orthodox people, therefore, tend to live a religious life without much awareness of people being involved in a sudden con-

version or religious rupture. Thus, being Greek generally means being 'born into' Orthodoxy and retaining at least some religious continuity and identity with it throughout their life. Coming from this background, Pontians seeing some of the local people as 'their own', therefore, are visualising continuity of belief and practice rather than discontinuity. Hearing them speaking the Pontic dialect, singing the same songs, dancing the same dances to the same musical instruments and performing some of the same religious practices, indicates to them that those they term Crypto-Christians continue to be Greek and therefore Orthodox.

Belief in the existence of Crypto-Christians that is embedded in the social memory of Pontians gives a different perspective on the rupture of conversion. For Greeks who were able to remain in Turkey after the Exchange of Populations, conversion was not to Christianity but to Islam where the convert understood that there had to be an outward indication that a clear disjunction had occurred. Apostasy would result in death (see Bryer, AAM 1980b: 175) and so carrying out Christian practices in secret was dangerous. While there were those who did discontinue their Christian beliefs and practices, evidence points to the fact that there were others who continued with them. However, regardless of whether or not there are actually Crypto-Christians in Pontos nowadays in the sense that there were in the 17th century, or what their numbers are, what is significant is that visiting Pontians maintain that there are. Part of the reason for this belief is in their religious position. What I am arguing is not just that this is a continuity of culture but an understanding whereby Orthodoxy preferences continuity rather than disjunction. Belief in the existence of Crypto-Christians creates for Pontians the 'visuals' of a historic continuity and an ongoing connection between the pilgrims and local people.

Those who visit the Pontos area always remark on how some local people continue to speak their language. When Pavlos was in a public park in Trabzon in the 1990s, he and those with him decided to speak Pontian loudly. One young man jumped up from a nearby table and asked, 'Are you *Rum*?' and then came and sat with them. In the end, Pavlos said that there were about fifteen people from a Pontian background who came and spoke to them. Olga who visited in the early 1980s told me that some of the people she met there spoke what she termed a 'pure' Pontian. It was one, she said, that she could understand. Her father had spoken Pontian to his friends when they visited their home in Adelaide when she was young but while they spoke Pontian, it was not as pure as the Pontian she heard in Pontos. She said,

‘It was pure Pontian. Very, very clearly and I didn’t know a lot about it but it was very different from the language I heard my father speak. Not very different...But you could tell the difference...and I understood it...and for the two or three words that I could speak they were rapt that I [spoke] it’.

Kyriaki, who was part of the Black Sea Club’s tour in 2006, said that when they were going to Panagia Soumela they saw some local Turkish people who gave the impression that they wanted to talk to them. ‘You could tell by the way they said “hello” but they could not [speak to us].’ She added, ‘They spoke perfect Pontian.’ When Pontians came to Greece in the early 20th century, the Pontic dialect was not understood by the mainland Greeks. Despite that fact that the Greek state brought pressure on Pontians to adopt Modern Greek, they have maintained their language both as refugees from Pontos and as migrants to Australia. Hence, for Pontian pilgrims to hear the Pontic dialect spoken and speak it in response is a further affirmation of their affinity to the land and its people.

Most people who visited Pontos commented on the similarity between the Pontic dance they perform and the dance they observed in places like Trabzon. Olga observed a local dance group dressed in almost exactly the same Pontian costumes as she wore in Adelaide when performing Pontic dances. She said that they wore pantaloons and a blouse underneath a long-sleeved cloak-like garment with a jacket on top and a wrap around their hips. If they were single, on their head they wore a scarf with the *tapla* underneath. Married women only wore the scarf. The richer ones had fur on their jackets. She said that when she got up to dance all the dances with them, they looked at her and asked, ‘How on earth does she know how to do these dances?’ While there were slight variations, the dances were virtually the same as those she had been taught, with the exception that the way the women danced was a lot more demure than the way they danced in Adelaide.

Back in 1969 Bryer commented:

‘In Matzouka [in Pontos] there are now two generations of Pontic Muslims who are too young to remember the Greeks. But in September, 1969, some were singing Greek songs to the Pontic lyre, tears streaming down their cheeks. The old Greek ballads may last a further generation before they are finally forgotten in the Pontos’ (1980c: 52).

But, he may have underestimated the strength of the continuity of loss.

Those who were on the Veria Black Sea Club trip to Pontos in 2006 told me that some of the local people came to play music and dance with them. Voula said that when they were staying at a hotel near Panagia Soumela for two days, local people heard that there were Greek people staying there and some travelled up to two hours to come to the hotel. She said that these people came with their *lyras* and were excited to meet them. They played from memory the tunes and the Pontic songs that their grandparents had taught them. Voula said that their music and dancing was almost exactly the same as theirs with only a few variations in the dance steps. Again, once when they visited a market place in Samsun in Turkey they heard Pontic music. When the dance group started to dance, those around heard that they were Pontians and came and joined in the dance with them. In the physicality of the dance—its bodily movements, the rhythms of the music and the touch of other dancers—both the visitors and the local people together affirmed a continuity that the estrangement of the two peoples has not been able to erase.

The pilgrims often told me how they, or those they were with, were often in tears. While Athina was talking to me and recounting her journey, tears were forming in her eyes as the memories of the visit evoked the emotions of absence and estrangement. Ethimia who was translating for her mother, who had recently returned from Pontos, told me:

‘My mother was crying all the time because when you are in Turkey up in the mountains and you hear someone, an old one, to talk to you in Pontian, it is very emotional. They were all Greeks, all of them, they danced, they played *lyra*, they took the *lyra* out, they danced, they were so glad to see Greek people in Pontos. They were talking to them in Pontian. It was very emotional.’

Crying can be the reaction to a number of different emotions and whether it is a response to happiness of reunion or that of sadness to estrangement, it nevertheless, employs ‘*distinctive, aesthetically guided ways of mobilizing the expressive body*’ (Katz 1999: 179, italics in the original text). Responding with emotion is a deeply felt embodied experience that validates the act of affirmation of the pilgrimage. As these second and third generation Pontians believed that what they were told of the genocide was true because of the intensity of the emotions by which it was told to them by their parents or grandparents, so too, crying for Pontian pilgrims demonstrates to them the validity of their own act of affirmation. This affirmation therefore is the assertion that despite the estrangement between the Greeks and Turks, and the distance of time and space, there are still Pontians living in the north of Turkey. Fur-

thermore, in this pilgrimage they can prove that they are Pontians because they continue to dance the same dances, talk the same Pontic dialect and worship in the same ways as some of those in Pontos. As well, some in Turkey recognise a connection between themselves and the visiting Pontians (see Öztürkmen 2003). This further enhances the affirmation and hence, in this instance, the tears were tears of joy at the re-connection. While the pilgrims were in Pontos, the discontinuities between the two peoples disappeared as each recognised the sameness in the other.

When local people join in a common dance or play the same musical instruments or sing well-known songs, which are recognised as particularly Pontian, the relationship between the two groups is changed. In making such a connection, they were no longer strangers to each other but were perceived to share a common background, even though the relationship has been a difficult one over the past eighty years. Through a shared language and common practices, Pontian pilgrims were made aware that the families of people they met once shared their parents' and grandparents' lives. This affirmed that there remains a close connectedness with the local people whom they saw as their own and who in return affirmed this relationship. Thus, the process of mutuality wherein both acknowledge their common background gave a different dimension to what being Pontian means.

Conclusion

The short-term visits that Pontians make to Pontos are pilgrimages that entwine memory, senses and emotion. The Pontian social memory that convinced Pontian pilgrims to make the pilgrimage was formed through what others had told them of the place and what happened there. However, through the practices of the pilgrimage, through the senses that are employed and emotions that are engaged, pilgrims form their own personal memory of Pontos. Later, the narratives of their journey, further feed into the wider Pontian social memory.

The emphasis in pilgrimages to Pontos is less on difference and more on continuity. Through shared practices, the pilgrimage re-established a commonness between local and pilgrims so that it seemed as if they could imagine living in their ancestors' time and place in Pontos. Athina told me that the feeling she has about her visit to Pontos is hard to describe 'It is something like a feeling of pain or grief,' she said. Her grandfather came from Pontos but because she had never met him, she feels this as a loss in her life. While she was in Pontos, she kept wondering what his life

could have been like and how he left his country. So, she said that throughout the trip she was trying to imagine her grandfather's life as if 'trying to get into another person's shoes.' Through the multisensory practices of the pilgrimage, that is, the 'visuals' of the pilgrimage, a sense of loss is allayed. In seeing the places where their parents lived they imagine their lives, by walking the streets they wonder if their grandparents walked the same streets and in worshipping at sacred sites they imagine their ancestors doing the same thing there. A commonness is established when they speak the Pontic dialect with local people, dance the same dances to the same musical instruments, sing the same songs and practice similar religious rites. For a brief time, a feeling of loss disappears as pilgrims experience a multi-sensory connectedness to the land and its peoples. In this way, pilgrims affirm to themselves and others that although they are second or third generation descendants of those who were exiled from Pontos, they, nevertheless, retain a profound connection to the Pontos as their place of origin.

Although their ancestors were once citizens of Pontos, their descendants remain visitors and after their pilgrimage they have to return to their homelands. The sense of loss of Pontos that Pontians feel is not diminished by these pilgrimages. Although what was in Pontos might be irretrievably lost, the presence of its absence continues to be created and recreated in the feelings attached to the memory of the pilgrimage, the narration of it and through the sensory attachment to collected objects. Thus, these pilgrimages do not alleviate the loss produced through genocide and exile but act to intensify the presence of its absence.

The pilgrimage also provides something else that is positive. Although the pilgrimage does not make the pilgrims 'more Pontian' than those who do not go, they do, however, come back with a different sensory awareness of what it means to be Pontian. The remembrance of the sensory practices of the pilgrimage remains with the pilgrims and gives them a visceral sense of what it means to be Pontian. The pilgrimage gives them a physical and sensory experience of what in the past they had only heard. Despite the fact that they were not born in Pontos, it now affirms the validity of their Ponticness.

8 Concluding chapter

When I began to write this thesis, I did not intend to focus on the Pontian genocide. I thought it was a subject for historians to prove or disprove from archival records. But as I began to be faced with the underlying and ongoing effects of loss from this fundamental event for Pontian people, I found that it was a topic that I could not avoid: Using a phenomenological stance, I have, therefore, explored the experience and significance of genocide for Pontians, and how this affected their lives in the second of their two historical ruptures, that of their voluntary migration from Greece. In focusing on the effects of exile and migration for Pontic Greeks in Adelaide, this thesis has explored how the memory of loss from these past events is constituted so that it continues to be experienced as absence. Losses from both of these ruptures have played a pivotal role in the construction of an ongoing presence of absence for Pontians. Loss is not only tied to the past but, for Pontians, the palimpsest quality of prior loss is always present. This thesis has shown how the themes of social memory, emotions and embodiment in corporeal practices bring loss associated with past events into the present to be experienced as the presence of absence. In this concluding chapter, I focus on two aspects that the thesis has highlighted. One is that traumatic loss is the basis for their ongoing identification as Pontians. The other is that a presence of absence continues to be experienced and is displayed through corporeal practices.

One of the sub-texts of this thesis, therefore, is the way in which loss differentiates Pontian Greeks from other Greeks. Pontians are members of a diaspora, in both the prototypical and contemporary meanings of the term; that is, they have been victims of a forced exile and have undertaken voluntary migration. This differentiates them from other Greeks who migrated without a background of exile. The process of differential identification for Pontians is complex: it is multi-faceted with each historical context having an influence on the subsequent one. Further, in the process of identifying themselves as a separate ethnic group they have created a Ponticness, which they continue to maintain and promote.

A number of historical events have contributed to the process of their self-identification. In their former homeland, Pontians, being of the Orthodox faith, belonged to the *Rum* millet but when they came to Greece they lost that status. Although they shared the same religion with mainland Greeks, they had always re-

ferred to a Byzantine Orthodoxy based in Constantinople as the essence of Hellenism whereas the Modern Greek state looked to the ancient classical period for the quintessential nature of its identity (see Herzfeld 1986: 18–21). This differentiation was further exacerbated after Pontians were exiled from Pontos and began to settle in Greece. They were forced to adopt a refugee status within the Greek state. In losing the appellation, *Rum* and accepting the term ‘refugee’ they were perceived by the local population to occupy an inferior social position. However, according to Giannuli, it was a term they accepted ‘as denoting both their misplacement in mainland Greece and their pride in the superior culture they had left behind’ (Giannuli 1995: 284). Only after two or three generations did ‘their descendants [stop] referring to themselves as refugees, and felt more at ease in their new homeland’ (Mazower 2006: 337). In addition, it was also as they began to settle in Greece, that they became known as Pontians, a designation which distinguished them from refugees from other parts of Asia Minor and Thrace (see Fann Bouteneff 2002: 20).

‘The Pontians’ reception and settlement as refugees in Greece have had an indelible effect on their worldview and have served to cohere them as an ethnic group’ (Fann Bouteneff 2002: 40). That their presence in Greece was resented by indigenous Greeks resulted in further alienation and discrimination. As a result Pontians sought to re-settle with other Pontians, in as far as this was possible. As shown in *Chapter Two*, through the creation of villages and religious sites, in the resumption of some retained everyday practices and through the expression of sorrow and joy, Pontians were able to return to some semblance of normality (Das & Kleinman 2001). In this process, the shared experiences became intertwined with personal memories to give Pontians an explanation of what had happened to them and contributed to the formation of a social memory of loss.

For Pontians, experience of the exile during which their forebears were ill-treated or died, remained as the prior experience of loss and coloured the later separation from families and homelands in the migration process. In the *third chapter* of this thesis, I contended that through a pro-active ‘home building’ exercise (Hage 1997: 102) Pontians used physical structures, such as ‘Greek’ homes and churches that presented the absence of Greece, to produce a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘autonomy’ (Jackson 1995). Initially, Pontian migrants found Australia a place that was alienating and disempowering, just as Greece had been for their parents. And, although

they maintain they are Greek in wider Australian society, within the Greek community in Adelaide they continue to refer to themselves and are known as Pontians. This identification is evident at Greek festivals at which they provide specific Pontic food and perform unique dances in costumes and to musical instruments that originated in Pontos.

The multi-faceted process of their identification is further highlighted in the journeys that diasporic Pontians make to their former homelands. In *Chapter Six*, I showed that there was a difference between the short-term visits that older Pontians make to Greece and those that their children undertake. For the former, they were nostalgic return visits that look back to the time and place of their youth. In contrast, for the latter, they were 'looking-forward' journeys for members of the second generation. In these, they discovered a new way of being Pontian Greek through visiting Pontian villages and by dancing at Pontian festivals to Pontic music. Both generations however, sought an aspect of Greekness that was different from that experienced in Australia. Nevertheless, once these visits were over, both the older and younger groups articulated a nostalgic yearning to return to Greece. Thus, I argue that these short-term visits do not overcome the sense of the absence of Greece but rather continue to reproduce the presence of its absence. This is part of the diasporic Pontic experience, which has an inherent sense of loss and absence associated with the migration experience.

Whereas diasporic Pontic Greeks who visit Greece seek 'Greekness', *Chapter Seven* of the thesis showed that those who visit Pontos, either from Australia or from Greece, go in search of Ponticness. Pontians gain a broader sense of their self-identification by actually being in the region of Pontos. They see the sites of former family villages, practise rituals at religious sites and also engage with people who share some of their cultural heritage, through music, dance and language. Through these ways, for a brief time they experience a multi-sensory engagement with the land and its people. This affirms to themselves and to others that they have a unique and inalienable connection to Pontos. Thus through the 'existential immediacy' (Csordas 1994: 10) of these visits, which incorporate physical, emotional and sensual experiences, Pontic visitors come to a different sense of being Pontian with a deeper understanding of the contextual nature of their Pontian identity.

These four chapters had a theme of movement: two initial chapters focus on moving from Pontos to Greece and then from Greece to Australia and the last two on going back to those two former homelands. The effects of these journeys highlight the multi-faceted process of Pontic Greek identification. *Chapters Four* and *Five* of my thesis concentrated on ongoing practices that continue to presence the absence of Pontos and Greece and demonstrated that while what was lost is in the past, the memory of loss is always in the present. It is evoked by contemporary experiences and sensed through a multi-faceted expression of emotions to become a presence of absence. Although many of my informants have lived in Adelaide for up to fifty years, they and their children continue to remember former homelands and presence their absence in a variety of ongoing corporeal practices, such as through commemorations and in dance.

Pontian commemorations are a way whereby the losses associated with the genocide are remembered. More than this, the emotions produced through these annual events continue to presence the absence of the homeland of Pontos. Commemorations, therefore, perpetuate the remembrance of loss and its associated emotional response, which is ongoing. In *Chapter Four*, I showed how, for Santa people, this was encapsulated in their permanent memorial monument at the House of Santa in Greece. I also pointed out that at the time of my fieldwork, Adelaide Pontians did not have a similar monument. On 20 December 2008, however, the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia unveiled a plaque at the Migration Museum in Adelaide to acknowledge the Pontian genocide. Such a public plaque now gives Pontians in Adelaide a permanent site that 'bears witness' (Oliver 2001) to the past pain and suffering of their people.



Plate 30: Pontian plaque at the Migration Museum in Adelaide

Speaking at the unveiling of this plaque, the President of the Brotherhood, a second generation Pontian, said:

'We are here today because we remember; we honour and respect the struggle of our forefathers to face the future away from their ancestral home. This is dedicated to our forefathers who survived the horrors, who told us the unbelievable, incomprehensible stories of their trials that seemed unreal and impossible and yet were true. This plaque is dedicated to all Pappouthes, all Yiayiathes⁶⁵ ...and to the many more who cried in the dark for their lost families yet fought and strived to raise new families in a strange and often unfriendly land. It is dedicated to those who sing the songs in raised voices, who dance with passion and lose their pain in the voice of the lira.

The Pontians and Mikr' Asiates⁶⁶ escaped the Ottoman Empire and became refugees in a country that was the Motherland, but didn't always welcome them as her children. Making a life in another country because one chooses to go there could be a pleasant type of struggle. One could feel excited to learn about the new culture with which they will live their lives. But to leave because one is forced, evicted and

⁶⁵ 'All grandfathers, all grandmothers'

⁶⁶ This is a reference to those exiled from Asia Minor.

hunted is traumatic and migration under these circumstances is painful for many years.'

Such a speech was intended to evoke an emotional response in those listening, as it did. But the words 'Lest we forget' on the plaque showed an intention on the part of those responsible for the wording, that subsequent generations would maintain an ongoing memory of the genocide, as well as the emotions attached to it, in a country far from where those atrocities took place.

Apart from commemorations, the other ongoing practice that presences absence is Pontic dance. Because it continues to be performed on many different occasions and at a variety of venues, it is another significant way through which Pontians display and express their Ponticness. Through unique dance steps, distinctive costumes and specific musical instruments, these dances not only connect Pontians to their social, geographical and historical background, but generate a particular shape to the emotions that have been shaped in other contexts prior to the dance such as through commemorations of the genocide, and the social memory of exile and migration. Pontians assert that it is necessary to have a specific 'feel' to dance Pontic dances. This inner feeling of which they have a tacit knowledge is described by reference to the outward body. In *Chapter Five*, I asserted that dance not only gives a physical form to feeling (Langer 1953) but it also shapes emotion. Thus, dance is an embodiment of the emotional feeling of being Pontian. This occurs when, time and again, dance is performed at Pontic community functions whether in choreographic or participatory dance. Dance, therefore, is a means by which Pontians display their Ponticness and through which intense emotions of loss are generated and through which the absence of Greece and Pontos continues to be presented.

A number of studies have been carried out on the settling practices of newly-arrived refugee or migrant groups in Australia (Abuk 2003; Hage 1997; Mar 1998; Tabar 2005; Thomas 1998; Tilbury 2007; Warin & Dennis 2005; Wise 2005). My study differs from these by focusing on a long-standing migrant group who have been in Australia for up to sixty years. It shows that the sense of loss from a former time and homeland continues to be experienced as an absence and that this is constructed as a presence of that absence within a number of practices.

The study contributes to the literature on exile and migration in that it suggests that the effects of the circumstances under which Pontians were forcibly exiled and then undertook voluntary migration, do not necessarily disappear once they were settled in a new place, even though what happened occurred many years before and in a countries far away from Australia. These issues have long-lasting effects and become further compounded if it is felt that the injustices under which they departed have not been addressed. I found that Pontic Greeks retain a heightened sense of injustice because the genocide has not always been acknowledged. Because of this many Pontian organisations continue to seek to bring pressure on the Turkish government to recognise that the genocide occurred. Very often they do this through petitioning other nation states to acknowledge the genocide. For instance, through the efforts of the Pontian Brotherhood of South Australia, on 30 April 2009, a motion was carried in the House of Assembly of the State Government of South Australia that officially recognised and condemned the genocide.⁶⁷ This action, along with the erection of the plaque at the Migration Museum, went some way to assuage the pain Pontians feel from the underlying event of exile, but it does not take it away completely. My research shows that memories of losses from exile and migration remain and that the emotional attachment to these continues to be experienced as an ongoing presence of absence despite the passage of time.

⁶⁷ The then Hon. Michael Atkinson, Attorney General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs was successful in having the following motion passed by the South Australia State Government:

- That, whereas the genocide by the Ottoman state between 1915-1923 of Armenians, Hellenes, Syrian and other minorities in Asia Minor is one of the greatest crimes against humanity, the people of South Australia and this House
- (a) join the members of the Armenian-Australian, Pontian Greek-Australian and Syrian-Australian communities in honouring the memory of the innocent men, women and children who fell victim to the first modern genocide;
 - (b) condemns the genocide of the Armenians, Pontian Greeks, Syrian Orthodox and other Christian minorities, and all other acts of genocide as the ultimate act of racial, religious and cultural intolerance;
 - (c) recognises the importance of remembering and learning from such dark chapters in human history to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not allowed to be repeated;
 - (d) condemns and prevents all attempts to use the passage of time to deny or distort the historical truth of the genocide of the Armenians and other acts of genocide committed during this century;
 - (e) acknowledges the significant humanitarian contribution made by the people of South Australia to the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide and the Pontian Genocide; and
 - (f) calls on the commonwealth parliament officially to condemn the genocide (Hansard of the Parliament of South Australia 2009).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Settlement of people from Santa in Greek villages

The table below was listed in *Ta Nea*, the local newspaper of Nea Santa, dated August 2006. It showed the number of people from Santa and their villages and the Greek villages where they settled between 1913 and 1940.

Πίνακας των Σανταίων που εγκαταστάθηκαν στην Ελλάδα την περίοδο 1913-1940									
			Πισοφάντων	Ισχανάντων	Τερζάντων	Ζουρντισάντων	Πλωσιάντων	Κοσκαράντων	Τσακαλάντων
Νέα Σάντα	Κιλκίς	549	193	127	35	34	52	13	95
Τριανταφυλλιά	Σερρών	220	106	54	36	6	3	8	7
Βεργίνα	Ημαθίας	206	46	87	35	22	10	3	3
Αμάρανια	Κιλκίς	169	53	20	33	4	25	33	1
Καστανιά	Ημαθίας	151	13	36	9	3	39	46	5
Μικρή Σάντα	Ημαθίας	144	71	15	7	18	6	26	1
Δασωτό	Δράμας	125	4	79	22	1	10	6	3
Ραχιά	Ημαθίας	102	38	1	2	57	3	1	0
Κύργια	Δράμας	93	12	51	15	0	1	14	0
Πεύκα	Έβρου	83	3	61	4	13	1	1	0
Νέος Πράδρομος	Ημαθίας	82	22	37	23	0	0	0	0
Άγιος Χαράλαμπος	Κιλκίς	79	18	4	7	45	2	0	3
Αετοχώρι	Έβρου	73	39	4	1	23	4	2	0
Ευαγγελίστρια	Θεσσαλονίκης	70	40	18	0	4	1	1	6
Παλατίτσια	Ημαθίας	64	11	34	4	11	0	4	0
Οχυρό	Δράμας	60	25	22	0	10	2	1	0
Κάτω Νευροκόπι	Δράμας	59	8	35	6	0	10	0	0
Μικρό Δάσος	Κιλκίς	45	26	12	0	0	1	1	5
Άγιος Παντελεήμων	Κιλκίς	42	37	1	0	2	0	0	2
Καταχάς	Πιερίας	32	1	13	18	0	0	0	0
Άλλοι οικισμοί		813	291	169	118	70	74	52	39
ΣΥΝΟΛΟ		3.261	1.057	880	375	323	244	212	170

Below is a translation of the above table:

Village in Greece	No. of people	Pisto-fandon	Ichan-andon	Ter-zandon	Zounat sandon	Pinatan don	Kozla-randon	Tskaland on
Nea Santa	549	193	127	35	34	52	13	95
Triantafyllia	220	106	54	36	6	3	8	7
Vergina	206	46	87	35	22	10	3	3
Amaranta	169	53	20	33	4	25	33	1
Kastania	151	13	36	9	3	39	46	5
Mikri Santa	144	71	15	7	18	6	26	1
Dasoto	125	4	79	22	1	10	6	3
Raxia	102	38	1	2	57	3	1	0
Kyrgia	93	12	51	15	0	1	14	0
Pefka	83	3	61	4	13	1	1	0
Nea Prodomos	82	22	37	23	0	0	0	0
Agios Haralambos	79	18	4	7	45	2	0	3
Aetohori	73	39	4	1	23	4	2	0
Afaggelistria	70	40	18	0	4	1	1	6
Palatitsia	64	11	34	4	11	0	4	0
Ohyro	60	25	22	0	10	2	1	0
Kato Nefrokopi	59	8	35	6	0	10	0	0
Mikro Dasos	45	26	12	0	0	1	1	5
Agios Panteleimon	42	37	1	0	2	0	0	2
Katahas	32	1	13	18	0	0	0	0
(All families)	813	291	169	118	70	74	52	39
Total number	3261	1057	880	375	323	244	212	170

Appendix 2: Examples of Pontic dance

The enclosed DVD shows the following examples of Pontic dance.

NOTE:
DVDs containing 'Recorded Performances' are included with the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Choreographed dance:

- The dance group of the South Australian Brotherhood of South Australia dancing at a religious festival at the monastery of Panagia Soumela on 15 August 2006
- The dance group of the Black Sea Club of Veria, Greece, dancing at a festival at the town Polikastro northern Greece, on 10 September 2006
- The knife dance, *Piçak Oyünü*, danced by two members of the Black Sea Club of Veria at the Veria Civic Centre on 17th September 2006 to commemorate of the genocide of peoples from Asia Minor
- A lament to prepare the dancers from the Black Sea Club of Veria for their performance of *Serra* at the above performance
- Dancers from the South Australian Brotherhood of South Australia dancing at a community event at the town of Langadas in northern Greece on 21 August 2006

Community dance:

- Members of the Pontian community dancing together at the Langadas function on 21 August 2006
- Dancing at a Pontian function held at the Dom Polski Centre, Adelaide, on 27 August 2005
- Dancing at the village of Agios Bartholomaeus, northern Greece, on 18 August 2006
- Dancing at Ferryden Park, Adelaide, for the *Synapantema* Festival, a national gathering of Pontians on 23 January 2011

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