

## New Horizons and Changing Perspectives in the Path of History

Demet Dimitra Uyar

International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (Giessen)

Demet.d.uyar@stud.uni-giessen.de

### Abstract:

The edited volume *History and Historiography in Greece: Recent Trends* examines the development and current state of Greek historiography. It explores the influence of international historiographical debates and the expansion of approaches such as Marxist, gender, economic, labor, oral, and public history. By placing Greek historiography within broader transnational and ideological contexts, the volume offers a concise and critical contribution to contemporary historiographical discussions.

### Neue Horizonte und sich verändernde Perspektiven im Laufe der Geschichte

#### German Abstract:

Der Sammelband *History and Historiography in Greece: Recent Trends* untersucht die Entwicklung und den aktuellen Stand der griechischen Geschichtsschreibung. Der Band analysiert den Einfluss internationaler historiographischer Debatten sowie die Ausweitung von Ansätzen wie marxistischer, geschlechtergeschichtlicher, wirtschafts-, arbeits-, oral- und public-history-Forschung. Durch die Einbettung der griechischen Historiographie in breitere transnationale und ideologische Kontexte leistet der Band einen prägnanten und kritischen Beitrag zu aktuellen historiographischen Diskussionen.

### How to cite:

Uyar, Demet Dimitra: "New Horizons and Changing Perspectives in the Path of History. [Review of: Christofis, Nikos (ed.). *History and Historiography in Greece: Recent Trends*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2025.]". In: KULT\_online 73 (2026). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22029/ko.2026.1567>



## New Horizons and Changing Perspectives in the Path of History

Demet Dimitra Uyar

International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (Giessen)

Christofis, Nikos (ed.): *History and Historiography in Greece: Recent Trends*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2025. 350 Pages, 135 USD. ISBN: 978-1-80539-986-5.

Published in English in 2025, *History and Historiography in Greece: Recent Trends* offers more than a collective overview of historiographical developments; it also raises a broader question about how a national historiographical tradition situates itself within global intellectual currents. Rather than presenting Greek historiography as a self-contained narrative, the volume frames it as a dynamic field shaped by institutional formation, ideological tensions, and transnational scholarly exchange. For researchers interested in the circulation of historiographical methodologies, this framing is particularly compelling because it positions the book as an active intervention in international historiographical debates rather than a purely descriptive survey.

As stated in the introduction of the volume, the book pursues a dual aim. First, it seeks to present Greek historiography in comparison with international historiographical trends, highlighting points of convergence and divergence, thereby showing how Greek academic history interacts with global historiography. In doing so, it provides an explanatory framework not only for Greek readers but also for non-Greek researchers and students. Second, it aims to illuminate the ideological constraints shaping Greek academia by introducing contemporary trends, themes, and methodological approaches in Greek historiography – a goal it largely achieves. Overall, the book offers a holistic perspective on how Greek historiography was formed, how it has evolved, and around which debates it is currently structured – and in this, it succeeds.

In the introduction, Nikos Christofis examines how history and historiography have developed since the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the establishment of the modern Greek state in 1830.

Christofis outlines the historical formation of Greek historiography from the nineteenth century onward, emphasizing the interplay between national narrative-building and academic institutionalization. Importantly, the introduction establishes the analytical lens through which the rest of the volume can be read: historiography as a field in which scholarly production intersects with identity, politics, and modernization. This conceptual grounding strengthens the coherence of the collection while clarifying its broader ambitions.

Although the fourteen chapters may be read as independent case studies, the volume is in fact structured around three principal axes: the institutional consolidation of historical disciplines, methodological diversification, and the expansion of historiography toward social and cultural orientations. That said, this thematic framework is not developed with equal depth in every chapter. While the influence of the Annales School on Greek historiography, the dynamics of the rise and decline of Marxist historiography, and the process of the autonomization of economic history are addressed in various chapters, the specific institutional and intellectual mechanisms through which these transnational interactions unfolded are not always examined in sufficient detail.

In the first chapters following the introduction, the social and cultural dimensions of historiography are foregrounded. Through fields such as labor history, gender history, and oral history, the volume demonstrates that historiography is neither limited to nor confined by political and national narratives, while also showing how it has expanded to encompass the experiences of 'silent' or marginalized groups. The final chapters address contemporary historiographical debates, covering topics such as biography, memory, public history, postmodern approaches, the place of Ottoman studies in Greece, and comparative or transnational history.

Methodological transformation is explored most clearly in Eleftheria Zei's account of the New History movement, Christos Hadziiosif's study of Marxist historiography, and Socrates D. Petmezas's work on economic and social history. These contributions show that Greek historiography engaged with Marxist, Annales-inspired, and interdisciplinary approaches not simply by replicating them, but by reshaping them within local intellectual contexts. Implicitly, the chapters argue that historiographical innovation was inseparable from institutional and

ideological change within Greek academia, thereby highlighting how scholarly practice reflects broader political and cultural transformations.

The expansion of historiography beyond political narratives is clearly reflected in Leda Papastefanaki's study of the labor movement, which situates the subject within its broader social and political context. Her contribution analyzes the ideological foundations, principal actors, and historical transformations of the labor movement while also assessing its contemporary relevance. In the gender-focused studies by Androniki Dialeti, Eleni Fournaraki, and Yannis Yannitsiotis, the emergence of gender history in Greece is examined through the development of women's movements, feminist activism, and the changing social position of women, emphasizing how these processes have reshaped historiographical agendas and methodological orientations. Similarly, the work of Riki Van Boeschoten and Antonia Antoniou on oral and biographical history highlights the importance of oral testimony in uncovering social memory and in incorporating the experiences of marginalized groups – particularly in relation to migration, war, trauma, gender, and class – into historical analysis. Taken together, these chapters foreground marginalized voices and collective memory, thereby situating Greek historiography within broader global shifts toward social and cultural history.

The volume's attention to public history and postmodern debates further reinforces its analytical breadth. Aimilia Salvanou's chapter on public history examines its emergence since the 1970s, emphasizing its role in mediating between academia, state power, and society, as well as its influence on collective memory and policy. Kimon Markatos analyzes post-1974 historiographical shifts, focusing on postmodern critiques, debates on objectivity, and epistemological ruptures. Together, Salvanou's exploration of public history and Markatos's engagement with postmodern debates underscore the growing reflexivity of the discipline, while Elias Kolovos and Nikos Christofis highlight the importance of Ottoman and comparative perspectives in situating Greek historiography within transnational frameworks and in the reassessment of nationalism and identity within regional and global contexts.

In this regard, the contributions of Angelos Chaniotis, Yannis Stouraitis, and Dimitri Stamatopoulos are particularly noteworthy, as they render visible the ways in which disciplinary traditions evolved in dialogue with ideological and methodological debates. Chaniotis critically

addresses the delayed institutionalization of ancient history in Greece, arguing that the field long lacked methodological rigor and emphasizing the foundational role of epigraphy and archaeology in its consolidation. However, the extent to which these methodological shortcomings were the result of intellectual choices, as opposed to broader academic and political structures, could have been explored more explicitly.

Similarly, Stouraitis demonstrates that historiographical approaches to Byzantium have been shaped by political, religious, and identity-based frameworks, contending that Byzantine identity can only be understood through sustained attention to both internal dynamics and external interactions. Yet this approach also raises the need to situate the concept of ‘identity’ within a more systematic theoretical framework and to interrogate its historical transformations more rigorously.

Stamatopoulos, for his part, traces key debates within modern Greek historiography – through figures such as Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, Yorgos Dertilis, Thanos Veremis, and Kaliopoulos – in order to illustrate the gradual erosion of the nationalist paradigm and the emergence of more critical and pluralistic frameworks. Nevertheless, the question remains whether this transformation constitutes a genuine epistemological rupture or rather a discursive repositioning within an enduring conceptual structure.

Taken together, these case studies convincingly demonstrate that Greek historiography did not passively internalize international influences but selectively appropriated and transformed them. At the same time, a more sustained engagement with the social, institutional, and political contexts that shaped these processes of adaptation would have further strengthened the analytical framework advanced by the collection.

Antonis Liakos’s afterword reinforces the interpretive thread running through the volume by presenting historiography as deeply embedded in processes of modernization, political transformation, and identity formation. Rather than offering a simple conclusion, the afterword invites reflection on historiography as a cultural practice that shapes collective understanding, echoing the book’s broader argument that Greek historiography is an arena of ongoing intellectual negotiation.

Ultimately, the strength of the edited volume lies not merely in the breadth of its thematic scope, but in its capacity to demonstrate how historiography operates at the intersection of academic inquiry, ideology, and institutional transformation. By foregrounding methodological debates and intellectual exchange, the work positions Greek historiography as an active interlocutor within the international scholarly arena. For readers interested in historiography as a comparative discipline, the book offers both a critical overview and a conceptual framework for understanding how national traditions engage with global currents. In this respect, the volume succeeds in presenting Greek historiographical production not only as a historical trajectory, but also as a meaningful contribution to contemporary academic debates.

In my view, the work does more than showcase thematic diversity and critical perspectives; by emphasizing its international dimension, it enables a deeper understanding of how Greek historiography has developed and where it may be headed in the future. The book's greatest strength, I would argue, lies in its ability to accomplish two core objectives simultaneously: first, to situate Greek historiography in relation to global trends, and second, to illuminate ideological constraints within Greek academia. The study renders the development of Greek historiography accessible and engaging for both Greek and international audiences, thereby serving as an important reference point in discussions of convergence with – and divergence from – global historiographical practices.