

Institution: Newcastle University		
Unit of Assessment: 28 History		
Title of case study: Increasing Public Understanding of Greek Family History		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Violetta Hionidou	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: Since September 2005
Period when the claimed impact occurred: July 2016 to December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Greece has not seen any substantial engagement with family history to match the upsurge of interest in genealogy in Western Europe and North America. This is because online searchable family history resources are rare and underdeveloped, as is advice and guidance on how to undertake family history. Hionidou's research, which utilises and nominally links civil registration and census records, has addressed this gap. She created and provided for free a searchable database embedded in a website that offers both the data itself, and advice and guidance for users. School lessons which she devised, as well as public talks that she delivered enabled pupils, teachers and the wider public, both Greek and from the Greek Diaspora, to learn how to research family history. Further, Hionidou's research has changed the practices of the General State Archives of Greece and the commercial genealogical organisation <i>Ancestry</i>. These developments have been important not only in shaping heritage and educational practices, but also they have strengthened, among both pupils and adults, individuals' and communities' sense of identity.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Violetta Hionidou's research explores the demographic and social history of modern Greece. The research underpinning this case study comprises a prize-winning monograph utilising oral history methods plus a series of journal articles and chapters investigating the history of families and households in 18th, 19th and 20th-century Greece. This research relied on the collection of many oral histories (PUBS 2, 4 and 5) but also Hionidou's collation of 49,833 records of individual nominal census records organised in households in 18th- and 19th-century Greek island populations (PUBS 1, 2 and 3). Such nominal censuses, of which the originals are deposited in dispersed Greek and British archives, had been inputted into a number of databases as part of Hionidou's work. Hionidou's research involved linking records from different sources, thus identifying individuals at different moments in their lives (PUBS1 and 3). Hionidou's findings have included the dominance of nuclear households among those populations, showing that the overwhelming majority of people spent their lives in a household with their own biological family (PUBS2 and 3). However, the research has also revealed the mechanisms of support that existed across households with, for example, daughters or granddaughters supporting the elderly mother or grandmother who resided on her own but in close proximity to them (PUB2). In other instances, grandparents would support their adult children by temporarily incorporating them, or one of their grandchildren, into their own household (PUB2). Among farmers, despite the independent residence of each family unit, economic links between married adult sons and their fathers persisted, in some cases for much of their adult life; in other cases for only a short period of time (PUBS2 and 3). Such findings challenge the close focus of research on residential patterns and emphasize the, often invisible, connections of support among non-cohabiting family members in times of hardship. In other instances, more significant changes were observed, such as an increase in complex households (PUB1) or significant re-organisation of the household unit when families were faced with the prospect of becoming refugees (PUB5). Such mechanisms were particularly important and were utilised in times of personal or economic crisis depicting strategies of resilience and agency at the level of family. Migration of women-as servants and men in search of employment was a constant dimension in the lives of the people, whenever it was possible (PUBS1, 2, 4, 5 and 6).</p>		

The research informs how everyday life was organised in residential and economic terms from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries in Greece.

This research connects individual family histories with local and national history. It also closely resonates with several central preoccupations of Greek society today, including questions of family, women's employment (PUBS2 and 6), migration (PUBS1 and 2) and, increasingly, issues of displacement and the status of refugees (PUBS4 and 5).

3. References to the research

Publications (all peer reviewed)

1. Hionidou V., 'From modernity to tradition. Households on Kythera in the early nineteenth century', In: P. Thane, P. Viazso and S. Sovic, eds. *The History of Families and Households: Comparative Dimensions* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 47-68. Available on request.
2. Hionidou V., 'Marriage, inheritance and household formation on a Greek island, Mykonos (mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century)', In: A.L. Head-König in collaboration with P. Pozsgai, ed. *Inheritance practices, Marriage strategies and Household formation in European Rural Societies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 261-282. Available on request.
3. Hionidou V., 'Independence and inter-dependence: Household formation patterns in eighteenth century Kythera, Greece', *The History of the Family* 2011, **16**(3), 217-234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hisfam.2011.03.005>
4. Hionidou V., *Λιμός και Θάνατος στην Κατοχική Ελλάδα, 1941–1944* (Athens, Greece: Estia Publishers, 2011), second edn. (The English language 2006 monograph received the Edmund Keely prize). The English language version of the book is available on request.
5. Hionidou V., 'If we hadn't left ... we would have all died': Escaping Famine on the Greek Island of Chios, 1941–44', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 2019, **32**(3), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez041>.
6. Hionidou V., 'Υπηρέτριες στην Ελλάδα, 19ος-20ός αιώνας: Μορφές και σχέσεις εργασίας' ('Female Servants in 19th- and 20th-century Greece: Patterns of work and working relationships') in Παναγιώτα Μήνη, Άννα Σταυρακοπούλου, Κωνσταντίνα Γεωργιάδη, Ιουλία Πιπινιά, eds, *Female and male servants: Historical Subjects and artistic representations in the Greek-speaking world (19th-21st centuries)* (in Greek) (Athens: Papazisis publishers, 2020). Available on request.

Research Grants

1. Hionidou V., 'Greek Family History: Digital resources and Experiential Learning', ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, 2016-2019, GBP9,751.92.

4. Details of the impact

In 2016-17, with the support of ESRC IAA funding (GRANT1), Hionidou combined, harmonised and adapted 9 of her research databases in order to develop a single database suitable for and accessible to a public audience. The 49,834-record database was built by Data Architects Ltd and overseen by Hionidou. The database and search function were embedded within a custom-made website called **GreekFamilyHistory** (<https://apps.ncl.ac.uk/GreekFamilyHistory/Page/Home>). Hionidou provided a comprehensive introduction, in both Greek and English, on *how to conduct family history with Greek sources*, one of the first of its kind. Hionidou authored all the editorial material, distilling her research knowledge on Greek family history, and examining major questions of history with reference to today's Greek and Greek diaspora populations, including family structures, women's employment, migration and displacement. After a trial period, the website received its official public launch in March 2019.

Building on the online availability of these data, Hionidou undertook a sustained campaign to introduce, explain and encourage engagement with the resource. She **reached individuals** in Greece and the Greek diaspora, both young and old, encouraged them to explore their own past and make sense of it by linking it to local and national history. She empowered individuals and communities to enhance their identity and access their intangible heritage through the

performance of family history. Moreover, Hionidou **changed practices** in genealogy organisations, Greek archives, libraries, community groups, and schools, assisting them to offer to their users new ways of engaging with archives and local history.

Impacts on individuals and communities

(a) Making data and historical contextual information widely available

Since its formal launch in March 2019, Hionidou's database and search facility have been used by a global audience numbering in thousands. Through the press, and social media channels, chiefly Facebook and Twitter, persons of Greek ancestry, living across the world were made aware of the website and have since employed and benefited through its use, having located previously unknown ancestors (IMP2c, IMP8a-c, IMP8e). This possibility was simply not available before to most users. The significance of the resource was recognised by the way in which it has been taken up by the world's major, and most well-used, genealogical organisations. The non-profit *FamilySearch*, operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the largest genealogical organisation in the world, has added a link to the GreekFamilyHistory website in its [GreeceGenealogy](#) Wiki page, an acknowledgment of its significance for Greek family history (IMP10a). The General State Archives of Greece (hereafter GSAG) has added a link to the GreekFamilyHistory website, similarly acknowledging its importance (IMP9a). So too several local libraries, such as the Korais library on Hios (IMP6f). Likewise, in collaboration with Hionidou, *Ancestry*, the largest commercial genealogy company in the world with 3 million paying subscribers, has incorporated select fields of the GreekFamilyHistory database to its own search engines, allowing its clients to identify Greek ancestors and subsequently to link these back to the GreekFamilyHistory to obtain further information (IMP10b). Google analytics show a sustained engagement with the GreekFamilyHistory site, involving 3,452 users (of which 3,148 are new users) with 22,829 page-views between March 2019 and December 2020 (IMP7). 24% of users originate in Greece, 40% in USA while the remainder are mostly from Australia (IMP7). For those already engaging in family history, the database and website have been received as an important new source of information. Representative comments include: 'Great resource! I spent hours last night browsing through everything. Thank you for posting.'; 'Thank you for sharing this information...it's wonderful!' (IMP2c). US users commented through Facebook on the extreme usefulness of this new resource that enabled them to trace multiple ancestors (IMP2c).

(b) Dissemination to and effects on user groups

Besides simply providing the data, Hionidou undertook a programme of work to present the database to local libraries and community centres, both in Greece (e.g. Mykonos Kousathanas Library, Municipal Hermoupolis Library, November 2019) and major centres of Greek descent populations in North America (e.g. Joliet IL, November 2019). Attendance was approximately 150 at each event (IMP6d-e, IMP5e, IMP2d). These events went beyond publicising the resource to guiding prospective users on how to navigate their searches (particularly important in the US, since most attendees do not read Greek). Many used the online resources during the talk and noted their successful findings on the questionnaires (IMP2b). 77% of those who filled a questionnaire at the end of the talk said they will engage with the database and 89% indicated they learned something new concerning their local or family history on the day of the talk (IMP2b). The talk traced the family history of specific individuals thus revealing aspects of the local history of their ancestral place of origin and offering an understanding of their ancestors' migration experiences (IMP2a-b). Feedback at the Illinois event stressed how the resource and event had for the first time opened up their understanding of 'the migration history from Mykonos [to Joliet]', providing 'A greater understanding of the linking between Mykonos and Joliet' and revealing 'how much [users'] ancestors went through to migrate and find jobs' (IMP2a-c, IMP8b). Those who attended the public talks repeatedly stressed how transformational this introduction to family history had been on their individual and communal identities. The resource provided a 'link to the past' and allowed them to explore their 'heritage and culture', their '**roots**' (IMP3). Doing family history 'changes the way of understanding of my own place [of origin] but also that of the path of [my] family history', representing 'the story of our existence' and establishing 'My identity' (IMP3). Following these events, 82% of participants who had not engaged with family history before confirmed that they would start engaging with it (IMP3).

(c) Dissemination to and effects on schools

Hionidou also undertook a targeted drive to promote use of the **GreekFamilyHistory** resources in Greek schools. The intention was to guide pupils to employ such resources through a topic of their local history. Hionidou created a series of online lesson plans, each of which was accessible through the website in a dedicated 'Education' section. In a selected sample of schools in Greece, on the islands of Hios, Mykonos, Kythera and Syros, Hionidou organised and led a series of lessons to pilot the lessons' use (March, September, November 2019). A total of 250 pupils attended these lessons, at times with the collaboration of local archives (Kythera) or the local library (Hios, Hermoupolis). The impact of the lessons was to educate and inform pupils about family history, linking this to a local history topic (for example on Hios studying the 'Massacre' and its refugees to Hermoupolis, on Mykonos past occupations of the population, in Hermoupolis migration). Besides using the resource, pupils were also guided on how to start their family history through conducting oral histories with their parents and grandparents. Bringing together parents, grandparents and children in this way was intended to ensure that vital family and local information are discussed, allowing the younger generations to acquire knowledge about their past not normally taught, for example the occupations of their female ancestors on Mykonos. Pupils were asked in questionnaires whether they knew what family history was before and after the lessons. These showed a 24% increase in the understanding of what family history is, with 48% reporting that they will engage with family history in the future (IMP1). Children of immigrants in Greece also expressed strong interest in learning about and performing family history in the future, asking for example if 'there are similar sources on the internet about Albania' (IMP5c). All Head-Teachers and/or Deputy Head-Teachers of the four Secondary schools expressed a strong interest on the lessons, the database and family history and expressed the intention to continue using them in teaching (IMP5a-e).

Impacts on organisations

Besides its impact of the thousands of users who have engaged with GreekFamilyHistory, Hionidou's research has brought significant benefits to major archival and genealogical organisations, both in Greece and internationally. Simply in numerical terms, Hionidou's data has very significantly expanded the records made available through the two largest genealogical organisations in the world, *FamilySearch* and *Ancestry*. This has substantially expanded their reach into new communities of users, particularly in Greece and among the Greek diaspora. Communications from *Ancestry*, for example, acknowledge Hionidou's role in alerting the company to the possibilities of Greek genealogical sources. Her research has been 'instrumental', *Ancestry's* Content Acquisition Manager, noted, in transforming *Ancestry's* 'thinking in relation to the availability and quality of Greek Family History sources' (IMP10b).

In some ways, the most profound impacts have been on Greek archives, and in particular in changing the ways in which these institutions are regarded and used in Greece. At a local level, Hionidou's public engagement with local libraries (Mykonos, Hermoupolis, Hios), archives (Athens, Kythera) and Community centres supported fulfilment of their policies of public engagement (IMP6a-c, IMP6f, IMP5a, IMP5c, IMP9b). The family history talks for adults and School children attracted different audiences from those regularly attending the libraries and community centres, thus **altering the profile** of those organisations (IMP2b, IMP2d, IMP6b-c, IMP6a referring to the School group). The public talks resulted in the public's engagement with archival sources. Such public engagement is still infrequent in Greece. The realisation that materials for family and community history are held in local archives had a significant effect on attitudes to and understandings of these municipal resources, as user feedback demonstrates: '[I learned today] that there exists an organised archive of family registers'; '[I learned today that there are] Census Records available for Mykonos' (IMP3, also IMP4, IMP5c). Similarly, the school lessons improved the pupils' awareness of where archival sources are held and what they can be used for. The lessons also improved the pupils' engagement with such sources, in digital or in published form, and allowed them to understand how these are linked to their own past (IMP6b, IMP5b-d), as the Headteacher of the secondary School in Kythera articulated: 'we can utilise what we learned [in the lessons] through a school visit to the [Local] Archive, something that will help the pupils to see the Archive in an altered manner. The important thing is that some of them

[pupils] will now have a **personal interest**; the Archive will not be an impersonal organisation ... It is about their family, the grandfather, their great-grandfather. The pupils did adopt that thinking, as far as I can tell through observing them in the class' (IMP1, IMP5c).

At a national level, Hionidou's research impacted on the practices of the General State Archives of Greece. Specifically, the research led to changes in the GSAG's thinking on the potential uses of some of their archives, and a commitment to 'use these records in new, innovative ways', as the GSAG Deputy Director/Acting Director put it (IMP9b). This specifically includes 'new ways of engaging audiences digitally', both through the resource and via bespoke webinars prepared by Hionidou, although they were unable to be delivered as planned in October 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (see statement). Taken together, the GSAG has confirmed that Hionidou's ongoing work has had a 'significant impact' on their practice, and 'identifies new values and uses for our resources' (IMP9b).

Overall, Hionidou's work has been one of the first resources to open up Greek family history to a large range of users, and has supported and even transformed the ways in which public and commercial organisations present and make use of population history. As the Deputy/Acting Director General of the GSAG put it, 'her work is making our records more relevant to contemporary society.' As well as expanding these organisations' reach and their impact on people's lives, Hionidou's work has impacted directly on the understanding and learning of family history among school children, diasporic Greeks and adult Greeks too, strengthening both the individual's and community's identity and intangible heritage through the performance of family history. This was lucidly articulated by one of the participants: 'The mining of information about our past and the reconstruction of our family history through the available sources is - for many of us -... a kind of physical need, a means to gain more knowledge and to reflect on our individual and collective present and future, a commemoration to those who preceded our existence' (IMP8d).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

IMP1 School questionnaires Greece (pupils)

IMP2 Diaspora (2a Joliet USA Letter from Treasurer of Community Group; 2b Adults questionnaires Joliet USA; 2c Facebook comments on the 13 May 2019 post; 2d Email from Joliet USA community group representatives)

IMP3 Adults questionnaires in Greece

IMP4 Kythera Archive testimony

IMP5 Schools (staff members) (5a Letter from the Secondary School Teacher and Chairman of the Board of Administration of Korais Library, Hios; 5b Letter from the Head of Mykonos School Syghrone Paideia; 5c Head and Deputy Head of Kythera Secondary School; 5d Interview with the Head of the 3rd Syros Secondary School; 5e Interview with a History teacher of the 3rd Syros Secondary School)

IMP6 Libraries (6a Interview with the Librarian of the Municipal library of Syros; 6b Letter from the local Councillor, responsible for the Library of Syros; 6c Letter from the Panagiotes Kousathanas Library Mykonos; 6d Video recording of the Hermoupolis' Library Adult session 27 November 2019; 6e Video recording of the Kousathanas' Library Adult session 29 November 2019; 6f Letter from the Director of the Municipal Library of Hios Korais)

IMP7 Google Analytics of the GreekFamilyHistory website

IMP8 Private communications to author (8a-e)

IMP9 General State Archives of Greece (9a GSTG Link to GreekFamilyHistory; 9b Letter from the Deputy Director/Acting Director of the General State Archives of Greece)

IMP10 Ancestry etc (10a FamilySearch mention; 10b Ancestry Letter)

All sources of evidence are available on request.