



FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA Univerzita Karlova

Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Laura Nicole Brody, M.A., B.A.

‘Memories of an Aegean Borderscape: Belonging to Imvros (Gökçeada/Ιμβρος)’

PhD dissertation

Supervisor’s Report

I have worked with Ms. Laura Brody, an Early-Career Researcher within the European Joint Doctorate MOVES (Migration and Modernity: Historical and Cultural Challenges), since the start of the programme in September 2019. Following the Induction Month organised at Charles University, Prague, the candidate proceeded to divide her studies between Université Paul Valéry III, Montpellier, and The Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, and opted to defend her dissertation at Charles University, Prague, following the prescribed options of the MOVES programme. The supervisory team included members from Montpellier, in the early stages Dr Eliza Hatzidaki, in the final years Dr Assaf Dahdah, as well as Dr Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, based at the University of Kent’s Brussels School of International Studies. Ms. Brody’s dissertation project had undergone a necessary series of conceptual and thematic developments in the earlier stages of the doctoral programme, where some parts of the existing research were further built upon, while others were duly discarded in diligent and considered pursuit of the most viable and stimulating conceptual frame. Based on a considerable amount of background research, Ms. Brody finally opted to focus her dissertation on the specific example of the Aegean island of Imvros/Gökçeada in the context of the broader issues of its complex migration history and its socio-political and cultural impact to the present day, analysed in the light of the theories of belonging and belongingness in relation to space/place, including the concepts of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic landscape. Tracing and analysing the history of the Greek Imvriot diaspora, the dissertation takes an interdisciplinary approach, employing ‘sociology, anthropology, border studies, human geography, cultural and memory studies’ (p. 18), and incorporates interviews with three generations of the Imvriot diasporic community, gathered on several field trips to Greece and Imvros between 2021 and 2022.

Overall, the dissertation is highly topical in its broader aims to contextualise, discuss and further problematise key aspects of these much disputed and widely critically discussed



FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA Univerzita Karlova

Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

issues related to and directly resulting from migration, the experience and development of specific physical space and individual as well as communal identity, and showcases the candidate's considerable academic promise, high level of critical engagement, substantial knowledge, and valuable insight. It also demonstrates the candidate's ability to work efficiently with diverse and complex critical material and combine existing scholarship gathered from across various disciplines towards charting potential exploratory paths forward.

The strength of the thesis lies in its diligent and in-depth engagement with the development of these key topics deftly interwoven to produce a persuasive and thought-provoking main argument. The candidate's interest in and knowledge of the subject matter at hand as well as local insight gathered from her field trips to the island of Imvros/Gökçeada is discernible. The candidate's choice of secondary material is both relevant and diversified, her employment of it into her own argument illuminating. The structure of the thesis is clear and well charted. On the formal level, the thesis is written in a fluent, confident, erudite style. The formatting is done to a very good standard, the individual parts of the dissertation organised in a coherent and easily accessible manner, the bibliography extensive, the appendices arranged equally well.

To conclude, this dissertation has been completed to a high academic standard despite considerable disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic and its long-term restrictions on research and travel as well as its toll on personal well-being. It represents a significant and original interdisciplinary contribution to the current critical debate on the pressing issues of migration, diaspora, and borderscapes, elucidating the socio-political intricacies of belonging which challenge the confines of nation states and their overarching narratives. I am happy to recommend this dissertation for defence.

25.3. 2024

Mgr. Miroslava Horová, PhD.