

CHAPTER 1

Marginal Margins

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT the marginality of both place and people, and how their marginality is continually reconstructed while somehow also staying the same. The place is in and around Epirus, a region in northwestern Greece (map 1); the story mostly concerns an area known as Pogoni, which, depending on how you look at it, either runs along or straddles the Greek-Albanian border (maps 2 and 3). And the people are those who live in, pass through, or come and go around this place, most particularly around the Kasidiaris mountain, a relatively small and not much noted landmark in the southern part of the Pogoni area. It is difficult to give any more specific details about either the place or the people just yet, precisely because of their marginality: they both are and are not something, somewhere, and someone in particular.

“Marginality” is a tricky word, a kind of poor relation to “otherness” and “difference”; it explicitly evokes a sense of unequal location as well as unequal relations: being where you are and being from somewhere always matters, even if it does not mean you stay in one place, either physically or perceptually, for any length of time (Gupta and Ferguson 1999b: 3–17; Clifford 1997: 2–3). That is one of the problems with the condition of being marginal: it is not necessarily clear exactly where you are or where you are from, and that can make you only partially visible, only partially connected.¹ Ironically, during this period of emphasis on transnationalism, transmigration, and multiculturalism, being marginal can negatively affect your ability to have a name that could be used to challenge whatever center happens to be significant at the moment.² As James Boon put it in describing himself as marginal, this kind of marginality sometimes involves being “interpretively homeless, devoid of passport, alienated from certainties and edges as well; even the borderlands refuse me shelter” (Boon 1999: 198).

In those terms, marginality implies a difficult and ambivalent relevance to the heart of things. Perhaps for that reason, there has been a fascination with marginality in Euro-American anthropology, a sense that shining a spotlight on the discarded, ignored, shifting, semivisible, and perhaps transgressive nooks and crannies, where many anthropologists find themselves anyway in the course of their exploration of otherness, might help to make the implicit explicit, might draw out the hidden cogs, wheels, or

2 • Chapter 1

(cob)webs of what we know to be central, and might provide an antidote to master narratives (Seremetakis 1991: 1–7). Marginality, too, can become part of the heart of things, precisely because of its asserted marginalization in relation to the heart of things.

Beyond anthropology, marginality has also become increasingly noted and remarked upon in recent years, partly as a result of numerous studies of what goes into making people and places marginal in the first place, in terms of both how it occurs and what the consequences of marginality might be.³ In one particularly pertinent example for my purposes, Misha Glenny suggests that the continual interventions of the “Great Powers” into the Balkan region’s conflicts—most recently in those involving former Yugoslavia and Kosovo—generated the Balkans as a very particular kind of place, as *the* margin of Europe, and also made the place a key center of attention (Glenny 1999: xxiii–xxv). After quoting John Gunther’s assertion that “these wretched and unhappy little countries in the Balkan peninsula can, and do, have quarrels that cause world wars” (ibid.: xxiii), Glenny argues that this kind of perspective “reflects a solid body of Western popular opinion that regarded and still regards the Balkans as a toxin threatening the health of Europe” (ibid.: xxiv). One could hardly be more simultaneously marginal and central than that.

Marginality has, of course, also taken a central place in the ethnography of Greece, though this is not often directly related to Greece as part of the Balkans. Michael Herzfeld’s work focuses on Greece as being “in the Margins of Europe” (Herzfeld 1987), somewhere at the crossroads between East and West (Herzfeld 1997: 97).⁴ He explores the diverse ways (disemic, in Herzfeld’s terms) in which Greeks imagine being Greek, and how this became entangled in the creation of a sense of national homogeneity in Greece out of a tense combination of Western (Hellenic) and Eastern (Byzantine) concepts. In the course of this, Herzfeld discusses, and critiques, how contemporary Greece has been marginalized both in Europe and in anthropology, partly as a result of a perceived ambivalence about how to locate Greece in modern binary divisions between East and West. He repeatedly points out that Greece is the only country in Europe which has the word “modern” placed before its name, implying that (to the modern mind), the classical version was much more at the heart of things, or perhaps even at the root of things.

Herzfeld is by no means alone in his reliance on the concept of marginality in analyzing Greek ethnography. For example, Seremetakis describes the Inner Mani, located at the southern extreme of mainland Greece, as “a detached fragment of a global modernity” in which she “explores the internal margins that organize the relation of Inner Mani to that modernity” (Seremetakis 1991: 1). Seremetakis insists that the kind of marginality she is describing (a “fragment”) is not necessarily dependent upon any

center: “To stand in the margin is to look through it at other margins and at the so-called center itself” (ibid.). And the significance of that, for Seremetakis, is that the women of Inner Mani whom she focuses upon constitute another example of the ability to identify “strategies of resistance that emerge and subsist in the margins” (ibid.).

A third approach can be seen in the work of Evthymios Papataxiarchis, who analyzes gambling among men in coffeehouses in a village in northern Lesbos as an aspect of “counter-hegemonic space that was historically established in conditions of the prolonged political and economic marginalization of the island” (Papataxiarchis 1999: 158). He treats gambling as a form of “constructive resistance” (ibid.: 159). Here, the marginalization in question is considered in terms of political economy: the men who gamble are “denied access to state-controlled political and economic resources” (ibid.: 160), and they come to equate money with the hierarchies and dependence generated by the state. In this, gambling “seems to be a major symbolic gesture of emancipation from economic debt, of defiance of the institutional producers of money; it is an important response to economic dependence, social displacement, and class marginalization. In this capacity, it can become an extreme demonstration of autonomy” (ibid.: 172).

Herzfeld’s, Seremetakis’s, and Papataxiarchis’s studies are just three examples of the search for resistance, forms of empowerment, forms of critique, in and around margins and marginality—a common theme, not only in the anthropology of Greece, but in much of the rest of anthropology as well.⁵ Sometimes, such studies can draw out how marginality itself can be strategically emphasized or even generated by people who are marginalized, such that marginality is turned against the center. As Anna Tsing has noted for the Meratus Dayaks of South Kalimantan in Indonesia, some “marginal” people can make their own marginality central: “The cultural difference of the margins is a sign of exclusion from the center; it is also a tool for destabilizing central authority” (Tsing 1993: 27). The value of Tsing’s comment is to make the point that marginality is not so much imposed as negotiated, and that it is not necessary to forget the imbalances of power involved—the power to exclude places and people, for example—to recognize this point.

These kinds of studies often constitute challenges to (Euro-American) modernity in its self-satisfied mode: they take a poke at the certainty of modernity’s omniscience and superiority, both morally and intellectually. At other times, marginality is used to explore (Euro-American) modernity in its self-pitying mode: the sense of having lost something through being modern, usually something involving authenticity, and wanting to have it back. Here, anthropologists have analyzed the search for redemption in margins. For example, Kathleen Stewart suggests that marginality within

4 • Chapter 1

the United States generates spaces or gaps in which it is imagined a lost “authenticity” might still exist, an imagining that renders such places central because of their marginality: “There is a dream that somewhere out there—in the space of marginalia and ex-centricity—there are ‘places’ still caught in the ongoing density of sociality and desire. Places to which ‘we’ might return—in mind, if not in body—in search of redemption and renewal” (Stewart 1996: 5).

Whatever aspect of marginality is focused upon, these examples are enough to show that marginality has been repeatedly regarded as geographically, politically, socially, culturally, and/or temporally significant, and has become more so in recent decades, partly as a result of changing transnational relations (Danforth 1995), and international and supranational agencies involved in recognizing and supporting human rights, especially for those peoples defined as minorities (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001). Boon goes so far as to suggest that attacking the center (whichever center that may be) through focusing on any number of marginalities is now standard practice, both in the academy and outside of it, and has resulted in a plethora of “isms” and identities. However, for Boon, these “isms” and identities do not constitute the essence of marginality. For him, what makes something truly marginal is its *inability* to become an “ism” or to be “identified,” as he puts it (Boon 1999: 208). He uses the example of Tantric practices: “usages customarily designated Tantric, whether Hindu or Buddhist, do not necessarily mark off any corporate identity or ‘ism’ (even underground). They include a gamut of transgressions—a polymorphous reservoir of ex-centric ritual possibilities” (ibid.: 207). For Boon, then, to be marginal (both for himself and for “ex-centric” ritual practices) is to be in between rather than on the peripheries: it is to be neither one thing nor another, or possibly too much both one thing and another.

This more recent fascination with ambiguous marginality, a focus on its fluidity, its lack of boundaries, and the inability to pin it down, marked a turn toward an interest in the postmodern, either as a condition in the world (postmodernity; Harvey 1990) or as an intellectual approach to challenge modernity (postmodernism): having done away with the self-satisfied and self-pitying certainties of modernity, the postmodern dwells in uncertainty and a refusal of borders. Some saw considerable potential for escape from the hegemonic in that. However, rather than resistance, this approach emphasizes inventiveness, the possibility of making something new out of making things uncertain.⁶ Terence Turner, for example, in his analysis of the rise of the explicit use of culture in politics, advocates “critical multiculturalism” as a means to avoid essentialist notions of culture embedded within what he calls “difference multiculturalism” (and what many others have referred to as “identity politics”). In this, Turner

approvingly quotes Stam and Shohat (n.d.): critical multiculturalism, they say, “rejects a unified, essentialist concept of identity. . . . Rather, it sees the self as polycentric, multiple, unstable, historically situated, the product of ongoing differentiation and polymorphous identifications” (Turner 1993: 418).

Such a focus on the way modernity tried to hide its own lack of fixity, its underlying fluidity and instability, is not limited to anthropology or to more recent postmodernist theory, of course. Aside from Bruno Latour and other actor network theorists,⁷ as well as Judith Butler and other queer theorists,⁸ there are also those who have focused on the places and spaces of marginality. Walter Benjamin, for one, became fascinated by the Parisian arcades, which were derelict and abandoned when he passed through them, but had been built in the mid-nineteenth century by people who were at the heart of things, and who had believed that the arcades would shape Paris forever (Benjamin 1999; Day 2001: 110). Or Michel de Certeau, for another, who wandered around the “waste products” of cities, arguing that cities inevitably generate marginal places because city planners keep executing plans about how cities should be, thus axiomatically creating anomalies and gaps: places and people that do not fit the plan (de Certeau 1988: 94).

Whether marginality is depicted as a kind of periphery containing distinct people or places that have been ignored and/or oppressed, and/or misrepresented by the center, or as the ambiguous flotsam and jetsam of life that has been discarded or hidden in the process by which things are made to seem clear, bounded, and fixed, there is often a warm hope implied in these studies of marginality, even an assertion at times, that focusing on it will show marginality to be truly central, at the heart of the matter (Stewart 1996; Herzfeld 1987); and that it will demonstrate the incoherence of what we think we are sure about (Steedly 1993; Tsing 1993), and therefore that it will highlight the ultimate pointlessness of trying to pin things down, showing that master narratives never have the last word (Seremetakis 1991), and that this goes as much for anthropological narratives as for any others (Riles 2000; Herzfeld 1987). Even Boon’s perspective, which describes marginality as something that cannot cohere into an identity or “ism,” as a condition that generates an inability to engage in the “self-other,” “center-periphery,” “identity politics,” and “cultural fundamentalism” (Stolcke 1995; 1999) projects that are generated in the current version of modernity (or postmodernity, call it what you will)⁹—even Boon is hopeful that there might be ways to challenge the normative through marginality:

Not quite invisible, opaque polymorphoses refract forces of regimental surveillance, evade bureaucratic stratification, and dodge centralized

6 • Chapter 1

control. Some “Tantric practices” may be better at “deviating” from enforced conformity than are sect-ualities or sexualities when “identified”, incorporated, or made into a dogmatic *cause*. (Boon 1999: 208, emphasis original)¹⁰

Initially, I shared that hope when I began fieldwork in northwestern Greece. As I became familiar with the peoples and the place (Pogoni), I also became increasingly aware that they were being regularly described as not only marginal but marginal within the marginal. I had evidently chosen to be in a place and among people that few thought were worth paying attention to, which appeared to have something to do with their lack of distinction. While both people and place were identifiable in some senses, by the same folkloric¹¹ markers as identified others in the region (people could point to Pogoni traditional dress, easily identify Pogoni music, and know more or less where Pogoni is), they also seemed somehow nondescript or relatively undistinguished, compared to other places and peoples in Epirus. This comparison included a hierarchy of distinctiveness of geomorphology and vistas. For example, the Zagori, made famous in anthropology by John Campbell’s study of the Sarakatsani (Campbell 1964), has also come to prominence more generally in recent years as the main tourist attraction of the region, containing as it does the biggest national park of the area, one of the more starkly attractive and climbable mountains (the Gamilla/Timfi; map 3), deep forests, fast-flowing, clear-water rivers, mountain gorges and valleys, and villages that have been “conserved” through regulations preventing the use of anything except local and “traditional” building materials, and by various reconstructions of “traditional settlements.” All of this contrasted starkly with the predominantly fairly low, shrubby, and scrubby landscape that characterized Pogoni, the absence of a national park there, and little in the way of conservation or preservation of villages. And a distinctly uncomfortable issue—that is, an issue whose implications were usually avoided—was that “traditional” Pogoni, the Pogoni used to evoke folklore and cultural heritage, stretched beyond the Greek state boundary into southern Albania, a region known in Greece as Northern Epirus. This had been a repeatedly contested border, one that often involved states other than Greece and Albania (particularly Russia, Britain, Italy, and Germany in the years before the Cold War, the former USSR and China during the Cold War, and the European Union and NATO thereafter). The location of the border—which, despite the battles over the years, has shifted only slightly from the location designated when it was initially established as a state border in 1913 following the end of the Ottoman era—formally divided the peoples associated with the Pogoni area between two states.¹² It remains contested, at least in map form: there is a continual drawing

and redrawing of borders across maps of this area, both in accounts about the history of the region and in more polemical texts about where the borders *should* be located—a habit that is shared with Macedonia, the region to the east of Epirus (Cowan and Brown 2000: 8).¹³

I will not pursue that issue much further yet, except to note two things. First, for many people associated with Pogoni, the process of locating the border (how it ended up there, ways in which it was negotiated and fought over), as well as its closure and reopening, did not appear to have a great deal to do with *them*, even though that ongoing process obviously affected their everyday lives.¹⁴ And second, ever since the border was partially reopened (made permeable; some would say “leaky”) following the political changes in Albania after 1991 (from socialist to “postsocialist”), there have been many events and debates that have increased, rather than decreased, the sense that people associated with this place are neither one thing nor another, or alternatively altogether too much both one thing and another, and somehow still not particularly noted or notable.

At times, it was difficult to avoid the easy conclusion that these peoples had been neither wealthy nor politically powerful, and this made their marginality (neither one thing nor the other, sometimes in an edgy way, sometimes not) of little consequence for others.¹⁵ In any event, one of the strongest views expressed by the majority of people around this place was that it had been undergoing a process of abandonment and neglect for some decades: grazing lands that used to be intensively used for sheep and goat pastoralism were now overgrown; scattered fields on the hills and small valleys that used to be cultivated were now abandoned; schools once full of children were now closed down; village squares once bustling with activity were now quiet. In village after village, with few exceptions, people would sigh and say, “Only pensioners live here now.”

Already, this view of the place suggested I would have difficulty in directly applying, here, analyses of marginality as resistance or inventiveness, as useful as such analyses are in other ways. This was so despite the fact that this depiction of abandonment was not quite all it seemed: many of the villages transformed from quiet, sleepy places into lively, bustling, and loud ones between winter and summer, as people arrived from cities both in Greece and elsewhere to spend summers in villages with which they were associated; some of these people, while not living there permanently, came and went fairly regularly in other ways as well (and had done so for the entirety of the remembered past, including the period when villages were full of children); and the opening of the Greek-Albanian border had led to a considerable amount of fuss (φασαρία) in the area, which, if the newspapers were to be believed, made the region the polar opposite of quiet and sleepy. But none of that detracted from many peo-

ple's sense of an underlying lack of interest in and neglect of this place, as a place, and them, as people.

I became intrigued because this story of abandonment was told in every part of mountainous Epirus that I visited, and not only in Pogoni. However, it was also clear that different peoples, and different places, were not the same in what this was taken to mean. Pogoni was regarded, both by people associated with Pogoni and by people living in neighboring areas, as being worse off than most, except for one part of the Thesprotia region, just south of Pogoni. That region, like Pogoni, also runs along (or straddles) the Greek-Albanian border, and also has relatively low mountains and a scrubby landscape in comparison with some neighboring areas. At the other end of the spectrum, parts of Zagori and the peoples associated with that region were regarded as being a lot better off: their abandonment had been converted into a national park, which emphasized the natural wilderness of the place (abandonment becomes nature); and as I have already outlined, the region is now widely represented, both in tourist brochures and in folklore studies of the area, as having significant cultural heritage (abandonment becomes tradition and authenticity). That had not happened very effectively in Pogoni: despite the fact that polyphonic singing, a musical genre particularly associated with the people of this region, has in recent years come to typify Epirot music in the rest of Greece,¹⁶ Pogoni as a place and Pogoni peoples remained somehow nondistinct, unclear—unrecognized, to use the language of recognition politics.¹⁷

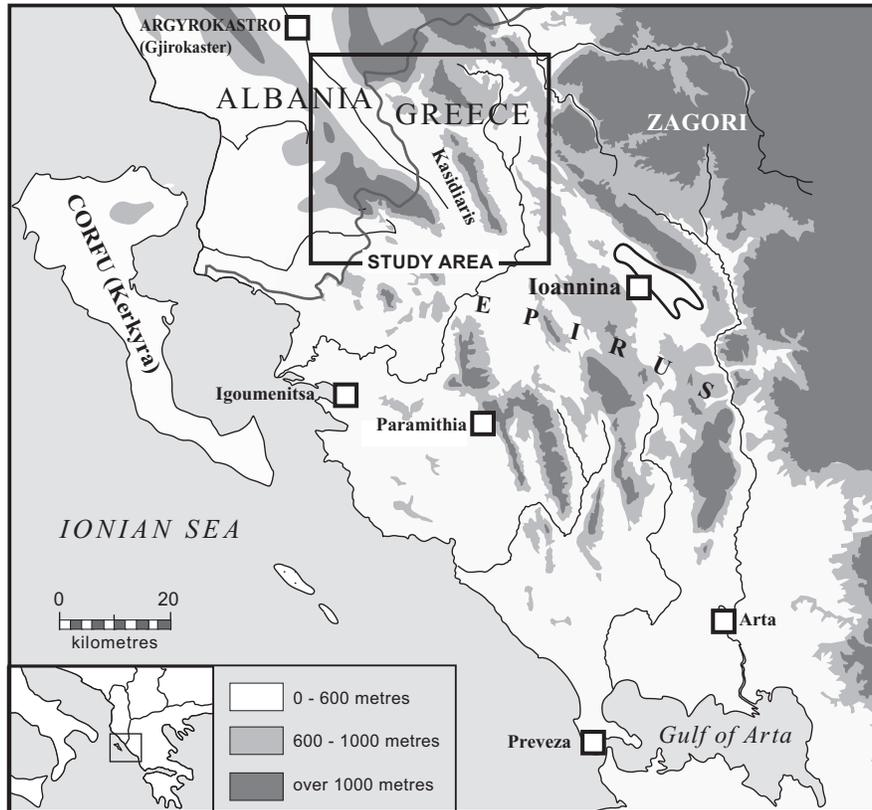
While this form of marginality seemed somewhat more akin to Boon's definition of Tantric practices than it did to an "identity politics" kind of marginality, it did not seem to me to constitute a marginality of inventiveness or resistance—or, come to that, of accommodation in Nugent's terms (Nugent 1999). The depiction of abandonment in Pogoni was a mark of something else; it was one transformation of a story about continually appearing, disappearing, reappearing, and disappearing again; it was about separation, division, and recombination; and it was also, for some of the people associated with Pogoni, a story about ordinariness (a point to which I will return). Abandonment was one among a number of past chapters and an infinity of possible future chapters that told and would tell that same story: of change—the place used to be full of people and now it was not—that somehow also constituted the same thing. While the events or details of each chapter differed, the story, the process (appearing and disappearing, separation, recombination, and, for some, ordinariness) remained the same. And the next chapters would tell the same story as well—the one about the opening of the border, or about the new interest in cultural and natural heritage (as opposed to the folklore studies of the past), or about the building of asphalt roads. That is what this place



Map 1. The regions of mainland Greece and northern borders (modified from Green and King 2001: 256)

meant to many people: constant change, and appearing and disappearing, while the process stayed the same, and (for some) ordinary. There was a mythical feel about the way that story was described at times, in Lévi-Strauss's terms (continual transformations of the same story; Lévi-Strauss 1963); but it was also experienced: it was not only narrated, it was also lived and dwelled in, and upon.

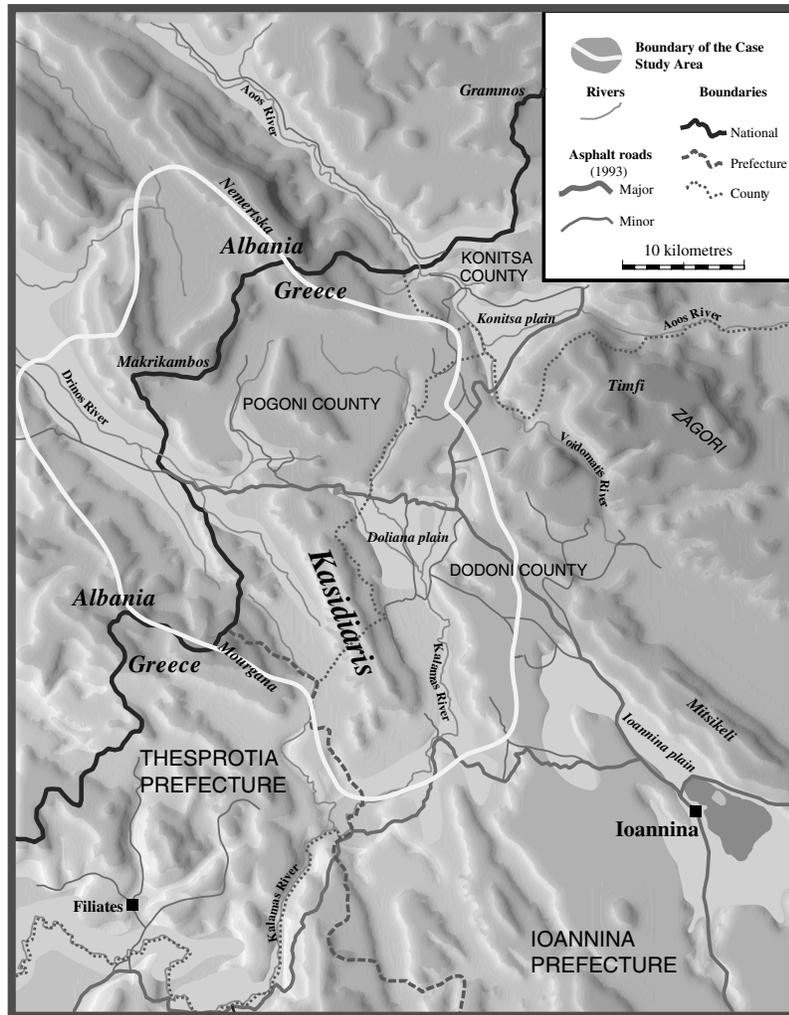
This book explores that issue; most of the chapters either parallel or trace the story of different moments of appearing and disappearing in differing transformations, and it considers various ways in which such appearances and disappearances were constituted: not only in stories, but also in maps and other techniques of accounting for places and change; in censuses and other statistics about places, people, animals, and activities; in EU-funded ecotourism and cultural heritage projects;



Map 2. Epirus and the Kasidiaris area (modified from Green and King 2001: 257)

and also in people's experiences of places, relations, and travels. Through this, it explores what makes some places and some peoples in "the margins" seem undistinguished or apparently a matter of indifference in political, cultural, or even topographical terms, while others in "the margins" have come to gain considerable distinction (positive, negative, or both) and interest.¹⁸

I argue that in this case, the way marginalization plays out has to do with a rather odd combination of ambiguity and ordinariness (or the lack thereof). First, on ambiguity: there was a quiet yet constant, even hegemonic, insistence on ambiguity in the Epirus region as a whole, but it seemed to affect Pogoni more than Zagori; a continual, though rarely entirely explicit, assertion that things cannot, and perhaps even must not, be pinned down, be fixed, be clarified. That is what made it odd: most (modern) hegemonic assertions (except perhaps psychoanalytic, aesthetic,



Map 3. Topography of Pogoni/Kasidiaris area with county and regional boundaries (modified from Green and King 2001: 260)

and metaphysical ones) are aimed at avoiding or concealing ambiguity, not asserting that ambiguity is the point of something (Herzfeld 1997: 93). One phrase, spoken occasionally when I expressed confusion about an event or statement during my time in Epirus, summed this up for me: “This is the Balkans, Sarah; what do you expect?” (Εδώ είναι Βαλκάνια Σάρα. Τι περιμένεις;). The statement caught me by surprise the first time I heard it: I was not really thinking in terms of the Balkans at all when I

first arrived in Epirus, let alone thinking of the Balkans as the answer to a question about something that was confusing. I was being told that I should expect to be confused, because this is the Balkans; at least, I should not expect to get to the bottom of things, never mind to the heart of things: that is not what the Balkans are about.¹⁹

Initially during fieldwork, my attempts to clarify the ambiguity became something of a guilty obsession. I felt I had no business imagining there is such a thing as clarity, and that the search for it was probably an outcome of too much Euro-American intellectual training, which used to teach, naively and hegemonically, that it is important to pin things down and to make things explicit. Resistance to such pinning down has been the leitmotif of many recent ethnographies, including Anna Tsing's (1993) and Kathleen Stewart's (1996). Yet being on the Greek-Albanian border on and off for a few years led me to conclude that the difference between ambiguity (continual and contingent indeterminacy) and clarity (ontological knowledge) is not as enormous as the literature implied, at least in terms of what generates the sense of their being authoritative accounts. Ambiguity can be as hegemonic and subject to disciplinary regimes as clarity; confusion, lack of a means to pin things down, can be as actively generated as positive assertions and constructions of truth: "This is the Balkans, Sarah; what do you expect?" I was continually being exhorted to stay confused, to let it go.²⁰ Far from an apparent stability and fixity that the analyst must unpick to reveal the fluidity and indeterminacy upon which it is based, the hegemonic discourse on the Balkans insists that the region is fluidity and indeterminacy personified, right on the surface, a completely explicit fog, as it were.²¹ I will return to this in detail in chapter 4. For now, I will just note that areas considered to have been divided by the Greek-Albanian border (e.g., Pogoni and parts of Thesprotia) were more affected by this assertion of muddiness, this lack of precise clarity, than some other areas of Epirus, though all were affected to some extent.

As to the second issue, ordinariness: the reputation of some Pogoni peoples of being ordinary also seemed odd, not only because in this age of multiculturalism everyone ought to have some distinctiveness (Strathern 1995; Stolcke 1995; Herzfeld 2004), but also because many others in the region were asserting some kind of distinctiveness and were occasionally explicitly using that as a means to attract both recognition and economic resources (in cultural heritage terms). As in every other part of Epirus, in Pogoni there were a range of differences marked between peoples: some were called Sarakatsani, some Vlchoi, some Gypsies, some Northern Epirots (peoples from southern Albania who were considered to be Greek), and some Albanians. But there were a significant number of people who were not called anything in particular; they were "just Greeks." The term *Gréki* was occasionally used to refer to people who were "just

Greek” in this way, and I explore that further in chapter 2, as it is a word not widely used elsewhere in Greece, and it does not evoke a sense of the binary (“disemic”) division between “romios” and “hellene” discussed by Herzfeld (1987). Here, I want to note that being “just Greek” is an assertion of ordinariness, a lack of a named distinction. It is different from an assertion of being “pure Greek,” which I also heard the same people saying quite often: being “pure Greek” is an assertion of distinction; it is special, even while it claims homogeneity with all other (pure) Greeks (Herzfeld 1986).

It was the “just Greek” population of Pogoni that most had in mind when they described Pogoni as lacking in distinction. Of course, there were “just Greek” people everywhere in Epirus, and particularly in cities (that is the point);²² but in Pogoni, the asserted ordinariness (an assertion, or at least complaint, made almost as often by themselves as by others) blended in with the asserted ordinariness of the landscape and the ambiguities associated with that Balkan border. The combination generated a sense of a general lack of distinction as well as an underlying, never quite explicitly acknowledged, lack of clarity; but it did not matter all that much—it made no difference (literally)—because the place and the people were ordinary.

In that sense, even the marginality of Pogoni was ambiguous: if the people and place were marginal, it was not a marginality of otherness, of difference, or of distinction; it was more the marginality of being nothing in particular. Yet I knew that when I was asked, “What do you expect, Sarah? This is the Balkans,” one of the things I did *not* expect was such an apparent lack of particularity. And although people in Pogoni complained about it, occasionally demanding to know what was so different or special about the Zagori that resulted in the Zagori’s attracting tourism and funding in a way that Pogoni did not, or offering answers that evoked assertions of political machinations giving the Zagori an unfair advantage, or even pointing to a wealth of history, traditions, costumes, music, and so on that in fact made Pogoni peoples culturally distinct and special,²³ all this was hedged around with ambivalence: there remained an underlying expression, or sometimes resigned acceptance, of their ordinariness, their “just Greekness.”

I argue that what *was* different about Pogoni, at least in terms of its contemporary reputation, was its relative location; it was the *where*, not the *who*, that mattered. By “relative location” I mean something fractal rather than linear. It was not only that Pogoni is geographically located next to, or straddles, the state border; it was not only that its topography, in contemporary aesthetic evaluations of such things, is defined as less distinctive than others—it was also that this kind of place, these kinds of spatial divisions and relations, these kinds of people, their kind of rela-

tions with others, their kind of activities and travels, and their kind of experiences, were seen as constituting transformations of many other places, people, relations, activities, travels, and experiences (there was something generic about them). While there were many differences, they were also the same—a “not quite replication,” in Strathern’s terms (Strathern 1991: xx).²⁴ That gets me back to the theme of both being and not being someone and somewhere in particular; of separations, divisions, and recombinations of places and people; and of stories that are different but the same. It was the ambiguous *sameness* that made the difference, not the differences, as it were.

Just to avoid any misunderstanding, considering the unthinking way that the Balkans have been and continue to be described both in the media and in some academic writing, I want to emphasize that I am not suggesting the people or the place is stuck in some kind of Balkan “time warp” (Cowan 2000: 2) or that they are representatives of “Balkan atavism” (Herzfeld 1997: 88), or even that they were represented that way. As I will go on to discuss in chapter 4, “the Balkans” is relatively recent as a concept and a name, and its history of appearance, disappearance, and reappearance is neither circular nor linear—nor does it involve a straightforward assertion of “backwardness”; it is, in its current hegemonic form, as fractal as what I have been describing for Pogoni, which is not coincidental. When I say that things change but somehow remain the same, my meaning is similar to Strathern’s when she discusses change in relation to English kinship in the late twentieth century (Strathern 1992a). Strathern argues that although English kinship is in one sense understood to be the same as it has always already been, it is also, and at the same time, understood to be undergoing possibly profound changes, partly as a result of the introduction of new reproductive technologies. Strathern suggests it is not these technologies in themselves that enable change, but what such events are causing people to think: people have become increasingly reflexive about kinship, have made the implicit English understanding of relatedness and individuality explicit, and that changes things, while they also apparently stay the same. As she puts it, “It is, in fact, this very capacity to think one is perpetuating old ideas, simply doing again what has been done at other times and in other places before, elsewhere, that is itself a profound engine for change. . . . The sense of new values, new ideas, new epochs, comes from the conscious effort to make evident the values and ideas people already hold” (Strathern 1992a: 44). For my purposes, it is not *whether* things stay the same or change that is the main issue here (though it will be elsewhere); it is the manner in which change and sameness are constituted and understood, and the relationship between them, that is the issue; and I argue in chapter 4 that this is currently hegemonically constituted as fractal in this region.

I will give just a brief example here about the apparent ordinariness of some of the Pogoni people and the relationship of that with the “where,” not the “who.” I mentioned earlier that Pogoni either runs along or straddles the border, depending on how you look at it, and that the border divided Pogoni between two states. Many of the people on the Albanian side of the border were the relatives, friends, or at least neighbors of the “just Greek” Pogoni people on the Greek side. For people familiar with Pogoni, some of the area on the Albanian side was regarded as part of Pogoni; a larger part was regarded as Deropolis; either way, the people were the relatives and friends of those on the Greek side. However, unlike their “just Greek” kin, friends, and neighbors, many of those on the Albanian side had an additional name—actually, more than one: they were called Northern Epirots in Greece and either Greek Albanians or Southern Albanians in Albania. Exactly where Northern Epirus begins and ends is another one of those contested issues involving drawing lines on maps: for some it straddles the Greek-Albanian border; for others, it includes only the area in southern Albania where the population associated with it is considered to be predominantly Greek; for still others (people in Albania, mostly), it does not exist—the whole of Epirus is regarded as constituting the southern part of Albania, irrespective of the state border. In any case, the people living just inside the Albanian state border in this region, and who were considered to be Greek, were the ones called Northern Epirots in Greece—which implies, in a reversal of one of the views from Albania, that they were from an overall (Greek) geographical entity called Epirus, and the northern part happens to be in Albania. In other words, calling this region Northern Epirus effectively pushes the existing Greek-Albanian border northward in terms of “national locations,” mapping them onto geographical locations; it implicitly asserts that Northern Epirus is part of Epirus, irrespective of the existence of the Greek-Albanian border, and that the people living there who are deemed to be Greek are the people who “belong” to this place, the Northern Epirots.²⁵

A not-quite-replication, a half mirror image, of this situation existed in parts of Thesprotia, to the south of Pogoni, which includes an area known as Tsamouria. The Albanian government argues that in the past, a significant proportion of the population living in part of that region, on the Greek side of the border, were ethnically Albanian people called Tsamides in Greece (Cams, Tchams, or Chams in Albania); it is unclear how many of these people still live in Thesprotia (some would say none at all). In fact, the issue of Tsamides caused me more consternation than almost any other I encountered in Epirus; it was an extreme example of things appearing and disappearing almost simultaneously, and it was an explicit example of an insistence on ambiguity. I will return to that in chapter 2; the point here is this: while neither the Greek nor the Albanian govern-

ment is making any territorial claims on the basis of their positions on Northern Epirus and Thesprotia, there are ongoing debates between them concerning the past treatment of the populations associated with those places. That effectively makes the border ambiguous: while it is unambiguously a state border, what it means in terms of nation is hedged around with fuzziness—and, incidentally, this is one of the reasons I am disinclined to use the forever hyphenated phrase “nation-state”; they are not the same thing.²⁶

My reason for bringing all this in here is that the “just Greeks” in Pogoni and the Northern Epirots from the other side of the border often discussed how they are, or at least had been, the “same” people; but they were also different. While on the Greek side of the border they were described as undistinguished, ordinary people, on the other side of the border they were something in particular.²⁷ Moreover, the ambiguity about the border led to more ambiguity when Northern Epirots crossed that border: although (in Greece) they were regarded as Greeks living in a non-Greek state, and to that extent, using nationalist logic, they were “displaced” in Liisa Malkki’s terms (Malkki 1992), when many of them moved across the border into Greece after its reopening, that was *also* seen by many in Greece as “displacement,” for they had moved away from “their place,” from Northern Epirus, to another part of Epirus. Were these people to be regarded as “coming home” (Greeks returning to Greece) or as refugees (people moving from their home, which was in another state, to Greece)? Or both? This movement evoked memories of other such movements in the past, and in particular the large-scale forced exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s (during which there was a dispute over whether the Tsamides of Thesprotia should be included in the exchange; the Albanian government argued not, on the grounds that Tsamides were not Turkish but ethnically Albanian). That such memories were stirred did not help matters much.²⁸

This is one example of what I mean when I say that it is the *where*, not the *who*, that is important. In this example, the *where* had a lot to do with ambiguities over the relations among nation, state, and location, but there are many kinds of *where*. In other examples in this study, the *where* had to do with the manner in which people traveled or failed to travel, or the distance between Epirus and Athens, or the aesthetics of topography and landscape, or the way places were subdivided, appeared, and disappeared in administrative accounts of the region. How the *where* is constituted, and how that is both different and the same across a range of scales (geographical, temporal, metaphorical, disciplinary) forms a key part of this study’s exploration of differing forms of marginality, their ambiguity, their appearance and disappearance, and their simultaneous similarity and difference.

That gets me back to the question of what to expect from the Balkans, a question that eventually led me to fractals—to the geometry, geography, and temporality of that which is constituted as simultaneously the same and different, of that which is fundamentally both fragmented and interrelated, and how that relates to the peculiar way in which the Balkans are currently constituted in hegemonic terms. It is here that ambiguity, distinctiveness, and ordinariness, as well as appearing, disappearing, and reappearing, seem to converge. In chapter 4, I analyze in detail the Balkans themselves, as an imagined whole that has no center or clear edges and is replicated within its many and potentially always proliferating parts (it is both singular and plural simultaneously); for the rest of this chapter, and in the next two, I explore such replications across scales concerning Epirus and Pogoni in particular.

I will start that account with how the fieldwork I carried out led me to focus my attention on things like movement and travel, places, maps, tectonics, animal numbers, and EU-funded development projects in my attempts to understand ambiguity, things being the same and different across a range of scales, and ordinariness.

MARGINAL TRAVELS

Over the years I spent carrying out fieldwork in Epirus (1992, 1993–94, 1995, 1997), I wandered from place to place, sometimes in pursuit of an objective set by the European Commission–funded research projects of which I was a part, but mostly because of the persistent wandering element in how people described their diverse lives and experiences, which I ended up mimicking. Overall, though, I spent most of my time in the northern and more mountainous part of the region, and kept returning to the area around the Kasidiaris (maps 2 and 3).

Deciding what to call that place was an early experience of ambiguity. On the one hand, the Kasidiaris mountain itself is administratively divided between two Greek counties, Pogoni County and Dodoni County. Pogoni County's share of the mountain is mostly on the western and northern sides, and Dodoni's is mostly on the eastern and southern sides (map 3). On the other hand, as already mentioned, most people's sense of Pogoni as a region also goes beyond the current Greek administrative boundary, both to the west and to the east, which means that it includes areas that are formally part of Dodoni to the east, and it crosses the Greek-Albanian international border to the west. That set up an ambiguity: most people living in or around the area were aware of the administrative boundary and would often define Pogoni's current location in those terms, asserting that it is really only the people who live there who are

Pogoni people. Yet at the same time, it was also acknowledged, often by the same people, that “traditionally” (that is, both in the past and in the present, as a tradition), Pogoni did include other areas, and for that reason those areas were also in fact Pogoni; or perhaps they were Pogoni plus something else (and somewhere else) as well. This was one of my earlier encounters with how naming and renaming things, as well as the regular shifting of formal boundaries, generated an interplay of a sense of where and what things were in this region—one that resulted in no final resolution on the matter. Moreover, although it was mostly the “just Greek” population who were considered to be Pogoni people, the area identified as Pogoni was also associated in certain ways with various other peoples not considered to be “Pogoni people” (e.g., certain groups of Vlachoï and Gypsies), as well as some who had been considered Pogoni but are now considered something else (either different from or in addition to being Pogoni people)—such as those called Northern Epirots. In any case, “Pogoni” people are not only “Pogoni” people but possess a variety of other identifying (or nonidentifying) labels as well, such as being “just Greek” (chapter 2).

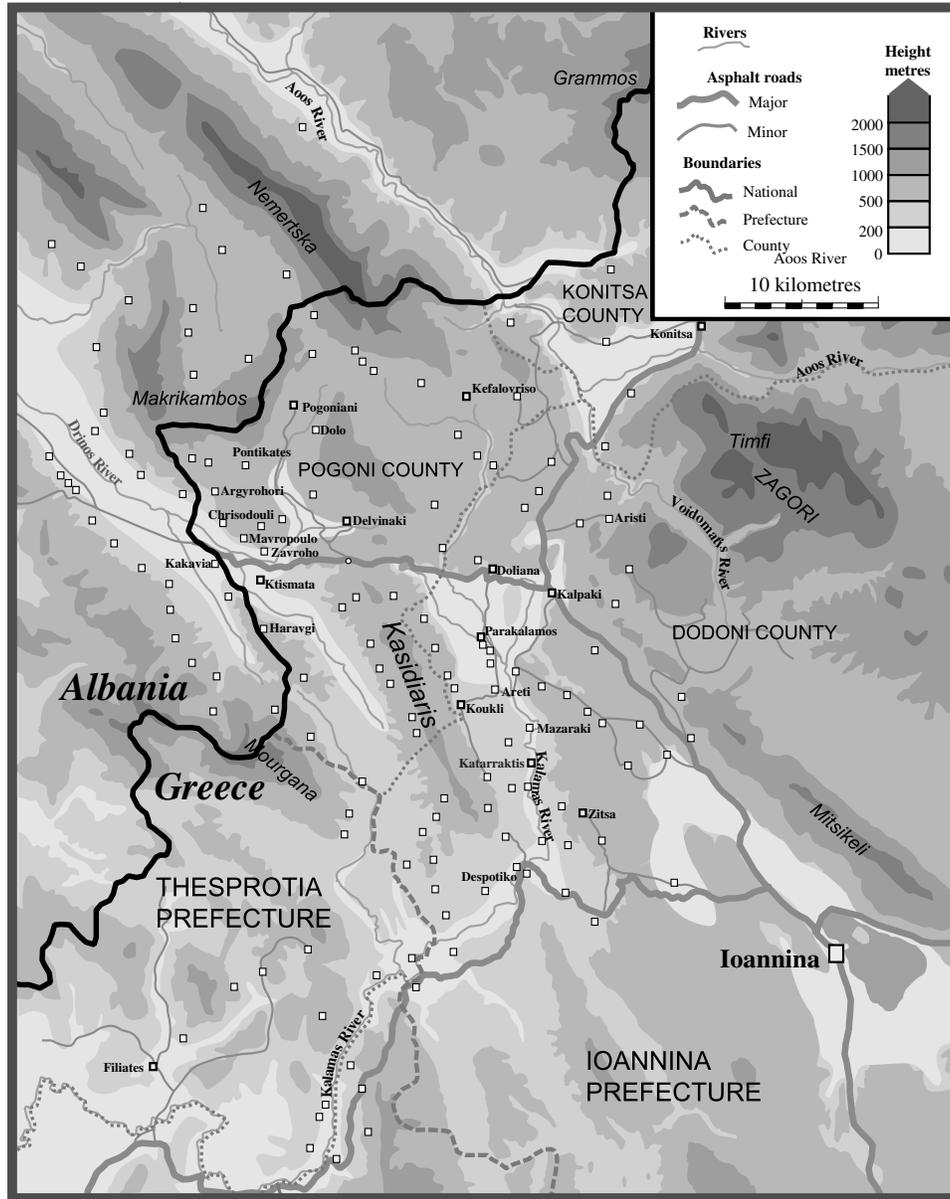
While this was all very intriguing, in that it led to me consider how people’s understanding of the “where” made as much use of local government administrative boundaries as it did of ideas about peoples, traditions, and national boundaries, it caused me some consternation in deciding what to call the place in my fieldwork notes. As I did not have the luxury of beginning with a people and a place that had clear names, and whose assumed boundaries I could later deftly deconstruct if I needed to, I was beginning to become confused over where and whom I was referring to when I looked back at my notes. So, initially for the purely practical reason of needing to understand my own notes, I decided to use a name that nobody suggested the area was called: Kasidiaris, after the mountain that is vaguely in the middle of the area I ended up focusing upon, and which people at various times either went up, over, around, or alongside of. In the absence of an unambiguous center, I invented a center that was not the focus of anybody’s attention, though most of the peoples I discuss had to deal with the Kasidiaris in one way or another, even if this mostly involved ignoring it in more recent years. Chapter 2 takes this invention further, focusing on the varieties of peoples associated with the Kasidiaris as a place in the company of others, but I do this to explore the lack of centrality, the appearance and disappearance of marginality, and the way location came into this across a range of scales.

One of the more persistent distinctions made within the Greek part of the area was a perceived division between the places located to the west and those located to the east of the Kasidiaris mountain, even though the mountain itself was not the focus of attention when this distinction was

made, and even though the distinction did not generally affect people's perceptions of where Pogoni was located. As can be seen in maps 2 and 3, the west is a stretch of land currently sandwiched between the international border and the mountain, whereas the east has a fairly substantial plain, contains most of the recently developed and expanding villages in the area and the highest population of younger people, and provides easy road access through the main route to the capital city, Ioannina.²⁹ The eastern side therefore constituted a literal as well as metaphorical kind of crossroads within the Greek side of the area, whereas the western side constituted a kind of crossroads between the Greek and Albanian sides of the area. Because of this frequently evoked distinction, I often refer to Western and Eastern Kasidiaris in this book. In practice, the bulk of my fieldwork during the earlier years focused on Western Kasidiaris, with occasional visits elsewhere, whereas most of my fieldwork in the later years was spent in Eastern Kasidiaris, particularly in a village called Doli-ana, where I lived for four months in 1997 (map 4).

This also marks a division among the different things to which I paid attention. In the earlier years, one key focus was the differing ways people used and moved around the landscape, past and present, how they discussed these travels and activities, and combined them with other things (chapter 2). A second focus was attitudes toward land degradation and soil erosion—the topic of research that had brought me to Epirus in the first place, and which I will discuss a little more later and in chapter 3.³⁰ A third focus was the Greek-Albanian border, the various movements across it, and its closure and reopening (chapters 2, 4, and 7). In the later years, the focus shifted to EU-funded development projects that were mushrooming around Epirus, in the dual contexts of EU policies aimed at kick-starting economic regeneration of “marginal” places through agrotourism and of ongoing tensions across the border, particularly involving people moving from Albania into Greece (chapter 7). In connection with this aspect of the research, I also spent a good deal of time in the Zagori, and particularly a village called Aristi (map 4), in part to explore the ongoing promotion of images of cultural and natural heritage being applied especially to this area.

In addition, I carried out a brief ethnographic study around the small towns of Filiates and Paramithia, in Thesprotia, toward the south of Epirus (map 2), for two reasons. First, this was an area through which long-distance regional travelers—transhumant pastoralists and traders—passed after going through the Kasidiaris region, or on their way to the Kasidiaris region, usually to some final destination beyond the Kasidiaris. I wanted to take that trip myself to understand something more about descriptions people had given me of the dangers that parts of the route had involved in the past (Green 1998b). Second, as I have explained, the



Map 4. Villages and townships of the key research area and county/regional boundaries (modified from Green and King 2001: 259)

area was considered to be as marginal as Pogoni, if not more so; that was in part because the area was associated with Tsamides, whom I mentioned earlier as causing me considerable levels of confusion. The difference was that unlike the Pogoni “just Greek” population, who were ordinary in a Balkan kind of way, Tsamides turned out to be extraordinary in a Balkan kind of way (in Epirus, at least), and that made most people even less inclined to be clear about them than they were about the Pogoni people; that is discussed further in chapter 2.

Beyond Thesprotia, Zagori, and the Kasidiaris areas, I also spent a good deal of time in the biggest urban center of Epirus, Ioannina, the region’s capital. There were two reasons for this, and both of them were practical. First, getting to any given village by car was usually far less circuitous if I started from Ioannina rather than from another village, as the asphalt road system was designed to lead into and out of the city, and not between villages. Since I was not planning on being based in one particular village, it made sense to be based in Ioannina. In any case, it was difficult to find rooms to rent outside the city, despite many houses’ being empty for most of the year in most of the villages; the concept of having strangers in your house, living there on their own, was an alien one, and although after a few months I could easily have persuaded someone, I chose to respect people’s discomfort about this issue. The one occasion when I lived for an extended period of time elsewhere—four months in Doliana—I rented a room above a coffee shop and restaurant owned by the local agricultural cooperative and managed by a family I had come to know very well.

The second reason I spent a lot of time in Ioannina is that most statistical information about land use, animal numbers and crop production, population censuses, land improvement programs, and EU development programs, as well as detailed maps and other data, were kept in a scatter of government offices in the city. My reasons for pursuing those data changed with time. Initially, it was because I was supposed to be in Epirus to investigate people’s changing relationship with their unstable landscape; I needed to know how that had been represented by the state, as well as how people living within these areas talked about it and experienced it. But later, when I began to get a sense of how things, people, and places appeared and disappeared, how they were named and renamed in a range of ways and across a range of scales—a sense I gained both by looking at these reams of data and by spending time with people around the Kasidiaris area and elsewhere—I became much more interested in the data as constituting traces of past and present negotiations and relations, as well as strange kinds of objects that were as ambiguous, ordinary, and extraordinary as anything else I had come across in this place. Moreover, they provided me with one means, among others, of looking at interrela-

tions and representations across scales; a way of understanding how things can be different while also being the same across diverse technologies of representation and experience, and how things can be made to appear and disappear in the process. This is something I explore in chapters 5 and 6; suffice it to say here that one conclusion I drew from this exercise is that statistics do not have to be collected, used, or understood statistically. That is, the use of statistics does not necessarily imply the exclusive imposition of a formally statistical way of understanding things, of constructing reality and truth using the ideas of classification and categories, aggregates, comparison, and things' being greater than the sum of their parts. In practice, that turned out to be only one part, one fraction, of the experience, use, and understanding of statistics.

In any event, being more or less forced to spend a long time in Ioannina made the city an important part of my experience while I was in Epirus, and I regret that I have not provided much ethnographic detail about that in this book, especially since I have spent some years focusing on urban ethnography in other research.³¹ Just briefly: by the 1990s, Ioannina had become the administrative, economic, and political core of the whole region, in geographical as well as conceptual terms, whereas in the past it had been one focal point among others. Nevertheless, Ioannina had its own margins, as all cities do, and during 1994 and 1995 I lived in one of them: a neighborhood on the southern edge of the city usually called “Ta Seismoplikta,” a pluralized and demotic version of its official name, “Seismoplikton,” which means “the earthquake-stricken”; “Ta Seismoplikta,” when used to refer to this area, meant “the place of the earthquake victims” to most people.³² I lived on a corner of the central street, which had the same name. The original houses there—small, square, flat-topped concrete structures with concrete or stone floors—had been built on scrubland by the Greek army to house the victims of an earthquake that occurred on May 1, 1967, in the Pindos Mountains just to the east of Ioannina.³³ Few people had died, but the earthquake destroyed large numbers of the mountain village houses. My landlady's father moved to Seismoplikta from Krapsi, one of the villages nearest the epicenter of the earthquake, and my neighborhood was heavily populated by Krapsi ex-residents. Maria (my landlady) had moved to Athens some years before the earthquake, but she and her husband moved to Seismoplikta in 1972. They had since built a corner shop next to their concrete house, which Maria ran, and had furthermore built two stories on top of the combined house and shop. Maria now lived on the first floor with her husband and one of her daughters (who was about to marry and move away to the Peloponnese); her other daughter lived on the second floor with her husband (she gave birth to her first daughter during my stay there). I rented

the original concrete house built by the army, which I affectionately came to call The Bunker.

The building of Seismoplikta and the movement of people into the area as a result of the earthquake was not something many commented upon as a great or cataclysmic event; it was noted more as a means to explain why there was still a certain lack of infrastructure or sense of long-term “dwelling,” in Ingold’s terms (Ingold 1995), in Seismoplikta, and how people moving through or new to the area felt fairly comfortable there, while at the same time large portions of the resident population were closely related to one another. The area was often described as combining “transients”—students of Ioannina University, located a couple of kilometers down the road; casual workers; immigrants; and the occasional anthropologist—with a “close-knit community” that had been transported wholesale from mountain villages to the city. Listening to people talk in Maria’s shop, I sometimes had the sense that this corner of the neighborhood was an extension of Krapsi and had nothing to do with Ioannina; at other times, it felt much like a bit of undistinguished urban sprawl.

What struck me about this was not so much that combination but the absence of a story about loss from the “earthquake victims”: the absence of a story of disaster or an account about how they came to be there, an absence that contrasted starkly with Hirschon’s account of Asia Minor refugees in Piraeus (Hirschon 1989). It seemed as if Maria’s people did not have a sense of anomaly in their being relocated. In any event, the village of Krapsi had been partially rebuilt, and ex-residents from Seismoplikta regularly visited and continued to be involved in village affairs. This precisely mirrored the behavior of thousands of other residents of Ioannina who had moved there by choice (as indeed had Maria herself), and who regularly visited the mountain villages in which they grew up.

There was more to this. Maria and Michalis (Maria’s husband) told me about the history of their village in terms of movement: how there had been a village in what is now Albania (or Northern Epirus) called Grapsi, and how the residents had moved to the new location, to Krapsi in the Pindos Mountains in what is now Greece, as a result of harassment by Ottoman administrators as well as irregular militias and animal rustlers. They both also talked about other kinds of movement—going to Athens for a time to live and then returning again, or even just traveling to visit relatives. Travel and movement were not anomalous activities for Maria and Michalis, even though the reasons to do it on any particular occasion may be extraordinary (such as an earthquake) or entirely mundane. Rather, movement was a key means by which events in their lives were marked, and through which they were discussed—both small and everyday (ordinary) events and large and traumatic (extraordinary) ones. Things change—you move—but they are in some senses the same: movement is what happens when things change,

as well as what happens when things stay the same. It is the means by which people note that something has happened, that an event has occurred which is different from what had been happening before but is nevertheless a kind of replication, in that it involves movement; it may be a kind of movement that is the same as one that has occurred before, even if the details are somewhat different this time.

Just to be clear, the 1967 earthquake, as an event, had of course changed things fairly dramatically in both practical and emotional terms for Krapsi residents. Apart from anything else, the memory of it had generated a deep-seated sense of physical insecurity, not only for those who had experienced it, but also for others who had been told about it. A small indication of this was the panic caused among the customers in Maria's shop by a small tremor that occurred there in 1994. It was the kind of tremor that rattles your cup a little on the table, lasts five or six seconds, and might equally have been caused by a very heavy truck driving by. Such tremors occur regularly in Epirus, and I must have experienced half a dozen or so while I was there, but this was the only one that was physically felt in Seismoplikta. Discussions about it continued for days afterward, and one of Maria's daughters complained that she had been unable to sleep for two nights because she had been so worried about it. However, although the memory of the event reverberated right up to the 1990s, the extraordinariness of the 1967 earthquake did not seem to make people feel there was something extraordinary about their moving from Krapsi to Seismoplikta. It was not the movement that had caused displacement; the movement provided a means to discuss the event itself, as movement provided a means to discuss all kinds of events.

MOVING PEOPLE AND PLACES

I have particularly noted this way in which movement is included in discussions of things happening for Maria's family because it was a characteristic way in which almost all the people I met in Epirus discussed their lives, their location, and their experiences. Chapter 2 explores this: different moments in people's lives were marked by one kind of movement or another; in addition, other peoples were assessed by the way in which they moved, the level of relative autonomy they had in moving, and their consequent relative status. People who moved seasonally (transhumant or semitranshumant shepherds) were different from people who moved in long-term labor migrations (as many "just Greek" Pogoni peoples had done); people who had in the past been free to wander around the Epirot region, such as traders and craftspeople (barrel makers, stonemasons, silversmiths, leather workers, bakers, charcoal makers, and loggers) as well

as irregular militias and animal rustlers, were different from those who could move only by effectively leapfrogging over the region and spending long periods in cities such as Constantinople (today's Istanbul), returning only occasionally for three or four months at a time; people who emigrated as families to cities in Greece or abroad were different from those who divided their year relatively equally between cities and villages; people who apparently wandered aimlessly (e.g., Gypsies and *tsopanides*, men who offered their services as shepherds around the region) were different from those who moved up and down a mountain with the seasons; people who had cars were different from those who went on foot or used buses; and people who moved across state borders illegally were different from those who crossed with visas and passports, or who did not cross such borders at all.

The one thing that people emphasized in distinguishing between different moments in their lives, different places, and different kinds of peoples was different kinds of coming and going, and different constraints, enablements, and coercions in that movement. Those who were regarded as most free to stay put were better off than those who felt constrained or even forced to stay put (and there was a considerable gender division in that). Equally, those who were regarded as most free to move were better off than those who felt they were coerced or forced by circumstances into moving (e.g., earthquakes, enforced exchange of populations, burdensome taxes, the division of an area into two different states).

While the form in which people spoke about these differing things remained the same—discussion of movement—the kinds of movements recounted for different periods were reported as being different, and that partly shaped many people's sense of different eras. In particular, over the last century or so, many people had a sense that movement was increasingly regarded, both politically and structurally, as unacceptable: first with the creation of strongly guarded state boundaries; then with the development of often equally strongly guarded national identities; and then, ironically, with technical change. It was this last that made the mechanized, irrigated plains the only places where it was sensible to cultivate anymore, leaving the seasonally used mountain and hillside fields to grow into impenetrable prickly oak scrub thicket; and technical change also made Epirus accessible along the asphalt roads, rather than the thousands of tracks, paths, and routes over mountains, along valleys, between villages, fields, towns, and grazing areas. While the literature I was reading at the time about movement and travel was increasingly emphasizing that people have always moved around, and arguing that the world is becoming ever more mobile and interconnected—characterized by transnationalism, transmigration, globalization, and the like³⁴—people in Epirus were suggesting that for them, a conceptual reversal had taken place:

whereas movement had been, in the past, the way things were and the way things happened, and the measure by which people and places were valued and judged, it was now regarded as somehow special, as something that you had to make an increasing effort to achieve and/or that involved both literal and metaphorical displacement.

What this pointed to was an increasing sense of discrepancy between Epirot people's understanding of how things are and wider political, economic, and structural conditions. If you start with coming and going, if you assume that movement is simply a part of many things, in different ways and at different times, then the axiomatic link between movement in itself and change or displacement is broken. Things that seem continually to cause change when the starting point is stasis or stability can easily lose these transformative qualities when the starting point assumes movement.³⁵ Further, if the starting point assumes movement, then one can imagine that *not* moving, becoming fixed in place, could be one of the greatest perceived causes of change.

This gets me back to what is and is not constituted as ordinary or extraordinary, and how the initial purpose in my going to Epirus, to look into people's relationships with their unstable environment, eventually led me to consider all these other kinds of movement and their interrelations and separations. Those new asphalt roads that replaced the thousands of tracks and paths rather neatly embodied the problem I was confronting. Asphalt is supposed to stay put and not move around, yet the asphalt in Epirus does not stay put: it had considerable trouble coping with the chronic surface movements of much of Epirus, as the all-too-common cracking, folding, gullying, and landslides regularly turn road surfaces into something that looks not unlike a crumpled gray blanket (fig. 1). Sometimes, so much of the road is lost down a gully that it becomes impassable until someone comes to fix it in the summer. Still, these days, cars and trucks are much easier than mules, horses, or walking. An elderly man from Aristi was bemused to hear that a horse trail for tourists might be developed in the area: who in their right minds would want to use horses to travel around Epirus when there was motorized transport—even if the roads do crumple a little now and again?

I was supposed to research all that land surface movement as a small ethnographic project to complement a much larger multidisciplinary, multinational, EU-funded research program on desertification and land degradation in the Mediterranean Basin.³⁶ It was known that Epirus is particularly tectonically active, prone to earthquakes, landslips, and the formation of badlands.³⁷ I was to ask people in the area, especially older people who had lived in the hills and mountains, what they had done in the past to counteract their landscape's tendency to change its shape. The assumption of the research program was that such change is anomalous,



Figure 1. Crumpled asphalt road in Western Kasidiaris

and that people prefer places to stay put, so would have done something to try to counteract the movement. Yet my questions to people about this generated mutual confusion. The following is an example of the kind of exchange I had on this issue. In this case, I was talking with a man living very close to one of the biggest areas of eroded badlands in Epirus, called Kokkinopilos (map 6)—a region of huge bare dunes made up of deep red *terra rossa* soil, going on for acres.

“So, what about those badlands over there at Kokkinopilos, where nothing grows?”

“What about them?”

“What do you remember about them, in the past?”

“What’s to remember?”

“That’s what I’m asking. For example, has the land changed in your memory? Has it got worse? Did people in the past ever grow anything there? Did they do anything to try and stop the erosion?”

“Changed? No. It’s always been like that there. Worse? How do you mean, worse? It’s just like that, that’s the way it is. And as for growing things: no, nobody ever grew anything there. Why would you?”

“Okay, well. Did anyone ever try to reinforce it—to stop the erosion, try to keep it stable, so it didn’t get worse?”

“No, nobody did that. There’s no stopping it, anyway. It’s just like that. It never changes. It’s always been like that.”

In retrospect, this was not a confusing conversation at all: the man was telling me that Kokkinopilos was an area of no interest to him, so why should he, or anybody else, care whether it eroded or not? I found it confusing at the time because I had been led by the research program to expect that people would notice this kind of shifting around of the landscape and would comment upon it as anomalous. In fact, most people agreed that the land did continually crack, gully, fold, erode, and slip; they also agreed that sometimes, not only in badlands, but also in cultivated areas, people's fields would suddenly drop about a meter in a year. However, most people also added that this land never changed; it had always been like that. As a result, these processes were not recognized as "erosion" because that term (for them as for me) denotes anomalous change. Since it was not anomalous, it did not constitute change.

In any case, most people kept dropping the subject and talking about something else, such as the depopulation of the area over the last few decades; or the recent influx of peoples arriving across the newly opened Greek-Albanian border; or the abandonment and overgrowth of the fields and grazing lands; or the Ottoman Empire, the Second World War, and the Greek civil war after it; or the proliferation of EU-funded agrotourism development projects in the area, and how unlikely it was that any of them would succeed. The last thing people were interested in talking about was the shiftiness of their landscape. Yet, as I had been sent to Epirus to find out about that shiftiness, I kept dropping it into the conversation. Eventually, I accepted that people did not *care* about land degradation; they were almost entirely indifferent to it, and as a topic of conversation, it was fundamentally uninteresting. Feeling somewhat as though I was playing truant from my assigned task, I began to listen to what people did want to tell me.³⁸

What emerged were stories about a range of events told in terms of coming and going, through space and through time, as well as through social and political moments; and they were about how things shifted, time and again, in the same way, even though the events were different: when regular migrations became permanent emigrations with sporadic visits back to Epirus; when mountains once used for grazing and cultivation became "natural wilderness," and when the Greek-Albanian border was closed following Albania's transition into a command socialist state; or when movement became anomalous, as happened when transhumant pastoralists were increasingly pressured to become sedentary, or more recently when Albanian citizens, having been prevented from crossing the Greek-Albanian border for almost fifty years, started to cross it in droves in the early 1990s. The kind of movement that never marked any event or process was the continual shifting around of the land surface in Epirus. There was no story to tell about it. There is more to this, which is dis-

cussed further in chapter 3. Here, the point is that not all movement is the same; in fact, movement does not mean anything in *itself*, so it is not movement as such that displaces anything.

That realization led me to explore how movement was always involved in a network of relationships with, as well as separations from, other things, places, people, and events, and how that seamlessly combined the way things seem (narratives, rhetoric, representations, images, numbers, etc.) with the way things are (the political economy of life, borders and passports, social relationships, being forced or being free to stay or move). Bringing these scales together, understanding how their interrelations as well as their fragmentations informed people's experiences, became an important part of what I have tried to explore.

As it happened, I went about that more by accident than by design, and it is here that my involvement with a large research program comes in: a multidisciplinary program whose main concerns centered on patterns of land use and land degradation across a wide range of spatial and temporal scales. I have already mentioned how the demands of that program's over-all objectives led me to ferret out large quantities of statistical data (something I would certainly not have done if left to my own devices), and how that eventually led me to use those data to look at relations across scales of representation and experience. But I was also continually engaged in relations with research colleagues over matters involving maps, satellite images, and GIS (geographical information systems), and over issues to do with the physical instability of the Epirot environment. Again, I was initially somewhat perplexed about how to use all these data in my ethnographic work. In the end, though, they provided me with another means to consider the interrelations and separations of different scales, simultaneously both intellectual and structural. The fact that I was not always on my own as a researcher in Epirus becomes important here.

ON MAPS, IMAGES, AND TECTONICS

Occasionally, I was accompanied in my wanderings around Epirus by colleagues from the European research programs of which I was a part. These included Paleolithic archaeologists, paleobotanists, agronomists, geologists, geographers, and GIS specialists. One of the most regular and, for me, influential of these visitors was Geoffrey King, a specialist in tectonics and earthquakes, who continually provided me with topographic maps, aerial photographs, and satellite images of Epirus. He would stand on hills and mountains to get a good view, so as to explain to me the tendency of the place to shift around. Geoff's timescale was in tens of thousands and millions of years; within that kind of scale, the mountains

and valleys bobbed up and down like yo-yos, lakes formed and disappeared down plug holes, all as a result of the tectonic plates upon which all this was sitting—plates that creaked, slipped, pushed, and pulled continuously. It was a perspective quite unlike either the one with which I had started or the various ones expressed by people I met in Epirus, and in its contrast, it caused me to rethink the issue of scale and its relationship to movement.

It was also Geoff who made me understand the potential of maps, as physical objects as well as symbols, to both generate and disturb images of what I was learning from the people associated with Epirus. The issue of maps, at least the cartographic ones based on a Cartesian geometry—a modernist grid of latitude and longitude wrapped across the globe so as to classify, objectify, visualize, know, and thus control the globe—has been a matter of debate for some years, particularly in terms of how such visions became key tools of empire (Cosgrove 1999; 1996; Ingold 2000a), and how they impose the “Western Gaze” onto space (Bender 1999).

Such analyses made me initially extremely uncomfortable about working with Geoff’s maps. They did indeed appear to powerfully impose a specifically visual grid, a constraining and distinctly “Western scientific” knowledge, upon Epirus. Moreover I was acutely aware of the way other kinds of maps, ones that marked divisions of states and regions rather than geomorphological divisions, were used continually in texts about the region, making conflicting territorial assertions about how Epirus “ought” to be subdivided according to the origins, history, nationality, or other characteristics asserted to be associated with the place, a habit shared with the whole Balkan region (Peckham 2001: chap. 8, “Map Mania”; Wilkinson 1951). Furthermore, I had confronted numerous difficulties in trying (usually at Geoff’s request) to get hold of certain kinds of maps, particularly detailed topographic ones of the area, which were produced by the Greek military and to which access was restricted. I was made to feel that even asking for such things, that type of knowledge, rendered me a deeply suspect character and up to no good. In short, maps were highly contested and loaded objects in Epirus, and Geoff’s stacks of them and requests for more of them initially made me feel I was involving myself in an activity that was fraught with difficulty, both intellectually and politically.

Eventually, though, after some weeks of working not only with standard cartographic maps but also aerial photographs and satellite images, I came around to the idea that this tension concerning maps was something to be explored rather than avoided: the maps themselves, and also the discourses to which Geoff was giving me access, provided one means to consider the relationship between powerful accounts and representations of places and the way places were constituted. In any case, in “West-

ern Gaze” intellectual terms, maps are apparently not what they used to be; as Cosgrove notes, maps and mapping have been subjected to the same kind of radical doubt as has social theory in recent years. Not only do they represent modernist purifications, but now they are also supposed to represent “the spatialities of connectivity, networked linkage, marginality and liminality, and the transgression of linear boundaries and hermetic categories—spatial ‘flow’—which mark experience in the late 20th century world. Such spatialities render obsolete conventional geographic and topographic mapping practices while stimulating new forms of cartographic representation” (Cosgrove 1999: 4–5).

Geoff King’s research centrally involves producing these “new forms of cartographic representation,” and he both understood and accepted that maps and maplike images constitute powerful assertions about space and place that are especially partial in Strathern’s sense (Strathern 1991). Working with him, I found that they could do much more than simply assert, in a formalistic, positivist, and stylized way, where you are located in the world, so that you can know it. They also turned out to capture differing forms of coming and going, of seeing and failing to see, and differing attempts at fixing in place, both temporal and spatial, across a range of scales. The images themselves could be used to explore those scalar shifts.

A clear example of this possibility came early on during one of Geoff King’s visits. One day in the summer of 1993, we were sitting in a coffee shop in Ktismata, a village very near the Greek-Albanian border post. Geoff unfurled a large, violently colored satellite image of a section of Epirus. After explaining that this was an image, not a map or a photograph, and therefore it did not “really” represent Epirus (in the same way, I suppose, that Magritte’s drawing of a pipe is not really a pipe), he was trying to train me to read it, to make me literally see a relationship between the mass of squiggles and colors on the paper and the place I had been walking and driving around for months. As yet, he was failing: my brow furrowed as I tried to “see” this relationship; all I saw were squiggles and shaded colors.

After a while, our activities caught the interest of an older man who had walked into the coffee shop. For a few minutes, he stood by the table, scrutinizing the image over my shoulder, and then he put his finger on a section of it and said, “That’s where we are, isn’t it?” I translated for Geoff, and he agreed that indeed, the squiggle that the man had pointed to represented where we were located at that moment. I was somewhat disconcerted and asked the man how he had worked it out. Grinning, he pointed to another section of the image, which represented, it turned out, the Kasidiaris mountain, and a squiggle, which represented, it turned out, the asphalt road leading to the village in which we were sitting.

I learned later that the man was a pastoralist, a Vlach, and one of the few who still occasionally traveled seasonally between summer and winter pastures on foot rather than by truck. The way he moved around this place gave him an overview that had somehow also been captured in this image Geoff had brought. It was the first time this man had ever seen a satellite image, as it had been for me; but he was able to read it in a way that had as yet proved impossible for me.

From such experiences as this, I began to grasp how things can be different but also the same in embodied (physically experienced) as well as discursive terms; how it is possible to read and understand things using a range of different types of knowledge and experience and yet still, on some level, come to a similar conclusion—at least, a conclusion about where one is in the world. This process recalls something of the way Helen Verran describes her sense of “disconcertment” in working with Yoruba children on learning about numbers: Yoruba children clearly did not understand number in the way that classic Euro-American mathematics teaches it, and yet both Yoruba and English speakers in Verran’s study were able in the end to arrive at answers that would solve the same problems (Verran 2001). Verran argues that the mathematical principles used by English speakers and Yoruba speakers—their ways of understanding number—were different but had both developed from repeated embodied social interactions that had been forgotten during the process by which some independent, universal qualities were ascribed to numbers. Whatever had occurred in that coffee shop, the skills Geoff was using to read the image, and the way in which he was trying to teach me to read it, were clearly different from the skills the Vlach man had used to read it, and yet they both agreed on at least one aspect of what it “meant” in spatial terms. The most significant aspect of this maplike object for the Vlach man, the aspect that drew his attention to it in the first place, was that it did not explicitly show political borders and boundaries, but instead appeared to distinguish between different kinds of topography, all of which he knew well from his repeated travels and planned routes around the area with his animals. Geoff’s maplike image emphasized one possible representation of the “shape” of this place that was not often seen, for the more common “shape” was one that highlighted political boundaries.

As I have already implied, the significance of political boundaries on maps could hardly be exaggerated for this area. Few people I met actually used such maps to move around or find their way; the interest in them was more about the political language of maps, the kinds of knowledge and power (technology, in Foucault’s terms) they asserted. This is hardly surprising given that most local books about the region show at least one map, if not several, indicating where the author thinks the international political borders ought to be, as opposed to where they currently are; or

show the variety of places the borders have been at various times in the past, which draws out clearly how contested such borders have been and therefore presumably remain.³⁹ Of course, the same habit is precisely replicated in books about the Balkans as a whole.⁴⁰ In both, it is not only the location of the lines indicating territorial divisions that are marked as having repeatedly changed and remaining contested; names of places have also regularly changed, and many also remain contested. Self-evidently, and as noted by many over the years (e.g., Wilkinson 1951; Peckham 2001; Irvine and Gal 2000), maps involving boundaries and names are a key part of the ongoing claims to legitimacy of the state and many of its related institutions—particularly, for this area, the Orthodox Church, the military, and the police.

As a result, maps of this sort constituted a familiar technology to people in Epirus in general, and to those living near the Greek-Albanian border in particular. They symbolized the range of interests and powers directly involved in the ascription to this place of a variety of different shapes and names, and they were also often treated as powerful objects in themselves: as I have mentioned, there were restrictions in access to certain kinds of maps, and the polemical way in which others were published embroiled maps in serious disputes, not only between individuals and groups, but also occasionally between states. The power of a map depended upon who had constructed it, how much access to it was provided, and who was willing to support its boundaries and names against other boundaries and other names. In that sense, maps could be representative of an always already partial view and could also be performative, in that they could potentially alter the shape and name of a place. It was often the lack of clarity over whether a particular map was a representation alone (an assertion with no teeth) or was also potentially able to change the shapes and names of things in its image, as it were—to literally interpellate places—that caused considerable levels of tension over maps in this area.

My first direct experience of this was the result of my attempts to pursue some of the things people had said during those endless mystifying conversations about land degradation. After some months of listening to people telling me that the land degradation in their area was not about landslips and soil erosion, but about depopulation and land abandonment, I decided to carry out a detailed survey of two village territories. Many people had described what their village territories used to look like before the abandonment and overgrowth, and I realized after a time that these were descriptions not of something that no longer existed but of something that was still there for them, partially hidden. All the continual movement and activity, the “dwelling” that was associated with the past use of these village territories, had somehow, by being abandoned, been fixed in place for some people. As I was also aware of a different perspective on these

abandoned areas, one that described such places as “returning to nature” or as “natural wilderness,” I thought it might help if I walked every foot of a couple of village territories, to note what the different areas had been used for and were being used for now, and how all of this related to the different perspectives I was being given about the matter.

It seemed like a simple enough idea, but I did not reckon on the complexities of the politics and performativity of maps, which was in retrospect touchingly naive of me (I had not yet grasped the significance of the imposition of fractality upon the Balkans). The first difficulty was getting hold of any kind of graphic image of village territories that outlined the area in sufficient detail to enable me to walk through it and mark what was there. This difficulty had two sources: first, organizations that possessed such “blueprints” (outlines of the boundaries of land plots, whether fields or built upon) were extremely disinclined to allow me to have copies of them, even when village presidents had given me permission to have copies of the ones detailing the village they represented; and second, it turned out that a considerable number of the villages I was studying had never had any such blueprints made.

This second point was one of those things that surprised me and had led people to respond, “What do you expect, Sarah? . . .” It meant that a good number of people did not have title deeds to their properties: title deeds must contain a textual description of the property *and* a drawing of it, giving detailed dimensions and describing adjoining properties. In Epirus, such blueprints for individual properties are most often taken from available blueprints of entire village territories; this is cheaper than commissioning a survey for yourself and usually prevents arguments with neighbors about boundaries, as the village territory blueprint represents the “official” boundaries. Village territory blueprints were gradually drawn up following the end of Ottoman rule in 1913, after which residents of some communes were granted ownership of areas that they had been using under the aegis of an Ottoman landlord or administrator. For one reason or another, though—including changes in Greek government policies on granting land ownership, the intervention of wars, exchange of populations, and the later process of mass emigration from the area—the practical business of having village territory blueprints drawn up had been far from completed by 1994. This revelation would later contribute considerably to my understanding of the ambiguous and diverse ways in which many people in Epirus related to the concept of land ownership, as I discuss in chapter 6; here, I simply want to note that maps and mapping continue to be an incomplete and tense political business in the region.

Having finally secured two village territory blueprints, one of which had been drawn up in 1933 and the other in 1965,⁴¹ and permission from the village president to carry out the survey (as well as having informed

as many people in the village as I could), I began the process of hiking methodically around the two territories, in the company of Geoff King, who had come to visit for the purpose. This took two solid weeks, during which time we repeatedly got lost; through this, and through hikes around the landscape at other times on my own or in the company of people from the area, I gained considerable experience of how people had come and gone around these places in the past and more recently, how to distinguish between paths people had used and those made by goats (which usually led to nowhere in particular, except a nibbled bush), how to deal with sheepdogs, and exactly what people had meant when they said that the prickly overgrowth of oak scrub in disused fields was impenetrable.

In these wanderings, I would occasionally come across others—villagers grazing their animals or tending to some remaining fields; illegal immigrants from Albania traveling cross-country to avoid the police and army; transhumant pastoralists on their way to somewhere else; a woman collecting hay for her animals; somebody visiting a chapel, and so on. Often, the sight of me—with my blueprint and accompanying topographical maps—covered in insect bites and scratches from attempts to get through thicket, caused considerable curiosity. One reaction, from a man who was working in his field, and whom I had met several times before in the village, gives a flavor of the kinds of comments I received:

“What are you doing over there?” (No greeting, which was rare under other circumstances.)

“Good morning. I’m trying to mark down what all these fields are used for, and what they used to be used for. Are these your fields?”

“What are you doing that for?”

“Well, I’m doing a study about people’s understanding and use of the landscape around here. How it used to be, and how it is today. Kind of an environmental study, in a way.”

“You know there are a lot of Albanians around, don’t you?”

“Yes, I know. I saw some earlier, as a matter of fact.”

“It’s not safe. They’ll kill you for ten drachma.”

“It’s okay, I’m with a friend. He’s over there in the oak scrub; he’ll be here in a minute.”

“Oh, you have a man with you? Still, it’s not safe.” The man paused, watching as Geoff emerged from the bushes, and then said:

“Maps and wandering around the landscape. Some people might say you were spies, you know. Are you spies?” He grinned broadly. I grinned back.

“I only wish I were. I’d get a lot better pay than I’m getting. I’m just a researcher from a university.” The man laughed, and then looked at Geoff.

“Doesn’t he talk, your friend?”

“Oh yes, but not in Greek.”

This required no further explanation, and the man went back to his work, ending the conversation.

“Bye, then,” I said. He half-raised a hand without looking up and muttered,

“People will say you’re spies, you know.”

Similar conversations were repeated on several occasions, even with people I encountered whom I knew quite well from the villages. Putting things on a map anywhere near the Greek-Albanian border was automatically a suspicious thing to be doing, and it had to have political motivations and connotations, even when what I was mapping were overgrown fields.⁴² One of the other common suspicions was that I was in search of British gold sovereigns. These had apparently been distributed in the area during the Greek civil war (1946–49), in an attempt to support the anticommunist forces there. In fact, there is still a market for these gold coins on the Greek stock exchange. As I came from a British university, quite a number of people assumed I had inside information about where some of them might still be hidden, information that I would obviously not wish to share with anyone else. The past and present involvement of various “Great Powers” in this area was never far from many people’s minds. In any case, it was quite fortunate that I carried out this kind of intense mapping activity on only two village territories—indeed, in two villages where I was known quite well; otherwise, my reputation in the area might not have survived such naive initial attempts to clarify ambiguity.

Overall, being part of a wider multidisciplinary research program often gave me a peculiar kind of ethnographic experience. For one thing, the research stretched across a number of years, a luxury that is all too rare in ethnographic research today, and that made it possible for me to spend a good deal of time in a range of different places, doing different things and focusing on the same issues in depth from a range of angles. It also continually stretched my intellectual boundaries, challenging me at every turn to justify an anthropological approach.

Most important, the range of techniques and technologies to which I had access allowed me to explore how things are different but also the same across a range of scales for the people associated with Pogoni as well as a number of other places around Epirus. Satellite images, information about tectonic activity in the region, reams of statistics about population, animal numbers, crop production, land use, historical accounts, studies on cultural heritage, information about environmental sustainability, information about borders and boundaries, visas and pass-

ports—all were treated by many people as different kinds of accounts, some more powerful and some less so, of how things seem and how things are. Each account was generally seen as the combined outcome of somebody's rules (specialization backed up by authority) and negotiation (differing particularistic interests, one of which eventually gains the upper hand, for a time; but there will always be a next time). Crudely and in general terms, people understood this diversity of accounts of "the truth," as well as attempts to combine them, as parts of contests or disagreements, motivated by partial interests stretching across a range of scales (political, economic, disciplinary, social), much as they experienced the depiction of their place and themselves (the multiple maps and names, the ongoing involvement of Great Powers). None of these accounts stood for themselves and alone; they were always assumed to exceed what they asserted they were (i.e., all data or maps were assertions, partial representations, part of an argument, and that is what made them *look* clear). As many people kept telling me in many different ways, things continually change, but they stay the same: you can divide and subdivide, redraw the shape of the place and rename it as much as you like; it will remain the same, because there will always be other divisions and subdivisions. That gets me finally to one of the more recent versions of this reshaping in Epirus, a range of EU-funded development programs aimed at kick-starting the flagging Epirot economy, while at the same time celebrating the region's cultural heritage and conserving its natural heritage. Epirus is not a part of Greece that is noted for its classical ruins, and its northern part, where I spent most of my time, is not a beach area. Instead, there are deep forests, breathtakingly high snowcapped mountains, and a lot of wildlife; and as it is an "out-of-the-way place" (to use Anna Tsing's phrase) in the European Union's terms, it is assumed to contain many "traditional" peoples and "traditional" settlements. The area is now peppered with blue signs featuring a ring of yellow stars (the insignia of the European Union), itemizing that this or that program or project has been funded for the place where the sign is posted, and that it has a budget of X amount (figs. 2 and 12). To many people in Epirus, this is another version of the attempt to change the shape and the names of places and people here, and once again it involves transnational relations, as well as transnational accounts and representations of how things are and how things seem. The difference this time is a shift in emphasis of what was to be standardized or homogenized: whereas in the past, it might have been nations and their nationals, now it seemed there was a particular standard for evaluating the aesthetics of the diversity of culture and nature, a standard that made it possible to "package" each people and place into something distinct and unique, which could nevertheless be classified and would be of interest to tourists to visit.



Figure 2. Gamilla/Timfi mountain with European Union development funding sign

This is something that Richard Wilk calls hegemonic “structures of common difference” (Wilk 1995: 118); Herzfeld calls it the “global hierarchy of value,” commenting that “even ‘diversity’ can become a homogeneous product. So, too, can tradition and heritage: the particular is itself universalized” (Herzfeld 2004: 2). All the “packages” of culture would have to take the same standard form: for people, there would be costume,

food, music, myths and legends, language or argot, festivals and traditions, and so on; for the places with which the people were now indigenously associated, there would be the traditional settlements as well as the untouched natural beauty of the flora and fauna, and, in the Epirot region, the awe-inspiring height of the mountains. What is absent in these celebrations of culture and nature is, of course, any hint of conflict or political tension, as Wilk also notes for Belize (Wilk 1995: 128). This reshaping of the “where” presented a different version of things appearing and other things disappearing. The key element that remained the same as in other reshapings was that for “packaging” to be done in this way, there had to be clarity of boundaries and belonging, and a certain kind of specialness and distinctiveness for both place and people, a distinctiveness that was about culture, nature, and heritage, and not about Balkan ambiguities. Once again, the Pogoni region found itself unable to package itself appropriately. And that gets me back to the issue of the ambiguity and ordinariness of marginality with which I started, and with which I will continue.