

International — Conference



12 - 14 February 2026

THE SHADOW OF THE AEGEAN

MEMORY, IDENTITY AND TRAUMA:
AFTERMATH OF THE POPULATION EXCHANGE (1923)
BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY

organised as cooperation of the GCSC, GiZo, and Südosteuropa Gesellschaft



Giessener
Zentrum
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Europa



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GGK/GCSC
Conference Room (Ground Floor)
Otto-Behaghel-Straße 12
35394 Gießen

THE SHADOW OF THE AEGEAN

Memory, Identity, and Trauma:

Aftermath of the Population Exchange (1923) between Greece and Turkey

12–14 February 2026

Gießen, Germany

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY 1 — FEBRUARY 12

15:00–16:00

OPENING SESSION

OPENING SPEECH & WELCOME

16:00–17:30

KEYNOTE LECTURE

THE MAKING OF YOUNG TURK RADICALISM (1906–1926)

ERIK JAN ZÜRCHER

By tracing the life stories of a group of half a dozen early members of the Committee of Union and Progress who became key members of the Kemalist regime, this lecture attempts to show how their experiences in the Balkans and Aegean before 1913 turned them into radical architects of the monolithic nation-state, for whom mass deportation (such as the population exchange) was not a problem, but a solution.



Erik-Jan Zürcher (b. 1953) is professor emeritus of Turkish Studies at Leiden University, where he has held the chair since 1997. He earned his MA (1977) and PhD (1984) in Middle East Studies at Leiden and previously taught at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. From 1989 to 1999, he directed the Turkish department at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, later serving as its general director (2008–2012). Zürcher specializes in the political and social history of the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic, particularly the Young Turk movement and Turkey's transition from empire to nation-state. His widely-used textbook *Turkey: A Modern History* has been translated into nine languages.

18:00–19:00

SPECIAL SESSION

THE TALE OF TWO REFUGEES

Remziye Koşar Yiğit & Christina Dongas

Remziye Koşar Yiğit (the founder of Grandchildren of the Population Exchange Initiative) and Christina Dongas will speak about their first-hand refugee memory experiences, which brought them together nearly 100 years after the Population Exchange, as their ancestors came from the same same village.

19:00–21:00

DINNER GATHERING



DAY 2 — FEBRUARY 13

09:00-09:30

OPENING & COFFEE SERVICE

09:30-11:00

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY (Chair: Nicole Immig)

• **Doruk Işıkçı**

Narratives of Lausanne and 1922–1923 Forced Migration: A Case-study on Exchangee Associations in Turkey

• **Duygu Yayla Eldem & A. Emre Eldem**

The Founder as Kin: Atatürk, Memory, and Belonging in Exchangee Narratives

• **Ellinor Morack**

Lost Memories: Settlement and Compensation in Accounts of First and Second Generation Mübadil Accounts from Turkey

• **Emilia Salvanou**

Negotiating the Refugee Past: Memory Practices and National Imagination in Greece

• **Salih Yasun**

Remembering to forget? The Collective Memory of Vallahades in Grevena and Turkey

11:00-11:30

COFFEE BREAK

The Lausanne Project (11:30-11:45): Professor Jonathan Conlin, co-founder of The Lausanne Project, will introduce the initiative's wide-ranging activities, which explore the legacy of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and its impact on identity and migration in Greece, Turkey, and beyond. Since 2017, TLP has organized conferences, workshops for academics and high school teachers, published teaching resources, and produced a podcast with over 70 episodes. Professor Conlin will open a space for collaborative dialogue and future partnerships around this shared historical legacy from an interdisciplinary perspective.

11:45-13:00

PANEL 2: GENDERED NARRATIVES & WOMEN'S POSTMEMORY (Chair: Ellinor Morack)

• **Yasin Özdemir**

A Woman's Silence, A Nation's Trauma: Female Exchanged Voices after 1923

• **Elif Vurucular Kesimci**

Gendered Spatial Memory in Population Exchange Settlements: the Case of Gölyazı Apolyont and Görükle Kouvouklia, Bursa

• **Maria A. Stassinopoulou**

Distinctions and Uses of Individual, Family, and Collective Memory in a Historical Research Context

• **Marika Liapi**

A Sewing Machine in Time: Constructing Immigration Memory through Textile Narratives and Tools

13:00-14:30

LUNCH BREAK – MENSA



14:30–16:00

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

(Chair: Jonathan Conlin)

• **Eleni Kyramargiou**

Between Memory and History: Negotiating the Encounter between the Third Generation of Refugees and the Historian

• **Ela Çil**

The Absent Neighbor: Ideology, Amnesia, and the Commodification of the Greek Presence in Turkey

• **Serhat Ulubay**

The Spatiality of Population Exchange in the Context of Spatial Triad Theory

• **Sinem Arslan**

The Displacement of Displacement: Remembering the Lost Homeland in the Shadow of Canal Istanbul

• **Leonidas Karakatsanis & Ülker Başak Yeşilkaya**

We cannot take them with us. These bones belong here! Constructing Memoryscapes of Belonging

16:00–16:30

COFFEE BREAK

16:30–18:00

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

(Chair: Ela Çil)

• **Tuncay Ercan Sepetcioglu**

Between Two Tongues: Memory, Language, and Belonging Among Turkish-Speaking Refugees in Northern Greece

• **Deniz Erinsel Önder**

Echoes from Crete: Cultural Transmission, Post-Memory, and Everyday Life from Refugee Families

• **Kenan Saatçioğlu**

Touched Memory: Trauma, Identity, and Cultural Transmission through Clothing after the 1923 Population Exchange

• **Melis Cankara**

A Century Later: Exploring Fluid Identities and Shared Heritage Through the Spatial Legacy of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange

• **Kemal Deniz Karabacak**

Our Çatalca, Their Selanik: Negotiating a Dual Homeland Among the Mübadils in Çatalca

18:00–19:30

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING: SEARCHING FOR RODAKIS (2023)

Director: Kerem Soyyilmaz

Theme:

As a Greek tombstone of unknown origin is discovered underneath the floorboards in an old village house in Turkey, an almost forgotten story from the country's creation unravels: the forced population exchange in 1923.

20:00–22:00

DINNER GATHERING – SOCIAL EVENT



DAY 3 — FEBRUARY 14

09:00–09:30

OPENING & COFFEE SERVICE

09:30–11:00

PANEL 5: SPACES, MONUMENTS & MATERIAL MEMORY

(Chair: *Malte Fuhrmann*)

• **Nurşen Kul**

Silent Loci of Memory: The Religious Ruins of Ildır

• **Aytek Soner Alpan**

Rebuilding Refugee Memory in the Neoliberal Age: AEK's Agia Sophia Stadium and the Spatial Politics of Memory

• **Alexandra Mourgou**

Urban Echoes of Loss: Refugee Identity, and Counter-Memory in Post-1923 Piraeus

• **Vasiliki Sarakatsianou**

Beyond Representation: The Silent Impact of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in Greek Visual Art in the 1920s–1930s

11:00–11:30

COFFEE BREAK

Memory İzmir Project (11:30–11:45) by Malte Fuhrmann: Justus Liebig University (JLU) Giessen and the İzmir Development Agency have partnered on an ambitious project extending until June 2027, designed to explore multiple perspectives on İzmir's history from the eighteenth through the twentieth century. This collaboration plans to bring together internationally recognized scholars for a comprehensive video lecture series examining the city's transformation from an Ottoman commercial hub to a modern Turkish metropolis. Under the academic management of Professor Nicole Immig, Dr. Malte Fuhrmann, and PhD candidate Şahin Yıldız, the project aims to produce not only professionally documented lectures but also a prestigious peer-reviewed publication and an International Symposium in Izmir in 2027. This initiative represents a model for transnational academic cooperation, combining rigorous scholarship with innovative public engagement.

11:45–13:00

PANEL 6: SACRED & SYMBOLIC CULTURE

(Chair: *Maria Stassinopoulou*)

• **Paraskevi Pari Argyrakaki**

The Relocation Journey: Exploring Hidden Spatialities and the Sense of Home through Mnemoactive Objects of Asia Minor Refugees

• **Kyriaki Tsesmeloglou**

The Exhibition “Icons: Refugees’ Heirlooms” Project

• **Chrysoula Anagnostopoulou**

Twice Foreigners: Aspects of the Greek–Turkish Population Exchange in the Museums of the Two Countries

• **Katerina Seradari**

How Post-Migrant Identity Shapes Pilgrimage, Relics Veneration, and Religious Objects’ Trajectories

13:00–14:30

LUNCH BREAK – MENSA



14:30–16:00

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

(Chair: *Elpida Vogli*)

• **Maria Nikolopoulou**

The Cultural Politics of the Memory of Asia Minor in Greek Prose Fiction, 1922–2022

• **Vassilios Bogiatzis**

My Father, Batis, Came from Smyrna in '22 and Lived for Fifty Years in a Hidden Basement

• **Michelle Hara Wittmann**

Literary Walks Through a Lost Homeland: Sokratis Prokopiou's Lyrical Memories of Smyrna

• **Konstantina Tsoleridou**

Narrating the Fractured Self: Mnemonic Multiperspectivity and the Negotiation of Belonging in Louis de Bernières' Birds Without Wings

• **Mélisande Leventopoulos**

A Performing Audience in Greek Macedonia: The Craze for Turkish Films among Refugees

16:00–16:30

COFFEE BREAK

16:30–18:00

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

(Chair: *Leonidas Karakatsanis*)

• **Youssef Elsafoury**

Inhabiting Memory through Film and AI: In a Greek as FL Classroom

• **Ayşe Lahur Kirtunç & Anthi Karra**

Forgetting to Remember: Reconstructing the Traumatic Past in Post-1922 Greek and Turkish Literary and Cinematic Works

• **Elpida K. Vogli**

The Postmemory of Trauma: The 1923 Refugees in 21st-Century Greek Film and TV Series

• **Ioannis Tsekouras**

The Shadow of the Black Sea: Collective Memory, Cultural Survival, and Place Mediation in Pontic "Momoyeria"

• **Anthi G. Chotzakoglou**

Shadow Theatre as an Axis of Cultural Identity: A Parallel Examination of Karagöz and Karagiozis Performances



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY

Narrative(s) of Lausanne and 1922–1923 Forced Migration: A Case-study on Exchangee Associations in Turkey

Doruk Işıkçı

ABSTRACT

Although the Treaty of Lausanne and the forced migration of 1922-1923 occurred over a century ago, their consequences continue to influence discussions in both the Greek and Turkish public spheres. While these phenomena have been addressed across various academic fields, associations of migration descendants are rarely targeted, despite being among the most significant actors in this debate, as sources and institutionalisation instruments of the established narrative(s).

This paper examines how narrative(s) evolves about Lausanne and the Forced Migration in the population exchange associations in Turkey by putting them in conversation with the narrative(s) of the refugee associations in Greece. Based on the fieldwork conducted in 2017-2018 in Turkey, this paper contends how the narrative(s) of the exchangee associations confines the Forced Migration experience solely through a relatively sterilised field, the Treaty of Lausanne, by claiming mutuality, shared pain, and objectivity through international law in contrast to the narrative(s) of a humanitarian disaster and atrocities in Greece.

This study shows that while the reciprocity in the narrative(s) aims to improve relations between the two countries by having a positive approach towards refugees and Greece, it ignores almost all the significant events in the refugee discourse that may contradict the Turkish national narrative(s). This research further argues that the existing narrative(s) based on the Treaty of Lausanne also serve as an important source for sociopolitical positioning and legitimacy in the domestic political debates in Turkey, with a reference to the founding ideals of the country, rather than just a nostalgic discourse.

BIOGRAPHY

Doruk Işıkçı graduated from the Faculty of Political Science in the Department of International Relations at Ankara University in 2013. After conducting one year of fieldwork in Turkey and Greece (University of Macedonia), he concluded his master's degree at the TOBB University of Economics and Technology with a thesis titled "A Comparative Analysis of the Construction of National Narratives by the Refugee and Exchangee Associations in Greece and Turkey in 2018". I am currently a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate studying nationalism and civil society as a scholarship student from the Ministry of the National Education of Turkey in the Department of Sociology at Cape Town University.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY

The Founder as Kin: Atatürk, Memory, and Belonging in Exchangee Narratives

Duygu Yayla Eldem & A. Emre Eldem

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the transformation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk into a localized and affective memory figure within the collective consciousness of the exchangee communities. Drawing on oral histories and field research conducted in regions with dense exchangee populations such as İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Tekirdağ, Samsun, and Amasya, the study examines how Atatürk's image has transcended its state-sanctioned monumental status to become woven into familial and regional narratives of displacement, belonging, and pride.

For many exchangee families, Atatürk is not perceived merely as the founder of the Republic, but as one of their own, a figure whose birthplace in Thessaloniki and maternal roots in the transferred territories render him both a "national saviour" and a "hemşehri," a compatriot. This dual identity allows Atatürk to occupy an intimate symbolic position in exchangee memory: simultaneously a mythic hero and a neighbour, a distant leader and a remembered presence.

Narratives collected during fieldwork reveal that nearly every family recalls a story connecting an ancestor to Atatürk whether through direct encounters, labour contributions to the early Republic, or imagined proximity. These micro-memories collectively reconfigure him into a bridge between the trauma of loss and the pride of national rebirth. The paper argues that this affective reterritorialization of Atatürk constitutes a form of vernacular memory politics a process through which displaced communities internalize the nation-building mythos by localizing it in their own histories. In doing so, they convert exile into belonging and distance into intimacy. Atatürk's image thus becomes a mnemonic vessel through which the exchangee experience of rupture is reconciled with the narrative of modern Turkish continuity. By situating these narratives within the broader framework of memory studies, the paper highlights how collective remembrance operates not only as a means of preserving trauma but also as a creative act of identity reconstruction.

BIOGRAPHY

Duygu Yayla Eldem was born in 1992 in Bursa. She graduated from Gazi University, Department of International Relations, in 2015. In the same year, he started his graduate studies at Marmara University, Department of European Politics and International Relations, and completed his Master's degree in 2019. She then began his PhD studies in Department of European Politics and International Relations at Marmara University. Currently, she is working on his PhD thesis on emotions in international relations and Turkish-Greek relations. Her main areas of interest include Turkey-EU relations and emotions in international relations.

A. Emre Eldem was born in 1991 in Izmir. He graduated from Yıldız Technical University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, in 2014. In the same year, he started his graduate studies at Marmara University, Department of International Relations, and completed his Master's degree in 2017. He earned his PhD in Political Science from Galatasaray University in 2024, with a thesis focusing on the associations of the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange. His main areas of interest include ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey and the political history of the late Ottoman and Early Republican Period.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY

Lost Memories: Settlement and Compensation in Accounts of First and Second Generation Mübadil Accounts from Turkey

Ellinor Morack

ABSTRACT

According to the 1923 Population Exchange Convention, „exchangees“ were entitled to equal-value compensation for the immovable property they had been forced to leave behind in their respective home countries. However, both Greece and Turkey failed to live up to the expectations of incoming exchangees (Yıldırım 2006). Accounts written by first-generation exchangees, as well as petitions written in their name in the 1920s in Turkey, generally express profound disappointment with settlement and compensation policies (Morack 2017).

While exchangee pauperization and alienation in Greece led to the formation of a distinct refugee identity (Pentzopoulos 1962, Hirschon 1989, 2003) a similar collective identity of exchangees in Turkey did not persist. Existing accounts of the population exchange in Turkey have generally explained this difference in identity formation as a result of the numbers involved: in relation to the existing population, much fewer exchangees arrived in Turkey than in Greece, and it has often been assumed (but not proven) that compensation, too, was easier for this reason. While this is debatable, it is true that disappointment with compensation policies is hardly ever mentioned in oral history accounts collected among exchangees who had arrived as children and were interviewed in the 1990s. Instead, exchangees mention time and again that „Atatürk“ brought them to Turkey and gave them land and houses. It seems that collective violence, hardship, dashed hopes and disappointment were forgotten over time.

In this paper, I shall compare accounts written in Turkish by first generation (petitions, Ö.D. Tesal), and second generation exchangees (R. Tesal, the oral history interviews published by Özsoy) respectively, tracing how differently they discuss compensation policies for exchangees in Turkey. Working with Aleida and Jan Assmann’s concepts of generational memory vs. public memory (Assmann and Assmann 1996, A. Assmann 2006), I will argue that the lack of memory of dashed hopes and disappointment in later accounts is not a result of successful compensation policies, but rather one of the Kemalist state’s suppression of refugee self-organization from the mid-1920s onward. Moreover, the ideology of Kemalism, which by the 1960s was hegemonic, left no room for remembering stories contradicting the narrative of Kemalist success – a narrative that has already been described in Herkül Millas’ study of mübadele novels (Millas 2003).

BIOGRAPHY

Ellinor Morack is a research and teaching associate (Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin) at Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany. She studied history, philosophy and Turcology at FU Berlin and Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, obtaining her PhD from Freie Universität Berlin in 2013. In her first book, *The Dowry of the State* (Bamberg University 2017), she studied the distribution of “abandoned” property in post-1922 Turkey as a site of nation-building. In her Habilitationsschrift (submitted in June 2025) she studied the contingency of collective memory of the “national forces” guerrillas in modern Turkey. She is interested in memory studies, the history of migration, law, labor relations and capitalism, nationalism and violence in Ottoman and post-Ottoman contexts – and especially in work that considers several of these issues together. Her work has been published in various international journals. She was the principal investigator of the DFG network project “Post-Ottoman Transformations” (1922–1925).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY

Negotiating the Refugee Past: Memory Practices and National Imagination in Greece

Emilia Salvanou

ABSTRACT

The proposed paper examines the intergenerational and institutional trajectories of memory and forgetting in Greece following the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange. Moving beyond approaches that treat cultural memory as mere representation, it explores how memories of displacement are organized, regulated, and reconfigured within specific regimes of memory through narratives and memory practices.

Drawing on oral histories, family narratives, cultural practices, and public commemorations, the paper traces the shifting frameworks through which the refugee past has been articulated—from intimate narratives of loss and silence to nationalized and politicized forms of remembrance. These institutionalized memories operate not only to integrate displaced populations into the national imaginary, but, especially after the 1990s, to reshape the tone of national self-representation. Such processes crystallize in cultural production—literature, museums, film, and public rituals—as well as in the politics of contestation, revealing the interplay between memory politics and aesthetic practice.

Forgetting is treated as an active mechanism that manages trauma, shapes collective temporality, and regulates social recognition. As familial memories are absorbed into institutional forms, they acquire authority while losing affective immediacy. This paper critically interrogates the limits of these memory regimes, showing how codified remembrance can simultaneously assert belonging and obscure ethical responsibility, exposing the tension between identity formation and the instrumentalization of history.

By situating the Population Exchange within broader debates on post-memory, public history, and the politics of remembrance, the analysis demonstrates how contemporary commemorations in Greece illuminate the complex dynamics of remembering, forgetting, and the political use of displacement.

BIOGRAPHY

Emilia Salvanou is a historian whose work explores the intersections of population movements, memory, and cultural history. She is currently affiliated with the Open University of Greece. Her research examines how memory and history are transformed into cultural practices, shaping collective identities and ethical imaginaries in the 20th and 21st century. She is the author of *The Shaping of Refugee Memory* (Athens, 2018), translated into Turkish and English, *How we learn history without being taught about it* (Athens 2021) and *Illness and Care in the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Refugees* (Athens, 2022).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: POLITICS, STATE NARRATIVES & IDENTITY

Remembering to Forget? The Collective Memory of Vallahades in Grevena and Turkey

Salih Yasun

ABSTRACT

The Vallahades (GR: Βαλαάδες, TR: Patriyotlar) were a Greek-speaking Muslim community from northern Greece, particularly around Grevena and Neapoli in Western Macedonia. Numbering around 17,000 people at the time, they were included in the Lausanne population exchange. Drawing on interviews with local historians and intellectuals, two field visits (2021 and 2025), and readings of primary texts by Greek and Turkish authors, this study examines how the Vallahades are remembered in Grevena and among their descendants in Turkey.

The findings reveal that the Vallahades occupy a liminal position in the Greek imagination, neither fully Turkish nor Greek, while in Turkey, they have largely assimilated into mainstream society. In Grevena, public memory emphasizes their conversion to Islam, often attributing it superficially to Ali Pasha of Ioannina, land ownership, and broader narratives of oppression under Muslim rule. This puts Vallahades in an ambivalent imagination, with a mixture of amusement and cautionary tale, as if distant cousins who went astray. The amusement and caution arise from the tension between their familiarity in local memory and the alienation when interpreted through the prism of Greek nationalism. In Turkey, by contrast, the community has embraced a Turkish identity, and there is little public discussion of conversion. Instead, collective memory emphasizes the community's retention of the Greek language and distinctive cuisine as symbols of cultural heritage. I trace these contrasting narratives on memory, identity, and religion to understand the construction of nationalisms in Turkey and Greece. My findings highlight how local memory, shaped by broader communal and nationalist narratives, selectively chooses what to remember and what to forget.

BIOGRAPHY

Salih Yasun is an Assistant Professor of International Studies and Political Science at the Virginia Military Institute. His research examines the historical and institutional foundations of governance and religion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with a particular focus on the enduring legacies of institutions and state-building. His work has been published in journals such as Democratization, Party Politics, and Middle East Law and Governance, among others. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and an M.Sc. in Applied Statistics from Indiana University Bloomington. Fluent in Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and a student of Modern Greek, Yasun combines archival research with quantitative analysis to investigate how historical institutions shape contemporary political and developmental outcomes.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 2: GENDERED NARRATIVES & WOMEN'S POSTMEMORY

A Woman's Silence, A Nation's Trauma: Female Exchanged Voices after 1923

Yasin Özdemir

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange through a gendered perspective, focusing on silence as both a survival strategy and a form of trauma transmission. The case of Saliha Özbalçisoğlu, a Turkocretan woman from Chania who resettled in İzmir, illustrates how women negotiated displacement by bearing the dual burdens of family survival and unspoken memory. Whereas existing historiography emphasizes political and economic dimensions, women's voices often mediated through silence reveal the intimate costs of exile.

The study draws on Maurice Halbwachs's concept of collective memory, trauma studies (Caruth, Hirsch), and feminist historiography, which highlights how silence functions as both repression and testimony in migration contexts. Using unpublished letters written by Saliha Hanım in Greek (Cretan dialect) with Arabic script, the paper analyses how she navigated cultural loss, maternal separation, and linguistic dislocation. Her correspondence discloses the affective dimensions of exile: longing for her children, fear of isolation, and efforts to maintain familial bonds despite structural exclusion in the early Turkish Republic. The central argument is that silence itself must be understood as a gendered response to trauma. For women like Saliha Hanım, silence was not mere passivity but a strategy of adaptation in hostile social environments where difference was stigmatized. Her hybrid letters Greek language, Arabic script, scattered Turkish words constitute "sites of memory" where silence, resilience, and trauma coexisted. By bringing such epistolary voices to light, the paper recovers a neglected dimension of the Exchange and argues for a rethinking of displacement narratives through the lens of gendered silence.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Yasin Özdemir completed his BA in History at Ege University in 2014 and received his MA from Dokuz Eylül University with a thesis titled *Modern Öncesi Dönem Osmanlı'da Pederasti, 1451–1839*. In the same year, he began his doctoral studies at Ege University, where he earned his PhD in 2025 with the dissertation *19. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında İzmir'de Nüfus, Göç ve Sosyoekonomik Etkileri*. Since 2013, his work has been published in various venues. He has authored several articles and book chapters on Ottoman socio-economic history, migration, law, and gender.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 2: GENDERED NARRATIVES & WOMEN'S POSTMEMORY

Gendered Spatial Memory in Population Exchange Settlements: the Case of Gölyazı (Apolyont) and Görükle (Kouvouklia), Bursa

Elif Vurucular Kesimci

ABSTRACT

Following the signing of the “Convention and Protocol Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations” on January 30, 1923, during the Lausanne Peace Conference, a compulsory population exchange based on religion was conducted between Turkey and Greece. In this process, Orthodox Greeks dwelling in Anatolia migrated to Greece, while Muslim Turks from Greece were resettled in Anatolia. The exchange constituted a “flashbulb memory event” for the displaced communities, radically altering their social and spatial lives. As a flashbulb memory, the population exchange has been transmitted to subsequent generations through stories and narratives of the first-generation exchangees, transforming into “post-memory.” In this transmission, spatial memory serves as a crucial means through which exchangees recreate their sense of belonging and identity in new environments.

This study aims to examine the role of spatial memory in the intergenerational transmission of exchangees identity through the lens of gender. The research was conducted in two population exchange settlements in Bursa, Turkey, which are Gölyazı (formerly Apolyont) and Görükle (formerly Kouvouklia). Apolyont was a mixed settlement where Greeks and Ottoman Turks coexisted before the population exchange, while Görükle was an entirely Greek village later inhabited solely by Muslim exchangees. The field study involved “memory interviews” with second- and third-generation descendants of exchangees. These interviews focused on eight collective practices; which are weddings, religious festivities, national celebrations, Hıdrellez, seasonal preparations, military send-offs, the announcements of bad news, and funerals; to identify the public places where exchangees identity was performed and transmitted across generations. The findings reveal that men and women participated in these collective practices through distinct rituals, used different places, and remembered and narrated place in gender-specific ways. Thus, the study interrogates the influence of gender on spatial memory within the context of flashbulb events such as forced migration. Results show that in Görükle, the exchangees continued to use and reinterpret former Greek public places in line with their own cultural identity; despite gendered spatial differences, these places have been preserved through ongoing collective practices. Contrarily, in Gölyazı, Greek public places were abandoned and eventually collapsed. New spatial structures emerged through the common but male-dominated practices of Ottoman locals and exchangees. In both settlements, the spatial frameworks established by the first-generation migrants for collective practices have persisted to the present day. The study highlights the determining role of spatial memory and gender in the reproduction and intergenerational transmission of cultural identity following forced displacement.

BIOGRAPHY

Elif Vurucular Kesimci graduated from the Department of Architecture at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in 2010 and began her professional career in an architectural office in Bursa. She completed her master's and PhD studies at the Department of Building Research and Planning at Yıldız Technical University. Her master's thesis focused on the analysis of public space through Space Syntax, and her doctoral research focused on public spaces, cultural heritage, and intergenerational spatial memory in the context of population exchange settlements. She began working as a full-time lecturer in the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Bursa Technical University in 2015, and has been working as an Assistant Professor Doctor since 2024.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 2: GENDERED NARRATIVES & WOMEN'S POSTMEMORY

Distinctions and Uses of Individual, Family, and Collective Memory in a Historical Research Context

Maria A. Stassinopoulou

ABSTRACT

In my paper I will discuss a research project of collective biography. In my work I have been motivated by the desire to reconstruct biographies of educated and professional refugee women as a whole and not only as two strictly separate parts before and after the trauma of forced migration — as one is forced to, when observing the historical caesurae conventionally applied in diverse fields such as Ottoman History, History of the Exchange of Populations, Modern Greek History etc. My case study is based on 42 bilingual women who graduated from the short lived (1911–1916) Kindergarten Training College of Flaviana — at the time quite modern in its conception; it was housed in the wider school building complex of the Greek-Orthodox Metropolis of Caesarea in Zincidere. The graduates worked as kindergarten teachers both in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and later in Greece. There is no shortage of original materials from correspondence to official documents to oral history interviews to contemporary bits of family memory objects currently appearing on the internet.

As a historian trained to observe the distinction between diverse memorial processes on the one hand and sanctioned sources and narratives deemed appropriate to historical writing on the other, I am confronted in this project with the additional complexity of having members of my family in the group of 42 graduates: my grandmother (whom I knew well in the first 23 years of my life) and my great aunt (whom I never met). In this project I am then not only a historian, but also a witness in an evolving family memory of the experience of the exchange of populations. I propose to discuss in my paper both theoretical propositions on how historians deal with their relationship to the past and practical decision making of a historian narrating a past which includes their individual and family memory.

BIOGRAPHY

Maria A. Stassinopoulou, born 1961 in Athens, Greece, holds the Chair of Modern Greek Studies at the University of Vienna. She studied Classics, Linguistics and History at the University of Athens (BA 1984) as well as Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and South-east European History at the University of Vienna (Dr. phil. 1990). In 2001 she acquired her habilitation at the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies of the University of Vienna. She has taught mostly at the University of Vienna, but also at other European universities and at Brown University, RI, USA. She publishes on the early modern and modern history of ideas and historiography, migration history and the history of cinema. With Georgios Chr. Tsigaras she recently edited Historiographical Approaches in Southeastern Europe (Komotini 2024, 655 pp., volume in Greek and English).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 2: GENDERED NARRATIVES & WOMEN'S POSTMEMORY

A Sewing Machine in Time: Constructing Immigration Memory through Textile Narratives and Tools

Markia Liapi

ABSTRACT

The following paper discusses the concept of the sewing machine, as a tool of labor, creation, storytelling and serving, as it appears in the digital archive of oral history Istorima in Greece. The archive offers an outstanding number of oral histories from the period of the Population Exchange (1923) and beyond that, focusing on the stories delivered mainly by the descendants of the Greek Christian populations transferred to the Greek Lands. The paper focuses on how the sewing machine became a valuable item for the refugees, women in the majority, transporting a family heritage item that served, at times, as the only surviving object from the previous life. Sewing machines were selected mainly by working to middle-class people, crafters, or amateurs, having the intention of using them to survive financially. Today, these machines serve as museum objects for the survivors, transforming their usage. Having in mind the archival storytelling but also the content of the cloths and pieces of art that these machines produced, the paper supports the idea of an object-based narrative, where the sewing machine serves as a guide to “weave” the stories told by their possessors and to inform us about their surviving status before and after the Exchange. Comparing the oral histories with the work of the textile artist Giwta Andriakaina and her work Crafted Narratives (2016) which tries to depict the story of the refugees and wandering craftsmen in Thessaloniki, the paper uses oral history, archive-concept methodology, but also art history tools, like textile aesthetics, to support a different way of seeing micro and macro historical narratives.

BIOGRAPHY

Markia Liapi is a philologist and art historian. She has studied Modern Greek Literature, Comparative Literature and Art History (MSc in Comparative Literature, MSc in History of Art, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) and since December 2021 she is a PhD candidate at the Department of Modern Greek Literature AUTH (“Representations of women’s time in contemporary female poetry: The Greek example”). She participated as Princeton research fellow in the 2024 Summer Institute of Ancient Greek Tragedy in Athens. She has participated in conferences on modern Greek literature, theatre studies and textile art. Her academic interests revolve around feminist criticism in literature, art history and the history of textiles. She worked as a philologist in secondary education and as an oral history researcher at Istorima. In 2024 she was awarded the New Professional Award by the Textile Society of America during the International Symposium “Shifts and Strands”.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

Between Memory and History: Negotiating the Encounter between the Third Generation of Refugees and the Historian

Eleni Kyramargiou

ABSTRACT

Drawing on the post-1923 refugee experience across the Aegean, this paper explores how collective memory is being reshaped by the descendants of those displaced communities. It focuses on the formation of a new refugee identity that has emerged in recent years through the mnemonic activism, persistence, and discourse of the third generation of descendants of the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange, and on the methodological and ethical challenges that this activation of memory poses for historical research and public history.

Since the mid-1980s, the revival of refugee associations and various initiatives of collective remembrance have gradually shaped a new web of identity, which during the past decade has been further strengthened and expanded through digital communities, local actions, and commemorative initiatives surrounding the centennial of 1923. The participation of the third generation in public history projects influences the process and framework of historical research itself. The intensity of their desire to engage actively in the production of refugee history creates a new field of encounter where living, mediated memory interacts with scholarly documentation, generating new questions about the relationship between history, memory, and identity. At the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, we implemented two related research projects — 100memories and 100objects — which included participatory workshops, interviews, and diverse public history activities. These initiatives, rooted in the Aegean's intertwined histories of displacement, serve as laboratories where memory, research, and digital mediation intersect. Within these projects, researchers encountered this newly articulated refugee identity and the persistent claim of descendants to take part in the production of new historical knowledge. The participatory memory that develops in such contexts often appears to direct or reshape research priorities, prompting historians to reflect on their role and boundaries.

Drawing on qualitative interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, this paper explores how third-generation narratives contribute to the formation of a new public history of refugee settlement in Greece—and how historians are called to navigate a field where emotional memory and historical judgment continuously interact. The contribution of this study lies in highlighting this complex and productive relationship, which invites us to reconsider how historical knowledge is produced in post-refugee environments.

BIOGRAPHY

Eleni Kyramargiou is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (Athens). She holds a PhD in Social Anthropology and History from the University of the Aegean (Greece). Her research focuses on twentieth-century Greek social and political history, with an emphasis on population movements, refugee resettlement, and the transformation of urban and social space. She has coordinated and participated in major research projects such as 100memories, 100objects, and 1c2rc, which combine historical research with public history and interdisciplinary approaches. Her research interests include the policies of refugee rehabilitation, state practices of social integration, and the local social dynamics that developed in Greece after 1922. She is the author of a monograph and numerous articles published in Greek and international academic journals.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

The Absent Neighbor: Ideology, Amnesia, and the Commodification of the Greek Presence in Turkey

Ela Çil

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the contradictory representations of the “Greek” (Rum) presence in post-exchange Turkish memory, focusing on how absence and commodification coexist within contemporary cultural discourse. In many narratives including some local museums across Turkey, the Greek Orthodox population once an integral part of the social and architectural fabric is either omitted or reduced to a marginal note, replaced by narratives of the 1919 Greek occupation and the subsequent “War of Liberation.” These discursive choices reproduce an ideological framework that equates the Greek with invasion and the Turkish with salvation, effectively erasing the shared histories that once defined these settlements.

At the same time, a strikingly different attitude emerges in the sphere of real-estate marketing and cultural tourism. The very same towns that celebrate “liberation” from Greek occupation now advertise restored houses as “Greek houses,” invoking Rum domesticity as a mark of authenticity, taste, and cultural value. The “Greek house” becomes a desirable commodity—a sanitized remnant of the other while the actual memory of coexistence remains unacknowledged or politically uncomfortable. By juxtaposing the museum’s ideological omissions with the market’s selective fetishization, the paper interrogates how Turkish collective memory negotiates the Greek presence as both threat and charm, absence and surplus. Rather than simply condemning this contradiction, the study reads it as symptomatic of a deeper cultural logic: a nation’s simultaneous need to repress and appropriate the traces of its erased others. Drawing on memory studies, post-Ottoman heritage debates, and visual-cultural analysis, the paper argues that the figure of the “Greek” operates as a shifting signifier—oscillating between ideology and consumption, denial and desire revealing how modern Turkish identity continues to be haunted by what it seeks to forget.

BIOGRAPHY

Ela Çil is a retired professor at the Department of Architecture at Izmir Institute of Technology. She received her B.Arch. (1992) and M.Arch. (1995) degrees from the Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul. She received her M.Sc. (2002) and Ph.D. (2005) degrees from the University of Michigan, specializing in History and Theory of Architecture.

Her research area focuses on the relationship between memories, identity discourses and their effect on sense of place and everyday life of spatial practices, incorporating class, gender, and ethnic differences. She combines various research tactics for a multi-dimensional portrayal of the issue in focus, such as oral history, ethnography, discourse analysis as well as the materiality of the space.

Currently, she is the senior researcher at the ERC-research project that is conducted by Dr. Kalliopi Amygdalou, and titled “HO-MEACROSS: Space, memory and the legacy of the 1923 Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey”.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

The Spatiality of Population Exchange in the Context of Spatial Triad Theory

Serhat Ulubay

ABSTRACT

Population exchange is not a simple act of resettlement agreed by states. It involves the efforts of communities with all their social and cultural practices to exist in new areas. Space plays a crucial role in this quest for existence. The first step in building a life and starting anew in the place where daily relationships have been disrupted begins with space. For immigrants entering a new life with population exchange, the separation between the space offered and the space lived entails alienation.

By examining the rupture created by this separation, the study aims to read the spatiality of population exchange not through the space on offer, but through the spaces created by the migrants. For the spaces created by the migrants contain all their actions, traces of the past and ideas of future life. This distinction is not merely an indication of spatial difference. It also demonstrates a reflex concerning the preservation of daily and social life. On the one hand, there are the places to which they migrated with all their vitality; on the other, the places provided to them by the state; and on yet another, their own life practices and the spatialities they carry in their minds. These emerge as the initial conflicts. Their efforts to establish their own spaces are essentially a sign of recalling their sociality and daily life. In this respect, the rejection of the allocated space also signifies the rejection of the life provided to her by the state. This situation results from ignoring the fact that exchange is a sociological phenomenon. The study aims to examine how exchange establishes social and daily life by considering the identity-related situation experienced by the immigrant through space, within the context of Lefebvre's spatial trinity theory.

BIOGRAPHY

Serhat Ulubay graduated from Kocaeli University, Turkey, Department of Architecture, in 2010. He completed his master's degree at Yildiz Technical University, Department of Architecture, in 2015 and his doctorate in 2021. He works as a faculty member at the same university. His research interests include the history of modernisation, the relationship between philosophy and architecture, and the impact of migration on spatial dynamics.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

The Displacement of Displacement: Remembering the Lost Homeland in the Shadow of Canal Istanbul

Sinem Arslan

ABSTRACT

The Canal Istanbul project, launched by Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) as part of its 2023 centennial vision, has been widely debated as one of the most controversial mega projects of the twenty-first century. Beyond its environmental and economic implications, the project carries significant symbolic and mnemonic weight for the local communities inhabiting the northern peripheries of Istanbul. In the districts and villages located along the projected canal route, many residents are descendants of mübadils (population-exchange refugees from Greece) and Balkan migrants who settled there after 1923. For these communities, whose families were once displaced under state-led population transfers, the Canal Istanbul project revives the historical trauma of forced migration.

Today, they face the threat of a “second displacement” as expropriation and urban transformation once again endanger their lands, homes, and inherited sense of belonging. Based on ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews conducted in Spring 2022 and Fall 2025, together with analyses of public discourse and archival sources, this research situates the Canal Istanbul project within a longer history of forced displacement that extends from the 1923 Population Exchange to the neoliberal urban transformations of the 2000s. The project not only reshapes land and property relations but also effaces the traces of migrant memory embedded in the landscape, replacing them with a homogenized narrative of progress and national grandeur. The official rhetoric of modernization and economic growth conceals the trauma of spatial dispossession, while residents reinterpret their mübadil or migrant ancestry as a source of resilience and legitimacy in their struggle to remain. By tracing the intersections of memory, identity, and neoliberal urbanism, this research shows how descendants of mübadil and Balkan migrant families transform their inherited displacement into a moral and political claim to space. The “shadow of the Aegean” thus emerges not as a historical metaphor but as a lived condition in which the memory of the lost homeland continues to shape struggles over belonging and place in contemporary Turkey.

BIOGRAPHY

Sinem Arslan is a Ph.D. candidate at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Boğaziçi University. Her doctoral research examines the cultural, political, and economic mobilization of Turks from Bulgaria across Turkey and Bulgaria, focusing on transnational networks, diaspora associations, and the politics of memory. Her broader academic interests encompass migration and displacement studies, collective memory, Balkan history, Turkish foreign policy toward the Balkans, and identity formation in post-migration societies. She has contributed several book chapters on the mobilization of Balkan and Rumelian migrants in Turkey, as well as on Turkey's foreign policy and historical engagement with the Balkans.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 3: THEORIZING MEMORY, SPACE & IDEOLOGY

“We Cannot Take Them with Us. These Bones Belong Here!”: Constructing Memoryscapes of Belonging in the Backdrop of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange

Leonidas Karakatsanis & Ülker Başak Yeşilkaya

ABSTRACT

This paper examines contemporary memoryscapes shaped by the long decade of war and displacement between Greece and Turkey (1912–1922). The research behind this study follows the story of human bones discovered at the former Muslim cemetery in Panagitsa, a village in northern Greece that was once home to a Muslim majority, who abandoned it during the 1924 population exchange and moved to Turkey. The paper traces how the village's current residents descendants of Greek Orthodox refugees from Turkey's Black Sea region (historical Pontus) dealt with the bones: from the cemetery's destruction and exhumation in the 1930s to efforts to preserve them, to a 2012 initiative to a joint Muslim and Christian reburial ceremony. The bone's new burial monument became a point of contact between Greeks and Turks, separated by the history of conflict and the population exchange. Since the 2000s, there has been a proliferation of similar civil society initiatives aimed at fostering a shared Greek-Turkish memory of loss and displacement, challenging nationalist narratives of one-sided victimhood. However, this trend has a geo-historical limit: the Greek demand for recognition of the 1919–1922 displacement of Pontic Greeks from the Black Sea region as a 'Pontic genocide' a point of contention with Turkey, which rejects such claims. Consequently, communities of Pontic Greek descent appear less inclined to participate in those Greek-Turkish reconciliation efforts.

Using a mixed-methods approach, combining archival research, ethnographic study, and discourse analysis, this paper investigates whether the Panagitsa initiative represents a unique case among Pontic Greek communities and whether it offers a counter-narrative of reconciliation within deeply polarised memoryscapes. Furthermore, the research employs a comparative analytical framework, situating this case within a broader set of similar initiatives across Greece and Turkey. By juxtaposing multiple instances of post-exchange memorywork, the paper aims to contextualize the Panagitsa case within transnational efforts of reconciliation and explore how localised acts of remembrance contribute to reshaping Greek-Turkish intercommunal relations.

BIOGRAPHY

Leonidas Karakatsanis is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics at the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece, and an Honorary Fellow of the British Institute at Ankara. His research focuses on identity politics, reconciliation, peace and conflict transformation, nationalism, minority rights, immigration, and civil society. Theoretically, he engages with discourse theory, deconstruction, affect theory, and post-structuralist political thought. His regional expertise spans Turkey and its neighbouring regions in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. He earned his PhD in Ideology and Discourse Analysis from the University of Essex and previously served as Assistant Director of the British Institute at Ankara (2015–2019). Leonidas is the author of *Turkish-Greek Relations: Rapprochement, Civil Society and the Politics of Friendship* (Routledge, 2014) and co-editor of *The Politics of Culture in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus* (2017). His current research explores comparative reconciliation and peace processes across divided regions.

Ülker Başak Yeşilkaya is a third-year PhD researcher in Human and Social Sciences at the University of Sassari, Italy. Her doctoral project, "Cultural Memory and Identity in Conflictual Spaces: A Community-Based Participatory Research on the 1923 Population Exchange Between Izmir and Thessaloniki," explores how collective memory and traditions shape post-exchange identities in exchangee communities. She holds a Master's degree in Human Rights and Intercultural Heritage from the University of Bologna and a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Ege University. Ülker is a certified mentor under the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research (K4C Consortium). Her research interests include cultural memory, displacement, reconciliation, and participatory methodologies bridging academic inquiry with lived community experiences across Turkey and Greece.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

Between Two Tongues: Memory, Language, and Belonging Among Turkish-Speaking Refugees in Northern Greece

Tuncay Ercan Sepetcioğlu

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on three years (2022–2024) of ethnographic fieldwork in twelve rural villages of Northern Greece, home to descendants of Turkish-speaking Greek refugees displaced from the Pontic regions of present-day Samsun, Sinop, Amasya, Tokat, and Ordu in Türkiye following the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange. Rather than focusing on the official or “written” histories of this displacement, the study investigates how this community situates itself within history through memory, oral transmission, and lived experience. Methodologically, the research combines oral history interviews, participant observation, and intergenerational narrative analysis to examine the ways in which collective memory, linguistic heritage, and refugee identity intersect.

The analysis is structured around four thematic axes: (a) recollections of pre-exchange life in Anatolia and what elements are selectively remembered or transmitted to younger generations; (b) narratives of hardship and adaptation during the first years in Greece, especially regarding language, communication, and social boundaries with both local populations and state institutions; (c) contemporary self-definitions among the last generation still able to speak or understand Turkish, and the socio-cultural factors that sustain or revive Turkish-language practices, including contact with Turkish people in Germany, Turkish-speaking Pontic migrants from Georgia, and Muslim Turks in Western Thrace in Greece; and (d) recent forms of memory work and identity re-articulation among younger descendants, who increasingly engage in “root tourism” to ancestral towns in Türkiye, reimagining belonging through mobility and nostalgia. By focusing on the experiences of a linguistically and culturally mixed community – Greek Orthodox Christians whose mother tongue was once Turkish – this study challenges the dominant national narratives in both Greece and Türkiye that link language, religion, and identity as inseparable. The paper argues that remembering, forgetting, and translating the past across generations constitute crucial acts of identity-making within post-migration contexts. In the end, this ethnography illustrates how the descendants of forced migrants keep reinterpreting where they come from and where they belong, viewing memory as an evolving process shaped by their experiences within and beyond their local communities.

BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Dr. Tuncay Ercan Sepetcioğlu (b. 1976, İstanbul) holds a degree in History from Middle East Technical University and completed two postgraduate studies on the 1923 Turkish-Greek Population Exchange at Ankara University (Folklore) and Aydın Adnan Menderes University (History). His first Master’s thesis was among the earliest scholarly works in Türkiye to examine the exchange through the movements of arrivals and departures. He received his Ph.D. in 2011 from Ankara University with a dissertation titled Ethnohistorical Analysis of an Immigrant Community Coming from Crete to Anatolia: The Case of Davutlar. Sepetcioğlu’s research focuses on late Ottoman migrations, population exchange, and the anthropology of memory. He contributed to a TÜBİTAK-supported national project on 21 exchangee settlements in Türkiye. A faculty member at Aydın Adnan Menderes University, he has authored Ethnohistory: Three Villages (2017), Yağlıbayat: A Century of Change in a Crimean Tatar Immigrant Village (2022), and Pomak Villages in Izmir – What Language Do You Dream In? (2022).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

Echoes from Crete: Cultural Transmission, Post-Memory, and Everyday Life from Refugee Families

Deniz Erinsel Önder

ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study explores how Muslim communities who migrated from Crete to Turkey following the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange have preserved, transformed, or lost their pre-exchange cultural practices — including language, cuisine, music, oral poetry, and ritual traditions — and how these practices continue to shape identity in contemporary Turkey. The study aims to construct a typology of transmitted, hybridized, and forgotten cultural elements, highlighting how memory and identity are performed in domestic and communal spaces.

The research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) Which cultural elements have been preserved, transformed, or forgotten in daily life? (2) Through which channels are these traditions transmitted (family rituals, community networks, or archives)? (3) How do musical and culinary rituals (songs, verbal literatures, communal meals) shape identity and belonging? (4) How does postmemory influence the experiences and self-understandings of second, third and forth generations? Methodologically, the study applies Grounded Theory, using semi-structured interviews with members of exchange-descendant families from Aegean regions such as İzmir, Ayvalık, and also İstanbul. Sampling follows theoretical sampling and continues until theoretical saturation. Data will be analyzed through constant comparative analysis, coding, and memo writing. The results will be interpreted through the theoretical lenses of cultural memory (Assmann, 2012), postmemory (Hirsch, 2012), cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004), and embodied/ritual memory (Connerton, 1989). The study aims to construct a typology of transmitted, hybridized, and forgotten cultural elements, highlighting how memory and identity are performed in domestic and communal spaces. Findings are expected to reveal intergenerational differences and show that ritualized everyday practices — songs, recipes, sayings, and commemorations — serve as both repositories and re-creations of collective memory.

BIOGRAPHY

Deniz Erinsel Önder graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Yıldız Technical University in 1986. She received her doctorate in 1996 and her professorship in 2011 at the same university. She served as a faculty member at the Faculty of Architecture at YTU between 1987 and 2016. Her work and publications focus particularly on space syntax, architectural design, and the relationship between space and behavior in architecture and urban spaces. She is the author of *Farewell to Rethymno – Ayvalık: Where My Mother Was Born*. She translated, illustrated, and published George Kordellasi's songs from Greek to Turkish. Since 2017, she has been working at a foundation university in Istanbul. In addition to her teaching and research, she paints and exhibits jewelry she designs and shapes using precious metals and glass. She is a third-generation descendant of four families who were exchanged from Crete to Turkey.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

Touched Memory: Trauma, Identity, and Cultural Transmission through Clothing after the 1923 Population Exchange

Kenan Saatçioğlu

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how displaced Greek Orthodox communities from the Cappadocia and Pontus regions articulated memory, belonging, and adaptation through dress in the aftermath of migration. Employing a descriptive-visual methodology that integrates content analysis, ethnographic interpretation, 10 oral interviews, and material culture study, the research investigates 196 archival photographs, 19 surviving garments, and a series of in-depth interviews conducted with descendants of displaced families living in both Greece and Turkey. These materials are examined comparatively across pre- and post-migration contexts to trace visual continuities and ruptures in dress. Such an approach reveals how clothing became a site of negotiation between continuity and change, functioning simultaneously as a mnemonic object, a medium of emotional expression, and a marker of transformation.

Women's richly embroidered aprons, multi-layered garments, and distinctive head coverings maintained visual continuity with their Anatolian origins, creating tangible links to the lost homeland (kaybedilmiş vatan). The persistence of these textile practices acted as a subtle form of cultural resistance against the sense of "permanent displacement," a defining aspect of refugee identity. For men, the gradual transition from Ottoman-style garments and accessories to Western silhouettes signified aspirations for modernity, social mobility, and citizenship in the new nation-state. Across both groups, material selection, tailoring, and ornamentation reflected a collective effort to reconcile displacement with belonging and tradition with modernity. Interpreting these garments as visual narratives of exile, the study argues that clothing played a crucial role in mediating the trauma of forced migration. Beyond their aesthetic and functional value, garments embodied memories of place, faith, and community, transmitting them across generations through materiality. They served as silent witnesses of dislocation and tangible archives of continuity. Situated within broader discussions of memory, identity, and post-migration hybridity, the research proposes that dress operated as a cultural text through which refugees reimagined both home and self. Through the material and visual elements of clothing, the displaced communities of Cappadocia and Pontus wove their experiences into visible expressions of survival, transforming the pain of exile into a living continuity of heritage, memory, and resilience across time and geography.

BIOGRAPHY

Kenan Saatcioglu is a fashion researcher and academic focusing on clothing culture, sustainable fashion, textile studies, and fashion history. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Textile and Fashion Design, Faculty of Fine Arts, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (Turkey), where he also served as Head of Department and Vice Dean. In 2024, he conducted postdoctoral research at the Manchester Fashion Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom). He received his PhD in Fashion Design from the Institute of Fine Arts at Gazi University (Turkey), where his dissertation explored the clothing culture of Greek Orthodox communities displaced by the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines design, history, and ethnographic observation, Saatcioglu investigates how dress shapes narratives of belonging, identity, and resistance within migrant and displaced communities. He has presented and published nationally and internationally on traditional dress, cultural identity, post-migration material culture, and sustainable fashion.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

A Century Later: Exploring Fluid Identities and Shared Heritage Through the Spatial Legacy of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange

Melis Cankara

ABSTRACT

The compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece, implemented under the Treaty of Lausanne, produced an extensive building stock that was left without its original communities on both sides of the Aegean. Although Muslims and Christians had long coexisted, albeit with regional variations, the nation-building processes of the early twentieth century redefined them as mutually exclusive identities and turned the exchange into a critical rupture. Yet the architectural legacy they left behind created a different, unexpected form of connection: exchangees and refugees inherited the material traces of the “other” while simultaneously reshaping the “other’s” built environment to establish a sense of home in their new settings.

This research examines how these abandoned and repurposed properties reveal the evolving and multi-layered nature of identity more than a century after the exchange. Moving beyond the binary labels of exchangee or refugee, it asks what contemporary spatial readings of these structures can tell us about the ongoing reconfiguration of identities shaped by displacement, memory, and belonging. Focusing on selected cases from Smyrna and the Island of Crete, the study draws on Ottoman and Republican State Archives of Turkey, documents of the Rethymno Refugee Rehabilitation Committee, and extensive fieldwork conducted by the author in Rethymno (2013–2016) and Smyrna (2021–2023).

BIOGRAPHY

Melis Cankara is an architect and independent researcher. Her interdisciplinary work spans architectural history, migration, archiving practices, design, gender studies, and public programming. She completed her doctoral studies at Yıldız Technical University in 2016 with a dissertation entitled *The Silent Witnesses of the Population Exchange: The Buildings of Crete–Rethymno that Changed Hands with the Treaty of Lausanne*. She conducted her postdoctoral research on the spatial transformations generated by the population exchange between Turkey and Greece at institutions such as the University of Crete, IMS-FORTH, and ELIAMEP. Her academic work has been supported by various organizations, including the State Scholarships Foundation of Greece (IKY), TÜBİTAK, the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), and the Onassis Foundation. She currently contributes to Salt Research’s Architecture and Design Archive as a part-time senior researcher and is also enrolled in the 2025 Minority Rights Academy organized by the Hrant Dink Foundation.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE, PLACE & ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

“Our Çatalca, Their Selanik”: Negotiating a Dual Homeland Among the Mübadils in Çatalca

Kemal Deniz Karabacak

POSTER ABSTRACT

The 1923 population exchange between Turkey and Greece, mandated by the Treaty of Lausanne, forcibly displaced nearly two million people across the Aegean, reshaping local identities and redefining notions of homeland. Among these displaced communities, the mübadils from Selanik (Thessaloniki) who were resettled in Çatalca—on the western edge of Istanbul—offer a revealing case of how collective memory and belonging evolved in the aftermath of enforced migration. This paper explores how the descendants of Selanik mübadils in Çatalca have negotiated a dual sense of homeland over the past century, oscillating between inherited nostalgia for “their Selanik” and lived attachment to “our Çatalca.”

Drawing on oral histories, local archives, and family narratives collected from the Çatalca region, this study examines how place-making, memory transmission, and cultural practices have sustained a hybrid identity that transcends national borders. Through an interdisciplinary lens that combines microhistory with memory studies, the paper traces how mübadil families have used storytelling, commemorative rituals, and symbolic geography to preserve links to their ancestral city while firmly rooting themselves in a new social and physical landscape. By analysing the language of remembrance—songs, idioms, and family sayings that evoke Selanik—the study reveals how collective memory becomes a site of both loss and resilience. This paper also situates the Çatalca mübadils within broader discussions on post-Ottoman displacements and the politics of belonging. It argues that nostalgia among the mübadils serves as cultural continuity rather than mere sentimentalism, allowing a displaced community to reimagine its past within the framework of the Turkish Republic’s nation-building project. The notion of homeland thus emerges not as a static or exclusive territory, but as a dynamic process of negotiation between past and present, displacement and rootedness. Through the lens of Çatalca’s mübadil experience, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of forced migration, memory, and identity in the Eastern Mediterranean. It argues that the Selanik–Çatalca connection represents more than a historical relocation—it embodies an enduring emotional geography that continues to shape local identity and collective consciousness in contemporary Turkey.

BIOGRAPHY

Kemal Deniz Karabacak pursued a double major in English Language Teaching at Boğaziçi University and History (distance education) at Anadolu University. He is currently a final-year master’s student at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, having completed his coursework and moved to the thesis stage. His thesis broadly focuses on a reexamination of Turkey’s Pan-Islamist foreign policy during the First World War. In addition, he has submitted an article titled “Mapping Linguistic Continuity and Decline: Kurdish and Greek Speakers in Republican Turkey, 1927–1965” to the journal Nations and Nationalism, which is currently under review. On November 4, he will present his paper titled “Between Perception and Reality at the Sublime Porte: Sultan Mustafa I’s Crisis of Rule through the Eyes of Sir Thomas Roe” at the 12th Young Historians Student Symposium. He has held two art exhibitions so far, and his third will be held next week.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 5: SPACES, MONUMENTS & MATERIAL MEMORY

Silent Loci of Memory: the Religious Ruins of İldırı (Lithri)

Fatma Nurşen Kul

ABSTRACT

İldırı, which was known as Lithri during the Ottoman period and was inhabited by a Greek Orthodox population, was a vibrant coastal village on the Urla Peninsula with a distinct cultural and religious identity. Its two main churches, Hagia Matrona and Zoodochos Pigi, stood as powerful symbols of faith and communal belonging. However, in the 1940s, both structures became targets of what appears to have been an ideological destruction, due to their association with the displaced Greek Orthodox community. While Hagia Matrona has survived only as a ruin, Zoodochos Pigi has disappeared entirely. In contrast, the numerous small chapels scattered throughout the rural surroundings of İldırı escaped such destruction. Although most are now in ruin, their deterioration stems less from ideological motives than from the gradual reuse of their materials and their adaptation for agricultural purposes.

For decades, many of these chapels functioned as storage spaces or temporary shelters within cultivated fields. Today, these small religious structures stand as silent loci of memory, remaining outside the grand ideological conflicts that shaped the region. Their silence does not only signify survival, but also the way they have been absorbed into the cycles of everyday life, forgetting, and nature. This study explores how the religious ruins of İldırı embody the tension between erasure and endurance—between being removed from collective memory and persisting as silent traces within the landscape. It also examines the contrast between how these buildings were remembered by former Greek inhabitants and how they continue to exist today as muted elements of the post-exchange cultural landscape.

BIOGRAPHY

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatma Nurşen Kul received her bachelor's degree from Karadeniz Technical University (1998) and her master's and doctoral degrees from Middle East Technical University (2003, 2010). She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage at Izmir Institute of Technology (IZTECH). Currently, she serves as a senior researcher in the ERC Starting Grant project conducted by Dr. Kalliopi Amygdalou, titled "HOMEACROSS: Space, memory and the legacy of the 1923 Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey". Her research focuses on the conservation of cultural heritage, traditional dwellings, and the relationship between space, culture, and memory.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 5: SPACES, MONUMENTS & MATERIAL MEMORY

Rebuilding Refugee Memory in the Neoliberal Age: AEK's Agia Sophia Stadium and the Spatial Politics of Memory

Aytek Soner Alpan

ABSTRACT

The inauguration of AEK Athens' Agia Sophia Stadium in 2022, timed to coincide with the centennial of the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange, embodies the reactivation of collective refugee memory in contemporary Greece. Founded in 1924 by refugees from Constantinople, AEK (Athletic Union of Constantinople) has always symbolized the intertwined histories of displacement, belonging, and post-imperial identity. The new stadium in Nea Filadelfeia, built on the site of AEK's first ground, stands as both a sports arena and a monumental site of remembrance. Its design explicitly integrates the Agia Sophia Museum of Refugee Hellenism, a permanent exhibition that narrates the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the forced migration of 1923 through artefacts, multimedia installations, and oral testimonies. The stadium itself officially bears the name Agia Sophia Center for Sports, Memory, and Culture, underscoring its intended dual function as both an athletic venue and a commemorative institution.

This paper examines the Agia Sophia complex as a hybrid "arena of memory," where urban development, national identity, and commodified remembrance intersect. Drawing on theories from sports geography (Bale 2003; Gaffney & Bale 2004) and memory studies (Assmann 2011; Fortier 2000; Nora 1989), it explores how the stadium and its museum spatialize refugee memory within a neoliberal urban landscape. The case study foregrounds the duality of such commemorative infrastructures: while they provide a tangible site for intergenerational remembrance and communal healing, they also operate within the logics of spectacle, tourism, and corporate branding.

Methodologically, the study combines discourse analysis of Greek media debates, architectural plans, and the museum's curatorial narrative with insights from urban cultural geography. The debates surrounding the stadium's opening reveal polarized public perceptions, celebrated by many as a long-awaited recognition of refugee heritage, yet criticized by others as an instance of commodified memory, urban gentrification, and sportswashing. The paper argues that AEK's Agia Sophia Stadium exemplifies the dual role of contemporary commemorative infrastructures. It preserves refugee memory through monumental design and museal narration while simultaneously reshaping it through the logics of spectacle, tourism, and market-oriented urbanism. The study concludes that the Agia Sophia complex encapsulates both the persistence of historical displacement in collective consciousness and the aesthetic and economic frameworks through which memory is rearticulated in the neoliberal age.

BIOGRAPHY

Aytek Soner Alpan is a historian and postdoctoral fellow at the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA), where he is part of the Ottoman Mobilities project. He also teaches economic history at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara. He holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), with a dissertation titled Trajectories of Displacement: A Comparative Historical Analysis of the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange. His research focuses on the 1923 Population Exchange, forced displacement and refugee experience, the Turkophone Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire and Greece, history and memory, and historiography. His work has been published in several peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. He is the co-editor of the book *Muhacirname: Poetry's Voice for the Karamanlidhes Refugees* and the author of *The Tatavla Fire in 1929 and the Salvation of Tatavla* (in Turkish). In 2023–24, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 5: SPACES, MONUMENTS & MATERIAL MEMORY

Urban Echoes of Loss: Rebetiko, Refugee Identity, and Counter-Memory in Post-1923 Piraeus

Alexandra Mourgou

ABSTRACT

From the late nineteenth century until the Interwar period, Piraeus was the main migration and refugee gathering point in Greece and the most significant industrial centre of the country; a city significantly shaped by the compulsory 1923 population exchange mandated by the Treaty of Lausanne. In its working-class and refugee neighborhoods, a predominantly urban culture flourished, involving music broadly known as “rebetiko”. This culture was the outcome of the encounter of multi-ethnic identities of the Ottoman past and the development of new survival processes in a modern city, often associated with semi-legal or invisible practices. The castigation of the working-class refugee strata in the official discourse, the socio-spatial isolation of their neighborhoods, and the systematic effort to marginalize whatever deviated from invented national ideologies, came along with the representation of this culture as the “underworld”, as termed by Elias Petropoulos, due to its association with the consumption of hashish and sex work, thereby perpetuating the stigma associated with the “refugee” label.

This paper investigates the cultural geographies of Piraeus’s refugee neighborhoods, focusing on rebetiko’s emergence. This music and its associated practices represent a critical response to the trauma of permanent displacement and the loss of the “lost homeland”. It was a culture that flourished particularly from the encounter between Ottoman-era influences and the new realities, leading to the creation of musical geographies in transition. Crucially, this paper argues that rebetiko and its spaces became places for the expression of a counter-memory, challenging the dominant, nationalist state narratives. For this purpose, a hybrid methodological approach is adopted, drawing from critical geography, urban studies, ethnomusicology, and oral history. Research techniques include interviews, ethnomusicological-ethnographic analysis, and archival research. On a theoretical level, the notions of space, place, and music are considered through the socio-spatial processes and relations which occur within the case study. By bringing together interview excerpts, documented testimonies, and material from the Archive of Elias Petropoulos, this study casts light on these “deviant” places and practices. It investigates the measure in which the emphasis on urban marginality has (re)produced the idea of otherness, and how these cultural forms function as a means of intergenerational transmission of a negotiated and often painful post-displacement identity. This work contributes to an interdisciplinary understanding of how cultural practices both preserve and complicate the long-term impact of collective trauma.

BIOGRAPHY

Alexandra Mourgou is a Postdoctoral Researcher at York University, and Principal Investigator of the project “Playing Back: Musical Geographies in Toronto & the Greek Canadian Diasporic Experience”. Her research interests and publications focus mainly on urban, cultural, and historical geography, and more specifically on the interconnections between space, place, and music. She holds a joint Ph.D. in cultural historical geography from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the National Technical University of Athens. Her dissertation is about to be published as a monograph entitled *Places of Rebetiko: From the Eastern Mediterranean to Inter-war Piraeus*. She also holds a Master’s degree in Architecture (NTUA) and a post-master’s degree in Urban Studies (ENSAPLV & EHESS). Dr. Mourgou has participated in research projects in Greece, Canada, France, and Turkey. Her background in musical performance further informs her unique perspective on the theoretical and methodological exploration of cultural memory and displacement.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 5: SPACES, MONUMENTS & MATERIAL MEMORY

Beyond Representation: The “Silent” Impact of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in Greek Visual Art in the 1920s–1930s

Vasiliki Sarakatsianou

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 and the subsequent 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange, as mandated by the Treaty of Lausanne, were portrayed—often in subtle and symbolic ways—in Greek visual art in the 1920s–1930s. While literature and historiography have extensively analyzed the refugee experience and collective trauma, visual art of the interwar period often refrains from direct or realistic depictions of displacement and loss. This study addresses several key questions: Why did artists during the interwar period choose not to represent the refugee crisis directly? What significance does the concept of “Greekness” have in the symbolic processing of trauma by the Generation of the 1930s?

Methodologically, this research combines visual and contextual analysis with archival and bibliographic investigations, situating the artworks firmly within the broader ideological and socio-cultural context of the interwar era. It argues that the trauma of the Asia Minor Catastrophe was not silenced; rather, it became a foundation for the aesthetic and ideological transformation of loss, one that manifested as a metaphysical quest within both collective consciousness and national identity. This paper aims to highlight the “silent” impact of the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the refugee experience on Modern Greek art, as well as the re-signification of historical continuity in dialogue with European modernism. In doing so, it seeks to enrich the interdisciplinary dialogue between art history, memory studies, and the cultural understanding of the refugee experience.

BIOGRAPHY

Vasiliki Sarakatsianou holds a PhD in Modern Art History from the University of Athens, which she earned with distinction and with the support of a grant from the State Scholarships Foundation. She also has a postgraduate diploma in Modern Art History and a BA in History and Archaeology, both from the same university. Currently, she is a lecturer at the University of West Attica and teaches at the Hellenic Open University. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary Greek and international art, along with gender issues. She is the author of the monograph *Abstract Art in Modern Greek Art: The Demand for Greekness and Its Relationship to International Abstract Art* (2021) and has written for peer-reviewed journals, contributed to exhibition catalogues, and participated in various conferences. She has curated art exhibitions, contributed to art magazines, and served on several scientific committees. From 2021 to 2024, she was a member of the Gender Equality Committee at the University of West Attica, and she is currently a member of the Art Historians Society of Greece.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 6: SACRED & SYMBOLIC CULTURE

The Relocation Journey: Exploring Hidden Spatialities and the Sense of Home through Mnemoactive Objects of Asia Minor Refugees

Paraskevi (Pari) Argyrakaki

ABSTRACT

Objects and spatial remembrance are deeply intertwined with our sense of familiarity, memory, and the way we navigate and interpret the world. When we interact with objects, we do not just experience them as isolated things; instead, they are linked to personal histories, physical spaces, and emotional contexts. Objects tie specific moments in time to particular places. Objects process dynamics hidden in “social biographies” intersecting with human biographies, that are in transit, along with their possessors. Although objects may not physically recreate or mimic images of what is considered to constitute a sense of home, they often serve as mental and emotional frameworks that provide a sense of rootedness. Objects of refugees inherit value and significance through memory and movement. Everyday objects often become memory artifacts or even political symbols in exile. In post-settlement contexts, these objects can reflect lost culture, space, and identity, serving as narrators of familiarity.

In the case of Asia Minor refugees, who were forced to leave their ancestral homes, objects recreated a semblance of home in new lands and became integral to the ceremonial process of bidding farewell to their ancestral territories. This research draws on Asia Minor archives and oral histories to illuminate the connection between objects and places of intimacy, revealing multiple representations of familiar spatialities and lived space. It further examines how objects structured refugees’ experiences of space by anchoring them to the familiar, highlighting the interconnection between refugees’ possessions and both physical and emotional landmarks.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Paraskevi (Pari) Argyrakaki holds a PhD from the School of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, where she currently teaches as a member of the teaching team in the School’s Master’s program. Her work lies at the intersection of memory, identity, heritage, space, and mapping. She focuses on post-conflict spaces, employing maps as tools to examine, deepen, or augment the understanding of events, while also revealing urban, cultural, and folkloric infrastructures. Her recent research explores memory and mnemoactive objects in relation to hidden spatialities and the sense of lost places, particularly in the context of refugee experiences.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 6: SACRED & SYMBOLIC CULTURE

The Exhibition “Icons – Refugees’ Heirlooms” Project

Kyriaki Tsesmeloglou

ABSTRACT

After 1923, nearly one million Greek refugees from Asia Minor resettled in Greece, facing immense challenges as they adapted to their new environment. Traumatized by forced exile and often living in poverty, many struggled with linguistic and cultural barriers. Some refugees spoke Turkish rather than Greek, which complicated communication and integration. Moreover, native Greeks frequently regarded them with suspicion or hostility, labeling them as “Turkish seeds” (tourkosporoi). Among the few possessions these Orthodox Christian refugees carried with them were their family and parish icons. Over time, these sacred objects acquired new layers of meaning, becoming symbols of a distinct “Refugee Hellenism” seeking recognition within the broader Greek cultural space. Passed down through generations, the icons transformed into cherished family heirlooms and tangible links to lost homelands.

Many found their place in local churches, including those in Marseille, where part of the Asia Minor refugee diaspora settled. Yet, not all icons were preserved with care. Some were neglected or forgotten, their histories buried beneath layers of displacement and assimilation. Three such icons, long overlooked in Marseille, were recently rediscovered and exhibited, revealing hidden narratives of social hierarchy and marginalization within the Greek diaspora. The exhibition in France restored a neglected cultural heritage and brought it back to public awareness. The planned exhibition in Germany goes further, questioning how curatorial practices can address the silences, losses, and absences created by displacement. How does what is not preserved become socially invisible? Can preservation itself serve as a pedagogical act? Ultimately, the project asks whether exhibitions can function as educational tools that honor both historical facts and the lived experiences of refugees.

BIOGRAPHY

Kyriaki Tsesmeloglou E.I.R.L Atelier Kyriaki Tsesmeloglou. Conservation-restoration specialist with over 30 years of experience in painted works, icons, and cultural heritage. Expert in preventive conservation, project coordination, curatorial work, and professional training.

Education: Higher Diploma in Conservation-Restoration of Painted Works – École Supérieure d’Art d’Avignon, France (1993).

Professional Experience: EIRL Kyriaki Tsesmeloglou, Nantes, France. Private studio/ Conservation of paintings. Lead conservation-restoration projects on painted works and icons - Scientific curator for exhibitions including Icons – Treasures of Refugees (2016) in Nantes, and Joseph Lemoine – Painter, 1830-1886 (2017) in Saint Pierre et Miquelon territory France.

Lecturer, University Rennes 2, France | Feb 2012 – Present. Founder & President, Icon-Network Association (2009–present).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 6: SACRED & SYMBOLIC CULTURE

“Twice Foreigners”: Aspects of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange in the Museums of the Two Countries

Chrysoula Anagnostopoulou

ABSTRACT

Sixty-five kilometers from Istanbul, in the town of Çatalca, the Museum of Population Exchange (Mübadele Müzesi) was founded in 2005 and inaugurated in 2010, through the collaboration of the Lausanne Exchange Foundation (Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfi – 2001), the Municipality of Çatalca, and the Turkish European Capital of Culture Organization. Eighty-seven years after the signing of the bilateral agreement between Greece and Turkey for the compulsory exchange of populations (Lausanne, 30 January 1923), the museum showcases historical documents and personal belongings of Turkish refugees who fled Northern Greece. Soon after, exhibits of Greek refugees—who were likewise displaced from Turkey under the same treaty—were added to the collection. In 2023, marking one hundred years since the forced population exchange, museums, state archives, institutions, organizations, private collections, municipal galleries, and libraries across many Greek cities unfold the stories of the displaced. They confront the past, reflect on the present, and reimagine the future.

This presentation, based on a previous talk delivered at a conference of the Democritus University of Thrace in November 2023 entitled International Scientific Conference. The Greek-Turkish Population Exchange in Art (1923–2023) and enriched with recorded testimonies from the archives of Asia Minor associations in the Volos region, focuses on the exhibition spaces where the exchanged individuals—men and women, Christians and Muslims from both sides of the Aegean—intersect their histories. Refugees in a sense within their own homelands, and simultaneously strangers, both the Greek Orthodox Christians of Turkish nationality who lived in Asia Minor and the Muslim Greek citizens who resided in Greece (Macedonia and Crete) share parallel narratives. The rich documentary material—historical and photographic archives, everyday artifacts, intellectual and artistic creations, and oral testimonies—traverses periods of peace, prosperity, upheaval, destruction, displacement, and subsequently settlement, integration, and creativity. Its purpose is to resist oblivion and to rekindle collective memory.

BIOGRAPHY

Chrysoula Anagnostopoulou is a graduate of the School of Humanities at the Hellenic Open University (program: Studies in European Civilization) and holds a Master's degree in History of Education from the Department of Philosophical and Social Studies, University of Crete. She completed her PhD at the same university in 2018 with a dissertation titled “Aspects of Female Entrepreneurial Activity: Greek Women Publishers in the Ottoman Empire (1887–1922)”, which was published in 2022 by Asini Publications under the title Greek Women Publishers in the Ottoman Empire (1887–1922). She has participated in several research projects and presented her work at national and international conferences. Her articles have been published in historical journals in both Greece and Turkey (Mnemon, Apoplous, Kebikeç), as well as in conference proceedings. She is currently conducting postdoctoral research at the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Crete, titled “Histories of Fashion, Consumption, and Mercantile Activity in the Greek Orthodox Communities of the Ottoman Empire (1880–1922)”.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 6: SACRED & SYMBOLIC CULTURE

How Post-Migrant Identity Shapes Pilgrimage, Relics' Veneration, and Religious Objects' Trajectories

Katerina Seraïdari

ABSTRACT

In 1924, a group of Turkish-speaking Orthodox refugees from Cappadocia brought the relic of Saint John the Russian from their native Prokopi (Urgüp) to the Greek island of Evia. Although Greeks knew almost nothing about this saint, his popularity grew rapidly, especially after the end of World War two. A church was constructed in 1951 in Neo Prokopi. It constitutes today one of the most important Greek pilgrimages and attracts even Russian tourists, who come to pray in front of the relic of their compatriot and at the "Russian corner" of the church, which is decorated with frescos of Russian saints. A museum, situated next to the sanctuary and dedicated to the civilisation of Asia Minor, was inaugurated in 2018.

The worship of this relic will be juxtaposed with the case of the Russian bell of Kars. Brought by Russian-Pontic refugees, the bell arrived in Thessaloniki in 1921, just before the defeat of the Greek army in 1922 and the consequent exchange of populations. It was apparently the heaviest object that the Orthodox refugees managed to bring with them during this period. It even had an accident during the transportation, due to which the bell lost for ever its clear sound. In 1930, it arrived by train in Kilkis, where a festive crowd of Russian-Pontic refugees welcomed it. However, in 1956, the local bishop decided to destroy it and to create with its metal seven « children-bells », which were distributed to the churches of the region. On 23 October 2022, in the framework of the centenary's celebrations, a commemorative bell, made of styrofoam, was brought in procession in Kilkis. Whereas St John the Russian has attracted academic attention (Stelaku, 2008; Seraïdari 2020 et 2021), the bell of Kars' trajectory stays unstudied. Through these two cases characterized by Russians' implication, I will analyze the capacity of the relic and of the bell to evoke pre-national memories and different models of identification. Was the bell finally destroyed because the Russian-Pontic identity was not relevant anymore ? Was this a part of the process of forgetting and of passing from a post-migration identity to (a more generic) Greek identity? As for the methodology, it is based on ethnographic fieldwork (for the shrine of Saint John the Russian, effectuated in 2019 and in 2025) and on the analysis of primary and secondary sources, but also of press articles.

BIOGRAPHY

Katerina Seraïdari obtained her PhD in Social Anthropology and Ethnology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (France, 2000). In 2007, she was awarded the Stanley J. Seeger Visiting Fellowship at the Program in Hellenic Studies, Princeton University (USA). In 2016, she participated in the organisation of the exposition Icônes. Trésors de réfugiés in Nantes (France). During 2019–2023, she was Senior Researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies (FORTH, Rethymnon, Greece) for the research project RICONTRANS (ERC Consolidator Grant 2018). She is actually an associated member of the Centre d'Anthropologie Sociale (Toulouse, France). She has published three monographs: *Le culte des icônes en Grèce*, Toulouse, Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2005; "May Her Grace be with us!" Devotional practices and ideological conflicts in the Cyclades, Athens, Erinni-Philippotis, 2007 (in Greek); and *La ville, la nation et l'immigré. Rapports entre Grecs et Turcs à Bruxelles*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

“My father, Batis, came from Smyrna in '22 and lived for fifty years in a hidden basement”: Challenging the Official State Narratives of the Catastrophe and the 1923 Population Exchange through Literature

Vassilios Bogiatzis

ABSTRACT

The “Asia Minor Catastrophe” cast its heavy shadow over the subsequent Greek developments in two fundamental ways: first, there was the terror of the ideological void after the bankruptcy of the Hellenic “Great Idea” due to the military defeat in Asia Minor; and second, the physical arrival in Greece of an almost 1,500,000 refugee population after their expulsion from Turkey. This paper argues that against this background, Greek official state narrative has often selectively silenced or downplayed certain aspects of the Catastrophe and the population exchange: frequently, the 1923 Population Exchange and the Treaty of Lausanne were/are described as “a masterpiece of diplomacy”, while refugees’ rehabilitation is characterized as a distinguishing success story.

However, this paper argues, literature, in different eras, 1930s, 1960s, 2010s, challenged these convenient and self-acclaimed assumptions – as the lyrics from the Dionysis Savvopoulos song “Zeibekiko” (1972) in the title of this paper show. In their way, literature posed inconvenient questions which brought to the fore the marginalized experiences and memories of the displaced communities/ persons: which were the responsibilities of the Greek state politics resulted in Asia Minor Catastrophe? Who did pay the price for the masterpiece of diplomacy? Have the interests of refugees been subordinated to those of the Greek state? And what was the human, physical, emotional and psychological cost of the displacement during and despite of the –in many cases, incomplete– rehabilitation of the refugee populations? Focusing in various literature works and attributing special emphasis on Ilias Venezis’ Galini [Calm], Kosmas Politis’ To Chroniko mias Politeias [The Chronicle of a City], and Vicky Tselepidou’s Alepou, Alepou, ti ora einai [Fox, fox, what time is it], this paper attempts to study how these works pose and answer to the above and other questions, and how they try to elaborate a language and a codification of memory and mourning. The further methodological framework of the paper is defined by the Jay Winter ground-breaking works *Sites of Memory*, *Sites of Mourning* and *The Day the Great War Ended, 24 July 1923: The Civilianization of War*. Their focus on how the societies attempted to come to terms with the unimaginable extent of the loss and to codify a language of mourning in the aftermath of the First World War, as well as the challenging of the conventional wisdom concerning the Treaty of Lausanne, constitute the stimulus for many of the insights and questions of this paper.

BIOGRAPHY

Vassilios Bogiatzis (PhD) is a historian and member of the academic staff of the Department of Political Science and History at Pantheon University. His books (in Greek) include *Ambivalent Modernism: Technology, Scientific Ideology and Politics in Interwar Greece (1922–1940)*, Athens: Eurasia Publications, 2012; *Seeking for a Sacred Canopy: Alexandros Delmouzos and his Contemporary Greek Intelligentsia*, co-authored with Giorgos Kokkinos, Athens: Taxideftis Publications, 2017; *Apostolos Bogiatzis, Makronissos: The Book I wanted to Leave Behind. The hand-written testimony of Apostolos Bogiatzis from Makronissos concentration camp*, Athens, Eurasia Publications, 2019 (transcription, historical editing, addendum).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

The Cultural Politics of the Memory of Asia Minor in Greek Prose Fiction (1922–2022)

Maria Nikolopoulou

ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the defeat of the Greek army and the exchange of populations Asia Minor has become a locus of painful memories, of defeat, loss and nostalgia for Greek culture. Literature has played an important role in shaping and negotiating the cultural memory of the traumatic events and re-creating the cultural landscape of Asia Minor. Literary discourse can bring silenced narratives to the public sphere or consolidate cultural constructions through repetition of narratives. Literature can be both a medium of cultural memory and an object of remembrance, since it also becomes a part of the collective memory. In this presentation the prose fiction that commemorates the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Asia Minor space will be examined in three ways: as a medium of cultural memory, as an object of remembrance and as an object of cultural memory. The aim is to show how these historical experiences were remembered and presented, how the narratives examined contributed to the cultural memory of events and how they interacted with other narratives and discourses in the public sphere. Genres, narrative tropes, canonization and ideological functions will also be considered, to highlight both the poetics and politics of the texts. The adaptations and revisions of the texts examined will show the interplay of the literary field and the cultural memory, leading to the institutionalization of memory.

Most Greek literary texts on Asia Minor distanced themselves from official narratives, since they adopted the refugees' perspective. This presentation intends to map out three periods. In the immediate aftermath of the events (1922–1940) some literary testimonies were published by soldiers, prisoners of war and refugees, challenging the nationalistic ideology and the institutions that promoted war and led to the trauma of Asia Minor Catastrophe. The 40th anniversary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1962 became a focal point in the re-negotiation of the memory of Asia Minor. Literary texts played a crucial role in shaping the cultural memory of the events by challenging the dominant narratives and focusing on the lives of everyday people and the peaceful coexistence of ethnicities in the Ottoman Empire before the First World War. Finally, after the 1990s, the memory of Asia Minor has surfaced in many literary texts, which can be examined along two lines: the most mainstream and middlebrow reproduce the cultural memory of 'lost homelands', while more experimenting writers focus on the silenced aspects of the events.

BIOGRAPHY

Maria Nikolopoulou belongs to the Laboratory and Teaching Staff of the Department of Philology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). She studied Classics in NKUA and obtained a Ph.D. in Modern Greek Literature at King's College London. She was a Regional Associate Fellow of the Nexus Project "How to think about the Balkans" run by the Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia (2002), a Fellow in the research project "Women's literary and artistic activity in Greek literary and art periodicals: 1900–1940", run by the Athens School of Fine Arts (2005–2007), a Fellow in Comparative Cultural Studies of Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies in Greece (2020–2021) and a Visiting Fellow of Princeton University's Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies (Spring Term 2025). Her research interests include the role of literature in the construction of memory of historical events, the role of periodicals in the history of ideas, and the post-war avant-garde.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

Narrating the Fractured Self: Mnemonic Multiperspectivity and the Negotiation of Belonging in Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* (2004)

Konstantina Tsoleridou

ABSTRACT

Exploring the social and cultural transformations following the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, this paper focuses on Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* (2004) to examine the disruption and reshaping of cultural identities among the heterogeneous populations of late Ottoman Anatolia. The novel narrates the final years of the Ottoman Empire as a cosmopolitan society (Eldem, 2013) through the microcosm of the fictional village of Eskibahçe, located in southwestern Anatolia. Set in a community of monolingual Turkish-speaking Greek Orthodox Christians and Muslims, its polyphonic narration traces the intertwined lives of the villagers from the First World War to the population exchange that concluded the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Eskibahçe thus functions as a “lieu de mémoire” (Nora, 1989), offering a rich narrative site for examining the interplay of memory, belonging, and identity during the years of political and social upheaval.

Interpreted through Homi Bhabha's (1994) notion of “vernacular cosmopolitanism,” de Bernières' narrative plurality enacts the vernacular diversity of the Ottoman Empire, while illustrating how modern nation-building imposed homogenizing demands on a historically diverse population (Akçam, 2012), resulting in the formation of new “imagined communities” (Anderson, 2006). Its multiperspectival narration conveys experiences shaped by faith, language, and belonging through the characters' memories, aligning with Astrid Erll's (2011) framework of “mnemonic multiperspectivity.” Combined, these dispersed voices converge into a transcultural mnemonic mosaic, where memories of coexistence, displacement, and loss intersect. In dialogue with Paul Ricoeur's (1984) concept of “narrative identity” and Michael Rothberg's (2019) theory of the “implicated subject,” the novel positions both communities—the forcibly exiled Greek Orthodox Christians and the Muslim individuals left behind—as implicated subjects in a shared history of dispossession and mourning. Both sides experience loss in the aftermath of the population exchange, revealing that implication extends beyond binaries of victimhood and agency to encompass the broader ruptured social structure of a once-interconnected community. Through its interplay of vernacular cosmopolitanism, identity fragmentation, and ‘implication,’ *Birds Without Wings* (2004) renders memory a dynamic site of negotiation, where fractured selves face erasure amid the transnational aftermath of displacement.

BIOGRAPHY

Konstantina Tsoleridou is a Ph.D. candidate in Anglophone Literatures, Cultures, and Media at Goethe University Frankfurt as well as a doctoral scholarship recipient of the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes. She holds a Master of Arts in Anglophone Literatures, Cultures, and Media from Goethe University and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English Language, Linguistics, and Literature from the University of Sheffield. Her doctoral research, supervised by Prof. Dr. Astrid Erll, is titled “Travelling Memories of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in Anglophone Literatures.” It investigates how the collective memory of the Asia Minor Catastrophe is circulated, reimagined, and transformed in diasporic postgenerational writing. It pays particular attention to the reception and cultural impact of these literary representations within Anglophone contexts, examining how such works shape collective memory, encourage cross-cultural dialogue, and inspire diasporic reflection and identity formation. Her research interests include Anglophone literatures, cultural memory studies, genocide studies, and diaspora studies.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

A Shadow Play of Memory: On the European Dimension of the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey (1923) in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's A Space Bounded by Shadows

Evgenia Dourou

ABSTRACT

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's latest novel *A Space Bounded by Shadows* [German: *Ein von Schatten begrenzter Raum*] (2021) opens with a striking scene set at the Greek-Turkish border in the Aegean Sea. In this scene, memories are revived that evoke the entangled Greek-Turkish past, most notably the aftermath of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923); an event narrated multiperspectively to include additional German and Armenian dimensions. Drawing on Aleida Assmann's reflections on metaphors of memory, Ann Rigney's work on European memory culture, and Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, this paper examines how the novel constructs a layered, transnational site of remembrance that accentuates the European dimension of the Treaty of Lausanne and the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange and integrates them into a broader European memory culture.

In Özdamar's narrative, the ruins of a Greek Orthodox church on the Turkish island of Cunda are transformed into a theatrical stage of remembrance; an inclusive space that transcends its religious function to give voice to the victims of history and the "homeless of memory," those unheard and uncommemorated in the public sphere. The memory model through which these entangled histories are portrayed is inspired by a shared Greek-Turkish cultural framework: the shadow play of Karagöz. Forgotten figures are projected as shadows onto the walls of the church, turning absence into presence. Finally, the novel links these historical memories to more recent ones from the early twenty-first century, connecting the refugee movements of the 1920s with contemporary events. Through this small Aegean island and an anachronistic aesthetic that crosses epochs, nations, and mnemonic boundaries, the memory of Lausanne becomes a vantage point for envisioning an alternative future grounded in transnational solidarities.

BIOGRAPHY

Evgenia Dourou holds a BA in Modern Greek Studies and an MSc in Film and Cultural Studies from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, as well as an MA in Comparative Literature from the University of Munich. She is currently a research assistant at the Cluster for European Research at Saarland University in Saarbrücken, Germany, where she is working on her PhD project in Comparative Literature, which focuses on so-called "Eurotexts" and the question of European memory.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

Literary Walks Through a Lost Homeland – Sokratis Prokopiou’s Lyrical Memories of Smyrna

Michelle Hara Wittmann

ABSTRACT

For Sokratis Prokopiou (1884–1957), a travel journalist and writer, losing his home in Smyrna was the most pivotal experience of his life. Smyrna (Turkish Izmir) was Sokratis’ base, from where he travelled to numerous regions of Africa and Asia for his studies, while at home in Smyrna, he also served as a correspondent for Greek newspapers. He descended from a family of artists from the Smyrnan suburb of Bournova (Bournabat). His parents worked as decorators; his brother was the artist Georgios Prokopiou (1876–1940), who went with him to Abyssinia and thereafter painted many scenes from the Greek-Turkish war. Later, together with Georgios, Sokratis produced photographs and video material on the Great Fire of Smyrna. Following this escalation, and the resulting population exchange, the family moved to Athens. Here, Sokratis, now a refugee amongst thousands, became involved with the Φιλελεύθερος Προσφυγικού Κόμματος. Besides releasing ethnographic publications of his travels, he started to focus on Asia Minor in his writing: In Athens, Sokratis published Σαν Ψέμπατα και σαν αλήθεια in 1928, in which he tells the story of a refugee and, with fiery patriotism, denounces the decline of Greek culture in Asia Minor, while criticising the Greek government for its failure. In the following decades, he processed the loss of Asia Minor in a lyrical trilogy: In Σεργιάνι στην Παλιά Σμύρνη from 1941, Prokopiou created a ballad, in which he portrays the protagonists of his memories from his lost homeland. In 1954, Προσφυγικοί περίπατοι followed as a continuation, in which he describes in verse the new refugee settlements in Greece and introduces their inhabitants to his readers. Two years later and only one year before his death, he published the final volume, Αναζητώντας τη Σμύρνη μας, which forms the logical conclusion to the trilogy: Here, Sokratis Prokopiou describes how he travelled to Izmir and searched for traces of the lost city of Smyrna.

The proposed paper examines the individual expression of identity, homeland, and its loss in the publications by Sokratis Prokopiou, which might be representative of a generation of forced migrants in Greece. His writings contain reminiscences, which tell a personal facet of the local history of Greek Smyrna. The publications presented are analysed with cultural studies methods to find different topoi of the loss of homeland, historical facts, individual memories, political approaches and (post-)migrant identity. The findings shall be discussed with the other participants of the conference.

BIOGRAPHY

Michelle Hara Wittmann is a PhD candidate at the Department of Modern Greek Studies at LMU Munich, where she completed both a Master’s degree in Art History and a Master’s degree in Modern Greek Studies. In her dissertation, she examines the two brothers from Smyrna Bournabat/Bournova in Asia Minor, the artist Georgios Prokopiou (1876–1940) and the writer Sokratis Prokopiou (1884–1957). Her general research interest focuses on Greek art in diasporic communities, particularly the Greek Munich School during the Wittelsbach era and artists from the Greek diaspora in the Mediterranean transfer zone, especially North and East Africa.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 7: LITERARY & CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

A Performing Audience in Greek Macedonia: The Craze for Turkish Films among Refugees

Mélisande Leventopoulos

ABSTRACT

Refugee populations in Northern Greece seem to have been particularly receptive to cinema, including Turkish cinema. I argue that Turkish film screenings not only formed an integral part of refugee culture in Greek Macedonia after the Second World War, but also became a key cultural habit for the populations originating from Anatolia. My paper is based on research into the reception of Turkish cinema in Northern Greece, drawing on state and private archives, trade journals, and ethnographic fieldwork conducted in cities, small towns, and villages, including refugee Turkish-speaking and Pontic areas. In Macedonia and Thrace, Turkish films enjoyed far greater success than in the rest of the country. Local film distributors and exhibitors explicitly targeted refugee communities while Muslim Turkish-speaking populations in Thrace were also attracted by this trend. Crying, singing, applauding Turkish melodramas of the *Yeşilçam* era: according to numerous testimonies, this was how the lost homelands were performed before the screen, within the public yet enclosed space of the theater. I will show how cinema became an uncommon site of rememory, albeit not through the direct representation of trauma. The phenomenon remains extremely vivid in the memories of film professionals and audiences today. However, as it is often the case in reception studies, it is very difficult to document beyond generalities. Therefore, I approach the phenomenon as precisely as possible by relying on interviews with film professionals and spectators. I also draw on the most tangible evidence available: the craze for Turkish cinema. I will focus on the period from 1947 to 1974, when cinema remained the dominant visual medium: the spread of television in Greece took place during the dictatorship years, while the Cyprus conflict brought Turkish film exhibition to an end in 1974. However, the afterlife of these collective practices will be considered, particularly in relation to VHS.

BIOGRAPHY

Mélisande Leventopoulos is an Associate Professor at the University of Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis (ESTCA Research center, cinema department). After completing a doctoral thesis in history on Catholics and cinema in France (2013), she gradually shifted her research focus to the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. Her current area of investigation encompasses the history of cinema distribution, exhibition, audiences, and reception in Macedonia and Thrace. She co-led the global history project “Community Building at the Cinema” with Morgan Corriou and Caroline Damiens (2021-2023) and currently runs the project “Visual Salonica”, on Thessaloniki’s visual history, in collaboration with Nefeli Liontou.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

Shadow Theatre as an Axis of Cultural Identity: A Parallel Examination of Karagöz and Karagkiozis Performances in Turkish “People’s Houses” and Greek Refugee Communities of Asia Minor

Anthi G. Chotzakoglou

ABSTRACT

Shadow theatre, though a product of audio-visual folk culture with Ottoman origins, accompanied and fortified Hellenism in multiple facets of its journey, gaining overwhelming popularity within its circles. The question of the spectacle's Turkish or Greek origins led its claimants to an ultimately less cultural and more nationalistic tug-of-war. However, the role of the Asia Minor Greek refugee wave in the surging popularity of the Karagkiozis spectacle on Greek soil is not clear. The relevant dramaturgy, stage roles, and the artists connected to them and to Asia Minor remain, though not unexplored, ultimately obscure. Similarly, it has not yet been examined in parallel with the trajectory of the shadow spectacle (Karagöz) in Kemalist Turkey, in the years following the Asia Minor Catastrophe and Population Exchange. Recent studies, however, focusing on military entertainment in the Greek Army of Asia Minor and on the chapter of the Turkish establishment (1932) of the “People’s Houses” and the embodiment of Karagöz performances in them, now encourage such a comparative analysis perspective.

This paper aims to examine the aforementioned issues, as well as the broader role of folk culture in the healing process of the Greek trauma caused by the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Population Exchange (cf. Treaty of Lausanne). Furthermore, it assesses the use of a common folk culture manifestation during approximately the same period on the other side of the Aegean, and the process of identity construction through (theories of) collective memory, silence and nostalgia, collective cultural production, and popular culture.

BIOGRAPHY

Anthi G. Chotzakoglou was born into a family of Greeks from Asia Minor. She completed her (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral) studies in the Department of Theatre Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She is an adjunct lecturer at the same Department. Her scientific interest focuses on popular performing arts, audiovisual oral culture, collective cultural memory, comparative theatre studies, folklore. Her research extends to Greece, Cyprus, Constantinople and centers of Hellenism. Her first book (A Thousand Years of Shadow Theatre in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkan Peninsula. From the Arabic to the Greek Karagkiozis, 465pp.) was published (Herodotos 2022) as a result of her collaboration with Professor Emeritus, Walter Puchner. Her second book (The Karagkiozis Performer L. Karadimas. Aspects of Shadow Theatre in the Peloponnese, 380pp.), was released (Stemnitsa Folk Museum) in 2024. In the coming period her third book (850pp.), based on her doctoral dissertation on shadow and puppet theatre in the Greek communities of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Cyprus, will be published (NKUA).



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

The Shadow of the Black Sea: Collective memory, cultural survival, and place mediation in Pontic momoyeria

Ioannis Tsekouras

ABSTRACT

In Greek public discourse, as a result of the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922) and the Lausanne Treaty (1923), the Aegean emerges both as a border and a center: the boundary between Greece and Turkey and the center of pre-modern hellenism; the primordial cradle of Greek civilization(s), from antiquity to the late Ottoman era. However, not all 1922 Greek refugees were from the Aegean space. The Greek-Orthodox populations from the Black Sea coasts of Anatolia found themselves in Greece, within the same Lausanne-sealed historical and political contexts. In the Greek state, the Black Sea refugees refashioned their cultural difference as Pontic heritage, emphasizing thus their pre-1922 Greek ethnicity, claiming a place within the ethno-national majority, and avoiding the dilemma of assimilation or cultural survival.

This paper examines Pontic identity and memory in the case of Pontic momoyeria or kochamania: a carnivalesque custom of the 12 days of Christmas that was transplanted by the 1922 refugees from the Matsouka (Maçka) area of the Trabzon province to Greek Macedonia. Kochamania, initially a community practice of folk paganism, has been elevated into a Greek national value, registered in 2016 as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter ICH). Based on fieldwork in the kochamania communities (2023 and 2024) and on archival research (Center of Asia Minor Studies, and the Committee for Pontian Studies), I examine the negotiation of Pontic identity, memory, and trauma in the kochamania performance practice and its framing discourses. Drawing from Bakhtin, I analyze kochamania through three chronotopes, narrative merging place and time: (1) Between an imagined pre-Christian past and contemporaneity; (2) between Pontos and Greece; and (3) between the memory of the pre-modern agrarian kochamania and contemporary ICH practice. The first chronotope concerns the primordial value that practitioners recognize in the custom. The second, the main focus of my analysis, examines the ways that kochamania mediates the memory of pre-1922 Pontos. The third refers to the post-1922 history from community life to inherited intangibility—a national value of global recognition. Borrowing from Kapferer's theory of the "generic event," I argue that kochamania exemplify the Pontic sensitivities of memory and refugee trauma commemoration, demonstrate the creative ways that Pontians have claimed a position in the Aegean-centric narratives of Greek nationalism, and offer ways for the renewal and transformation of Pontic memory.

BIOGRAPHY

Ioannis Tsekouras is postdoctoral researcher in the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, part time faculty in the Deree American School of Greece, and a Tsagada fund recipient. His research interests concern the music negotiations of collective memory and transgenerational trauma, with emphasis on emotionality and vocality. His most recent research concerns intangible cultural heritage policies in the Pontic momoyeria. His three most recent publications are the article "Postmemory of trauma and transgenerational empathy: the re-membering of the refugee pain in Pontic dialogical singing" journal Muzikologija–Musicology, the chapter "Re-membering Pontic Sociality. Musical longing as community surrogation," for the volume Music Making Community. Festschrift for Thomas Turino, eds. Tony Perman and Stefan Fiol, University of Illinois Press, and the chapter "The Neopontic music of Greece: Traditions of Modernity and the a/politics of identity" for The Routledge Handbook of Popular Music and Politics of the Balkans, ed. Catherine Baker, Routledge.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

Inhabiting Memory through Film and AI: In a Greek as a Foreign Language Classroom

Youssef Elsaafoury

ABSTRACT

This paper details a pedagogical experiment conducted in a Modern Greek class, addressing the challenges of teaching the 1923 Greco-Turkish population exchange. While historical trauma is often conveyed through factual accounts or film, Stoddard (2012) notes that film can sometimes be a (non-optimal) crutch. This study explores a shift from “teaching history” to “teaching memory,” aiming to facilitate students’ exploration of the emotional impact of the past, as suggested by Kansteiner (2017), rather than merely explaining events.

My approach, implemented over two class periods (4 hours) with 9 students (approximately 18 years old), integrates theories of cultural memory and trauma. Initially, students view selected scenes from mainly Politiki Kouzina, treating the film as an artifact of “cultural memory” (Assmann, 2008) to foster “perspective recognition” (Stoddard, 2012). Subsequently, students engage in an experimental activity where they “interview” a historical persona, a refugee from that period, using an AI chatbot. This sequence is designed to guide students toward a “working through” of the trauma, moving beyond passive observation to active engagement (LaCapra, 1999). Although an AI cannot genuinely feel or remember, it appears to provide a unique environment for students to practice both their Greek language skills and their capacity for empathy. This “thoughtful” pedagogy (Stoddard, 2012) utilizes technology as a catalyst for inquiry, rather than solely for content delivery.

The central question explored in this study is: How does a multimedia approach integrating film and AI influence student engagement and their ability to articulate historical empathy in Greek? To assess this, I am employing qualitative data from classroom observations, transcripts of the AI chats, and student reflective writings. While this is a small-scale study may not offer definitive conclusions regarding AI’s role in the humanities classroom, it aims to provide a practical and honest examination of how these new tools can be utilized. Ultimately, this endeavor seeks to connect language practice with a critical understanding of cultural memory, suggesting that carefully integrated technology may deepen our humanistic inquiries into the past.

BIOGRAPHY

Youssef Elsaafoury is a Lecturer of Modern Greek Language at the Faculty of Languages and Translation (Department of Modern Greek and Italian Languages) at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, a position he has held since 2014. He completed his PhD in 2023 at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Greece.



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

The Postmemory of Trauma: The 1923 Refugees in 21st-Century Greek Film and TV Series

Elpida K. Vogli

ABSTRACT

The first decades of the twenty-first century have been marked by symbolic commemorations of Greek history, including the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution, the centenary of the Asia Minor Catastrophe—as it is referred to in Greek historiography—and the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne. These anniversaries have inspired not only new research initiatives and academic publications but also the production of films and television series. Due to their immediacy and their connection to popular entertainment, both cinematic and television productions now play a prominent role in shaping postmemory. Yet representations of traumatic events that audiences have not personally experienced can also produce renewed interpretations, transforming inherited memories in line with the political priorities and social sensitivities of the era in which they are created.

Drawing on the communicative power of audiovisual art and employing the theoretical framework of postmemory, this paper identifies and examines Greek television and film productions of the twenty-first century, situating them within their respective social and economic contexts and proposing qualitative groupings. It seeks to demonstrate how national trauma and refugeehood following the 1923 compulsory population exchange have been received and reimagined, and to trace the evolving depictions of refugee identity in contemporary Greek visual narratives.

The succession of national accomplishments and traumas—shaped by the profound effects of the global financial crisis, which nearly brought the Greek economy to the brink of collapse, and by the unprecedented pandemic that imposed strict restrictions and lockdowns worldwide—along with other factors, has fostered a distinctive social landscape of cultural production. Within this framework, cinematic and television portrayals of the 1923 refugees not only reflect collective memory but also reinterpret it, revealing how contemporary Greece negotiates its past amid ongoing social and political transformations. By addressing a largely unexplored topic at the intersection of history, cultural studies, and political analysis, this paper contributes to current debates on the role of the humanities in times of crisis and underscores the continuing relevance of historical inquiry for understanding the politics of memory in contemporary societies.

BIOGRAPHY

Elpida K. Vogli is Professor of Modern Greek History, Democritus University of Thrace. Her research spans three main areas. First, she focuses on citizenship, national and gender identities, nationalism, state formation, diaspora policies, migration, and the evolution of social and political rights. Second, her work addresses historiography, methodology, and theoretical frameworks across the humanities and social sciences, with a particular emphasis on digital humanities and the emerging applications of artificial intelligence in historical research. The third area of her research focuses on the development of collective perceptions in modern society, the dynamics of communication and media, including advertising and social media, as well as the interaction between cinema, television, and history. Her recent publications include “Modern Greek history hits the big screen: Reviewing historical films during the 1980s”, *Filmicon* (forthcoming); and “Migrants and refugees in interwar Greece: the public debate”, in *Population Movements, 1900–1951: the world and Thrace* (Proceedings of international scientific conference), Athens, Foundation of the Hellenic Parliament, etc. (forthcoming) [in Greek].



ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 8: PERFORMANCE, MEDIA & PEDAGOGY

Forgetting to Remember: Reconstructing the Traumatic Past in Post-1922 Greek and Turkish Literary and Cinematic Works

Ayşe Lahur Kirtunç & Anthi Karra

ABSTRACT

Literature and cinema have long served as important vehicles and sites for the construction of cultural identities. Drawing on “the capacity for endless interpolations of what has been” (Walter Benjamin) that characterizes individual memory, they have contributed to the representation and reconstruction of collective and cultural memory—sometimes supporting, and at other times overturning, its seemingly dominant truths. The cultural memories recorded in literary and cinematic works may challenge official narratives, shed light on the shadowy aspects of collective remembrance, or give voice to marginalized figures, thus shaping the way the past is perceived and revealing the logic behind its representations.

Assuming the subjective stance of being second-generation refugees ourselves—raised in families that endured a desperate flight and, following the Treaty of Lausanne, a forced exile—and fully aware of the complex, decisive, and sometimes healing dynamics of the transgenerational transmission of traumatic experiences, painful processes of adjustment, and cultural particularities in our own lives, we chose to examine two literary works (*Bloody Earth* by Dido Sotiriou and *Makedonya 1900* by Necati Cumali), produced in the aftermath of the Second World War, together with more recent feature films from both sides of the Aegean—each engaging with questions of displacement, traumatic memory, and identity in the aftermath of the population exchange. Conceptual frameworks from relevant literature—such as Maurice Halbwachs’s notion of collective memory and Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, among others—will be employed as analytical tools in our examination of these works.

BIOGRAPHY

Ayşe Lahur Kirtunç received her BA and MA degrees from Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Literature and her PhD from Ankara University, Department of American Culture and Literature. She has worked at Middle East Technical University, Dokuz Eylul University and Ege University where she was the head of the Department of American Culture and Literature between 2000 and 2007. She was a Fulbright Research Grant recipient during the years 1975–76 (University of San Francisco) and 1996–97 (University of Texas at Austin). Her areas of interest are gender studies, popular culture and cultural theory. She was the editor of Journal of American Studies of Turkey between 2002–2007. Also, she was the founder (1995) and organizer for many years of the Ege University Cultural Studies Symposium. She is currently working on enforced population exchange, migration and refugee movements. She is a poet and a farmer who has been experimenting with organic, sustainable farming for the last 27 years.

Anthi Karra was born in 1955 and raised in Iraklion (Crete) in a refugee family originating from the Smyrna region of Anatolia. She studied Law and Slavistics in Paris, specializing in International Public Law, but went on to work for 35 years as a linguist in the Greek Translation Section of the Council of the European Union in Brussels. Eager to find answers to her family’s tragedy, she learned Turkish and gradually developed a passion for the history and culture of the late Ottoman world. Over the past 35 years, she has translated a great number of Turkish literary texts—both prose and poetry—into Greek. Since her retirement in 2016, she has been living in Paris and has dedicated herself to studying the numerous cultural interactions between Greeks and Turks during the last hundred years of their “national” existence.



HOW TO GET TO THE VENUE

Frankfurt Airport → Giessen → The Venue

Recommended App: rmvGO

Your digital companion for the Rhine-Main region



Live Navigation

Real-time delays, traffic reports, and crowd forecasts.

Search "rmvGO" in App Store/Play Store.



Cashless Tickets

Buy single, day, or group tickets directly in the app.

Supports PayPal & Credit Card.

The Arrival

Frankfurt Airport (FRA) → Gießen

01



Option A: Regional Train (Step-by-Step)

1. **Start:** Airport Regionalbahnhof (Tracks 1-3).
2. **Take:** S-Bahn **S8** or **S9** to Frankfurt(Main)Hbf (Central Station).
3. **Change Trains:** At Central Station, go to main hall (Tracks 13-16 usually).
4. **To Gießen:** Take **RE30**, **RE98**, **RB37**, or **RB41**.

Total ~1h 10m • Ticket: destination "Gießen"



Option B: ICE High Speed

1. From Airport Fernbahnhof (Long Distance station).
2. Take ICE to Frankfurt Hbf (or direct to Gießen if available).

Faster but costs more (~€22-30)



Option C: Taxi / Transfer

Direct car ride from Terminal Arrivals.

~45 mins • convenient but expensive (~€170+)

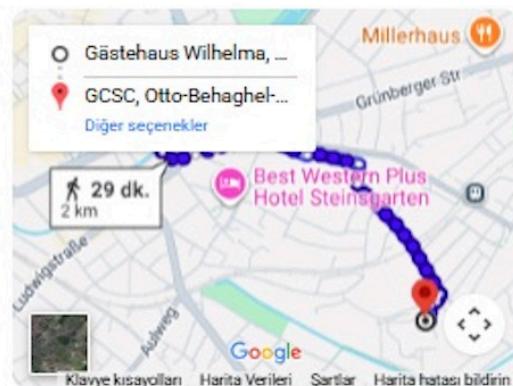


HOW TO GET TO THE VENUE

In Giessen

From Gästehaus Wilhelma

Wilhelmstraße 3



Option A: Bus Options

1. **Bus 2** (Liebigstr. → Graudenzer Str.)
 2. **Bus 10 / Exp 18** (from Bahnhof → Philosophikum)
 3. **Bus 801 / 802** (from Berliner Platz → Rathenaustr.)
- Multiple lines available nearby.

Option B: Walking

Scenic route through the city center.

~35 mins • 2.4km

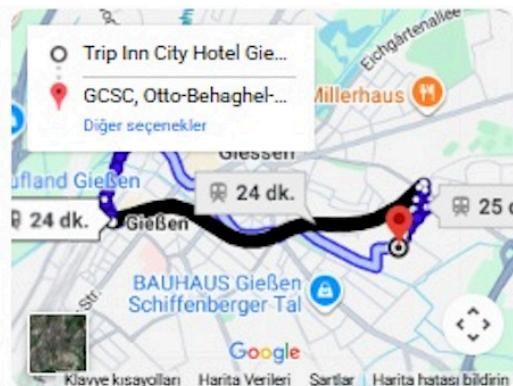
Option C: Taxi

Short ride to Otto-Behaghel-Str.

~8 mins • ~€10-15

From TripInn City Hotel

Westanlage 30-32



Option A: All Bus Routes

1. **Bus 10 / Exp 18** (Bahnhof → Rathenaustr.)
 2. **Bus 5 / 24** (Bahnhof → Marktplatz → 801/802)
 3. **Bus 2** (Graudenzer Str.)
- Most connect at Bahnhof (near hotel).

Option B: Walking

Walk via Alter Wetzlarer Weg.

~25-30 mins • 2.1km

Option C: Taxi

From Hotel/Station directly to venue.

~10 mins • fast & easy

Detailed Bus Stop Info

10

Bus 10

From: **Bahnhof** (Railway Station)

To: **Philosophikum**

Direct connection from main station.

801

Bus 801 (Dir. Pistorstraße)

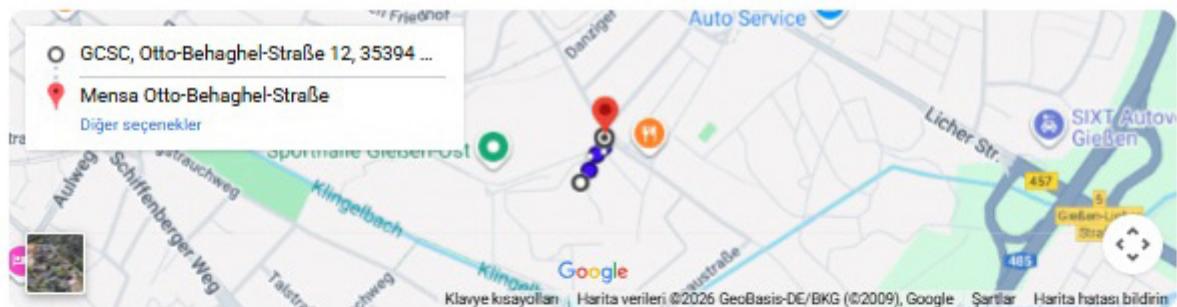
From: **Nahrungsberg** (near Park Hotel Sletz)

To: **Ostschule**



HOW TO GET TO THE VENUE

Lunch Break



GCSC JLU

Otto-Behaghel-Str. 12

3 min walk

Mensa JLU

Otto-Behaghel-Str. 27

Questions or Problems?

Always feel free to ask our friend



Zekiye Gürün Ücüm

+49 176 84810153

Call or WhatsApp for assistance.

Safe travels

See you in Giessen

