In our project two issues are discussed together. These are the memory of the Population Exchange and the Holocaust in Thessaloniki. We tried to locate people and sites in Thessaloniki and elsewhere and we conducted investigations and interviews to understand how the memory of these two events changed. Our trip in Thessaloniki took place in June and lasted for two weeks. It was a very challenging as well as enriching experience in the sense that the ties among the group members enriched as these four people from different countries stayed together and shared experiences. It was emotional because in many ways the stories we heard and the sites we visited represented a society that had been lost and this was reflected in many ways in the personal backgrounds of the group members.

Our method to find people was by inquiring in the institutions of memory as well as walking the streets. The narratives collected from these people are brought together in our essay and illustrated in the photographs. This project is unique in the sense that it brings to light a collective story of humanity that had begun in Thessaloniki and spread to Istanbul, Ayvalik, Sirince, Jerusalem and Auschwitz. The members traced different trajectories of this common story in their homelands and abroad encountering unexpected turns in the story each time they ran into a new person with a particular claim to the heritage of Thessalonikan Muslims and Jews.

Before and after Thessaloniki, project members visited numerous sites and institutions to collect information and expand the picture of our project. Among these other locations were Uskudar, Tuzla, Sirince, Ayvalik, Ioannina, Berlin and Jerusalem. Uskudar has the biggest cemetery for the converted Jews who were deported with Muslims in 1922. Tuzla cemetery probably has the biggest concentration of Muslim refugees from Greece, especially from the environs of Thessaloniki. Sirince, Izmir is the best known example of a village whose Greek dwellers were entirely replaced with Muslims from Greece. Similarly, Ayvalik and its neighbor island Cunda is an example of a city that was almost totally depopulated and resettled by refugees from Crete and Lesbos. The ethnic make-up of the northern Greek city Ioannina was altered just like Thessaloniki by the Population Exchange, and later in the Holocaust in which almost all of its Jewish population that belonged to one of the most ancient in the world, was lost. The majority of Greek Holocaust survivors chose to continue their lives in Israel. In Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Petach Tikvah, project members have met and interviewed second and third generation descendants of survivors.

The results from these visits and explorations are compiled in the essay which is uploaded to
the Geschichtswerkstatt web page. The experiences we made in Thessaloniki and the theses we have developed about the European memory are accessible in our blog.

Since the project was not finished in Thessaloniki, the members had to have time to continue research in their home countries. Consequently, the project was not presented in a public presentation in Thessaloniki. This was also due to the fact that the organizations we worked with were on summer schedule and could not organize a body of English-speaking audience. However, once the project paper was written and the photographs were circulated among the project members, Sara Zorandy presented on behalf of our group this project on November 7, 2009 in Budapest, Hungary. The presentation was part of a larger conference on Jewish identity called Limmud. Organised entirely by volunteers, the Budapest Limmud was taken from the UK model of cross-communal Jewish education. During Limmud, all educational styles including lectures, workshops, discussions, and performances are used to ensure that there is always 'something for everyone'. The content of a typical Limmud event is as diverse as its participants. Sara’s presentation was well-received: here too the plight of Thessalonica’s former citizens came as a surprise.

Although our project did not fulfill the publication of its results in any media yet, we continue to work on this issue. We will be most happy to declare in printed materials that this project is supported by the Foundation Remembering, Responsibility and Future and the Institute for Applied History.

In comparison with the goals that we stipulated in the beginning of the project, we are confirmed that our results are satisfactory. Above all, the fieldwork in Thessaloniki was a transforming event for every member in a different way. The project activities caused great enthusiasm and interest among the descendants from pre-WWII Thessaloniki as well as the new Greek citizens of the city who are predominantly migrants from the other side of the Aegean Sea. Our blog stats show, that it received dozens of visits from around the world.

Ozgur Yildirim
Constanze Kolbe
Sara Zorandy
Sheer Ganor

Layers of Remembrance – Thessalonika and the European Memory
January 28, 2010 in Uncategorized | Tags: Project Results, Thessalonika and the European Memory | by Sheer

Leave a comment

Project results as handed over to the Geschichtswerkstatt Europa:
1. Introduction

The population exchange between Greece and Turkey following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 and the destruction of Greek Jewry in the Second World War were two sides of the same coin that led to a gradual homogenisation of Greece in general and the destruction of the multi-cultural set up of Salonika in particular. The exchange of populations was that the "official end" of a series of expulsion due to various wars waged in the region from 1912. Devastation was aggravated by the great fire of 1917. With the destruction of great parts of the Jewish quarters, the fire was taken as an opportunity to rework the physical and geographical setting of the city. The population exchange, the forced departure of the Muslim inhabitants of Salonika and the subsequent arrival of the Christians of Anatolia and Asia Minor, became an
opportunity for gradual gentrification and subsequent “Hellenisation” of the city, which was completed only the expulsion of the Jewish community in the Second World War.

The exchange of populations in 1922 was on the one hand the ultimate expression of the broken dream of the “Megali Idea”, the idea of the ultimate territorial expansion of Greece that also encompassed the territories of the old Byzantine Empire. The “Megali Idea” was the motivation for Greek Politicians at the time to launch the Asia Minor campaign to re-integrate their Christian “brothers” living in Anatolia. With the unexpected defeat of the Venizelos troops by Mustafa Kemal and the subsequent signing of the Population Exchange Agreement, this dream was ultimately over. Yet, on the other hand, it enabled Greece to pursue the next step in religious homogenisation. Thus, whereas the Treaty of Lausanne was in fact a formal protocol of the lost “Megali Idea” it still underlined its very equation of Greekness with orthodox Christianity.[1] Although many arriving refugees could not speak the Greek language their Greekness was established with regards to religion. The exchange of populations can therefore be seen as the ultimate expression of nationalist aims to homogenise a country.

Following its near destruction by fire, the first World War and the War of Independence, the situation in Salonika was catastrophic. Arriving refugees and the Jewish population struggled with scarce living space. Whereas arriving “Greeks” could obtain privileges from the state, such as tax exemption, the Jewish inhabitants were largely left alone and subject to discrimination.[2] In 1922-23 the Salonikan municipality forced out all Jews working in the port with no chance of re-employment.[3]

While in 1912 the population of Salonika had been roughly 30 % Greek orthodox, 25% Muslim and 40% Jewish, by 1926 it was 80% Greek orthodox and 15-20% Jewish, making the Jews the last remaining non-Christian citizens of Salonika. With the new population that arrived with the exchange, a new political climate commenced. In the early 1930s ultra-nationalist organisations such as the Ethniki Enosis Ellados (EEE: National Union of Greece) emerged and promoted a strongly anti-Semitic tenor in their newspaper Makedonia. This group mainly constituted of Asia Minor Refugees that had nothing in common with the “old” Greeks other than the same religious affiliation. Orthodoxy became the mouthpiece of Greekness and was used against the Jewish community, which was perceived as “foreign”. Thus, in the subsequent years, the process of Hellenisation and need of assimilation was increasingly directed against the Jewish community, which was perceived as the last remaining stain on the homogeneous character of the Greek nation. Ironically, the exchangees that entered Greece after 1923 were themselves the victims of forced expulsion and were themselves not welcomed among the “old” Greeks. Yet, the religious emphasis allowed them to gradually integrate into Greek society. With the emergent Second World War this fear of the foreign reached its high point and resulted in the total “homogenisation” of the city, through the deportation and murder of the Jewish inhabitants in the concentrations camps of Eastern Europe. After the German Occupation of Greece, within months 80% of Greek Jewry were murdered and thus the full Hellenisation of Salonika crystallised, ending two decades of inter-faith communities.

The Hellenisation efforts of the Greek state are also reflected in the memorisation of former Muslim or Jewish Heritage, as our paper will show. In the process to forge a true Greek and Orthodox Christian identity, the past multi-cultural character of the city was denied. Our research will try to give a short account of our research on the traces that both the Muslim and Jewish population left in the city. In view of the reciprocal character of the exchange of populations, we also include some accounts of today’s Christian Heritage in Turkey and the remembrance of Greek Jewry’s tragedy in Israel. The aim will be to show in which ways the formation of nation states is reflected in the national historiographies as well as in architectural sites left in the city of Thessaloniki. Both the Muslim departure and subsequent arrival of Christians and the deportation of the Jewish population in the Second World War are closely connected not only in the way they homogenised the city landscape. They also show in which ways the need for conformity of the newly arriving Christian population was executed in opposition to the Jewish identity.

After a historical introduction to the Population Exchange and the Deportation of the Jewish Community in the Second World War, we will advance some theoretical frameworks necessary to understand the homogenisation of the city. Further an account of the Muslim and Jewish heritage in today’s Thessaloniki will be given, followed by a description of the forms of remembrance in Israel and Turkey.

2. Historical Background

2.1. The Jewish Community[4]
The great history of the community is often perceived only as a preface to its demise in the Holocaust. It is perhaps inevitable, since the more one delves into the rich past of Jewish Thessaloniki, the more catastrophic appear the events that took place during the second world war.

A small Jewish community lived in Thessaloniki for hundreds of years, evolving and changing in accordance to the different regimes that dominated the area, as well as in accordance with newcomers that arrived to the city from different regions of Western civilisation and joined the community. The most crucial change took place in 1492, when the Spanish monarch expelled the Jews from his kingdom as part of the Reconquista.

Thessaloniki, then under rule of the Ottoman Empire, became the home of many Jewish refugees. Sultan Bayazid, the Ottoman ruler at the time, famous for his tolerant approach towards the Jews, announced that all Jews that wish to enter his domain are welcomed. Thessaloniki, a thriving port city, received large numbers of Spanish Jews, and by 1553 it is estimated that approximately 20,000 Jews were living in the city, more than half of its inhabitants, making it the largest centre of Jewish population in Europe for several decades.

The growth of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki is unique in the history of Jewish diaspora. The large number of Jews living in the city (which at certain points reached almost to 75% of the population) earned it the names “Ir Va’Em Be’Israel” (City and Mother of Israel) and “Jerusalem of the Balkans”.

Enjoying full autonomy granted by the Ottoman Sultan, the Jewish community in Thessaloniki prospered, especially through textile manufacturing and overseas trade. With time, they established more community institutions, such as schools, unions, medical centres and later on even newspapers. Though highly consolidated, the Jews of Thessaloniki were not alienated from the rest of the population (Christians and Muslims) and were not hostile to external influences. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, westernisation of the Ottoman Empire introduced ideas of progress and liberalism to Thessaloniki as well as to its Jewish residents. At the turn of the century, a large part of the community was involved in the political sphere, chiefly through socialist or Zionist movements.

The first decades of the 20th century were marked by political turmoil in the entire Asia Minor and Balkan region, and Thessaloniki was no exception. The 1908 Young Turk revolution against the Ottoman sultan designated a constitutional monarchy throughout the empire. Soon thereafter, in 1912, the Greeks and their allies defeated the Ottoman army in the First Balkan War, ending the Ottoman occupation that had lasted centuries. Greek nationalists hailed regaining power over Thessaloniki as the primary achievements of the war. Under the new rule of king George, the Greek monarch ruler, and Elftherios Venizelos, the Greek prime minister, the process of “Hellenisation” of Thessaloniki began right after the defeat of the Ottomans.

At first, the Jewish community expressed little enthusiasm towards the new regime and regarded it with suspicion, fearing that it will both disrupt the liberty that the community enjoyed under Ottoman rule and harm the city’s economic relations overseas. Several leaders in the community even suggested that Thessaloniki should be declared an autonomous city, independent of Greek jurisdiction. Although the Venizelos regime sought to reassure the Jews, as well as other non-Greek populations that were suddenly turned into minorities, promising to maintain their status and guard their interests, the suspicions that arose against Jews and Muslims with the assassination of King George, followed by several assaults on these groups, indicate the birth of a new atmosphere in the city that was until then famous for its celebrated multiculturalism.

Nevertheless, the Jews in Thessaloniki were pacified by the new government’s promises and efforts to prevent similar events from reoccurring and conformed with the new regime. They continued to lead a relatively relaxed existence, until in August 18, 1917, an unexpected disaster devastated the community, when a great fire broke loose in the city, destroying approximately a third of its territory. The area that was most affected by the great fire was mainly inhabited by Jews and as a result, more than 50,000 people, almost 80% of the community, became homeless. Central community institutions such as synagogues, libraries, schools and administration buildings were devastated.

Although the authorities offered the victims prompt aid and shelter, and while they quickly set out to rebuild the area destroyed by the fire, the official reconstruction plan was sketched in accordance to the broader goal creating a “Greek Thessaloniki”. Jews that lost their homes during the fire were offered compensation, but for the most part were not allowed to return to the former neighbourhoods in the heart of the city, that was now being rebuilt to suit the new Greek narrative of progress and national unity. Leaders of the Jewish community protested against what they perceived as an attempt to uproot the Jews from the city centre, but the rehabilitation plan was carried out nevertheless. This resulted in a solid change in the city’s
urban texture, the first amongst others yet to come.

2.1.1 Anti-Semitism in Greece

During our research, we came across mentions of a stronger anti-Semitism in Salonica during the period relevant to our research (roughly 1923-1943), compared to other parts of Greece. One example of these mentions is the report of a refugee from Athens, who had escaped to Istanbul in October 1943: “It must be granted that the inhabitants of Athens have behaved more humanely than did the population of Salonika.”[12] We considered it important to map these mentions, analyse the possible causes, as well as see whether this phenomenon is true today.

Possible reasons

a) Religious anti-Semitism

While Salonican Jews made up the largest population in the city, before the forced population exchange, there seems to have been no mention of anti-Semitism. After the population exchange, Jewry suddenly became a minority in the city. In addition, the new arrivals were keen to prove their Greekness to the local Greek population and were able to use (the difference in) religion for this purpose.

b) Sheer numbers

As Mr. Molho writes from his safe haven in Cairo in October, 1943: “When war was declared, Greek Jewry consisted of about 100,000 persons. The majority of this Jewish population (about 60,000 persons) was concentrated in Salonika where they comprise 1/4 of the total population.”[13] While one does not require the presence of Jews to develop anti-Semitic sentiments,[14] their presence certainly fueled nationalistic feelings that in a city inhabited by recent Greek Orthodox arrivals there was still such a large number of Jews.

c) Salonica had only recently become part of Greece

Greece gained the Macedonian region, including the city of Thessaloniki in Central Macedonia, in 1913, with the Treaty of Bucharest, following the Second Balkan War. Many of the Salonican Jews only spoke Ladino[15]. As an officer of the Greek army confesses in a letter to his wife: “Salonica doesn’t excite me, […] I am totally fed up. I’d prefer a thousand times to be under canvas on some mountain than here in this gaudy city with all the tribes of Israel! […] How can one like a city with this cosmopolitan society, nine-tenths of it Jews. It has nothing Greek about it, nor European. It has nothing at all.”[16] and began learning Greek only in 1913, due to these language barriers they remained isolated for years. It seems that Greeks from other regions looked upon Macedonia and especially Thessaloniki as frightful areas, where little Greekness was to be found.

d) Greek immigration due to population exchange

As has been mentioned before, the recent arrivals from the former Ottoman Empire to Macedonia were keen to prove their Greekness. Many of the members of the Ethniki Enosis Ellas (National Union Hellas), were new arrivals. “Its anti-Semitic provocations culminated in the burning of a large part of the Jewish suburbs of Campbell in June 1931.”[17] This was considered the worst anti-Semitic attack in Greece to date.

A duality of sentiments and actions

While considered by some to be and have been explicitly anti-Semitic, the Greek Orthodox Church has painstakingly attempted to prove otherwise. However, during these undertakings in the past, a certain duality has become visible, as in the case of Archbishop Damaskinos’s letter to the Quisling Prime Minister in March 1943. In it, he writes that he and his co-authors do not wish to be “apologists for or even judges of world Jewry and of this or that activity on its part in the sphere of the major political and economic problems of the world”. At the same time, they worry about “the fate of our 60,000 Jewish fellow-citizens, whose nobility of feelings and humanitarian disposition, the progressingeness of whose ideas and whose economic activity, and most important of all, whose unimpeachable patriotism we have come to know during a long co-existence in slavery and in freedom.”[18]

This duality becomes apparent again shortly after the war. Mr. Kyrou, director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs writes in 1946, that the “the Greek Government, not wishing to benefit in any way from the persecution undergone by the Jews at the hands of the enemy occupation authorities, has resolved that all assets which would have reverted to the Greek State by reason of intestate (sic!) succession in the case of Jews who lost their lives in concentration camps, leaving no legitimate heirs, shall not revert to the State, but shall be used for special charitable purposes, provision being made for meeting the needs primarily of the Jewish
In 2001, Archbishop Christodoulos, blamed the Jews for being behind government's decision to follow European Union rules opposed to stating one's religion on the new state identity cards, which have a standard format for EU member countries. For years already, both the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice had criticised Greece for placing religion on the identity card. However, sole because Christodoulos is an Archbishop, we cannot claim that this is a case of religious anti-Semitism. The former large amount of Jews in Thessaloniki no longer poses a (pseudo-)reason for anti-Semitism, since their numbers have dwindled to approximately 5,000 for the whole of the country, only some 700 of whom still live in Salonica. In addition, Macedonia and Salonica within it, has been a solid part of the Greek nation state for nearly a hundred years and there are no new arrivals of Greek origin who need to prove their Greekness. However, with the above mentioned past it is perhaps no surprise that Salonica is in denial about its past even today. This denial takes place on different levels. There is the example of the locally published tourist guide-book, which conveniently ends its historical overview in 1917, before the great fire in the Jewish neighbourhood, the forced population exchange and the Holocaust. There is the book we have quoted from several times, the Documents on the History of the Greek Jews, Records from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where under a photograph we can find the following words: "View of the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki after it was destroyed by the Nazis in December 1942. The cemetery covered an area of 357,246 square metres. Today the location is occupied by the facilities of the University. "[23] "Occupied by" seems an excellent choice of words, since the Jewish Community of Salonica has tried to regain ownership of said cemetery in the courts for over ten years now.

Be that as it may, possibly due to the "healing effects" of time, anti-Semitism in Salonica cannot be called greater than that in other parts of Greece. According to a website that gives a short description in of all the explicitly anti-Semitic Greek sites, there is only one to detail the Macedonian region and therefore Thessaloniki specifically.[24] Which is not so say there is no anti-Semitism in the city. In the early 2000s, there were several occasions of desecration: street signs like that of the Street of the Jewish Martyrs are frequently spray painted with Swastikas, headstones in cemeteries have been broken, swastikas were drawn on the walls of the Monastiron Synagogue in the city. Also, one day after a Holocaust Memorial service at the Synagogue, the Swastikas, headstones in cemeteries have been broken, headstones in cemeteries have been broken, swastikas were drawn on the walls of the Monastiron Synagogue in the city. Also, one day after a Holocaust Memorial service at the monument it was daubed in red paint to suggest bloodshed.[25]

At the same time, save the outspokenly anti-Semitic voices, most Greeks seem insistent on the good relations between "Greeks and Jews" – as if Greek Jews are not Greeks at all. In the Documents on the History of the Greek Jews, Records from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these "good relations" are repeatedly stressed by various sources. In its prefatory notes the editors write: "Greek-Jewish relations, now over three millennia in duration, present the oldest continuous inter-ethnic relationship in history and constitute, as it were, the double helix of Western civilization. As with every relationship it is double-edged, with elements of competition and fusion."[26] It continues on this note: "In pursuing the history of the two peoples, it is easy to observe their common characteristics: their inclination to trade, their love for art and literature, their long subjection to conquerors and their Diaspora, have been dealt with in many treatises. Their love of freedom, respect for the individual, and their cosmopolitanism, which, however, never broke the bonds with their country of origin, are a few other characteristics which linked the two nations."[27]

Salonica has its share of bookshops selling nationalist and anti-Semitic works (see photographs). These have come under attack, apparently by anarchists: anarchist slogans were spray-painted across their shop windows, which were thrown in on occasion. The more central of the nationalist bookstores had a Molotov cocktail thrown through its windows and has since removed all such works from public view. These can now be found in the back of the store, behind rows of pencils and other stationary. The other shop seems abandoned.
As Mr. Angel of the Jewish Community in Salonica mentioned, it has only been during the last decade that the Community has fought for its rights. He claims Salonican Jewry did its best to assimilate and to accommodate the local government, in order to be accepted. These days, he says, the Community does not care so much anymore about whether the non-Jewish majority is sympathetic towards them. These sentiments are somewhat more critical than those expressed by the Chief Rabbi of Volos in his letter to the Archbishop of Athens in 1949: “On the part of the Jewish race there is no lack of examples of love and sincere friendship towards the Greeks. From time immemorial we can discover feelings of partnership in the history of our two chosen peoples owing to which the knowledge and the majesty of divine power and its world-saving teachings were revealed to our forefathers, together with our incomparable civilizations.”

A member of the youth movement of the Salonican community put it rather unsentimentally: “Sure, there is anti-Semitism, but nothing to be afraid of. They’re just saying things, but they don’t know anything about us. So I just shrug it off. I don’t hide that I’m Jewish, but I also don’t go running around shouting that I am.”

2.2. The Population Exchange

The Greek-Turkish population exchange occurred in 1923 following the conclusion of the Population Exchange Agreement included in the Treaty of Lausanne in January 1923. The agreement envisaged the "reciprocal restitution of interned civilians and the exchange of prisoners of war" according to Article 142 of the Treaty of Lausanne.[29] The Treaty concluded the exchange of the Turkish civilians of the Greek orthodox religion and Greek civilians of the Muslim religion with the exception of the Muslims of Western Thrace for Greece and the Greeks of Constantinople, the Princess Islands and the islands of Tenedos and Imbros on the Turkish side. [30]

Although the Agreement was signed under the light of the principle of self-determination, Çağlar Keyder has pointed out that the defining criteria was which religious affiliation people cherished and not which nation they preferred to be part of. Thus, the Christian Karamanlı of Central Anatolia, who only spoke Turkish and the Cretan Muslims, who mostly spoke Greek, were transferred into their new “homelands”. [31] The explicit aim of the population exchange was to “homogenise” both Greece and Turkey, and irrespective of their place of origin or native language, people were classified in terms of their religion.

As a result of the agreement, some one and a half million people were displaced. Of these, Greece received 1, 1 million Christians from Turkey, and Turkey received 380,000 Muslims from Greece. Whereas in 1923 the population of the lands that form Turkey today counted one in every five people as a non-Muslim, by the end of 1923 this ratio dropped to one in forty.[32]

For Thessaloniki, while in 1912 the population had been roughly 30% Greek orthodox 25% Muslim and 40% Jewish, by 1926 it was 80% Greek orthodox and 15-20% Jewish. In a way, the population exchange of 1923 constituted the first negotiated exercise in “ethnic cleansing” in the region.

Its negotiated nature, however, should not divert attention from the fact that it had been preceded by violent attempts to purge non-nationals or to re-nationalise once lost territories. As for Thessaloniki, the exodus of Muslims to Turkey had started already with the first Balkan War in 1912 that resulted in the loss of almost all European territories of the Ottoman Empire, including Thessaloniki. In fact, before the negotiated agreement, a large percentage of the people already fled in the preceding years.[33] From 1913 onwards the Greeks of Thrace were driven out of their homes by Bulgarian and Ottoman troops, whereas after the 1914 and the subsequent loss of the war, thousands of Muslim villagers had passed through Thessaloniki on their way to Istanbul or Anatolia. After the loss of Salonika in 1912 the situation for the remaining Muslim population was relatively calm compared to what Muslims in the countryside had to fear. [34] The new Greek government even allowed for the installation of an “Ottoman community”.

Thessaloniki still counted some thirty thousand Muslims and more than ten times that number in the countryside at the beginning of the First World War, which was followed by the Greek-Turkish war from 1919-22. The Greek defeat in the latter resulted in increasing pressure against Muslim minorities in Greece and against Christians in Turkey. As a result of massive slaughters on both sides, no real other option was possible but a legally constituted exchange of populations to save the respective minorities in both countries. By the time the agreement was signed, more than one million refugees had already arrived in Greece from Asia Minor. [35] By the time of the agreement a population of the size of 18,000 was estimated to be still living in the city.

After the last Muslims had left Thessaloniki, a violent destruction of their buildings followed. “One after the other the symbols of a barbarous religion fall crashing to the ground. The forests of white shining minarets is thinning out… The red fezzes are leaving, the yashmaks vanish. What else remains? Nothing. Nothing after some months will remind us that the
occupier swaggered through here, shamelessly razing emblems of his faith, sullying magnificent temples of Orthodoxy. Their threatening height will no longer intimidate us, nor remind us of the former misfortunes of our race, the frightful slavery and the sufferings of their subjects. The voice of the muezzin will no longer bother our ears, and he and his voice will disappear in the depths of their new country... Nothing, nothing at all must remind us again of the epoch of slavery." [36] The weight placed on the destruction of monuments underlines the importance of religious orthodoxy along with the Hellenisation of the city. After the forced departure of the Muslims a forced destruction of anything that reminded of Ottoman presence followed.

Approximately 100,000 refugees from all backgrounds and regions entered the city, constituting around a third of the population of Thessaloniki by 1928. The impact of the Population exchange onto Greece was enormous, considering the fact that altogether around 1/5 of the population of 1923 of Greece entered its territory. In Turkey, the numbers were smaller and human catastrophes like in Greece due to lack of housing and food could be prevented. The different scale of the exchange in both countries is also reflected in both countries respective historiographies.

The population exchange had also a strong impact on the Jewish inhabitants of the city. The economic crisis caused by the influx of ten thousands of refugees, the political turbulence that accompanied it and the increasing nationalist enthusiasm had shaken the harmonious relation between the city’s minority groups and the predominant Greek population. This affected the Jewish community to a great extent, as anti-Semitic sentiments were aroused. During the 1920’s and -30’s, the Jews were accused of not being “Greek enough”. In 1934, Venizelos himself was quoted as saying: “The Salonican Jews are not Greek patriots but Jewish patriots. They are closer to the Turks than to us... I will not allow the Jews to influence Greek politics”[37]. Several newspapers in the city voiced these sentiments and fuelled them, publishing articles that allegedly exposed the anti-Greek nature of the Jews.

The beginning of the 1930’s brought a new development in Greek anti-Semitism, as words were transcribed into actions and several incidents of violence against Jews took place. The most influential incident, which is present in the Jewish community’s collective memory even today, is the “Campbell Riot”. On June 29, 1931, approximately 220 Jewish family that had settled in the “Campbell” neighbourhood after the fire in 1917 were forced to flee their homes as a gang of nearly 2,000 people attacked the area and set it to fire[38]. The riot stunned not only the Jewish community but also by the majority of the Greek population, yet not all mainstream politicians were willing to denounce it[39].

2.3 Deportation of the Jewish Community

Distressing as such events were, nothing could have prepared the Jewish community for what lay ahead. The German army invaded Greece on April 6, 1941. As the largest concentration of Jews not only in the country but in the entire region, Thessaloniki posed a special interest for the SS, and soon enough anti-Jewish measures appeared in the city. Forced labour, appropriation of Jewish businesses and property, the coercion of the Yellow Star regulations, mobility restrictions and ghettoisation were implemented quickly and efficiently at the hands of the German forces.

Two events from the time of the Nazi occupation of the city are especially embedded in the memory of the community. The first took place on July 11, 1942, when 9,000 Jewish men were gathered at the central Plateia Eleftherias (Liberty Square) at the orders of the local Nazi administration. For hours they were humiliated, forced to drills in extreme hot weather while forbidden to even drink. The German officials took down the names of the men present while a large crowd of Greek civilians observed. The men were later taken to a railroad construction site as forced labourers. The photographs taken of the Jewish men exercising, while being watched by German soldiers are considered a symbol of the annihilation of Thessaloniki’s Jewry by the Nazis.

The second event, which haunts the Jewish community in the city to this very day, is the destruction of the old Jewish cemetery. The Greek authorities wanted to extend the local university, which was built right next to the cemetery, and have battled with the Jewish community for the rights to the large ground for many years. Now, with the community badly weakened by the German policy, they were free to take over the land. In early December, 1942, in a collaboration between the German officials and the local authorities, thousands of tombstones, some dating back to the 15th century, were destroyed and looted by both
Germans and Greeks to be used as construction materials. Still a few years ago, Jewish graves could be seen on the paths and roads of the Aristotle University, which was built on the land of the ruined cemetery. The legal battle for the restitution of the land or its worth is still fought today in Thessaloniki[40].

The extermination process of the Jews of the city was extremely quick. From March 15th until August 10, 1943, almost 50,000 people, approximately 95% of the community, were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau[41]. The majority of them died in the gas chambers few hours upon their arrival. A vivid, prosperous community that had developed safely for centuries was eliminated in a matter of a few months.

In the immediate post war years, approximately 1,500 Jewish survivors returned to Thessaloniki and, together with the few hundreds that have survived the war in hiding, slowly tried to rebuild the community. The utter destruction of the community’s infrastructure, the poor state in which the city itself lay after the liberation, as well as the indifference and sometimes hostility that many of them encountered upon return, made this task extremely difficult. Some survivors chose to immigrate from the city (especially to Palestine and the USA), and those who remained took it upon themselves to fight for the community’s revival.

Though today the Jewish community of Thessaloniki is a well-organized and well-recognized community, it is unable to reconstruct the times of pre-WWII. With less than one thousand members, the community’s past as “Jerusalem of the Balkan” is today only a distant and tragic memory. This memory is what we will now attempt to analyze, by examining the development of different perspectives and narratives.

3. Historiography

3.1 Muslim Thessaloniki in History

The historians writing the majority of materials published in Turkish or Greek on the exchange by and large described the events from the viewpoint of their respective nationalism.[42] Greek official historiography looked upon the events associated with Lausanne as a collective tragedy and the population exchange entered public memory as the “Asia Minor Catastrophe”. On the other hand, Turkish scholarship viewed these events in the framework of the National War of Independence. These two attitudes produced, in turn, two apparently opposed patterns in the representation of the Exchange, illustrating the use of history as an instrument of manipulating collective memory.

In Greece the remembrance of the Asia Minor Catastrophe was a major tool of political rhetoric and constitutes until today a main pillar of Greek nationalism. The “Katastrofi” was a turning point in Greek modern history, since it ended the irredentist aspirations of creating a Greater Greece: the “Megali Idea”. Many Greek politicians and historians set out to read this traumatic event into the existing biography of the Greek nation in the 1920s. The Exchange and more particularly the refugees provided politicians and historians alike with “a forceful tool with which to decry the persecutions of Greeks in general”[43] and were conveniently incorporated into this discourse as reminders of the defeat, humiliation and victimisation inflicted by the Turks.[44] The studies produced neglect the problems of the refugees and rather portray the exchange as a means to “bring home” the Greeks that lived outside the national territory. They therefore assume a common origin and a smooth integration into the social and national framework.

Yet, the recent anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty has come along with a new “revisionist” scholarly approach undertaken on the exchange on both sides. On the Greek side scholars like Michael Herzfeld, Renee Hirschon, and more recently Anastasia Karakasidou have focused on the anthropological side of the exchange. [45]

For Turkey, the nationalists adopted a differing tendency and subdued the exchange to the success story of the War of Independence and the making of the Turkish nation-state. Thus, during the formative as well as the later phases of Turkish national history, the population exchange among many other topics of the period was suppressed under the shade of the preordained literature of “the Turkish Revolution” and eventually marginalised to the historical narrative of the nation.[46]
Since the 1990s a new critical school has emerged that was connected to the general trends of globalisation and rising critical voices in Turkey over issues such as democratisation, human rights and minority issues. Only a few years ago, the “Lausanne Treaty Association” was established, which aims to collect knowledge of survivors and anything relating to the exchange. In this context a large body of literature was produced, and the population exchange became a topic of interest in the framework of questioning the nation state. Among the existing publications one can discern two diverging paths. One school of scholars tried to fit their research around the broader line of nationalist historiography[47], while another school attempted to reread the existing sources and tried to shed a fresh light on the historiographical bias by emphasising the predicaments experienced by the refugees. [48]

Especially the “local” narratives of the exchange remain very understudied and only over the last years scholarly attention in Turkey and abroad has attempted to shed light on the consequences of the exchange on local level. Esra Özyürek writes in her book The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey that especially studies on personal memories were discouraged in the past, because the history of “people challenges, reafirms, or transforms the concept of history, nation, homeland, and Republic through acts of memory”.[49] Thus, personal memory functions as an agent, because it contests or alters collective understanding of nationality and homeland. In 2007 Aslı İğsz published one of the first English studies of counter narratives of the population exchange. Through the analysis of recent publications and movies she states that “the representations in the 1990s of the 1923 Greek Turkish population exchange opened a retrospective platform to contest homogenising practises and air tensions between state impose identity and self- identification”.[50]

3.2 Jewish Thessaloniki in History

Although Thessaloniki’s Jewish community suffered one of the harshest blows during the Holocaust[51], it was for many years blocked from the collective remembrance process of the Jewish people. Within the international Holocaust memory sphere, the memory of Thessaloniki’s Jews has been marginalised and neglected for decades, and with it was also the memory of the community’s long and unique past. Only in recent decades has the story of this community started to penetrate this sphere. Arguably, even though the first steps have been made, a full acceptance into society’s consciousness has only been partially achieved. We will now attempt to examine the path made by the events mentioned above, in their effort to break out of the outskirts of collective memory and receive their place in the heart of it.

The differentiation between Thessalonikan Jewish victims and other Jewish victims began already in the death camps. The Jews of Thessaloniki were of Sephardi heritage, unlike the majority of persecuted Jews during the Holocaust, that were of Ashkenazi descent[52]. Greek Jews, bearing their Sephardi tradition, the Ottoman influence and to an extent the reborn Greek identity, were indeed quite different from the Jews of West, Central and Eastern Europe. Their appearance was nothing like that of Ashkenazi Jews; the Polish climate was unfamiliar to them; they did not speak Yiddish, the dominant Ashkenazi language, but Ladino, the language of their Spanish forefathers which survived for centuries, even in a city like Thessaloniki where Jews were never secluded from the rest of the population until the German occupation.

The Jews of Thessaloniki were not only different from the Ashkenazi Jews in the camps, they were also a small minority between them. K.E Fleming describes how in Auschwitz, the Sephardi Jews, of which the majority were Thessalonikan Jews, were casted as outsiders and even as inferiors. She quotes the testimony of a Greek Jew, describing this situation:

“We, the Jews of Greece, were in a special situation, the reason of which I never understood... we were treated with disrespect, particularly [by] prisoners from the northern countries, such as Poles, Russians and Czechs. We were always the black sheep, and we always were called insulting names such as ‘cholera’ or ‘kurva’ [whore]. One day I spoke with [a Polish prisoner named] Kochak and asked him to try to put an end to the situation. ‘I can’t help,’ he said. ‘they are bastards who view you as people of an inferior level. They are Ashkenazim, and you are Sephardim[53].’

Another quote, from the book “Atrocity” by author Ka Tzetnik, demonstrates the first contact between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews in the camps from the viewpoint of a Polish prisoner:

“Professor Rafael... doesn’t tire of just lying there day and night, all locked up within himself, not saying a word even to his friends... So they are as silent as he. And even if Professor Rafael did speak, he, Hayyim-Ildi, wouldn’t be able to exchange a word with him. They say the Professor knows ten languages fluently. But he doesn’t understand a word of Yiddish. Strange Jew. He was brought here from Greece, where he was born... Not even forty yet, and he speaks all of ten languages. But plain Yiddish, the Mother Tongue — not a word![54]”

The Greek Jews arose not only negative sentiments within the Ashkenazi Jews, but also admiration for their skillfulness and warm nature. “I liked to be around them”, recalled Romanian survivor and author Eli Wiesel. “They had good hearts... The solidarity between them struck all of us with amazement”[55]. The Greek Jews had a reputation in the camps for
being clever and resourceful. They were thought to have better chances of survival than other prisoners. Fleming quotes Primo Levi's, an Italian survivor and author, explanation for choosing a Jew from Thessaloniki as a companion for the road out of Auschwitz in 1945: “Everyone in Auschwitz knew, [the presence of a Thessalonikan Jew] was equivalent to a guarantee of highly skilled mercantile ability, and of knowing how to get oneself out of any situation”[56].

For good or for bad, Greek Jews in the camps found themselves tagged as “others”, if not simply secluded. Their otherness, marked first and foremost by their inability to speak Yiddish or German, did not go unnoticed by their German captures. In some cases, the Germans took advantage of the Greeks’ isolation from the majority of the prisoners and placed them in “special duties”. The Sonderkommando, the prisoners’ unit in charge of bringing inmates into the gas chambers, removing their bodies and cremating them, was comprised largely of Greek Jews. The Sonderkommando was considered a secretive unit, and the communication difficulties of the Greek Jews made it easy to keep their duty a secret. In a research conducted by Gideon Greif about the Sonderkommando in Auschwitz, Greif states that 30% of the unit’s living survivors at the time of the publication (1995) were Greeks[57], a much larger percentage than their relative share in the Auschwitz population, which was approximately 5%. This figure indicates that Greek Jews were specifically chosen for this particular work.

As demonstrated, even in the concentration camps, where people have been imprisoned, tortured and murdered for their otherness, divisions and prejudices played a leading role in the shaping of the Holocaust experience of the Jews of Thessaloniki. Yet it was after their release from the camps when they, as survivors, experienced a further isolation, that was in many ways more hurtful than the initial one.

4. Layers of Remembrance

In this section, we will give an account of the research we have conducted in Thessaloniki on the remembrance of the Muslim and Jewish Community. As we have detailed above, remembrance takes place on different layers: physical entities, official remembrance and personal memories. A collection of these three layers is presented below.

4.1 Physical Entities

The Ottoman monuments in Thessaloniki are under the preservation of the municipality and now attention is being given to the restoration of Ottoman architecture. These seven monuments are acknowledged by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture as “monuments of the Ottoman Period of Thessaloniki:” Bey Hamam, Pasha Hamam, Yahudi Hamam, Yeni Hamam, the Bezesten, Hamza Bey Mosque, Alaca İmaret.[58] First of all, their present use and condition will be described. Furthermore, it will become clear that the sites and buildings built in the Ottoman period far exceed the list given by the official Ministry of Culture publication.

The seven officially acknowledged buildings

Bey Hamam is one of the best renovated buildings in Thessaloniki. It is used as a cultural exhibition ground. It is the largest surviving Ottoman bath in Greece and was used as such until 1968. It is an impressive building with many domed rooms, which are now used as projection rooms for international documentary films.

Pasha Hamam is situated in a relatively underdeveloped part of the city. Adjacent to the semi-demolished western walls of Thessaloniki, it can be found in the old Cezeri Kasım Pasha district. Cezeri Kasım Pasha was the benefactor of the Hamam and was the governor of Thessaloniki in the 1520s. Until 1981, the structure was used as a bathhouse. Now it is under reconstruction and visitors are not allowed inside.

Yahudi Hamam is located in the old Jewish district of the city, hence its name “the Jewish bath”. The building is also known as the flower market in Greek; however, as part of its restoration in 1993, florist shops were removed. The building is used now as an art gallery and holds temporary exhibitions as part of the municipality’s cultural program like Bey Hamam. There is a small café opposite the building: “Hamam Café,” owned by Turkish born Greek Vladimir. His story is interesting. He was travelling to Italy in the 1960s via Thessaloniki where his wallet was stolen and he had to interrupt his travels to make some money. He was a Turkish citizen and a Russian-Orthodox by faith. He was to be drafted into the army when he started his journey, and chose to stay in Greece, where he found work. After sixteen years of living in Greece without a valid passport, he became a Greek national. His wife is a Greek-born, Turkish speaking orthodox. Their daughter does not speak any Turkish. On the day we encountered him, he was trying to teach his granddaughter Turkish. Vladimir: “I was born on Heybeli Island and I could swim before I could walk. My country is the sea.”
A drama about the events in 1955, Istanbul. Depicting in a critical manner the mob of Muslims looting the Greek-owned shops, the Turkish movie, Güz Sancısı, was well-received by the Greek audience on that night. The Bezesten has been an integral part of city commerce since the mid-fifteenth century. It is still functioning as a hub of textile and jewellery businesses under the six, solidly renovated historical domes. Inside, a small colourful shop is run by Yannis, who was part of the population exchange. Born in an Anatolian town, he fled to Istanbul with his parents as a baby. His father was a businessman who kept a shop in Istanbul first; later they joined the rest of their relatives and migrated to central Greece during the population exchange when Yannis was two years old. Yannis converses in Turkish and loathes the animosity between the two people. One of his customers is a young Armenian girl whose parents escaped from Turkey and found refuge in Thessaloniki. (There are five Yeni Hamam pictures and two Bezesten pictures: one Yeni Hamam’s exterior, three interior, one cinema and on pictures of Bezesten’s exterior and one of Yannis shop)

Hamza Bey Mosque is one of the two buildings in Thessaloniki today recognised by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture as Ottoman mosques. The building is also known as Alkazar in reference to the cinema operated in the building and its courtyard. The mosque was built in 1467. Standing across the Bezestan on the junction of Egnatia and Venizelous streets, the location of the mosque is to be converted to a metro station. The on-going construction of the subway has interrupted the restoration of Hamza Bey Mosque.

Alaca Imaret, the second building that had a religious function, is an art historical example of early Ottoman architecture. It was not only a mosque but also a soup kitchen for the poor and a school for religious learning. The minaret that gave the building its name “colourful” was demolished in 1925 together with 25 other minarets in the city [59]. Today children play in front of the building while the building itself is an art gallery. At the time of the visit, Alaca Imaret was housing a Slovak-Greek art project, Mosty-Bridges-Gefires VI. [60] We found the Alaca Imaret with the guidance of a Greek Muslim, who walked us to the building. She is born in Eastern Thrace, Greece and a member of the Turkish speaking community of Thessaloniki.

We met her in the courtyard of the Ayios Dimitrios, where she was speaking with a group of elderly ladies. These women were either first generation of exchanged Greek families or recent immigrant labourers from Georgia. All could communicate in Turkish fairly decently.

Other Buildings and Structures bearing Memory

Villas on the Vassilis Olgas Street

Casa Bianca (1911). Its original owner is unknown, its architect was an Italian. Now it holds the permanent exhibition of Byzantine Icons.

Villa Mordoch (1905). Today it is the office building of the Municipal Art Gallery and the 5th Municipal district; however, it was originally built for the Turkish commander Seyfullah Pasha and designed by a Greek architect. A municipal worker, Thalia-Maria Alexaki, showed us around the villa and further helped to identify other Ottoman buildings in Thessaloniki.[61]
Villa Kapantzi now belongs to the National Bank of Greece and serves as an art gallery. It was built by the convert Jewish Ahmet Kapantzi in 1897. It was the residence of Prince Nicholas in 1912 and of Eleftherios Venizelos in 1917, then the prime minister of the provisional government based in Thessaloniki. Between 1922 and 1926, refugee families were housed in the rooms of the villa. It was requisitioned by the German military command during the occupation in the Second World War and was probably a significant place in the destruction of Thessaloniki's Jewry.[62]

Villa Allatini is the house of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki since 1978.[63] The building is entirely used as office space for the administration of the city and its hinterland. Built by the wealthy Jewish Allatini family in 1896, the villa became the residence of the deposed monarch Abdul-hamid between 1909 and 1912.[64] It housed the University of Thessaloniki from 1926 until it became a hospital in the Second World War. There is no indication of either its Jewish, nor its Muslim heritage.

The School for the Blind, Sxoli Tiflon, is the Hafiz Bey Mansion built in 1879.[65]

The Center for Byzantine Studies on the Vassilis Olgas Street was built in 1897 as the mansion of the Turkish merchant Osman Ali Bey.[66] In 1922 it turned into the orphanage for child refugees from Turkey and was named Melissa.[67]

With the help of Basil Gounaris, professor of modern history at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, we identified at least twelve more buildings, which were either built by the Ottomans themselves or they were pre-existing structures appropriated into the Ottoman culture of the city.[68] These are Rotunda, the Old Friday Mosque, Aya Sofia Mosque, Agios Dimitrios, the Old Palace Mosque, the New Mosque, the School of Law, a Hospital, Pasha Konak, the White Tower, the Ottoman custom house at the port, 3rd Army Corpose, the Caravanserai and the Yedi Kule fortress. They can be divided according to their religious or civic function.

Buildings with a Religious Function

Built c. 306 CE, Rotunda belongs to the Roman heritage of Thessaloniki. It was used as a church, Agios Georgios, and as a mosque, Hortaj Baba. One of the two still standing minarets in the city is next to it.[69] Rotunda was converted to a mosque in 1591 by Hortaç Süleyman, the Sheikh of the Halvetiye monastery. In 1912, it returned to Christian use. One year later it declared a national monument, therefore its minaret was rescued from destruction in 1925.[70] As Thessaloniki was nominated as the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1994, European funds started pouring in for the restoration of the city’s monuments. For the opening of an exhibition of icons at Rotunda, the Ministry of Culture permitted church prayer service. On the Sunday after the exhibition was closed, Christians demanded to pray inside the building. The Orthodox Church sued the Archeological Service for desecrating the church of St. George.

Thessaloniki, rather than Athens, was chosen as the cultural capital of Europe to emphasize its ethnically mixed past and multicultural history. Eski Cuma Cami, “the Old Friday Mosque,” was the first Byzantine church to be converted into a mosque in Thessaloniki right after the capture of the city in 1430. Since its “liberation” in 1912, Eski Cuma Cami, Acheiropoietos returned to Christian service. Aya Sofya is the second building which retains its minaret. The minaret is not demolished in 1925. It is short and most likely did not disturb the officials.

Kasımiye Cami on Agios Dimitrios, is the site of legend of the martyr Roman commander Demetrios who died 303 CE.[71] Christian veneration of the martyr continued even after the church was converted to a mosque in 1493. During the summer, the large courtyard of the Agios Dimitrios is entertained by old ladies and young kids. The staff of the souvenir shop at the entrance of the church denied that the building was ever used as a mosque.

Eski Saray Cami, “the Old Palace Mosque,” stands on top of a hill in the upper town. Its current name, the Church of the Prophet Elijah, is coined after 1912. In 1958-60, Eski Saray Tekkesi, “the Old Palace Monastery,” and Eski Saray Medresesi, “the Old Palace School for religious learning,” were destroyed. The mosque, monastery and the religious school together constituted a large centre for religion and culture. Today their ruins are barely visible. The list of Byzantine churches in Thessaloniki that were appropriated for Muslim service goes on and on. Other major examples in the city centre are Kazancilar Mosque (Panagia Chalkeon), Suluca Mosque (Latomou Monastery), Isakiye Mosque (Agios Pandeleimon), Soguk Su Mosque (Agii Apostoli), Iki Serife Mosque (Taxiarches), Yakup Pasha Mosque (Agia Ekaterini).[72]

Buildings with a Civic Function

Right next to the Hamza Bey Mosque, Caravanserai is a shopping mall today. Its authentic name remains in the signpost of the car park.
Yedi Kule Fortress (Heptapyrgion), situated above the mountain overlooking the city, is an integral part of the city walls and serves today as a recreational ground. It was a Roman citadel. It became a prison in the 1890s, and gained notoriety through Rebetiko songs as the main penitentiary facility of the city during the Metaxas regime, the Axis Occupation of Greece, and in the post-war period from the Greek Civil War up to the Regime of the Colonels.

The 3rd Army Corpse is an Ottoman military building still used today as part of the Greek Army. It seems today that there is no memory of the Ottoman past of this strategic structure.

The Thessaloniki customs house and the warehouses of the harbor were built in 1910 inside the port by Italian architect Eli Modiano. Today these buildings are housing cultural events and also the Museum of Photography and Cinematography.

Today a symbol of the city, the origins of the White Tower are very controversial. It is the City Museum of Thessaloniki today. The museum itself emphasizes the pre-Ottoman history of the tower. The City museum explicitly acknowledges that the present inhabitants of the town settled as refugees in 1922 and aims to forge a link between the new citizens and the city.

Pasha (or Hukumet) Konak (1891) was the office of the Ottoman governor of Thessaloniki. Today it is the residence of the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace but there is not any trace left of its Ottoman past. From the balcony of this building, Hilmi Pasha announced the restoration of the constitution in 1908.

The Ottoman Municipal Hospital belongs to the municipality today and continues to serve the sick. However, there is no sign indicating its Ottoman history.

Ottoman School of Law is another building that still serves the citizens of Thessaloniki. Part of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the School of Law now functions as the Department of Philosophy and Literature. The secretaries and students filling the corridors and rooms of the school are not aware that they spend their days in an Ottoman building.

Yeni Cami, “the New Mosque”, deserves a place of its own in this project. It was built by the community of converted Jews for Muslim worship. The courtyard around the building is an open-air exhibition of Roman sarcophagi and some tombstones of the Jewish-Muslim community. The Greek administration named the mosque and the street Archeological Museum but the building never served as a museum. Today it serves as an art gallery.

Musa Baba’s tomb is in the upper town. This tomb was used as the fan club of a local football team. Now it is abandoned. The space to the north of it should have been a cemetery according to an old Ottoman map. But now there is a large residential house in the plot where the map shows a cemetery. The square in the south west of it is a today playground for the children of the neighborhood. The map also indicates a small mosque to the north west of the Tomb, however, there was no trace to be found of it. There is no sign on the tomb or in the square that it is an Ottoman structure.

One of our most exciting finds was the discovery that the territory of the Kule Hamam Cemetery was turned into a public primary school. Inside the city walls, Kule Hamam Cemetery is one of the largest Muslim cemeteries and it is located in the south of the Upper Town, east of the Alaca Imaret. It should come as no surprise that the cemetery was not commemorated. The plot of land on which the primary school stands matches the shape and location of the Kule Hamam Cemetery exactly.

Sites outside Thessalonika

Istanbul was the main destination of exchanged Muslims. They were settled in the outlying towns of Istanbul. Pendik and Tuzla are two adjacent towns that received thousands of Muslim refugees. The reason for these two towns were chosen was that the original inhabitants were mostly Greeks forced to migrate to Greece. There was an abundance of housing and land in these towns and the government arranged the allocation of these properties to the coming Muslims. Most of the exchanged people can be found in cemeteries today. The cemetery in Pendik houses many Muslim refugees from Ioannina (Yanya). The old cemetery is in disrepair and abandoned: disappearing naturally. Most of the gravestones are in miserable condition. The Tuzla cemetery management did not allow for pictures to be taken. The Municipality of Istanbul requested 400 $ for permission to take photographs in a cemetery. Although the Geschichtswerkstatt foundation sent an official letter explaining the project, the Municipality’s Press relations officer refused to give permission free of charge. The Tuzla cemetery contains well-preserved gravestone of many Muslim refugees from Thessaloniki.
A Gravestone in Uskudar, Istanbul, in the Graveyard of Sabetaean Muslims from Salonika

The Bülbülderesi Cemetery in Üsküdar is the cemetery of the converted Jewish community from Thessaloniki. Although there are graves that do not belong to the community, the older graves are almost exclusively Muslim-Jewish. Their gravestones are very different from usual Muslim gravestones. First of all, they are more descriptive of the deceased person's life. Second they depict the photograph of the deceased person.

Sirince is a village near Ephesos, Turkey. The inhabitants of this village were Greek before the population exchange. Today the whole population is Turkish; however, the majority originates from Greece. Tourists are flowing into the village to visit the old architecture. The old school building is a restaurant today. The official sign in the village square has a different interpretation of history: “the village became empty with the liberation of Smyrna”. It does not mention the population exchange. The people of Sirince are used to tourists, they convert their houses into shops and exhibit Greek traces to curious visitors.[74]

The story of Sirince became international hearing through the publishing of the novel “Farewell Anatolia”. Chosen as the fictive main locality, this village is still visited by many who know the novel.

Cunda, or Alibey Adasi, is an island off the coast of Ayvalik in today’s Turkey, opposite the Greek island of Lesbos. Ayvalik was an important trade centre during Ottoman rule and almost entirely inhabited by Christians. Following the Population exchange the island was totally depopulated and later re-settled by refugees from Crete and Lesbos. The fact that almost the entire island was resettled by refugees without “local” pressure groups led to the situation of a quasi “Cretan” outpost. Among the Cretan Muslims only very few could speak Turkish, and thus in Cunda the Cretan dialect of Greek continued to be spoken and cherished. Folklore traditions and cuisine also entered the island, which make it still today a little “Greece” within Turkey. Yet, also in Cunda the neglect of cultural heritage is omnipresent: old churches were transformed into mosques or are in a state of disrepair. Old monasteries were either totally demolished and their remains used for the construction of new buildings, or are neglected like the monastery of Patricia.

Similarly to Ayvalik, Ioannina, in the northern region of Epirus in Greece, was an important centre of trade under the Ottomans and gained special significance in 1792 when Ali Tepedelenli Pasha of Albania declared it an independent outpost. His rule continued until 1822. Ali Pasha re-built important monuments in existing structures in the city such as the fortress and the Fetihye Cami. Although Ioannina flourished under his rule and important trade relations with European neighbour countries were established, his rule is portrayed as “Rule of the Barbarian” in Greek national Historiography. Apart from the Muslim immigrants that entered the city, Ioannina is important in so far as it was home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in the world, the Romaniotes Community. Other than the Sephardim of Thessalonica, the Ioanniotse Jews did not settle after the expulsion from Spain in 1492 but came from Palestine much earlier in Roman times, probably after the destruction of the second Temple.[75] During the Second World War almost 90% of the Community was sent to Concentration camps in Germany, yet there still remains a small community until today. Thus,
Ioannina was, just as Thessaloniki as multi religious city that slowly took on a homogeneous character through the population exchange and the subsequent expulsion of the Jewish Community.

Amongst the remains are the Kehila Kedosh Synagogue, and a Jewish cemetery which has been repeatedly desecrated in the past years.

Important structures related to our research were also Ataturk`s house in Thessaloniki and Sabetai Zevi's house in Izmir. The former is an invented monument, which was a house used by a Greek family before it was purchased as part of the Turkish consulate. Its interior is decorated with furniture brought from the museums in Istanbul and the link between every article in the house and Ataturk's early life is forged. The history of this building is so complex that it deserves a separate study. Ironically, the 1955 violence against the Greeks in Istanbul is sometimes legitimised as a reaction to alleged attacks on Ataturk's house. The second building is perhaps still unknown and will perhaps never be known. The building shown in the photographs “Sabbatai Zevi's house” is identified according to one of the Turkish archaeologists working in the Agora of Smyrna. The building is standing next to the grounds of the Agora and it is surrounded by fences. Sabbatai Zevi was born in Izmir 1626 and lived there until 1651 before he moved to Thessaloniki to study Jewish mysticism. Sabbetai’s followers in Thessaloniki converted from Judaism to Islam in the 17th century and were deported from Greece in 1922.

4.2 Official Remembrance

Although Holocaust experiences of Thessalonikan Jews and the history of the Jewish community in the city are remarkably documented by community members themselves (there is absolutely no lack of first-person witness accounts, of prose or of academic literature on the topic written by survivors from Thessaloniki or by Greek Jews in general), the topic was scarcely referred to by non-Greeks.

While the deportation and murder of Greek Jews were not overlooked during the 1961 Eichmann trial[76]: the first major public event that dealt with the Holocaust in Israel and probably the most important episode in the shaping of the Israeli collective memory of the Holocaust, it had not succeeded in channelling the experience of Greek Jews to the consciousness of the Israeli society. Representatives of the Greek community in Israel publicly protested what they perceived to be inappropriate representation of their communities' history throughout the trial[77].

The theme of memory marginalisation is again and again mentioned in testimonies and diaries of survivors from Thessaloniki. Through reading these documents it is made clear that, as they simply told their story, they were faced many times with complete ignorance on the topic of the Holocaust of Greek Jews, with indifference even with utter disrespect. Many survivors state these reactions as one of their greatest motivations to make their stories heard. While survivors of Ashkenazi descent feel a great responsibility to keep their stories alive in the international consciousness so that the world will “never forget”, the witnesses from Thessalonika have an additional duty – to affirm their status as Holocaust victims.

Jacques Strumza, who held several conversations with young audiences in Yad Va'Shem[78] about his experiences in Auschwitz, later recalled in his autobiography: “I was surprised to discover that the Holocaust of Greek Jewry was an unknown chapter in the consciousness of my listeners. Most of the young people that I've met were amazed to learn that I was a Sephardic Jew and that my family arrived to Thessaloniki after the deportation from Spain in 1492.”[79]

Another survivor from Thessaloniki, Ya`acov Handeli, writes in his autobiography that “there is a big gap between the level of research and documentation of Greek Jewry on the one hand, and those of other Jewish communities, particularly that of Poland, on the other”[80]. This
A comparison is one expression of the opinion held by many Greek survivors, feeling that “their” Holocaust is not being commemorated enough.

Studying the memoir of Bouena Sarfatty, a female survivor from Thessaloniki, Renée Levine Melammed has observed that this sense of marginalisation was extremely important in Sarfatty’s life course: “There is a distinct sense in the memoir that the majority of the individuals whom Bouena encountered over the years had not a clue about what she had experienced, because of their ignorance either about the details of the war or about the Sephardi community and its suffering. This is a key to understanding the memoir. Bouena was a Sephardi woman who, once she left Salonika, confronted a world made up mainly of Yiddish and English-speaking Ashkenazi Jews[81]. Sarfatty, who survived the war in hiding in Greece, combating with different partisan groups and saving the lives of others while risking her own, spent her post-war life in Israel and Canada, where she was again and again shocked by the “intolerant”[82] attitude of Ashkenazi Jews to her and her life story. In her memoir, she recalls how she being treated as a second-class citizen on several occasions[83].

This sense of being cast aside is evident not only in the narratives of the victims themselves, but has also lingered with their children. During our research in Thessaloniki, we have accompanied a group of second-generation descendants of Holocaust survivors from Thessaloniki, that organised a trip from Israel through Poland, to visit the death camps, and then to Thessaloniki, to visit their parents’ first home. The feeling of suppressed memory and the yearning for recognition were extremely clear in their sayings. They often used a much angrier tone than that of the survivors themselves. When we told them that we were conducting a research about the Holocaust of the Jews of Thessaloniki they were overjoyed and expressed their gratitude to us, for making, as they put it, the effort to shed more light on the history of their families.

One group member told us how as a 3rd grade pupil, she announced to her teacher that she will not be able to attend school the next day, since she is going with her family to an inauguration ceremony in Yad Va’Shem. She was deeply hurt when the teacher replied in a rude tone: “What can your family possibly have to do with the Holocaust?”. The young girl, feeling that her family’s experience of loss and survival was being questioned, simply answered: “But mommy has a number on her arm.”

This attitude towards Sephardi Jews was (and still is, some would argue) symptomatic to the post WWII Jewish society, especially in Israel, where non-Ashkenazi Jews[84] were classified as inferior by European and North American Jews, that exclusively constructed the country’s elite during the first decades of its existence[85]. One result of this sociological phenomenon was the appropriation of the Holocaust experience solely in the hands of Ashkenazi Jews. Starting with Israel, then followed by the diaspora, the Holocaust became associated first and foremost with Central Europe, especially with Poland.

This point of view, exclusively dominating the Holocaust remembrance sphere during the first post-war decades and, to an extent, still leading the commemoration front today, has created the expression “The Holocaust of European Jewry (Sho’at Yehudei Eiropa)”. European being, in the common Jewish phrasing, a synonym for “Ashkenazi”. The Jews of Thessaloniki, though geographically originating from Europe as well, are not necessarily perceived by the Jewish world as European Jews (for that matter, Sephardi Jews who lived in European countries would also not perceive themselves as Europeans in the same manner as Jews from Hungary, for instance, would). In other words, this popular term, which can be found in numerous acts of commemoration, from the Jewish prayer in honour of the Holocaust victims[86] to the famous memorial in central Berlin[87], excludes Thessaloniki’s Jewry from the Holocaust experience.

The situation described above was most true during the first three decades of the world’s recovery from the trauma of WWII. However, during the 1980’s, as a result of sociological developments in the Israeli society as well as the entire Jewish world, of new historical discoveries and approaches and of new perceptions of remembrance, the history of the Jews of Thessaloniki was able to receive better, if not yet appropriate treatment.

It is beyond the limits of this project to properly analyse the reasons for these developments[88], but we can point out to several examples that depict them. As the centre of the contemporary Jewish world and as the country where most survivors from Thessaloniki eventually chose to rebuild their lives, the examples we chose to include are related to Israel and Israeli society, although similar tendencies can be recognised in the international scope as well[89].

It was first during the 1980’s that Israeli education ministry decided to include the events that took place in the Balkans and in North Africa in the Holocaust educational program. Analysing
from 2001: Holocaust Library Publications, to the book “The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness Accounts” can be seen in the preface written by Steven Bowman, editor of The Sephardi and Greek treatment of the history of the Jews of Greece and of Thessaloniki in specific. One example publications are still usually accompanied by a preface reproaching the lack of proper memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these while these specific events were accompanied and followed by numerous publications of memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these recurring theme in this journal is the ignorance of the general population in regards to the Holocaust of Greek Jewry[92].

In 1986, Dalit Ofer, then a young producer for Galey Zahal, the Israeli army’s radio station, decided to dedicate the Holocaust Memorial Day broadcast solely to the still rather unknown subject of the Holocaust in Greece. This broadcast, titled “After the War”, was considered groundbreaking, since it was the first to relate to the issue in the Israeli mainstream culture[93]. The majority of it dealt with the community of Thessaloniki, since it was the Greek community to suffer the biggest loses during WWIII. As part of the broadcast, Ofer recorded a session with Yehuda Poliker and Ya’akov Gilad, a duo that have worked together in the Israeli music industry for several years, Gilad providing texts and Poliker composing and performing them. Ya’akov Gilad is the son of Polish survivors, his partner, Poliker, the son of Thessalonikan survivors. The purpose of this joint session was to shed light on the story of Greek Jewry through the collaboration of the two artists, forming a collective point of view from their shared experiences.

This session gave birth to a much larger cultural event, the album “Efer Ve’Avak” (“Ashes and Dust”), released by Poliker and Gilad in 1988. In this album, that dealt mainly with the phenomenon of the second-generation, combined through music the story of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, making it one shared tragedy. Songs like “Haki Li, Saloniki” (“Wait for Me, Thessaloniki”), which is comprised of new lyrics written by Gilad to a famous folk tune originally sung in Ladino, or “Prachim Ba’Ruach” (“Flowers in the Wind”), written by Gilad’s mother, Warsaw-born writer and poet Halina Birenbaum, and composed by Poliker, with distinguished characterisations of Greek folk music, defied the consensus of “The Holocaust of European Jewry” and offered an entirely new approach to Holocaust remembrance. “Efer Ve’Avak” is still considered one of the most important albums ever to be released in Israel, continuously peaking at the top of the occasional lists for “Best Israeli Album of All Times”.

The production of the album was accompanied by the recording of a documentary film by director Orna Ben Dor. “Biglal Ha’Milchama Ha’Hi” (“Because of that War”), released also in 1988, followed Gilad and Poliker in the recording studio and incorporated scenes of their work with interviews with them[94] and with their parents, the survivors. Jacko Poliker, the singer’s father, told his story and weeped in front of the camera. To the majority of the film’s viewers this was the first time that they had heard a first-hand account of the events that took place in Thessaloniki during the war. Ben Dor’s film was very influential in the shaping of the new Holocaust memorial realm, in accordance with the director’s wish to “take the Holocaust out of the museum”[95].

Also in 1988, researcher and author, Dr. Gideon Greif, received one of the highest prizes in the Israeli journalism field, the Sokolov Prize, for a special radio broadcast he edited the previous year under the title, ‘Thessaloniki-Auschwitz’. Greif travelled in 1987 to Auschwitz and to Thessaloniki with eight survivors that were born in the city, and recorded interviews with them about their lives before the war, their Holocaust experiences, their battle for survival and the reconstruction of their worlds after their release. The awarding of the prize to Dr. Greif was not only a cultural event, but also an official recognition by the Israeli state of the importance and necessity of the story of the Greek Jews to the commemoration of the Holocaust.

While these specific events were accompanied and followed by numerous publications of memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these while these specific events were accompanied and followed by numerous publications of memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these recurring theme in this journal is the ignorance of the general population in regards to the Holocaust of Greek Jewry[92].

The Israeli organisation, Second Generation for the Commemoration of Greek Jewry, initiated in 1986 an annual publication under the title “Lo Nishkach!” (“We Shall Not Forget!”). The journal, published during several years on the evening of the Holocaust Commemoration Day, included personal stories, academic articles and reflections of second-generation authors. A recurring theme in this journal is the ignorance of the general population in regards to the Holocaust of Greek Jewry[92].

In 1986, Dalit Ofer, then a young producer for Galey Zahal, the Israeli army’s radio station, decided to dedicate the Holocaust Memorial Day broadcast solely to the still rather unknown subject of the Holocaust in Greece. This broadcast, titled “After the War”, was considered groundbreaking, since it was the first to relate to the issue in the Israeli mainstream culture[93]. The majority of it dealt with the community of Thessaloniki, since it was the Greek community to suffer the biggest loses during WWIII. As part of the broadcast, Ofer recorded a session with Yehuda Poliker and Ya’akov Gilad, a duo that have worked together in the Israeli music industry for several years, Gilad providing texts and Poliker composing and performing them. Ya’akov Gilad is the son of Polish survivors, his partner, Poliker, the son of Thessalonikan survivors. The purpose of this joint session was to shed light on the story of Greek Jewry through the collaboration of the two artists, forming a collective point of view from their shared experiences.

This session gave birth to a much larger cultural event, the album “Efer Ve’Avak” (“Ashes and Dust”), released by Poliker and Gilad in 1988. In this album, that dealt mainly with the phenomenon of the second-generation, combined through music the story of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, making it one shared tragedy. Songs like “Haki Li, Saloniki” (“Wait for Me, Thessaloniki”), which is comprised of new lyrics written by Gilad to a famous folk tune originally sung in Ladino, or “Prachim Ba’Ruach” (“Flowers in the Wind”), written by Gilad’s mother, Warsaw-born writer and poet Halina Birenbaum, and composed by Poliker, with distinguished characterisations of Greek folk music, defied the consensus of “The Holocaust of European Jewry” and offered an entirely new approach to Holocaust remembrance. “Efer Ve’Avak” is still considered one of the most important albums ever to be released in Israel, continuously peaking at the top of the occasional lists for “Best Israeli Album of All Times”.

The production of the album was accompanied by the recording of a documentary film by director Orna Ben Dor. “Biglal Ha’Milchama Ha’Hi” (“Because of that War”), released also in 1988, followed Gilad and Poliker in the recording studio and incorporated scenes of their work with interviews with them[94] and with their parents, the survivors. Jacko Poliker, the singer’s father, told his story and weeped in front of the camera. To the majority of the film’s viewers this was the first time that they had heard a first-hand account of the events that took place in Thessaloniki during the war. Ben Dor’s film was very influential in the shaping of the new Holocaust memorial realm, in accordance with the director’s wish to “take the Holocaust out of the museum”[95].

Also in 1988, researcher and author, Dr. Gideon Greif, received one of the highest prizes in the Israeli journalism field, the Sokolov Prize, for a special radio broadcast he edited the previous year under the title, ‘Thessaloniki-Auschwitz’. Greif travelled in 1987 to Auschwitz and to Thessaloniki with eight survivors that were born in the city, and recorded interviews with them about their lives before the war, their Holocaust experiences, their battle for survival and the reconstruction of their worlds after their release. The awarding of the prize to Dr. Greif was not only a cultural event, but also an official recognition by the Israeli state of the importance and necessity of the story of the Greek Jews to the commemoration of the Holocaust.

While these specific events were accompanied and followed by numerous publications of memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these while these specific events were accompanied and followed by numerous publications of memoirs, autobiographies, testimonies and researches, it is important to state that these recurring theme in this journal is the ignorance of the general population in regards to the Holocaust of Greek Jewry[92].
In our attempt to understand the state of this affair nowadays, we decided to analyse materials produced by the educational department of Yad Va'Shem. As a leading institute in the sphere of Holocaust remembrance, we believe that examining Yad Va'Shem's publications and publications can provide a fairly balanced picture of how the Jewish community of Thessaloniki is being remembered today.

Yad Va'Shem has been operating the International School for Holocaust Studies since 1993. The school offers training for educators, publishes books, films and research as well as produces original teaching materials for different ages and levels. The self-proclaimed aim of this institute is to develop Holocaust education as "interdisciplinary, multi-faceted and multi-directional, focusing on how individuals lived before, during and after the Holocaust, as well as the "choiceless choices" they were forced to confront in this period"[97]. Our intention in examining the material produced by the school was to determine how and to what extent is the story of the Jews of Thessaloniki emphasised in them[98].

We will first examine lesson plans[99] offered by the school, both in Hebrew and in English[100], starting with the Hebrew ones. Out of six plans available for elementary school pupils, one makes a reference to Thessaloniki. The plan is titled "Children in the Ghetto", and offers an interactive website that depicts a virtual ghetto. One of the photos on the site is from the Bar Mitzvah of Into Shimshi, celebrated in the Thessaloniki ghetto in 1936. In the eight lesson plans available for middle school pupils, there is no reference to Thessaloniki. The existence of the Holocaust of the Greek Jews is indirectly mentioned in the lesson plan dealing with Righteous Amongst Nations, when it is casually mentioned that such righteous people also operated in Greece. Six out of 21 lesson plans for high school pupils make reference to the topic. The first is focusing on the author and survivor of Italian descent, Primo Levi.

This plan includes an article about Greek Jews in the Holocaust, excerpts from the testimony of Aliza Baruch, a survivor from Thessaloniki and a photo of children survivors from Thessaloniki, celebrating Hanukah after their release from the camp; Another plan, "The pain of liberation and the return to life", includes excerpts from the testimony of Shlomo Cohen, a survivor from Thessaloniki; A lesson plan titled "The world after Auschwitz" includes the same testimony; The lesson plan "Jews and their environment", dealing with the Jewish communities' relation with the local non-Jewish community, includes a reference to anti-Semitism and tolerance in Greece in the main text of the plan, excerpts from the testimony of Shlomo Charon, a survivor from Thessaloniki and a photo of a Jewish man in Thessaloniki in the beginning of the 20th century; A plan that focuses on historiography, consciousness and memory offers a recommendation to the documentary "Because of the War", mentioned earlier; A lesson plan titled "Documentation and commemoration during and after the Holocaust" refers to the deportation of Jews from the Greek cities Laros and Kos; A complete lesson plan dedicated to the Holocaust of the Jews in the Balkan areas makes broad reference to Thessaloniki and offers four testomnies, two original documents regarding the yellow-star regulations and the deportations, an article about Greek Jews in the Holocaust and four photos from Thessaloniki. Also, in the introduction part it is written that the research on the topic is quite limited. Alas, this lesson plan can hardly improve the situation, since all but one (excerpt from the testimony of Yitzchak Cohen, a survivor from Thessaloniki) of the links to the educational material offered in it are broken, leading to empty pages.

The English lesson plans are comprised of two plans for elementary schools, five for middle schools and 18 for high schools. Two lesson plans from the latter category include references to the Holocaust of Thessalonikan and Greek Jews: In the lesson plan "Learning and Remembering about Auschwitz-Birkenau", Greece is casually mentioned in the introductory text. Excerpts from the testimony of Ovadia Baruch, a survivor from Thessaloniki, are also available in the plan; A lesson plan about children's lives in the ghettos includes excerpts from Erika Aamariglio Kounio's memoir, "From Thessaloniki to Auschwitz and Back".

To summarise this, out of 56 lesson plans, ten give some reference to the Jews of Thessaloniki or Greece in general. When comparing the references of Thessaloniki to those made of Kaunas or Lodz, for instance, it is clear that the first does not receive the amount of attention it deserves. The inclusion of Thessaloniki in the materials modelled on Yad Va'Shem is not adequate. This is also a result of the fact that the exact location is not mentioned; A lesson plan dedicated to the Holocaust of the Jews in the Balkan area makes broad reference to Thessaloniki and offers four testomnies, two original documents regarding the yellow-star regulations and the deportations, an article about Greek Jews in the Holocaust and four photos from Thessaloniki.
Another interesting inspection is that of “Zika” (“Affinity”), an online magazine in Hebrew, published by the International School for Holocaust Studies and distributed to teachers, educational institutions and commemoration institutions. “Zika” was first published in August, 2004. Until this day, 19 issues of the magazine have been circulated. In all 19 issues, we managed to find only three indirect references to the Jewish community of Thessaloniki: A film review on “Because of the War” in the December, 2006 issue; Under the title “Holocaust teaching in multidisciplinary methods”, a new program for children is mentioned in the issue of September 2005, in which “Jocha the Thessalonikan” introduces the young audience to “the vibrant past of a Jewish community before the Holocaust”; In the same issue, a book review written by Dr. Gideon Gref about Itamar Levin’s “Lexikon Ha’Shoah” (The Holocaust lexicon) offers a correction to a factual error in the book, regarding the chief rabbi of the community in Thessaloniki at the time of the German occupation, rabbi Tzevi Koretz.

In all fairness it must also be stated that Yad Va’Shem has taken measures to commemorate the Holocaust of the Jews of Thessaloniki, for instance by producing the documentary “May Your Memory Be Love” in 2008, telling the story of Aliza and Ovadia Baruch, two survivors from Thessaloniki who fell in love in Auschwitz and established their home together in Israel. In “The Valley of Communities”, a memorial in honour of all Jewish communities that have been affected by the Holocaust, a large stone bearing the name of Thessaloniki is prominent among other stones. Collecting testimonies from Greek survivors was and still is accomplished with all the appropriate seriousness and respect.

And still, our research has led us to discover many memoirs, texts, poems, photos and other materials regarding the fate of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki. Realizing that such wealth of sources exists, we cannot but feel disappointed by the rather unbalanced representation of this history in the educational branch of the institution, which is considered worldwide to be a pioneer in the field of Holocaust remembrance.

When viewed as a mirror to the tendencies and trends of the Holocaust memory sphere in general, the examination of the educational materials of the International School for Holocaust Studies shows that though the history of Jews of Thessaloniki managed to break out of the sidelines, it is still far away from the centre of this sphere.

4.3 Personal Memories

4.3.1 Muslims Remember

The Muslim population which was deported from Greece in exchange for the Greeks who sought refuge from the Greco-Turkish war of 1920-22 is today mostly lying in graves scattered around Turkey. Their descendants commemorate their suffering through memory trips to their ancestral lands. First, I turn to the cemeteries in Turkey which hold the Muslims from Greece. Second I discuss the descendants of exchanged Muslims who visited the area around Thessaloniki on June 24-26, 2009.

Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı, the Foundation of Populations Exchanged in Lausanne, is the first Turkish organization of immigrants from Greece who were forced to move to Turkey as a consequence of the Lausanne Treaty. They are organizing trips to northern Greece and Crete to visit the hometowns and villages of their forefathers. They are also encouraging research into the population exchange because the Turkish perspective is relatively less represented in the history of the movement of people in 1922. One of the several trips to Greece organized by the Foundation this summer arrived in Thessaloniki in June 24. Early in the next morning, we started the marathon to visit as many as 8 villages. Five of the participants were young and they looked not only for their hometowns but also for an identity. They knew very little of the places they sought for but they were very excited to be in the vicinity of the places where their grandparents were born. In their ancestral villages they tried to create imagined connections to the land and the old-looking buildings. When a villager challenged their claim to belong to these villages, they were consciously defensive of their identity and roots.

There were some noteworthy participants who were not actually exchanged people themselves. Iskender Özsoy is a fascinating personality and a journalist who wrote two books about the population exchange and makes interviews with everyone whose story is involved in the population exchange. Sefer Güberç, the general secretary of the foundation, organizes the memory trips and guides them. I thanked Sefer Güberç for answering many questions about the foundation and integrating me into the memory trip and Iskender Özsoy for explaining critical issues about the population exchange. Erol Güberç, an activist for the protection of historical monuments in Eastern Anatolia, left an impact on me with his idealism. He founded AKÜL-DER to preserve the history and nature in Akdağmağdeni, Yozgat. His stories of continuing destruction of Orthodox Churches, Armenian bathhouses in this small town demonstrate the vulnerability of historical monuments in rural Turkey. He spent futile
efforts to gain the support of local bureaucracy to protect historically important buildings, yet he is still suing those who violate the laws that protect such buildings. Some were in the trip just to travel abroad and look for business connections.

Ali Onay's Story

Ali Onay is one of the few people still alive that can still vividly recount the experiences of the 1923 population exchange. Born in Resmo in 1916 he was resettled to Turkey in 1923 with his family. His house is still decorated with pictures taken in Crete, among family portraits one can also find a photograph of the crowded boat that had taken them from their place of birth to their new "homeland".

A:O: “And we entered the boat in Rhetymnon in mid July. After a very long journey, we finally arrived in Cunda Island. There, they brought us all to the old Palace to the Quarantine section, it was in the old Palace. To wash us with medications, with water we had to put all our clothes into the sterilizer. They disinfected us so that we don’t bring diseases to Anatolia. The people who would have seen us in that moment would have laughed hilariously. Clothes from the stove were crumpled, shrunk, the fez was shrunk and could not be worn by the men since they were too small. The tassel of the fez shrank. Of course, they were obliged to wear them. Because the other clothes were in the trunks and in bundles, there was no possibility to change them.”[101]

Upon arrival, the fact that nearly the entire population of Ayvalık and Cunda had been exchanged can be considered an advantage for the incoming refugees, because they were able to settle in an area without other pressure or majority groups.[102] In many accounts, for example by the Cretans that arrived in Mersin, which still held a substantial "local" non exchanged population, exchangees explain how difficult the initial time was as "newcomers" vis a vis the "local" population.[103] In Cunda, on the other hand, almost the entire population of the island was constituted by the refugees from Crete and Lesbos.

This should not divert attention from the fact that after the welcoming contacts, eventually two distinct groups developed and relations were based on mutual suspicion. The majority of the Cretans was not able to speak Turkish but only the Cretan Greek dialect referred to as "Giritçe", which resulted in them being called “yarım gâvur" (half non Muslim) by the exchangees from Lesbos. Making allusion to their close inter communal relationships with the Christians on Crete. Similarly, people who came from Lesbos were called “Kalın Kuyruk" (thick tail), which makes allusion to a certain kind of "şal" (i.e. special kind of garment ) that these people were wearing, which resembles a tail. A:O “We came and around 90% of the people who came with us did not know Turkish. They said “Half Non-Muslims" to us. But later this changed of course.”.

The emphasis on the fact that “they", coming from Crete, brought culture to the island is something that was continuously emphasised. As “culture" they referred to aspects of life from dancing, music, over to food and manners.

A.O: “Look: our culture has a culture of table manners. A living culture, a food culture, a reading and writing culture, everything is included in this. My father said to the neighbours, my father came on a horse, while the neighbors came out of ( their houses) “Babula” ( note: Greek word for somebody who scares another person) “coward", what are these cowards, my
father said. They are not wearing clothes. Only a black Hiram. (Note: A Hiram is a kind of cloak or gown). Not even a sheet. A Hiram. Village life. City life. This is the difference between the people. Look at how they were raised. Family is very important. Look here is a friend of my son, he went to school. He became an engineer, what he used say, do you know? We learned how to eat food from the Cretans. Do you know? They even did not know how to eat food with fork and knife. You don't know these things. I know everybody here who came from Lesbos. I was a child but a very clever child, this I know." [105]

Most of the people who came tried to engage in one way or another in the economic structure that was present in Ayvalık, which was olive oil business or mining. Some olive oil factories were still left from the departed Greeks, yet many in need for repair. Later, many also engaged in fishing, which became one of the most lucrative revenues. Especially the Cretans were very sea oriented and many of the Cretan refugees eventually grew rich as they engaged in smuggling fish to the Greek Islands. [106] Tourism was also an industry that later flourished under the Cretans and still today many of the main restaurants and hotels on Cunda island are in control of second or generation refugees from Crete. [107]

4.3.2 Jews Remember

Though today the Jewish community of Thessaloniki is a well-organised and well-recognised community, it is unable to reconstruct the times of pre-WWII. With less than one thousand members, the community’s past as “Jerusalem of the Balkan” is today only a distant and tragic memory. Yet, an increasing number of Israelis of Greek descent visit their country of origin, often combined with a visit to Auschwitz. The order of their visit occurred to us as a turning back of time: the survivors took their murdered family members with them from Auschwitz back to Thessaloniki, Volos, Crete and then home to Israel.

During our research period we encountered one such group, the majority second generation, aged roughly between 50-70, some first generation, who either moved out of Greece before the tragedy, or survived in the mountains with the partisans. We witnessed two emotional dinners, hosted by the Jewish Community in their centre. The Greek Jews and Israeli Greeks sang Ladino and Judeo-Greek songs together, which the visitors remembered from childhood. Their spoken Ladino was rusty, some did not speak it at all, but each of them could join the singing.

When asked what it meant to be Greek, what personal memories they had in relation to their Greekhood, the answer was always: Food! This was also true for the Israelis of Greek descent we met in Israel. From the twenty-eight oral histories collected there, no significant conclusions can be drawn. However, some impressions can be offered, which we would like to do by allowing our interviewees to speak in their own voice. Some names have been changed at the request of the interviewees:

"My great-grandfather was a hero. My father’s family came to Israel in the late 19th century. In the early 20th century, he English wanted to throw them out of the village they made in the middle of nowhere, there were a few hundred people there. My father had not been born yet, only his older brother, my grandfather’s only child then. My great-grandfather wanted to see his son’s family safe. When they English said, they would put everyone in the village on a boat to Greece, my great-grandfather said: ‘Better to die here, than go back to Greece’, then he doused himself in gasoline and burnt to death. The British let the others stay.” Hava (36)

"We never went there, it was too hard for them to go back, the most horrible things happened to them there. They never even really talked about it at all. For me Greece was like a dark spot, with the exception of the food, always the food. My father cooked the meat dishes, my mother the rest. Always like that.” Emmanuel (56)

"When my father was already eighty years old, I took him. I asked him to show me. My mother had already died. We went to Saloniki, but their house was not there anymore. He showed me the school and we went to the cemetery, where the university is today. So many things are different today, we almost found nothing from his life.” Chaya (47)

"My Greek heritage? I think the food and the big family dinners. The spanakopitas, the kiftikas de prassa, the boyos de rayo. But I don’t make them, it takes too much time. My grandmother would be in the kitchen for days. If it was easier to do, sure, but now I just remember them. And I’m a pastry chef…” Eynat (31)

"Grandmother’s pastelikos, little pastries with almonds and honey, and of course the savoury burekitas, these were the dishes that made the big family dinners. After grandma died it was not the same, we tried to make these things, but it was not the same and when we were in Saloniki, we looked for them, but they didn’t taste right.” Ehud (27)

"I learnt some Ladino, because it was my parents’ secret language, when they didn’t want the children to understand, so we had to learn it. But it’s really the songs that I remember (starts...
singing a melancholy song, about a love lost)" Yoshua (62)

"Saloniki, Saloniki, always Saloniki! I am revolted by this! You think there were no Jews anywhere else in Greece? We were from Volos! Hundreds we were! My sister (her voice breaks down), she had a little girl. Dead, all of them dead. What about them? Why always Saloniki?" Esther (86)

5. Summary

In our research we tried to show how the multi cultural character of the city of Thessaloniki has evolved into a more and more uniform make up. While the city of Thessaloniki had seen a living together of Christsnas, Muslims and Jews over many centuries, the beginning of the 20th century clearly heralded the end to this make up. Through the compulsory exchange of populations implemented under the treaty of Lausanne in 1923 and the subsequent deportation of the Greek Jewry in the Second World War set an abrupt end to probably one of the most multi cultural cities in the world.

With the artificial homogenization of the city, also a more pronounced definition of "Greekness" emerged. While Jews, Muslims and Christians had lived together for centuries as more or less equal citizens in the Ottoman Empire, the notion of the Greek nation state fused Greekness with being Christian. In a way, the compulsory exchange of populations paved the way for a new, pronounced anti Semitism in Greek society. Having been transferred under the exchange of populations to Greece, the newcomers developed a pronounced “Greek” identity that often enough developed into a pronounced Anti Semitism. On the state level as well, a policy was adopted that identified the Jewish population as “separate” from the Greek population, thus glossing over the fact that Jews and Greeks had lived together peacefully for centuries. Reference to former Jewish buildings and institutions remains scarce or is often not acknowledged at all.

The first part of our research tried to give a historical background to the population exchange signed under the Treaty of Lausanne and the subsequent deportation of the Muslim population of Thessaloniki. While the city had seen dramatic streams of refugees already before the signing of the Treaty, after 1923 only very few Muslims were found in the city, while at the same time an enormous amount of refugees from Asia Minor had to be accommodated. The events that followed in the second World War eliminated from March 15th until August 10, 1943, almost 50,000 people, approximately 95% of the community, through deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The majority of them died in the gas chambers few hours upon their arrival. A vivid, prosperous community that had developed safely for centuries was eliminated in a matter of a few months.

In our historiography we tried to summarize how the remembrance of the Muslims and the Jewish population was rather marginalized in Greek national historiography. Only recently a revisionist approach had been adopted that emphasized the former Multicultural of the city. In the subsequent section Layers of Remembrance we focus on the field work that we undertook in Thessaloniki in the summer of 2009. As for the Muslim community, we tried to collect and visit all former Ottoman Monuments that were left in the city. Again, this research showed that much more buildings survived than had been acknowledged by the Ministry of Culture in respective Tourist guides. Furthermore, only some of the buildings were adequately restored and accessible to tourists. While most of the Byzantine Churches have special signposts and information billboards, this was far from the case for many of the Ottoman buildings. Despite the recent efforts to reconstitute the Ottoman heritage of the architecture in Thessaloniki, minor and less prominent monuments are fading into oblivion. The city has not decided upon the ways of utilising these architectural monuments, almost exclusively they are used as venues for cultural or art exhibitions. Even though some of these exhibitions represent current developments in painting or photography, some of them are serving a narrowly nationalist audience. The opening of Ottoman monuments to local visitors has served to familiarize the young people with non-Christian aspects of their history. Consequently, the young people in Thessaloniki are more open to discuss the multifaceted history of their city than their predecessors as was evident in their welcoming approach to our group.

While our prime research focused on Thessaloniki, we also wanted to include some impressions from Turkey, because the Population exchange has been a reciprocal event that shaped Turkey’s identity in as much as it shaped Greece. Just as the Ottoman heritage in Greece, the Christian heritage in Turkey remains neglected as some examples from Ioannina and Cunda show. Even our attempts to visit a graveyard of exchangees proved very difficult and showed how sensitive the topic of Muslims refugees from Greece still is.
In the next section we tried to focus on the Official Remembrance of the Deportation of the Jews from Thessaloniki. Although Holocaust experiences of Thessalonikan Jews and the history of the Jewish community in the city are well documented by community members themselves the topic was scarcely referred to by non-Greeks. Our research showed, that the history of Ashkenazi, Eastern European Jewry is far more acknowledged than the history of Sephardic Greece. This attitude towards Sephardi Jews was and still is symptomatic to the post WWII Jewish society, especially in Israel, where non-Ashkenazi Jews were classified as inferior by European and North American Jews, that exclusively constructed the country’s elite during the first decades of its existence. One result of this sociological phenomenon was the appropriation of the Holocaust experience solely in the hands of Ashkenazi Jews. Starting with Israel, then followed by the Diaspora, the Holocaust became associated first and foremost with Central Europe, especially with Poland.

In our attempt to understand the state of this affair nowadays, we decided to analyse materials produced by the educational department of Yad Va'Shem and established that the marginalization of Sephardi (Greek) Jewry is also reflected in the educational material available for the study of the Holocaust.

In the last part of our paper we tried to give voice to those who still remember the exchange of populations and, respectively, the deportation following the Second World War. On the side of the Muslims we established some contacts in Cunda, close to Ayvalik, with a survivor of the Muslim Community from Crete. Additionally to that we also interviewed some second and third generation refugees on a trip to their ancestral “homeland” in Greece.

On the side of the Jewish community, we met a group of Israelis of Greek decent, the majority second generation, aged roughly between 50-70, some first generation, who either moved out of Greece before the tragedy, or survived in the mountains with the partisans.

Thus, while our project encompasses two seemingly different events our work tries to point out how both events are interrelated and eventually led to the gradual homogenization of the city. We tried to show this process through touching upon different “layers” that reveal this process, such as architecture and oral history. Despite our general impression that this important heritage is not acknowledged enough, there are positive events that give rise to hope. In the past years a general trend towards the acknowledgement of the multi character of the city has been initiated, be it through memorial tours organized in Israel, Greece or Turkey or be it inside Greece through the establishment of a Jewish History Study Group in the University of Thessaloniki. Respectively, the the Jewish community finally managed to get their memorial placed in a central spot, after much to and fro with the local government, but it probably hasn’t occurred to anyone to create a memorial for those part of the forced exchange.

6. Footnotes

[3] Fleming, p. 188
[4] The history of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, a fascinating history of many ebbs and lows, is brought here only in a short and superficial manner, since it is not the actual focus of this project. It is based on the joint reading of the following titles: Benmayor, Iakov, Thessaloniki Ir Va’Em Be’Israel; Mazower Mark, Salonica: City of Ghosts; Lewkowicz, Bea, The Jewish Community of Salonica: History, Memory, Identity.
[7] It is important to note that Thessaloniki’s Jewry is unique for participating in almost all aspects of commercial life in the city, unlike other Jewish communities that were mostly confined to a small number trades (if not a single one).
[8] The process of integrating the city into the Greek state as well as imposing the Greek culture as the dominant one.
[10] King George was actually assassinated by a troubled Greek with a history of insanity.
[14] see Cala, Alina in Antisemitism Without Jews and Without Antisemites, pp 39-51
[15] The language spoken by Jews originating in Spain
[16] Mazower: Salonica, City of Ghosts, p. 277
[20] The Cabinet Office decided in 1947 that “particular care should be taken to protect the interests, on the one hand, of the State and, on the other, of those persons now established in
property belonging to Jews, whether they are established as custodians or by virtue of lease agreements concluded with the custodians appointed during the occupation.”, see Documents on the History of the Greek Jews

[21] ibid., p. 258

[22] ibid., p. 396

[23] ibid., p. 38


[27] ibid., p. 38

[28] ibid., pp. 389-90


[32] ibid., p. 389


[34] Mazower, pp. 313

[35] ibid. P 321


[38] ibid, p. 382.

[39] It is here important to note that many Jewish eye-witnesses and Holocaust survivors from Thessaloniki state in their testimonies that they themselves never experienced anti-semitism nor even tensions between Jews and Greeks before the German occupation during the Second World War. It is often mentioned in these testimonies that relations between the Jews and their neighboring Christians were very pleasant. It is difficult to tell if this was simply the case in the private sphere while the politic sphere was more influenced by nationalism, if the witnesses’ memory deceives them for psychological reasons of relief from the painful past or is it due to the fact that the Thessalonikan Jews still feel the need to prove their allegiance with Greece (as we have often noted during our visit to Thessaloniki and through various materials published by the Jewish community).

[40] Ino Engel, general secretariat of the community, told us very proudly during our stay in Thessaloniki how persistently the community is running this battle, at the great displeasure of the current authorities.

[41] According to the official records from Auschwitz, published as an appendix in Strumza, Jaques, U'Bacharta Ba'Chayim: Me'Saloniki Le Yerushalayim Derech Auschwitz Ve'Pariz (published in English as Violinist in Auschwitz: From Salonica to Jerusalem), 48, 453 Jews arrived from Thessaloniki to the camp. A group of several hundreds, mainly community leaders and wealthy families, were deported in early August to Bergen Bezen.


[45] See Michael Herzfeld, A Place in History, Social and Monumental Time in a Cretan Town,


[50] Ibid. p. 186

[51] Such a comparison is, of course, unjust. It is not our intention to conduct a "body count" or to attempt to measure something as unmeasurable as human suffering. But the plain facts are that the percentage of annihilation within one community is remarkably high in the case of Thessaloniki.

[52] The division between Ashkenazim and Sephardim is the major division within the Jewish people. While Ashkenazi Jews' origin is traced back to the area of the Rheinland, later spreading across Europe, the Sephardic Jews' origin is in Spain, from where they've been deported in the 15th century and then settled primarily in the lands of the Ottoman empire. The two groups, influenced by the lands in which they developed, differ in language, traditions, religious customs and cultural habits. This division is considered to this day the cause of many inner conflicts in the Jewish world.


[54] Ibid, p. 22.


[56] Ibid, p. 25.

[57] Greif, Gideon, We Wept Without Tears: Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz, p. 83.


[59] Mark Mazower, Salonica: the City of Ghosts,


[61] On my second visit to Villa Mordoch, Thalia presented to me a list of Ottoman buildings that she prepared with the help of her mother. I thank her for her kindness.

[62] "Cultural Center of Thessaloniki", pamphlet published by the Cultural Foundation of the National Bank.

[63] For the information on the history of Villa Allatini, I thank S. Orailoglou, a staff of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki. Orailoglou is a first generation immigrant Greek and he frequently visits Istanbul where his parents were born. He is a fan of the Turkish football team, Besiktas.


[65] I owe this information to Thalia-Maria Alexaki.

[66] I thank Pliota Natassa, the researcher at the Center of Byzantine Research for the information about the centre.


[68] I thank Prof. Mark Mazower of Columbia University for helping me to find Prof. Basil C. Gounaris in Thessaloniki.

[69] Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine Churches of Thessaloniki, does not recognize the existence of the minaret. The text does not mention the only surviving minaret of the city from the 1925 destruction. The pictures of Rotunda reprinted in the booklet apparently conceal the minaret.

[70] Mark Mazower, Salonica: City of Ghosts. The following account of the 1994 debate on
Rotunda is summarized from Mazower’s book.

[71] Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine Churches of Thessaloniki, reproduces the legend of the St. Demetrius as historical fact and laments the building’s conversion to a mosque by Ottomans.

[72] Ibid.

[73] I thank Basil Gounaris for this valuable information.

[74] I thank Münevver Mutluay, a first generation immigrant from Greece, for showing me her house, built by the past inhabitants of the village.

[75] Fromm, The Jewish Community of Ioannina, Introduction

[76] Itzhak Nechama, a survivor from Thessaloniki, was invited to testify in the courtroom. In addition, nine testimonies of Jews who were not residing in Israel were delivered by the Ghetto Fighters’ Museum and heard during the trial.

[77] Fleming, p. 36.

[78] Yad Va’Shem, Hebrew for “memorial and name”, is the central official memorial for Holocaust survivors and victims in Israel, situated in Jerusalem. This institute’s importance for remembrance, research and education related to the topic is highly acknowledged throughout the world.

[79] Strumza, p. 102.

[80] Handeli, Ya’acov (Jack), A Greek Jew From Salonica Remembers, p. 111.


[82] Ibid., p. 165.

[83] Ibid., p. 164.

[84] This term includes both Sephardic and Mizrahi (whose stem from North-African Jewry) Jews.


[86] Tefilat El Ma’leh Rachamim – Merciful God, which is traditionally cited during Holocaust commemoration ceremonies, is referring to the Holocaust of the Jews of Europe.

[87] The official title of the memorial, more commonly known as the “Holocaust Memorial” is “Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe”.

[88] Since these changes are massive topics in their own right and are not directly the issue of this project, we can only state in brief a few reasons that set them in motion. Within the Israeli society, awareness of the problems of inequality between Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi Jews sparked around this time calls for improvements and integration of so far neglected groups in the mainstream national narrative. Historical discoveries on the topic of the Holocaust in Greece include, amongst many others, the famous “Waldheim affair”. During the 1986 presidency campaign in Austria it was revealed that Kurt Waldheim, one of the candidates, served as a Wehrmacht officer in Thessaloniki. The debate around the degree of his involvement in the murder of the local Jewish community raised awareness to the fact that such events actually took place. Another issue is the growing acknowledgment of the fact that the survivors’ generation is slowly dying out, which led to the need to document as many first-hand accounts as possible. Many survivors that were simply not heard until then were suddenly asked to tell their story.

[89] It is worthwhile to mention several international events that indicate a growing interest in Thessaloniki and the Holocaust around that time frame as well. For instance, the foundation of the publication program “Studies in Sephardic Culture” in 1980, initiated by the American Sephardi Federation in New York. In the program’s framework, 13 publications have been released, eight of which dealing with the Holocaust in Greece. The 1989 Hollywood film, “Triumph of the Spirit”, inspired by the true story of Thessaloniki-born Jewish boxer, Salamo Arouch, who survived Auschwitz by entertaining German officers at boxing matches staged within the camp, introduced the history of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki to a much greater audience than ever before.

[90] Porat, Dan A., From the Scandal to the Holocaust in Israeli Education, p. 634.

[91] Ibid., p. 635.


[93] Galey Zahal is a run by the Israeli army but does not function as a normal military radio station. Its broadcasts, dealing with issues that are relevant to the entire Israeli society, are aimed to the large public and it is very popular amongst all layers of the Israeli population, in 1986 even more so than today.

[94] Interestingly, Ya’akov Gilad admitted in one of the interview that he had not known that Jews from Thessaloniki were also murdered during the Holocaust until he met Yehuda Poliker as a teenager.

[95] Loshitzky, Yosefa, Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen, p. 33.

[96] Bowman, Steven (editor), The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness Accounts, i.
The relevant materials are all available on the website of the International School for Holocaust Studies.

Lesson plans are suggested programs for a class activity related to the Holocaust. Each lesson plan focuses on one topic, for instance “Women in the Holocaust” or “The year 1938 in Germany”. Each plan draws a general outline of how the lesson should look like and offers texts, images, testimonies and videos that are relevant to the topic. The lesson plans are divided to three: elementary school, middle school and high school.

The content of the lessons in both languages is almost completely different. For that reason, the two will be analyzed separately.

Interview from the 16. June. 2009


7. Bibliography
Constantopoulou, Photini and Veremis (eds), Thanos. Documents on the History of the Greek Jews, Records from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Athens: Kastaniotis Editions 1998, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, University of Athens, Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Fleming, K.E. 2007, The Stereotyped “Greek Jew” From Auschwitz-Birkenau to Israeli Popular Culture, pp. 17-40 in Journal of Modern Greek Studies (vol. 25, no.1)
Greif, Gideon. 2005, We Wept Without Tears: Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz, New Haven: Yale University Press
HaElyon Mazritz, Rachel (editor). 2008, Kol HaNitzolim: Bitaon Nitzoley Machanot HaHashmada Yotzey Yavan Be’Israel (no. 2), Tel Aviv
HaElyon Mazritz, Rachel (editor). 2008, Kol HaNitzolim: Bitaon Nitzoley Machanot HaHashmada Yotzey Yavan Be’Israel (no. 11), Tel Aviv
HaElyon Mazritz, Rachel (editor). 2008, Kol HaNitzolim: Bitaon Nitzoley Machanot HaHashmada Yotzey Yavan Be’Israel (no. 12), Tel Aviv
Kourio, Heinz Salvador. 2003, A Liter of Soup and Sixty Grams of Bread: The diary of Prisoner 109565, New York: Published for Sephardic House by Bloch Publishing Company
Lis, Yitzchak (editor). 2004, Kol HaNitzolim: Bitaon Nitzoley Machanot HaHashmada Yotzey Yavan Be’Israel (no. 2), Tel Aviv
Thessaloniki and the European Memory – Blog Introduction

June 16, 2009 in Uncategorized by Sheer | 1 comment

We are a research group exploring layers of memory in connection with the Greek city of Thessaloniki.

This blog reflects personal experiences and impressions from our fieldwork in Thessaloniki, Israel and Turkey.

More information on the project and the participants will be posted soon.

Cheers,

Özgür, Sara, Constanze and Sheer