

International Training Programme Research support grant 2022 Final Report

A Suitcase of Museum: A research on the effectiveness of Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum (Μουσείο Μικρασιατικού Πολιτισμού Αιγαλεω) in Athens and İzmir Immigration and Exchange Memorial House in expressing the 1923 Turkish- Greek Population Exchange to the public *Greece-Turkey*



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1st-5th October, 2022 Athens/Greece
30th November-2nd December 2022, İzmir/Turkey

Supported by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

Introduction

I am Meltem Yaşdağ. I've been working as a culture and tourism expert in the General Directorate of Cultural for Heritage Museums, which is affiliated to the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, since 2004. I completed my undergraduate studies at Ankara University, Department of Art History (2001), Master of Architecture at Middle East Technical University (2004) and PhD at the Department of Art History at Ankara University (2013). I deal with issues concerning temporary and continuous museum exhibitions, new techniques for object displays and the connection between cultural heritage sites and museums. In 2011, I participated in the British Museum's International Training Programme of Museology and studied in UK museums.

Since 2018 I've been preparing for associate professorship exams in the field of museum and cultural heritage studies. After completing my PhD, I continue to engage with an academic career through writing new publications and holding seminars about museum exhibitions, oral history and museology, cultural heritage sites and museums etc. studies. Both private and government museums in Turkey are accountable to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and in accordance with the Ministry of Education, museum efforts are focused on the role of museums in education. Within this context my aim is to make museums more accessible and useful for the children and local people, who live in the area of protected heritage sites. I also work on the concept of living social museums through my seminars and training programmes.

Due to my job, I deal with cultural heritage, cultural heritage studies and postcolonial museums focusing on the 1923 Turkish-Greek Compulsory Population Exchange. The field I have chosen is very important both in terms of cultural heritage studies and because it encourages the research of exchange museums that bring up a long-unspoken period of recent history. This is where the importance of this study comes from. On the Turkish side, the common history is told based on the ethnographic artefacts that have survived to the present day and only from those who came from Greece, as there is no other information. So, what did those, who left from Turkey, do in Greece, and how did they display this heritage? The aim of the study is to reveal the unknown aspects of the common history through the museums in both countries. To date, such a study has not been carried out within literature, at least on the Turkish side. In fact, the beginning of the exchange museums on the Turkish side started in 2010. So, it is fairly new. An investigation of the effect of this type of museum in the region where they opened, the communication it establishes with its visitors, etc. will also guide the new immigration museums to be opened in Turkey in the coming years.

Another importance of the study is the contribution they provide to the life skills, daily practices and traditions of the exchanged people, who are among the

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rich elements of multicultural Turkey, through their museums. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the exchanges, which did not come to the fore mostly due to political reasons after the population exchange, still needs to be investigated in every field. However, as I mentioned before, the belongings of those who left and stayed after the migration became the artefacts of museums, and their memories became the documents of the oral archives. Exchange museums established with limited information are also important in terms of shedding light on the life before and after the exchange. For this reason, it is not only in the field of museology, but also in the focus of a rich academic discipline such as the history of art and architecture, social anthropology, folklore, sociology, political science and traditional handicrafts. As an employee of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the official representative of cultural heritage institutions in Turkey, this area that needs such research, which exists in the museums, caught my attention. Studying the exchange museums in Turkey, it was inevitable that I look at the Greek side to make an objective assessment. That's why I thought a comparative museum study would be important and useful. So, I decided to do this research.

There were two institutions that came to mind for this research. The first of these was the ITP, and the other was the Scientific and Technological Research Institution of Turkey (Tübitak). However, I applied directly to the ITP, as Tübitak applications only give priority to projects with a much more limited budget and a long calendar process, mostly done by academics from universities, at certain times of the year. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, where I work, could not support such a study due to budgetary constraints. With the scholarship I received from the ITP, I was able to carry out the entire study in a short time in two stages. I also met all the spontaneous needs that were not included in the ITP budget report.

Below are relevant links relating to the research:

https://www.ktb.gov.tr/?_Dil=2

<https://kvmgm.ktb.gov.tr/>

<http://www.lozanmubadilleri.org.tr/catalca-mubadele-muzesi/>

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/09/11/we-have-not-forgotten-families-of-greek-refugees-who-fled-turkey-in-1922-tell-their-story>

<https://mikrasiatesaigaleo.wordpress.com/>

<https://ppied-museumfx.gr/>

<https://www.apikam.org.tr/tr/Apikam-Arsiv/1/62?tab=75>

<https://populationexchange.ku.edu.tr/>

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The historical garden (left) of the General Directorate where I work; Republic Museum affiliated to the general directorate (right)



Presenting my research results on the effectiveness of population exchange museums of Türkiye, "Museum and Identities", November 21-23h, 2018, Wilanow Museum of King Jan III's Palace, Warsaw, Poland

Research experience

My interest in population exchange museums started about 6 years ago when I studied the houses abandoned by the exchangee. Today, most of Turkey has a large number of legally protected houses 'remained from the Greeks'. In some of these houses, the descendants of families who came from Greece after the population exchange still live. Again, in a town where I worked on architecture, I saw for the first time that one of these buildings was turned into a museum. And I thought: What can be the content and effectiveness of the museum, which contributes so much to the history of the region and tells this history to its visitors? Because it was very difficult to find artefacts that would constitute a museum apart from oral history studies. In this way, I started working on the population exchange museum in Samsun Alaçam. Actually, I officially started my research on population exchange museums in 2017 with this Alaçam example (I presented this museum at the museum symposium I attended in 2017 and shared it with ITP via a blog). In my early research, I mostly turned to history readings and conferences on what population exchange was. Bruce Clark's "Twice a stranger" and Renee Hirschon's "Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus" come first in these readings. How such a recent history was researched so late, the painful stories experienced and where these people are today, caught my attention. Then, as an art and architecture historian, I started to trace their legacy on the Turkish side. Afterwards, I read novels that describe the period with a bit of nostalgic fiction, along with academic studies published in Turkey and abroad. These novels showed me the importance of reaching out to resource people.

In the same period, when I saw that the "International Symposium on Immigration and Population Exchange (27-28 April 2017)" was organized by the municipality in İzmir, where exchanged settlements are dense, I quickly participated in this symposium by making a two-day plan. In this symposium I attended as a listener, I learned that this time the Izmir Population Exchange and Memorial House, which is also the subject of my research, would be inaugurated (see photo below). There were 9 exchange museums/memory houses in Turkey in 2018. So a new museum was quite exciting. Afterwards, I began to study other population exchange museums academically and to publish my own articles.



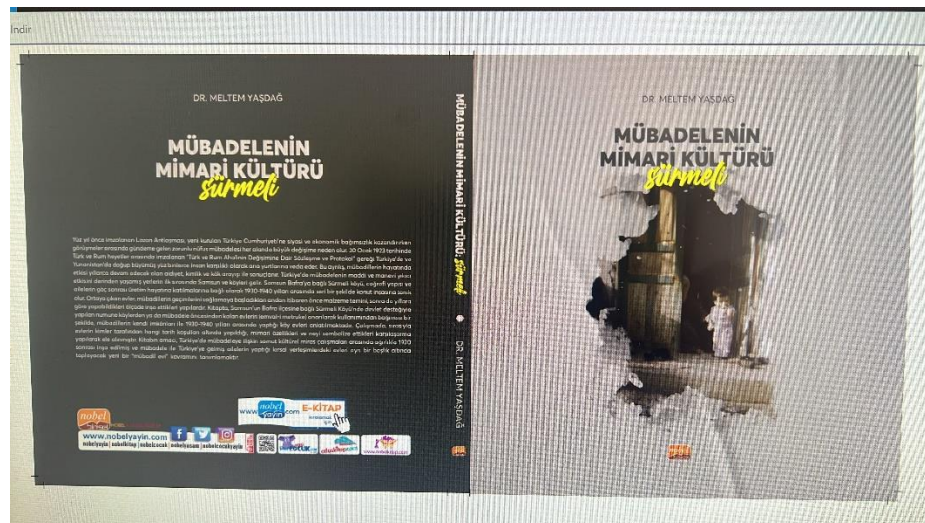
Poster of International Symposium on Immigration and Population Exchange (27-28 April 2017)



Museum opening and artifact purchase/donation announcement of İzmir Immigration and Exchange Memorial House

Afterwards, my articles were published in national and international publications (I present some of the names of these publications and the link that leads to the original text of one of them, in the appendix of the report). I also progressed in this field as both a listener and a speaker in events such as symposiums, congresses, etc. During my time at national and international meetings, my biggest assistant was the population exchange museums, which were established and run by volunteers. Due to the 10th anniversary celebrations of the opening of the first exchange museum in Turkey, I made a presentation that was broadcast live on youtube (see link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsrHuy4HC5A>) in 2020, including the joint work of immigrant associations and museums, with a very large audience.

In fact, I wrote a book on the architecture created in Anatolia by the Muslim exchangee who came to Turkey for the first time with the population exchange from Greece. This book will be published at the beginning of 2023. You can see the cover image of my book as attached. (see photo below). Thus, I am on the way to becoming one of the few academics in my country specialising in population exchange's cultural heritage, museums and architecture. As I progressed in this way on the Turkish side, I began to wonder how Greece approaches the same heritage with its museums. Finally, I got involved in this field, albeit partially, with the support of ITP.



The cover of my first book, named “Architectural Culture of Exchange: Sürmeli”

While I continue to develop myself personally, the museums of Belfast that I visited in 2018 thanks to ITP, as in the population exchange, inspired me with their stories of recent history (Ulster Museum). The Belfast experience guided the design of the Athens-Izmir museums project, at least as a method. The universal language of museology was important in terms of showing how it could be perceived by the society,

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even if the history told was different.¹ Along with all these preliminary preparations, I had meetings with the managers and founders of the immigration and exchange memorial house in Turkey. On the other hand, although there is still no official and national migration museum in Turkey, there are various projects that are still working on this subject. As an employee of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of these projects, I still continue to support these projects with my experience and publications. When we came to 2021, my research was interrupted for a while due to the effect of the pandemic. During this period when I spent a long time at home, this time, unlike Turkey, I started to research how the exchanged heritage was exhibited in museums in Greece. Although there were centers opened with local facilities in different regions, I could not find systematic information as I had in Turkey, so I contacted the Center for Asian Studies and got information from them. The museum, which is the subject of my research today, was determined partly by the center and partly as a result of interviews I had with ITP fellows dear Yolanda Theodoropoulou and Costas Kirykos Vasiliadis. Finally, thanks to the ITP, I was able to come to the point of learning what was happening on the Greek side.

I was in Athens between 1-5 October 2022. On October 2, I visited the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum, which is the main subject of my project. This museum is different from the general museology rules in some respects. First of all, the museum is not always open to visitors. Since they work completely on a voluntary basis, they provide a service on certain days of the week and at certain hours by appointment. In order for me to make better observations, the museum manager allowed me to be there at the same time as a visiting teacher group, who had made an appointment; I would like to thank my dear Athina Daskalaki once again from here. Before coming to Athens, Athina Daskalaki sent me informative e-mails telling me how many artefacts were in the museum, alongside when and how it was opened. Thus, when I came to the museum, I was better prepared to learn about the visitor group and their thoughts about the museum. During my visit to the museum on October 2, in addition to meeting Athina Daskalaki face-to-face, I also met other museum volunteer ladies who were preparing for the visitors. Most of them were descended from families who had lived in Balıkesir-Ayvalık or İzmir-Urla in Turkey before the population exchange and had to go to Greece with the population exchange. We talked together about their family origins, their relationship with the museum, and why the museum was important to them.

¹ Recently, my article about Belfast Museums has been published. I also attached its link to the appendix.

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Exhibition in the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum



Me and the museum volunteers in front of the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum with their culinary delights



Me, taking some notes



Me with Athina Daskalaki



with museum director Mr. Yiannis Koutoulis

In addition, we had a long conversation with the director of the museum, Mr. Yiannis Koutoulis, who also works at the Acropolis Museum. After telling the story of his family's population exchange and where they came from, he talked about his future plans for the museum. One of these plans was a sister museum project with İzmir Migration and Population Exchange Memory House. It was an important development in my research, to choose the project partner museums by chance. It was also a great opportunity for my long-term research to learn that both museums have something in common, at least in terms of ideas.

The most useful part of the research for me was witnessing the guided tour that took place at the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum. Thus, I was able to visit the museum with a guided tour, as well as meet the founders and supporters of the museum. I met many people working for the exchange museum, especially Mr. Yiannis Koutoulis, Director of the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum, and Athina Daskalaki, the assistant director of the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum, with

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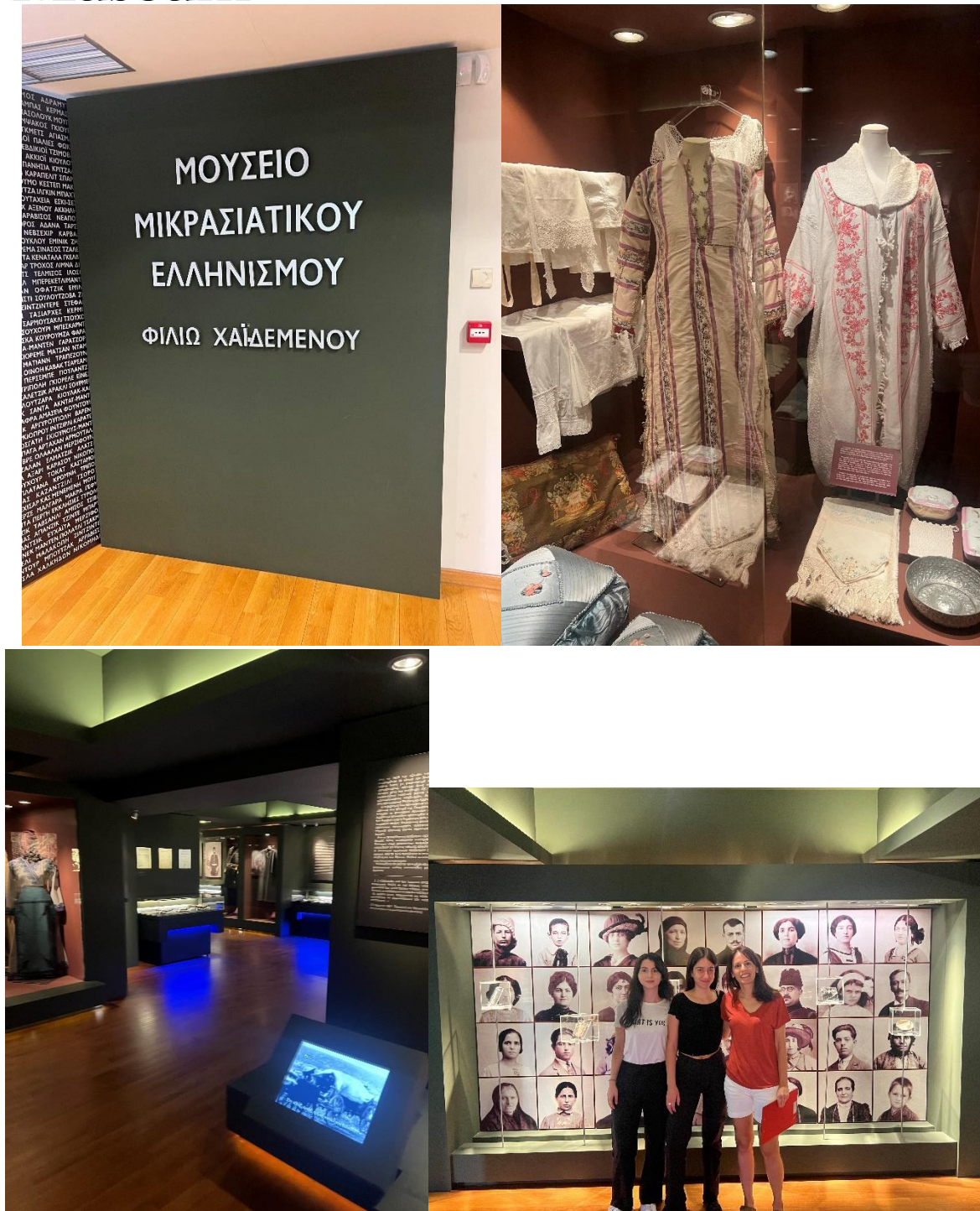
whom I communicated before I came to Athens. Again, I had the opportunity to talk with the new generations, who are museum volunteers and also exchanged grandchildren, whom I had the opportunity to talk with in the same field. Thus, the foundations of a very significant and long-term communication process were laid for me.

Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum has its own website that it actively uses. On this site, it is possible to find photos from my museum visit the same evening (I'm in the back-left corner in the 11th photo) - these posts are important in terms of conveying what kind of ambiance I am in, although they are not particularly about me. I leave the link below:

<https://mikrasiatesaigaleo.wordpress.com/2022/10/03/%ce%b1%cf%80%cf%8c-%cf%84%ce%b7%ce%bd-%ce%b5%cf%80%ce%af%cf%83%ce%ba%ce%b5%cf%88%ce%b7-%cf%87%cf%84%ce%b5%cf%82-%cf%83%cf%84%ce%bf-%ce%bc%ce%bf%cf%85%cf%83%ce%b5%ce%af%ce%bf-%ce%bc%ce%b1%cf%82-%cf%84/>

In the Athens section of the research, besides the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum, Lefkothea Stergiou, the director of the Asia Minor Hellenism Museum “Filio Chaidemenou”, was one of the people I met professionally. Although they did not provide me with information/document support as much as I had hoped, it was a good opportunity for me to examine museums with the same theme in a different geography. Apart from Lefkothea Stergiou, during my research I met many people, especially the founders of local exchange museums and associations. In these meetings, I had conversations about how exchange museums emerged in Athens, why these museums became 'a need' and what their aims are. Similarly, they asked questions about the number, effectiveness and future of exchange museums in Turkey. Thus, we discussed how the common history is shared in the museums of the two partner countries.

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Asia Minor Hellenism Museum "Filio Chaidemenou"

The Izmir part of the research was an experience with similar processes as in Athens. Unlike the museum in Athens, İzmir Immigration and Exchange Memorial House was open to visitors six days a week, with regular employees. The museum building was a registered building used by the Greeks before the population exchange.

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Different types of artifacts were exhibited in the museum, from the migration journey to the various household items left behind by the immigrants. One of the most striking features of the museum was the visuals and original documents used in the exhibition. These documents; sometimes it was a diploma, sometimes it was a marriage certificate, sometimes it could be special photos of happy days before the population exchange. Similarly, we talked to the museum officer in Izmir, Ms. A. Hazal Beytaş about the emergence of the museum, and how a museum design and scenario was constructed with limited artefacts. In these conversations, I understood the importance of the communication between the Izmir Exchange and Memorial House, which was established with the support and patronage of the municipality, with the population exchange associations in the region where it was opened.



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Views from İzmir Immigration and Exchange Memorial House



Museum's library building



Exchange park behind the museum

During my research, I had the opportunity to visit three main institutions in Athens. The first of these was, as I mentioned before, the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum, the other was the Filio Chaidemenou Museum, and finally the Asia Minor Studies Center, which has a great contribution to the history of population exchange. Most, or even all, of the exchange museums in Athens obtain most of their written and visual documents from the Center for Asia Minor Studies. The institution has archived the photographs and oral history expressions of the Orthodox Greeks who came to Greece from Anatolia after 1923. In the institution; The oral history of 5,000 immigrants from all parts of Anatolia was recorded and a survey was conducted in 1,375 households, and nearly a hundred researchers worked in this study. All these handwritten testimonies, which fill 300,000 pages, make up the Oral Tradition Archive. I worked on these documents and rare books, and I also had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Stavros Anestidis, the deputy director of the centre, talking with Mr. Stavros about the transfer of information and documents to the exchange museums and how they work with their support.

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Filio Chaidemenou Museum



Center for Asia Minor Studies

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Apart from the two museums and research center, by a great coincidence, I visited the museum exhibition opened at The Benaki Museum on October 1st, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the seizure of Izmir by the Turks that is the symbol of the Greeks leaving Anatolia. Most of the artefacts in the exhibition belonged to the Center for Asia Minor Studies and some at the Filio Chaidemenou Museum. The museum exhibition described the period from the beginning of Hellenism in Anatolia to 1922 with different themes. These themes were pre-1922 Anatolian daily life, education, sports, handicrafts, culture, etc. It has been a great wealth for my project. With this exhibition, I have gained access to some information that I can access for a long time in different institutions, especially the original artefacts and documents in the exhibition and the exchange and migration photographs that I had not seen before, also enriched my research.



Exhibition poster and views from the exhibitions

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The last part of the exhibition, holograms telling their daily life before population exchange

During all these research trips, thanks to Yolanda, I saw the Acropolis Museum and the ongoing excavations under the museum's grounds. After the Acropolis Museum, I visited the Parthenon and then the National Archaeological Museum of Athens on my last day in Athens. Although these areas I visited seemed to be in close connection with archaeological research, I think they were noteworthy in terms of showing the historical relationship of the partnership between Turkey and Greece, because both countries hosted many civilizations that were almost identical to each other in terms of their archaeological sites. This union, which started before Christ, was not interrupted until 1922. As I wandered first in the museums and then in the streets of Athens, I once again realized how many elements of common life there are belonging to the two countries.

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from the Parthenon visit



me with the Caryatids in the Acropolis Museum



One of the exhibition halls in Acropolis Museum



Ongoing excavations on the ground floor of the Acropolis Museum



Athens National Archaeology Museum

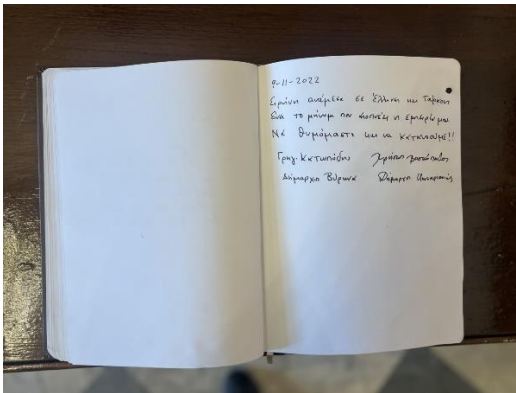
In the Izmir part of my research, I visited Ahmet Piriştina City Archive and Museum (APİKAM), to which the museum is administratively affiliated. This institution, which is affiliated to the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, has many important information-documents on the history of the city of Izmir in its archive. The institution also has various publications describing the migration history of the city. Accompanied by these publications, I evaluated the artefacts and information in the museum.

Another institution that I had the opportunity to visit in Izmir was the 100th Anniversary Memorial House, which was opened specifically for the 100th anniversary of the liberation of Izmir from the Greek occupation. In this museum, which was opened only three months ago, the city history of Izmir and its lives until September 9, 1922 are explained, albeit in a limited way. There was also Ms. A. Hazal Beytaş, whom I knew from the Exchange Memorial House, in the memorial house. I visited the house with her and observed a group of students visiting the museum. This museum was a good opportunity for me to compare the exhibition opened at The Benaki Museum with the same theme in Athens.

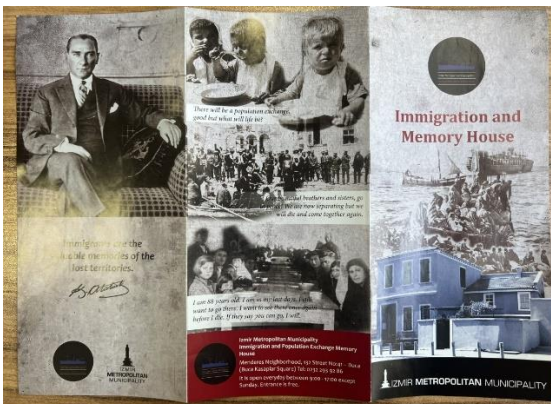
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100th Anniversary Memorial House





Proceeding book of Migration Symposium



Some documents and books that I bought from İzmir

The impression I got from both exchange museums that I could visit in Athens was that the common history was embraced with almost the same perspective and instinct to protect. The quality of the artefacts was of course important in the museum display. However, I felt once again how important population exchange museums are in the effort made to transfer this history to future generations. During my visit to both museums, I was able to observe the feelings of the visitors both with the survey I made and with the observation method. The showcases prepared, the objects selected for exhibition, and the events organized to make the museum known (guided tour, additional exhibitions, musical nights, etc.) were always developments that supported the function of museums as a memory space.

The museum in Izmir, on the other hand, is relatively less known as it is located inside the coastal part of the city, which can be called non-touristic. The fact that the building selected for the museum belonged to the Greek family before the population exchange, also contributed to the identity of the museum. The museum in Athens was relatively more on the street, but just like in Izmir, it was a structure that had a relationship with the history of exchange. In this respect, it would not be wrong to say that a common approach was followed in the selection of the museum building and the settlement applied in the survey in the museum in Izmir, which I also carried out in the Athens museum with the visitors. The results that will emerge when the surveys are completed will be useful to understand the effect-reaction of the museum on the visitor, at least at first glance. However, according

to the preliminary results of the survey, the emotions shared by the visitors; it oscillates between sadness, longing, and anger.

As I stated before, my research took place on the centenary of the forced displacement between Greece and Turkey. The 1923 treaty of Lausanne legalised the forced movement of more than a million Greek Christians to Greece and that of approximately a million (according to official documents, it is around 500.000). It is obvious that the departure and arrival of both immigrants left indelible marks again on both sides' people and their lives.

With this research, how the Turkish-Greek compulsory population exchange is remembered, experienced and explained 100 years later, has been experienced through the museums. The visitor survey, one of the most remarkable features of the research, is the first application in both museums. This survey was useful to define the visitor profile in exchange museums, which have a very low number of visitors compared to archaeology or urban history museums, and to measure the effectiveness of the museum. Based on my personal observations during all the studies, I can say that there was a great communication between the museums of Greece and Turkey. On the other hand, both countries need to do much more work in this area. The most innocent object, and story needing to be told, of this common history, in which both sides are injured, is actually human. For this reason, the number of events should be increased in order to introduce people-oriented museum exhibitions in the first place. And of course, promotion is very important. Despite everything, considering that there are places and people in both countries where even the exchange is still unknown, I have seen first-hand what an important task these museums fulfil.

As a result, this research personally showed how important the phenomenon of root, origin, family and land is in people's lives. No matter where or what time period a person lives, people are always looking for their past or longing for it in some way. Moreover, for those who have to relocate, this situation can turn into a trauma that will last for years. Perhaps for the first time, it was incredible to see this longing openly quenched through the 'museum'. Even the nameplate of the museum had become one of the main actors of some visitors' communication with their past. Even if it does not belong to him/her, an image from those years, a door handle or a kitchen utensil can be enough to create a great sense of belonging in the visitor. Contribution of exchange museums to 'emotion' and 'memory'; as both a person and a museum curator, it caused me to witness amazing moments first-hand. Moreover, the fact that the research conveys the same history in two different geographies with an almost identical approach has also shown me how the

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'museum' has become an effective memory center in the 21st century. In fact, there was a similar moment in the ITP 2011 program in the section on the history of the city at the MShed Museum in Bristol. A woman whose photograph is included in the museum exhibition must have served such a purpose at that moment when she looked at herself as a part of the history of the city years later.



MShed Museum, Bristol, UK

When I completed the Athens section of my research, it was surprising how, through museums of shared history, they had served such a close purpose. The examples of Athens and Izmir are the efforts to transfer the cultural heritage of the two nations, which are trying to heal the wounds of a history that has suddenly been interrupted, to the next generations. This effort becomes more meaningful by reaching a much wider audience with museums. The aim of the exhibition, which is supported by the museums with close related work and different family stories, is always the same: to prevent the loss of heritage and to ensure that what was once lived is known. However, it was quite surprising for me that the prevailing emotion, especially among the visitors of the Athens museum, was anger rather than sadness or longing. Because the result for the museum in Izmir was the opposite. While visitors in Izmir wanted to see the exchange museums in Athens, some of those in Athens said they never wanted to see them. I think museums can re-evaluate the techniques and missions they use in exhibitions based on this determination.

My next goal is to focus a little more on the museum-emotion connection and conduct a study by directly observing the experiences of the exchanged generations during the museum visit. In fact, there is a similar research method that has been done before on this subject. In this sense, I recommend the book of my dear friend, Newcastle University faculty member PhD Gönül BOZOĞLU (Museums, Emotion, and Memory Culture: The Politics of the Past in Turkey). She is already a researcher, whom I interviewed and got her suggestions from during the writing phase of the research project, before I went to Athens and Izmir. In addition to the impact that exchange museums have had on the environment and visitors, my next goal this time will be to find various ways to increase the effectiveness of these museums. Undoubtedly, each geography and culture will create its own effectiveness with its own efforts. However, despite all its differences, migration is a phenomenon suitable for establishing international partnerships. For this reason, I plan to examine the examples where the museum of migration abroad has become more institutionalized.



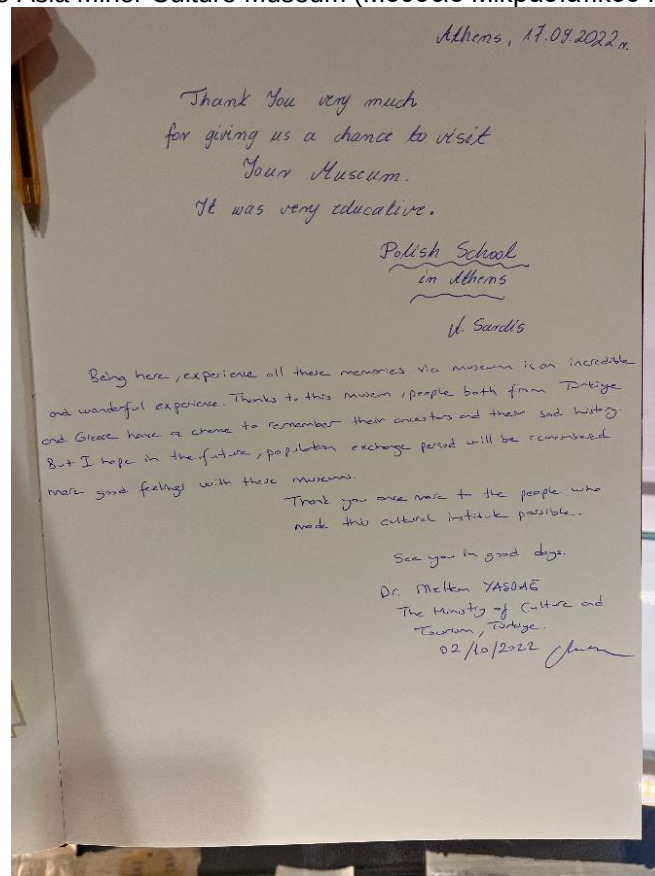
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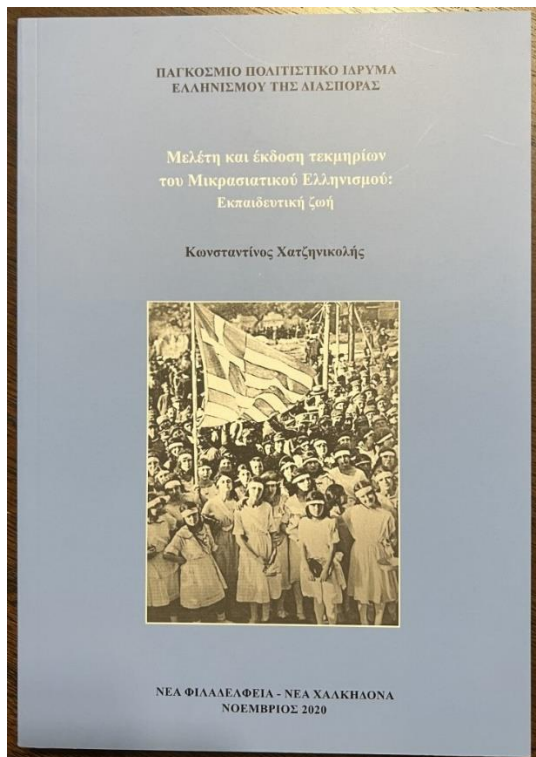
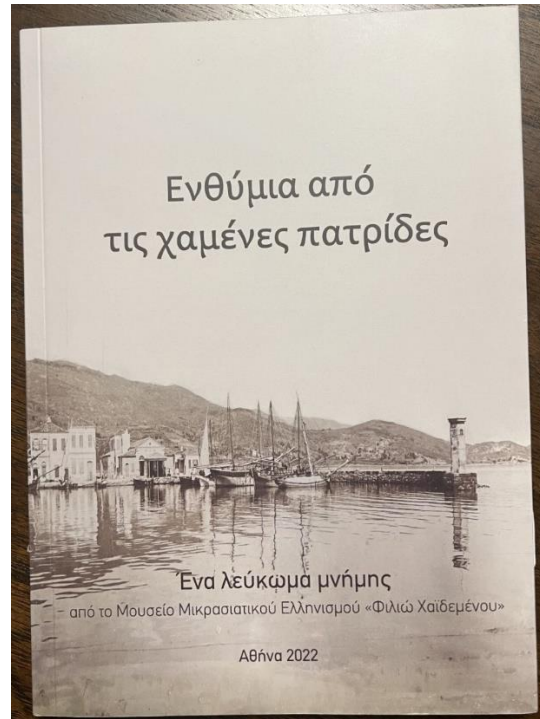
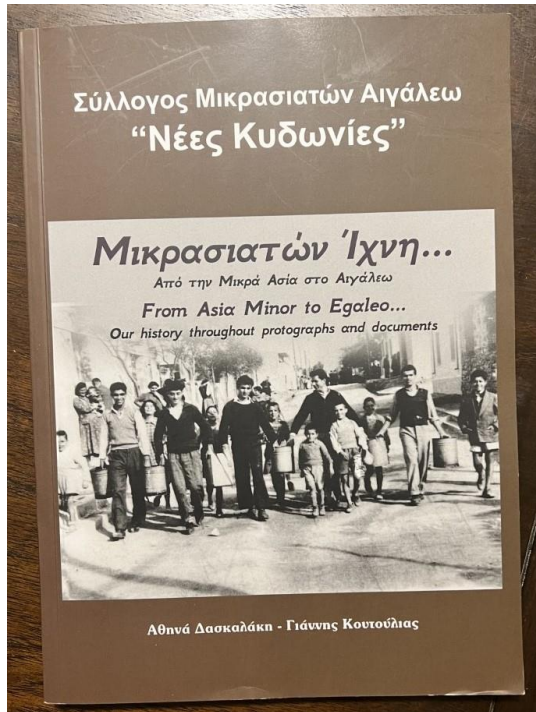
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Views from Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum (Μουσείο Μικρασιατικού Πολιτισμού Αιγαλεω)



the note I wrote in the visitor book of the museum



Books bought or gifted from Athens museums (last picture is the brochure book of the Filio Chaidemenou Museum)

The first people I contacted during the research process were the representatives of the institutions responsible for the establishment of the museums in Athens and Izmir. These people were Yiannis Koutoulis, the responsible manager for the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum in Athens and A. Hazal Beytaş for the Immigration and Exchange Memory House in Izmir. I contacted Yiannis Koutoulis through Yolanda and Costas. Mr. Yiannis was also the director of an educational unit at the Acropolis Museum. Thus, thanks to my ITP fellow friends, I established the most correct, healthy and productive relationship with Mr. Yiannis and his assistant Miss Athina. We made an appointment to examine and view the museums on Sunday evening, October 2nd. That same evening, I met with a group of teachers and museum volunteers who were going to visit the museum. Most of the volunteers knew Turkey and their roots very well. I had conversations with them. In addition, I observed the museum visitors' feelings while completing the survey I prepared. I think that was one of the most remarkable moments of this research. Since the surveys have not been completed yet, I cannot share their results in this report. Because I want to complete surveys of at least 100 visitors for a healthy result.

That same evening, I had a long conversation with the museum director, Mr. Yiannis Koutoulis. In the interview, I learned where his family was from, the lives of the elders before and after the population exchange, how the museum was opened, who supported it, and what they did about the joint project they carried out with the exchange memorial house in Izmir. When I went to Izmir, I was informed that I could attend their next meeting if I had the opportunity. Thus, I was pleased to know that the two museums, which are my research interests, have different partnerships.

Apart from the museums I visited, at the Center for Asia Minor Studies, which is famous for its publications in this field and where the records of the Greek immigrants who emigrated to Greece from Anatolia before 1923 are kept, I also had the opportunity to meet with Stavros Anestidis, the assistant director. In my last two days in Athens, I went to this center and researched whenever I had the opportunity. I would also like to thank Stavros Anestidis here for his help and support. He also knew Turkish. For this reason, I was able to share the details that I could deal with from different angles. I completed my research at the center by taking his promise that he would support the next research process.

ITP reunions

My connection with ITP friends actually started before I went to Athens. I even decided with the ITP fellows which museums in Athens I could limit my research area to. I sent e-mails to Yolanda Theodoropoulou from the 2016 ITP Programme and Costas Kyrkos Vasiliadis 2014, in April and May 2022. In particular, I got help

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from Yolanda about the location where I should stay, etc. Then we decided together on the most suitable museum for me to research in Athens. And once again, I realized that the ITP is not just a museum education and sharing platform, it has become a platform where we can support each other wherever we are in the world. Before arriving in Athens, I had already informed Yolanda and Costas of my arrival dates. On October 2, Yolanda and I met at the Acropolis Museum. I think it was a real meeting of Aegean people with the effect of living in neighbouring geographies for years. I met Yolanda for the first time, but it felt like I had known her for years. The museum where she works is already one of the most important museums not only for Greece, but also for the whole world. Thanks to her, I had the opportunity to visit and examine the Acropolis Museum. In our meeting, we talked about the departments we worked at during the ITP Annual Programme, our mutual acquaintances, and the work we do. We also shared details about my arrival in Athens, my relationship with the ITP and of course my ongoing project.



took by Yolanda at the roof of the Acropolis Museum



Yolanda and me at the Acropolis Museum

My communication with Yolanda continued during my stay in Athens after the meeting on 2 October. It also helped me a lot in arranging my visits to different museums, when I had the opportunity. In the end, she accompanied me again on my last night in Athens and allowed me to do a little night tour of Athens by her car. In the meantime, I think the foundations of a friendship that will last for years have been laid.



Yolanda and me on my last evening in Athens

I didn't have a chance to meet face-to-face with Costas due to his busy schedule and my day-by-day research plans. However, as I mentioned, he helped me a lot in many stages of the research with his correct directions and recommendations.

The future

In terms of Turkey's recent history, population exchange is an issue that has started to be discussed in the last twenty years. Even the discussion and study of the population exchange itself spans almost 60 years. The definition and protection of the cultural heritage remaining from the population exchange has been the subject of the last 20 years. Therefore, there is still much work to be done in this regard. As I mentioned before, population exchange museums/memory houses have a very important role in recognizing this heritage. However, both countries have a lot of work to do in the field of population exchange museology. My research has perhaps for the first time measured the role of museums in the understanding of this history by society. In a way, what was foreseen, felt or known about population exchange museums in two different countries became concrete knowledge and written material. My research will be a source detailing the mission, vision and target audience of the population exchange museums to be opened in

the future. For this reason, this study is of great importance for both countries and it is closely followed by immigrant associations that plan to open museums.

Personally, I think that I have made an important progress in a field where I have been working for a long time. No matter how rich the artefacts of museums are, they are incomplete if they do not have visitors. This study showed me the impact of the museum on the visitor and the difference it can make.

On the other hand, the most important thing that this research contributed to me was a lifelong professional communication network. I already gave the most basic information about the population exchange and migration museums in Turkey during my visit in Athens. From now on, we will mutually follow the developments in this field in both countries more closely. We will always be in contact with each other. There is already an EU project that the Aigaleo Asia Minor Culture Museum continues with the Izmir Immigration and Exchange Memorial House. I was informed that my work will also be included in the EU project bibliography. Thus, a diverse and unexpected network developed spontaneously.

In addition, this research supported by the ITP will be published in one of the magazines of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the coming months, to inform all the museum and its staff. In this way, I will also contribute to the work of the first official migration museum planned to be established.

I hope that this research will contribute to the population exchange section, which will form one of the most important parts of the most comprehensive migration museum to be opened in Turkey in the long run. In the medium term, I think that the rapidly increasing numbers of exchange museums in Turkey will enable them to communicate more closely with the examples on the Greek side. In the short term, I plan to publish the results of the survey I conducted in the museums that are the subject of the research, by turning it into a scientific article. I will share this publication on the ITP Blog in the future.

With this research, I also think that I will contribute to the "sister museum" project of the museums in Athens and Izmir, which I mentioned in a previous part of the report.

In the next stage of the research, I will explore the types of artefacts exhibited in exchange museums. Because while there were many common objects that I observed in the examples of Athens and Izmir, on the contrary, examples specific to only these museums caught my eye. Therefore, the next topic will be on the artefacts.

Acknowledgements

This research would never have been possible without The British Museum ITP supporting me financially and morally. For this reason, my biggest thanks go to the ITP family, which I am proud to be a part of. Undoubtedly, the sponsors who created this program also supported my research. For this reason, I would like to thank "the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust". Sometimes a little support can make a big difference. The Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust will always be in a special and important place for me.

I would also like to thank the directors and staff of the museums I researched during my stay in Athens. Special thanks to Mr. Yiannis Koutoulis and Ms. Athina Daskalaki for their help and positive support. Likewise, I would like to thank A. Hazal Beytaş, who helped me gather the necessary information and documents before I went to Izmir.

My final thanks go to ITP fellow Yolanda Theodoropoulou, a wonderful colleague and friend. Her support, which started before she arrived in Athens, continued throughout the research. Thanks to this research, I found myself a lifelong friend, colleague and support. Once again thank you very much.

Appendix

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