
ORAL TESTIMONIES AND DIGITAL REALITY IN HISTORY TEACHING

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From December 1922 Corfu emerged as a main center of temporary settlement and relief for refugees of the Greco-Turkish War.



Refugees from the regions of Caesarea and Cilicia, who arrived in Corfu on October 16, 1924. Source: George Giannakopoulos (ed.), *Refugee Greece*, KMS, Athens 1992.

Abstract

Scientific fields such as Oral History and oral testimonies of memory and metamemory are now involved in the modern Teaching of History, as well as New Technologies, with the utilization of any digital archival material, digital reports, digitized files, etc. In this paper, an attempt is made to present this connection in its entirety, through specific teaching activities for the History lesson at school, in order to present some of the proposals of modern History Teaching and the digital exhibition of The Corfu Reading Society "From Ionia to the Ionian: Refugees in Corfu after the Asia Minor Disaster" (<https://refugees-to-ionio1922.eu/>), while at the same time, it is sought to highlight and utilize oral testimonies as an important teaching tool in the History classroom. As a case study, the refugees of the Asia Minor Disaster who fled to Corfu have been selected. Particularly, oral testimonies are used, which are published

in the digital exhibition and depict the experiences of the refugees as they were transmitted to their descendants through stories (metamemory). In the final section of the paper, methods for incorporating these testimonies into the History lesson are discussed.

Keywords: *Oral History, History Teaching, Refugees, Metamemory, Digital Exhibition.*

Introduction

Corfu, which is geographically located in the N.W. Ionian Sea, was one of the main places chosen for the temporary settlement and immediate care of the thousands of refugees who fled to Greece after the Asia Minor Disaster. Although the numerical data could not be completely accurate, it is estimated that about 30,000 refugees passed through Corfu, coming from various regions of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Eastern Thrace. They arrived on the island mainly with group expeditions. A percentage of them belonged to people who left their ancestral homes after the Lausanne Convention. The limited employment opportunities and absence of cultivable land on the island were the primary reasons why the majority of refugees were relocated elsewhere. A small number of refugees settled permanently on Corfu, where their descendants continue to reside to this day.

In 2022, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Asia Minor Disaster, The Corfu Reading Society, an intellectual institution founded in 1836, created a digital exhibition titled “From Ionia to the Ionian: Refugees in Corfu after the Asia Minor Disaster” under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture. The exhibition's primary objective is to emphasize and preserve historical memory and cultural heritage. In this context, Oral History and other archival documents were used to highlight the historical events while also illuminating the thoughts and sentiments of the descendants of the refugees who currently reside on the island.

The use of Oral History in exhibitions is of course not something new. Oral testimonies have been part of museum exhibitions since the 1950s, while from the 1990s onwards they seem to acquire autonomy as exhibits. Today, technological development has caused the emergence of new innovative ways of presenting oral testimonies via the internet, essentially expanding the museum space, but also the access to it. One such project is the digital exhibition about the refugees in Corfu.

The use of digital media allows the highlighting of a large volume of files of different types -such as audio testimonies, videos, texts and photos- in high quality. Also, free internet access and the bilingual version of this particular exhibition significantly increase its traffic. It is no coincidence that in the first five months of its posting, the exhibition received over 16,000 visits.

To create the digital exhibition, a long-term research was carried out by a group of young historians. In addition to the search for archival evidence, the project researchers conducted Oral History interviews, with the aim of collecting the metamemories of the descendants of the refugees living in Corfu today. By the term “metamemory” is meant the secondary memory, as it was formed through the narratives of the first generation, which experienced the Asia Minor Disaster (Hirsch, 1997). Whether metamemory can count as Oral History or, according to F. Hartog (Hartog, 2003), whether it constitutes a “distinct regime of historicity”, is a question that continues to concern the scientific community.

Fifty testimonies of descendants residing in Corfu, as well as other locations where refugees who initially passed through the island were permanently settled, were collected for the digital exhibition. Methodologically, the interviews consisted of a semi-structured questionnaire and open-ended inquiries. Following the completion of each interview, the researcher meticulously transcribed it and made notes. Each narrator selected the way in

which the interview would be filmed or documented, as well as the location, so that he would feel more secure and comfortable. For this reason and due to the covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted both in-person and online, depending on the informant's preference.

Before the interview, the informant received a letter describing the goals of the program and the digital exhibition, and after the interview, he or she signed a letter of concession to the organization (The Corfu Reading Society) that allowed for the imposition of several restrictions on the part of the narrator. The latter reserves the right to delete or modify any portion or the entire interview at any time.

The testimonies of the descendants collected reveal unknown aspects of the life of the refugees, before and after their arrival in Greece, and enrich all the thematic sections of the digital exhibition. In terms of their presentation, taped or recorded excerpts were used, as well as quotations in text format, with a uniform font and background.

The parallel investigation of historical events through the archives and the metamemories of the descendants reveals additional information that would not be easily discernible from the study of documents alone. Obviously, one of the fundamental principles of Oral History is the interpretation and evaluation of interviews using specific and rigorous criteria.

An indicative example is the testimony of a second-generation descendant, who reveals the method of her mother's adoption. Although the existence of orphanages in Corfu and the efforts to adopt refugee children are well documented in the relevant literature, the informant enriches the knowledge from archival research with the description of her mother's adoption. According to her, the village where her grandparents lived was visited by a crier ("telalis"), who informed the residents about the orphaned refugee children and the possibility of adopting them. Accordingly, the descriptions of the refugee settlements that no longer exist today, saved by the descendants, bring to life the residential past of the town of Corfu.

Through oral testimonies, differentiated versions of historical events are often found, as they are recorded and presented in official historiography. Besides, collective differentiation from the facts, according to A. Portelli, is the oral testimony itself, for the way in which the collective identity of each social group was formed (Portelli, 2020). Thus, although for years the relations of the Greeks with the Ottomans were considered bad, a perception that worsened during the retreat of the Greek populations from Asia Minor, many testimonies sometimes reveal a different picture. The excerpt from the interview of a second-generation descendant from Chanakkale, published in the digital exhibition, is typical: "All together, Greeks and Turks, neighbors, they were all friends. That is, when they left, they cried, they hugged each other; how do you leave a friend..." (The Corfu Reading Society Archive).

Related to the above are the conflicting interpretations surrounding the issue of the reception of refugees in Corfu. The relevant literature and archives such as the press of the time reveal the negative attitude of the local society. Several of the descendants have the same opinion. The quote "the people of Corfu did not like the refugees, because they considered them inferior" is indicative. In contrast to this interpretation, there are other testimonies, such as the following: "I will always remember my childhood, the love, solidarity, care between refugee families, but also the relationships and respect with the locals" (The Corfu Reading Society Archive).

Of particular importance are the lived experiences of the descendants themselves, who, although they had been integrated into Corfu society, experienced marginalization in some cases. A second-generation descendant remembers being described as a "little breed of Turks" ("Turkosporakos") by an elderly man at a school celebration. Stigmatization at school was

also experienced by another descendant, who emphasizes that she was "made fun of because she didn't have good shoes" (The Corfu Reading Society Archive).

Beyond the experiences of the descendants, the interviews also attempt to highlight the feelings regarding their origin, as a dominant element for the preservation of refugee memory in today's Corfu society. The majority of the narrators declare themselves to be from Corfu, even though they all express pride and affection for their Asia Minor origins. Also, of interest is the difference observed in relation to other areas, which were formed purely by refugees who initially passed through the island, such as Neokaisarea Ioannina, where the descendants today largely describe themselves primarily as Minor Asians.

The oral testimonies, combined with the rest of the archival material and the accompanying texts of the exhibition, constitute a rich material, which could be utilized in various ways in the educational process. The importance of the use of Oral History in Education has been emphasized early on by P. Thompson, in his seminal work "The Voices from the Past" (Thompson, 1978). Correspondingly, in the scientific dialogue, the dangers of using Oral History in school are also recorded: the danger of populism or intense emotionalism, the emphasis on narratives, when it is deprived of the exploratory historical processing that the students must do, as well as the danger of reinforcing misconceptions regarding the process of building historical knowledge are some of the challenges faced by the teacher who wants to integrate Oral History into his teaching. An inhibiting factor can also be the frequent treatment of Oral History as a non "normal" school practice, but as an activity outside the educational program (Chapman & Edwards, 2015).

In Greece, the dialogue on the use of oral testimonies in school is active, but for now it just highlights the institutional inactions and anchoring that have been found over time in the field of Education. The necessity of renewing the History Curricula remains crucial, in order for them to keep up with the current developments in the science of Teaching History in the global sphere. The current History Curricula at the first two educational levels (Primary and Secondary Education), albeit modern (2023), seem to ignore both the so-called secondary concepts of the Teaching of History (historical thinking, historical empathy, historical consciousness, continuity and change, moral dimension of History, etc.), as well as Oral History, as a potential educational material. In recent years very interesting initiatives have been recorded in Greece, with the aim of a different approach to school History through the utilization of Oral History, from institutions outside the school. Indicatively, we mention its inclusion as a main topic in the student historical documentary competitions, organized for a number of years by the Scientific Union "Nea Paideia" together with the Ionian University (<https://neapaideia-glossa.gr/contests/>) and the holding -in 2019- of the first Oral History student conference (<http://oralhistorygroups.gr/mathitiko-synedrio-2019/>).

The digital exhibition "*From Ionia to the Ionian: Refugees in Corfu after the Asia Minor Disaster*" is potentially educational material available to teachers and students. The pupils of Primary and Secondary Education, depending on their age level and abilities and with the guidance of the teacher, can use the digital material of the exhibition, in whole or in parts (audio, videotaped or text testimonies, etc.), in order to, on the one hand, approach the multidimensional phenomenon of the refugee experientially, and on the other hand, to ascertain -at least the students of Corfu- the direct connection of their place with one of the most important historical events in Greek history and, at the same time, the way in which the past can reform catalytically the individual and collective present and future.

1. The digital dimension of History teaching today

The rapid technological developments and their inevitable impact on the field of Education have now contributed to the creation of Digital History departments in several universities in the international environment. Even in traditional university Departments of History, teaching incorporates digital skills or references to digital culture (recently also in the Department of History of the Ionian University, where undergraduate students are offered a relevant course). The shift of Tertiary Education in this direction proves the need to investigate the new conditions within which the society perceives the historical past, but also the way in which historians can work in the digital environment (Pentazou, 2019). In addition to universities, there are now specialized History teaching blogs posted on the Internet, which undertake to train historians in digital skills that will help them process, evaluate and interpret historical data.

In 1994 B. Bloom (Bloom, 1994) mentioned in his taxonomy the three domains of learning: the physical activities (doing), the affective/emotional domain (feeling) and the cognitive/intellectual domain (thinking). Of course, the key question is whether learning is considered an object or a process. To them is added today the learning that can be achieved unconsciously and without a planned framework, creating new challenges in the humanities and social sciences and -mainly- in the scientific field of History (see also: Stenhouse, 2003 and Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2012).

In this context and in Greece, educational software has already been created in the past years, which focused on practices similar to those that the social network utilizes in its daily life. The research focused more on ways of designing this software, on forms of experience that users had and on how they felt during their participation in this process. A similar tactic was followed by those involved in historical education, producing a series of software aimed at renewing the cognitive subject of History. Software such as “Κασταλία” (Castalia) (see Kavvoura, 2005) or “Χωροχρόνος” (Spacetime) were mainly based on the finding that learners do not focus on a linear perception of History, but they actively process multiple data and perceive space and time through their active attitude. The students carried out structured activities, with the aim of achieving learning goals that the creators of the software had set from the beginning. However, the learning process remained limited and trapped in the context of the specific software (Stouraitis, 2019).

Education, as one of the basic institutions of a society, is directly influenced by the practices of this society and largely determines the experiences and perceptions of teachers and students. The digital world of the Internet now offers a wealth of material relevant to History education: websites, search engines, digital games, digital libraries, digital museums and exhibitions are some of the examples available to researchers, teachers and students for educational use. The role of researchers in this process is mainly to investigate and check whether learners benefit when they come into contact with these media, if they understand the historical content and historical events and -most importantly- if the use of digital tools contributes effectively in building historical thinking and consciousness.

In any case, the use of any kind of digital tool at school and in the History lesson must be done with rules, criteria and a method, be a sufficiently organized process with the participation of all those involved (students, teachers, school administration, parents, etc.) and above all to be a targeted and essential process. When the use of digital tools is not done consciously with adequate knowledge and preparation, with targeting and evaluation, then it is very likely to slip into a playful and meaningless process, which is not only irrelevant to the educational process, but can also become misleading for the students (see also Chapman, 2021, Chapman & Georgiou, 2021 and Chapman & Standish, 2021).

2. Main targets of the modern History teaching

Today, the field of History Teaching is mainly focused on two general issues: (a) the formation of students' historical thinking and consciousness and (b) the understanding of the way in which historical knowledge is formed and critical skills are formed, with a further perspective on future practice of citizenship by students.

Historical thinking, i.e. the understanding of the epistemological nature of History, the interpretative approach and utilization of historical testimonies, the distinction of time, the connection of space and time, the distinction and mastery of primary and secondary historical concepts, the understanding of change, of continuity and causality, the ability to create working hypotheses and substantiate them with arguments and rational reasoning, the ability to detach from the conventions of the present, the respect for otherness (when it does not lead to exaggerations and/or idealizations) and, finally, the critical and reflective production of historical discourse, are some of the basic demands of the modern teaching of History. The cultivation of historical thinking in citizens, from their school years, forms within them tools with which they enter a state of moral and mental alertness and, at the same time, acquire the possibility of discovering the mechanisms of manipulation controlled by the state or the dominant social groups and ideologies and deal with them competently and effectively.

In addition to these issues, the teaching of History also manages methodological issues, such as the issue of balanced functionality between declarative and procedural knowledge. Historical knowledge is not only about the content of the lesson, but also about the validity of the way it is conducted. Beyond the search, investigation and knowledge of what “really” happened in the past, historical critical thinking also consists of how what really happened was interpreted (sometimes even inconsistently), by different people, in different times, but also how it is interpreted today (perspectives, multi-prismaticity, empathy); also, how what each side claims is substantiated (criticism and evaluation of the validity of sources, interpretation and correlation with the conflicting claims), with which linguistic means and which codes thoughts are expressed (representation, communication), how the relevant argumentation is structured (use of correct, substantiated discourse, utilization of historical terminology), etc. (Gatsotis, 2020 and Kokkinos & Gatsotis, 2020). It is easy to see that understanding the process of building historical knowledge is now a key issue in historical education.

Based on the above and the specific directions and with the help of some selected oral testimonies of the digital exhibition, in the last section of this work some indicative activities are proposed for the History lesson at school, with the dual goal of keeping up with the proposals of modern History Didactics on the one hand and, on the other hand, of utilizing digital oral testimonies and highlighting them as an important teaching tool in the History classroom.

3. Indicative suggestions for the teaching use of oral testimonies in History

Oral testimonies selected mainly concern three axes of the management of the refugee crisis. The first is related to the coexistence of the Greeks with the Turks, before the displacement, and the first indications that the situation was worsening and that at some point, peacefully or violently, they would be forced to abandon their ancestral residences. The second concerns the struggling care of the refugees to adapt and coexist with their new fellow citizens and at the same time the treatment they had in the new homeland, in the Greek territory, by the local residents. And the third one has to do with the refugees' constant and dynamic effort to keep

alive in the new homeland their traditions, customs and any kind of situation that would remind them of their peaceful past and make them feel more at home in their new country. As has already been pointed out, these are testimonies of refugee descendants, i.e. mediated narratives, something that must be pointed out by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson.

The following testimonies concern the first axis:

1.1. “[...] *they did not speak Turkish. They spoke the dialect of Sille! They had their own dialect, the ancient Greek language. Because the Silleans were all Greeks, from the Peloponnese. And they left the Peloponnese and went to Turkey, when Greece was enslaved... Well, five hundred years they were over there. My father and my mother were born a lot of generations later!*”.

Adamantia Makri, second generation descendant, (Sille, Konya), Corfu 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

1.2. “*In Konya their life was very good. They were happy, they were on very good terms with their neighbours, those who were there and various Turkish families. And in fact, when the Turks raided the houses, to search for young men to recruit them in the army... A family of Turks would hide my uncles in their own houses. In fact, they dressed one of my uncles as a woman and gave him an embroidery... to embroider, so they wouldn't take him as a soldier...*”.

Herodia Chalvatzidou, second generation descendant (Konya & Isparta, Asia Minor), Corfu 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

1.3. “*My grandfather went to Istanbul with my grandmother to buy fabrics for his shop. The Atatürk riots had already begun there, his soldiers had entered the street, they were throwing marbles, as Grandma said, at the hotel, they had injured people, they were destroying the shops of foreigners who were on the street... Grandfather came from the merchant and told her to get up and leave because a Turk, I don't remember his name now, said to him "George, pack up, take your family with you because things are getting worse..."*”.

Sofia Linardou-Karagiannopoulou, 2nd generation descendant (Chanakkale), Corfu 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

These testimonies can be exploited, as long as they are combined with additional archival material, multimodal and multidimensional [textual primary or secondary sources, works of art, statistical tables, photographs, audio files, videos which can mainly be found in the General State Archives (GAK) (Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους) in <https://archives1922.gak.gr/>], asking students questions such as the subject of coexistence of the Greeks with the Turks before the war and the uprooting. Indicatively: based on testimony 1.2. the relations of the Greeks with their Turkish fellow citizens were perfectly normal. Other testimonies report the exact opposite; they speak of intense friction between the two, etc. What do you think of this contradiction? What factors could account for it, and how can it be interpreted?

Also, the issue of how the Greeks and the Turks found themselves living together in the same geographical area and -mainly- what knowledge/image people have today about this specific condition. Indicatively: the testimony 1.1. mentions that some Greeks moved from the Peloponnese to the coasts of Asia Minor during the Ottoman rule in the Greek area. In 1922 they were already settled there, for almost five centuries. Are you aware of this? If such a thing is true and can be confirmed by research, identify in the whole matter the historical concept of **continuity and change** (Seixas & Morton, 2013), that is, how the population's composition of a place can change over the centuries.

Finally, the question of the beginning of the sufferings and the first reactions/preparations of the Greeks for the imminent huge change in their lives. In this case, students may be asked, using **historical empathy** (Endacott & Brooks, 2018, Retz, 2018), to put themselves in the shoes of the people who felt threatened and be asked to interpret the

decisions they made (e.g., to leave immediately, “before the situation gets worse”), but also what choices they would make themselves in their place.

The second axis includes the testimonies:

2.1. *“And because my grandfather had money, as it seems, he didn't leave the family in the Fortress, where everyone else was. He bought a plot of land on the prison hill, where the prison is now ... The courts. ... He bought the land and then he wanted to do the work he did in Turkey, pottery... Now it's a ruin ... from the prison you can see a ruin, that's not gone, that's where the kiln was where they made the clay pots, pottery. That was public land, they had bought an area to make the pottery. There was nothing, no other families up there... then [mother's] family was given a house at a refugee settlement, which the state had constructed in Corfu. They gave each family a house according to the number of the family members”.*

Aristides Apostolidis, second generation descendant (Permata, Konya & Agios Konstantinos, Caesarea), Corfu 2021, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

2.2. *“I remember -grandfather said- being twelve years old, thirteen years old and I didn't have any shoes... And I was doing various odd jobs!“. That is, he carried milk from door to door. And then he'd take ice to houses. Then he became, until he died that is, he started painting. And he became a house painter. Then he worked, later on, after he was married, and had worked as a house painter, in the Achillion palace, in the casino”.*

Maria-Eleni Andreadaki, third generation descendant, for her grandfather Vasilios Charissos, Kynopiastes, Corfu (Istanbul), Athens 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

Testimonies 2.1. and 2.2. can be used, provided they are combined with additional archival material [see General State Archives (GAK) (Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους) in <https://archives1922.gak.gr/>], in order to highlight the concept of **historical significance** (Lévesque, 2005), that is, what is considered important in History and what is not, depending on what exactly the historian is researching and for what purpose. Data of people's daily life, refugees' in our case, such as accommodation and work, are crucial for the smooth running of a society. After the arrival of the refugees, both the state and -much more- they themselves took care to obtain housing and work, in order to cover the basic needs of everyday life. While these data are theoretically not that important, in other words they do not determine the outcome of a battle, an expedition, a political choice, etc., they ultimately prove to be particularly important in History, because they determine the survival of people.

The third axis could include the testimonies:

3.1. *“The halvah was typical, I remember it! It's a memory... to this day, I always remember that halvah in the pot; which was not so strong in spices - as one may think of Istanbul's desserts. And I always said to my father-who didn't like spices very much-I said, ““But how? Your mother - I said - was from Asia Minor...? She didn't cook so strongly on spices, but she always made this halvah...”.*

Elena Bonelou, third generation descendant, (Chanakkale), Corfu 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

3.2. *“They were crammed. There was some commotion there, they threw a sailor overboard because they heard him cursing Christ and Virgin Mary. And they were very religious, the people, it was a blasphemy to curse Christ and Virgin Mary. And they took the sailor and threw him into the sea. But because he could swim, the other sailors pulled him up. There was commotion there too. People were dying in the ship, and were thrown into the sea, as they said. Then they came to Piraeus, they stayed there and left for Corfu”.*

Aaron (Akis) Kortsinoglou, third generation descendant (Farasa, Cappadocia), Konitsa 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

3.3. *“They stayed in Corfu for nearly nine months. Then they left... A committee was sent to see where they could go. And they came back, they looked for the right place and they*

finally came here, he says, to Stavros. They were brought here and then they came here to the village. The place name is Strolongos. They came here and they founded Nea Madytos. Here it was a wild land as I remember it, the village developed later”.

Sultana Christani, second generation descendant (Madytos, Eastern Thrace), Nea Madytos 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

3.4. *“The older children - who were twenty years old - were told where father Germanos was buried. So, my parents set out and went to Corfu on an excursion. They went to the church in the cemetery and because they knew that their priests were buried in the perimeter of the cemetery -in the perimeter of the church, I guess- they went there around the church and searched. How can you find anything in a grassy place, with graves, with railings... And they started at random with various sticks and with various stones to remove the soil that was above the graves; to see if they could find any sign. And at dusk, after a whole day, after they had dug the upper part of various graves, they found a plaque that read "Father Germanos"... all the bones of the clergymen that were there before the construction of the monument of St. Arsenios, seem to have been placed in the cenotaph... In the perimeter of the wall, I also fixed a memorial plaque in memory of my grandfather, father Germanos”.*

Ioannis Papadopoulos, second generation descendant, (Karacaoren), Volos 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

3.5. *“Now, when they first came, especially the women, they had problems...with the locals (...) Well, that's what I heard with my own ears. That is, I remember them saying when I was little "Ah! She's a refugee!". The word "refugee" was like a swear word back then, in those years. Slowly we integrated into society, people started to understand that we were not simple people... we were hard workers! I mean, we always tried to support our family - with very little. Because that's what my father did. And my uncles and a lot of other people I know”.*

Nikolaos Tagatidis, second generation descendant (Konya, Asia Minor), Leeds UK 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

The testimonies of this section can be used, always in combination with additional archival material [see General State Archives (GAK) (Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους) in <https://archives1922.gak.gr/>], in the direction of the investigation of the **historical causes** that led the local residents to warmly or completely coldly (even abusively/violently) receive their new fellow citizens, but also of the **historical consequences** (Seixas & Morton, 2013) that each way had on the refugees. The main question could of course be whether the treatment was the same by all local residents. Beyond this, and at a more advanced depth, students could be asked to discuss to what **ontological causes** (Lévesque & Clark, 2018) the specific differentiation in these attitudes can be attributed (some accept them with joy and condescension and some hate them and humiliate them). At the same time, students will be asked to place themselves in the shoes of both refugees and locals, in order to proceed to a **rational understanding** (Lee & Ashby, 2001) of the reactions and feelings of both.

An important issue in this section is the commitment of the refugees to respect the dead and their intensive effort to preserve their memory. The activities in this unit are directly related to **the moral/ethical dimension** (Seixas & Morton, 2013) of History, i.e., the cultivation of moral values and practices and the familiarization with ways in which the study of the past could contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of societies in the present and in the future.

The refugees' attempt to maintain customs and traditions at all levels (diet, naming new cities based on the lost ones, etc.), as recorded in testimonies 3.1. and 3.3., is another point of reference during teaching. Students should be asked to identify the reasons why people try to remain, as much as possible, in the way of life they are used to and that this does not have so much a folkloric and emotional dimension, as it is determined by inherent ontological factors

that co-shape the human life. Also, the need for people to pursue a daily life as comfortable and peaceful as possible, under any circumstances, no matter where they are or how many difficulties they may go through.

Finally, the intense religiousness of the refugees could be a topic for discussion for the students. The archival material [see General State Archives (GAK) (Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους) in <https://archives1922.gak.gr/>], combined with the testimony 3.2., is sufficient, which records the surprise of the Asia Minor refugees when, coming to the Greek territory, they realized that their fellow Greeks did not respect the sacred and holy figures of their common religion. Students could be asked about how they judge the specific treatment on the part of the refugees, but also compare the way in which similar phenomena are treated today (connection of the past with the present, **historical perspective**) (Lee & Ashby, 2001). A more challenging exercise could be for students, with the help of Literature and/or film (historical fiction or contemporary cinematic approaches to the era) to try to interpret the deep religiousness (sometimes superficial/emotional and sometimes deeper/true) of the refugees, but also the lightness with which many Greeks approached religious things (symbols, figures, etc.). This exercise presupposes a more in-depth study of the daily living conditions of the two populations, on both sides of the Aegean, and how they may have had a decisive influence on the behaviors, choices and attitudes of the people of the time.

Lastly, there are also oral testimonies concerning the treatment of the whole issue by the people of the second or third generation, which are equally of interest both in research and teaching. The following two testimonies are presented as examples, with some suggestions for their didactic use.

4.1. *“I mean, I think all these is in my genes... It's me. Absolutely. That is, while I have read so much about what the Turks did to the Greeks, this and that... If you told me to go and stay there in Turkey for a while, I would go”.*

Sophia Linardou-Karagiannopoulou, second generation descendant, (Chanakkale), Corfu 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

4.2. *“Look, I am and will always feel - until I die - a Corfiot. Corfiot through and through; [I am] consciously a Corfiot.*

My dad was half from Epirus, on his fathers' side. He was from Epirus, from Arta. But I have always preferred Corfu. I loved Corfu. That's where my soul is, that's where my heart is... that's where everything is. But over the years, and because of the love I had for my grandmother, I understood the meaning of being from Asia Minor. You cannot understand that as a child. You understand that when you grow up and mature. All the more so because grandma never tried to influence us. I know, let's say, not to influence us in a negative way, like Pontians who tell their children the history of Pontus or Asia Minor, and they try to keep it alive partly by force or by pressure, by telling things... incidents. No, grandmother didn't tell us much, but in her own way she made us care on our own. At least I did, but so did Maro. To be interested in Konya. Perhaps not about the whole Asia Minor... That is, Istanbul doesn't mean anything to me...”.

Kerkýra Katsaounou, third generation descendant, (Konya), Thessaloniki 2022, The Corfu Reading Society Archive.

Testimonies 4.1. and 4.2. and others like it can be drawn upon, along with additional multimodal archival material, in order to explore the process of self-awareness of contemporary descendants of refugees. This process is directly linked to one of the main purposes of teaching History: the formation of **historical and national consciousness** and **identity** (Seixas, 2004, Duquette, 2015, Seixas, 2017, Körber, 2019). It is, therefore, essential for students to know the different ways in which national and historical consciousness is formed, according to what criteria, and why **the sense of belonging** to a specific social group

is important for people. The process of self-determination of citizens is decisive in the functioning of societies, since it largely determines the relationship that is formed with the Other, the neighbor, the friend or the opponent and -consequently- it is necessary to be carried out with complete awareness and with transparent and crystallized criteria. The students could be asked to comment on the distance the third-generation descendants observe between themselves and the people and events of the past, as well as to interpret their efforts to reduce this distance by any means. Utilizing various teaching tools (e.g., organized and prepared discussion between students and debates between groups, dramatized dialogue and/or dramatized reading, digital historical games, simulation, dramatization etc.) students could study the games of people's mind and memory, the diversity in how people conceive the personal and collective past, and -above all- the innate human need for self-determination and the causes that lead people to certain choices.

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Links

Digital Exhibition “From Ionia to the Ionian: Refugees in Corfu after the Asia Minor Disaster” (Ψηφιακή Έκθεση «Από την Ιωνία στο Ιόνιο: πρόσφυγες στην Κέρκυρα μετά τη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή) <https://refugees-to-onio1922.eu/>

General State Archives for 1922 (Γενικά Αρχεία του Κράτους για το 1922) in <https://archives1922.gak.gr/>

Oral History student conference (Μαθητικό Συνέδριο Προφορικής Ιστορίας) <http://oralhistorygroups.gr/mathitiko-synedrrio-2019/>

Student historical documentary competition, “Nea Paideia” Scientific Union (Μαθητικός διαγωνισμός ιστορικού ντοκιμαντέρ, Επιστημονική Ένωση «Νέα Παιδεία») <https://neapaideia-glossa.gr/contests/>

The Corfu Reading Society Archive (Αρχείο Αναγνωστικής Εταιρίας Κέρκυρας) <https://anagnostiki-etairia-kerkyras.eu/>