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- 1 In this paper, I will focus on displaced persons' life stories to demonstrate how the processes of displacement, deterritorialization and resettlement can shape the construction of national and social identity in the long term. Specifically, I will examine how and the extent to which individual experience of nationalism and national identity may differ from nationalism presented as a basis for state building. This exercise shares a common concern with Hobsbawm¹, who indicates that the study of nationalism should be centered on the « views from below, i.e. the nation as seen not by governments (...) but ordinary persons who are the objects of their propaganda ». It also has certain parallels with Bastea² who indicates that one should focus on the « individual actor who is part of the larger nation-building myth, but who is also able to resist or question this myth ».
- 2 My case study is centered on oral memories of two displaced and one local actor who experienced the process of population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923 - and its aftermath. One of the displaced persons found himself uprooted from his village in Turkey (Kaya / Livisi) and settled in Athens. The second displaced person was moved from Thessaloniki in Greece to Kaya / Livisi. The third person was and remained a resident of Kaya / Livisi. The evidence sieved from these people's oral narratives indicates clearly that their individual experiences and their belonging to a particular space is not necessarily congruent with the ideology of nation building either in Turkey or in Greece. In addition, the oral narratives demonstrate that displaced people's experiences of nationalism as a nation-building project was not a happy one: they were either excluded to some extent or their "fit" into the "nation in construction" was questioned. The oral narrative of the Kaya / Livisi resident lends support to the academic project which questions the validity of the nationalist argument concerning the homogeneity of the nation.

- 3 The paper is organized in two sections. Section 1 begins with a brief explanation of the historical events leading to the population exchange of 1923. It then examines the debate on how oral narratives may challenge the official discourse and historiography of nationalism. Having thus provided a historical background and a theoretical framework for understanding the significance of oral narratives, I move to the presentation and analysis of the oral narratives in section 2. This section will demonstrate that the nationalist ideology in Turkey and Greece could not erase the memories of co-existence and belonging to space beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Finally, I will conclude with some observations on the extent to which nationalism as experienced by individuals can be divergent from and richer than the official presentation of nationalism.

From population exchange to its narration : a historical and theoretical overview

- 4 The population exchange narrated in this study occurred in 1923, following the conclusion of the Population Exchange Agreement in January 1923. The agreement provided for the compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion and Greek nationals of the Muslim religion with the exceptions of the Muslims of Western Thrace and the Greeks of Constantinople. The Agreement also provided that all movable property could be taken and financial compensation would be made for immovable property³. As a result of the Agreement, 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
- 5 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 at purging non-nationals or re-nationalizing once lost territories.
- 6 On the one hand, the Greek state had been promoting the *Megali Idea*, or “Great Idea”, since its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. This irredentist attempt at unifying all Greeks was the main foreign policy for the newly formed Greek State. The *Megali idea* was based on rebuilding the Byzantine Empire, the Hellenization of Anatolia and the termination of the Ottoman Turks’ control in the Balkans and Asia Minor. On the other hand, Turkish nationalism began to flourish in reaction to nationalism in Greece and the Balkan region, which was part of the Ottoman Empire. One major conflict resulting from the clash of these nationalist projects was the fighting of the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, which created a large number of refugees, as Muslim Ottoman subjects known as Rumelians fled the Balkans to the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. Fearing reprisal, the Anatolian Greek population began to flee from Istanbul and the Aegean coast of Anatolia towards Aegean islands. The Balkan war thus had two groups of victims : the Rumeli Turks and the Anatolian Greeks⁴.
- 7 During this turmoil every state in the Balkans had to accommodate large refugee populations. For example, by 1923, Greece had to accommodate approximately 1,4 million refugees. The impact of this massive population movement on Greece was immense, given the fact that the population of Greece in the early 1920s was only 4,5 million and the Greek state was unstable. Many of the displaced people arrived with

few possessions and some did not even speak the Greek language⁵. This is a striking fact considering that these people were supposedly part of the Greek nation. Similar processes happened in Bulgaria and Turkey where people with the same ethnic origin as those in the receiving country had to be accommodated.

- 8 Many orthodox refugees to Greece came from urban places in Asia Minor and were mainly merchants, ship builders, traders and civil servants. In contrast to this, 90 % of Turkish refugees from Macedonia who settled in Turkey had peasant backgrounds. These processes have changed the ethnic composition of these three states. The percentage of the Greek ethnic element within Greece rose from 80 % in 1920 to 94 % in 1928. While Bulgaria expelled almost the entire Greek minority, Turkey expelled the Christian population and became an essentially Muslim and Turkish state - with the exception of the Kurds who were considered to be "mountain Turks" and the Christian minority, mostly concentrated in Istanbul⁶.
- 9 During the population exchange, it was very difficult to control and organize the refugee movement in a humane way for various reasons. First, a successful departure agreement requires a trustworthy government that would comply with international agreements. However, both Turkish and Greek governments were unreliable, and both failed to keep the terms of population exchange agreements. Second, refugee flight cannot be organized in a humane way when the countries involved violate human rights. The narratives of many Greek and Turkish refugees demonstrate that the population exchange was implemented against their desires. These narratives question the validity of the arguments put forward by those who had been involved in the management of the population exchange. For example, some of those people quoted in Ladas⁷ argued that the organization of the population exchange was humane as people's lives and possessions were saved. This line of reasoning, however, cannot conceal the fact that the human rights of the refugees were violated because the exchange was against their wishes.
- 10 Third, the implementation of the population exchange agreement did not run as smoothly as the international agencies quoted in Ladas⁸ had predicted. These agencies had assumed that the creation of homogenous nation states and the elimination of minorities would help to create peace in the Balkans. Therefore, they tended to turn a blind eye to both governments' violation of the population exchange agreements. For example, the Turkish government confiscated the property of the displaced Orthodox Greeks and forced them to leave in a disordered way. Although Muslim refugees from Greece left in an orderly way, the property that they had expected to occupy (houses and land vacated by the Orthodox Greeks) had been occupied by other Turks or destroyed. Many refugees as a result found themselves without food, clothing and shelter⁹.
- 11 Given this historical background, the rest of this section will explore the way in which a group reconstructs, assimilates, and understands its identity. I will also examine the role of memory in the formation of the group's contemporary identity and the way in which the group's interpretation of history may not necessarily be compatible with the official interpretation.
- 12 The way in which refugee identity is developed makes the refugee an incongruent member of the nation he / she joins at a certain point in time. In other words, the refugee does not automatically become a natural part of the host nation for two reasons. First, nationalism is obsessed with territorialization, or the division of the

world into territorial units that are “home” to defined peoples. As a result, the refugee who originates in a different territory is a candidate for exclusion. Second, refugees cannot but bring with them memories, cultures, and even languages that differentiate them from the host nation. Let us now examine the way in which these tendencies interact and generate results that put the refugee at a disadvantage.

- 13 Despite official arguments to the contrary, the population exchange created refugees and the refugee identity endured. In 1931, Charles B. Eddy hoped that “refugee” as a word would vanish in Greece¹⁰. This wishful thinking, however, was challenged by the continuation of the “refugee identity”, which had been formed within new host countries and documented in anthropological writing long after the exodus from Asia Minor. For example, Hirschon indicates that displaced Orthodox Greeks tended to identify themselves as “refugees” or *prosfyges* or as *Mikrasiates*, or Asia Minor people¹¹. More strikingly, not only the original refugees but also younger people of the second and even third generation born in Greece identified themselves in the same manner.
- 14 The Greek and Turkish governments and the international refugee regime defined the refugee as a special category and contributed to the Asia Minor refugee and *muhacir*, or Muslim refugee from the Balkans, identity as a separate identity¹². These results are related to what Malkki describes as « the national order of things »¹³, which conceives of the world as « composed of sovereign, spatially discontinuous units »¹⁴. This notion is built by nationalist ideologies, which uses a map with no “vague” or “fuzzy spaces” or “bleeding boundaries”¹⁵. The most important feature of the nationalist principle is “one state, one culture”¹⁶. In addition, the world is represented metaphorically by use of terms such as “roots and trees”, which help to essentialize and naturalize the unity of the society and culture¹⁷.
- 15 Although the Greek and Turkish nationalists present the population exchange as “repatriation”, oral accounts of refugees demonstrate the “patrie” was the place they had to leave. Cultural practices “brought from the homeland” and memories pertaining to it, have powerful emotional value and bear the marks of a another origin¹⁸. That is why an Asia Minor refugee from Livisi, on his / her visit to the “homeland”, kisses the soil. Similarly, Muslim refugees ask visitors to bring soil from their villages in the Halkidiki region of Salonica to sprinkle over their ancestors’ graveyard. These practices challenge the essentialist nationalist discourse, which expects the refugees to become a natural part of the nation within the new territory. As will be demonstrated below, refugee oral narratives further point out a different sense of belonging and identity. For the nationalists, this type of identity and belonging reflect “disorder” and damage the “national order”.
- 16 Yet the agency and creativity of the refugees should not be underestimated. These assets demonstrate themselves in the relationship between history and memory. What the refugee remembers must be seen not only in connection with their past but also as a primary indication of their present feelings of belonging. References to common suffering and to memories about the place of origin are significant indicators that their status in the host nation leaves much to be desired. The memory of ancestors and place of origin is a coded signal that can be unscrambled by careful study of oral history. The “experience” of the group of the people in the research project become central to oral history. The interpretation of oral history testimony enables the researcher to make sense of individual experience in relation to past events, relating it to public or national narratives which affirm or challenges the informant’s narrative identity as

presented in the interview. In this sense memory is « a process used by both individuals and more institutional forces to connect the past with the present and future »¹⁹.

A refugee from Asia minor

- 17 In keeping with anthropologists' deployment of life narratives to illustrate cultural practices and conventions, I offer three different accounts. All three are tied in different ways to the village of Livisi / Kaya koyu, which lies today in south western Turkey, 25 nautical miles from the island of Rhodes. It is something of a ghost town. In 1914 the population of the town was 6 500, mainly orthodox Christians sharing a single geographical space with neighboring Muslims. Today the population is 600 Muslim Turks, a mixture of long-term residents and more recent settlers. There are around 3 000 empty houses, most of them ruined, and a host of old public and commercial buildings : two big churches, around 20 chapels, an old school, a library, a pharmacy and many different type of shops. Many of these structures are now in ruins, and serve as a constant material reminder of the unmixing of the Ottoman past. That memory is also preserved by residents past and present. While I was doing my field work in Kaya koyu I heard from a second generation Salonican refugee who runs a café in the village, that he had met a Greek man born in the house where he now lives. When I went to Athens I set out to contact this man, born on February 2nd 1914 in Livisi, and resident in Greece since 1922, when he left as a refugee. His name is Nikandros Kepesis, and I found him living in a big block of flat opposite the KKE (Greek Communist Party) headquarters. He turned out to be one of my most valuable informants.
- 18 Kepesis had a distinguished career in Greece, where he grew up in Palaia Kokkinia and then moved to Drapetsona, where he finished high school. He embraced left-wing ideas at an early age, becoming a member of OKNE (the youth wing of the Communist Party) in 1930, and a member of the KKE in 1936. He studied Law before serving in the military in 1940-41 as a second lieutenant, then was a captain in the 6th Independent Division of ELAS (Greek Liberation Army) of Piraeus. Jailed after the war, he became a member of the Central Committee of the KKE in 1950, and retained this title until the 12th Conference of the Party on 1987. For his communist views and activism, he served a total of 21 years and 11 months of jail and exile. For his courage and active resistance, the Municipality of Keratsini and the German Republic honored him. Now he is Vice President of the Greek Union of Resistance Fighters (PEAEA). He was also a Communist Member of Parliament. As a writer he became known with the book *The December* which was written in jail and appeared in 1944. Other books followed : *We will win* (2nd edition), *I remember*, *Piraeus in the National Resistance*, *My own and not only mine*, *In the Whirlpool of Events*, *And on the Peace on Land*, *From the depths of memory (for the lost countries)* and *Asia Minor Disaster*.
- 19 Kepesis's distinguished political and literary accomplishments reveal a life of leftist activism within the parameters of the Greek nation-state. Here, though, I wish to focus on the ways in which he draws on other aspects of his personal history to link past and present. His story, told through our conversation in 1999 and three of his books that deal with themes of expulsion and destitution, is no more typical or representative than any refugee narrative. Indeed it may be less so, in part because Kepesis complements his memories of his birthplace and early years with knowledge gleaned from wide reading of published materials about the village and the broader political

and historical events of his youth. I was taken by surprise by some of his perspectives on the population exchange and his memories of the village. His narrative nonetheless constitutes a rich and vivid cultural resource which can inform the discussion around the formation and maintenance of personal and collective senses of identity.

- 20 When Kepesis describes his life in Livisi, he emphasizes the importance of family and the religious community. He also indicates the harmonious relationship between Christians and Muslims. In this regard, there are similarities between Kepesis's perspectives and those of the Greek novelist Mrs Dido Sotiriou in *The Dead Wait* : both agree that at least until the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, there was a good relationship between Muslims and orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire.
- 21 An example of Kepesis's positive image of coexistence is in his description of Easter celebrations at Tria Kavakia (Uc Kavaklar in Turkish), a very spectacular area on the way to Livisi's nearby port, Makri. He gives an account from the point of view of Pindaraki, the name he gives himself in his published accounts. He describes feasting and dancing, and a special attraction called "balestra", where the young men of the village were exposing their masculinity to impress the unmarried girls. This impressed Pindaraki, who was there only once. He also marveled that some Turks kept lemonade ice-cold to sell it at the feast. They had gathered snow from the mountains. Their presence was confirmation that Greeks and Turks used to go to each others' religious festivities, and also did business with one another. Communication was easy, as most of Livisi's orthodox Christians spoke Turkish. They went to the Muslim festivities of Bairam, while Turks would join in excursions to monasteries on Saints' days, and even participate in prayers for rain before the icon of the Virgin Mary, in times of drought. Most of the Livisian orthodox were skillful tradesman and traveled around neighboring Turkish villages to work with leather, or as carpenters or masons. The children, recalls Kepesis, found the chance to play on the way.
- 22 Changes began as early as 1913, before Kepesis was born, and he records them as having a direct impact on his own family. He was the only son of Eirinis and Minas Hatziarguris. His father was early to realize, after the Balkan Wars, that wider war was soon coming. To avoid being recruited into a labor battalion in the Turkish army, as many Greeks were, he went to Alexandria of Egypt and then on to Piraeus and to the USA in 1916. Alexandros and his mother were sent into exile by the Turkish officials to Acibadem in Denizli (Turkey) as a punishment for Minas' flight. When they returned to the village, they found that many families were in the same position. By 1922, indeed, most of the male adult orthodox inhabitants of Livisi had either left the country, been sent into exile, or were serving in labor battalions of the Turkish army.
- 23 This male absence made the events of 1922 more terrifying for those they left behind. The remainder of the town's Orthodox population, mainly women, children or elderly people, were compelled to leave by Turkish soldiers, who marched them out of town under escort. According to Kepesis's memory, there were only four men left in the village at this time : two were Turks, one was over eighty years old, and the other was lame. Resistance was impossible: some reportedly converted to Islam to be able to stay in their homeland. The rest all locked their houses, hoping that they would return, and left behind all their material possessions. As a local Muslim Livisian described the event « They left here with only food in their stomachs and clothes on their backs ».
- 24 In Kepesis' memory, they faced one more ordeal, the Turkish customs, who would not let the Livisian women take anything of silver or gold. His nanny had a worthless silver

pin to fasten her blouse, that had no buttons. The Customs removed it and didn't let her take it with her. In all the panic and upheaval of the moment, Kepesis remembers his nanny's desperate attempt to hold her blouse together. Then her daughter managed to sew it. The refugees from the village were brought by ship (200 families) to Tzia (Kea) - an island near the Turkish coast. Resettlement of the Asia minor refugees was a difficult task, especially as most of them preferred to stay together in the same areas. They were very creative in turning barren area to a place where they could settle. they called their place Nea- Makri, after the harbor town near Livisi, now called Fethiye in Turkey.

- 25 Kepesis' narrative appears consistent with the conclusions of several anthropologists working with refugees, who have found that their cultural identities are strongly related to their past of who they were. In the words of the editors of a recent collection of essays, « The refugee's self-identity is anchored more to who she or he was than what she or he has become »²⁰. In his analysis of the people of Argaki, Peter Loizos notes that relationships in displacement have shifted, such that « Land disputes particularly are not worth pursuing when both parties have lost the land in question, and local "honor" disputes pale when both parties face a common "dishonorable" enemy »²¹. People form a new kind of identity on the basis of loss of home and they build close relationships with people who have had similar losses. Hirschon's studies of Greek Asia Minor refugees from Turkey shows that the refugees new identity in Greece is connected with their past life and experiences and shared memories. She argues that

The importance of shared memories for any uprooted group is obvious: in order to reconstitute their lives memory becomes a critical link, the means of a cultural survival, a kind of capital without which their identity would be lost. Indeed, the connection between identity and memory as a social and collective fact deserves some consideration, especially in the case of displaced peoples²².

- 26 Hirschon goes on to stress that as well as memory, religious background was a very important component of Asia Minor refugee identity-maintenance. The collective memories of the past were linked to a shared religious heritage. Living in a neighborhood in Piraeus where old practices of sociality, manners, and cuisine were continued, Hirschon shows how Asia Minor refugees developed regional identification of their past in their new environment. Even 50 years after their displacement people transported their old life style to the new environment—a phenomenon also noted by Voutira, who writes

(The) varieties of insignia that were invented to denote the locality and origins of particular groups suggest the way in which the old "regional identities" became redefined in the new lands both through their organizational structure as associations and in the symbolic sense that refugee settlements were marked in space through the use of the term "new" [*nea*] as a toponymic prefix denoting the refugee identity of the settlement (for instance Nea Moudania, Nea Maditos, Nea Santa)²³.

- 27 Anthropological analysis also indicates how refugees construct their identity in relation to their hosts. Asia Minor Greeks views of the indigenous Greeks are traced by Hirschon through statements like « They do not know how to behave ; they do not know how to speak », or « Before we came here they were nothing. We opened their eyes. They did not know how to eat or dress. They used to eat salt fish and wild vegetables. It was we who taught them everything »²⁴. Refugee experiences and impressions of life in mainland Greece were not promising, especially in contrast to

their recollections of their life in Ottoman towns and villages. In contrast to their own prosperity and sophistication, Greece was perceived as a small backward country.

- 28 This self-perception of themselves as being culturally superior is partly explained as a form of defense mechanism. For as refugees who had made the journey with nothing to show of their former wealth and self-sufficiency, they now found themselves at the bottom of the economic scale. They nonetheless saw native Greeks as uncultured and rough and named them “Vlachs” (Shepherds), or country “bumpkins”. In this urban space locals were called people “from the mountains”. By thus casting themselves as cultured and educated and their “hosts” as isolated and backward, the Asia Minor Greeks constructed social boundaries. Integral in this process was the idea of their lost homelands, and the collective memory of the Ottoman past.
- 29 Yet the very strength of this attachment also fueled discriminatory impulses among native Greeks, many of whom conceptualized their relationship with the newcomers as one of competition for scarce state resources. Derogatory terms like *Tourkosporoi* (Turkish seeds), *Tourkomerites* (originating from Turkey) and *yaourtovaptismenoi* (baptized in yogurt) - are all manifestations of what can be called the nationalist impulse of territorialization, in which those from outside the state are seen as less legitimate citizens. Such epithets challenge the authenticity of the refugees’ Greekness by reading their pride in place of origin as signaling their impurity.
- 30 As a staunch leftist and undoubted patriot, one might imagine that Kepesis’s recollections would diverge from those encountered by Hirschon among her deeply religious interlocutors. He too, though, recounts that church and school were instrumental in promoting the consciousness of nationality among Anatolian orthodox Christians. Though Greece was a distant place, most teachers were trained there : other associations such as “The Organisation of Constantinople”, “The Association for the Propagation of Greek letters” and the Athens-based “Anatolia” also sponsored the *Megali Idea* outside the Greek State. What his memoirs also reveal is how history is embodied in material sites such as houses, land, mountains and churches. This active process of remembering is not only an expression of personal identity but the affirmation of relationship with other refugees.
- 31 His narratives of return and remembrance are freighted with emotion. All through his life, he relates, Kepesis thought about the town where he was born. Even it was painful to think about his lost home and destitution, it gave him strength to resist what he called oppression. He had always wanted to go back to see his house, and the church yard where he used to play : eventually, he made the trip with some of his friends, determined to overcome what he called the traumatic effect of the forced displacement. He described himself as standing “as if lost” in front of his house, after seventy-five years, remembering many scenes, and re-experiencing feelings mostly related to the few minutes of the exodus. « I remember my mum and nanny saying it was God’s will » he said, « and no one can go against it ». In his book as well as our interview he described his first visit to the church yard, standing in a trance, unable to move. He could hear his mother’s voice and his cousins.
- 32 In one passage in his writing, he stands before the debris that was there instead of his house. In order to remove the wooden floors, the Turks demolished whole houses—only single-story dwellings survived this, as there was no wood to be taken. Kepesis’s memory goes back to conjure the moment when his nanny was holding his hand and they were leaving Livisi. He turned around and looked at his dog Roza who stood there

looking at him. The older Kepesis wants to burst into tears but he is not alone there so he tries to keep himself together. Then he walks to the church-Kato Panagia. The bell is missing, the church emptied of its icons, and transformed into a museum. His memory turns back again, and all his love about the church wells up. He is amazed that his birthplace has become a tourist site.

- 33 Even for this leftist intellectual, the physical remains of a childhood past conjure a strong sense of lost community. The social dimensions of memory, both in what is remembered and in the act of remembering, emerge as important in comprehending the individual ways in which how people make sense of their past. The past is not only history but connected to the present through individuals' interpretation of their lives and the world around them. The narrator not only remembers the past, but is thereby linked to a larger social group. Personal testimonies convey the conscious and unconscious meaning of experiences as lived, but also reveal the influence of ideology and culture. Memory is thus not one-sided or mechanical: there is a dialectical connection between history and social groups' memories, in which subsequent experiences, personal or shared, also play a role. And senses of belonging in the present can be transformed by encounters with the past—here with the result that a strongly self-reliant individual with decades of experience in a left-wing struggle, comes face to face with his own earlier membership in a very different kind of community, and his expressed self-identification comes to embrace both.

Muslim refugees

- 34 After the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the First World War of 1914-1918, and subsequent Greek-Turkish conflict, Muslims living in the territories of the Greek state were feeling the psychological and physical consequences. Like Kepesis' father in Asia Minor, many sensed that these state-level disputes would have direct effects in their lives. The resettlement scheme and exchange of populations was the ultimate realization of their fears. In theory, there should have been an abundance of land and property in Asia Minor, left by the departing Orthodox refugees, to provide for them. In practice, their resettlement proved more complicated, and generated considerable bitterness.
- 35 Much of the trouble in the practical implementation of the exchange lay in the significant time-lag between the flight of Orthodox Christians from Asia Minor, and the departure of Muslims from Greece. A majority of Asia Minor's orthodox Christian refugees were forced to leave between the fall of Smyrna on 9 September 1922, and the Armistice signed in Mudania on 11 October 1922, which was then followed by the opening of the Lausanne peace talks on 1 December 1922. On 8 November, the Turkish government set up the Ministry of Reconstruction, Exchange and Settlement, with the duty of organizing the resettlement of Muslim refugees from Greece. According to Turkish Red Crescent documents, the first shipload of refugees left Salonica for Turkey only on 1 May 1923, and completing the transfer of Muslim population took approximately eight months²⁵. The Muslims of Greece thus stayed several months, and sometimes as long as a year, after the arrival of their Orthodox counterparts from Asia Minor. They shared the same villages and, according to oral accounts, in some cases had to share the same houses. According to Pentzopoulos, during this transition

period the Greek government confiscated and redistributed Muslim properties and livestock to Asia Minor refugees²⁶.

- 36 The Turkish Red Crescent, or *Hilal-i Aymer Cemiyeti*, gave assistance to Muslim refugees for transport and settlement, and incoming refugees were welcomed at the ports with music, dance and official celebrations. This masked underlying, unpalatable truths concerning the realities of their reception. Between 1922 and 1924, most of the properties abandoned by Christians were given to locals, or taken over by corrupt government officials. This scenario was played out all across Asia Minor, including Livisi, where the forced displacement of Christians before the arrival of Muslim refugees made it possible for government officials and locals to dismantle wealthy houses like that of the Kepesis family, plundering furniture and building materials, including doors, tiles, shutters, and even floor and joist timbers. They were either sold or used for construction.
- 37 Although the newcomers, known as *muhacirs*, often brought their land registration forms, hoping they would be given similar amounts of land, they were disappointed. The inadequate distribution of land and properties lies at the root of many refugee complaints. Another factor is the alleged lack of government foresight or even minimal consideration for logic. Many Muslim refugees were from peasant communities, in contrast to Asia Minor refugees who were often tradesman or merchants. The Turkish government was taken to task for ignoring the skills, means of livelihood, and economic situation of the newcomers : in parliament, Ministers were accused of forcing people from the plains to settle in the mountains, and vice versa. Relying on information collected at the ports during the arrival of refugees, government capacity to take proactive measures to address such concerns was limited. The state's ability to allocate further resources to the problem was also restricted, in part by its failure to win the international credit it sought at Lausanne. The effect was to add further difficulties to the lives of nearly 500 000 Muslim refugees who had lost their homeland. Refugees were officially welcomed, automatically acquired Turkish citizenship, and were generally given some land and housing. Beyond that, though, they were left on their own.
- 38 These elements can all be seen in the resettlement of Muslim refugees in Livisi. This area of olive and tobacco production was chosen as the place of settlement for peasants from wheat-growing communities around Salonica. They were given abandoned Christian properties : however on their arrival they found not only that the climate was very different, but also that the houses and plots of land were farther apart than they were used to. The land they were given did not meet their needs, and they did not receive adequate start-up capital from the government. The locals weren't very welcoming either. All of this only heightened their vain hopes that they would one day return home, and reduced their will to make new homes for themselves in this foreign environment. Over time, many left the village in search of a better places for their skills.
- 39 Many of these themes inform the following account, provided by Ahmet Yorukoglu. He is a Muslim refugee from Salonica who now lives in Livisi.

Non-Muslims took our properties and lands : we were allowed to keep only half the harvest. We were gathered in Salonica to be sent away: in the Spring [1923] a big ship came and took us from Salonica with our animals and belongings, and dropped some of us in Izmir. The Turkish Maritime Company (Turkish : Vapurcular Birliği) transferred the refugees from Salonica to Turkey, and the Turkish government gave

each household five hectares of field per person regardless of their sex and age, and a house per household. People from the same villages were sent to the same areas. We landed in Fethiye (Makri) and resettled in Livisi. However my father didn't like it. We looked around the surrounding villages for a few weeks, and then tried to make a new life near Izmir. But we grew disillusioned, and were forced to return to Livisi. The locals called us derogatory names.

- 40 The form of intercommunal name-calling reflected different cultural practices. Locals called the newcomers “covered”, as all of the women used to cover their faces with thick woollen scarves. This was partly a function of Islamic devotion ; but was also a pattern developed in the cold Macedonian mountains. Such visible markers of difference, though, which endured for some time, served to reinforce segregation. Reportedly, the communities didn't let their children play together, and didn't visit each others' houses. Refugees thus kept their distinctive identity as *muhacir* (migrant) or *Selanikli* (coming from Salonica). They were settled in old Christian houses, and their part of town was renamed as *Muhacir mahallesi* or the refugees' neighbourhood. For nearly two decades, they were physically and socially segregated. They turned one of the churches into a mosque and worshipped separately from their fellow Muslim local neighbors. They went to different coffee houses. They all retained an enthusiasm for their former home in the Balkans. « We used to live in a big house in Doburlu (Nea Silata), and we could grow anything there » remembers Ahmet Yorukoglu. A strong communal sense survived that Thessaloniki and its hinterland constituted their *memleket*, or homeland. In their refugee present the theme of lost homeland often resurfaces, salient in songs from the Balkans which they call “Rumeli Havalari”.
- 41 Even today, some locals still regard the descendants of *muhacirs* as outsiders. But the derogatory term has been internalized by the Muslim refugees as a sign of pride, marking a clear distinction between themselves and other migrants or refugees, such as Bulgarian Muslims, Albanians or Pomaks. The term *Muhacir* derives from Arabic roots : “h-j-r” denotes « to dissociate oneself, to separate, to keep away, to leave, to abandon, to give up, to emigrate ». In contrast to the widely known term *Mujahidin*, or “holy warriors”, the associated term *Muhacir* (Muhajirin) can be translated as « those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression »²⁷. The Salonica refugees would say *biz muhaciriz, fakat onlar gocmen* – « We are Muslim migrants, but they are only migrants », thus demonstrating the importance of religious identity rather than national identity.
- 42 Muslim refugees in Livisi thus continue to use a range of symbols in their attempt to distinguish themselves from local Livisians. While Muslim refugees are typically depicted in national media and in national discourse as sharing the same language, culture and religion with other Turks, oral narratives such as that provided by Ahmet Yorukoglu make us aware that specific refugee communities distinguish themselves and are distinguished by other Turks as different. Likewise, many such groups place emphasis on the specific site of origins. Second generation refugees born in Livisi continue to identify themselves as *Selanikli*.

Local Livisians

- 43 In the official history of Turkey, there is little or no space to accommodate local stories of difference or hostility. Yet within Livisi such accounts flourish in an agonistic context. *Muhacir* narratives of local unfriendliness and governmental indifference are

matched by local descriptions of complicity between new settlers and state officials in the destruction of their lived environment. Vesile Yorukoglu, a local villager who was the first to marry into the Salonican refugee community, offered the following interpretation of past events.

The *muhacirs* burned the beautiful houses and destroyed the place while people from the surrounding villages and government watch them. Tax collectors and officials took all of the belongings of the orthodox Christians. We used to cultivate tobacco together, and everywhere there were beautiful grapes and figs. If Christians were still here, this place would be a paradise.

- 44 A still more vivid and personal account was provided by Mehmet Gokce, a local Livisian who was born in 1909, and comes from a family of 3 boys and 5 girls. His father was a gunsmith and all the orthodox Christians knew him. They used to cooperate with a Christian family in cultivating tobacco. « We used to lend each other money » he began, and then continued

My sisters and our Rum (Orthodox) neighbors used to sleep in each other's houses. We used to harvest together and visit each other in our religious festivities. There was trust then. The sound of the church bell was so beautiful you could hear from everywhere. After the exchange the government took it away and installed it on the *Yavuz*.²⁸

- 45 Gokce thus expressed a memory of religious tolerance and respect, as well as a sense of loss for the passing of those values. He remembers how his parents and relatives wept with the orthodox Christians when they were escorted away by the Turkish Army for deportation. He did not emphasize economic differences between the two communities, but along with other older Livisians recalls an atmosphere of sharing and mutual benefit. Christian doctors, for example, treated their Muslim neighbors, and at times of crisis the town rallied in solidarity. Indeed, it is only when elderly Orthodox Christian refugees return to visit their homes that questions of economic standing surface. Gokce recalled one such visit in the following terms:

- 46 There were around twenty *Rum* who came back to see their places twenty five years after their deportation. They were surprised to see that most of the houses have been destroyed and are unoccupied. They asked « Why haven't you moved into our big houses ? You are poorer than we left you. What happened to all our possessions ? » What they didn't know is that all the big lands were taken by the rich landlords and their belongings were plundered by the neighboring villages and officials.

- 47 The theme of deterioration is very common in the everyday language of the locals. By this means they express resentment of the nationalist refugee settlement project, and their own sense of loss, as the material traces of a lively, thriving town with considerable contact between its religious communities has been gradually destroyed. For some, the refugees themselves are guilty by association, and this triggers resentment towards them. This can take the form of accusations that they are not "true" Turks, and are undeserving heirs to the land that they now occupy. Its former owners were perhaps even less Turkish, but this was nonetheless their shared homeland.

Conclusion

- 48 Of the forced displacements of 1922-1923, Bernard Lewis writes:

What took place was not an exchange of Greeks and Turks but rather an exchange of Greek orthodox Christians and Ottoman Muslims. A western observer, accustomed to a different system of social and national classification, might even conclude that this was not repatriation at all, but deportation to exile-of Christian Turks to Greece and of Muslim Greeks to Turkey²⁹.

- 49 I do not seek here to sign up to an idealized nostalgic vision of the Ottoman past. What this paper has tried to demonstrate is that before nationalist ideologies took effect, there was a harmonious relationship between Muslim and Christian communities in Livisi / Kayakoyu.
- 50 The national epic and refugee experiences were historically connected, but they did not therefore always fit easily together. There is a disjunction between recorded official national history and local narratives. In the official recorded histories of the modern Turkish and Greek nation-states, this past of intercommunal relationships and co-existence with other social groups is not represented. It is for this reason that research to recover the local, individual, voices of Anatolia is important.
- 51 Beyond this straightforward point, the refugee experiences of nation and nationhood, presented in these oral narratives, challenge established and cherished ideas of nation and nationalism. Even though such challenging voices have been silenced or excluded from official histories, refugee narratives nonetheless endure, and offer the basis to reconstitute alternative stories.
- 52 Finally, these different narratives emphasize the important role of memory, and in particular its link to the material remains of the past. The voices recorded here are all linked through a small village in Asia Minor, in which various processes of cultural identity-maintenance and transformation have taken place in the course of the last hundred years. For all the people in this story, their experiences and the ways in which they recall them serve to reconfirm the observation made by Samuel, that memory is « not merely a passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past [but] historically conditioned, changing colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment, so that far from being handed down in the timeless form of “tradition” it is altered from generation to generation ». Yet simultaneously, they demonstrate the powerful continuity not just of the ideas, but of the experience of “home”.

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Index géographique : Grèce, Turquie

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