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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN COMMEMORATION PRACTICES
STUDENT-TEACHERS' IDEAS
ABOUT PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS IN MONUMENTAL PLACES

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ΣΥΝΕΧΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΣΕ ΜΝΗΜΟΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΕΣ
ΙΔΕΕΣ ΜΕΛΛΟΝΤΙΚΩΝ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΩΝ
ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΥΣ ΕΟΡΤΑΣΜΟΥΣ ΣΕ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΑΚΟΥΣ ΤΟΠΟΥΣ

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η εργασία παρουσιάζει προκαταρκτικά συμπεράσματα έρευνας που βασίζεται στην ανάλυση 60 γραπτών ερωτηματολογίων που συμπλήρωσαν τριτοετείς φοιτητές παιδαγωγικού τμήματος περιφερειακού πανεπιστημίου στην Ελλάδα. Οι φοιτητές, μεταξύ άλλων, κλήθηκαν να σχολιάσουν τις δημόσιες αντιπαραθέσεις που προέκυψαν κατά τον εορτασμό της επετείου της αντίστασης κατά τη διάρκεια της Γερμανικής Κατοχής σε μια αθηναϊκή γειτονιά στην Αθήνα, στην Καισαριανή. Το ερώτημα που διέπει τη μελέτη είναι το εάν οι φοιτητές αντιλαμβάνονται τους δημόσιους εορτασμούς ως αφηγήσεις για το παρελθόν, αναγνωρίζοντας τον προσωρινό και «κατασκευασμένο» χαρακτήρα τους. Η μελέτη στηρίχθηκε σε προηγούμενες έρευνες στον τομέα της διδακτικής της ιστορίας (Lee 2004a), της ιστορικής συνείδησης (Rúsen 2005, Seixas 2004), της συλλογικής μνήμης και των δημόσιων πρακτικών μνημόνευσης (Gillis 1996, Carretero 2011, Dromprouki 2015) όπως και του υλικού πολιτισμού (Lowenthal 1985). Οι

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60 φοιτητές ενημερώθηκαν για την αρχική λειτουργία του ιστορικού χώρου του Σκοπευτηρίου στην Καισαριανή, χώρος που στο Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο χρησιμοποιήθηκε από τις κατοχικές αρχές στην Αθήνα για την πραγματοποίηση εκτελέσεων, μεταξύ των οποίων και η εκτέλεση διακοσίων κομμουνιστών την 1η Μαΐου του 1944. Επίσης, ενημερώθηκαν για τις διαμάχες σχετικά με την κατασκευή ενός μνημείου για την Αντίσταση στο Σκοπευτήριο, όπως και για την αντιπαράθεση σε σχέση με το ετήσιο μνημόσυνο που πραγματοποιείται στον ίδιο χώρο. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, κλήθηκαν να σχολιάσουν την κατάργηση του μνημοσύνου κατά τη μετεμφυλιακή περίοδο ή τις προσπάθειες των διαδοχικών κυβερνήσεων να οικειοποιηθούν την ιστορία του Σκοπευτηρίου για πολιτικούς λόγους. Μέσα από την επαγωγική ανάλυση των γραπτών απαντήσεων των φοιτητών αναδείχτηκαν τρία σχήματα συλλογισμών σε σχέση με την «αλλαγή» ή την «επανάληψη» στις διαδικασίες μνημόνευσης. Ορισμένοι φοιτητές θεώρησαν ότι η συγκεκριμένη επιμνημόσυνη τελετή ή οι δημόσιες, εν γένει, τελετές, χαρακτηρίζονται από «επανάληψη» ως προς τον τρόπο που τελούνται, έτσι ώστε να λειτουργούν ως παραδείγματα προς μίμηση και να μας θυμίζουν την υποχρέωσή μας να τιμάμε τους προγόνους μας. Άλλοι φοιτητές είδαν επίσης «επανάληψη» στον τρόπο που τελούνται οι δημόσιες τελετές, αλλά ερμήνευσαν την παραπάνω επανάληψη ως αδράνεια και έλλειψη προσαρμογής από την πλευρά των ιθυνόντων στις μεταβαλλόμενες συνθήκες. Τέλος, η πλειονότητα των φοιτητών διέκρινε «αλλαγή» στις δημόσιες τελετές, αποδίδοντάς την στις αποφάσεις των πολιτικών και τις μεταβαλλόμενες ανάγκες της κοινωνίας, και απέδωσαν τις αλλαγές στον τρόπο μνημόνευσης είτε σε πολιτική μεροληψία είτε σε ερμηνείες του παρελθόντος από διαφορετικές οπτικές γωνίες, οπτικές γωνίες που ανταποκρίνονται σε διαφορετικές κοινωνικές ανάγκες. Η τελευταία αυτή ομάδα των φοιτητών που διέγνωσε «αλλαγή» στους τρόπους μνημόνευσης εμφανίζεται να αποδίδει μία δυναμική διάσταση στο παρελθόν και στην ερμηνεία του και να επιτυγχάνει αυτό που ο Rúsen, ονομάζει «επικαιροποίηση της ηθικής» (Rúsen 2005: 29). Η παραπάνω μελέτη επιβεβαιώνει προηγούμενες έρευνες και ενισχύει απόψεις που υποστηρίζουν ότι το μάθημα της ιστορίας στο σχολείο καλό είναι να επικεντρώνεται σε ό,τι ο Barton ονομάζει «ιστορικοποίηση του παρόντος» (Barton 2004) και στις τρέχουσες αντιπαραθέσεις (Wrenn 1999). Τριανταεπτά από τους εξήντα φοιτητές μπόρεσαν να αναγνωρίσουν τον αμφιλεγόμενο χαρακτήρα των μνημονικών πρακτικών και να τις ερμηνεύσουν ιστορικά, παρά την παραδοσιακή εκπαίδευσή τους και την έλλειψη έμφασης του ελληνικού αναλυτικού προγράμματος στη νεότερη και σύγχρονη ιστορία.

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports preliminary findings based on an analysis of 60 university students written questionnaires. At the time of the study participants were 21 years old in their third year of studies for a bachelor in primary school education. Students, among other tasks, were called to comment on the controversies over the commemoration of Resistance in an Athenian neighbourhood in Greece (Kessariani) during the German Occupation (1941-1944). The question guiding the study is whether students perceive of the public celebrations as narratives about the past and whether they recognize their provisional and “constructed” character. The study is informed by previous literature in the field of history education (Lee 2004a), historical consciousness, both empirical (Seixas 2004) and theoretical (Rüsen 2005), commemoration processes (Gillis 1996, Carretero 2011, Drompouki 2015) and material culture (Lowenthal 1985). The 60 students were first briefed on the history of the area, an area used since the 1920s by civilians and the army as a shooting range, and in the Second World War by the occupation authorities to carry out executions, including, most famously, the execution of 200 communists on May 1, 1944. Students were also briefed on the controversies over the construction of a monument commemorating resistance and over the commemoration practices themselves, including an annual memorial ceremony conducted in this site. Students were specifically called to comment on the abolition of the memorial ceremony during the post-civil war years and the attempts by consecutive governments to appropriate the history of the place for their own use. Through the process of analytic induction three patterns were located in the students’ answers about “repetition” and “change” in commemoration practices. Some students mentioned “repetition” in memorial ceremonies in a way that it indicated past examples to be imitated in the present and expressed a duty to remember ancestors and to honour them. Other students also located “repetition” in memorial ceremonies but interpreted it as inertia and inability to adapt to changing circumstances. Finally, the majority of the students mentioned “changes” in memorial ceremonies attributing them to the decisions of the politicians and the needs of society. They either mentioned political bias and prejudice governing commemoration choices or interpretations of the past made from different points of view and responding to differing social needs. This group of students appears to see the past and its representation in a dynamic way that allows temporalization of the human experience (Rüsen 2005). This study confirms the suggestions made by history educators that history lessons should focus more on current controversies and their historization as a means for students to understand equally past and present. Students in the study were exposed to a “present controversy” (Wrenn 1999) while being given access to information related to Kessariani as developed in

time. Thus thirty-seven students out of sixty were able to recognize the controversy related to the specific memorial practices and to produce explanatory frameworks for it, despite their traditional school history education and the lack of emphasis on modern and contemporary history by the Greek curriculum.

Introduction

The question underlying this study is whether students understand the events of “public memory” (Casey 2004), such as anniversary celebrations and monumental creations, as narratives about the past, recognizing their provisional and ‘constructed’ character. As pointed out by Casey, precisely because of its public nature, public memory is revised: “It is just because public memory is so much in the arena of open discussion and debate that is also subject to revision” (ibid: 26). In consequence, school history education should equip students with the skills to recognize and interpret revisions in public memory often expressed in public debates.

This article is divided into three parts: the first part describes the emphasis of contemporary history education in exploratory procedures and controversial issues. The second part focuses on the advantageous character of the use of material culture in history education, especially in relation to the study of controversial issues, and gives examples of the relevant use of monuments memory sites in history classes. The second part also introduces the case study of the memorial site of Kessariani as an example of a “site of memory” since it concerns both a monument, a prospective museum and a memorial service that has been held there occasionally and for conflicting political purposes. The third part displays the category system that describes the empirical findings of this study and attempts their interpretation.

History education today: Exploratory procedures and ‘controversial’ issues

In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, history education, in most of the western world, served, to a great extent, the purpose of constructing national identity and was limited to the memorization of facts. There have been sporadic attempts to modernize the lesson at schools both in the U.S.A., by the National Education Association (Repoussi 2000: 331) and in Britain by the publication of studies dedicated exclusively to the teaching history and suggesting more active processes in the classroom.¹ In the 1960s, the repercussions of May 1968 and of other social movements, as well as because the *Annales* had for long disputed traditional historiography, reforms that “fundamentally changed the appearance of school history took place” (Wilschut 2010: 710). History didactics combining the knowledge of historiography, education, cognitive and social psychology, sought to release school history from the “great tradition”² (Repoussi 2000: 321). Within the “great tradition” pedagogy students remained inactive in class, while the most important role was attributed to the teacher. History teachers within the “great tradition” context largely reproduced a ‘fixed’ and ‘closed’ narrative about the past aiming at inculcating

national identity (Cavoura 2011: 19). History education within the context of "New History"³ focuses on the processes in which the historian is involved, and seeks to develop students' critical ability.

The "New History" movement in history education partially owed its origins to the "New History" movement that emerged in the 1970s in Europe, especially in France. The "great tradition" (Husbands 2003: 12) in history education was challenged by "alternative" (Husbands 2003: 12) traditions, in the same way that "traditional" historiographical practices were also challenged by more modern ones. In Britain, political and educational changes and especially the imposition of a National Curriculum for the first time in 1991, accompanied by a need for assessment that ought to conform to pre-established criteria, gave emphasis to the "structure" of the discipline. In this way empirical research conducted in Britain about students' understandings of history was extremely useful because it provided educators with "a basis for progression in children's understanding in history" (Lee, Dickinson & Ashby 1998: 227).

Within the "New History" pedagogy, students are not supposed to reproduce narrations constructed from a certain point of view. On the contrary, they are trained in locating the reasons why there are differing narratives about the past (Seixas 2000: 26). The "fragmented cultural milieu" (Seixas 2002) in which students live today, and their exposure to conflicting narratives, render traditional approaches to history education inadequate. As Lee and Howson put it,

the ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them or the criteria involved in evaluating them has nothing historical about it (Lee & Howson 2009: 214).

This emphasis on the processes through which history is written and students' familiarization with the basic historical concepts also relates to students' everyday life: as Husbands put it, students' exercise in the evaluation of different and sometimes conflicting historical narratives, first contributes to their familiarization with the discipline of history. Second, it is expected to

play an essential part in the preparation of pupils for life outside and beyond school, where they will be confronted with a mass of information, much of it conflicting (Husbands 2001: 16).

History educators today also speak about the need for relevance⁴ of school history with students' interests and students' lives. Students ought to be convinced that history concerns them and gives them a perspective through which to comprehend the world they live in (Kitson 2011: 150). This can only be possible when the difficult and controversial issues are not bypassed in the history classroom. Controversial issues in history are the ones about which

there are disagreements in relation to what happened and why it happened and over its significance [...] Controversial issues which are socially divisive or divide nations are usually also sensitive: they upset or disturb people's sensitivities; they call on people's loyalties; they arouse people's prejudices (Stradling 2001: 99-100).

Kitson (2011) reminds us that, when the curriculum of a country tends to be neutral with the aim to create consensus in relation to the past, students resort to stereotypes usually derived from their families.

Material culture and history education: Monuments - 'Sites of memory'

Within the disciplinary context of history education, as described above, lessons at school follow exploratory procedures where the use of historical sources is considered indispensable. History teachers and museum educators emphasize the advantages of material culture, i.e. museums, buildings, monuments, particularly for the younger age students, emphasizing their experiential character, their immediacy, and the possibilities they offer for multi-sensory experiences. History and museum educators praise especially the objects' broadness, the fact that they are open to multiple⁵ students' interpretations, if handled appropriately from a pedagogical point of view.

The challenge for the students is to realize the interpretative nature of museum exhibitions and the intentional, therefore political character of monumental creations that decorate their cities, to see the museum exhibitions and the environment where they live as historical accounts. These processes are challenging for students because museums and monuments are usually considered as material evidence of the existence of the past and not as interpretations: as Liakos put it, for most people the "referentiality", or the connection of the museum exhibitions to the past, is given" (Liakos 2004: 14).

On the other hand, monuments in public (civic or rural) places give us plenty of information about the era in which they were made and the controversies around their construction:

Monuments are recommended as historical sources [in the classroom], tools for historical learning ... [monuments] are decoded and linked on one hand with the policies that established them as monuments, on the other hand, with the memories they are supposed to secure (Repoussi 2004: 84).

Repoussi also emphasizes another advantage of 'landscape' historical sources or monuments, their accessibility, a very important factor when one has to organize school projects. Natural, rural, or civic spaces and monuments are public so that they can be easily located and used in teaching history, especially in local history.

To conclude, monuments and material culture, in general are compatible with the demands of contemporary history education and especially with the requirement to connect history teaching in the classroom with the present and its controversies that stem from the past.

History educators have occasionally realized pedagogical interventions and research that familiarize students with the mnemonic and interpretative function of both monuments and memorial places. Wrenn (1999), for example, took his students to the Museum of the City of Bristol that hosts an exhibition about slave trade, also presenting visitors reactions to the exhibition (from the visitors' book). His aim was to make his 15 year-old students think in relation to present interpretations of the past and the consequences provoked in the present and to think of the emotions stirred in the present by the reminiscence of past events. He explains that he did so to comply with the history curriculum of 1999 that demanded from teachers

to focus the analysis on the present rather than on the past, to supply pupils with a range of real, modern interpretations and to explain why particular individuals and groups 'construct' the past differently (Wrenn 1999: 22).

In another visit at Somme cemetery, he involved students in activities that would help them realize that 'historic sites such as war memorials change constantly because the guardians of the sites respond to new national or popular priorities and feelings' (Wrenn 1998: 25). Nemko, also, took his high school students at Ypres to sensitize them in relation to the interpretative character of memorials which also are products of a certain époque (Nemko 2009).

On the other hand, "public memory" is not comprised only by articles of material culture that bear a mnemonic function, but also by public acts of remembrance that take place in public spaces, and many times in spaces that recall past reminiscences. Casey reminds us that Memorial Day parades in the USA "characteristically end up in cemeteries, where speeches are made" (Casey 2004: 32). Seixas & Clark note that a lot can be learned about historical consciousness "from the debates over it", (Seixas & Clark 2004: 146):

Public monuments, along with memorials, school history textbooks, museums, and commemorative holidays, occupy an arena where modern societies define themselves most explicitly in relation to their pasts. They are examples of what Pierre Nora (1996) has called lieux de mémoire, sites of memory. (Seixas & Clark 2004: 146).

The latter excerpt by Seixas takes us to the "lieux de mémoire". According to Nora,

a lieux de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has

become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the French community) (Nora 1996: XVII).

These include places and objects such as archives, museums, cemeteries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries and others (Nora 1989: 12). Also, practices, like celebrations, festivals, anniversaries, eulogies, all different rituals. Official ceremonies, more relevant to this study, would also constitute a lieux de mémoire; official memories are always imposed from above either by national authorities or established interests. Within the same context, Carretero expands especially on national holidays and their celebration at school: he considers them as processes that establish collective identities by the use of emotion, since they take place in the period of children's first socialization, therefore becoming points of reference in students' lives (Carretero 2011: 119, 169).

The memorial site of Kessariani in Athens was chosen as a case study for research in students' preservice teachers' perceptions of public celebrations, within the above theoretical, educational and research context related to sites of memory. It is a space identified both with the Resistance against the Germans and with the Civil War, a space in which occasionally there have been conflicting "acts of remembrance" (Drompouki 2014: 92). Memorial services were held either for the two hundred communists who were shot on the 1st of May 1944, or for the ones *slaughtered in December 1944*.⁶ The latter are supposed to have been the victims of the communists during the events of December 1944, the beginning of the Greek Civil War.

Controversies in relation to a public memorial site: The shooting range of Kaissariani

My sample is comprised by sixty students, prospective primary school teachers, in the third year of their studies. It could be considered "convenient" (Cohen & Manion 1997) as I had access to the specific group of students because I knew the teacher.

Material culture sources are considered to be more attractive for primary school students and easier to use in comparison with textual historical sources that present language difficulties to them. Researchers such as Levstik & Barton (2005), Harnett (2009) and Cooper (2012) have stressed the importance of material culture and local history (which mostly involves material culture sources) for primary school. In consequence, it would be interesting to know how primary school teachers perceive of the monuments. Do teachers use them as historical sources or as material and photographic confirmations of the past itself (Avdela 1998: 55, Palikidis 2009)?

Students were given a photocopy that included a photo of the Kessariani monument and information about the area's history during the German Occupation and the Civil War, as well as information around the confrontation between the shooting company and the

different municipal councils of the region in relation to the use of the space. Finally, students had to reply in writing to the following question:

In 1959 the president of the municipal council refused to hold the memorial service “for the people slaughtered in December 1944 during the mob war (“mob war” was the official name of civil war used by the government in those years)”,⁷ explaining that “oblivion of the past is essential and we have implemented it for the last 15 years”.

What can you note with respect to public ceremonies and official commemorations? Do you locate “repetition” or “change” and how can you explain it?

With the above question I sought to detect whether students can separate the past (the events of the Occupation and the Resistance) from their representation (the monument) in a way that they can also recognize the possibility of past representations constructed from different angles (Lee 2004a, Chapman 2011, Stradling 2001 & 2003). I also sought to explore whether students think that one should revise one’s view of the past due to new data or changing circumstances. There were cases that students took the initiative to make a point of what ought to be done, whether rituals ought to be repeated in the same form or change, without being asked specifically about that.

The word “repetition” in the wording of the task was adopted because it is also used by Rüsen in his description of the “traditional” type of historical consciousness. “Change” on the other hand, constitutes the criterion for the differentiation of Rüsen’s four types of historical consciousness: Rüsen’s four types of historical consciousness are types of orientation in time and they constitute stances in relation to “change”, (Seixas 2004: 22). Each of those types requires a different time experience and stance in relation to moral values or criteria for significance. People critical⁸ of the past, recognizing its dynamic character, change their interpretations of it, also their way of life. Those considering the past a tradition that should be preserved, do not realize the possibility of different interpretations of the past, or of changes in their lives (Rüsen 2005: 29).⁹

Students’ speech was read also within the framework of material culture theory, since the question students were asked related to a material culture element (a memory place, a monument), and a conflict with respect to the site’s further utilization, whether there ought to be constructed a “museum or a school”. According to material culture theory, objects, space and landscape constitute interpretations equally of the past and the present (Kotsakis in Nikonanou & Kasvikis 2008: 49),¹⁰ they bear “meanings”¹¹ and they are past accounts. Being past accounts, they bear only a relative truth and they are not ‘transparent’ in relation to the past they narrate. Can students identify the different interpretations and meanings attributed to memory sites by the residents of a region?

My methodology is qualitative: students' responses, do not constitute the "units of analysis" (Corbin & Strauss 1990: 7), since the categories that emerge also include my understanding of students' constructs about the past. In other words, categories are not allocated to "previously defined units" or units "readily visible to other external observers", as in "classic" content analysis (Titscher, Wodak & Vetter 2000: 56). The categories in this study describe thought processes, or "constructs", in relation to the past or to commemoration acts. As Corbin & Strauss put it, in grounded theory the theorist works with "conceptualizations of the data" (Corbin & Strauss 1990: 7). The categories either describe, and sometimes repeat, students' answers or constitute my explanations of students' answers. The point of reference is historical thinking, thus the categories describe how close or remote students are from historical thinking. If students are found to be close to Rösen's "critical" and "genetic" types and they realize the need of "changes" in commemorations, then they are also expected to be closer to historical thinking. The findings are also described quantitatively, through the frequency of their occurrence.

The sample of this research cannot be considered representative in the sense the term bears in the quantitative research, but in the sense Strauss and Corbin transfer the term in theory-building methodologies: "when building theory inductively, the concern is with representation of concepts and how concepts vary dimensionally" (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 214). In other words, the above process does not seek to "representativeness" in relation to the sample, but to a more complete description of the perception of students for monuments.

Findings

Students expressed themselves in relation to monuments, ceremonies and commemoration procedures mostly in two ways: they either talked about "change" in the way people see the past ("Memory as Change: The Dynamic Past"), or they located inertia in the acts of remembrance but accounted for it in a negative way ("Memory as Repetition: The Dynamic Past"). Finally, only twenty-three felt that procedures of commemoration events should remain unchanged, believing that changes would equal amnesia, oblivion ("Memory as Repetition").

The categories names, "Memory as Change" and "Memory as Repetition" were selected as such, because they were thought as "[best] operationalizing the variables of the particular research question", (Tischer & Wodak 2000: 59). The research question in this study is about whether students realize the provisional, thus, changing character of the historical narratives; also Rösen's typology focuses on subjects' stances in relation to change.

Table 1. The frequency of occurrence of each of the 3 categories.

Categories	<i>Memory as Change</i> The Dynamic Past	<i>Memory as Repetition</i> The Dynamic Past	<i>Memory as Repetition</i> We celebrate to have examples
Frequency	27	10	23

Memory as change: The dynamic past

The twenty-seven students who saw changes in commemorating the past, separating in this way the past from its representation, attributed them to governments and politicians, that is to factors of institutional memory (excerpts a, b and c below). They blamed politicians for partiality and bias, largely reproducing themes against politicians common in Greek public speech especially during the Greek financial crisis (Fragoudaki 2013: 99-122).

At this point, students explained the lack of transparency in politicians' decisions about remembrance rituals accusing individual persons and non-articulating "structural" explanations. "Structural" explanations are considered more complex than the "personalized" ones that show history as a result of the wills of individuals (Jacott 1998: 296-297).¹² On the other hand, students also referred to "dominant ideas" (excerpt c), and "beliefs" (excerpt d) noting also that significance criteria change from period to period (excerpt c). Students referring to politicians' ideas and beliefs recognized what historians, theorists of history, or teachers of history call "perspective" (Lee 2004a: 164). Although Lee refers to choices made by historians and while here we have history produced in the public sphere by state and municipal authorities, thus excluding methodological framework and research ethics, it is encouraging that students do not consider as given the perspectives adopted by politicians when deciding about public monuments and commemoration ceremonies, thus making choices relating to wider communities.

Even more encouraging is that in excerpts (g) and (i) students comment on how the needs, the "customs" and the "beliefs" of a society vary from generation to generation (excerpt i). The latter stance could be read through the "genetic"¹³ type of historical consciousness as described by Rűsen. People belonging to the "genetic" type are supposed to amend ethical principles, updating them, they also develop themselves adapting to the current demands of the present and those of the future (Rűsen 2005: 29). Rűsen explains that those belonging to the genetic type realize change in time and diversity in opinion, being able of synthesizing different views.

Students' excerpts from the category "Memory as Change: The Dynamic Past"

- (a) "the memory of governments *is selective*", Dimitris.
- (b) "changes in commemoration are decided by *politicians*", Olympia.
- (c) "...the significance of events changes depending on *the dominant perceptions and ideologies of the politicians in power*", Andromachi.
- (d) "there is change in commemoration because of different political *beliefs*", Marianthi.
- (e) "there are changes [in commemoration] when there are also changes of the understanding of the events", Konstandinos.
- (f) "whatever not desired by the several governments passes to oblivion", Theodora.
- (g) 'events are commemorated depending on the *society's needs*', Elpiniki.
- (h) 'we have changes in commemoration *because of social and economic changes*, today for example we are in economic crisis and we are having incidents of racism', Agathi.
- (i) 'we are having changes [in commemoration] depending on people that hold the 'important posts', also depending on *the society* of which customs and beliefs change between generations', Andigoni.

Memory as repetition: The dynamic past

A complex way of thinking would consider changes of commemoration practices inevitable. Students in this study first assumed that there are no changes of commemoration practices in Greece; second they considered this as a problem owed to the inertia of the Greek society and the political leadership.

There are at least two interesting cases: excerpts (l) and (m), for example, emphasize the conventionality and implicit passivity with which celebrations and other commemoration practices are repeated over the years. Consequently, students ask to connect with the present while asserting that the past cannot produce any good unless it is connected with the present. Theorists of history from Bloch (1954) up to Jenkins (1995) consider the interdependence of past and present as given either when one seeks to understand the one or the other. As Bloch (1954) argues,

Misunderstanding of the present is the inevitable consequence of ignorance of the past. But a man may wear himself out just as fruitlessly in seeking to understand the past, if he is totally ignorant of the present (Bloch 1954: 43).

In the excerpts (j) and (k) students make an attempt to interpret inaction on the part of decision makers: politicians fear political costs (excerpt j), the world likes

beautification (excerpt k), while in excerpt j students refer to the creation, maintenance and enforcement of national consciousness through the monumentalization of sites, the commemoration of events and the celebration of anniversaries etc.

The special relationship between archaeology and nation has been studied by historians and archaeologists for a long time. A useful source on this relationship is the collective work of Meskell, “Archaeology under fire”, which presents the political role of archaeology in the consolidation of nation-states, especially in politically sensitive areas such as the Middle East. Historians like Hobsbawm and Ranger¹⁴ or Gellner¹⁵ have discussed the connection between nation-states and commemoration procedures. Pearce and others have also analysed the role of “national museums”.¹⁶ Finally studies that focus specifically in mnemonic functions, such as Tsiara’s (2004), who studies public sculptures, comment how monuments (their unveiling ceremonies) and public memorial practices treat the acts of decision-makers as the continuation and fulfilment of the objectives set by previous generations (Tsiara 2004: 30). They are planned in a way so as to ensure the much needed national “continuity” and to highlight the 'official' interpretation of the past against other alternative ones. The same researcher presents an analysis of the myth, according to Barthes, who exposes how national and other myths are substantiated through monuments.

Along the same lines, Repoussi and Coulouri comment on the use of monuments or national anniversaries by nation-states to consolidate national identity. More specifically Repoussi describes the practice by Greek authorities in 1921 of forming committees for the construction of heroes’ tombs and other monuments to celebrate the centenary of the Greek revolution (Repoussi 2012: 162). She also comments on how the Greek state attempted to identify the whole of the Greek state territory with the revolution of 1821. Coulouri (2012) on the other hand, demonstrates the political rivalries and controversies surrounding the celebration of the Greek State Independence on March 25 in King’s Otto¹⁷ Greece: while there was unanimity in relation to the importance of the March 25, different political groups tried to appropriate the anniversary.

All this supports the largely accepted assumption for the use of monuments by political leaders with the aim to consolidate national identity. This process is often realized through the cultivation of myths and according to the well-known motto of Renan that

the nation is nothing without falsehood. As ... we express our national family values ... salute our flag ... and claim eternity for ourselves, we distort history (Bosworth 2007: 12).

The students of this sample seemed to recognize an effort to consolidate national identity and impose a specific view on the past both in the “changes” and the

“repetitions” of national commemoration practices. Students also spoke of “embellishment” processes and “idealizations” of the past, all of which are considered essential to establish links between different groups of people who live in the same country in order to gain collective consciousness through a common falsified past.

Students’ excerpts from the category “Memory as Repetition: The Dynamic Past”:

- (j) “nothing changes in Greece, everything is done in the traditional way, depending on the aims of the several governments to remind in the same ways the events to the citizens in an effort to empower their national consciousness ... *changes may alienate people*”, Georgia.
- (k) “[I see] repetition [in commemoration] because people need to celebrate, celebrations have an emotive value, *there is a tendency for embellishment*”, Anastasia.
- (l) ‘celebrations take place in a formal way, they have lost their meaning, they constitute habits, *we are having changes in commemoration when past and present are combined*’, Kostas.
- (m) “[in commemorations] there is a formal repetition, *not a present connection*, the past should become more productive for the sake of the present”, Sophia.

Memory as repetition: We celebrate to have examples

The twenty-three students of this category produced three patterns. The first pattern equated change with amnesia and oblivion (n). Those students might have felt that by not perpetuating traditions they would miss the element that ‘rendered their present familiar’ (Lowenthal 1985: 39). Students asked commemorations to be observed in the form they always had been in order not to lose contact with what offered them familiarity and guidance. The possibility of ‘losing’ the past, in their words “oblivion”, seems to have provoked a sense of “disorientation” (Rúsen 2005: 30).

The second pattern (excerpt q) reminds us of Nietzsche’s “antiquarian” type or Rúsen’s “traditional” type. According to Nietzsche, the “antiquarian” type “preserves and reveres the past”: the student in excerpt (q) said “we honour history”. Also there is a sense of “debt” in the same excerpt towards “the ones who fought for the country”. It is as if our ancestors constrain morally our lives, because we feel committed to them. As Lowenthal put it, “there is an unfolding of practice from immemorial specific instances”, (Lowenthal 1985: 369), or, according to Burke,¹⁸ it is as if “the minds [of all those past revering people] have always been filled”.

The third pattern, the one after which the whole category was named, is best expressed through excerpts (o) and (p). The excerpts can be read through Nietzsche’s “monumental” type and Rúsen’s “exemplary” type. Here the past functions as a guide,

as a number of examples to be used as an answer to present problems. The similarity between past and present is given, no changes are seen and past options seem to constitute the best answers and solutions for the present. In Cercadillo's words the above stance towards celebrations would imply that students applied to them "symbolic significance". Cercadillo referring to her own findings from her study in secondary school students' perception of historical significance¹⁹ explains that "symbolic significance is attached specifically to notions of moral example (lessons from history) and mythical past" (Cercadillo 2001: 127). She also relates it to a notion of "piety" to the past. The latter "piety" notion could relate to excerpt (o) of this study, where students speak of "honour" towards ancestors, or to paying "appropriate attention".

On the whole, the last category "Memory as Repetition: We Celebrate to have Examples"" is an expression of very traditional stances towards the past, to the ceremonies they celebrate it, or to those ceremonies that celebrate past heroes. From that point of view, the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Golia's study in the role of national celebrations in the Greek primary school (Golia 2006). This was a survey conducted through a questionnaire and based on a sample of 700 primary school teachers and 1314 12-year-old students. Students were proved to be traditional, selecting²⁰ options that indicated a positive stance in relation to national celebrations at school.

Students' excerpts from the category "Memory as Repetition: We celebrate to have Examples":

- n "if official celebrations stop there will be no memory any longer", Aikaterini.
- o "there must be repetition so that young people may have remarkable acts as models of behaviour and in order *to honour* people of the past", Maria.
- p "we celebrate to have *examples*", Anastasia.
- q "we honour history, the ones who fought for the country, *only today people do not pay the appropriate attention*" , Dimitris.
- r "there is repetition, but the way is being done ... [*commemoration*] is not ascribed the appropriate significance", Efrosyni.

Conclusion

This study was an effort to 'bring together' in history classes approaches to history education that focus on the inclusion of the present and conflictual issues, with approaches relating to the use of material culture. Conflicts around monuments or memory sites, either in the past or in the present, can help students realize the existence of several ways to read the past, as well as the provisional character of those readings since they change over time. This study was meant to be a small scale exploration of students', future teachers' thinking and also a pedagogical intervention:

it was hoped that, through the memorial service case, students would be sensitized to the existence of conflicting memories and be more open to people's differing experiences of the same events.

Students, future teachers, were given a complete account of the 1944 events in Kessariani and enough information of the "second life"²¹ of the memory site during the Civil War and the tacit continuation of it in the years 1949-1974. Thus students had the opportunity to realize the uses of the Kessariani past according to the political needs of different periods, to locate silences, like in the 1950s, incidents when monuments were taken down to be replaced by others, like in 1967 (Dictatorship), or the emphasis on Resistance in the 1980s. Students having the opportunity to follow the conflict about the Kessariani site in its development, finally managed to locate patterns of change in commemoration practices and historicize them.

Rüsen's typology was used for this analysis. As Rüsen himself put it, his typology is suggestive of a cognitive development: "the sequence entails increasing complexity ... the extent of experience and knowledge of past actuality expands enormously as one moves from the traditional to exemplary ..." (Rüsen 2005: 35). At some other point he refers to the "principle of precondition" that makes each individual stage a precondition for the next (ibid). On the other hand, Lee and Seixas noticed that Rüsen's typology was not designed to answer questions about students' understanding of the discipline of history; "even a student whose responses are categorized as "genetic" may [...] be thinking of accounts of the past as copies of that past" (Lee 2004b: 32).

Speaking of criteria in relation to historical thinking one would admit that development in understanding "change" could be an indication of historical thinking, also the capacity to tell between past and present: "history is interested in differences and contrasts" (Halbwachs 1980: 81). Relativization or temporalization of the notion of time, a characteristic of Rüsen's "genetic" type, could also be thought of as indicative of historical thinking. What perhaps we cannot deduce from Rüsen's typology as a whole is whether individuals belonging to the "genetic" type understand the past as a construction; the data of this study though, the "wordings" of the students, indicate that these students understand the past as a human construction: for example in excerpt (a) they speak of the "selectiveness of memory"; or in excerpt (b) they attribute changes in commemorations to politicians' decisions, therefore recognizing in people's commemorations "agency" or authority for interpretation.

To conclude, history produced in the public sphere like official commemorations, or traditional school history, seems to prevent students disciplinary historical understanding in a way that they do not incorporate conflicts or different identities in their 'reading' of the past. On the contrary, when teachers encourage students to "historicize" specific mnemonic options as regards school history textbooks, public celebrations, museum exhibitions, city monuments also, in a way that the supposed

historical identities are “denaturalized” (De Oleaga 2012: 251), students might start to realize the complexities of historical interpretation.

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Endnotes

¹ Wilschut (2010: 698) refers to Keatinge's publication of *Studies in the Teaching of History*, 1910.

² "Great tradition" as in Husbands, 2003: 8

³ The term "New History" initially referred to historiography. The theoretical debate and the objective of the New History was transported from historiography to school history in the 1960s. The movement was contrasted with the traditional ways of writing history which focused on politics and great men and over-emphasized administrative documents as basic source materials; Also, as Tosh mentions, the ultimate aim of the historian was to recapture human life in all its variety, in other words to write "total history" (Tosh 2006:139).

⁴ "Relevance" in Kitson et al, 2011: 147.

⁵ Indicatively, Cooper 2012, Harnett 2009, Levstik & Barton 1996 and 2005, Mouliou 2005, Bounia & Nikonanou 2008, Nakou 2006, Solomon, 2013.

⁶ The incident took place in 1959. These are the exact words of the president of the municipal council, cited by Drompouki, 2014: 200.

⁷ The exact words of the president of the municipal council, from the archives, cited by Drompouki, 2014:200.

⁸ Rüsen describes the "critical" type as "problematizing actual forms of life and value systems" (2005: 29), thus breaking from the past, whereas the "genetic" type realizes "changes" in life in order to adapt to also "changing" circumstances.

⁹ Those are the other two of Rüsen's types, the "traditional" and the "exemplary": both of them appreciate the past, the "traditional" type "repeating" it in the present, and the "exemplary" type, extracting from the past timeless rules to live with.

¹⁰ Also consult Pearce 1994.

¹¹ Here Kotsakis cites Hodder.

¹² "Structural explanations" and "Intentional, personalistic" explanations (as used by Jacott et al, 1998).

¹³ The "genetic" type of historical consciousness is considered to be an evolution of the "critical" type of historical consciousness.

¹⁴ Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T. (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ Gellner, E., (2008). *Nations & Nationalism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

¹⁶ See also Nakou 2001.

¹⁷ King Otto, from 1832 to 1862.

¹⁸ Edmund Burke in Lowenthal, 1985: 369.

¹⁹ Sample of 144 secondary school students, from Spain and England, ages ranging from 12-17 years old.

²⁰ Students had to choose among given options.

²¹ "Second life" as in Drompouki 2014: 31.

