



THE
LAUSANNE
PROJECT

Co-Creation of Materials for Use in Greek and Turkish High Schools: Report on a Workshop

Musée Historique de Lausanne, 6-8 July 2023

Participants and others involved:

Stella, Andreas	Greece-based history teachers
Burcu, Hasan	Turkey-based history teachers
Angelos, Martin	Greece- and Switzerland-based experts in history pedagogics
Jon	UK-based historian and TLP convenor
Elena	UK-based history teacher
Dimitris	Greece-based TLP intern
Ahmet	Turkey-based TLP intern

Background

The workshop was organized by The Lausanne Project (TLP): a forum for scholars to share research on interwar relations between the Middle East and the rest of the world. TLP seeks to encourage informed debate on the legacy of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne among young people and the general public, as well as academics, teachers and journalists. It does this by convening conferences and workshops, and by publishing scholarly volumes, a graphic novel and weekly podcasts/blogposts.

Funded by the Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH), with in-kind support from the Musée Historique de Lausanne (MHL) and Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern, the workshop aimed to bring Greek and Turkish high school history teachers together, to share their experiences of teaching Lausanne and the population exchange, to establish ties with colleagues across the Aegean and to brainstorm ideas for teaching materials, materials that will be developed later in the summer by Elena and then shared by TLP for free, via Tarih Vakfi, AHEG and other informal teacher networks.

In the weeks running up to the workshop Dimitris and Ahmet sifted the wealth of textbooks, web-resources, films, documentaries, graphic novels and other sources provided by the teachers. They also researched how the population exchange was presented by public historians, conspiracy theorists and young people (on TikTok, for example). They then reported back to Jon, providing a valuable *tour d'horizon* as well as sharing their own experiences of the Greek and Turkish school history curriculum. Finally they translated the sources used in session one into English. Dr Kalliopi

Amygdalou, PI of the ERC-funded project HOMEACROSS agreed to share draft teaching materials they had prepared, so that we could get the participants' feedback.

Opening Discussion: Hopes, Approaches, Constraints

Jon began by inviting participants to indicate what they hoped to achieve from the workshop. Burcu and Hasan noted that Turkish textbooks only devote a single sentence to the population exchange, despite the fact that many students' own family histories have been shaped by it. Burcu hoped the workshop would give her the tools to introduce the topic to her students. "History is related to humans", Hasan noted, and hence he hoped that the materials would address the social side, as well as serving to challenge nationalism and xenophobia. Stella hoped the materials would strengthen student empathy as well as their historical consciousness. Andreas looked forward to networking with colleagues from Turkey.

Angelos delivered a short presentation on "The Lausanne Treaty as a teaching subject" (Appendix 1). This surveyed how zones of public history, school history and national historiography interacted, and noted the shared characteristics of education in Greece and Turkey. In both countries high school history teaching is centrally controlled by the state: in addition to ensuring the homogeneity of the collective consciousness, both states seek to disseminate a single narrative. The population exchange nonetheless afforded an opportunity to challenge monolithic national narratives, and to introduce forms of historical investigation which speak to today's young people in a way that the traditional focus on military, political and diplomatic history does not. He hoped the materials would assist students to historicize first order ("nation", "ethnicity", "refugee") as well as second order historical concepts (multi-perspectivity, historical empathy, causality, ethical dimensions of history).

At the same time, however, Angelos hoped that we could widen the focus beyond the traumatic experience itself, that currently dominates teaching of the exchange inside Greece. Chronological parameters needed to be expanded so that students understood what came before/after the exchange. It was equally important that students recognize that perpetrators and victims were found on both sides of this shared historical trauma. Analogies between today's refugee crisis and that of a century ago were evident, but we needed to be attentive to the risk of anachronism: these crises are comparable, but not identical. Narratives and objects passed down through generations of exchangee families likewise afforded opportunities to engage students with material culture, oral history and local history, mapping the events recounted in their textbooks onto their communities (and vice-versa). However warmly nostalgic, these memories and objects needed to be treated as mnemonic constructions. Child exchangees struggled to conceive of "what happened" during 1913-25. In their case memory was not a case of recollection, but collection.

The group then discussed the constraints we face as we seek to introduce new teaching materials on the population exchange to senior high schools (Grades 11-12). It was acknowledged that all present taught in prestigious private schools, enjoying a degree of flexibility, commitment and prior experience of similar initiatives (Euroclio's "Learning to Disagree" project, in Burcu's case) which most of their peers might envy, or find intimidating.

Grade 12 cohorts in both countries had two 40/45-minute history classes a week. Class sizes were roughly similar (c. 20-24 in Turkey, c. 28 in Greece), and both systems "taught to the test": nation-wide exams made up of multiple choice questions. Students and parents invested hopes of university on regurgitating an approved set of facts and interpretations. Those looking forward to studying history at university might resent novel activities, however effective at teaching useful skills, for purportedly depriving them of "real" (as in, "chalk and talk") teaching: not so much St Augustine's famous prayer ("Make me virtuous, but not yet!"), but something analogous ("Make me a good historian, but not until I get a high mark on the state exam and get into a good university history course").

Andreas noted that teachers in Greece often paid lip-service to group work and skills, but were sluggish to put these into practice. Greek history students were divided into two cohorts: one which was preparing to take History for the Panhellenic Exam, one which was not. In the case of the latter cohort teachers were more willing to experiment with group work, if only as a means to hold students' attention. Students in this stream could not be expected to do any preparatory or follow-on work outside of class, however.

Hasan noted that 75 schools in Turkey taught IB History, which explicitly sought to teach critical thinking, which gave teachers more time (four to six classes a week) and flexibility, and which included the events of 1914-23 as a topic. Both public and private schools in Turkey did, Burcu noted, include a term project, which could potentially be used to research family histories linked to the population exchange. She added that the very silence of Turkish textbooks on the population exchange presented an opportunity: compared to, say, the Armenian Genocide, the population exchange was much less contested, and there was less "othering" of incoming refugees. There was therefore potential that materials tackling this topic might actually get into public schools. Hasan commented that even if teachers did not avail themselves of the proposed activities, they might still integrate the sources used in the materials in their lectures.

When it came to distribution, it was noted that Turkish teachers must attend six-monthly Discipline Meetings convened by the Turkish Ministry of Education: public as well as private school teachers attended these meetings, which, though perceived as something of a chore, would give an opportunity to spread the word about new teaching resources. The Education Union and unofficial teacher FB groups are other potential avenues into Turkish public schools.

Frontières: Le Traité de Lausanne, 1923-2023

We then toured the MHL exhibition together, discussing the exhibits as well as the museological approach. It was felt that the interviews with local members of the Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Alevi and Kurdish diasporas featured might be worth considering as teaching materials. We are grateful to MHL for presenting all participants with a complementary copy of the catalogue.



Participants with Deniz Mirkan's copy of the original treaty table.

The following three sessions followed a similar format: Jon introduced the sources, after which two pairs of teachers retired to different corners of the seminar room, to brainstorm together. Jon, Martin and Angelos dropped in on the two groups after about 30/40 minutes, to hear what ideas they were coming up with. The group then came together again for a final few minutes of reflection. Over the three sessions every teacher collaborated with each of their colleagues from across the Aegean at least once.

Session 1: Text-Based Activities

Participants were presented with six short extracts (Appendix 2), from both "directions" of the population exchange. Extract 5 was the longest extract, as well as the richest. The extracts were presented without bibliographic information.

Suggested learning activities:

- Guess which "side" of the exchange the sources refer to.
- Group Work: some groups write a prequel (i.e. imagining what happened before the episodes addressed in the extract itself), others a sequel. This would be one way of ensuring students reflected on the social norms of pre-exchange Ottoman society.
- Identify the feelings/emotions.
- Guess how long after the exchange each source was written. The aim would be to explore how emotions/attitudes shift over time from confusion/hostility/fear towards nostalgia, pride ("we made our new homeland better") and some surprisingly "philosophical" remarks ("Mankind's capacity to survive...").

- Compare the difficulties faced by exchangees to those faced by today's migrants.
- Find musical extracts to accompany each extract.
- Group work: produce a tableau vivant (no spoken words) response to an extract.
- Produce an artistic response to an extract. Extract 2's "Tell me, which of your body parts..." is particularly rich in potential.
- "Would you want to go back to your old village?"/"Would you want to visit your exchangee family's home-town?" Clips from documentaries showing "return visits" could complement the extracts. Short plays/dramatic scenes could be written and acted out, then clips from "real" visits played for comparison.
- Use Thinklink to map the extracts: students would "translate" place names, and could use online demographic resources to trace the direction and size of exchangee "flows" across time.
- Role play the meeting of former/current residents in extract 5.

The gendered nature of the sources might also form the basis of activities, encouraging students to reflect on how women are both perceived by the authors (who are all male, but we would need to verify this; one might also reflect on when these texts were issued as book form, and by whom) as "enduring" hardship (apparently passive), while playing a crucial role as memory-makers and -carriers across generations.

It would be a good idea to encourage students to explore the motivations behind the often hostile behaviours of those "welcoming" their "fellow" Greeks/Muslims, rather than simply condemning their actions and attitudes as beyond empathy.

Burcu explained the background to the behaviour of the father in extract 5: the emphasis on learning and performative reading of newspapers/magazines was probably a case of the incoming Muslim refugees seeking to contrast their "western" sophistication and bourgeois learning to the "locals", seen as rubes unfamiliar with, say, flush toilets, whose religious scruples stood in the way of their girls' education, etc.

Session 2: Object-Based Activities

We used the "Objects in Motion" gallery on the TLP website, which itself consists of highlights from the online exhibition *100 Objects*, that features photographs of treasures which exchangees took with them, and which were then passed down to their descendants. Each object is accompanied by a single paragraph that was "collected" along with the image. All objects came from the families of "east-to-west" exchangees, so before implementing any of the following ideas TLP would need to find an equal number of images/memories from "west-to-east" exchangees.

Suggestions:

- Why was this object taken?
- Why was it kept for a century?
- How do objects reflect cultural differences between Ottoman Turks and Ottoman Greeks?
- What one object (iphone aside) would you take with you?
- Write an it-narrative, in which the object voices pre-exchange daily life.
- Changing uses of object ("Will use remain the same in object's new home?").

The oudh and tambourine led all participants to note the contribution of Ottoman Greeks to Greek music, to the popularity of contemporary electro-folk and other forms of folk/pop fusion music. Hasan cited the Dutch psychedelic group *Altın Gün* (Golden Day) and the documentary *Crossing the Bridge: Sound of Istanbul*.



Salle Bridel, Musée Historique de Lausanne

Session 3: Building-Based Activities

TLP thanks HOMEACROSS, the ERC-funded project led by Dr Kalliopi Amygdalou, which aims to use GIS techniques to record and preserve the built environments created to accommodate exchangees, for letting us look at their draft lesson plans (Appendix 3).

It was felt that the lesson plans needed a good deal of work. Learning objectives were not indicated, and instructions were too vague. The suggestion that QR-code stickers be attached to houses was viewed as potentially controversial. On the eve of Turkey's anti-Greek and anti-Alevi pogroms, for example, homes were "marked", so that crowds would know which houses to attack. Even if the owners' permission was secured, there is a serious risk of this exercise backfiring badly.

It was noted that the exercises proposed as well as the stories on the HOMEACROSS website focused on "east-to-west" exchangees. Though that was understandable - the Republic of Turkey did not produce the large urban projects that saw whole

neighbourhoods pop up in Greek cities - for our purposes it was felt to be important that both "directions" be represented in any proposed activity.

There was some discussion about the idea of making a model. Should this be a real card model or be produced in a virtual space? It was suggested that an activity might be built around making a model of a single purpose-built home for an Ottoman Greek exchange family and, say, a building within Turkey that had been abandoned by its original residents and later assigned to incoming Muslim refugees from the Balkans or Greece.

All 11th graders in Turkish state schools do a three-month "Performance Project", which can be an individual or a group project. This is supervised by teachers outside normal class hours - there is no class-time devoted to it. Inter-disciplinary projects are encouraged: Literature and History are commonly combined. It was proposed that Maths/History or Maths/History/Geography combinations might work, if part of the project involved surveying an actual building, producing the scale model, and perhaps reflecting on issues surrounding public health, employment, etc. with the help of charts and graphs. Here again data from online historic censuses on both sides of the Aegean could be used, as well as visits to exchange museums.

Although museums contained archival collections, it was felt to be unfair to expect students to be able to perform archival research. As Jon noted, if History MA students struggle to get to trips with archives, school pupils would be totally at sea. Many public archives do not let school children in. Prior liaison with museum curators, however, could allow a curated "archive" of, say, material culture to be made available to students. Such objects as well as oral history testimonies could be used as proposed to "furnish" a real model with online content, via QR-code labels. The finished models might be placed on show for other students to view.

Concluding Observations

Andreas was struck by the quantity and quality of ideas that emerged over just two days. For Hasan and Stella it had been reassuring and inspiring to find colleagues who shared their concerns and aspirations. Angelos confessed that he had come Lausanne wondering how realistic the project's plan was, given the extent to which the events of a century ago are tangled up with contemporary political controversies. He had been impressed at what had been achieved, and at the way in which the proposals engaged with temporal, spatial and ethical dimensions.

Hasan felt teachers like him needed access to reliable facts about the exchange - the numbers involved, the time-frame (including how much time exchangees had to prepare, how long they spent in transit camps, etc), etc. Andreas and Jon were less comfortable around the idea of "hard facts": while it is certainly a fact that, say, the treaty will not expire on 24 July 2023 (as so many Turks believe), other facts were constructs. Jon noted how Ismet and Venizelos batted statistics at each other during the first phase of the conference, in a manner which all present found anything but illuminating: numbers varied depending on who counted, and which ethnic groups they recognized (or not). For some Kurds and Turkomans "counted" as "Turks", for others they did not. Some "counted" Alevis as Muslims, others do not. As Angelos had noted in his opening presentation, first order concepts such as ethnic groups/nations were

historical concepts, and exchangee testimonies were mnemonic constructs, examples of memory work. More discussion and thought is needed to ensure that students appreciate how statistics, say, are produced within a paradigm (data is compiled by human beings with agendas, blind spots, assumptions, etc), without falling victim to today's culture of "alternative facts", "fake news", conspiracy theories and post-truth.

It was encouraging to hear participants planning to develop the workshop ideas and "twin" their classes for activities. TLP is eager to explore how we might facilitate such twinning, providing translation and other support necessary to enable students on both sides of the Aegean to share responses to traditional historiographical narratives, perhaps via TikTok videos. Having the students interact directly, rather than via their teachers, has an obvious appeal.

Next Steps

Over the next two to three months the TLP team will:

- Place a short blogpost on the workshop on the TLP site.
- Ask MHL if they can make their interview footage available to us.
- Circulate this report for comment by 1 August 2023.
- Circulate this report (after 1 August 2023) to our contacts at Tarih Vakfi, AHEG, Gingko, SIAH, ELIAMEP, Gulbenkian Foundation and other potential funders and supporters, offering where appropriate to write reports about the project.
- Elena will produce a set of lesson plans, building on the proposals made above, on the population exchange and around the debate at Lausanne which led to the decision to exchange populations.
- Locate Muslim exchangee objects to complement the Greek ones, by contacting exchangee clubs, societies, museums to ask for images/memories.
- Translate Elena's plans into Greek/Turkish and circulate for trial/testing via the networks discussed above - materials will be made available to anyone who is willing to provide feedback after using the plans.
- Investigate funding opportunities for phase 3 - we discussed a workshop in Turkey to which Greek and Turkish teachers could be invited, contributions to AEG teacher training events, as well as the idea of organizing workshops in teacher training colleges. We discussed the challenges of holding events with pupils (e.g. "History Days"), specifically the need to secure ministerial permission.
- Contact Christina Koulori for further discussion of the idea of producing a workbook on World War I>Lausanne, to fill the obvious gap in this important series.

We will keep all participants informed as plans develop. It would be much appreciated if participants could help us by:

- Continuing to share examples of texts, videos, etc they feel would be helpful, as well as any further reflections/suggestions.
- Letting us know if they implement any of the above ideas themselves, and how it all went.
- Passing on the names of any individuals who might help us get further funding.

As Angelos noted at the very end of our final session, the newly-elected governments of Greece and Turkey have created a political climate in which previously unlikely or unthinkable dialogue or compromise on a number of controversies dividing Greece and Turkey seems possible. Similar arguments were made at the ELIAMEP conference (held a few weeks ago in Athens, which Jon spoke at) on the Lausanne centenary. Although the workshop identified a number of unofficial channels by which lesson plans might be distributed, there is a tantalizing possibility that official bodies might, maybe, be moving towards a more open-minded stance.