



Religious and National Mythmaking: Conservation and Reconstruction of the Social Memory

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Abstract. This essay examines the notions of otherness; the making of a past, and the shaping of a national/religious/cultural identity, using the example of the village of Nea Karvali as a case study. The village was founded in the mid-1920s in northern Greece by Orthodox Christian Turkish-speaking refugees from the village of Gelveri in Cappadocia, Turkey. This study focuses on a series of religious and national myths that were created to secure honourable past for the group; to preserve and reconstruct its social and cultural memory, and, ultimately, to facilitate the community's process of integration into the new social environment.

Key words: Cappadocia, Gelveri – Karbala, Nea Karvali, St. Gregory of Nazianzus (the Theologian), collective memory, national identity, ethnic myth.

The conservation and reconstruction of the social and cultural memory of a group, through the transmission of religious and national myths, has been extensively analyzed from multiple angles in the context of both small and large communities². Taking full advantage

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² *Halbwachs*, Maurice. *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Paris, 1925; *Halbwachs*, Maurice. *La mémoire collective*. Paris, 1950; *Connerton*, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge, 1989; *Hobsbaum*, Eric, *Ranger*, Terence. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, 1989; *Fentress*, James, *Wickham*, Chris. *Social Memory*. Oxford, 1992; *Alvarez-Pereyre*, Frank (ed.). *Mi-*

of recent scholarship in this field, the present study focuses on the notions of otherness, of making of a past, and of shaping a national/religious/cultural identity, as applied in the case of the village of Nea Karvali, founded in the mid-1920s in northern Greece by Orthodox Christian Turkish-speaking refugees from the village of Gelveri in Cappadocia, Turkey³.

Gelveri (actually Güzelyurt) was an important Christian center in western Cappadocia⁴. The area was highly populated during the Early-Christian period, even though very few monuments survive from then. Among the best-preserved examples, Kızıl Kilise (the Red Church), probably dating back to the 5th century, may have been the funerary chapel of Gregory of Nazianzus⁵ (Fig. 1). Gelveri has been associated with the place mentioned as Karbala in written sources, where Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the three Hierarchs, also known as Gregory the Theologian, spent part of his life during the 4th century⁶ (Fig. 2). The saint's relics were believed to be kept and venerated in the village's main church, which was dedicated to him⁷ (Fig. 3). Later, during the 9th–11th centuries, the abundance of rock-cut monuments testifies to the prosperity of Cappadocia⁸. The Christian populations continued to live in Cappadocia after the battle of Matzikert (1071) and the Seljuk conquest of Asia Minor, as

lieux et mémoire. Jerusalem, 1993; *Becquelin*, Aurore. *Molinié*, Antoinette (eds.). *Mémoire de la tradition*. Nanterre, 1993.

3 *Tsakalos*, Antonios. Conservation et reconstruction de la mémoire sociale: l'exemple de Néa Karvali, village de réfugiés en Grèce (unpublished Masters' degree thesis, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). Paris, 1997.

4 *Hild*, Friedrich, *Restle*, Marcell. Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos). Vienna, 1981 (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2), 200-201.

5 *Thierry*, Nicole and Michel. Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce. Région du Hasan Dağı. Paris, 1963, 9, 25-26. On the monuments of the area in general, see *Ramsay*, William Mitchell, *Bell*, Gertrude Lowthian. The Thousand and One Churches. London, 1909.

6 As mentioned in his Letter 203: *Gregory of Nazianzus*. P.G. No. 37, col. 333f., col. 1451-1477.

7 The church of Haghios Grigorios Theologos (probably from the 11th century) has been subject to major renovation since 1896, and is actually converted into a mosque (Kilise Camii). The underground *haghiasma* is still accessible: *Thierry*. Nouvelles églises rupestres, 24.

8 Cappadocia is particularly famous for numerous Middle-Byzantine monuments (painted churches, monasteries and residential complexes) carved into the soft volcanic *tufa* that covers the whole region: *Jerphanion*, Guillaume de. Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce. Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Paris, 1925-1942; *Thierry*, Nicole. Haut Moyen Âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de Çavuşin. T. I: Paris, 1983, T. II: Paris 1994; *Jolivet-Lévy*, Catherine. Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords. Paris, 1991. On the settlement/town at Çanlı Kilise (not far from Gelveri) with paintings of the 11th and 13th century in the main church: *Ousterhout*, Robert. A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia. Washington D.C., 2012.



Fig. 1. Kızıl Kilise (the Red Church) in Cappadocia, a free cross-plan with high dome (probably 5th century), associated with St. Gregory of Nazianzus

attested by a number of 13th century rock-cut monuments⁹ and the Ottoman census records of the 15th and 16th centuries¹⁰. Towards the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Gelveri enjoyed a period of prosperity (from about 1840 to 1914), like many Cappadocian villages at that time. The male members of the community migrated *en masse* to Constantinople or other important cities in search of work, from where they were able to send money back to their families which funded the building of elegant houses (Fig. 4), as well as big churches, public buildings and important schools, such as the *parthenagogeion* (school for girls, currently used as a hotel), (Fig. 5). During that period, the village was inhabited by around 300 Muslims and 3,000 Orthodox Christians who were Turkish-speaking, but demonstrably conscious of their Byzantine

9 For a comprehensive presentation of the 13th century monuments: *Jolivet-Lévy, Catherine. La Cappadoce médiévale. Images et spiritualité. Paris, 2001, 82-87.*

10 *Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Irene. La géographie historique de l'Anatolie centrale d'après les registres ottomans. – Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1982, 470-502; Beldiceanu-Steinherr, Irene. Les Bektâşî à la lumière des recensements ottomans (XV^e-XVI^e siècles). – Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 1991, No. 81, 50.*

past and a certain Hellenic national identity¹¹.

The period of prosperity suddenly ended in 1922, with the defeat of the Greeks by the Turkish army. The *Exchange of Populations* (1923) resulted in the obligatory simultaneous removal of Greeks and Turks, who were classified according to their religious affiliation, from Turkey to Greece and *vice versa*¹². All Christian inhabitants of Gelveri (about 500 families, or 3,000 people) were *Karamanlides*¹³. They were forced to collectively migrate from Cappadocia to northern Greece. In 1924, after several months of preparations, the villagers of Gelveri left their homeland, having been allowed to take with them only their personal and valuable belongings, and accompanied by an important number of icons, religious utensils and furnishings of the churches, as well as the relics of their patron saint, Gregory the Theologian. After a long trip by boat, the majority finally settled in northern Greece, at 12 kms east of the city of Kavala, in a swampy land that was granted to them by the Hellenic state, which had to organize the reception of almost 1.5 million refugees. On that land, in the mid-1920s, the village of Nea Karvali was founded, under the strain of unsanitary conditions, poverty and psychological pressure¹⁴.

11 On the history of the village of Karbala/Gelveri and the etymology of its name, see *Karatza, Eleni. Καππαδοκία: Ο τελευταίος ελληνισμός της περιφέρειας Ακσερά-Γκέλβερι (Καρβάλης)*. Athens, 1985, 134-141, 147-158. On the population: *Petropoulos, Dimitris, Andreadis, Ermolaos. Η θρησκευτική ζωή στην περιφέρεια Ακσερά - Γκέλβερι*. Athens, 1971, 63-64.

12 In the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, there was a mutual expulsion of around 1.5 million Anatolian Orthodox Christians from Turkey to Greece, and of fewer than 400,000 Muslims from Greece to Turkey. It is important to draw attention to the fact that the Convention classified Greeks and Turks according to religious affiliation. As a consequence, many Greek Muslims (living in Greece and speaking little or no Turkish) were classified as Turks and were forced to leave their homes. Similarly, many Turkish-speaking Christians from north-eastern Anatolia and Cappadocia were classified as Greeks and were expelled to Greece. On the historic and social context of that period: *Svoronos, Nicolas. Histoire de la Grèce moderne*, Paris, 1972, 84-98; *Chatziiosif, Christos* (ed.). *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα*, vols. A, B: *Οι απαρχές 1900-1922*. Athens, 1999.

13 The *Karamanlides* were Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians who wrote in Turkish but with Greek characters, known as *karamanlidika*. See recently, with the previous literature on the subject: *Balta, Evgenia, Kappler, Matthias* (eds.). *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books*. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies (Nicosia, 11th - 13th September 2008). *Turcologica* No. 83. Wiesbaden, 2010.

14 According to oral testimonies, the number of people settled in Nea Karvali reached 2,500, of whom about 1,000 died of malaria during the first years: *Karatza, Καππαδοκία: Ο τελευταίος ελληνισμός*, 332, footnote 820. According to the census carried out by the National Statistic Office of Greece, by May 1928 there were 1,090 inhabitants.



Fig. 2. Icon of the Three Hierarchs: St. Gregory the Theologian (on the left), St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil (detail from side B of a bilateral icon with Panaghia Hodegetria on side A), first half of 14th century, Byzantine and Christian Museum, inv. no. BXM 992

Process of integration and the notion of otherness

Group feeling was an important safeguard of the community's unity at this time. Refugee groups in particular show a strong tendency towards remembering and recreating, as a priority, the characteristics of their place of origin in their new homeland¹⁵. The word "Nea" (new, in Greek) preceding the name of the village Nea Karvali, responded to the group's need for keeping a direct link with the past and thus retaining its own cultural, ethnic and local identity. In response to a similar requirement, priority was given to the erection of the new church of St. Gregory the Theologian in the very centre

15 *Halbwachs*. La mémoire collective, 132, 133; *Bastide*, Roger. Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage. – L'Année sociologique, 1970, No. 21, 86.



Fig. 3. The church of Hagios Grigorios Theologos in the village of Gelveri, Cappadocia, Turkey



Fig. 4. Detail from the exterior decoration of a private house in Gelveri, Cappadocia, end of 19th century



Fig. 5. Gelveri, the parthenagogeion (school for girls, currently used as a hotel), end of 19th – beginning of 20th century



Fig. 6. The church of Hagios Grigorios Theologos, Nea Karvali, Greece

of the village (Fig. 6), where the patron saint's relics would be kept, together with the icons and sacred utensils brought from the old village in Cappadocia. Through the conservation of relics and religious objects as guarantors *par excellence* of antiquity, authenticity and respect for stable traditional values, the church of Nea Karvali assumed the privileged and almost exclusive role of becoming the vessel of the entire community's collective memory¹⁶.

As regards religious affairs, the integration process was not very difficult, because the Greek "host culture" and the Cappadocian "guest culture" were of the same Orthodox Christian religion. Nevertheless, the notion of otherness remained quite strong for the community members during their first decades in Greece. The main reason was that they were *Karamanlides* and, despite their Christian religion, their mother tongue was Turkish. Because of their Turkophony, the indigenous Greeks greatly despised the newcomers and called them "Turkish spawns" (*Tourkosporoi*), holding them in

16 On this subject: *Halbwachs*. La mémoire collective, 162. See also: *Augé*, Marc. Génie du paganisme, Paris, 1982, 38 (where the author reminds us of the function of religion, according to Durkheim, to act as a source of solidarity and identification for the individuals within a society).

contempt. The male members of the community were obliged to learn Greek as soon as possible in order to find jobs, while children were integrated by acquiring fluent command of Greek at school. On the contrary, women learned Greek less quickly and not very well because they rarely worked outside of the village; even today the oldest ones still feel more comfortable speaking Turkish, confirming that language offers to those who share it a feeling of cohesion and of being part of a group. Learning Greek helped the social integration of the refugees, and it was the only way to improve their professional and financial situation. The State too considered education very important: it acquired a public character and became free and compulsory, providing a very effective means of diffusing official ideology and promoting national unity among the different populations of the country.

Along with learning Greek, the Cappadocian immigrants tended to modify their family names by “Hellenizing” them, so that they could be better adapted to the language of their new settlement. Erasing any distinctive signs of their foreign origin, they tended to faithfully translate the meaning of their surnames from Turkish into Greek, and to replace the termination –oğlu (deriving from the Turkish *oğul* = son of) by –idis, –adis or –opoulos, which were common in Greek¹⁷.

One of the main axes for investigating the integration of a group within its social environment is the study of matrimonial connections. Research in the archives of the Nea Karvali community shows that village endogamy was the main characteristic during the first years in of new settlement. Nevertheless, the situation changed after the World War Two, when marriages between refugees and people outside of their community proper became much more frequent.

A number of convergence points can be detected between the Cappadocian “guest culture” and the Greek “host culture”, and it is not surprising that they seem to be contradictory to each other. On the one hand, the community instinctively showed a tendency to withdraw into itself, and realized the importance of maintaining their

17 Just to name several examples, the surname Kayaoğlu was transformed into Petridis (*kaya* in Turkish and *petra* in Greek mean stone, rock); Boyacıoğlu was turned into Vafeiadis (*boyacı* and *vafeas* mean painter in Turkish and Greek respectively); Osmanoğlu (*osmanlı* meaning the man who makes himself respected, who terrorizes his entourage, in Turkish) became Gennaiopoulos (*gennaios* means brave, in Greek).

traditions and preserving a 'proper' identity. On the other hand, the group became conscious of the need to be promptly integrated into the "host culture", and to acquire a social identity conforming to their new social environment. Nevertheless, the reception of the immigrants was quite hostile and their integration into Greek society was a difficult process. In that context, various attempts were made in Nea Karvali to ensure a respectable past and reconstruct the group's social memory, in order to endow the community with a common ancestry and prove that its members were direct descendants of important religious (i.e. Christian) and national (i.e. Greek) ancestors. Since they were treated as "Turkish spawns", they invented and disseminated a mythology about their religious and ethnic origins, to demonstrate that they were both sufficiently Christian and sufficiently Greek.

Myths are patterns in the form of narratives which do not principally explain the world, but define the place of a group or a nation within it¹⁸. From a psychological and psychiatric point of view, myths are fundamental in giving meaning and importance to human existence, and confidence to people's lives¹⁹. They are often invented in a time of crisis or turmoil, when it is important to build unity among the members of a group and create a national identity. Telling myths about a common past is crucial in binding societies together and forging a collective identity within a group of people. "To be member of a community is to share its myths"²⁰.

Religious mythmaking

As was mentioned before, Gelveri was associated with Karbala, where St. Gregory the Theologian lived and officiated as a priest²¹, so the saint is considered to be a kind of religious and spiritual an-

18 On the function of myths and their transmission in modern societies see, for example: *Belmont*, Nicole. *Mythes et croyances dans l'ancienne France*. Paris, 1973; *Belmont*, Nicole. *Paroles païennes. Mythe et folklore*. Paris, 1986; *Ginzburg*, Carlo. *Clues, myths and the Historical Method*. Baltimore, 1992.

19 *May*, Rollo. *The Cry for Myth*. New York, 1991.

20 *May*. *The Cry for Myth*, 45.

21 See, the extensive article in two parts in the newspaper "Anatoli" published by the Cultural Association of Nea Karvali: *Loukidis*, Ioannis D. Μια σύντομη βιογραφία του Γρηγορίου του Θεολόγου. – Ανατολή, June 1990, No. 4, 2/ September 1990, No. 7, 4.

cestor of the community²². Nowadays, in Nea Karvali, various legends refer to the miraculous foundation of the saint's church in Cappadocia²³, and to important miracles performed by the saint for the salvation of the group²⁴. Moreover, several pseudo-scientific arguments claim the authenticity of St. Gregory's relics that are nowadays displayed for veneration²⁵. Every inhabitant of Nea Karvali is even nowadays able to narrate these legends, which are so widely reproduced to make very many people confused, believing that they do not tell stories about 5th- or 10th-century Cappadocia, but about real events that happened in 20th century Nea Karvali. These legends are very well rooted in the collective memory of the group, indicating that the social memory does not reproduce real facts, but it rather reshapes and reconstructs the historic past, according to the community's needs. As Maurice Halbwachs notes, the faculty of reproducing a specific memory is not to find it again, but rather to reconstruct it: it is fiction rather than truth, inaccurate and incomplete²⁶.

The Feast of St. Gregory of Nazianzus is celebrated on January 25th, a public holiday and one of the most important days in the religious and social calendar of Nea Karvali, which has evolved into a ma-

22 On the notion of the religious ancestor/hero: *Rossignol, Marie-Jeanne, Marienstras, Elise* (eds.). *Mémoire privée, mémoire collective dans l'Amérique pré-industrielle*. Paris, 1994.

23 According to oral traditions, faithful people carrying the relics of St Gregory on a camel in Early Christian Cappadocia decided to build a church on the spot where the animal would stop. Even though they did not like the place "indicated" by the camel, it was impossible to make the animal move. Finally, a source of holy water (*haghiasma*) emerged and they were thus convinced to build the church where it still stands today in the Cappadocian village.

24 As for example, the miracle during a terrible storm or a big fire that happened while the refugees were travelling by boat from Turkey to Greece, in 1924. It is worth saying that similar and stereotyped miracles have also been reported by other refugee groups that traveled to Greece by ship at that time. On that phenomenon, which is frequently observed: *Belmont, Nicole*. *Mythes et croyances*, 31.

25 According to historical sources, St Gregory's relics were transferred to Constantinople during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (10th century): *Flusin, Bernard*. *Le Panégyrique de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète pour la translation des reliques de Grégoire le Théologien (BHG 728)*. – *Revue des études byzantines*, 1999, No. 57/1, 5-97. According to the local tradition, which is trying to demonstrate that the relics never left Karbala, the imperial envoys visited the village in search of the saint's relics, but the local people lied and gave them some other human remains instead of the real relics. In addition, the alleged existence of three sets of relics, of St. Gregory and his family respectively, is considered as the irrefutable proof that the saint's authentic relics are still kept in Nea Karvali, instead of some of the other places in the Christian world that also claim to possess them.

26 *Halbwachs*, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, 92, 95, 112. Two chapters of this book are of great interest for the present study: "La reconstruction du passé" (83-113) and "La mémoire collective des groupes religieux" (146-177).

major regional pilgrimage center. During the celebrations that last for three days, a religious procession is followed by a huge crowd of the faithful, with the participation of the representatives of the religious and political authorities. The saint's relics are exhibited for public veneration, while ill people and paralytics sleep in the church for three nights (incubation), in the hope of experiencing a miraculous healing. This series of rites and religious practices contribute to conceptualizing the myth and guaranteeing its transmission from one generation to another. Given the lack of historical evidence, the religious myth has been necessarily supported with material evidence, such as the saint's relics²⁷; that is why it is very important for the community to prove that these are the authentic relics, in particular because there are several other places in the Christian world that also claim to possess the relics of the saint.

Ethnic mythmaking

The concept of ethnic or national identity is inescapably connected with myths²⁸. A national myth is a legend or fictionalized narrative which might over-dramatize true incidents, omit important historical details, or add details for which there is no evidence; or it might simply be a fictional story that no one considers as literally true, but which contains a significant symbolic and credible meaning so as to be true to an ethnic or national group²⁹.

Language is considered to be one of the main vehicles of ethnic and cultural identity. In the case of Nea Karvali, its members' embarrassment of its Turcophone past has led this community to create an ethnic myth in order to prove its Greek identity. So, the group argues that its origins hark back to the time of Alexander the Great's expedition in Asia, and as a consequence, the ancient Greek hero *par excellence* is considered to be the community's blood ancestor,

27 On the importance of material evidence for conserving social memory: *Halbwachs*. La mémoire collective, 53; *Belmont*. Paroles païennes, 81; *Bahloul*, Joëlle. La maison de la mémoire, Paris, 1992, 217.

28 *Cameron*, Keith (ed.). National identity. Bristol, 1999, 4; *Kaufman*, Stuart J. Modern hatreds: the symbolic politics of ethnic war. New York, 2001, 25.

29 *Smith*, Anthony D. Myths and Memories of the Nation. Oxford, 1999 (in particular 57-95: "National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent"); *Bhatt*, Chetan. Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths. London, 2001; *Gear*, Patrick J. The Myths of Nations. Princeton 2002; *Abizadeh*, Arash. Historical Truth, National Myths and Liberal Democracy. – Journal of Political Philosophy, 2004, No. 12, 291-313.



regardless of the historical fact that Alexander bypassed Cappadocia entirely. A similar tendency of establishing a direct link with a glorious antique past can be detected among several Greek/Cappadocian authors of the 19th century. According to them, despite the fact that the Greek language was forcefully replaced by Turkish in certain regions of Cappadocia, the local customs recalled those of Antiquity. Moreover, the use of wooden spoons in traditional Cappadocian dances seems to be reminiscent of the use of crotals by Cappadocian virgins, as described by Pausanias. Both examples are considered to guarantee the uninterrupted continuity between classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the case of Cappadocian communities³⁰.

At the time of the Exchange of Populations (1923), the population of Greece was estimated at around 5 million and the arrival of almost 1.5 million refugees must have seemed very threatening to the native citizens of Greece, because the immigrants were mainly seen as potential claimants for scarce lands and jobs. During the first decades of the immigrants' settlement, the indigenous Greeks treated them as foreigners and "Turkish spawns", in a profoundly insulting and humiliating way. The refugees from Asia Minor, Constantinople, Smyrna, Cappadocia and Pontus felt very proud of having preserved their ethnicity and religion for many centuries under Ottoman and Muslim rule. In their own words, they felt more Greek than the Greeks and more Christian than the Christians in Greece, because they considered themselves as direct descendants of Alexander the Great and spiritual heirs of St. Gregory the Theologian. The feeling of otherness provoked the community of Nea Karvali into demonstrating a religious and ethnic "purity", through the transmission of religious and national myths that have gradually been incorporated into the group's collective memory. In this regard, the local Cultural Association (*Στέγη Πολιτισμού Νέας Καρβάλης*, founded in 1981) has played an important role in "keeping the memory alive" through various activities, such as the creation of the *Historic and Ethnographic Museum of Greek-Cappadocian Culture* in 1995³¹ (**Fig. 7**); a series of publications; free courses of

30 On the similarity between the Cappadocian customs, songs and dances and those of Ancient Greece: Rizos, Nikolaos. *Καππαδοκικά, ήτοι δοκίμιον ιστορικής περιγραφής της Αρχαίας Καππαδοκίας, και ιδίως των επαρχιών Καισαρείας και Ικονίου*. Constantinople, 1856, 99-104; *Eleftheriadis*, Rizos. *Συνασός, ήτοι μελέτη επί των ηθών και εθίμων αυτής*. Athens, 1879, 78.

31 The museum presents artifacts of Cappadocian origin, such as ancient statuettes, pottery



Fig. 7. Part of the exhibition in the *Historic and Ethnographic museum of Greek-Cappadocian Culture*, Nea Karvali

traditional dances; the organization of an annual folk-dance festival and of an international conference³²; the official participation in religious rituals (especially those concerning St. Gregory the Theologian and its relics), as well as the organization of trips to Cappadocia as a kind of modern pilgrimage to the native land. The above-mentioned activities in Nea Karvali are perfectly in line with the notion that the collective memory is conserved and transmitted through myths and rituals that remind the group of its identity, and that the social memory of a community consists of reconstructions (and not faithful reproductions) of the past under the society's control.

and coins, icons and liturgical utensils, books in *Karamanlidika*, as well as carpets and kilims, traditional costumes and music instruments of the 19th-20th century.

32 "Η Καππαδοκία των ζώντων μνημείων", International congress, Nea Karvali, 26 - 31 August 2000.

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Религиозно и национално митотворчество: съхранение и реконструкция на социалната памет

Андониос Цакалос



Преносът на религиозни и национални митове допринася за съхранението и реконструкцията на социалната и културна памет на общността, която се състои от реконструкции (не от верни репродукции) на миналото под контрола на социума. Този етюд се фокусира върху понятията за другост, върху правенето на миналото и върху формирането на национална/религиозна/културна идентичност, както те се появяват в село Неа Карвали, Гърция. Селището е основано в средата на 20-те години на ХХ в. в Северна Гърция от турскоговорещи православни християни, бежанци от с. Гелвери в Кападокия, Турция. През първите десетилетия на тяхното заселване местните гърци ги третират като чужденци и като „турски изчадия“ заради това, че говорят турски език. По тяхно мнение обаче, изселниците от Гелвери се приемат за повече гърци от самите гърци, както за по-християни от християните в Гърция, защото се смятат за директни потомци на Александър Велики и духовни следовници на св. Григорий Назиански Богослов. Усещането за „другост“ кара общността в Неа Карвали да демонстрира религиозна и етническа „чистота“ чрез преноса на религиозни и национални митове, които постепенно се инкорпорират в колективната памет на групата. В това отношение местното културно дружество играело важна роля за „за съхранение на живата памет“ посредством различни дейности (изложби, публикации, фестивали, конференции и екскурзии).

