Migration memory, cultural heritage: A vehicle of the intercultural identity of a city. The case study of the Eastern Greek Community and the Greek museums of Trieste Italy

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Abstract: The main aim of this study is to examine the key position that migration memory and her materialistic manifestations have in a particular place, as a symbolic and cultural capital as well as a big part of the city identity. The present study is based on extensive research, titled “Social services and management in multicultural societies. Contemporary approach to intercultural relations. The case of Trieste in Italy.” Migration, which leads to the formation of cultural minorities, is defined as one of the main culprits of social exclusion both at individual and group level. Residents, who come from different countries and cultures due to globalization in the work market, should also participate in the social life of the city. At a social level, national and cultural differences, which are constantly spiraling, owing to international migration, are recognized as one of the main structural changes taking place not only in the societies of the European Union, but also all around the world. The Greek cultural heritage in Trieste is an ideal paradigm because due to its architectural design, history and location it reflects a very important part of the city’s and Greece’s collective memory and history. Also this cultural capital could be transformed an investment factor in the future.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
Monuments/cultural places project the idea of an experienced, social place, which constitutes a product of realities with various, historical, and societal deposits. In this framework, the role of the museums constructed in today’s cities is very different from the one they had previously. Factors such as ethnicity, migration, gender, sexuality are now taken into account. In other words, museums have begun to embrace the concept of “cultural diversity.” The Greek cultural heritage in Trieste is an ideal paradigm because due to its architectural design, history and location it reflects a very important part of the city’s and her collective memory. Furthermore, this survey may be used as a handy tool for academics, researchers, educators, policy-makers, marketers, and students as well as for the local communities of various cities in order to plan effectively and implement techniques that will lead humanity to a real exit from the crisis, hence helping to build a humanistic future for their cities.
1. Introduction: the theoretical framework of the study

1.1. Migration memory—a big part of the city's collective memory and the role of cultural heritage

The city is associated with the old and new. It has its own space and its population. It has its people, its places, and its characters. It may be ancient and contemporary. Within this context the “monuments”/cultural places project the idea of an experienced, social place, which constitutes a product of realities with various historical and societal deposits. They are approached as places with many “histories” that have a malleable content which is also easy to negotiate with. They are also considered as areas where various identities and ideologies (official ones as well as unofficial, prevailing/popular) converge and diverge whether they concern the past or the future.

The collective memory (the image of a typical city which one has and which is frequently connected and referred to its equivalent counterpart, which may possibly be an image of one’s village so “rural” in its form and its societal functions, as evinced by the continuous comparison made between a village and the good old neighborhood. In addition, it is capable of being continuously informed and rejuvenated perpetually fed by new experiences in order to “stabilize” the perception and turn it into action in fast-changing circumstances (failure or even resistance to urbanization can sometimes inhibit city planners from making mistakes). Any kind of place (an urban area, a neighborhood, a suburb) exists in relation to its own experience and life. Belonging to a city means that one actually feels that sense of belonging. The flexibility (adaptability) of reconstruction and representation, as well as flexibility of identity function in an osmotic manner in connection with collective memory (Crow, 2004; Hall & Hubbard, 2013; Liu & Hilton, 2005). It is this very memory that gives meaning to management policies regarding cultural heritage. Policies that will allow the members of a community to exploit the full potential if a city’s history and each resident’s life story are necessary. By doing this, the people of a particular area will be able to influence it by shaping their own images, perceptions, norms, and attitudes thus creating a sense of “belonging.” (Bitsani, 2014; Hall, 2004).

Cultures and identities are dynamic sets, they change over time and adapt to circumstances. They are also complex wholes, encompassing heterogeneous components. Thus, it is not possible to coagulate or summarize them in one level. As we will see below, the concept of culture has been given many interpretations, while for culture there are about a 100 definitions. They also include the knowledge and information accumulated by collective experience. They have cohesion, adaptability, and evolutionary features, based on communication between community members, the internal organization, the identification of members with the whole community, and attitudes that shape each community against the other communities (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1986).

So the city is the place that records the collective memory of the people.

“Collective memory constitutes one of the most vital elements, which contribute to reforming a city, functioning of course within the frameworks of society.

Memory becomes the thread that permeates the whole of the complex structure of the city,” cites Aldo Rossi (Leoni, 1997, p. 445).

In this framework, we can understand the importance of migration memory, and the importance of her conservation for the next generations. Also we can understand the identitarian connection between migration memory and collective memory of the city. Collective memory is metaphorically...
Monuments, that is to say, constructions made by man in certain places constitute collective representations, aiming to shape collective memory (Halbwachs, 2003, p. 124). They encapsulate a narrative place that combines the “indirect” speech of history with the “direct” speech of memory and they survive materialistically and intellectually in time and space (Benevolo, 1997, p. 119).

Therefore, monuments play a pivotal role in the process of creating fixed moral values: they mark the area with a permanent durable trace, which constitutes the foundation of memory and historical cohesion of specific places.

In practice, the institutionalizing of monuments, or the protection of architectural works of art, declares man’s intention to preserve something in time and space and therefore in his memory. Besides, the word monument etymologically refers to memory while from a semantic point of view, it refers to the process of stimulating the mind.

On the other hand, the value of museums as cultural heritage institution is extremely high in the public mind. Accordingly, although museum exhibitions are in principle morally neutral, in practice they do make moral and political statements. They are privileged arenas for projecting the self, social, or national (Karp, 1991, pp. 14–15, as referred in Mouliou, 1994, p. 84).

In this point of view, the cultural policies adopted by the member states of the EU, must make museums accessible to all members of society, so as to promote social cohesion and education.

Moreover, building a museum in the heart of a society is due to the realization that its development depends on the public’s contribution. This is why incentives should be given to the public so as to enable the people to support the objectives of the museum while taking part in its activities (Arronson & Elgenius, 2011, pp. 5–20).

In addition, places that are regarded as complex works created by both man and nature are also considered to be options of cultural heritage. These areas are partly built stretches of land that are vastly distinct and homogeneous. They basically resemble monuments or aggregates (Bitsani & Kalomenidis, 2007, p. 353).

They illustrate examples of social life in the past, while the modern surroundings of these places are mere continuations of that life.

The preservation and maintenance of historic buildings is not just a monumental act, but it also contributes to the shaping of stimulants that will facilitate us in our effort to perceive history’s course and the continuation of a certain place.

Additionally, it helps us to connect to a particular area, giving one a real sense of belonging as well as a substantial identity (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The monument and its uses, facilitate social needs that are connected with the identity of the people and the repercussions that certain historic events have on modern societies. Our research addresses issues that are pertinent to the “monuments” of the past. On the one hand, they are viewed as materialistic evidence of a certain era, while on the other hand as a potential sphere of activity and as “omen subjects” that participate in the historical procedure, that constitutes the
various and disparate social and cultural identities of a place, in areas where converging ideologies, conflicting arguments, and collective representations come together by referring to the past and the present. Bitsani and Kalomenidis (2007) have determined the philosophical and cultural management of resources: “all the cultural goods, including cultural landscapes that have survived from the past are perhaps cultural resources.” That means that they have some kind of potential value or use in the present or the future. They are “tangible connections to the past that has survived” (Cleere, 1984, p. 125). Within this context the “monuments”/cultural places project the idea of an experienced, social (Bitsani & Kalomenidis, 2007) place (which constitutes a product of realities with various, historical and societal deposits) they are approached as places with many “histories.” These places have a malleable content which is also easy to negotiate with. They are also considered areas where various identities and ideologies (official ones as well as unofficial, prevailing/popular) converge and diverge depending on whether they concern the past or the future.

Therefore, cultural and architectural heritage and the listed buildings of the cities make up the key link between the cultural environment of the past and the modern environment (Swyngedouw, 2011).

In this light, its universal dimension is recognized and man’s obligation is to preserve it, since monuments are witnesses of man’s existence, activities, and intervention. It represents man’s connection with space, while at the same time it determines the identity of a place as well as contemporary life and its development (Bitsani, 2014).

In this context, since the 1980s, cultural organizations and cultural activities have been considered an essential lever for the regeneration of urban economy. In this way, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence is ensured.

This study is a case study. In particular, the study is part of the larger study, “Administration of social services in multicultural societies, contemporary approaches of the intercultural relations and of the intercultural education: The case of Goritzia-Trieste”. Regarding that city museums are places of societal dialog and social cohesion in the modern city, we try to answer, these questions:

How are the city and city museums dealing with migration and memory? What are the issues and the challenges for city museums? What is the role of migration in the creation, history, culture, and development of a city?

A diverse range of sources is searched in order to verify the results from multiple sources of data employing “triangulation” as Maxwell mentions and thus, “gain a better assessment of the validity of the explanations” (Maxwell, 1996, pp. 75–76). It has been based on primary data, archives and quasi-structured interviews, but also on the study of existing bibliography. In addition the study has also been based on the analysis of the content of relevant press publications.

1.2. The multicultural condition of modern cities

Societies are consisted of many different groups which live together in their everyday lives, are citizens and residents of one community, region, or city. In order to live together in the same city, people from different cultural backgrounds need to be based on strong connections with the city.

Migrants created cities and they continue to give cities shape and meaning. We, and our parents, may have been born and brought up in the city, but we are all in one way or another the children of migrants, migrants from the rural hinterland or from another country, who found the lure of the city irresistible.

Migrants bring memories of their past, their culture and their habits with them. How do they preserve them in another environment, how do they maintain their identity? They may prefer to be absorbed into their new home, but they still bring a former life with them, and diversity and difference
give a city its own unique character. In any event, no city museum can be indifferent to the impact of migration (CAMOC, 2015).

In our days, the concept “multicultural society” provides a new condition which is under construction without yet, to be complete. More specifically, the term reflects the fact that a homogeneous national community slowly transforms the cultural character under the influence and the pressure of the procedure of globalization and the new cultural groups which are created. The evaluation of cultural standards in the social composition of national groups has been discussed in the literature: a number of people believe that they belong in a national team either because of a virtue, or because of a real or a concept of common ancestry (Casson, 1997, p. 117).

That is why there is emphasis on the distinctiveness and multiplicity of identities, all of which claim their position in society promoting their cultural distinctiveness.

In addition, the big migration flow in Europe since the 1990s and still continues almost 30 years later all over the world (Sakellaropoulos et al., 2005), contributing to the expansion of cultural and national host countries and creating phobic feelings. Migration which leads to the inclusion of a cultural minority is defined as one of the main factors which increase the social exclusion at the personal and group level. At a social level, national and cultural difference, multiplied via international migration, is recognized as one of the main structural changes to the societies of the European Union (Sakellaropoulos, 2012). These, in the area of the European city are expressed with the special attention provided nowadays to the maintenance and elevation of cultural heritage and at the same time, to the creation through the procedures of social inclusion of its intercultural contemporary identity (Bitsani & D’Arcangeli, 2009).

Sassen mention the parallel “underground” world, the immigrants’ world, the minority citizen’s world, the world that the low-paid workers experience, it is these very people who contribute to global economy while at the same time they are socially excluded. Sassen (2008) characterizes the inhabitants of global cities as de-nationalized, based on the logic that the rich who are participants in the global capital stock, care for exactly just that, hence ignore the nation in which they work in, while the minorities are socially excluded and therefore are indifferent towards the nation in which they live, which is also indifferent towards them. The global city is a city of inequalities in which marginalization is as common as legibility, and poverty interchanges with ostentatious affluence (Sassen, 2013).

The importance of local community reflects a number of cultural values, which differ greatly from the values of the globalized community in economic, political, and ideological field (Swyngedouw, 2005).

2. Eastern Greek community of Trieste as a living network of city museums and Trieste’s cultural heritage

2.1. The historical context of Trieste’s multicultural development

“There are people all around the world who constitute the Fourth World, their own diasporas. If you end up meeting them, these people will not end up tricking you or embittering you, because they are not interested either in your race or your religion. They are neither interested in your gender or your nationality. The obtuse they tolerate, though not whole-heartedly, but with compassion. They laugh easily. They don’t find it hard to feel grateful. They are never small-minded and pusillanimous. They are not inhibited by fashion, public opinion or what is considered politically correct.

They are banished in their own community; they always belong to a minority, but it is a powerful nation, and it is a shame that they don’t know it. It is the nation of no-where and I have ended up
believing that it is natural that Trieste is its capital,” cites Jan Morris the English novelist in her work titled “Eternal city, Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere.” (Horgan, 2012; Morris, 2009).

Trieste lies between Eastern Italy, Austria and Northern Yugoslavia, in the heart of Venezia Giulia. It was established by the Gaul and became a Roman province during the reign of Emperor Augustus. Later on it was retained by Constantinople and became a Byzantine military outpost. It was then conquered for a short while by the Goths and the Lombards. In the thirteenth century, it was under Venetian rule until 1382, when the Hapsburg conquered it. In 1719 Charles VI declared it “a free port.” (Bitsani, 2008).

The contemporary scholar of Trieste Elio Apih wrote in 1968, “Trieste has been to a greater degree than Vienna the city where populations of monarchy felt like it was their own.” Trieste is the city loved by James Joyce who stayed in the old town in the beginning of the twentieth century and tried to speak Greek from a Greek under the name Santos. It is the city where multilingualism and multiculturalism is the rule, the mixed marriages the common solution and quite obvious the tolerance (with some exceptions in regard to the Slovenian issue) towards the different culture. Trieste was and is rich in contrasts which could not be dissolved. It does not have a central base neither a unitary system of values. Since it has become a free port, Trieste owes an important part of its affluence to the interest shown by the state to the development of the city and the boost which was given to it from the affluence of Trieste (Bitsani, 2008; as referred in Bitsani & Kavoura, 2011).

Cosmopolitanism of Trieste, which in certain sizes we can accept that it still characterizes it, since its establishment in (1719) allowed maintaining the characteristics of the “foreign”—own residents. The “foreigners,” although small groups, were a strong economic power since most of them pulled the strings of robust commercial, banking, business naval insurance businesses that exceeded the limits of the Apsvourgian Monarchy and since the mid-nineteenth century Europe’s boundaries (Smith, 2000).

Communities in Trieste, Italy such as the German and Greek ones managed to preserve to a significant degree their cultural heritage and values since they did not refer to it as opposite but as supplementary to the Italian culture and within this model of intercultural relations, not only have they created diglossy but also a double culture, an intercultural one which shows how well people of different cultures may live together. In contrast, the belief in the Slovenian (Istrian) community, is that the distinct lingual and cultural identity may only be preserved through the preservation of national identity, otherwise, there is the one way towards social and cultural Italian pressure of assimilation. Trieste, Italy can consist of a typical recourse for other areas of the Mediterranean where cultures and identities intermingle with migration and policy directions need to be implemented so that people who migrate to live in another country are not dealt as tourists or visitors or as foreigners (Bitsani, 2008).

The cosmopolitan element in Trieste, which still nowadays characterizes it and has existed since its foundation in 1719, allowed the maintenance of the distinct characteristics of the “foreigners”—its residents. Greeks, Serbs, Jewish, French, German, Dutch, Austrian, and Italians from other areas of the peninsula, co-created the cosmopolitan society of Trieste, which provides residents with a distinct relational identity, that the historian Attilio Tamaro would call: “Triestinita” (Bitsani, 2008; Bitsani & D’ Arcangeli, 2009, p. 24).

This dynamic coexistence and the correlation among different communities in terms of equality not only did they create the distinct identity of the city and made its image a brand name which is powerful nowadays all over the world, but also have created the intercultural identity of its residents and the identity of each one of these. This has as a result the identification of the “foreigners” who finally acquire the sense of “belonging” but also the acceptance and approval from those members of the community who were the first to inhabit the city. The promotion of a brand identity willing to accept multiculturalism and willing to see the “significant other,” as a beneficiary and a friend (Bitsani, 2014; Bitsani & D’ Arcangeli, 2009) is the success story for Trieste. In that way, dynamic synergies were created with multiple results for the benefit of all.
2.2. Trieste today

Today it is one of the nicest Italian cities of the North, unique and utterly breathtaking, having had simultaneously embraced the contradictions of its borders, bridges and barriers, it has become the place where you can easily meet “The Other” while at the same time ignore him/her. The city is open, vibrant but also restricted in a petty bourgeois manner.

The migration phenomenon and the formation of intercultural social and economic relations emerged in Italy in the nineteenth century and its practical and social implications can be seen in the twenty-first century (Bitsani, 2008; Bitsani & D’ Arcangeli, 2009; Bitsani & Kavoura, 2011). Nowadays, to these different culturally groups in regard to their ancestry, Muslims have also been added based on the contemporary migration phenomena that Europe is facing.

According to the scholar and historiographer Robert Finzi (2006) the multiethnic and multicultural element or Trieste was, mostly made up of elitists, and connected with a particular family mood and atmosphere. According to them, of course this is the exception to the rule.

Others claim that, Trieste is a melting pot of different cultures, while some extol it by calling it the archipelagos of cultures.

As the journalist “Corriere della Sera” Claudio Magris (Corriere della Sera–giovedi 5 luglio 2005) cites “Trieste is a place were Greek and Turkish people speak Italian.”

In their work called “mille volti di una citta di frontiera” Robert Finzi and John Panjck manage after extensive research to reach the bottom of triestinita’s history, which is the name of the city’s identity. They also managed to reconstruct the complex web of Trieste and its forming procedure, detecting the emergence of the Italian language quite early (Finzi, Panjek, & Panariti, 2003).

In this way, they managed to correct, among other things, many clichés, like the widespread use of the German Language in Trieste.

According to the specific writers the identity of city that has many cultures is simultaneously a reality and a myth. It depends on the historical periods and situations that the city has been through, also on which historical era we are referring to each time (Leontidou, 2010; Sapounaki–Drakaki, 2005 as referred in Bitsani, 2014).

In our time, with the help of literature its identity tends to become crystallized in a kind of platonic category and axiomatic demand of “Triestinità” which rises above history.

Finally, they conclude that its basic Italian identity and the policies that were developed based on the Italian culture that respects dignity and recognition allowed for osmosis and for a peaceful coexistence among the people of different backgrounds.

2.3. Cultural heritage of Eastern Greek community of Trieste

According to Bitsani’s (2008) research a fundamental part of Trieste’s identity belong to the Greek Community. The first Greeks who inhabited Trieste came there in 1718, during the treaties of Pasarovits; all foreign merchants were allowed to develop economic activities in the geographical space of the Apsvourgian Empire with favorable conditions (Bitsani & D’ Arcangeli, 2009). From this point onwards and throughout the eighteenth century, Greek presence in Trieste, develops rapidly, which coincides with the urban planning of the city (Katsiardi- Hering, 1986). Trieste, a new city in 1718 was in position to absorb quite easily the foreign population in contrast with other neighboring commercial centers such as Venice, which began to compete it until it surpassed it in the end of the eighteenth century (Bitsani, 2008).
In 1719, the emperor Charles the Sixth, declared it together with Fiume (Rijeka) as a free port. The core of the new city was built in the foothills of San Giusto (where the medieval city is located), when Maria Theresia was the queen, after the alluvion of the salterns and the city slowly expanded surrounding the port (Archives of the Greek Community, No 173) (Bitsani, 2008; Katsiardi–Hering, 1986 as referred in Bitsani & Kavoura, 2011).

Greek sojourners mainly come from Ionian islands, Peloponnesse, Crete, Cyprus, Konstantinoupole, and Smirni and in the beginning were doing business as retail merchants History of the Greeks (2005). In the passage of time, they succeed in more daring activities owing to the international circumstances, such as the Treaty of Kioutsouk Kainartzi (1774) according to which Greek ships could get permission to travel under the Russian flag. Besides, the Napoleonic wars (1790–1815) and the isolation of France from the British navy, creates a huge gap for the merchandise at the East Mediterranean, which was substituted, by the Greek shipowners and the merchants from the islands and west coast either unlawfully, or lawfully (Katsiardi- Hering, 1986, pp. 539–546).

In regard to the Greek community, the Church consists of the connecting bond—among Greek schools and Greek libraries. A determining step immediately afterwards was the creation of the first Greek school in 1801 and of the Library which is even nowadays is the most significant that Hellenism has created abroad. One may find in the library the issues of the newspaper “New Day” published in Trieste since 1855. Unique masterpieces are printed in Trieste, old publications and few printed material of religious content. In particular, there are the Argonautika of Apollonius Rodios (Frankfurt 1546) and the publication of Geoponikou Agapiou Landou (Venetia 1686). Rare works of Byzantine writers, theologians, classical scholars, and historians such as the Divine Mass of John Christomos (Venice 1644), the Myriobiblos of Fotios (Magentia 1653), the Chronicles of John Zonara (Venice 1729), and the Sixth Bible of Konstantinos Armenopoulos (Venetia 1766). Other important works is the book for the holy and saint of Gabriel Severos (Venice 1691) the Treasure of four languages of Gerasimos Vlachos (Venice 1723), Geography of Meletios Mitros (Venetia 1728), the History of Byzantium of Ioannis Stanos (Venetia 1767), and the Church History of Meletios Mitros (Venetia 1783–1795). Nowadays, according to the interview with Mr. Kosmidis, the president of the Greek community in 2008 aims to create a new library which could securely host the whole archival material of the community.

3. The network of living Greek museums in Trieste today
Cultural influences of the Greek business dispersion are the second issue which emerges from the research. The economic development of the Greek community results in the creation of an important social and spiritual work (personal interviews with the president of the Greek Community Mr. Kosmidis and the distinguished member of the community and Mr. Cuccagna, president of the Non Profit Institution Skaramagas, in 2008 and results from the participant observation throughout 2008). Trieste is a city that takes the initiative of supporting different cultural values and their diffusion. Through the diffusion of language, education and culture Italians, Greeks, Jewish, Germans, Slovaks, preserve and stabilize their presence in Trieste (Bitsani, 2008).

The Greek Kiriakos Katraros had the initiative for the creation of the stock market of Trieste which was created by Greeks and he became his first president. Greeks who covered the 28% of the capital will have two more presidents in the stock market of Trieste, Antonio Dimtriou in 1905 till 1911 and Ioannis Skaramagas from 1914 till 1916. There are few of the most affluent Greek business merchants who nevertheless, distinguish for their cultural sensitivities and activities such as Amvrosios, Rallis, Alexander Manousis, Konstantinou Chatzikonsta, Paul Ralli, and George Afentoulis.

Tangible works of the cultural influence of Greeks can be seen in the port, the building of the Greek community Palazzo Carciotti and the Greek Orthodoxan temple of Holy Spirit and Saint Nikolas. A few meters away the canal is located and there lies the catholic temple of Saint Antonios and the Serb Orhtodox temple of Saint Spiridonas. Piazza Tommaseo, the Provincial Command post, the old building of Lloyd Triestino on the left- and right-hand side of the big piazza Unità d’Italia surrounded by the City Hall and the General Insurances building of Trieste (Assicurazioni Generali) which was the old
residence of Nikolaou Strati (casa Strati) which was built in 1824 (Volume “Arte e Pieta, I patrimoni culturali delle opere pie” Catalogo della Mostra, 1980 as referred in Bitsani, 2008) (Figures 1–4).

The merchants and the economy with which they were associated, put their mark on the character of the city. Trieste is the city of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and mixed marriages is a solution for young couples and complaisance is the case.
3.1. The museums of the eastern Greek community of Trieste

There are three Greek museums in the city. The museum and the library are in perfect condition, open to the public, while the archives and the Greek cemetery in Trieste have been preserved so that researchers may document the historic archives. The Greek School operates nowadays and a lot of Italians attend Greek lessons offered by the Greek community (Bitsani, 2008).

The museum of the Eastern Greek Community of Trieste, next to the Church of St. Nicola, dedicated to the memory of Costantino and Mafalda Pisani, is a treasure chest full of icons, paintings, and sacred objects.
It is divided into two main sections: one dedicated to the works belonging to the Orthodox tradition with icons from the fifteenth to the twentieth century and the remarkable Epitaphion, and the second is an expression of Western European culture containing the works of the Catholic tradition.

One of the highlights, the wooden sculpture Epitafios (Holy Sepulcher), was created in 1823 by Greek and Italian artists under the guidance of Micheal Speranza and his son, Spiridione, from Corfu. Two meters high and finely decorated and painted gold, it represents Christ’s tomb and is exhibited in the church for Holy Week. Located in two large halls of the building next to the Church of St. Nicholas of the Greeks, the center of the community itself, the museum also has two other star exhibits, both of which are paintings: “Presentazione della Vergine al Tempio” (“Introduction of the Virgin to the Temple”) by a master of the histories of Saint Agnes, pupil of the Bramantino school (sixteenth century, Lombardy), and “Susanna e i Vecchioni” (“Susan and the Old Men”), a Flemish work from the seventeenth century.
Specifically, the museum has several sections and—in part thanks to its collaboration with Touring Italian Club as part of the “Aperti per Voi” project, which makes use of volunteers—will be open to the public three days a week. The museum is the fiftieth site to be opened in Italy on this basis. The museum has a collection of works from donations, inheritances and acquisitions. In the first half of the twentieth century, several works formed a picture gallery that now acts as the basis for the current museum. The section of holy Orthodox works is visually stunning, with icons from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries from diverse locations—from Greek territory to the islands of the Aegean and Ionian seas, from Crete to Russia, Slavic areas, and the Middle East. It also holds works made by the monks of Mount Athos and ones from between the Veneto region and Trieste by Greek painters. Fearing idolatry, the Orthodox did not possess holy images. However, through Western influence they eventually agreed to a compromise: only images that did not have any material essence to them, with no natural environments (gold backgrounds) or sense of perspective. Greek figures and families that came to Trieste and set up trade and banks play an important role, contributing as they did to the development of the city and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One of these, the Economo family—of whom many portraits were made—even built a railway between Trieste and Aquileia.

b. The Skaramaga Museum is run from a special committee of the Municipality of Trieste. A member of the Board of the Greek Community of Trieste participates as a member and this member is elected from Board of the Greek Community of Trieste.

Ioannis Skaramagas collected old artifacts, valuable pieces of art and in general, everything that was associated with the history of Trieste. His collection became known since it was permanently enriched and “Fondazione” was converted to a museum which operates nowadays.

c. The Strati residence in Trieste, accommodates the Town Museum of History and Art. The town had a Greek hospital during 1788–1822. Two Greek schools were created offering an innovative for their age program since demotic language and the sciences were taught, courses which provide students with the necessary knowledge for the practice of merchandize. The teaching of these courses consisted of the application of the beliefs of Korais according to the education Greek students should attain (Volume “Il Nuovo Giorno, La Comunita Greco-Orientale di Trieste: Storia e patrimonio artistico-culturale,” 1982; Bitsani, 2008).

4. Conclusions

Extensive indulgence in the history of the city and particularly in modern history was a very useful and precious analytical methodological tool of today. Because when one is well-versed in history then one can return to the sources and correct wrong stereotypes and perceptions such as snob-bism, desire for vengeance and intolerance etc. which may have become consolidated over time but are nonetheless collapsing in the light of the certain verified facts (Bitsani & D’ Arcangeli, 2009).

Talks regarding the settlement of immigrants in Europe, place the issue of social integration at core of sociological and political deliberating.

Bitsani’s research done up to now have shown that cultural diverse communities were a dynamic mechanism of integration and adaptation for the immigrants (Bitsani, 2008).

The case concerning the museums and the total Cultural Heritage of Eastern Greek Community of Trieste, is indicative as to how such an emblematic aggregate inherently linked to the history of the city is used as a “tool” in order to exert cultural policies, and whose purpose is, among other things, to the consolidation of the country’s, and thus the city’s international position. Based on the facts of the study, a multilevel and multipurpose effect on the general developmental process that is taking place in the area and in the suburbs ensues.

The value of the adopted policies and the devised strategy is also acknowledged.
Not only has the cultural heritage of Eastern Greek community of Trieste proved to be an invaluable and effective tool in connection to the upgrading of the museums and their scientific mission, but it has also proved to enhance the social and economic development of the city.

According to the results of Bitsani’s wider research Trieste, Italy can consist of a typical paradigm for other areas of the Mediterranean where cultures and identities intermingle with migration and policy directions need to be implemented (Bitsani, 2014, pp. 77–78). The promotion of a brand identity willing to accept multiculturalism and willing to see the “significant other,” as a beneficiary and a friend. In this framework, we can understand the importance of migration memory, and the importance of her conservation for the next generations.

The historical buildings of Greek immigrants located at the center of Trieste form a lively network museum area. Having been successfully incorporated into modern life, they build a bridge between the future and the past (in view of the fact that they are currently used by the Italian public administration). At the same time they bear witness to the heritage of the Greek diaspora and thus they constitute the tangible part of her memory. Both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Greek community fosters and preserves, precisely through the Greek museums, the continuity of this migration memory through time.

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Cover image
Source: Carciotti (detail) Trieste Italy.

Notes
1. According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted during the 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007; a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment.

References


