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ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ

*Collective Trauma as a Means of Shaping the Society of Kalavryta:
Dialogue between the Artistic and Academic Sphere*

Φωτεινή Γουσέτη

Dissertation Committee

Penelope Papailias, Associate Professor of the Department of History, Archaeology, and Social Anthropology at the University of Thessaly (Supervisor)

Elena Tzelepi, Assistant Professor of the Department of History, Archaeology, and Social Anthropology at the University of Thessaly

Lucy Steeds, Senior Lecturer in Art at the Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh

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To Constantina, daughter of Theodora

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Prologue

“Right here. Here it is. This is the path they took.”

(Delbo, 1985: xviv)

These women, I can say now after all these years, that's what they had to go on: first of all, there was solidarity. Nobody said, "I have bread, so I can eat". They would share it. Whatever they had, they would share it with the rest. "Do I have a room that was salvaged from the fire? I will host 20, 30 people in there". There was no way they would just think about themselves, say "it's all about me, I don't care about the others". There was solidarity. The second thing that helped them get along: their faith in God. Churches were the first places they found refuge in. Both were salvaged. Their faith gave them strength, made them feel they were strong enough to bring up their children. They received some kind of state pension after the Civil War mess, but this was short-lived given that then, same as now, Greece was poor. Back then, of course, there was a reason why it was poor. Now there isn't, but that's another story. So once the pensions stop coming, what's gonna happen with these children? For the right wing, Kalavrytans were leftwingers so they got what they deserved. For the left wing, EAM, the Kalavrytans, etc., were reactionaries so they got what they deserved. So the women found themselves alone, with just their love and their solidarity to go on. And they fought to the bitter end. I should mention here that the Germans came back in '54, not to kill, this time, but to take, harbour and educate the children. The boys. The ones who had survived. I remember all this very well. I remember women coming to the house my dad had built and asking "Giorgo, what should we do?". My dad was

a clever and serious man, so he told them: "The children will go to Germany". "But Giorgio...", they'd say. "They have no future here. They'll go to Germany".

- Difficult decision.

- Difficult, yes. Meanwhile, there were rumours going around scaring the women, who thought they were going to kill the children, and I even remember one woman saying to my dad, "You, Giorgio, why don't you send your child?", meaning my brother. And my father said "I'm not sending him because I'm alive, I can do something for my children. It's only children who've lost their father who have the right to go", and that was the reason. My brother still hasn't forgiven him because his friends left, and so on. So the boys left and the women and the girls stayed behind.

- For the second time, it was just the women and the girls left?

- For the second time, yes. They did any job you can imagine trying to make ends meet. We were given clothes and food. I remember all this very well.

- From the Red Cross?

- The Red Cross and UNRA. I remember the dignity of the children, and of the women of course, all this effort to get food to us was very important. Very, very important. Then something else came from this. All the clothes that didn't fit, they had to fix them. They had to adjust them to everyone's size. Collectively, again.

- Was there any sense of division according to the women's political orientations?

- Never.

- Never ever?

- Not once. Here, the women said that the guerillas were to blame for what happened. It would still take many years for this to sink in, of course. It was a tragic event. The guerrillas were defending the country to drive out the Germans. But the women never forgave the

cause of their suffering, and the cause was the execution of the Germans. Of course, "Operation Kalavryta" had been planned beforehand, but not to the detail that in Kalavryta they would kill the men and burn all the houses. As the rumour had been deliberately spread by the Allies that there would be an invasion in the southern Peloponnese, the Germans wanted to clear the northern part from the rebels —and we were right at the centre of this part—so that the Allies would not find any help when they got here. And it was in this context that "Operation Kalavryta" was designed. But the final decision was taken very shortly before the disaster, when they discovered the 78 executed prisoners and the three wounded who had been treated here by the local doctors. I must tell you that the society of Kalavryta was an advanced, civilized society. We had things here that people couldn't find even in the big cities. In Kalavryta Square, the philharmonic orchestra performed works by Mozart and Beethoven. That is, they were civilized people and that's why they thought that, based on the Geneva Convention and so on, the prisoners should be treated, so they took them to the hospital [...] Unfortunately, us Greeks often have extreme reactions, and back then that reaction was that the rebels, in fact one of them was a relative of mine, took the wounded out of the hospital, killed them and threw them into a well. Then someone went and told the Germans. They found the corpses and invited everyone to the cemetery because, in the meantime, the Kalavrytans had buried them—honourably, I would say—because they were afraid. They asked everyone to attend the exhumation and when they fired shots in honour of the dead the people present thought that was it, that they were going to kill them. But they didn't kill them because they had already conceived of that plan. In my case, my father's house was requisitioned, same as many others around here, there were a lot of soldiers. A guard said to my mother at the entrance of the house, "children", he said to her. At the time, I was just starting to walk. "Children elsewhere", with gestures indicating that we should be

sent away. My mom understood something bad was going to happen and said to my dad and to my uncle "they're going to kill us". "No," said my uncle Athanasiadis who had also spoken with them [...] But say that they believed her, what could they do, anyway? There was nowhere to go. Anyone coming out of the village, say to go and tend to the sheep, would be killed instantly. So they were given a reason and this operation they had planned became the most tragic thing they could do and they did it.

The question that prompted Maria Georgada to start relating the above story to me was the following: "How did the women and children of Kalavryta manage to survive and continue living in the town after the disaster?" This interview took place on the 12th of December 2012. The two of us were walking up the path leading to Kappi's hill, now paved as part of the hill's monumentalisation to indicate the route the Kalavrytan men and boys took on the day they were led to their death by Wehrmacht's soldiers. At the top of the hill stands a monument identifying the exact spot of the execution. Georgada, a two-year-old girl in 1943, is one of the voices today communicating the traumatic memory of Kalavryta to the public.

Georgada's father, a wealthy man before the disaster of the town, is among the thirteen Kalavrytans who survived the massacre. Although she has not lived in the town since her early childhood, throughout her life she has actively kept the memory of the events alive. A primary school teacher by profession, Georgada continued teaching until her retirement, while she is also a board member of the Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust (MMKH). She has recounted her memories of the events that transpired that day hundreds of times throughout her life, so they remain particularly vivid.

This interview was held in a peculiar sociopolitical context. In 2012, at the peak of the financial crisis, the political climate in Greece was fraught with tension. In a country where

citizens were suddenly expected to live under harsh austerity measures, the fact that the EU was acting under the guidance of Germany brought back the memory of past enmities and, in the case of Kalavryta, even reactivated the trauma of WWII. As tensions were rising, an increasingly polarized rhetoric resulted in turns of phrase dating back to the Greek Civil War being liberally used in parliament¹. At the same time, new communities exploring novel solutions to everyday troubles emerged in large numbers; solidarity, as well as resistance, became popular concepts (Koutouza 2019).

Georgada and I are on our way to attend the *trisagion* on Kappi's hill, a yearly blessing held one day before the the massacre memorial ceremony on December 13. This small ritual demonstrates the local population's need to mourn and commemorate their dead privately, before throngs of people swarm to Kalavryta for the official ceremony, among them Greek and international political figures, representatives of the Orthodox Church, the army and the police force, as well as citizens hailing from various parts of Greece who wish to pay tribute to this symbolic memory site bearing so much symbolism for the Greek nation-state.

The story Georgada tells in response to the question regarding post-war everyday life in Kalavryta incorporates some of the main topics which are going to be analyzed in the following pages: the trauma inflicted on the community and the dire living conditions enforced on the local population in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as the divisions created during the Civil War that have left their imprint on local historical narratives, shaping a politics of blame. In addition, Georgada also mentions in her interview the first German initiative designed to help the people of Kalavryta, which strategically anchored itself on this symbol of

¹ For instance, the word *aplitoi*, an adjective meaning *the unwashed*, was used by conservatives to refer to the rebels who were active in the mountains and could not take care of their appearance or personal hygiene. The term was taken up again during the economic crisis, as a derogatory description for people with leftist beliefs.

the Greek nation to erect bridges of friendship with Greece while steering clear of the contentious issue of war reparations. Georgada's response also reveals the ideological input of her historical references, informing both her conception of the politics of memory and her reading of the socio-political context at the time of the interview.

Georgada is one of the people acting as the community's "memory keepers", whose role is to ensure that the next generations learn what happened in Kalavryta during WWII. What Georgada and the other memory keepers of Kalavryta perform on a local level, the exhibition *"From Generation to Generation: Inherited Memory and Contemporary Art"*, curated by Pierre-François Galpin and Lily Siegel and held at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco in 2017, traces on an international level. Among the works presented was *Kalavryta 2012*, which I developed as part of the Present as a Result of the Past, my first research project in and about Kalavryta. The title of the exhibition alludes to the responsibility of each generation to educate the next. The exhibition itself also expands into the field of postmemory. As Marianne Hirsch (2012) puts it, postmemory "describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before" (Stuber, 2013: 1). as it brings together works from twenty-four visual artists working with memories they have inherited from previous generations. The works presented tackled the issue of remembering the past, but also of coping with the future as present. However, the works could also be interpreted as exploring the imaginary as part of collective memory.

While discussing, in the museum, the context of the exhibition and the ways through which the past shapes our present, Marianne Hirsch mentions that she reads these interconnected and entangled memories as having a texture deriving from the stories, the objects, the images and photographs, all of which form a triangle of remembrance. Hirsch also refers to the violence that women were submitted to during WWII, as well as to the fact that

their stories have been largely ignored; their words discredited. For that reason, she claims, feminism's role is pivotal in recovering women's stories —that is, intimate and familiar aspects of everyday life, the kind of stories which pass down from mother to daughter and granddaughter (Hirsch, 2012). Hirsch envisages a social history that looks into communities and collectivities in order to trace how knowledge and memory is passed on intergenerationally through women. She refers to the different approaches survivors adopt in order to deal with trauma; distinguishes between survivors who choose to keep silent and try to forget about the past and those who feel a responsibility to share their memories for the benefit of the younger generation and of society at large, since they believe people need to know what happened to prevent it from happening again. Hirsch points out that women's stories passed down to daughters and granddaughters do more than relate traumatic experiences, and claims that they are also ways of transmitting, through narrative, potential means of resisting, fighting and achieving success and equality.

Artists, Hirsch continues, are able to influence the linearity of time because art looks backwards as well as forwards, therefore creating a hiatus. Through this pause, the audience gets access to different points of view on memory and may therefore connect different stories to each other or possibly create new possibilities. Therefore, artists can counter the instances of violence passed down to us by previous generations and weighing heavily on societies. While interfering with the present, art can provide the grounds for interpreting the past differently by examining different courses that could have been taken, decisions that could have led to different outcomes, while coming up with suggestions to change things in the present. As a result, Hirsch concludes, art can orient the past towards a different kind of future.

At this point, Hirsch also mentions Charlotte Delbo's (2011) writings chronicling her confinement as a political prisoner in Auschwitz as well as the latter's position that: "I know

that some things are true even if I don't know that they correspond to the facts" (PAGE). Departing from Delbo's quote, Hirsch moves on to describe a larger truth, an emotional truth, an experiential truth; a kind of truth referred to as a "core truth" linked to the fact that "she [Delbo] knows what she experienced and she knows who the perpetrators were" (PAGE).

Since this research is about post-war Kalavryta and focuses on postmemory, I have consciously chosen not to start from, and thus focus on, the historical sources providing further explanations about the war events referred to by the speakers, but instead place this information in the endnotes of this dissertation.ⁱ



Figure 1. Mural on the building housing the Aglaia Konti and Eleni Champsas Kalavryta Elementary School and kindergarten (own picture, 2014).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Kalavryta, a village located on the slopes of Mount Chelmos in the northern Peloponnese, is the commercial and administrative center of a cluster of ninety-nine villages locally known as *kalavrytochoria* (lit., the villages of Kalavryta). According to official historiography, this is where the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire was sparked in 1821, thus transforming Kalavryta into a symbol of the Greek nation and assigning it a special status in the national consciousness and imagination. The fact that this village—whose total population does not exceed 1,500, with even fewer permanent residents, in my experience— is often referred to as a “town” or sometimes even “a city” demonstrates the significance of its symbolic character. The source of the special status the area enjoys is linked to the nearby Agia Lavra monastery, which is located only five kilometers away from Kalavryta. According to a foundational myth of the Greek nation-state, this is the cradle of the Greek revolution since this was the place where Palaion Patron Germanos first hoisted the banner of the revolution.

In addition, Kalavryta is engraved in public consciousness as a place of martyrdom due to the fact that during WWII Wehrmacht troops executed the entire male population before looting and burning the town to the ground. This military operation, known as “Operation Kalavryta”, which was mounted in December 1943 in response to resistance activities organized by fighters operating out of Mount Chelmos, had a devastating impact not only on Kalavryta itself, but also on several of the nearby *kalavrytochoria*. Given the great number of dead and the savagery of the crime, the destruction of Kalavryta is widely known both in Greece and abroad and has been extensively discussed in international WWII bibliography (for example: Meyer, 2008; and Droubouki, 2014).

This dissertation will not discuss the events of the massacre itself, but rather its aftermath. The period it covers begins with the departure of the Wehrmacht soldiers after the killings and the looting was over and done with, and follows the construction of the “new Kalavryta” all the way up to the present. My focus, in other words, is on Kalavryta after the massacre, with extra attention paid to what was happening in the town during the first decade, the memory of which, I argue, has been eclipsed from the public sphere due to the gendered overemphasising of war and battles as the only “actions” worth narrating or recording as historical events. Moving beyond this patriarchal conception and practice, I instead place the focus on acts of survival. That is, on the subjects who acted in Kalavryta not during, but after, the war and the town’s destruction. Those subjects were the women and children who found themselves living in the town following the catastrophe and went on to organize themselves into the new community that emerged out of the rubble.

To achieve this, I analyse the monuments that have been placed in the public space in Kalavryta to commemorate the events of WWII. I examine the turmoil and divisions they create or reproduce on a local level ; trace how they consolidate and perpetuate divisions dating from the Greek Civil War, which overlapped and immediately succeeded WWII; and show how the perpetuation of these divisions goes hand in hand with a failure to acknowledge the contribution of the post-war Kalavrytan community of women and children, which was a successful example of communal life. Extending the scope of what is commonly viewed as the “Kalavrytan trauma”, I suggest that this overshadowing of the Kalavrytan women and children, but also the people who migrated to the area after the catastrophe, is in itself traumatic and traumatising. After mapping the Kalavrytan trauma on the basis of this more inclusive perspective, I turn to the political appropriations of the Kalavrytan trauma on a national and international level (especially in the context of Kalavryta’s relations with Germany), leading to

the emergence of a politics of memory. Reversing the focus and methodology of official historiography, I use in-depth interviews with local subjects who have either embodied memory or post-memory of my period of interest to explore the various manifestations of trauma figuring in narratives coming from below and try to respond to the community's frequently expressed "need for catharsis" in the only way that, in my opinion, seems possible: through a combination of art and anthropology.

An artist in Kalavryta at the age of Golden Dawn

I lived in Kalavryta from 2006 to 2010, working as an art teacher in local schools. I developed friendships, some of them strong, both with colleagues at the school and in the wider Kalavrytan community. After these four years, I was transferred to another town in the Peloponnese, but as I was in a relationship with a man living in Kalavryta I continued to spend my weekends there until 2011, when we moved together to the Netherlands. However, as my interest in Kalavryta remained undiminished, I kept reading the local press and never severed ties with my local friends.

What prompted my decision to conduct research on Kalavryta were the results of the 2012 national elections, which saw a significant number of local votes going to the neo-nazi political party Golden Dawn. Despite the fact that the distribution of votes was not very different from other areas in Greece, journalists at the time interpreted the results as shocking given the history of Kalavryta (Doumanis, 2012). This "paradox" was extensively discussed in Greek media for several months to come, stirring, according to my local friends, intense emotions in Kalavryta. The locals considered that journalists were tapping into the town's symbolic status just for the sake of increasing their readership. It was at that point that I

decided to return to Kalavryta to conduct field research. At that early stage, my research was mainly focused on understanding this shocking electoral result in a community that, as I knew from personal experience, had developed its identity around the collective trauma linked to the 1943 massacre. As I will be showing in this dissertation, this trauma was, in fact, not one, but several: there was the trauma of the executions, the looting and the destruction of the city by the Wehrmacht in 1943, the long years of poverty and hardships that followed these events, but also the feeling of injustice still experienced by the local community given that, to this date, not a single person has stood trial for the mass killings in Kalavryta (Fleischer, 2012 p. 77).

At the time, I was enrolled for an MA at the Dutch Art Institute, so I decided to turn this research into my MA thesis (Gouseti, 2013). The title of my MA thesis and, later on, of the project as a whole was *The Present as a Result of the Past* (PRP, <https://www.fotinigouseti.com/index.php?page=the-present>). Kalavryta is a community closed in on itself. I believe that the reason I was accepted as a researcher was the fact that, due to the four years I had already spent in the town working as an art teacher, I was already a familiar outsider.

Postwar Relations with Germany and the Germans

Very soon in my research, it became clear to me that the Kalavrytan community's ideological divisions were not simply linked to the Greek Civil War that overlapped and immediately followed WWII, as I had previously thought and as was the case in other areas of Greece. The local population is, in fact, multiply divided as a result of subsequent traumatic events (see, Chapter 4). Over the years, these factions have been antagonising each other or have formed ephemeral alliances over specific issues affecting the life of the community.

This research started in 2012, at the height of the economic crisis. In the context of the economic measures imposed on Greece by the European Union, with Germany at its head, many people saw links harking back to WWII. Particularly so in Kalavryta, where residents still had vivid memories of the destruction of the town and of the deprivation the local population endured until 1985, when a ski resort was constructed—with Germany contributing financially to the purchase of the equipment (Meyer, 2010). In the years that followed, tourism became the power engine of the local economy. The imposition of economic austerity on the residents whose lives had been shaped through the hardships resulting from the destruction of the town also reopened the discussion concerning war reparations. This dynamic escalated over the years I spent in the field.

To take but one example: when the German embassy proposed to finance the last stages in the construction of a cultural center in Kalavryta, a project which had remained unfinished for a long time, they received the reply that the municipality no longer accepted financial support from Germany. Soon after, in 2021, the project was completed with private funding from the Martinos Foundation in 2021. This change in the political stance of the municipality of Kalavryta became even clearer after the statements German Foreign Affairs Minister Annalena Baerbock made during her visit to Greece in July 2022. At the time, she said that her country wished to invest in the areas most damaged by the Nazis. This statement was interpreted as essentially a refusal to pay war reparations, as proposed by Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias during their meeting. On this occasion, the mayor of Kalavryta stated: “We say NO to German tips (*filodorimata*). We are not beggars. Because it is clear that their

ultimate goal is to use diplomatic maneuvering in order to cancel the Greek reparations claims we are entitled to in full, as decided by the Greek Parliament” (Molonoti, 2022).²

This reaction has a long history behind it that is important to mention in order to better understand the broader context in which I am situating this research. The post-WWII relationships between Kalavryta and Germany were often rekindled through different initiatives funded by German sources, most frequently the German embassy. Throughout the years, these projects have been of a charitable, cultural or educational nature and have occasionally provided financial support to Kalavryta—in the form of assistance for the completion of local projects, for example. These attempts at rapprochement and reconciliation started in the early 1950s when, at the initiative of German progressive political parties, there was an interest in repaying Germany’s debt towards Greece in the form of investments, rather than reparations. Ehrengard Schramm, an MP of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which was in opposition at the time, played a leading role in these efforts aiming to restore the amicable relations the two countries used to enjoy before the war.

Owing, again, to the history of the Greek Revolution and Kalavryta’s symbolic connection to it, Schramm decided to focus her supportive activities in the area, claiming that if Germany helped Kalavryta it would be an act of “symbolic importance” and a “first step to regain the heart of Greece” (Schramm, 2004). After a period of discussions with the community of women and children living in Kalavryta, it was proposed that a group of young men from Kalavryta travel to West Germany to receive vocational training under the auspices of German companies. This proposal proved a very difficult decision for the Kalavrytan community, which ended up creating additional divisions within the community to those

² The article in molonoti.gr was reprinted from one originally posted in the Kalavrytan newspaper *I Ora ton Kalavryton*, which is now no longer accessible.

already created by the Civil War (see Chapter 4). After the first group of thirty-three young men traveled to West Germany, the German Foreign Ministry aimed to generate positive impressions by featuring their activities in the German and international press, which brought great visibility to the programme (Chamakiotis and Antonopoulos, 2010). What is important to note is that, ever since, whenever projects funded or co-funded by German sources are proposed in Kalavryta, the decision of whether or not to accept them reactivates the trauma that was triggered on the occasion of the Schramm programme (Gouseti, 2013). Kalavrytans, who, as already mentioned, are now openly against the implementation of any German-funded programme, refer to such initiatives as “friendship attacks” (*epitheseis filias*): stratagems aimed at creating positive impressions to deflect reparation claims for the crimes that took place in Kalavryta during WWII. Furthermore, they argue that these acts of soft diplomacy (Papagaroufali, 2013) pave the way for a (re)writing of history that serves the side of the aggressors. In short, friendly approaches initiated by Germany have always been met with local reactions that trigger traumatic memories for the local population.

During the years I spent living and working in Kalavryta, I experienced some incidents that further aggravated the already tense dynamic I am describing. I will mention the most characteristic ones because I believe that this will help the reader understand the broader context of this project.

For instance, in the early 90s, the German School of Athens (Deutsche Schule Athen) in collaboration with the Kalavryta high school set up an exchange programme focusing on the events of 1943, which was funded by the German embassy. This programme was soon discontinued, as it became obvious that there were difficulties that could not be overcome. In 2003, the programme was resumed with a more open structure: this time around, it was decided that it would touch upon various topics, and not necessarily the events of 1943. The

goal was for the two schools to work together with a view to attenuating the differences separating the students, who came from different social environments, class backgrounds and educational systems (Gouseti, 2013). Beginning with the events of 1943, the two schools worked on a far-reaching cultural and environmental programme.

In 2012, the Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust (MMKH) was also running an educational programme that proposed experimental ways for students of Greek and German schools to learn about the historical period covered by the museum. Some residents linked the two programs, resulting in strong reactions and demands for explanations from the MMKH and the Kalavryta High School. Some local people argued that the programme was aimed at teaching students a version of history that would serve Germany's mnemonic interests (*Oi ekpaideytioi tou GEL*, 2012). Both programs were discontinued, and the teachers involved experienced great embarrassment. Reportedly, some people were also sued.

An earlier event that had upset many Kalavrytans occurred in 2005, when the then Mayor of Kalavryta Athanasios Papadopoulos was awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany on the grounds of having offered a great deal toward Greek-German reconciliation efforts. Reportedly, when the news reached Kalavryta, the local community stated that they failed to understand in which way the activities of the Mayor helped improve Greco-German relationships, so Papadopoulos was pushed to return the prize to Germany.

At this point, I would like to mention that aside from these large-scale events initiated and supported by governmental institutions, there were also smaller initiatives led by individuals and groups of German citizens who visited Kalavryta either regularly or on a one-off basis without seeking visibility. These were often welcomed by the local community. This

acceptance, in my view, indicates that the visibility that goes hand in hand with Kalavryta's status as a national symbol is not always welcome for the local community.

However, the efforts to strengthen the relations between the two countries have not always come from the German side. In 2012, George Lazouras, another Kalavrytan Mayor, proposed that the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra of the Municipality of Kalavryta (which enjoys an important status locally, as it serves as a link between pre-war and post-massacre Kalavryta) travel to Athens to hold a concert at the residence of the German ambassador, as part of the yearly celebrations for the reunification of Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Again, the suggestion met with fierce reactions, which rallied together many of the ideological groups mentioned above. The mayor's plan came to fruition as the City Council voted in favour, ignoring the reactions of the local community, with some arguing that the members of the Council who determined the outcome of the vote were those who represented the smaller *kalavrytochoria*. They also said that their vote was a reaction to the continued primacy given to issues concerning the town of Kalavryta, while the villages of the district face perennial problems that are often ignored.

Left-Wing Memory in Kalavryta after the Civil War

As I have explained, the German presence in Kalavryta, is a regular source of reactions, divisions and consequently trauma for the Kalavrytan community. Yet, it is not the only source. As I established in the first phase of my research on Kalavryta (Gouseti, 2013), there are two more areas of trauma affecting postwar Kalavryta, which are directly linked to narratives regarding the destruction of the town on December 13, 1943. It is important to mention these points of tension and conflict as well, as throughout the period during which I was researching and writing up this dissertation I continued to deepen my understanding of them, so will be referring to them in the pages that follow.

The first area of trauma in post-war Kalavryta concerns the Civil War period. Although, in that time, the town was nothing but ruins inhabited by impoverished women and children, it served as a base for the fighters, as well as a battlefield, because of the symbolic status of the community. Its connection to the Greek revolution and the founding of the nation-state made it a desirable site of conquest for both sides. When Kalavrytans recount their experiences of the Civil War period, it is clear that the divisions of this period continue to be a source of conflict. Nonetheless, at the beginning of this research, I came to realise that the Civil War memories are kept close within each family, thereby resulting in the perpetuation of hatred. These issues are never openly discussed in the community.

This silencing of the Civil War experiences is, of course, not limited to Kalavryta. Greece is not one of the countries that celebrate the end of WWII on May 8, but rather commemorate its beginning on October 28. This is due to the fact that, in Greece, WWII was followed by the Civil War. Significantly, for future generations, the Civil War was also the “filter” through which the resistance has been inscribed in the country’s collective memory (Voglis, 2008). In Kalavryta, as in the rest of Greece, the memory of the rightwing community is in contradiction with the memory of the Left. The latter is true for a number of historical events, with the Civil War figuring most prominently among them. As a symbol of the Greek nation, i.e., the focal point of a national narrative co-written by the rightwing winners of the Greek Civil War, and at the same time as the locus of a major massacre linked to the activities of leftwing guerrillas operating in the area during WWII, Kalavryta has found itself in the eye of the storm. On the one hand, there is the —occasionally shifting—national narrative, which is politically determined and reflects the view of history held by central governments. On the other hand, there is the traumatic experience of the Civil War which renders it extremely difficult for Kalavrytans to revisit the 1943 events without reawakening the divisions and traumas of the

past. As I will be showing in my discussion of the Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust (MMKH) (see Chapter 2), this double bind is traumatic in itself, as it entails that any of the community's attempts to tell their story either to themselves or to others perpetuates past divisions.

"True Kalavrytans" and Those Who Came After

The second source of local trauma involves the division of the modern-day population of Kalavrytan into "real Kalavrytans" or "Kalavrytan Kalavrytans", as they are locally referred to, and *fertoι* (φερτοί), meaning people who are brought in, strangers. When I started this research, many of the locals suggested that the electoral base of the Golden Dawn was mostly composed of *fertoι*, indicating an assumption that a true Kalavrytan would never have voted in favour of an ideology that destroyed the town. A "true Kalavrytan" is defined as someone who has firsthand experience of the massacre, the destruction of the town and its aftermath. All those who settled in Kalavryta after the disaster, even if they arrived in the days immediately following the massacre and even if they hailed from one of the nearby *kalavrytochoria* are thought of as *fertoι* even to this day. There is also the term *symazochitaria* (συμμαζωχτάρια), referring to the children from nearby villages who attended school in Kalavryta when the latter resumed its operation, and subsequently stayed in the town marrying "real Kalavrytan" women.

The designation "*fertoι*", then, is used for anyone choosing to live in Kalavryta for personal, professional or other reasons and it is still in use to this day. The Kalavryta residents who fall under this category are not involved with the commemoration of the 1943 events. The latter is reserved for those who lived through the massacre or, on an exceptional basis, to certain teachers who have devoted their lives to gathering material related to the events. The

existence of this division creates a hierarchical order placing older Kalavrytano at the top and the *ferto*i near or at the bottom. This dynamic between “Kalavrytan Kalavrytans”, which I will henceforth be referred to as Kalavrytans, and the *ferto*i is a major source of trauma for the local community and one of this dissertation’s key areas of interest. The dynamic is further complicated by the fact that many Kalavrytans are members of the diaspora, while the majority of those who reside in Kalavryta today are *ferto*i. Having said that, I find it important to point out that through my own research I was not able to find a link between being a *fertos* and voting for Golden Dawn. It is obvious, then, that the distinctions between local and foreigner do not overlap with the ideological divisions developed in the aftermath and on account of the Civil War.

One key argument often suggested by Kalavrytans in support of this division is that only those who have gone through what they did can understand them. By implication, this logic brings all the residents who are *ferto*i closer to migrants and refugees than to other fellow residents. In Kalavryta, though, migrants are always welcomed and supported as it is taken for granted that they have experienced something violent that led to their fleeing their country. Adopting this attitude towards migrants is seen as constitutive of the Kalavrytan identity, or, as is it referred to locally, as an indication of “Kalavrytanism.” This openness was amply demonstrated to me during the discussions regarding the establishment of a facility for unaccompanied minor migrants in Kalavryta in 2016. The community was divided into those who supported the decision and those opposing it, with one of the arguments in favour—and simultaneously a criticism of the *ferto*i who were against it—being that the *ferto*i could not understand human suffering like Kalavrytans did. Interestingly, in an instance of the local prevailing over the national, one of the fiercest supporters of the underage refugees was the representative of Golden Dawn in Kalavryta.

From Monument to Memorial: The Demand for Catharsis

During the first phase of my research in 2012, I began to deduce some of the complexity of what the Kalavrytans refer to as “catastrophe”³ and the many lines of conflict and division that run through the local community and diaspora. Although, strictly speaking, the term “catastrophe” refers to the massacre by the Wehrmacht during WWII, the way I perceive and research Kalavrytan trauma also includes a set of events caused, connected, or simply resulting from the aftermath of the original catastrophe. So, part of this research is the mapping of “Kalavrytan trauma”, starting with the massacre and continuing to this day. The understanding of “Kalavrytan trauma” I believe is connected to what the Kalavrytans define as a demand for catharsis, which I have heard voiced repeatedly and in different contexts without being given any specific answer when I asked for clarifications on what exactly this demand entails. My goal has been to conduct research focused on this request.

At this point, I assumed that there was likely to be more than one request grouped together under the umbrella term “catharsis”. Also, it seemed that this request, or these requests, relate to the events of 1943 and to the years after the massacre, particularly the first nine years after the catastrophe, over which people tend to keep silent. Given my need to understand the broader perception of what “Kalavrytan trauma” entails and how it is linked to the claim for catharsis, I had to find the right methodological tools that could help me conduct this kind of research.

³ When referring to the events of December 13, 1943, the people of Kalavryta describe the group execution, the looting and the burning of the town with the word “catastrophe”. A word also used to describe the population exchange of 1922 (the “Asia Minor Catastrophe”), catastrophe clearly bears biblical connotations. In this text, I will often use the word catastrophe (as the Kalavrytans use it), alternating with the term massacre.

Knowing that the society of Kalavryta holds and hides many tensions, which were in fact further exacerbated by previous attempts of addressing the traumatic events of 1943 initiated by politicians, journalists, or researchers alike, I asked the residents before proceeding with the investigation if, in their view, it was possible for art to make a positive contribution to the locals' need for catharsis. The reply I got from almost all the people I asked was a definitive yes. A few people did claim that there is nothing that could be done to bring catharsis but I was surprised at the number of persons who answered that art can definitely contribute to positive change and even more so at those who took a step further and replied that catharsis can only be achieved through art. At that point, the challenge I had to face was figuring out the kind of art that could meet the needs of the Kalavrytan community. With the insight I had gained from my master's thesis, I decided that to be able to approach the kind of art that would meet their needs, I needed to engage in in-depth and structured research. This stage of the PRP project lasted for three years, from 2013 to 2016.

My goal was to produce artworks that would respectfully reactivate the silenced historical events that continue to create and perpetuate tensions in contemporary Kalavryta, but also activate dialogue among present-day Kalavrytans. From the first steps of my MA research, I had chosen to use anthropological research tools as part of my methodology; this is the choice that later on led to my writing this dissertation. Using a combination of artistic and anthropological research, I started mapping the various areas of trauma in the local community, with a view to better understanding the various sources of the demand for healing.

In order to analyze and present the complex material resulting from this research, I decided to use as an explanatory and narrative tool the monuments—both existent and inexistent, both demolished and extant, both true to their role and branching out to other territories—that have been established to commemorate the events of WWII in Kalavryta.

Finally, drawing from Sturken's (1977) idea that monuments commemorate tragic events and defeats, while memorials refer to past victories, I use the case of the monument on Kappi's hill monument in order to examine how art could productively engage with the local community in order to convert an existing monument to a potential memorial that would be best adapted to address certain layers of trauma still afflicting the Kalavrytan community (i.e., the limited reference to women's contribution in the official historiographical sources dealing with postwar Kalavryta).

Chapters of this dissertation

In the first chapter, I examine the case of the Municipal Museum of the Kalavryta Holocaust (MMKH), which I interpret as a monument. Methodologically, this examination proceeds through a close reading of various narratives proposed by the museum in a number of contexts. More specifically, my analysis is based on transcripts of the many guided tours I have attended and recorded throughout the years; the museum's publications and recently published catalogue; the (often revised) descriptions of the exhibits that have appeared as wall text over the years; as well as my discussions with people who are, in one way or another, linked to the MMKH (managing board, collection donators, teachers from the local school who have collaborated on programmes initiated by the museum, etc.).

There are three main conclusions arising out of this analysis:

- 1) The MMKH is a war museum, in the sense of the term proposed by Azoulay, Ndikung and Tinus (2020), which simultaneously aims to acknowledge a crime that has gone unpunished and thereby seek justice for a community that feels it has been wronged. This sense of being wronged works on several levels, given that beyond the fact of the massacre itself, the

Kalavrytans feel that they were degraded from a grief-worthy (Butler, 2016) community to a precarious, unrecognized other. In addition, the MMKH lays claim to restitutions, thereby critically engaging with Germany's long-standing position that what lies in the past stays in the past, i.e., that the country will not be paying any reparations to WWII victims. Or else, in Preciado's (2020) words, the MMKH actively opposes the "systematic erasure of the history of oppression and resistance", thus helping the Kalavrytans align themselves with other communities laying similar claims across the globe.

2) Following the end of WWII, the identity of the Kalavrytan community suffered a split. On the one hand, there is the solid and long-established association of Kalavryta with the Greek revolution against the Ottomans, with the town figuring in the national narrative as the cradle of the revolution and therefore a symbol of the nation. On the other hand, there is the image of the Kalavryta massacre, which has been engraved on the national consciousness as the result of leftwing resistance activities undertaken against the Nazi occupiers. In the aftermath of the Greek Civil War, however, it became extremely difficult to evaluate the input of leftwing-led resistance during WWII. Due to the polarisation that the Civil War gave rise to, any leftwing activity was either demonised or, as in the case of Kalavryta, shrouded in silence, even if its input for the Greek nation had been positive. On a local level, this is a very perturbing situation, as it strikes a blow to the Kalavrytan identity, forcing it to become divided. I argue that the difficulties the MMKH faces every time it needs to make decisions over its collections testifies to the existence of a problem of an identitarian nature: the community that has traditionally prided itself on resisting the conqueror, to the point of basing its identity around this very occurrence, all of a sudden found itself in a situation where the resistance mounted against another conqueror, i.e. the Nazis, had to be hushed and completely divested of its heroic character. Finally, another question addressed in the context of this analysis is the following:

what are the prerequisites for a town to be assigned the statue of a symbol of resistance under the terms set out by the modern Greek nation state?

3) The MMKH establishes patriarchal memorial hierarchies. Men who survived the execution are placed at the top—as the continuators of the Kalavrytan identity—followed by the men who died at the execution, while the women and the children who built the new Kalavryta remain in obscurity. In the course of my analysis, I record the changes I have observed throughout the years of my involvement in the field regarding gendered memorialisation of the catastrophe and the gradual shift of focus towards the mothers. In this chapter, I also present the artworks I have made with a view to rendering visible these women and children who have been obscured. In that sense, my work in that area is both inspired by and aligned with Solnit's efforts to take the focus away from the battles and the wars and give centerstage to the struggles and triumphs of those who remained in town after the end of the war (Solnit, 2004, ed. 2008: p. 121).

Finally, at the end of the chapter I turn to examine the museum's surroundings, i.e., the garden of the former school which was redesigned with the repurposing of the building and the opening of the MMKH. Using Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*, I claim that the garden of the MMKH functions as a counter-site to the museum itself, as "a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault, 1986, p.24), which replicates the patriarchal norms and at the same time engages in soft diplomacy. To exemplify this claim, I present the case of a tree-planting project initiated by a German school and endorsed by the MMKH, not without controversy. In addition, I present the background of the very long process that preceded the installation of the ramp finally rendering the MMKH accessible to wheelchair users, which I construe as a very apt metaphor for the museum's attitude when it comes to providing researchers access to its archives.

In the second chapter, taking a non-existent monument as my point of departure, I examine a myth that started being forged immediately after the catastrophe and consolidated over the years into the figure of “the good German” (Fleischer Date, Droubouki Date, Meyer Date). The myth attributes the role of savior to a Wehrmacht soldier who presumably unlocked the door of the school where the Kalavrytan women and children were rounded up, therefore sparing their lives from the fire that was blazing. After examining the inconsistencies of the testimonies claiming to substantiate the myth, I proceed with an analysis of memory politics through which I discuss which centers of interest stand to benefit and which to lose from the creation as well as the perpetuation of this myth. In the course of this analysis, I will use the term “overlapping monumentality” to describe this coexistence of memorial materialisations that occupy (parts of) the same surface, yet represent opposing memorial/monumental interests, often developed in response to each other. The “good German” figure is traced using examples from the fields of visual arts and cinema, which are analysed not as works of art per se, but as different types of media approaching the topic from an artistic point of view. Having, then, attempted to document the figure using testimonies and historical sources, and then examined its fictive configurations as well as the reception the latter had on a local level, I then move on to consider the reasons why these, often well-meaning, artistic endeavours were met with hostility by Kalavrytans. This impure (given that the “real” figure was not real to begin with) juxtaposition of fiction and reality in the case of the good German of Kalavryta is then examined alongside the theoretical formulations of Rancière (2020), Mackenzie (2020) and Liakos (2011), all of whose views converge in the notion that the real needs to be fictionalized in order to be thought. Against this background, I move on to present the case that was the starting point of this dissertation, i.e., that in order to make the kind of art the Kalavrytan community is asking for one needs to rely on a combination of history and utopia, fiction and

faction, ficting and facting, etc., and, finally, in my case, on a combination of art and anthropology.

In the course of my analysis in chapters one and two, there are frequent allusions to an alternative version endorsed by the leftwing community of Kalavryta, which comes to the surface every time the community's memory of the 1943 events is triggered. As a post-scriptum to the second chapter, taking the monument of Dinos Pavlopoulos as my point of departure, I present this alternative version of history, focusing particularly on the points of divergence between the local narrative and the one that became dominant on a national level. It should be noted that these divergences transcend the ideological differences between left and right on a local level, thus posing a more general challenge to the dominant national narrative.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the period immediately following the 1943 massacre and extending all the way up to 1952. When I first arrived in Kalavryta, this decade was basically a "lost" one, as it represented a lacuna in the continuity of the community's historical narrative, with only the image of the mourning Kalavrytan widow figuring in the collective consciousness. The toils and efforts of the women and children who found themselves living in the destroyed town during and after the Civil War were hardly ever talked about in public, as this part of local history had not been selected to figure in the narrative habitually promoted and reproduced through the usual discourse-producing channels (historiographical sources, the MMKH's narrative, monumental choices, etc.). In order to counterbalance this patriarchal focus on war and battles and to move away from the stereotypical image of the mourning widow, I reached out to the women and children who had lived in Kalavryta through the period that interested me to collect information about the organisation of everyday life in post-massacre Kalavryta. My aim, in this process, was to trace a broader, and, in my view, more representative image of

the Kalavrytan woman of that period, who was not only a mourner, but also an agent of transformation. As Butler (2004) argues, mourning relates to an agreement of a person or perhaps a community to undergo a transformation (to be submitted to a transformation). It is precisely this transformation that I sought out to trace in this chapter. The process of collecting these oral histories in conjunction with the artworks I produced in response to the stories, as well as the discussions triggered by the artworks, all contributed to a reactivation of memory over the 1943-1952 period, which had been lying dormant until now. In the new narrative that emerges following this reactivation of memory, the Kalavrytan woman is portrayed as the driving force and creator of new Kalavryta, as an Antigone-like figure resisting unjust laws, norms and policies (Butler, 2014) and shaping new conditions for herself, her loved ones and her city.

In the fifth chapter, the focus of my analysis is the monument on Kappi's hill, which was erected at the site of the massacre in order to commemorate the events of 1943. After providing a brief overview of the monument's construction history and the political purpose it has served over the years, using Sturken's and Tsiara's distinction between a monument and a memorial I argue that, in the case of the monument on Kappi's hill, these two functions are not interchangeable but rather fulfilled in a parallel manner. Further, I construe Kappi's hill monument as an incomplete work which is constantly reworked in order to reflect the Kalavrytan community's evolving needs. As a result of this process, I argue, new layers of narrative are continuously added to the monument, which render visible those parts of the Kalavrytan community that had previously remained in the shadows under a patriarchal reading of history. Finally, I present the performance I am in the process of developing together with the local theatre group, through which the memorial on Kappi's hill is reconfigured from a monument that commemorates the death of Kalavrytan men to a memorial that also

commemorates the successful struggle of the women who brought the town back to life after the catastrophe.

Methodology and positionality

During the first months of my stay as in Kalavryta, an embarrassing incident occurred at the school where I was working, which made me realise that this society rests on delicate balances, connected to hermetic silences and great tensions. From this incident, I understood that in order to be respectful towards a society that only ostensibly resembled other Greek communities I was familiar with, I had to assume the role of the silent observer.

Apart from the years I lived in Kalavryta, when I came back in 2012 for this research I never again took up permanent residence in the town. I visited Kalavryta a few times every year (four to seven) and stayed for different amounts of time, depending on the needs of what I was researching. Since initially I financed my own research, I was often supported by Kalavryta people (mainly members of the theater team), who provided accommodation and food.

The network of people I contacted to gather information started with and through the people I already had friendly relations with while living in Kalavryta, as well as my former teaching colleagues. Soon, however, as each person who gave me an interview suggested more individuals I could contact and more topics I could research, my network soon expanded. There were, also, a few Kalavrytans who approached me of their own accord. This was already the case since the beginning but more and more people reached out as the years went by and my *The Present as a Result of the Past* project became more known to the local society. After a certain point, it felt like for some younger Kalavrytans it was a relief that I could ask what they felt that they could not. On the other hand, for some older Kalavrytans, I felt their relief

in being able to share information that they had not shared with their family. They knew that with me their secrets would take on a symbolic character and not affect anybody personally.

In other cases, I felt that every time I would dig deep into certain areas – especially regarding the Civil War, given that the community is small and people had a broad sense of the topics I was working on, some individuals offered me information to counterbalance what I was learning from others at the time. With some Kalavrytans I conducted more than one interview, and with some others we collaborated for the artistic parts of the project.

The group discussions we often had in coffee shops in Kalavryta turned out to be of great importance, as contradictions and limitations, as well as commonplaces of the narrative became clear to me. Also, my presence at events related to the subject of the research was continuous and steady over the years. I regularly followed official guided tours and educational programmes referring to the catastrophe. I also attended the yearly memorial services held to commemorate the 1943 massacre. I was in constant communication with the people I worked and/or had friendly relations with throughout the period of the research (from 2012 to today). I was offered precious material from personal archives of Kalavrytans and was informed by local and online newspapers, as well as social media. Kalavrytans take history in their own hands and for that reason they constantly re-collect (Papailias 2005) historical information and documents in personal archives. At this point, it is important to mention that throughout the fifteen years of my presence in the field, I never encountered a local newspaper that does not have a direct or indirect reference to the events of 1943. Also, a significant part of my bibliography comes from local amateur historians. Last but not least, part of my methodology involved conducting artistic experiments, which I communicated to Kalavrytans (who often helped me); the results of these experiments informed my research process and feature throughout the dissertation, as I discuss below.

The theatre team of Kalavryta drew my attention since I first arrived at the town, even though they had temporally stopped performing their annual plays at that time. The members of the team, though, had strong bonds among themselves, interesting stories to tell and drew on the legacy of bringing people and concepts together within the community in a way that I found inspiring. When they started performing again, I followed both their rehearsals and activities. This close relationship with the theater team developed into a collaboration. The future exhibition of the PRP project I am planning will take place in Kalavryta in collaboration with the theater group.

Initially, the process of conducting interviews provided limited, repetitive and “safe” information because of the community’s reticence, so it took time for me to learn to formulate questions and pay attention to silences. When I started to collect information that went beyond the superficially identical narratives, I realized the importance of cross-checking everything I learned, while being very careful both about what I said and about the results I presented.

At this point, I should clarify that even though what the Kalavrytan community consists of the inhabitants of Kalavryta and a proportionally large diaspora spread around different parts of Greece and the world; and, even though I have been in close contact with members of the Kalavryta diaspora, my main focus in this research was the people living in the town of Kalavryta.

For my master's thesis, I ended up interviewing ninety-eight Kalavrytans and recording the interviews and discussions in audio, written forms and video. Some interlocutors did not want to be recorded. In the course of the entire research, I have collected over 350 interviews which I captured using the same methods. For this thesis, I use a small number of these sources and select them based on the following criteria: the information given is cross-checked and

representative and the people providing the information —the majority of whom are collectors owning personal archives of interviews, photographs, newspapers and other documents— have full control over the conditions of the interview. In short, they know when to tell me to turn off the recorder. Also, the majority of them are people who have a public say in Kalavryta. Throughout this research and the rendering of its results either through this text or through the works of art, it was important to me to preserve the secrets of the Kalavrytans and not expose their open wounds in my attempt to poke holes and let air into the suffocating spaces of silence.

A pivotal moment for this research happened in the early years when I realized that by focusing on the silences, I was making my path unclear and my results uncertain. I decided that the research process and my need to understand was more important than having impressive results. So, I started rephrasing and repeating the same questions under different conditions and making notes of the results. One may imagine the process of mapping the silences using the following scheme: take a semi-transparent paper and draw lines to demarcate a “zone of silence” depicting the specific ways in which each interviewee manages his or her difficulty to answer a specific question engaging with an area of silenced memory; then repeat the process on different semi-transparent papers for every interviewee to whom the same (or variations of the same) question were posed; then, finally, stack the papers on top of each other and let the light pass through the pack. It will then be possible to observe the fluctuating borders of the emerging “zones of silence” and see how these can give you the vocabulary to dig deeper with your question.

The artworks I made as a result of this research have a dual character. On a local level, these works mirror pieces of the silenced historical subjects that still influence the lives of the Kalavrytans and shape their relationships, although these silenced areas are taboo. The

presentation of my artworks to the local community up to 2016 took place through personal discussions with the people I worked with and through articles in the Kalavrytan newspaper *Kalavryta News* —were they were published on the occasion of the works being exhibited abroad. The texts were written by myself and addressed to the entire community. The aim of these artworks on a local level was to initiate dialogue on subjects that hadn't been discussed in the past, indirectly and while keeping in mind the complex dynamics of the local community. Opening a dialogue about these difficult topics would, it seemed to me, gradually move the boundaries of silenced areas and make room for new approaches to old problems. In this thesis, I present part of this process with the reference to the artwork *Kalavryta 2012*, which is a work that has already contributed to moving discussion within the Kalavryta community. The rest of the artworks were presented to the general public without providing sensitive information that would violate the privacy of the residents of Kalavryta.

The artworks of the PRP projects are also analyzed in the context of this research, where they address a broader audience. In this case, I aimed to include the case of Kalavryta in the global spectrum of societies that have suffered violence and injustice and bring it into dialogue with those who claim justice and reparations. When those works are presented abroad, the curatorial context in which they are included changes each time their perception from the different audiences they are shown to, which, in turn, helps me develop my research questions.

Simultaneously, exhibiting the artworks functions as an additional ethnographic reflective tool that enhances and reconfigures research through the feedback I collect. In turn, the comments and reactions of Kalavrytans following each exhibition always continuously feedback into the research.

At this point, it might be useful to mention the argument raised by Elpida Rikou (2019) while discussing "artistic research" in Greece. Rikou maintains that whether artistic or not, research itself could claim to be recognized as art, since the characteristic that makes research research and art art (and perhaps both anthropology) is taking the risk of approaching the other. In other words, presenting field research as art sets forward a process of coexistence, learning and collaboration in Kalavryta, which gives rise to an anthropological-artistic process aimed at facilitating the change that the community demands.

Finally, as part of this dissertation, in order to demonstrate how I combine anthropology and art in the case of Kalavryta, I analyze three artworks: two films, Elias Giannakakis' *Kalavryta: People and Shadows* (2014) and Dimitrios Katsantonis's *Echoes of the Past* (2021); and a discussion held on the occasion of documenta 14 in Kassel, entitled "Working Group Distomo".

Artistic Research and the Turn to Anthropology

My own choice, then, to develop a methodology blending anthropology and art was intended as an attempt to come up with a practice that "does things" —specifically, does what Kalavrytans believe cannot be done by relying on facts alone, but also what I, through my research, have come to realize cannot be done by relying exclusively on artistic practices.

What I have come to understand now is that in order to address the "need for catharsis" demanded by the local community and to respond to this quest using art or any other means possible, I needed to make sure to abide at all times by the following criteria: 1) as an artist/researcher, I have to approach my subject matter responsibly, respectfully and with care in order to avoid retraumatizing the community; 2) all information gathered in the field needs to be cross-checked with various sources and the artistic/research conclusions

submitted for commentary to representatives of different groups within the community (in terms of gender, age, class, “real” Kalavrytan or *fertos*, political convictions and family history); 3) as an artist/researcher, I need to advance through trial and error and take into consideration any reactions raised locally in response to my work; 4) the project has its own natural time, and no deadline should be forced on it due to practical considerations. Over time, the community has gradually changed its attitude vis-à-vis the topics I was researching, and this very shift has provided answers to my research questions, which would not have been supplied if I had rushed to conclusions. In fact, the way in which the local community evolves over time and interacts with the subject areas I am working on, but also with my own presence/research/artistic work has evolved into one of my key interests; 5) when it comes to exhibiting or presenting the results of my research, it is necessary to apply a certain economy of visibility; not exhibit too soon, i.e., before I have reached safe conclusions, and not exhibit unless I am certain the work will indeed contribute to the community’s process of dealing with its trauma, rather than aggravating past divisions or even giving rise to new ones; 6) after a certain point, I too adopted the secretive attitude of the Kalavrytans, bearing in mind that, at any given time, the community is only ready to see certain areas of its untold history figure into new narratives, while some others it continues to consider as best kept quiet; 7) finally, as Kalavrytans are often particular when it comes to funding sources for projects realized in Kalavryta, while looking for funding to pursue my own research, I had to make sure I would steer clear of donors or institutions whose “presence” in the town as financial contributors to my project risked being considered by some as offensive. As this excluded several potential funding sources, in the end, my only supporters during the first stages of this research were the locals themselves, who, as I mentioned, often provided food and housing for me while I was in Kalavryta doing fieldwork. Other than that, the PRP project is entirely self-funded, with

only this dissertation being covered by the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY). This was yet another factor causing this project to stretch out in time. As previously stated, I believe this was a setback which quickly turned to my advantage, as it permitted me to approach the community from the position of the observer/participant and resurface with more solid results.

For all the aforementioned reasons, from the very early stages of my PRP project I started using tools from the field of anthropology to help me understand the Kalavrytan community —the trauma in all its complexity, the tensions and divisions it gives rise to it as well as the different mechanisms Kalavrytans have developed over the years in response to it. From the very beginning, I knew that I had to tread very carefully while researching this project. But what kind of research could one conduct for an artistic work referring and addressed to a community with the aforementioned characteristics?

After a certain point, once I became aware that the focus of the project had shifted clearly towards research, I realised that it was not just the tools of anthropology, but the discipline itself that I needed in order to produce the kind of art that I feel is needed to respond to the Kalavrytan community's demand for catharsis. My approach has the intention of care, in the sense that Iliana Fokianaki (2021) assigns to the term in her text introducing the work of Margaret Kenna on Anafi (2004). In the case of the PRP project, this caring intent formed the basis for developing a caring, targeted and respectful methodology that would bring together art and anthropology in order to deliver artistic results which would abide by the same principles.

Facting and fiction

Having, then, realised that in order to address the Kalavrytan community through artworks produced using the material I had gathered and reactivate memory in a respectful way, I needed to combine fiction and reality in parts that could only be determined if the research was approached using anthropological methods. I soon realised that this need I had come to experience as urgent was aligned with a long line of contemporary thinkers who posit that the real needs to be fictionalized in order to be thought. McKenzie's (2020) suggestion, for example, that we should move beyond the categories of fact and fiction when analyzing social phenomena of the present and past, and instead employ the more active concepts of "ficting" and "facting" was a key reference for developing my methodology. After applying this methodology in Kalavryta, the conclusion I have drawn is that in order to produce a type of art capable of responding to communities dealing with trauma without re-traumatising its members, and in a way that could potentially contribute to their process of healing, one needs to strike the right balance between facting and ficting.

Note on resources and presentation of artworks

As this research project is about post-war Kalavryta, which is a period lacking in historiographical sources, oral history is my main source of harnessing information. By contrast, the rich fabric of historical resources providing the historical background to the war events are supplied in endnotes.

The reader should also bear in mind that a discussion of the artworks I produced as a result of this research is also provided throughout this dissertation. The choice of positioning the artworks within the text follows a logic of thematic relevance. In these cases, the title of the work also provides the title for the section in which the work is discussed.

Finally, I would like to note that the personal archives of the following Kalavrytans were consulted for the writing of this dissertation: Christos Foteinopoulos, Filippos Sardelianos, Dimitris Kanelopoulos, Efstathia Tzouda-Mitsonia, Efthimia Papadimitropoulou Benaki, Charilaos Ermeidis, Marios Stathis, Giorgos Dimopoulos, Fanis Papageorgiou.

Chapter 2: Kalavryta's Monument-museum: A Guided tour

Founded in 2005, the Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust (MMKH) is central to the construction of modern-day Kalavrytan identity. It is the most representative, most sanctified, most publicized and politicized monument of the 1943 massacre. Most importantly, it is an institution originally envisaged and subsequently founded by members of the community with the aim of letting the world know their story —with the word “world” here taking on different connotations depending on the level of analysis (local, national and international) and the story changing in response to the demands raised by the members of each group. As I will be showing, the MMKH is a museum that is extremely complex to describe both in terms of the narrative it puts forward and in terms of the purposes it ultimately serves. This very complexity is key in the context of this dissertation, as it was this backdrop that gave rise to my own need to combine art and anthropology in order to understand the community's demand for catharsis and possibly contribute to its members attaining it. For that reason, the anthropological study and findings presented in the course of this chapter will be accompanied by brief descriptions of the artworks I have produced addressing the same topics. In the following pages, I will discuss the Municipal Museum of the Kalavryta Holocaust (MMKH), as well as the monuments linked to it, through their presence in (or absence from) the garden that serves as its outdoors space.



Figure 2. Municipal Museum of the Kalavritan Holocaust, outside view (own picture).

The shell, the content and the context

In this sub-chapter, I will be tracing the foundation and the evolution of the MMKH, which I will be approaching not, strictly speaking, as a museum, but rather as a monument-museum. Indeed, during a meeting held in 1996 between the Ministry of Culture and members of the Kalavrytan group working towards the museum's founding (MMKH archive, 1996), the former school premises housing the museum were referred to as a "shell covering the space of the exhibition" (Manioudakis & Koumantaropoulou, 1996, p.1) This description alludes to the key role the building itself played on the day of the catastrophe, as this was the place where the women and children were rounded up while the men were led to their death. Furthermore,

the neoclassical building housing the school premises had originally been erected as part of a state programme for the construction of school buildings funded by the Greek benefactor Andreas Syngros soon after the foundation of modern Greece. All the buildings Syngros funded were subsequently attributed monumental status, and this is also the case for the school building today housing the MMKH. To be sure, this is one of the factors which prompted the Ministry of Culture and Sports's decision to issue a decree, in 1986, listing the building of the Kalavryta elementary school as a work of art and a historical monument, and henceforth placing it under state protection. Soon afterwards, a new state delegation arrived, which extended the zone of the monument to also include the area surrounding the school.

What we have here, then, is a museum, which, at its founding moment, is officially declared a national monument in a town which is itself considered a symbol of the Greek nation-state. This intricate fabric linking the stones of the building to the history of the town and the country at large is what accounts for the "shell" formulation found in the meeting's minutes, as well as for my own choice to refer to the Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust (MMKH) as a monument-museum.

As I wish to show in this chapter, the fact that this monument-museum has a triple role to serve (on a local, national and international level) renders the task of proposing a consistent narrative a very difficult one indeed. In order to explain why this is so, I will begin by tracing the museum's narrative throughout the years and will then move on to show that the different narrative approaches proposed within this "shell" define differentiated understandings of the roles the monument-museum is seen as serving. By pinpoint the changes in the museum's narrative and approach, I wish to follow the various stages of the MMKH's (re-)definition of itself, which, as I will be demonstrating, is also a very good indication of the Kalavrytan

community's efforts to invent new ways of approaching its traumatic and controversial past. Finally, I will try to show what function the MMKH serves for the local society, for Greek society and for the world at large.

My research methodology is based on participatory observation. I have been following the museum since moving to Kalavryta in 2006, that is, one year after its opening. This interest I kept intact even after moving away. I continued following the museum's news in the local press and on social media, talking about it with Kalavrytan friends and/or visiting whenever I was in town. In 2012, my observations were intensified in the context of my research-based artistic PRP project, which led me to the present research. Throughout the years, I have attended numerous guided tours led by museum staff —either in relation to my work as a local art teacher or as an individual joining different groups of visitors (from schoolchildren to politicians coming from different parts of Greece or from abroad). As a result, I have observed first-hand the slow, but steady, changes in the museum's narrative, which takes upon itself the extremely difficult task of relating Kalavryta's complex embodied history.

One of these guided visits, attended in 2019 and recorded as part of my personal archive, will serve as one of my three main reference points in the present chapter. Adopting a comparative approach, after sketching out the narrative emerging from the descriptions of the guide offering the tour on behalf of the MMKH, I will examine how this narrative relates to two documents (or set of documents) published at different moments of the museum's history. These are: the inaugural museological reports, consisting of a museological study (MMKH, 2001), an interior design report (MMKH, 1996), and a study of the exhibition spaces (MMKH, 1997); and the first guide ever published by the MMKH in 2022. In addition, a number of conversations held with members of the museum's board and interviews conducted with

people from the community on the subject of the memorial choices promoted through the selection of exhibits will also provide input for my conclusions. Again, my aim here is to explore to what extent, and towards which direction, the narrative has shifted through the years. At the end of this comparative analysis, my aim is to have shown what happens when national demands interact with local ones as well as with the global sociopolitical context; what are the resulting memorial choices; and, finally, how the above interactions affect the monument-museum itself and determine its identity.

Unfolding the museum

In the pages that follow, I will be providing a meticulous description of the exhibits and themes presented in each room. And I will be doing so for two reasons: firstly, because I believe that this monument-museum is exemplary in its attempt to achieve the impossible task I have seen pursued in all aspects of life in Kalavryta —namely, to produce a narrative that could combine the polyphonous and often contradictory demands for commemoration raised on a local, national, and transnational level; and, secondly, because such detailed description will enable me to better frame the various re-conceptualisations of the museum which the “shell” monument has hosted through the years.

The MMKH consists of four distinct rooms separated by a corridor, each of which develops a different theme. The corridor is connected with the main entrance of the building, which remains permanently shut. This was the door through which the women and children exited the building on the day of the catastrophe, and the fact that it remains closed serves as a symbol of the abrupt break marked in the life of the community. In a meeting held between a Kalavrytan delegation tasked with determining the configuration of the exhibition space and the Ministry of Culture and Sports, it was mentioned that there was also a practical reason to

keep the door shut: to limit the choices of the visitors and determine a specific flow for viewing the exhibition (MMKH archive, 1996). It was, then, both for practical and for historical reasons that the entrance to the museum was placed at the right wing of the building, previously housing the classrooms where the men and boys aged over 13 were rounded up before being led to the place of their execution.

In all four rooms, there are videos with testimonials and archival material addressing a different theme. All narrators have embodied knowledge of the 1943 events. The main focus is on male survivors, with the women's presence being limited to the widows who lost male family members during the massacre. There is only interior lighting and the walls are painted dark red, while the surface of the floor is covered in black. There is a lot of text displayed on black frames placed on the walls, so that visitors can have access to the historical background. The first room, dedicated to prewar Kalavryta, provides an overview of the town's sociocultural and economic profile prior to the catastrophe, with particular emphasis being placed on the organization of school life and on the notion that prewar Kalavryta was not a simple village, but rather an important cultural and commercial center, boasting both an elementary and a secondary school, as opposed to smaller villages in its periphery. Representative school objects and photos depicting a classroom tell of a vibrant educational environment. The photo installation portrays aspects of that thriving school milieu, with the school staff figuring in the pictures. The member of the museum's staff guiding the tour stresses the fact that many of the teachers and students were subsequently executed. Predictably, most of the depicted students are male, as, at the time, in Kalavryta and elsewhere in Greece, girls had limited access to education. Girls usually went to school until the age of ten, with social class determining whether or not they would continue past that age. The schools of Kalavryta were particularly desirable for the surrounding region, and students from nearby *kalavrytochoria*

[καλαβρυτοχώρια] used to either commute on a daily basis or move to Kalavryta to attend school. It should also be noted that, among the museum board members and staff, as well as among the “memory custodians” of the Kalavrytan past, many were teachers themselves. This could perhaps account, at least partly, for the exhibition’s obstinate spotlighting of prewar Kalavryta’s school life.

Exceptionality is another trait this first room communicates to the visitor: Kalavryta held an exceptional status in early 20th century Greece, as a town at once culturally developed and economically robust. The narrative would seem to indicate that the pivotal status of the town as a symbol of the nation went hand-in-hand with visibility and privilege. The economic growth of prewar Kalavryta is evidenced through material objects, printed matter, business and legal documents, as well as photographs. The condition of the material presented, i.e., whether it is burnt or not, appears to be deemed secondary compared to the wealth of information communicated. The evidence creates the image of a bustling commercial, business and tourist center which attracted visitors and businessmen from across the country and whose residents enjoyed a standard of life similar to that of residents of big urban centers: quarries, businesses, advanced technological equipment, medical services and touristic development. The town’s technological infrastructure, its thriving banking sector, as well as its cultural activities, are accentuated, with references to the town’s philharmonic orchestra, the dress code and overall lifestyle. As a result, prewar Kalavryta is presented as a “civilized” and affluent town. One thing that is repeatedly highlighted throughout the exhibition is that the “disaster” that happened in Kalavryta is not limited to the executions, the pillaging and the fires that consumed the town, but also extends to the sudden break in the town’s development. The guide giving the 2019 tour also, for example, insists on the fact that young men had to stop working to join the army,

that the local industry was paralysed and that the male population—and therefore also their unborn offspring who would inherit and develop the family businesses—was killed during the catastrophe, thus dramatically changing the living conditions and forcing the locals to migrate. “It's not just the execution, but all this development that had happened before, and which could not continue”, the guide notes.

At the last part of this first room, just before moving on to the next part of the exhibition, the guide informs the visitors that the documents displayed in this section date from the years of the occupation. Introducing the theme of the next room, these documents provide information about the impact of Whermacht's occupation of Kalavryta. Among the exhibits are the instructions communicated to the local population by the occupying forces, many of which amounted to strict warnings specifying that the occupiers were not fighting against the Greeks, but against the communists, and encouraging the local population to “take the hand stretched out” to them. These warnings were issued against anyone actively organizing guerilla fighting or supporting the guerillas.

Then the guide and the group of visitors leave the first room to enter the second one, which, as he states, is dedicated to the period of the Italian and German occupation and to the Resistance. There is a video showing footage of the German invasion, which prompts the tour guide's statement that the images were captured by the German forces themselves who had the technological means for this type of documentation. Interestingly, the only reference to the collaboration of Greeks with the German occupying forces is the word “δωσίλογοι” (i.e., traitors), which appears just once on the wall text with no extra information supplied regarding the nature and aftermath of that betrayal. In this way, traitors are placed at a safe distance from this community.

The fact that the building served as a concentration camp during the Italian occupation is mentioned in the text of a museum caption, though, crucially, without material evidence (I will return to this point later in this chapter). Then the narrative moves to the capitulation of the Italian army in September 1943 and the following situation, in which German occupying forces quickly took control of the entire Greek territory. Wehrmacht troops are depicted waving the swastika on the Acropolis, next to images of the 1941-1942 famine in Athens.⁴ At this point, the guide returns to the argument regarding the halt of the economic growth, which is again cited as the massacre's corollary, to mark the contrast between the affluent prewar community and the large parts of the population brought to a state of starvation.

Next to the caption notifying visitors of the previous use of the building as a concentration camp, there is the first reference to the Resistance. The tour guide explains that this was initiated by those parts of the Greek army that did not follow the Greek government to the Middle East and then refers to the different groups active on Greek soil and the operations they mounted against the occupiers. The objects serving as exhibits to prove the guerillas' activity in the region include: the local Resistance flag; clippings from newspapers circulated by the German occupation forces and addressed to the Greeks with the aim of laying down the rules and the accepted code of conduct (especially with regard to the guerillas); newspapers and pamphlets of the Greek Resistance; annotated maps created by the British keeping track of the battles between the Italian troops and the Resistance, as well as some other objects. The next set of objects the narrator zooms in on are a series of maps tracking "Operation Kalavryta", which include German estimates of the guerillas active on the ground.

⁴ As historian Mark Mazower notes: "The total population of Greece was at least 300,000 less by the end of the war than it would otherwise have been, as a result of food scarcity." (Mazower, 1993: 41)

At this point, the visitor is informed about the battle of Kerpini held three months earlier, on the 16th and 17th of October 1943, 6 kilometers away from Kalavryta, which led to the capture of 80 German soldiers. This battle is construed as the background of “Operation Kalavryta”. Also, in this second room hang the “pictures of the aiders and abettors so that people can learn and remember who waged war against Greece and Europe: Hitler and Mussolini”. There are also pictures of several military leaders of the German army who took part in the operation, together with their biographies “so we can have the full picture of who was convicted of the crime and who was not.” Before leaving the second room, the narrative returns once more to the battle of Kerpini, again presented as the background to the vindictive fury that led to the catastrophe, while yet more maps show other areas in Greece which were targeted by the Axis forces. The guide notes that mountainous areas suffered the highest death toll in the country, as opposed to, for example, the islands where the geography is not conducive to guerilla activity.

As the guide starts making his way to the third room, he crosses the corridor leading to the blocked entrance. There, he stops in front of photos depicting monuments in nearby *kalavytochoria*, which were also struck by the murderous acts of the Wehrmacht during “Operation Kalavryta”, and explains to the group that, at this spot, the floor is left in its original, burned state to commemorate the fire that had engulfed the building on the day of the disaster. In addition, he informs visitors that the German command never issued an order to murder the women and children rounded up in the building, but flames arrived at the school from nearby houses. This point too, as will become evident later, is significant for the interests of this dissertation.

Then it is onto the third room, which is dedicated to informing the visitors about what happened in Kalavryta during and after the executions. The first place to which the guide takes the group is the execution point, known today as Kappi's hill, which is represented in the museum through a photo installation documenting the various steps of the hill's memorialization. All visitors to the museum, whether they have opted to take a guided tour or not, will immediately notice upon entering this third room the shift towards a more theatrical approach in presenting the exhibits. While in the first and second room the shot was wide, and the exhibits posited alongside each other mainly with a view to providing either a nostalgic background (first room) or a zoomed-out perspective (second room) of the historical context, here the lens draws nearer, and the visitor is called on to look at the victims up close. There are photos of the town in ruins in the immediate and not so immediate aftermath of the disaster, while personal effects of the victims (for example, clothes pierced through with bullets, money, hats and ID cards) figure in various installations. The guide draws the group's attention to an installation where a large number of watches previously belonging to several of the executed men are heaped together in a pile, while the watch of the execution survivor Georgios Georgantas is displayed at a distance from the rest, alongside exhaustive information regarding its make and history.

Then the lens of the exhibition, as well as the gaze of the guide, stops in front of another installation: this consists of a wall-size picture figuring three women standing in front of one of the makeshift graves dug after the massacre, some blankets used by the women to carry the dead from the execution point to the graveyard, as well as two digging tools indicated as having been used for the making of the graves (I will return to the question of the digging tools later in this chapter). This installation is by far the largest in the room, as the guide himself notes

when he describes this piece depicting the women burying the executed men as the dramatic climax of the story the MMKH was set up to commemorate. Among the exhibits are also German helmets (one of which damaged by a shell) and German weapons, mostly German artillery seized by the guerillas following small-scale operations mounted against the Wehrmacht. The guide points to a specific weapon, a firearm the MMKH acquired from a museum in Dresden, which was exchanged for a coat pierced through with bullets. In the same room, there are also filmed interviews of a number of male survivors of the execution and of women who came out of the school, with the accounts focusing mostly on the massacre, the burial of the bodies and, more broadly, the day after; pictures of the German army entering Kalavryta and others showing the town burned to the ground. Finally, also displayed are objects and utensils found in the ruins, which the women and children used at the beginning of their new life. Finally, one interesting comment the guide makes concerns a burned gospel which was in the church on the day of the catastrophe. This gospel, he says, could have been placed in the museum but, in the end, it was decided that it would instead be exhibited in the Kalavryta cathedral on the central square. As a result, the space provided for it in the museum was filled with a number of German reports listing the money, cattle, goods, valuables and number of lives the Wehrmacht army took during Operation Kalavryta, but also the losses the German side had suffered during clashes with the guerillas.

The fourth and final room of the museum is dedicated to the approximately 700 hundred men who were executed across the Kalavryta region, as well as to the survivors who made it out of Kappi's hill alive. A wall-to-wall installation to which the tour guide and all museum publications and representatives refer to as "the pantheon", presents a "patchwork", as the guide describes it, of the victims and survivors. Among the photos figuring in the installation, some are mere grey shadows with no recognizable traits or features, which are

there to act as spatial reminders for those men whose pictures it was not possible to recover. In the adjacent wall, the visitor can read all the names of the men and boys figuring in the pantheon—in black for the executed, in red for the thirteen survivors. The guide also mentions that interactive monitors have been added to the room in order to honour the wish of the families—who agreed to part with rare photos of their loved ones salvaged among the ruins—to ensure that photos and names are accurately paired to each other. Using these monitors, the visitors can click and acquire information about each executed man, but also about his lineage.

The room also hosts pictures and texts relating to those parts of the Nuremberg trial which are linked to the Kalavryta massacre. The tour guide insists on the fact that the first mayor of the town, who was one of the 13 survivors, traveled to Nuremberg to testify as part of the Greek delegation, which included another five witnesses from martyr cities across the country. Among the exhibits, there are pictures of Wehrmacht officers convicted in Nuremberg, only two among whom had been stationed in Greece and could therefore be linked, directly or indirectly, to the operation in Kalavryta. The guide stresses that, despite the mayor's testimony, the court ruled that the intervention in Kalavryta was performed as part of legitimate retaliatory measures. He then draws the visitors' attention to a document containing a statement by a German officer, who claims that the massacre was a "military operation" sparked by the locals' refusal to accept the *de facto* occupation, and their forming resistance groups and/or assisting such groups operating in the area. From this perspective, the German officer goes on to claim, this operation was a military one and not one mounted against civilians. "That was the argument," the guide concludes. The only person convicted for the Kalavryta massacre was Helmut Felmy, despite the fact that he was only informed about

the operation after it had been completed. Felmy was sentenced to 15 years in prison (Meyer, 2010).

Alongside these installations, there are monitors screening photographic material from the first memorial services held in the cemetery and in town, as well as pictures depicting Kalavryta and the surrounding villages in ruins. The last exhibit the guide discusses is an installation placed at the center of the room, a work symbolizing the end of Nazism and its ideology, which need to be “buried deep in the ground so that it may never again rise to the surface”. The installation consists of a black box whose top side is sealed off with transparent glass and encloses a Nazi flag partly covered with earth. Finally, it should also be noted that in this room the visitor can explore the exhibits under the imposing musical score of the Italian composer Tomaso Albinoni.

This room brings to a close the main part of the exhibition. In order to reach the exit, the visitor is directed to the museum’s shop, where s/he can purchase one of the MMKH’s numerous publications and oral history DVDs. Significantly, the set up does not seem to prioritize the typical sale of souvenirs or other types of merchandise, but rather to focus on pursuing the educational character engrained both in the building’s history and in its dual role as a monument and a museum. Throughout the years, the museum has invested in its educational character through programs it has implemented either unilaterally or through a series of collaborations, while part of its archive has been digitized and rendered accessible to researchers using a grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Research findings

In the previous part, I described the exhibits displayed in every room of the monument-museum and the narrative put forward through the layout of the exhibition on the basis of a recorded guided tour dating from 2019. In this part, I will be looking at how this narrative has shifted throughout the years on the basis of a comparative examination of the inaugural museological study, the description provided above, the museum's website (available in Greek, English and German) and publicationsⁱⁱ, as well as the bilingual guide the MMKH published in 2022. In addition, using findings from my own research on the field, I will be attempting to first pinpoint and then interpret the reasons guiding these modifications.

One background note before I continue: in 2021, while preparing this section of my dissertation, I contacted the museum and asked to be given access to the archives (minutes from meetings, revisions in the museological study, interviews, etc.) documenting the changes the exhibition had—obviously, to me—undergone throughout the years. The response I received was that, with the exception of some minor changes effectuated in 2017, the museological study of Manioudakis, A. & Koumantaropoulou, M. (2001). had not been revised. As a result, the findings I will be presenting here are based on my own observations and were not developed in consultation with the museum.

According to the 1997 inaugural museological study (MMKH archive, 1997), the setup of the MMKH's interior space and its separation into different spaces is intended to rouse a “cinematic feel” and create an experience that will be cut off from the environment of contemporary Kalavryta. The curatorial strategy sets up a linear narrative aimed at guiding the audience through the historical flow of events: from the pre-war period and all the way up to the final act of the “drama”, i.e., the extermination of the male population and the destruction of the town. Furthermore, again according to the study, a pervading principle that needs to traverse the structuring of all rooms is that “the Kalavrytan Holocaust is not an event that is

important only on a local level, but one with an international dimension, which is significant for understanding WWII as a whole” (MMKH, 1996). In other words, the MMKH’s educational and cultural objectives address not only the Greek audience but also the entire world.

First room

As before, I will approach the exhibition spatially and will begin my comparative analysis in the first room. In this room, the museological study states, the visitor can see traces of the joyful, affluent and cultured community of prewar Kalavryta. The town is presented as a cultural and commercial center with a European air. The clothes of the people presented in pictures show clear signs of Western influence, with beautiful women depicted in domestic settings wearing expensive fabrics tailored in accordance to the Western European trends of the time (for example frills and hats). In local historiography, oral testimonies as well as in the museum’s publications, there are multiple references to the balls the locals used to throw, where people danced to European classic and contemporary airs performed by the local philharmonic orchestra.

In a key document I retrieved from the museum’s archive, i.e., the minutes of a meeting held between the Ministry of Culture and the museum’s initial board (MMKH archive, 1996) in which the foundations of what was to become the MMKH were laid, it is stated that the Ministry has asked to collect artefacts from prewar Kalavryta that attest to the “cultured” status of that community. The objects presented in this room previously figured in local homes. Acquiring them for the museum’s collection was by no means an easy task, as their Kalavrytan owners considered the very few objects salvaged from the disaster precious heirlooms with a high sentimental value.

Prewar Kalavryta was a community with acute class divisions (Gouseti, 2013).⁵ Giorgos Koutsouris' book *Kalavryta ta palia, ta axechasta* [The old, unforgettable Kalavryta] republished by the MMKO in 2010, provides ample testimony to this fact, while practicing the type of nostalgia Svetlana Boym (2001) describes as a recollection of a past that can be turned into myth or as "a longing to return home despite the possibility that the home no longer exists". During the years of the financial crisis, I noticed a change of course when it comes to the dominant narrative regarding the town's past, which was not limited to the museum's exhibition and publications, but was instead widespread in the community. The aforementioned image of a town bathing in Western culture is supplemented with elements celebrating local traditions. For example, the philharmonic orchestra is portrayed as an ensemble playing not only waltz, classical and contemporary European scores, but also local folk songs and traditional music. Elder Kalavrytans remember that the philharmonic orchestra, already active since 1926, would typically play traditional Kalavrytan dances, but also tango, waltzes and foxtrot, which locals would learn under the guidance of a dance teacher (Foteinopoulos, 2004, p.22). Furthermore, the attendees at these balls are now also described as drinking local wine, in addition to European-style beer. The above image would seem to corroborate Rodakis' (1999) claim that prewar Kalavryta was a privileged community, the vast majority of whose members was sympathetic to the king. While before the focus was on the Western lifestyle the old Kalavrytans enjoyed, the MMKH guide published in 2022 describes prewar Kalavryta as a community in which "tradition meets the urban way of life" (MMKH 2022: 26).

⁵ Interview with Efstathia Tsouda, 10/4/2019, Athens.

What is more, as previously mentioned, the inaugural museological study portrayed prewar Kalavryta as a peaceful, “joyous” and “cultured” community, a major commercial and cultural center much like any other town in Western Europe and therefore innocent of any radicalism later assigned to it. Indeed, when I first moved to Kalavryta, it seemed particularly striking to me that the locals would refer to prewar Kalavryta as “little Switzerland”. Along with the representation described above, I read into this description an agonizing attempt to communicate the town’s position of neutrality in the conflict the country would become embroiled in during World War II and its aftermath.

However, by 2019, the MMKH’s staff guiding the visitors through the collection would start to interpret the town’s past glory somewhat differently: instead of insisting on the image of a benevolent community that did not deserve what it had coming (as per the museum’s pre-crisis narrative), the guide places emphasis on Kalavryta’s actual and potential economic growth and on the fact that the catastrophe brought it to a sudden halt. In my view, this shift of perspective is a product of the financial crisis and of the criticism arriving in Greece from various EU outlets portraying the state and its citizens as unable to achieve growth due to poor economic management.

Second room

The second room, as the reader will remember, is dedicated to the period of the Italian and German occupation and to the Resistance. Before moving on to examine how the MMKH’s narrative on this subject has changed throughout the years, I would like to mention an important piece of background information. At the very early stages of the museum’s inception, the historical and archival material the founding board submitted to the Ministry as part of their original application seeking permission to found a museum in Kalavryta was the

personal archive of Dimitris Kanelopoulos. Kanelopoulos was a *simazohtari* [συμμαζωχτάρι] who came to live in Kalavryta as a young boy and later on married a woman from Kalavryta. Although a forester by profession, he dedicated his life to conducting research on the Kalavryta massacre. From the outset, a key objective of the museum was for the archive to be enriched with supplementary material in order to encourage and foster historical research. Following the opening of the museum, the MMKH's archive has continued to grow. Yet, despite the extroverted attitude the monument-museum exhibits towards the world, its archives seem to be shrouded under a veil of secrecy —much like most discussions regarding the town's history, which Kalavrytans prefer to conduct behind closed doors. This culture of secrecy is also prominent within the museum's board, where decisions are kept equally close to its members and are often the result of extended negotiations and, once materialized, often subject to reactions from the local society.

The Resistance banner added to MMKH's collection in 2017, which the visitor can find in the second room of the museum, was a prime example of such decision. Some members of the board objected to the banner's being exhibited in the museum⁶ as they saw the legitimization it offered to the Resistance as incompatible with a museum commemorating the Kalavrytan disaster. This line of thinking is linked to the argument that the guerillas are mainly to blame for what happened in 1943. Traces of the ambivalence surrounding this decision can still be detected in the museum's treatment of the subject. For example, although the 2022 catalogue (MMKH 2022: 245) ascribes the making of the banner to young women from the nearby village of Achladia, with the published journals of the head of the EAM resistance in Peloponnese, Captain Michos (MMKH 2018), cited as the source for this information, there is

⁶ Interview with G.K., 17/05/2018, Kalavryta.

no mention of the young women in the exhibition. It should be noted that the publication of Captain Michos' notebooks and the addition of the banner were in fact parallel decisions, as they were both taken in the same period. It could, then, be surmised, that the 2022 catalogue's more confident embracing of the Resistance mirrors the monument-museum's intentions as concerns the narrative's future direction. If this is the case, then the reference to the young women is itself not without significance. A key development in this regard, it seems to me, is the fact that, in 2016, two professional museologists were added to the museum's team following a widely circulated job advertisement. This marks an important shift compared to the previous situation, when all managerial and curatorial decisions were covered by local teachers and the municipal staff.

To provide background to the aforementioned reactions, I would like to turn to a book the MMKH published in 2008, entitled *"A House for our Heroes: An attempt to Approach the Tragedy in Kalavryta"*. Combining text, photographic and archival material, this publication (which came out both in English and in Greek) provides an overview of the historical events the museum was built to commemorate. During that period, there was a general tendency to present the executed men as heroes. This, however, turned out to be short-lived, as it sparked an awkward comparison with the heroes of the Greek revolution. According to official historiography, the Greek rebellion against the Ottomans began right here in Kalavryta, when the rebels raised the "banner of the revolution" at the nearby Agia Lavra Monastery which figured the official motto of the Hellenic Republic: "freedom or death" [ελευθερία ή θάνατος]ⁱⁱⁱ. This dilemma is engraved in the minds of Greek citizens since the early years of their life and is also referenced in the Greek national anthem, entitled "Hymn to Freedom" [Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν], which also dates from the period of the Greek War of Independence.

Kalavryta, therefore, holds a unique position in the Greek imaginary due to its status as

a double symbol of the nation. On the one hand, the aforementioned link to the embryonic stages of the Greek state is congruent with the connotations of national pride; on the other hand, the town's complete destruction during WWII commemorated in the monument-museum links it to a darker page of Greek history.

Prior to the war, the Greek nation-state had invested considerably in the symbolization of the town as part of its nation-building process, thus assigning to Kalavryta the exceptional status it has enjoyed on a national level from the founding of the Hellenic Republic in 1830 and all the way up to the beginning of WWII (Pavlopoulos, 2018). In the aftermath of WWII, however, the process of attempting to commemorate—on a national level—what happened in Kalavryta in 1943 has been long, slow and subject to continuous revisions (Pavlopoulos, 2018). This was due to the reverberating echo of the Greek Civil War, which, in turn, resonated with the dynamics of the Cold War.^{iv} After the end of the Civil War in 1949, the victorious right-wing powers proceeded to a further demonization of the second wave of the *antartiko* (guerilla warfare), which they linked to resistance activity during WWII. In order to achieve this, the first and second phase of the *antartiko* had to be bundled together, often in an oversimplifying way, so as to produce a homogenized leftwing enemy against whom post-WWII right-wing governments could be positioned. This strategy put governments in an awkward situation, as they now had to figure out how to combine the reputation of Kalavryta as a stronghold of the Resistance (subsequently considered as a burden based on the post-Civil War dynamics mentioned above) and the long-established image of the area as the cradle of modern Greece which sparked the 1821 revolution. In other words, Kalavryta posed a problem for post-Civil War Greek governments because it was linked in the collective consciousness, with a “good” resistance it could not do without (used as a symbol of the nation) and a “bad” resistance it wanted silenced (EAM stronghold). In this context, the previous image of Kalavryta and of the

Helmos Mountain as places begetting resistance against conquerors of any kind was no longer acceptable, as it would result in an endorsement and even a heroization of the leftwing-led resistance fighters who were active in the area during WWII.

Historically speaking, this attempt at creating a homogenized image of the Resistance as communist-led stumbles on yet another problem. As Voglis (2010) notes, even though there were battles among different resistance groups during the occupation, these events have never been recorded, as doing so would mean touching upon the thorny issue of the collaboration between the Greek authorities on the ground and the occupying forces, therefore risking to expose the trauma which informs, markedly yet covertly, the post-WWII Greek national identity. On a local level, Sardelianos confirms that clashes took place between different armed Greek groups in the wider area of Kalavryta, tracing their starting point to the autumn of 1943.⁷ All these instances, prove that the historical juncture affecting Kalavryta right before the disaster was far more complex than the version presented in the museum's narrative, which, it should be borne in mind, for many years, was aligned to the official historiography written by the right-wing winners of the Civil War.

In the national consciousness, Kalavryta was already famous for hosting the *lavaró* banner of the Revolution that had helped forge this consciousness. As a result, presenting the banner of the Resistance within the same geographical radius, would indirectly link it to the banner of the Revolution, thus adding covert connotations of heroism. There was only one way to get out of this conundrum, and that was silence. As opposed to what was the case before WWII, in the years immediately succeeding the Civil War, Kalavryta was no longer the focus of national celebrations or presented as the heroic symbol of the nation (Pavlopoulos, 2018). As

⁷ Interview with Filippos Sardelianos, 19/9/2019, Kalavryta.

I will be showing later in this dissertation, for a good number of years Kalavryta was simply laid aside and forgotten by Greek central governments on account of the aforementioned complexities. In my opinion, this abrupt change inflicted on the Kalavrytan identity creates yet another layer of trauma to the local community.

The above instance is congruent with the museum's overall attitude towards the Resistance, as evidenced through its curatorial decisions over the years. The position moves from a general tendency to limit its presence within the museum to a new phase inaugurated shortly after the financial crisis. In recent years, some key objects associated with the Resistance (such as the banner and the printing press on which the guerillas published the outlawed newspaper *Eleftherotis* were added to the collection and the narrative has shifted towards a legitimization of the Resistance. This is also evidenced through the tour guide's remark that the soldiers who did not manage to follow the Greek government and the rest of the Greek army to the Middle East stayed back and organized the citizens into armed guerillas. Another example is the publication of the MMKH's first printed museum catalogue in 2022, which highlights the pivotal role of the Resistance during WWII and goes so far as to include an EAM-ELAS document "urging Italian soldiers to join the national resistance". For my part, I do not remember seeing this document exhibited in the MMKH at any point. Neither did I find it on display during my last visit in 2022. In my view, the fact that it figures in the 2022 catalogue is a result of an article that appeared in a local newspaper, written by the local historiographer Filippos Sardelianos in 2021. I will discuss this article extensively in the second chapter of this thesis.

However, it is important to note that, despite this gradual shift in the museum's attitude vis-a-vis the Resistance, the leftwing community of Kalavryta still deems that there are aspects of the town's history that are not mentioned in the museum, even though they are

directly linked to the massacre. For example, according to the leftwing reading of history, in the summer of 1943 Greece was split into two different countries: occupied Greece, consisting mainly of big urban centers and the mainland; and free Greece, which covered various mountainous areas across the country, including in central Peloponnese and the Kalavryta region. Even though this is a piece of information that can shed ample light on Wehrmacht's motivation for launching "Operation Kalavryta", to this day, the MMKH has chosen not to include it in the museum's narrative.

Nonetheless, Kalavryta did experience the innovative sociopolitical program implemented throughout "free Greece" by the guerillas (Sardelianos 2022). The latter included: the operation of a self-organized school system, a wide range of cultural events such as theatre performances, as well as holding (on April 23 and April 30, 1944) the first elections in Greek history that gave women the vote. In this ballot, the "free Greeks" were also called upon to elect the members of a number of people's courts that were set up in various villages across Greece. In Kalavryta, these courts were held in a *kalavrytochori* called Sigouni, which also hosted the Sigouni concentration camp [Στρατόπεδο Συγκέντρωσης Σιγουνίου]. At the Sigouni Concentration Camp, EAM-ELAS held people accused of collaborating with the German occupier or of developing anti-communist activity. It is reported, though, that there were also individuals who ended up in the camp for unspecified reasons (Palaiologopoulos, 2004). Many of the prisoners were executed, though I have not managed to gather data concerning the precise number. The building that was indicated to me as the Sigouni Concentration Camp is not currently accessible. It looks abandoned. Reportedly, the premises were used during several parliamentary elections. the Sigouni camp is a taboo subject for the local society, so when I started asking questions about its operation several of the elders entrusted with safeguarding local memory were displeased. Younger people, on the other hand, seemed

interested to find out more, as they themselves have not been given access to this information⁸. The existence of this camp is another notable source of trauma in the common memory of the Kalavrytan society. The reason why I am mentioning this here is not because I wish to argue the point that this piece of information should have been integrated in the monument-museum's narrative, but rather to show how high the stakes are when it comes to decisions linked to the existence and operation of the Resistance, as in the case of the banner.

Roughly in the same period in which the banner of the Resistance was added to the second room, another exhibit was removed altogether from the MMKH. This was the installation of the "Madonnas", i.e., the Virgin Mary icons given to children by Italian soldiers during the occupation. Those children, among whom were also some of the founders of the monument-museum, often report feeling grateful to the Italians for handing out scraps of food to them. The Madonnas' installation consolidated the imprint of this recollection within the community's shared memory. Outside the museum, these memories are often contrasted to others involving German soldiers, who, according to testimonies, would reportedly kick the begging children and prefer to throw away their leftovers, rather than give them to the community⁹. This nostalgia glosses over the violence of the Italian army mentioned by the guerilla supporter Kiki Papandreou-Skoura in her own testimony (figuring in the MMKH's collection of testimonies *Kravgji* [The Scream] [2010, p. 165]), setting up a contrast between the "good" Italians and the extremely violent Germans (Doumanis 2010).

In my view, this juxtaposition picks up on another exhibit presented in the first room, namely the translated German instructions handed out to Greeks during the occupation.

⁸ Interview with Toula Spiliotopoulou, 22/10/2015, Sigouni.

⁹ Interview with Giorgos Dimopoulos, 10/02/2013, Kalavryta.

There, the visitor can read the occupying forces stating that their target were not Greek civilians but the communists and further declaring that they would not harm anyone unless provoked. It seems to me that the monument-museum's choice to monumentalize the kindness of the Italians towards the children links, in an indirect way, to the argument that the Germans were responding to the provocation of the partisans who were holding members of their battalion hostage. In that sense, the presence of the Madonnas was incompatible with that of the Resistance banner. Placing these two exhibits side by side in the same room would mean having to accommodate contradictory readings of the disaster: on the one hand, the dominant view that the partisans were to blame for what befell the innocent, law-abiding Kalavrytans who had done nothing wrong to provoke the occupier; and, on the other hand, the leftwing view that both the Italians and the Germans were conquerors who had to be sent away.

One last point regarding the building's Italian connection: earlier in this chapter, we heard the tour guide draw the visitors' attention to a wall text mentioning that this building once served as a concentration camp where the Italian occupiers kept the Greek communists and guerillas. The decision to place this inscription on the wall was part of the same cluster that led to the removal of the Madonna icons and the display of the Resistance banner. Although the original museological report does contain a reference to the Italian use of the building, the first time I recall seeing or hearing this information in the museum was following the installation of this new inscription in 2017. Similarly, even though the aforementioned inaugural report listed among the reasons proving the building's historical significance the fact that the eighty prisoners from the Battle of Kerpini, held on 16 and 17 October 1943, were also kept here for a few nights, there were no references to this effect either in the form of physical evidence placed in the museum or in that of information given to visitors during the tours.

In my opinion, the MMKH's decision to keep silent about this page in the building's history was part of the same attempt to accentuate the innocence of the Kalavrytan population, which, as we have seen, was its main narrative thread in the first years of its operation. Interestingly, the museum's catalogue published in 2022 not only mentions both these uses of the former school complex, but also presents them as landmark moments determining its identity. Finally, it should be noted here that when the inaugural museological study was elaborated, Greece was ruled by the socialist party PASOK. In my opinion, the fact that there was this delay in implementing the suggestions of the museological study was a case of the local population and its then dominant ideology asserting itself over the national narrative of the time, which was more sympathetic to the Resistance due to the socialists being in power.

Like any museum, at the moment of its establishment, this new monument-museum had to determine its scope. As in any museum, it is normal for this scope to have undergone some changes along the way. In my view, in the case of the MMKH, each one of these changes was prompted by, but also ridden with, the same difficulties that keep emerging every time this community tries to tell its story. On the one hand, there is the shifting national narrative, which is politically determined and reflects the view of history held by central governments. On the other hand, there is the traumatic experience of the Civil War which renders it extremely difficult for Kalavrytans to revisit the 1943 events without reawakening the divisions and traumas of the Civil War past.

Let us now turn to the "pictures of the aiders and abettors" and of other German officers whom we heard the tour guide say were placed on the wall "so that people can learn and remember who were the people who waged war against Greece and Europe" and "have the full picture of who was convicted of the crime and who wasn't". Bearing in mind that, to

this date, not a single person has stood trial for the mass killings in Kalavryta (Fleischer, 2012: 77), it could be argued that this installation is, in effect, a “wall of shame”. By putting on display the faces of the perpetrators who have gone unpunished and listing the crimes they have committed not only in Kalavryta, but also elsewhere in the world, the community seeks to dispense justice in its own right and of its own initiative.

Before leaving this room, I would like to comment on an exhibit that for me is particularly striking: the museum uses archival material furnished by the occupier, which it tacitly accepts as the most germane for accurately depicting the historical events. This decision appears even more striking if one considers that this material is exhibited in the same room as the aforementioned “wall of shame”, in which the conqueror is discredited and therefore deprived of any authority. I believe that there is another way of interpreting this choice. In the context of the cinematic approach adopted by the MMKH (let us remember the references to the “cinematic feel” the MMKH aspires to transmit to the viewer), the archival material is brought in to serve as evidence in an imaginary trial set up for the benefit of the visitor, who is called on to condemn the German army and perpetrator of the depicted crime.

Corridor

The corridor of the museum is the first moment in the monument-museum’s narration when Kalavryta enters in conversation with other villages in the region. Until now, the town was presented as the commercial center of an area that had not previously been placed in focus. The pictures of the monuments erected in other *kalavrytochoria* to commemorate those killed by the Wehrmacht does precisely that. Continuing the documentation of the changes effectuated within the collection, one notes that another thing that has changed compared to the 2019 tour is the floor. Earlier in this chapter, the guide was quoted as saying that only a

part of the corridor floor has been left uncovered to remind the visitor of the fire that had once consumed parts of the building. This is now true for the entire monument-museum.

In the corridor of the MMKH, we also come upon the closed door, which, as mentioned earlier, has been symbolically sealed off to mark the passage between the old town and the new Kalavryta into which the women and children exited following the disaster. One could argue that this sealed door is an oblique reference to Hagia Sofia, thus linking the town to the legend of the Hagia Sofia priest and its emancipatory content. According to this legend, when the Turks conquered Istanbul, the priest holding Mass in Aghia Sofia had just passed by the altar door, which miraculously turned into a wall. Once Istanbul returns to Greek hands, the legend goes, the wall will come crashing down by itself and the priest will be able to finish the Mass^v. This link adds yet another layer to the collection's recurrent trope for a justice that could/should be served in the future.

Third room

In my view, this is the room in which the cinematic feel of the museum is the most vivid and an attempt is made to instill in the viewer an embodied memory of the 1943 events. Depicting the different stages in the monumentalization of Kappi's hill is one of the key curatorial concerns of this room, as manifested by the amount of space allocated to the photos documenting the monumental interventions to the hill. The goal here is to conceptually link the MMKH to the physical space where the massacre took place. This curatorial decision communicates with and further stresses the monumentalization of the path that the massacred men took on that day.

Since the MMKH first opened its doors to the public, this room has hosted various personal affects formerly belonging to the massacred men, as well as an installation of watches. As the reader will remember, the latter juxtaposed the watches of the executed with the watch of Georgios Georgantas, which was placed a few meters apart. Over the years, this installation has been enriched with more information: for example, a QR code that visitors can scan and be directed to a page providing extensive information about the watch's history. The same is true about the other exhibits in this room (German presence in Kalvryta, weapons used during the battles, photos of the destroyed town, etc.), all of which have been supplemented with more items acquired and added to the collection to serve the purpose of informing visitors about "what happened in Kalavryta during and after the disaster", as stated in the 2019 guided tour.

However, if in every subject area touched upon in this room there is continuity of scope, with exhibits being added, removed and further developed as in the case of the installation of watches, there is one area in which we can observe a sharp shift in the museum's policy: the portrayal of the women of Kalavryta.

Let us consider the steps one by one. According to the museological study drawn up by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the role of the women within the museum's narrative was to be limited to that of the grieving widows who were left behind after the killing of the men. Little by little, however, this first decision was overturned *de facto* through the addition of various exhibits, as well as through references in the publications of the monument-museum. In my recollection, this process, which is still ongoing, was inaugurated in 2015, when a large-scale picture of the *Πετρωμένη Μάνα* [Petrified Mother] statue exhibited on Kappi's hill was placed in this very room, to be replaced later by the even larger-scale installation mentioned earlier in this chapter, involving a picture of three women standing next to the graves, as well

as the blankets and digging tools the women used during the burial. By 2017, then, the women who were left behind to mourn, but also to restart life in Kalavryta after the disaster, have already stopped being mere references on walls or footnotes to the information imparted during guided visits, and were more actively included in the story presented to the visitors. The women-blankets-digging tools installation is now the highlight of this room, while various domestic items found among the debris were added to the exhibition, in an effort to invoke the continuation of life in Kalavryta.



Figure 3. Women mourners installation at the MMKH (own photo, 2022).

A few years later, the MMKH catalogue published in 2022 goes one step further in this direction. Not only are the women no longer left in the sidelines of history to grieve the men in silence, but it is also declared that documenting the hardships that the “survivors”, including, for the first time, the women, had to endure following the catastrophe is among the aims of the MMKH. Interestingly, the 2022 catalogue proceeds to an additional break vis-a-vis the MMKH’s previously established practice, in that it includes a picture of an orphan child to which

it also extends the designation “survivor”, initially reserved for the 13 survivors who made it out of Kappi’s hill alive.

This gradual transition might seem smooth and uneventful on paper, but in fact each step of the process has been riddled with tension and effectuated after a number of heated debates. As explained to me poignantly by a member of the MMKH’s board in a private conversation, the reason is that Kalavrytans view the museum as their family grave. Decisions pertaining to which objects will be exhibited, in which part of the museum and framed within which narrative, are issues that concern not just the museum’s board or curatorial team, but the entire community of survivors whose members believe that they have every right to intervene whenever a decision conflicts with the accepted configurations of the Kalavrytan common memory. The case of the digging tools included in the emblematic installation of this room is a prime example of these dynamics. Already at the first mention of this installation, several members of the community protested that the prospect of replacing the original digging tools, which could unfortunately not be located after all these years, with similar ones went counter to the museum’s founding principle to present the bare bone truth and nothing but that. The installation went ahead anyway, but locally there are still people who vocally oppose this decision. Interestingly, the only instance in which no voices of objection were raised was when the women started figuring more prominently in the museum’s narrative.

Yet, despite the departure from the original study and the increasing showcasing of women on the museum’s walls and within its narrative, the women are still presented anonymously in the MMKH. The only exception to this is the women whose interviews are projected on monitors placed in various rooms. Even in this case, however, the focus is on complementing the information retrieved from the thirteen male survivors, with the women

supplying added insight from their first-hand experience. These named women, who were not yet called survivors at the time when the interviews were conducted, are nonetheless called on to relate their experiences both of that day and of the ensuing burials. It is important to note, however, that the focus of the interviews is still on the men, and this is evident by the proportion of the men and women interviewed, which is by no means representative of the population living in Kalavryta after the disaster. It is interesting to note that, in the course of the interviews, the women usually focus not on the day of the massacre, but on the harsh months and years that came after. This overarching impression is best encapsulated in a phrase the survivor Vassiliki Zisimopoulou says in one of the interviews exhibited in this room: “*Kai meiname emeis ta tomaria*” (“and then it was just us skins”)¹⁰. In Greek, the literal meaning of the word *tomari* is the skin of the animal, but the word is also used metaphorically in a derogatory sense to describe a lowly person. This declaration, then, bitterly attests to the fact that even though the women were not killed in 1943, they had to reinvent life under unbearable conditions.

It is important to note that the decision to frame the women exclusively as grieving widows places the female supporters or members of the Resistance in a position of complete invisibility, in contrast to the memories of the elders in Kalavryta, many of whom recall that there were also women active in the Resistance. The evidence, though, seems to suggest that these women came from other areas and not from the town of Kalavryta, where the vast majority of families held conservative and/or royalist values that were incompatible with a woman leaving the household to take up arms or actively participate in guerilla actions.^{vi} This

¹⁰ The interview is also part of the MMKH’s audiovisual archive and has been uploaded on the “Testimonies” section of the museum’s website (<https://www.dmko.gr/en/digitization-project/testimonies/>).

discrepancy creates a gap between the individual memories of the elders and the community's common memory, which does not allow space for commemorating the female supporters of and participants in EAM-ELAS. It is precisely this gap that the 2022 catalogue attempts to bridge when, under the picture of the banner of the Resistance, it mentions the names of the two young women who made the banner, citing Captain Michos' notebooks as a source of information. A further example of this somewhat more inclusive approach adopted by the MMKH's publishing department is the allowance for a reference to Kiki Papandreou-Skoura's guerilla activities, which can be found in the 2010 publication *I Kravgi* (The Scream) (MMKH, 2010). This volume gathers together testimonies of 63 women with first-hand experience of the 1943 events, with Skoura being the only one among them who is quoted as saying that she was actively involved with the Resistance.

Nonetheless, local collective memory does link some other local women to the Resistance. One example is the case of the famous "*giatrinna ton ftochon*" (doctress of the poor), a doctor who actively supported the Resistance and was famous for offering her services (often free of charge) to anyone in Kalavryta and in the nearby villages, regardless of ideology, nationality or social status. The only mention in museum publications of "doctor Evdokia"—as Maria Stefanopoulou fictionalises her in her book *Athos o Dasonomos* [Athos the Forester] (2014)—is an oblique reference that appears in Captain Michos' notebooks. Published in 2018, but written in the height of the witchhunt unleashed against the communists after the end of the Civil War, Michos' text also obscures her identity, though this time with the aim of protecting her from falling into the hands of the authorities.¹¹ In 2013, Evdokia Papasotiriou's

¹¹ Interview with Filippos Sardelianos, 8/7/2019, Kalavryta.

bust was erected in Planitero, the *kalavrytochori* where she was born and raised (Timisan sto Planitero, 2013).

Before leaving the third room, I would like to return to the gospel found in the cathedral's rubble in 1944 (Konstantopoulou, 1998), which, as the reader will recall, according to the tour guide could have been exhibited in the monument-museum, but instead was kept in the cathedral in the central square. The cathedral is devoted to the Virgin Mary and, as the marble slab on the façade indicates, it had already been burned once before—in 1826, by the Ottomans. This gospel that was not placed in the monument-museum is instead held in a religious building established as a monument commemorating the many woes Kalavryta has suffered. Significantly, during the cathedral's restoration, it was decided not to replace the burned clock of the left bell-tower, which was instead integrated into the new cathedral to serve as a permanent reminder of the 1943 disaster (the clock is stopped at the time when the executions occurred). I see these different elements of the building—namely, the marble slab and the stopped clock—as part of the same attempt to not only bundle together, but also render visible, all past attacks mounted on the town by different conquerors. Through this process, the monument functions as a counterpoint to the nearby Agia Lavra monastery, that key symbol of the Greek nation, which can therefore be distinguished from the 1943 events and continue fulfilling its symbolic function without being embroiled in the difficult memories of the disaster. It should be reminded, at this point, that a principal concern when it came to placing the banner of the Resistance in the MMKH was that the latter could potentially trigger connotations with that other most famous of banners: the banner of the Greek Revolution.

As Hermann-Frank Meyer (2010) claims, and the elders recall, the Agia Lavra monks did lend their support to the guerillas. According to Meyer, this was what triggered the Wehrmacht's particularly vehement attack on the monastery itself, as well as the slaughter of

the monks (Meyer 2010: 427). In my view, the cathedral's grandiose post-WWII reconstruction—which one can perceive in the unplastered external wall at the back of the building, where the different construction layers clearly show how much height it has gained compared to its prewar predecessor—responded to a specific need: that of creating an alternative religious symbol as part of what could be termed a preemptive monumentalization strategy; that is, a symbol which, by privileging the image of Kalavryta as a victim of past conquerors would prevent the Agia Lavra monastery from being portrayed as a locus of Resistance, or else as a place producing resistance against any and all conquerors.

Fourth room

In this room, as the reader will remember, the main piece is the “pantheon” of the men and boys executed in Kalavryta. If one follows the thread of the cinematic approach envisaged in the monument-museum's founding documents, this is the room where the drama reaches its climax. Contrary to the narrative line followed in the first room, where Kalavryta was portrayed as the center of a periphery, in the fourth room Kalavryta is equated with other neighboring villages in terms of visibility of casualties. Here, the dead from Kalavryta and from other *kalavrytochoria* are grouped together and their pictures presented side by side. This puts the number of the dead in the pantheon at approximately 700, with the figure including all men and children that the MMKH management team has recorded following meticulous research and only on the basis of substantial evidence. Other sources place the number of casualties much higher (up to even 1,500), in a move which, according to Meyer (2010) associates the historical event with a fictionalized version of it whose death toll keeps rising throughout the years. On a local level, it seems that this tendency to exaggerate the number of dead stems from a need to draw attention to what happened to the community. In his own treatment of

the ever-rising figure of the Kalavrytan death toll both in Greece and abroad, Fleischer (2008) also comments on this tendency to bump up the numbers, as if the actual figure was not enough.

Furthermore, keeping up with the practice discussed earlier of naming the men and casting a veil of anonymity over the women, the family names and pictures of all men included in the pantheon are monumentalized, while the women are represented as mourning widows performing memorial rites. With regard to the installation of family trees, a first reading could claim, probably with good reason that this exclusion of women was born out of the descendants' need to pay tribute not only to the deceased, but also to the families who were plunged into mourning following the death of their loved ones. A second reading, however, could underline the patriarchal overtones permeating the installation, i.e., the fact that the exhaustive recording of each killed male's family tree has the effect of portraying the massacre as a genocide, since the killed men could no longer beget the children that would continue the clans.



Figure 4. The “pantheon” installation at the MMKH, figuring the pictures of the executed men (own picture, 2019).

In this room, there is also extensive material referring to the Nuremberg trial, which, following the end of the World War II, should have brought some judicial resolution to the drama, but in fact did not, as the culprits were either not brought to trial or not condemned for the crime committed in Kalavryta. This representation, which constitutes a specific instantiation of the generalized demand for catharsis, bears links to the “wall of shame” installation in the second room, which, as discussed earlier, already sets up an imaginary trial for the German perpetrators. This is the second time that the MMKH’s narrative chooses to get embroiled in legal imagery in order to place the demand for a legal process that would result in justice being served.

Very interesting in this regard is a remark Pinelopi Fountedaki, a Professor of

Constitutional Law at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences made when she visited Kalavryta in 2019 as part of a delegation from Panteion University with the aim of proposing to the MMKH a memorandum of cooperation between the two institutions. To this proposal, the MMKH board replied that they would only be interested in participating in the initiative if Panteion provided written reassurances that it was not funded by German sources. The memorandum of cooperation ended up falling through, while the monument-museum's reaction prompted Fountedaki's¹² comment that the people of Kalavryta conceive of justice and the law only in relation to what is just and unjust and not as a set system of rules. Indeed, as Ronald Dworkin (2010) notes, a pragmatic understanding of the law views the legal system as a mere fact and the question as to what is the law by no means depends on what justice should be. By contrast, Fountedaki's comment seems to indicate that, for the people of Kalavryta, the notion of justice is based on ethics and presupposes having faith in the law, that is, on what the law should be.

The speech the Kalavrytan lawyer Nadia Konstantinou delivered on August 14th, 2022, on the occasion of the *Μνημόσυνο στην Καλαβρυτινή Μάνα* (Memorial to the Kalavrytan Mother) held yearly at the Kalavryta cathedral, seems to point in a similar direction. Breaking with the tradition of presenting the Kalavrytan mothers as grieving widows, Konstantinou portrays the women of Kalavryta as empowered agents and a driving force of history: as proud members of a community that defied the patriarchal norms of the time, worked together in unity and successfully managed to rebuild a democratic society. In order to consolidate peace and to affirm the democratic values of this new society, this community, Konstantinou continues—and this is where the link to Fountedakis' comment comes in—to call on the

¹² This statement was made during a private conversation on July 28th, 2022.

perpetrators of the 1943 crimes committed in Kalavryta to appear as witnesses before the resurrected town, so that justice may finally be served. A lawyer and a Kalavrytan herself, Konstantinou subsequently goes on to quote Martin Luther King Jr., who stated that “peace was not made for the sake of justice, but justice for the sake of peace.” What, then, is the demand that arises out of this approach adopted by the female founders of the new Kalavryta? That legal systems should be modified to better serve the needs of the communities and not of those who wage, win or lose wars. As Konstantinou told me during a private conversation on November 18th, 2021, the logic behind this demand is simple: if the international community held anyone committing war crimes accountable for paying war reparations, then war would stop being a profitable business and would therefore no longer be pursued. If this were to happen, Konstantinou claims in her speech as a concluding statement citing the anthropologist Margaret Mead, then communities would “do away with warfare as a method of resolving conflicts”.

Before moving on to address the question of the MMKH’s function and role, I would like to briefly summarize this chapter’s findings up to this point. The Municipal Museum of the Kalavrytan Holocaust is a monument-museum that has assigned itself the task of telling the story of the Kalavrytan massacre *on a local level* without departing from Greece’s official history, whereby Kalavryta serves as a symbol of heroism and rebellion linked to the nation’s independence *on a national level*. At the same time, the museum tries to fulfill the local community’s urgent need to let the world know what has happened to it *on an international level*. In that sense, the MMKH might even be said to serve as a monument to itself: the monument of the inability to combine local collective memory and national narrative, while at the same time acting as a vehicle for communicating local history across the world.

This description might sound contorted, mirroring the exhibition itself. However, I

believe that without introducing this question of the museum's triple address (local, national, international) it would not be possible to grasp the tension that is never far from sight whenever this community tries to share its story with itself, the nation and the world. It is my impression that the changing curatorial approaches adopted in the case of the MMKH are inextricably linked to the aforementioned complexities, which are further aggravated by the divisions already active within the community. But how can a community that is so far from producing a commonly accepted and inclusive narrative concerning its own past ever hope to address the trauma giving rise to its omnipresent demand for catharsis?

Claims of restitution and justice

The MMKH is hardly the first museum to be housed in an existing monument (Riviere, 1980). In the previous part of this chapter, I examined closely and at length the various shifts of direction in the museum's narrative, policies and overall approach throughout the years of its operation. What interests me here is how these different layers of meaning underpin the monument-museum's reconceptualizations. I am trying to understand what kind of museum the MMKH is, what it stands for and to whom. These are the questions to which I will now turn, in the final part of this chapter.

As Solomon (2015) explains, any museum established in order to commemorate violent moments in history is destined to stumble upon many obstacles when attempting to organize the information into a coherent narrative that will be presented to the affected community. As I have demonstrated in the previous pages, this has also been the case for the MMKH. This is a museum which, as Solomon puts it, takes upon itself the duty to commemorate both the living and the dead whose lives were either terminated or forever altered due to acts or crimes of war; a museum that assigns itself the goal to shape the politics of public memory; and a

museum that tries to tell a story but struggles to find an explanation sufficiently logical to justify what happened, since the events narrated are unimaginable, and therefore indescribable.

When the monument-museum first opened its doors to the public, its declared goal was to commemorate the executed and throw light on the unjust crime that violently ended the tranquil life of Kalavryta's pre-war community. At this stage, the thirteen survivors were the key figures driving the narrative forward both as eyewitnesses carrying embodied knowledge of the killing and as the ones thanks to whom the Kalavryta society could be perpetuated. In addition, another declared goal of the MMKH was to continuously enrich its archival material collection, with the intention of documenting the massacre more thoroughly and more amply. The assumption here seems to be that if all information relative to the crime could be collected and archived, then this would help Kalavrytans to tell their own story. However, gathering endless archival material or evidence did not, in fact, render it easier to explain what happened in Kalavryta. In addition, the unresolved and largely unnegotiated divisions the Civil War bequeathed to post-WWII Greece further accentuated the differences separating the two main mnemonic communities (left and right) of Kalavryta, rendering it even more difficult to narrate the unimaginable events of 1943.

As analysed, over the years, different mnemonic strategies have been chosen as part of different attempts to describe and explain the disaster. Through these strategies, historical memory has been constituted, alongside a demand for justice that is linked to the war reparation claims. Throughout the years of my visiting the monument-museum, I have noticed that all the changes effectuated in the museum's collection, narrative and overall policy center around three main thematic areas: a) the representation of pre-war Kalavryta, b) the representation (or absence thereof) of the Resistance, and c) the portrayal of women and of

the role they played both during and after the massacre. In my opinion, the re-conceptualizations of the monument-museum—in other words, what this museum stands for at any one point in time—are largely triggered by revised understandings relating to these three areas.

As previously mentioned, during the years of the financial crisis the MMKH's previous representation of pre-war Kalavryta as a cultured, affluent, inherently innocent community recognizable by the "civilized West" changed towards a more traditional image of a Greek town in the periphery of Europe. This, as I argued, was partly connected to the economic pressure that Greeks felt was "imposed from the outside" in the form of financial restrictions that were coupled with belittling comments and intense criticism arriving from abroad.

It seems to me that the community that was previously used to ranking itself among those whose lives are worth living is still struggling to come to terms with the fact that their privilege was not valued as such and eventually considered precarious by the Nazis. As Konstantopoulou (1998) stated, what Kalavrytans continue to grieve over is the fact that *"they are thoroughbreds, superhuman and invincible"* and that *"the son of a German woman is worth as much as the sons of fifty Greek women"*. Viewed in this light, the monument-museum could be interpreted as a permanent temple of grief laying a persistent claim to "recognizability" in the precise sense that Judith Butler (2009) assigns to the term; a monument-museum which gives itself the role to grieve over the loss of life and material possessions, but also the change of status the local community underwent during the Nazi occupation, as a result of which Kalavrytans were degraded from a grief-worthy (Butler, 2016) community to a precarious, unrecognized Other; a monument-museum which demands that justice be served for crimes that have gone unpunished, thus aligning the town with other communities laying similar claims all across the globe.

This last role of the museum concerning its laying claim to justice needs to be specified further. Following on from the argument presented earlier in this chapter referring to the triple audience the MMKH addresses (local, national, international), a similar distinction could be adopted here to elucidate the nature of this claim for justice. On an international level, to begin with, the monument-museum demands justice by presenting the case of belated war reparations being paid to the victims of the massacre.¹³ Azoulay et al. (2020) argue that museums are “subjectivities that reveal refusals, resistances, memories, agencies of materials, and a considerable amount of pain” (p. 26). Analyzing *museums as crime scenes* in the context of decolonization, they claim that “we should not accept any museum to the conversation without having as an assumption that they are making claims for restitution. The question is how and what does it mean. Restitution means also to accept that there are procedures to unlearn, procedures that cannot continue” (p. 27). One such procedure, the MMKH seems to be claiming, is Germany’s long-standing position that what lies in the past stays in the past, therefore allowing the country to avoid paying reparations to victims of WWII.

This notion of “restitution” is also a useful one through which to approach the claim to justice expressed, more equivocally in this case, on a local level. This claim relates to the processes described at length in this chapter that concern the groups of people the museum’s narrative had previously ignored or distorted (the women and children, the Resistance fighters, the *fertoï*). The monument-museum’s gradual change of attitude vis-à-vis the role assigned to the women and the acknowledgment of the resistance as an active force of local history are

¹³ In 1962, 35,000 German marks were given to Greece so as to be distributed to the communities who has suffered great losses during WWII. The amount set for each Kalavrytan household was to be linked to the number of victims each family had lost, with a “ceiling” of victims set at three. According to Georgios Dimopoulos, it was decided that 35,000 drachmas would be paid to his family for the loss of his father. The lawyers who handled the case was set at 10 percent of the total amount, which was withheld from the first donation. As Meyer (2001) points out, however, the second instalment never reached Kalavryta. As a result, they were compensated with the sum of 17,000 drachmas. An amount which, as Dimopoulos himself points out, was sufficient to cover only their most urgent needs at that time.

indications of the MMKH's slow and gradual steps towards a restitution that would encompass all strata of the local community. This, of course, is a work in progress, which is by no means finished or even systematized. As things stand, the monument-museum displays only the faces of pre-war, mostly privileged Kalavrytans, the faces of the perpetrators of the crime, the faces of the men who survived execution, as well as some faces belonging to—anonymous, for the most part—widows. Never, to the time of writing, have the faces of the resistance fighters, whose lives are deemed unworthy of mourning, figured in the museum's collections. Perhaps this is a restitution still to come, a process that is still ongoing. Equally evolving is the restitution of the local community's imagining of itself, which totters between a fully Westernized and "civilized" image and a more empathetically local version proudly expressing its traditional Greek features. In my opinion, a good way to frame the negotiations taking place in the three areas of interest identified at the beginning of this chapter is to understand them as part of this process of restitution. Finally, in order to comprehend how the monument-museum claims justice on a national level, it is necessary to go back to Fountedaki's statement concerning the way Kalavrytans conceive of justice and the law: not as a system of rules, but in relation to what is unjust. Konstantinou's statement, also cited earlier in this chapter, takes things one step further by arguing that the case of Kalavryta provides fertile ground from which to raise a political point about using war reparations as a means to discourage waging wars in the first place. Interestingly, this final claim to justice the MMKH makes takes on the notion of justice itself, thus calling for a renegotiation of the notion determining what is legal and what criminal. This resonates with an argument Papailias (2022) makes, according to which Greece functions as a site for articulating the border in a number of dichotomies (Global North vs Global South, European colonial pasts vs postcolonial presents, and, significantly, law vs 'crime').

So far, I have portrayed the monument-museum as: a) a temple of grief; and b) a means

for the local community to claim justice for a crime that has gone unpunished. To these two functions I would now like to add a third one, namely that of a case-specific war museum, or else a museum telling the story of something that happened by and to men during WWII in Kalavryta. However, even though WWII was far from being an exclusively male business, the story that the MMKH tells is from a male perspective.

This argument, however, needs to be further complemented in order to give the whole picture. As manifested through the various revisions and shifts of direction initiated in response to voices claiming their own place in the history of this town and this monument-museum, the fact that for so many years the MMKH told a story exclusively seen through the eyes of men was also a result of blindness. As a case-specific war museum, the MMKH does not include in the narrative the struggles and triumphs of those who remained in town after the end of the war, i.e., of the women and children, therefore making those triumphs invisible (Solnit, 2008: 121). The selective blindness extends also to the former enemies of the state, in this case the resistance fighters. As I have shown abundantly in this chapter, the presence of the resistance in the history of Kalavryta is either systemically silenced or purposely obfuscated within the museum's narrative, thus making a case for Preciado's observation (2020) that "we do not suffer from an oblivion of normative history, but from a systematic erasure of the history of oppression and resistance".

Mamma, στ' άρματα, Lili Marlene

Mamma, στ' άρματα, Lili Marlene is the title of an artwork I created, inspired by an interview with George Dimopoulos on July 19th, 2019. During one of our discussions, Dimopoulos recalled a song he liked, which Italian soldiers had taught to the children of Kalavryta during the occupation.

George Dimopoulos was born in Kalavryta. In 1943, he was thirteen years old and his father was among the men executed by the Wehrmacht. As older Kalavrytans recall, after keeping silent for many years, a moment came later in his life when he started talking about his WWII experiences, repeatedly recounting everything he remembered from the Italian occupation, EAM's presence in Kalavryta and all the way through to the murderous intervention of the Wehrmacht and its long-term consequences. Dimopoulos, it would seem, from a certain point onwards felt the urge to share his memories with everyone willing to listen, from journalists to researchers or visitors in any context and of any age. To this day, he continues recalling the painful events of the past, as he believes that commemoration is a way to prevent the repetition of similar violent acts in the future. He speaks at length about different stories relating to the massacre, his feelings, his nightmares, his lifelong suffering. This stance he has now chosen to adopt has turned him into the most vocal narrator of oral history in Kalavryta, a position of import as most of the people talking about the disaster are members of the Kalavrytan diaspora based all over Greece. As a result, Dimopoulos is experienced, in control, and very comfortable with the camera and the sound recorder, as these are means he often has to use while recounting his story to various audiences. He also owns an endless, somewhat chaotic archive consisting of all kind of disparate items ranging from newspaper articles and books to personal notes written on scraps of paper, napkins, or even paper bags; sound, video and photographic archives; a complete archive of his own contributions that have appeared whether in print or on film; but also bullets he collected in the area, as well as the bloodied banknotes he found in his father's pocket after the execution, which are framed and displayed on the wall of his house. Parts of his archive has been donated to the MMKH.

While performing the songs *Mamma* and *Sta armata* [Call to arms, Greek rebel song] his embodied knowledge rose to the surface, thus linking the present of our interview to the past moment when he had learned the songs, as well as his experience of singing them again after the war. Despite having to improvise phonetic alternatives to some long-forgotten lyrics, he did his best to sing the Italian song for me. Later on in our discussion, he also remembered the songs the guerillas had taught the children. Then, suddenly, after shuffling through his papers, he found in his notes the lyrics of the guerilla song *Sta armata* — which he sang with his glasses on, staring on his notebook and looking very disciplined. The third melody he performed for me was an emotionally charged rhythmic murmur reenacting the German song *Lili Marlene*. Even though Meyer (2001) places this event in the area of fiction, according to Dimopoulos and other Kalavrytans present at the disaster, this is the song Wehrmacht soldiers sang as they were walking down Kappi's hill following the execution.

I recorded Dimopoulos' renditions of these three songs. The resulting artwork, entitled *Mamma, στ' άρματα, Lili Marlene*, is a video installation displaying footage of Dimopoulos singing the three songs in an equal number of screens. The artwork was created with the

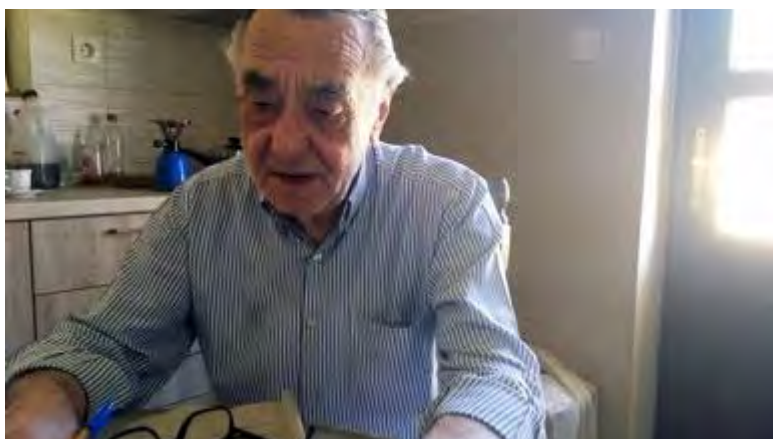


Figure 5. Screenshot of George Dimopoulos from video installation *Mamma, στ' άρματα Lili Marlene*.

Museum's Garden

intention of being exhibited in the museum, during the exhibition of my PRP research project, which has not been held yet. I assume that this connects also to the fact that the MMKH's exhibition does not contain any reference to Dimopoulos, despite his great contribution in publicly voicing the Kalavrytan massacre.

Fenced off yet clearly visible from the street, perceivable yet protected, the MMKH's garden courtyard is the in-between zone linking the museum's indoor narration to the public space of Kalavryta. For visitors reaching Kalavryta, the fenced garden leading up to the museum is one of their very first impressions of the town. For those who decide to enter, their steps will lead them through a metal door crowned by a curved arch and into a garden arranged with simplicity, boasting flora typical of the area. In 1995, Panos Polkas, then mayor of Kalavryta, placed a demand to the Ministry of Culture for benches to be added to the space. In his view, this addition responded to the visitors' need to sit down and ponder the overwhelming information they are exposed to in the museum (MMKH archive, 1996). Earlier in this chapter, I examined the monumental and mnemonic imprint that the MMKH projects on the community of Kalavryta. In the following pages, I will widen the scope to also include the museum's garden courtyard. As I will be showing, the museum's outdoor space follows the local community's typical stance towards public history, even though, in this case, decisions were implemented without prior consultation with the Ministry of Culture. From this perspective, the museum's garden is more than a mere extension of the museum. It also affords an expanded view into the entire process—including both action (decision) and reaction—through which the Kalavrytans have been trying to materially articulate their traumatic memory and integrate it into public history. Finally, using Foucault's concept of

heterotopia, I will be claiming that the garden of the MMKH functions as a counter-site to the museum itself, as “a kind of effectively enacted utopia” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24)

No More Wars

Past the entrance to the museum’s garden courtyard, at a prominent position on the left, stands a sculpture entitled *No More Wars*. *No More Wars* was commissioned to Nikos Dimopoulos (mentioned by his nickname, Dionikos), a high school art teacher who is also a sculptor. The sculpture was placed in the museum’s garden in 2015. This artwork is a life-size bronze composition of a woman struggling to carry the body of a dead man using a blanket, while a boy and a girl are watching in dismay. There are two signs on the ground providing a concise description of the historical moment the work monumentalizes, pointing out that this is a factual representation of the process of burying the massacred men after the execution, while there is no reference either to the artist or to the commissioning body.



Figure 6. *Ochi pia polemoi* (Dimopoulos, 1977). Own picture, 2022.

Dioniko's figurative approach focuses on the intensity of the female body's effort, as the woman drags the corpse along. The composition is simple and predominantly realistic, though some facial expressions, as well as the clothing depicted introduce expressionistic elements. Crucially, the bronze structure was placed directly on the ground without using any form of pedestal, thus facilitating an intimate interaction with the audience. *No More Wars* captures in bronze the dictates of a rare coalition between collective memory and official historiography. The sanctified content, the life-size scale and the popular medium and technique selected, all seem to indicate that the artist's intention is to construct a monument that will be cherished by all. Initially, though, that was not the case. Kalavrytans do not refer to this monument as *No More Wars*; they call it either *Καλαβρυτινή μάνα* [Kalavrytan Mother] or *tou Varelopoulou* [of Varelopoulos]. Andreas Varelopoulos was eleven years old on the day of the execution. Soon after the massacre, his remaining family members left Kalavryta. When he reached the age of eighteen, he migrated to the U.S., where he had a successful career, got married and changed his name to Andy Varlow. The ones referring to it as "*tou Varelopoulou*" describe the composition as accurately bringing into material form Varelopoulos' personal memory of his mother Vassiliki carrying his father Theodoros while he and his sister Betty are watching. They also perceive of the sculpture as his donation. In fact, during the writing of this dissertation, the artwork was again renamed (in April 2023) to *Wars Have No Winners*.

Varlow also wrote a novel entitled *Just Another Man: A Story of the Nazi Massacre of Kalavryta* (1998). The book was written in English and published in California. Even though this title suggests to the reader that the book will be based on the author's biography, thereby blending history and fiction, in fact, only a small part (27 out of the 336 pages) of the hard-cover book refers to what took place in Kalavryta in 1943. The narration as a whole describes

the successful life of the main character (named Barlow), his sexual prowess and heroic antics leading to the punishment of the Nazi commander responsible for the massacre in Kalavryta. A key scene in the book is when the Nazi commander is hanged, as a result of Barlow's actions. The detailed description of the last moments in the Nazi officer's life hanging from a rope suggest to me that the 11-year-old Varelopoulos might have been among the Kalavrytans forced to witness Pavlopoulos' execution¹⁴.

On the title page of Varlow's novel there is a rather surprising note: "In August 1998, the author, his wife, children and grandchildren traveled to Kalavryta in Greece to dedicate a statue commissioned by the Elios Charitable Foundation." The insert on the front cover is a sketch of Dioniko's life-size bronze representing a scene of grieving women and children. Also, on the book's front cover alongside a black-and-white picture of the Nazi flag and soldiers in front of the Acropolis, there is an image of a red drawing that looks like a pre-sketch of *No More Wars*. Given that Varlow claims this novel to be "a catharsis that has abated my nightmares", it might be safe to surmise that commissioning *No More Wars* was also part of this cathartic process.

Originally, the statue was meant to be placed somewhere between Kappi's hill and the cemetery, so that the bronze composition could perform a perpetual restaging of the dramatic moments the women went through on the first days after the execution, when they had to carry and bury their male relatives. However, the idea did not receive broad support, as many Kalavrytans found both the initiative and the context upsetting. The proposed monument was dismissed as a brutal life-size reminder to the women embodying this memory, while the fact

¹⁴ Pavlopoulos' execution will be analyzed later, as the monument dedicated to his killing is pivotal part for the argumentation of this dissertation.

that this was a personal initiative by Varlow often had locals asking: “who does he think he is?”.

As a result of the delays caused by these long negotiations over the monument’s location, for over two years the completed sculpture remained in the artist’s studio. Locally, it is rumored that the delay forced Varlow to come up with a plan B, securing the promise of an American politician that the statue would be placed somewhere in the U.S. in the event that the efforts to erect it in Kalavryta fell through. Taking into consideration that Varlow’s novel was prefaced by the Governor of Massachusetts Michael Dukakis, this was not an altogether unrealistic alternative.

The story of *No More Wars* places into relief what is at stake in the establishment of a monument in public space: namely, integrating an individual memory into the collective one (Tsiara, 2004: 17). There is no detailed evidence of the reasons that prompted Kalavrytans to reject Varlow’s initiative. Was his gesture interpreted as an attempt to individualize collective memory? Can the locals’ negative response be seen as manifesting their dislike for Varlow’s privileged position, enabling him to lend material existence to his own personal memory? Or was it perhaps a consequence of him being an expatriate and, thus, perceived as an outsider in relation to the people who were permanently connected to the place? In my view, if the community were to accept *No More Wars* and grant it monumental status, then Varlow’s mother, sister and himself would be placed on an equal footing with others who had been carrying the memory of the event throughout the years. The woman dragging her husband’s dead body along had to stop being Vassiliki and become any Kalavrytan woman dragging any executed Kalavrytan man and the children watching had to become the children of the community. In other words, the sculpture had to pass from the individual to the collective. As I will argue, this process has taken many years. It is also important to note that even though

Varlow indicates in his book that the Elios Charitable Foundation is the financial backer of the sculpture, this information is not mentioned on the work itself. In my view, this lack of reference could be interpreted as an attempt to remove the American origins of the sculpture, so that it could be placed in the public sphere more neutrally and, therefore, achieve the status of universal representation.

When *No More Wars* was finally put on display in 1998, it was not placed at the slope on the way to Kappi's hill as initially planned, but instead in the museum's backyard, which is less frequented by visitors. It was only in 2015 that the sculpture was moved to the prime position it continues to occupy today. It was placed in the western part of the garden courtyard, in the position that Varlow's sister Betty had indicated back in 1998. The sculpture's move to its new position was remarkably well-organized and Betty, who was present on the day, was very pleased with the outcome. Finally, the composition was perimetrically cordoned off with a chain and a "please do not touch" sign. Surprisingly, today, according to various people I have spoken with, nobody seems to recall the initial unease people felt towards the sculpture.

A question of accessibility

In the following lines, I will present the museum's attempts to become more accessible and more specifically the decision to install a ramp for wheelchair users in 2015. To pursue this, I will chronicle the history of the installation of the ramp at the entrance of MMKH and will be reframing the ramp as a kind of ready-made¹⁵ serving as a symbol of accessibility.

¹⁵ Readymade is a term introduced by Marcel Duchamp in 1916. It describes mass-produced or refabricated objects that were isolated from their intended use and elevated to the status of an artwork through the artist's choosing and designating them as such.

Designed to allow wheelchair users to access the entrance of the museum from the garden, the ramp in question was finally placed at its current position following many trials and tribulations. In my view, it serves as an excellent metaphor for the politics of accessibility adopted in the case of the MMKH's archive. Even though the mission statement of the monument-museum lists using its archives in order to further scientific research among its primary objectives, in my experience, the access it grants is selective and only limited to parts of the material. Other researchers working in Kalavryta have come to the same conclusion (Droumbouki, 2014).

I will be starting this analysis about 20 years before the ramp's actual installation, at a conference on museology and disability held in 1993 at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. I consider this relevant since, in my opinion, the conference's conclusions helped shape the Ministry of Culture and Sports' future accessibility policies and played a pivotal role in the MMKH's being awarded in 2020 precisely on the grounds of installing the ramp in question. During the 1993 conference, Professor of Sociology Dimitris Tsaousis gave a keynote lecture entitled "Museums and Disabled People, Experiences and Perspectives", which also appeared in print in 2004. In the course of this lecture, Tsaousis noted the cultural importance museums have when it comes to moulding and promoting a nation-state's common identity and then went on to stress how urgent it is for museums to ensure the inclusion of disabled people in their operations. Through collecting and presenting the intellectual and material culture of a community, Tsaousis argued, a museum effectively serves the purpose of connecting the present with the historical past. In the framework he proposes, history serves each community as the medium through which notable aspects of local history are highlighted, while the distinction between the local *versus* the Other emerges as a

fundamental tool for strengthening social bonds. After acknowledging the dangers lurking in this position of mediator museums need to adopt when presenting to their audiences something between historical truth (itself mediated by any divisions giving rise to alternative interpretations of history) and popularized narrative, he concludes that the main difficulty in this configuration is to find a way to combine the answers the museum gives with the questions the museum's audience raise. However, he very interestingly continues, the above problem could be resolved if access and equal opportunities for all came to be ensured.

On the 15th of January 2020, the Minister of Culture and Sports Lina Mendoni issued a decree assigning to the MMKH an accredited museum status. The MMKH thus became the first non-state museum in Greece to receive this accreditation. During her speech at the ceremony held at the Old Parliament in Athens, the minister noted that creating this category of museums was a great challenge everywhere in the world due to the fact that both historical evidence and personal experiences need to be taken into account when developing the narrative of the collection. The museum was commended on its curatorial approach, with Mendoni stating that the incorporation of material evidence of the event and oral history in the collection enables the audience to approach the content "with precision, objectivity, based on historical truth, without unnecessary sentimentalism."¹⁶ She also explained the process required for a museum to become an accredited museum, highlighting that once an institution joins the accredited museum scheme, it can have access to funding to upgrade its accessibility for disabled visitors.

The MMKH was already accessible when it became an accredited museum, with a disabled ramp installed in 2015. This seems to put the MMKH in a much better position

¹⁶ These words appear on the MMKH's relevant press release (MMKH, 2020).

compared to other Greek institutions, which fail to comply with accessibility criteria (“Prosvasimotita atomon me provlimata”, 2022)¹⁷. The matter, however, is a bit more complex than that. Christos Foteinopoulos, the director of the MMKH, had to go to great lengths before finally managing to have a disabled ramp installed at the monument-museum (“Ger. Fyssian: Aparadekti”, 2013). Bearing in mind that Foteinopoulos is a wheelchair user himself and that he has been a key figure in the museum since its first day, the ten-year wait he had to endure before he could enter the institution does seem like a long time. In my view, the explanation for this delay and for the difficulties he faced while fighting to secure the bare minimum for his equal involvement in the life and management of the institution lies in the tensions evident within the museum’s board. The question of the ramp’s installation in the museum is exemplary for Kalavryta at large, as it makes manifest how difficult it is to take any decision within a group of people who share trauma, but are separated by ideological divisions. To complicate things even more, Foteinopoulos is what Kalavrytans refer to as *fertos*; therefore, he is also embroiled in the dynamics distinguishing between direct witnesses and those who came after.

In addition, this limitation of access does not only concern outsiders wishing to consult the museum’s archives, but is also extended to the local population. The MMKH also maintains a secretive attitude on a local level, as its archives are not freely accessible to all members of the Kalavrytan community wishing to consult them. In my view, this is one of the reasons why Kalavrytans possess such a large number of personal archives and collections, which set up a network of alternate truths circulating around town. It is interesting to note a popular local

¹⁷ While writing these lines, a plan to make the MMKH accessible to the visually impaired has been brought to the museum’s board.

belief, claiming that the reason why the museum will not make its archives fully accessible to the public is that, if this were to happen, a second civil war would break out. The assumption, in this case, is that the archives contain important evidence, including, for example, the names of local perpetrators of unsolved crimes or Nazi collaborators, which, in a community of this size, are best kept silent for the purpose of preserving the peace.

The architect Stavros Stavrides (2016) has developed the concept of a common space, which he views as a form of spatiality that defies the distinction between public space and private space. In the course of his analysis, Stavrides privileges the image of the threshold, which he uses as a material and/or mental scheme through which to advocate for social change and more expansive forms of social organization. Thresholds, he writes, aim to “regulate, symbolically and actually, practices of crossing, practices of bridging different worlds” (ibid.: 57) Furthermore, drawing from Benjamin, Stavrides argues that “thresholds can perforate the unity of urban myths as well as the unity of history, considered as the site of “homogeneous empty time” (Benjamin 1992: 252). “Thresholds mark occasions and opportunities for change. Thresholds create or symbolically represent passages towards a possible future, already existing in the past” (71). A society’s emblematic and/or metaphoric experiences of thresholds may change the social status of its members.

After having been denied the ability to cross the threshold leading to the museums’ archive, I had to come up with alternatives archives to replace the official sources to which I did not have access. The private archives I ended up using belong to collectors standing on different or opposing sides of the ideological spectrum.

One linden tree and 13 oak trees

In a lecture given in 2020, Fay Zika (2020), echoing both Foucault (2016) and Stavrides (2016), framed urban gardens as pluralities setting up an enclosed space that is public and private at the same time, in which humans attempt an appropriation of nature. In her view, within the garden's boundaries, the essence of both life and decay are placed under protection, while their soil is also a fertile ground for exploring the distinction between humans and nature and, crucially, the spatial and the imagined. In the pages that follow, I will demonstrate how even the flora planted in the garden of the MMKH are linked to collective memory, therefore producing a monumentalizing effect, as part of the museum's official narrative.

In a corner of the museum's garden stands a tree meant to serve as a monument symbolizing peace. This tree was planted by students of the German junior high school Johannes-Nepomuk-Gymnasium Rohr during a 2018 visit to Kalavryta. The initiative was featured in the local press and on the museum's website under the title "a tree for peace" (MMKH, 2018). Once again, however, there were reactions voiced locally. The Kalavrytan historiographer Filippos Sardelianos was among the first to oppose this well-intended gesture by claiming, during one of our discussions, that the type of tree selected was not the right one for the setting.¹⁸ The linden tree, Sardelianos argued, carries a symbolism that is extrinsic to Greek culture. In the German mind, a linden tree is immediately associated with peace, as it bears for Germans the same connotations as the olive tree does for Greeks. It would, therefore, have made a lot more sense for the side that, according to him, is launching a "friendship attack" to draw from the local system of symbolisms to perform its peacemaking gesture,

¹⁸ Interview with Filippos Sardelianos, 8/7/2019 (Kalavryta).

rather than simply transferring to the Greek context a symbol that is foreign to the people to whom the gesture is addressed. However, Sardelianos admitted, even if the German students had chosen the olive tree, the latter would not have satisfied the Kalavrytan side either. The best option, according to him, would have been to plant a cypress tree. Cypress trees, he continues, in addition to being common in the area, are endowed with a symbolic charge in the collective imagination, as they symbolize freedom, which is even more valuable than peace. Using Ottoman rule, colonization, and Nazi occupation as examples, Sardelianos's argument prioritizes peace over freedom. Local populations, he explains, can always choose to make peace with their oppressors, yet, optimally they should choose to fight for freedom. This movement enables Sardelianos to interpret the linden tree planted in the garden of the MMKH not as a symbol of peace, but as a symbol of the sovereign's continuing demand for submission. "There cannot be peace without justice", Sardelianos concludes.



Figure 7. *Ena dentro gia tin Eirini* [A Tree for Peace], planted by students of the Johannes-Nepomuk-Gymnasium Rohr at the MMKH's garden in 2018 (own picture, 2023).

The linden tree, however, is not the only plant to have been assigned monumental status in the vicinity of the museum. Behind the fence on the back side of the garden, thirteen “eternal oak trees” have been planted along the pavement just outside the museum. This extension of the museum into public space is explained on the site as part of a monumentalizing initiative aimed at commemorating the thirteen survivors of the execution. The bilingual (Greek and English) inscription reads:

THESE ETERNAL OAK TREES,
PLANTED ALONG THE PAVEMENT,
ARE DEDICATED TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY
OF THE 13 SURVIVORS OF THE KALAVRYTANS’
EXECUTION BY THE GERMAN ARMY
ON DECEMBER 13, 1943

Both the memorial medium of the planted oak trees and the concept guiding the memorial choice exemplify the patrilineal understanding of continuation that is characteristic of the Kalavrytan identity. The planting of the trees would seem to suggest that the town inhabited by 1,103 women and children owes its uninterrupted existence to the thirteen surviving males who were of reproductive age when the massacre happened. In fact, none of the survivors would go on to have children after the massacre. The symbolism is premised on a patriarchal assumption and can only work if the latter is taken for granted.

The choice of defining the Kalavrytan identity by highlighting the 13 male survivors of the execution deprives from this privileged status not only the women and children who made

it out of the school, but also a number of other male Kalavrytans who survived the massacre because they were not present in the town on December 13, 1943. This choice may enhance the element of drama; yet, it pushes some other aspects of memory into obscurity. Kakogiannis (1998) offers a different perspective of the Kalavrytan men who were not at the site of the execution. This group consisted of eleven elderly males whose lives were spared: Kalavrytan men who had already relocated to other towns or cities; men on business trips; the thirty-three men who had joined the resistance; the men who felt unsafe or had a hunch about the approaching disaster and had fled Kalavryta together with their families before the Wehrmacht troops arrived; and the twelve men who did not believe the German reassurances, but instead heeded the warnings of women from the surrounding villages that had already been destroyed. With regard to the latter category, Kakogiannis (1998) notes that the Kalavrytan population was informed about the imminent arrival of the Wehrmacht troops by women from nearby villages who, knowing that the Wehrmacht did not usually kill women, travelled within the region to inform the residents of surrounding villages. These women, Kalogiannis continues, had been tipped off about the Wehrmacht's moves by the guerrillas. The men who did take the warning seriously managed to escape just in time when Kalavryta was already under the Wehrmacht's full control. The very last man who managed to flee did so with the help of a woman named Sultana, whose clothes he borrowed to pass as a woman (*ibid.*).¹⁹

While oak trees are a common specimen in Greek flora, the White Oak (*Quercus Ilex*) does not grow in Kalavryta. Planting trees, especially oak trees, as an artistic—and, by extension, a memorial—practice traditionally comes with connotations of regeneration (Beuys, 1982), of time extending far back into the past and signifying an event of great significance. It

¹⁹ Interview with Michalis Glarakis, 05/07/2016, Kalavryta.

seems to me that these three elements apply to the oak trees planted next to the museum's garden. Moreover, one should not fail to note the usage of the oak tree in the Nazi system of symbols. In a study prepared in anticipation of the monument-museum's opening, one of the exhibits considered for inclusion in the museum's collection is a picture (MMKH, archive 1997, pic. 16) of what seems to be a group of Wehrmacht soldiers. The picture also bears a stamp depicting three oak tree leaves and an acorn, together with the number 117, i.e., the number of the division that executed Operation Kalavryta.



Figure 8. The thirteen eternal oak trees planted at the pavement just outside the MMKH (own picture, 2023).

Fiery memories

Throughout the years of my involvement with the Kalavrytan community, I have noticed a gradual shift in the memorial hierarchies established via the MMKH. The institution's initial mnemonic focus was on the executed men highlighted by the mourning widows and the privileged status it ascribed to the thirteen survivors. In the last years of my research, I noted a shift towards a parallel acknowledgment of the role of the women and children who survived

the massacre, with emphasis placed on the mothers. It is important to mention, however, that the mothers who survived not only the night of the executions, but also the difficult years that came after, are honoured locally for their pivotal contribution in rebuilding the town. This comes in stark contrast to the museum's patriarchal curatorial narrative approach, which focuses solely on the mourning women and silences the struggles, fights and achievements endured or accomplished in the years after. The emblem of the municipality of Kalavryta is the «Petromeni Mana»²⁰ (Petrified Mother), reflecting the Kalavrytans' belief that they owe the existence of their community and personal achievements to their mothers. For that reason, the women who were mothers during the massacre are honoured annually on August 14, one day before the religious celebration of the "Panagia", the Virgin Mary .

Sociologist Dimitra Kotouza (2019) describes the "emotive weight of the figure of the 'mother' in Greek culture... *as carers of men and children*" (ibid.: 183), where the male protagonists are supported by crying and caring women/mothers. Kotouza aligns herself with Sherry Ortner's (1995) aim to challenge the normative interpretation of women as intermediaries between nature and culture and as natural carers. Locally, the community's collective memory unanimously acknowledges the women as the ones who fought with all their might and love to maintain and rebuild life in Kalavryta. This legacy is not represented in the museum's garden courtyard. The Kalavrytan citizen Giouli Kokoti claims that,²¹ in Kalavryta, history is written by the winners and the survivors (meaning, the conservatives as a result of the civil war, and the men who either survived or were not present at the execution), never by the women. The MMKH's narrative focus on women mainly as "mourning mothers" is a

²⁰ The monument *Petromeni Mana* is analyzed in a later chapter.

²¹ Interview with Giouli Kokoti, 20/05/2016, Kalavryta.

patriarchal interpretation of the Kalavrytan community after the massacre, imposed on—yet standing at odds with—local memory.

How does the MMKH present everyday life in Kalavryta after the massacre? It is important to remark that the image of the Kalavrytan women who came out of the night of the massacre and built life from scratch is forged by the same people who took the initial decision to make the thirteen male survivors the epicenter of the Kalavrytan identity. An important event towards this direction is the MMKH's aforementioned publication *Kravgi, to gynaikeio vioma tis Kalavrytinis tragodias* [i.e. *Scream, the female experience of the Kalavrytan tragedy*], published and presented in Kalavryta in 2010. This book collects a number of interviews whereby women describe their experience of the massacre and the ensuing period. In the book, they are presented next to the executed males of their families and described as *chires* [widows]. Their speech is polished and edited. I was there during the very emotional presentation of this book in Kalavryta, where many of the women who had embodied memory of the event were present, watching in silence.

The exhibition *Pyrrines Mnimes* [Fiery Memories] organized by the MMKH on December 2021²² presented a pantheon of photos picturing the “women and children confined in the school”. Photographic documents drawn from the museum's archive were printed and presented next to text, providing information about all persons sharing embodied memory of the event. Among the pictures, displayed in much bigger dimensions than the others, is the portrait of Vaso Katsini, the woman born the night of the massacre on December 13th, 1943.

²² The exhibition opened on December 10th, 2021, and was on show between 11 December 11th and 10 January 10th, 2022.

The curatorial choice aesthetically mirrors the long-established choice of presenting the executed Kalavrytan males in a pantheon of heroes, only this time it is women who come into the spotlight. What is more, the emphasis placed on Katsini's photo counterbalances the monumentalizing effect advanced through the "13 oak trees" installation, since, in this context, the women and children not only represent the trauma linked to the massacre, but also the continuation of life as well and the establishment of the new town. In parallel with the exhibition, the 1,103 names of the "women and children confined in the school" were uploaded on the monument-museum's website (MMKH, 2021). Until that moment, I had not received an answer to my persistent questions regarding the exact number and archived names of the women and children who had experienced the massacre. This was the first time that the lives of the 1,103 people confined in the school in 1943 were acknowledged as having memorial importance in their own right and not merely in relation to the executed male members of their families. In this way, even by association, they were acknowledged as individually named survivors and not as an unnamed mass of "widows and children". Until then, I had only encountered some women inhabitants naming the 1,103 as "survivors", parallel to the thirteen males who had survived the execution. Moreover, this exhibition marked another break with past practices, in that it was the first time that life as a collective achievement over death was, even if indirectly, institutionally proposed as a memorial choice.

Back in 1996, during a meeting about the museum's interior design plan held between the MMKH board, some Kalavrytans who were part of the institution since its inception and a delegation from the Ministry of Culture, the Kalavrytan Yiota Konstantopoulou suggested that the collection of photographs of the mothers and children who lived in the town between 1943

and 1950 becomes part of the permanent exhibition of the museum. Her proposal was rejected by the ministry's delegation on the grounds that the central narrative of the museum is to present the women as solitary mourners (MMKH archive, 1996).

About 1500

About 1500 is an installation I started developing in 2013 and is still ongoing. The work came about as a reaction to an answer I kept receiving in 2012, when, following a Greek national election that secured votes for the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party in Kalavryta, I began to conduct research as part of my MA thesis (Gouseti, 2013). When I asked people to give me their interpretation of the electoral result, many replied to me: but the Golden Dawn voters were *ferto*, not real Kalavrytans. Going one step further, some others even claimed that there are not any real Kalavrytans living in the town at the present moment anyway: they were all killed on Kappi's hill.

The absurd logic on which this answer is based is that the people living in the town in 2012 are all strangers, down to the last one, who are not the massacred men's equals and therefore not really the continuers of the Kalavrytan identity. In the aftermath of the shock that gripped the town following the electoral results and the publicity this instance gained across the country, it was perhaps to be expected that the blame would fall on the Other and the long-established difference between the *ferto* and the real Kalavrytans would become amplified. What struck me the most, however, about this answer I kept receiving was that it seemed to also extend to the women and children who survived the massacre. In addition to being absurd, this logic, it seemed to me, came in stark contrast to the figure of the Kalavrytan

mother, monumentalized as a self-sacrificing, grieving widow. How could these women, I wondered, often portrayed as saints in the collective consciousness, now be depicted as unequal members of the community that presumably ended on “that day” and denied any political status as entities separate from their deceased male ancestors?

This is when I started asking the question that ended up giving this project its title: How many women and children were there who had to live in the ruins after the disaster? At this time, I also found out that the figure had never been counted. In response to my question, I kept receiving the vague answer that the women and children were “about 1500”, though nobody seemed to have data about their names and personal details. The portraits included in my project, then, are an attempt to produce these missing records: to depict the women and children who organized themselves into the post-war community of Kalavryta including the *fertoj*, the *simazohtaria*, other “strangers” who decided to live in Kalavryta in the following decades, as well as the descendants of all these people all the way up to the present day.

As I started delving deeper into the subject, I began asking people what was it like to live in Kalavryta immediately after the massacre: What did the women do? What kind of organizing and decision-making mechanisms did they develop and enforce? How did they manage to survive? Were they receiving any support from the Greek government or from any other source of financing? What happened in the town during the Civil War?

It soon became clear to me that these stories were not part of the stock information circulating among Kalavrytans. The latter included stories about the events leading up to the massacre, the massacre itself, the days and process of burying the dead and the mourning women. After this, all narration seems to stop. In 2012, nobody would even consider talking about the period between 1943 and 1952. Everything that the women and children lived

through during those years was shrouded in complete darkness and buried in the most deafening silence. The year 1952 is when the narrative resumes again, with Schram's arrival in Kalavryta to recruit boys who would be taken to Germany to study. These were the boys who had been rounded up at the school and had, by now, come of age. If history had stopped with the massacre of the community's males, it now picks up again with the new generation of males who have blossomed into adult political subjects. These are the new political entities the narration chooses to include and mention by name, as opposed to the amorphous and, again, anonymous mass of women whose contribution is taken for granted and whose history is not considered worthy of documenting or talking about.

My aim, then, in this work, was to expand the narrative to include in the symbolic polity of Kalavryta not only the deceased males or the ones who were born afterwards, but also the women who rebuilt the town from scratch. To create new memorial material, which would be placed next to the existing monuments in which the men are dead, and the women are mourning them.

As woodcutting is by far the visual medium with which Kalavrytans are most familiar, it made sense to use this method while developing new material evidence to help inscribe the history of the women who lived in Kalavryta after the massacre. Many artists have used the technique of engraving to depict the 1943 events in woodcuts, while most houses, shops and institutions across town own reproductions of these works. The MMKH also has in its collection a number of woodprints which are figured on the website and occasionally put on display in the museum itself.^{vii} A key moment for the Kalavrytans' relationship with the medium of woodcutting was in 1985, when the famous artist Tassos, working under a commission from the National Gallery, produced a woodcut entitled *Epitymvio gia to dekapentachrono agori Vasilaki Pesli* [A tombstone for the fifteen-year-old boy Vassilakis Peslis] (1970) and

subsequently produced woodprints out of it which he offered to every Kalavrytan who was a mother on the day of the massacre including a handwritten inscription addressing each woman by name. This instance, it seems to me, served as catalyst for the Kalavrytans' attachment to woodcutting, which consequently became the artistic medium *par excellence* when it comes to expressing the community's common identity. This point was not only pivotal for my decision to adopt the woodcutting technique in *About 1500*, but is also central to my wider concerns in the context of this thesis. In my view, the above example provides substantial evidence of the local community's willingness —and perhaps need— to resort to art in order to deal with the trauma that is so markedly impressed on its common identity.

As I set out to work on *About 1500*, my first concern was to produce engravings picturing the women and the children after the disaster. Soon enough, however, I also started making portraits of contemporary residents from different age groups, both blood relatives and *ferto*i. Some felt uneasy when I asked them if I could take their photo so I could include them in this project since my request challenged the established order concerning who has the right to call him/herself a Kalavrytan. Often, the first reaction I would receive from the people I asked to photograph was that they were only “ferto” and therefore not portrait material for a project about the community of Kalavryta. In the end, however, nobody reacted negatively to this inclusive approach in portraying the community.

My goal in *About 1500*, then, was twofold: on the one hand, I wished to create parallel material evidence that would mnemonically flesh out the lives of people who, on the one hand, had been erased from official historiography and, on the other hand, to commemorate the successful struggle of the women, children and the *ferto*i to rebuild life in Kalavryta. What interested me the most in this process of working is that this work resulted in a type of “heroization” of the woman and the man-next-door, detached from the traditional figure of

the hero whether in Kalavryta or beyond. Butler (2004) argues that once relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility are brought to the fore, a sense of political community is created. As far as the general audience is concerned, this is precisely what I am attempting to do in *About 1500*: to move beyond the archetypal, solitary figure of the griever —present in Kalavryta as well as in other towns and villages scarred by similarly murderous massacres across the globe— and towards a togetherness affirmed by a polity that would no longer attempt to keep its grief to itself through a depoliticizing gesture, but instead try and convert it into a sense of political community.

The conversations prompted by this interaction fed my research and influenced the conclusions I have drawn from the field. Among the engravings, some are made using individual or group portraits while others were developed from selfies. The conversations I had with the residents while collecting the material I am using for this work usually revolved around the immediate and not so immediate aftermath of the disaster, the question of the local versus the outsider and the process through which status is assigned within this community, all of which are issues that have become central to this dissertation. In that sense, for me, this work is a way of giving back to the people who shared with me their memories, thoughts—or even their skepticism, silence and valuable criticism— as well as their personal archives; a way of expressing my gratitude for what they taught me and how they changed me throughout the years I have spent interacting with this community in different roles. In the opposite direction, I believe that this art project-cum-thesis, as well as the 15 years I have spent in Kalavryta as a *fertoi* asking uncomfortable questions, participating in debates concerning the present and the past of the community and trying to ferret out information on topics which were previously not considered important enough to dwell on, has contributed to the recent shift as concerns

the events, periods and groups of people (women and children) whose past is currently coming into focus and gradually becoming integrated into the common memory as subjects of history in their own right.

One example here would be the monument-museum's recent decision to look for the names of all the women and children who survived the disaster, which I believe was linked to my persistent questions on the same subject. Some of the woodcuts I produced for *About 1500* figured in the poster placed at the entrance of the MMKH to announce the *Women and Children* exhibition, held in the main square. This, to me, was an interesting change of context, as part of the project's woodprints were used to add an extra layer of memorialisation to the *Women and Children* exhibition. Moreover, prior to the exhibition, one of these woodcuts had served to illustrate a poetry collection published by the MMKH (MMKH, 2013).

What pleases me the most, however, is to see these works among family pictures and other woodcuts adorning the walls of Kalavrytan houses. Woodcuts take a long time to make and I believe it is a practice that I will continue even after exhibiting the results already produced in Kalavryta.





Figure 9. *About 1500* (Gouseti, 2013-ongoing). Photos from the exhibition *The Present as a Result of the Past* (Grimmuseum, 2016). Photo credit: Torben Höke.

Chapter 3: A monument for the “good German”

This chapter is about a phantom monument: the one visitors to the MMKH expect to find at the front yard of the building. If it existed, the monument would depict the good German/Austrian/Alsatian soldier who supposedly broke the padlock and freed the women, children, and elderly the Wehrmacht had gathered at the school, saving them from the raging fire that otherwise would have consumed them. Such monument, however, does not exist; and the reason for that is that neither did that person. This false report, references to which can be found both locally and internationally, produced a myth alluding to an imaginary hero of ambiguous nationality. In my research, I found it to be a rather resilient myth that continues to be reproduced even after all claims presumably attesting to its veracity have been refuted in every way imaginable, including via testimonies and historical research.

In the pages that follow, I will be examining the politics of memory in Kalavryta—how it was shaped and how it operates—using the myth of the so-called “good German” as my point of departure. The figure of the “good German”, which first entered public discussion

shortly after the traumatic events of 1943, both illuminates and consolidates the ideological and political differences that have been dividing the local community ever since the end of WWII. As a result, this myth is an ideal starting point from which to examine the different and often contradicting decisions through which memory is produced and converted—or not—into different forms of monumentalization, as well as the impact that the latter has had on the local community. I will discuss the physical presence—or absence—of the “good German” figure in Kalavryta and beyond; the local reactions—or absence thereof—to the monumental traces the myth has generated over the years; as well as the political background leading to the decisions relating to the myth’s monumentalization (or not). In addition, I will attempt to pinpoint the reasons this myth has proved so persistent, exploring the ideological positions that stand to benefit from its perpetuation. Finally, as part of my examination of the “good German” figure, I will be discussing the relationship between fiction and “faction”²³ based on specific artworks which were created in response to this myth.

From a methodological point of view, I have chosen to approach the enigmatic figure of the German soldier through its depictions in art: specifically, through a discussion of two films and a contemporary art event. I also trace various references to the German soldier found in the local press. My aim in selecting these particular apparitions of the soldier’s ghost is twofold: on the one hand, I wish to track down the various stages of a process that resulted in inscribing a non-existent event on public memory; and, on the other hand, I believe this choice can elucidate some more general methodological choices I had to make in the context of this dissertation: namely, the decision to combine elements from the fields of art and

²³ “A faction is, indeed, a blending of fact and fiction (as is the word itself). The term is problematic because readers want to know which category a book falls into, and ‘faction’ does not provide that” (Bruce, 2019).

anthropology to address the traumatic past and the traumatized present of the Kalavrytan society. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will return to the connection between art and anthropology to explain why, in my view, the local community's demand for catharsis can only be met by turning to anthropology whose solid method for conducting research can also provide a firm starting point for future researchers working in any field.

The good German: Oral testimonies, archival and bibliographical material

The German researcher Hermann-Frank Meyer (2010: 458-461) discusses the figure of the "good German" in Kalavryta extensively before he concludes that it is, in effect, a myth. On the basis of fieldwork conducted in Kalavryta, Meyer examined how the press, both in Germany and abroad, as well as authors of tourist guides and other publications used this mythological construct in order to produce a milder account of the massacre. He also scrutinizes the case of the Wehrmacht soldier Jean Liro from Alsace, who attempted to appropriate the status of the "local saviour". Understandably, Meyer is skeptical of Liro's statements about his travels to Kalavryta in the aftermath of the war, which he thinks were mainly aimed at deceiving and misleading the victims.

Despite the fact that Liro's claims were subsequently disproved, they did help consolidate the myth of the good German. The voices of indignant Kalavrytans who, having embodied knowledge of the horror experienced during the confinement at the school, tried to stop the spreading of false rumours proved too weak to reach out to the broader public. Year after year, many traveled to Kalavryta expecting to find the non-existent monument of the hero who, although imaginary, continues to live on in some people's hearts and minds. After perusing numerous foreign-language publications and travel guides for Greece, Meyer

concludes that the misleading fable of the good German was one among several instances of exploitation occurring in the aftermath of the slaughter and horror that accompanied it (Meyer, 2003).

On a more local level, this myth started gaining ground about ten years after the massacre, when it was endorsed by the archimandrite Theoklitos Fefes, as well as Dimitris Kaldiris, a local teacher. Both individually and in tandem, the two men were among those whose accounts figured in publications relating the events of the massacre, therefore acting similarly to today's "influencers". The historian Anna-Maria Droubouki (2014: 327-329) has studied the process through which the myth was employed in Germany as a way of responding to the need for rekindling the relationships between the two countries, while she has also traced how the "good German" figure became increasingly popular first in Kalavryta, and then all across Greece. In the framework of the myth and of the need to invent a monument for the "good German", the supposed savior also takes on the trait of a martyr, as he is said to have been executed by a Wehrmacht military court following his act of defiance. Droubouki also points to the significant role that some prominent representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church have played throughout the years, not only by perpetuating the myth, but also by helping establish a politics of memory that has instituted an attitude of lenience towards the perpetrators of the crime. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the rationale on which this politics rests is that the Wehrmacht was within its rights to execute the people of Kalavryta, as the massacre occurred as a reprisal for the partisans' actions.

Social anthropologist Riki Van Boeschoten (2006) analyzed divided memory in Drakeia, a village with a past similar to that of Kalavryta. Drakeia too suffered many losses during a massacre which took place in the village during WWII and seems to follow a parallel route to Kalavryta in terms of its sociopolitical and cultural development. In addition, this "quasi-

mythical tale [...] which seems to belong to a universal stock repertoire of stories retold by survivors of wartime massacres” (ibid. 93) figures in this context as well. Van Boeschoten explores the cultural background of prewar Drakeia, as crystallized in the two prevalent mnemonic communities (leftwing and conservative), to conclude that this myth was a product of social and ideological divisions.

The existence of such divisions is reflected both in the words of Giorgos Dimopoulos and in the attitude he adopted during our interview.²⁴ After stating that he was the first person to have stepped out of the school that day, Dimopoulos provides the following description of the events:

“They didn’t set fire to the school to burn us, the fire came from the surrounding houses that were burning. The Germans had no intention of killing us. If they wanted to... (gesture, indicating that there was no escape). They were holding us there (clenches hand vigorously into a fist) hostage [in case the guerrillas made an intervention]. It was filled with smoke and there was panic... the situation was tragic. The doors were pushed outwards and would not open because they opened inwards. They were not locked. We were so crammed in there... panic, crying, screaming...

We went out like crazy; they had their work cut out for them.

There were some Germans out there, they didn't pay any attention to us, they were getting ready to leave.”

Then his tone changes. He gets worked up, becomes sarcastic:

²⁴ Interview with Giorgos Dimopoulos, 20/05/2014 (Kalavryta).

“Which door did he open? There were eight doors, which one did he open? And how did the women know what he was? In the situation we were in, a grandmother went up to a German and asked a German, ‘Where are you from, little boy?’ In what language? This is nonsense.”

Distomo at Documenta

On 10 June 2017, the contemporary art exhibition documenta14, typically held in Kassel every five years, opened its doors to the German public. Two months earlier, the organizers had already welcomed audiences in Athens, which a bold curatorial decision had selected as the primary site for this specific edition of documenta, entitled *Learning from Athens*. The labyrinthine curatorial approach adopted meant that there was space to address a plethora of urgent issues at once—Greek-German relationships being among them. As part of documenta 14’s Public Programs, a series of events were held in both cities under the title *The Parliament of Bodies*. The Kassel program opened with *Working Group Distomo*, where artist, curator and activist Margarita Tsomou invited Argyris Sfountouris to talk about the massacre committed at Distomo exactly 73 years ago, on 10 June 1944. The discussion soon took the form of a campaign calling for a reappraisal of the atrocities of fascism, a context broadly related to reparation claims. Sfountouris was four years-old on the day of the massacre, which led to the murder of many members of his family, including his parents.

Within the framework of *Working Group Distomo*, Sfountouris recalled the day of the killing before an overwhelmed audience. The discussion was held in German, with simultaneous interpretation in English. While relating his memories from the crime scene, Sfountouris stated something that is highly reminiscent of the myth of the “good German”:

“But I have to say that a large portion of the Germans did not participate [in the killings]. They

aimed their weapons up in the air... they refused to fight... errr... to shoot the villagers. I always want to stress this fact" (Tsomou, 2017). Sfountouris is a well-known survivor of the WWII Distomo massacre. While searching for information about him online, I stumbled upon an interview in which, among other questions, he was asked the following: "You have said that you and your sisters were saved after a German soldier of the secret police beckoned you not to leave the house. If you saw him again, what would you tell him?" Sfountouris replies that he had already tried to locate him, though without success, and concludes: "I think he would immediately remember that there were some children there who could have been executed. I would tell him that I was the youngest of those children and you saved my life."

Sfountouris (the subject) heroizes the persecutor (the sovereign) out of gratitude for the latter, who abstained from exercising his right to kill him. Right at the moment when the sovereign could kill, he decided to exercise his power and let live. The subject concedes absolute power to the sovereign, driven by the need to protect his life. The subject endorses the view that his life was spared thanks to the sovereign's kindness (Foucault, 2003: 241-242). At the same time, he seems willing to forget that his aggressor was linked to the origin of his suffering.

As mentioned before, a quick online search informed me that Sfountouris is a well-known public figure who has given various interviews in a number of contexts. These interviews have yielded various video documentations of himself narrating his war experiences, while he also preserves WWII memory and is active in reparation claims. Highly appreciated in Germany, Sfountouris has been awarded in 2022 the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Verdienstorden der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) for his contribution in unveiling the atrocities committed in Greece by Nazi Germany. This award was largely the result of the earnest approach he adopts in his public appearances, which has helped shape a shared Greek-German

way of reading historical memory. Furthermore, a square in Distomo is named after him, thus establishing that at least a part of the Distomo society views the visibility deriving from his actions in a positive light.

Orphaned during the war following a slaughter committed by the SS in the small village of Distomo, Sfountouris, was brought up and educated in central Europe, where he subsequently lived. His input has been instrumental in establishing the myth of the “good German” in Greece in general. As someone whose ancestry was directly affected by the aggressors, Sfountouris’ figure has the advantage of offering a bridging effect, as he can both inform the public about the events that transpired that day at Distomo and ease the shock caused by his narrations. The narrative he puts forward is turned into a useful tool in support of an empathetic, yet privileged, point of view, since the storyteller is willing to reinterpret past events even if that means renegotiating certain aspects of “reality” by offering alternative perspectives —possibly with a view to prodding societies to move beyond them. In this way, Sfountouris’ simplistic narrative both maintains and strengthens the dynamic of the savior/saved, conqueror/conquered, debtor/indebted hierarchy.

Sfountouris’ story and the savior narrative inspired Stefan Haupt’s (2006) documentary film *Ein Lied für Argyris* [A song for Argyris], a work embedding the prospect of reparation claims in an antiwar rhetoric. Interestingly, the information about the savior is not actually derived from Sfountouri’s account, which was included in a film made for the project “*Memories of the Occupation of Greece*” (MOG), alongside other testimonies given by people from Distomo. MOG (<https://www.occupation-memories.org/en/index.html>) is a history project developed jointly by universities in Germany and in Greece, which employs in-depth research in an effort to promote a common understanding of history in the two countries. Sfountouris’ testimony was included in the MOG project; yet, the part about his being rescued

by an SS member does not figure in the oral history archive published on the MOG website. This elimination constitutes a tacit declaration on behalf of the historians involved in the project that Sfountouris' story is not corroborated by evidence.

In order to better understand Sfountouris' position, it might be useful to turn to a field that has long dealt with the effects and the manifestations of trauma. Professor of Law, Elizabeth Howell (2014), elaborating on Ferenczi's concept of identification with the aggressor, argues that it is common for an abused child to develop a two-stage response when confronted with the violence imposed by the adult abuser. The first reaction, she claims, results automatically from the trauma endured, as opposed to the second step of the process, which is purposeful and defense-oriented. Using the psychoanalytical concept of self-states, she explains that the victim develops dissociated attachment in the course of which victim and aggressor self-states are experienced. "In the traumatic moment of being terrified and abused, the child cannot assimilate the events into narrative memory," she explains. As the child recovers from the attack, she/he feels "enormously confused, in fact, split" and her/his confidence in the testimony of her/his own senses is broken (Ferenczi, 1988). The notion of identifying with the aggressor is useful not only for gaining access into the abused child's feelings, but also for comprehending the process of dissociation which is part of the victim's effort to turn away from reality. "In the victim-identified position, the child may be passive, submissive, and numbed-out, and experience herself as attached to and dependent on the aggressor/caregiver. But she knows the abuser's role well, as a result of procedural identification". Nevertheless, Howell notes, "primitive idealization is felt from, and only from, the victim state".

Now let us detour back to Kalavryta, where a non-existing monument provides fertile ground to reflect on local memorial choices. It is evident that the invention of the "good

German” has proven useful to those who invented and helped disseminate it. The myth has not only helped cool tempers in post-WWII Germany, as Meyer pointed out, but it has also helped the efforts of conservative-leaning circles in Greece to smoothen out strained relations between the two countries. The quip “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” has served a line of thinking which has helped form an anticommunist front in post-Civil War Greece. In other words, in Greece, the myth is closely associated to the rhetoric of hate speech which it has helped instill. In the context of the society of Kalavryta, it seems that the mythopoeic of the “good German” case is pursued by the same actors who continue to assign to the partisans the responsibility for the crimes committed by the Nazis.

But what could possibly urge some of the people who experienced the violent events of that night to become willing consumers as well as perpetrators of such a construction? Does the invented savior solely benefit those affiliated with anticommunist ideology and politics? Freud (1899, letter 101) introduced the term “screen memory” in order to describe a process of trauma denial, whereby the unpleasant event gets substituted by a less painful associated memory. As a result, a rescued mnemonic trace relying on a false reconstruction of events rescues visual memory locked away in childhood experiences, therefore serving as a shield obfuscating immediate memory. Could the myth of the “good German” function as a “screen” in the memory of some actors who were children at the time, and thus operate as a veil protecting them from the terror they experienced? And, most importantly, could any kind of monument founded on false history help bolster this society’s need to trace a common memory?

Kalavryta: Echoes of the Past

During an interview given at the English-language newspaper *Greek Reporter*, the scriptwriter and co-producer Dimitrios Katsantonis of the film *Echoes of the Past* (2021) talked about the sources that helped him establish the existence of the “good German”, as well as those stating that the myth is nothing more than “German propaganda” (Kalafatis, 2015). The making of the film originates from the Greek American diaspora, while it was funded, among others, by the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), EKOME (National Center of Audiovisual Media and Communication) and the Greek Film Centre. The initial goal was for the shooting to be completed within 2015. He proceeded by analyzing the methodology he employed to construct the character in the following manner: “I always felt that the Austrian and his role in the tragedy, whether real or manufactured, offered a glimmer of hope —even in the darkest hour, humanity survived the madness of war.” What is even more revealing is his conclusion: “The film —inspired by true events instead of based on true events, which is an important distinction—has a lot of fictional characters. Moreover, and since history is often simplified through one-dimensional characters, mythology-building, even around historical figures, is paramount in creating a nuanced story with the ability to move the audience and stir their feelings and emotions. A film is not meant to write —or re-write—history, nor be interpreted as an academic treatise.” Here, Katsantonis talks about the distinction between the meticulous ways in which academia deals with history, as differentiated from the broader potential offered by mythology and art. What is more, he specifically points out the distance that separates historiography from a fictional work based on historical events, wearing this distinction as an amulet of apolitical artistic freedom. His approach fails to take into account the ways in which such film might affect the Kalavrytan community by triggering their shared memory of trauma, while at the same time it fails to acknowledge the problematic political message that the film puts forward.

Katsantonis is not the first filmmaker to have stumbled upon these pitfalls. Same as all artistic media, a film enters the sphere of public history and actively contributes to the writing of history when interpreting a community's common memory of trauma. This, to be sure, comes with great responsibility. As opposed to what happened in the case of *Echoes of the Past*, Joshua Oppenheimer's (2012) documentary film *The Act of Killing* takes this responsibility very seriously. The film helped disseminate information about the Indonesian mass killings of 1965-1966, which was largely unknown prior to its release. Oppenheimer invests in providing agonizingly thorough descriptions of the actual activities by inviting the death-squad leaders to performatively reenact the killings they were placed in charge of all those years back. By arraying a number of first-person narrations of the events next to each other, he successfully includes a number of subjective truths while treating every subject with respect, even the ones with whom he is in clear ideological disagreement. The result of this approach is a film that allows politics to arise out of aesthetics and become inscribed in materialities of history by providing an alternative version of it: one which lends a voice to those previously excluded (Oppenheimer, 2014).

Contrary, then, to Katsadonis' view that a film "is not meant to write—or re-write—history", Oppenheimer's film project does exactly that. In the course of an interview, Oppenheimer (2016) stated that in order to counterbalance the feeling of powerlessness people experience as a result of knowing that official discourses are tailored to fit each speaker's interests, they turn to non-fiction films to look for an alternative truth: one that would undermine official accounts and give them the sense of regaining control over their own histories. I will return to discuss the relation between Katsantonis and Oppenheimer in the conclusion of this chapter.

The film *Echoes of the Past*, later renamed *Kalavryta 1943 (Echoes of the Past)*, premiered in 2021, following a long waiting period. The filmmakers' presence in Kalavryta to conduct in situ research gave rise to feelings of unease, instigated by a lack of trust on the part of the local society regarding any initiative dealing with local history. The producers had been swift to announce that celebrity actresses and actors would be cast and to inform the public that filming would be of a Hollywood standard.

During my research, I followed local responses to the filmmaking process and its online traces, thinking of this production as a case study that could help enrich my understanding of how artistic intervention relates to WWII memories in the context of the Kalavrytan society. The filmmaking team approached the field with caution and moved around town through a network of acquaintances that protected them from anyone outside it. They were supported by individuals who served as their local guides. The local newspaper *Kalavryta News*, in 12 April 2015, played up the Hollywood level of the production and stellar cast—with Jeremy Irons, Diane Kruger and Sebastian Koch being among the names dropped (“Oles oi leptomereies”, 2015)—and the positive impact that the film would have on the visibility of the town's history. The film-making process was also actively documented on the film's Facebook page, which bore the title *Echoes of the Past* as well as through their website, where several articles were published in Greek and in English, regarding the filming process, the actors and the goals of the film (the website and FB page are presently no longer accessible).

In the course of their visits to Kalavryta, the filmmakers learned about local history through conversations with locals, while they were also granted access to archival material and were shown around Kalavryta and the surrounding areas. Additionally, they talked with Kalavrytans about the traumatic past of the town, touching also upon topics that could be

considered as sensitive for the society of Kalavryta. The myth of the good German was pointed out by many as a pitfall to be avoided. When the *Echoes of the Past* team approached the Panos Michos Kalavryta Theater Group, and proposed collaborating with them on the film, Efthimia Benaki, the head of the group, rejected their proposal with the following statement: “We have no intention of becoming extras in our own story”.

I believe that Efthimia Benaki’s response partly mirrors the dynamics between the locals and the Kalavrytan diaspora regarding the interpretation of history. A large percentage of the Kalavrytan diaspora holds conservative views and interprets past events through recourse to old political divisions hinged on a politics of blame: a tactic that is not always in line with how contemporary Kalavrytans deal with common memory. Moreover, the fact that the town’s elders can lay claim to proximity with the 1943 events has created hierarchal structures relying on criteria of age, which often run in parallel with financial power. Oftentimes, when the diaspora finances programs aimed at keeping the memory of the trauma alive, this act is interpreted locally as an attempt to “secure” their place on the top of the aforementioned hierarchy. In this way, memory-keeping processes often exclude younger generations and can be triggering.

Kalavryta – People and Shadows is another film made about the 1943 events, commissioned by the Athens Kalavrytan Association and the MMKH. The filmmaker Elias Giannakakis (2014) relied on archival and historical research, as well as on oral history, for approaching his subject matter. Giannakakis’s film takes the form of a memorial documentary. He sheds light on archival film material consisting of oral “testimonies” in which elderly Kalavrytans recall their memories from 1943. His visual narrative is inclusive and feels personal.

His scenario follows an open narrative structure allowing space for multiple interpretations of historical events. When I met Giannakakis soon after the film was finished, we discussed the filmmaking process, which he described as intensive due to time constraints, the demanding research he had to conduct on complicated historical subjects, as well as the strict supervision the funders of the film exercised during editing. The commission was doubly motivated. On the one hand, it aimed to preserve memory and pose certain questions that have been circulating for a long time: what would have happened if they (the guerillas) had not killed the Wehrmacht captives? What would have happened if they had not killed the three wounded captives in such a violent way? Would the disaster have taken place anyway, or could it have been avoided? Adopting a balanced approach and an attitude that seems to split responsibility for the crime committed between guerillas and Nazi Germany, the film made to mark the seventy years since the slaughter offers official confirmation of the town's divided memory.

The film brings into the picture German friends of the Kalavrytan society, including a journalist, who informed the German audience about the crime and Schramm's humanitarianism. Giannakakis keeps the good German fable at bay; yet, he does include two cases of oral history that resonate with the exceptional Wehrmacht savior theme. Both individuals, one of them residing in Kalavryta and another in a nearby *kalavrytochori*, while recalling their childhood memories spoke of a Wehrmacht soldier who decided, on his own initiative, to exclude them from the group of males facing execution. Both narrators expressed their deep gratitude to the Wehrmacht soldier who chose to spare their lives. Based on my experience in the field, I find the story of the narrator poorly documented, as opposed to more mainstream and well-known narratives documented in the field. Additionally, based on my understanding of the data collected in the course of my meeting with Giannakakis, I believe

that he was prompted by the people who commissioned the film to interview the more conservative representatives of Kalavrytan society. Regarding the absence of the “good German” in this film, I assume that Giannakakis decided to avoid this pitfall after conducting historical research on the subject. The inclusion of the two unknown exceptional savior accounts, nevertheless, is likely an attempt on his part to bridge the gap between pleasing his financial backers and producing a film based on historical facts.

Giannakakis himself did the voiceover of the film. When we talked, he seemed to have regretted this decision, which he said was taken purely for practical reasons. There is, however, another way of reading this voice narrating the words written in his own script. In my view, this dissociation between written and spoken word enables the filmmaker to introduce a pluralistic element in his work. In the voiceover, while the speaking subject narrates, his voice echoes other voices which, during the process of making the film, taught him when to speak and when to keep silent. Panopoulos (2016, p.338) argues that the experience of repeatedly listening to familiar voices results in these voices blending with other voices, which, in turn, will become enmeshed in the network of voices coexisting in our own person. According to Panopoulos, we ourselves are the medium for all those different voices, with our psychological state at any one time determining which one of them will come to the surface. The voices echoed in Giannakakis as a speaking subject become entangled with the ones he already serves as medium to, that is, with all the often undefined, unconscious or repelled, voices that attract and repulse us. Then they blend with the voices embedded in each listener’s individual mental world and personal imaginary, where they are piled “upon and inside one another, reflecting desires and repulsions, wounds and healings, muted cries and painful silences.” (Panopoulos, 2016, p.338).

When the *Echoes of the Past* crew traveled to Kalavryta in June 2015 for location-hunting purposes, I happened to be there as well. I therefore had the chance to experience first-hand the reactions of the local population which, it is my impression, contributed to the crew's bringing that first visit to an abrupt end. Their second, more coordinated visit took place in 2017, when it was also revealed that new actors had been cast for the film. The actual shooting took place in mid-December 2018, at Sopoto, a nearby *kalavrytochori* which looks similar to Kalavryta before the catastrophe ("To Sopoto metamorphothike", 2018).

During a conversation we had about *Echoes of the Past* on 13 May 2022, a member of the MMKH's board talked about the museum's role in supporting the filmmaking team during their research. He stressed that he had strongly advised them to stick to the facts and avoid either bumping up the number of the dead or including any reference to the myth of the imaginary savior. Both pleas were not only ignored, but in fact actively contradicted. The central character of *Echoes of the Past: Kalavryta 1943* is that of an Austrian soldier. Throughout the film, we follow his perspective of the days he spent in Kalavryta before the massacre, culminating in his heroic act of breaking the padlock of the school and releasing the women and the children from the blazes. In the film, a female German lawyer is appointed by the contemporary German government to find evidence that would undermine the Greek side's claims for war reparations. To this end, she travels to present-day Kalavryta. Following her visit to the MMKH, she discovers in a presumably official archive reports alluding to the controversial figure of a so-called good German. In the end, she not only achieves her goal of establishing his existence and thus dissolving any doubts over the veracity of the myth, but is also also successful in locating his house in Austria and paying honours to his beautiful wife, who is still alive, for her dead husband's exceptional moral standard. The dramaturgy goes

even further, as the lawyer, deeply moved by her experience, refuses to use this evidence against the Greek government and ends up dropping the case. Therefore, as Peter Bradshaw notes in a review of the film published in the Guardian: “She, in effect, becomes the film’s second imaginary good German” (Bradshaw, 2022).

Following the screening of the trailer, before the film had even premiered, the Victims of the Kalavrytan Holocaust Association voiced their fierce reactions in both Greek and international media. Nevertheless, the film had already gained wide visibility through all kinds of media advertising, including posters on the streets and the metro in Athens. At first, the production team opted for selected screenings across Greece, as well some international screenings (the film’s languages are Greek, English, and German.) However, following strong local reactions reported in the media (including rumors about legal procedures being initiated against the filmmakers), the distributors of the film seemed to have decided to pause screenings altogether. Some elderly Kalavrytans who had personally experienced the confinement in the school spoke up against the film. Oral history circulated on TV, radio, press, and social media is often mediated by familiar voices and faces: for a brief moment, the preoccupations of my own research became topics of discussion in the wider public sphere.

Echoes of Echoes of the Past: the treatment of the film in local media

Echoes of the Past: Kalavryta 1943, and particularly so the representation of the “good German”, created further divisions in a local community already split over the reading of its own past. The reactions to the film came from three different groups. The first one consisted of first-hand witnesses, who authoritatively stated that there was no evidence of the existence of a benevolent Austrian soldier at the school. The second group, consisting of later-generation

Kalavrytans who were not born yet in 1943, questioned the claims of the first group by reminding them that the story of the good German was taught to them at school. Finally, the third group consisted of people who, although acknowledging the historical misappropriation the film performs, argued that this should be seen as a mere corollary of the infinitely more important positive exposure the Kalavrytan Holocaust was getting as a result of the film. The representatives of this last cluster were often dismissed as *fertoι*: that is, as not being directly related to the traumatic heritage of the crime, which they were therefore unable to understand.

In the aftermath of the screening, several articles appeared in the local press reflecting the locals' concerns. In order to examine the intricate network of connections developing between public history and society in Kalavryta, in the pages that follow, I will provide a detailed analysis of an open discussion held in 2021 in response to the film. I will be examining one article published in a local newspaper and a Facebook post published in response to the former, in the account page of a discontinued local newspaper. I have selected to proceed through a close reading of only these two articles, rather than an extensive indexing of as many examples as possible, as I believe that these two cases best encapsulate how the content of the film affected the contemporary Kalavrytan society. It should, however, be noted from the outset that the argumentation set forward in the two articles I will be examining is by no means exhaustive.

The first reaction to the film I will examine is an extensive, four-page article written by local historian Filippos Sardelianos (2021, p. 26-29) and published in the newspaper *Ora Ton Kalavriton* in the wake of the political tension created as a result of the film. This article offers a thorough—and therefore useful for this chapter's objectives—examination of the context within which the figure of the “good German” emerged. Sardelianos locates the first reference

to the good German in a 1945 book entitled *Oi Sfages Ton Kalavryton* (The Kalavryta Massacres), written by the historian Kostas Kalantzis (1945). Sardelianos claims that the figure of the “good German” is already ambiguous from its very first reference. Kalantzis, Sardelianos points out, is not an actual eyewitness of what happened in Kalavryta in December 1943 as he was living in Athens at the time, so the descriptions he provides are not only second-hand, but dubious. As an example, Sardelianos refers to a Red Cross echelon report written on 28 December 1943, providing different information regarding the Kalavryta incident, which, Sardelianos claims, Kalantzis purposely chose to ignore.

After dealing a blow to the foundations of the myth, Sardelianos goes on to provide his own interpretations of the factors that rendered this myth resilient over the years. To begin with, he addresses an extremely pertinent question: why is it that, since his very first apparition in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe, the good soldier keeps changing nationalities? According to Sardelianos (and Meyer, 2001), this is in part due to the misleading visit of Jean Liro, the Alsatian soldier mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; and, in part, to a belief widely held both locally and across the country that Austrians were “less Nazi than the Nazis”. Since elder Kalavrytans depicted the Wehrmacht as cruel, heartless cogs in a killing machine who were blindly obeying orders, Sardelianos argues that a merciful German soldier would be more convincing in the form of an Alsatian or an Austrian. He concludes that this alone could account for the good German’s shifting identity and dubious nationality.

Sardelianos’ claim is corroborated by Hagen Fleisher’s analysis of memory polemics in the aftermath of WWII (Fleisher, 2008, p. 511-512). Fleischer argues that public history is not merely applied to a specific societal model, but rather grows together with the community for which it is “created”. To illustrate this point, Fleischer frequently mentions Austria in the course of his analysis, as this is a country that spent years trying to develop the image of a nation

where peace and benevolence reign, thus silencing its central contribution to Nazism. This image was disrupted during Kurt Waldheim's electoral campaign for the 1986 elections (Beckermann, 2018) when it was revealed that the soon-to-be president of Austria had been a high-ranking Wehrmacht officer stationed in Greece during WWII, responsible for several war crimes committed across the country, as well as for the deportation of the Jewish population of Greece (Fleischer, 2008). Fleischer concludes that Austria's public history is closely linked to the myth of the good German in Kalavryta, as in both cases an entire mythology has been constructed around a non-existent person.

After making this point, Sardelianos goes on to argue that the myth of the good German is something that long preexisted both the film and the debate it gave rise to, as it is a direct outcome of the dynamics established during the Civil War (in the broad sense of the term, as explained in the introduction) as well as a direct consequence of the rapprochement policies pursued by Greece and Germany following the war. According to Sardelianos, this is the nerve that the film hit and the reason for the tension it created. To prove his point, he painstakingly traces the various efforts made throughout the years to substantiate the myth through different proposals for monument or actual instances of monumentalization, epitomized, at long last, in the film itself.

In support of his arguments, Sardelianos mentions two proposals for monumentalizing the "good German" in Kalavryta—one of which never materialized, while the other only partly.

The first, and earliest, proposal Sardelianos mentions is one put forward in a 1969 article, which appeared in the local newspaper *I Foni Ton Kalavriton*, to install at the building of the school (now housing the MMKH) an honorary plate in memory of the "unknown benefactor of Kalavryta". Significantly, the only phrase of that article Sardelianos isolates and cites in full is the following: "Men (with a capital M) should honor Man and therefore prove

that the people of Kalavryta do know how to pay tribute to what is good, and the same goes for what is evil". After citing this passage, a sarcastic Sardelianos points out that this idea to "honour the good Nazi" was articulated at a time when the monument for the executed Kalavrytans had not even been completed. Nobody actually went through with installing the plate in question. The second attempt at creating a memorial trace for the good German, according to Sardelianos, was a proposal put forward by the Union of Kalavrytans in Athens (UKA). Following the construction of a traditional stone faucet at the train station square, the UKA suggested the construction of a second faucet dedicated to the "*agnosto oikogeneiarchi anthropo*" [unknown family man] who helped rescue the children of Kalavryta. Interestingly, this reference, in the article cited by Sardelianos, to the hero's own family aimed at establishing a link among all human beings suffering from the alienation of war: a position that goes hand in hand with the use of a much harsher vocabulary to describe the Wehrmacht soldiers who were involved in the events. The German troops are now described as "anthropomorphic beasts" (ανθρωπόμορφα κτήνη) so that the community of Kalavryta can better grasp the prevailing culture within which the heroic German had to break in order to perform his act of mercy. In August 1977, the UKA announced that it was going ahead with making a second faucet on which the inscription "in memory of the German soldier" would be engraved, together with a poem lauding his extraordinary "act of humaneness". The stone faucet was built. The inscription lending the good German soldier his first physical manifestation was carved, but the poem, although written, never made it to the square.

As far as documenting the myth of the good German goes, Sardelianos' input stops here. There is, however, a last part to his article, which I would like to comment on at some length as I believe it marks a very interesting change of course in relation to what has preceded it. After going to great lengths to argue that the "good German" was not a historical figure—

whether of German, Austrian or Alsatian descent—Sardelianos now goes on to suggest that the good German did in fact exist, only he was not just one person. Instead, he was an entire group of German soldiers who defected into the ranks of the Resistance. Sardelianos thus creates a new, displaced version of the myth of the “good German”, a plural figure whose heroism he accentuates by noting that the defectors joining the enemy antifascist camp risked the death penalty if caught by the Wehrmacht. To prove this point, Sardelianos includes a document unfamiliar to Kalavrytans, namely a poster appearing in print for the first time. Used by antifascists within the Wehrmacht to incite like-minded Wehrmacht soldiers to join the ELAS, the poster depicts a clock about to strike twelve. On the upper left side, we can read the words EAM ELAS, while under the clock we can see a soldier holding a swastika whose lines have been replaced by snakes. The poster is printed with a black mono-plate and features the following phrase in capital letters: *DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN! HITLER UHR DEUTSCHLAND ZUR KATASTROPHE! GEB HIRE WAFFEN DEM ELAS! KAEMPFT MIT DEM ELAS. GEGEN HITLER!* [GERMAN SOLDIERS! HITLER IS LEADING GERMANY TO DISASTER! GIVE YOUR WEAPONS TO ELAS! FIGHT WITH THE ELAS. AGAINST HITLER!].

These “good Germans” in the plural, Sardelianos adds, paid an equally high price for their decision to defect in the years that followed, as the state apparatus of post-WWII West Germany was often manned by the same people who served as leaders within Nazi Germany. These were the real anti-fascists of the 117th division, Sardelianos notes, but precisely because they were defectors and incorporated into ELAS, they were excluded both from the film and from the official historical narratives of Greece and Germany, which instead positioned the good German within the Wehrmacht ranks to serve their own political and ideological agenda.

Before I turn to the second article, in my attempt to trace the echoes of the *Echoes of the Past* controversy, I would like to examine a more recent reading of the myth of the “good

German” provided by anthropologist Konstantinos Kalantzis’ (2022). In a text discussing the film which appeared in *Greek Studies Now: A Cultural Analysis Network*, Kalantzis construes the myth of the good (German) soldier as speaking “to a certain sensibility regarding the incorporation of Others in Greece by differentiating them from a general category (Herzfeld, 1987). In that sense, a certain German man/woman can become ‘our own German’ (δικός μας) even if he/she was originally seen as a representative of ‘Germany’ (the entity which is Other/hostile, etc.)”. Kalantzis offers the example of a German woman married to a Greek man in Crete and perceived by her mother-in-law as “different” from the Germans who committed atrocities during WWII. In my view, however, in the case of Kalavryta, the imagined Other could be incorporated as “our own” only by a part of the ideologically divided community. Another part of the community, as Sardelianos argued, construed as “our own” actual Germans who were actively supporting the locals during the occupation of Greece by the Wehrmacht. A characteristic example is that of Greta Golphinopoulou, a German woman married to a Greek man based in the broader Aigialeia area, who helped the local community and informed the guerillas on the Wermacht’s moves. In the course of one of our interviews, Sardelianos referred to Greta as a spy. In addition, in an article covering an event in honour of her contribution to the Greek community, Greta was presented as a heroine. Crucially, this event was held in order to mark the the 28th of October celebrations, which in Greece is known as the “ochi day” and commemorates the Greeks’ struggle against the Nazis. By choosing to honour Greta Golphinopoulou—locally known simply as Greta—on that day in specific, the community not only recognizes this foreign woman as a local benefactor, but also praises her choice to side with the Greeks when the latter took up the arms against her Nazi fellow countrymen. As the author of an article covering the event in protionline.gr newssite noted, in

the eyes of the local community, this decision suggests that Greta “loved Greece more than the Greeks themselves” (“I iroida Greta”, 2018).

Let us now turn to the second reaction to the film I will be examining. As mentioned earlier, this is a Facebook post published in *I Foni Ton Kalavriton* (2021), which was written partly in response to Sardelianos’ article in *I Ora Ton Kalvriton*. As the post was accompanied by the frontispiece of the same book written by the historian Kostas Kalantzis whom Sardelianos discussed at length in his own article, what we have here is a kind of forked trajectory that departs from the same point of departure to arrive at different destinations and conclusions.

The author of the post begins by casting into doubt the commonly held belief that the story of the “good German” was first conceived of ten years after the massacre by the teacher Mimis Kaldiris. According to the post, the fact that Kalantzis already expressed his gratitude to the savior in this book written only a couple of years after the massacre is evidence enough to refute the above claim. Turning to the myth itself rather than its creator, the anonymous author of the post then moves on to argue that those who question the story’s veracity are the same people still expecting and claiming German reparations 80 years after the crime and who, for that reason, have a vested interest in denying any possibility of compassion to the other side. Nevertheless, the post concludes, what happened in Kalavryta is rather a case in point, exemplifying crimes committed all around the world both before and after the 13th of December 1943, and which will continue to occur until a certain spirit of humaneness “pacifies our souls”.

The most interesting thing about this article is that it consists of a response which, in fact, refuses to respond to any of the arguments challenging the hypothesis that a good German/Austrian/Alsatian soldier ever did act as a benefactor for the people of Kalavryta. As

Sardelianos preempted in his piece, the article indeed affirms its complete indifference to every argument trying to debunk the myth of the good German. There is no attempt to provide counter arguments or articulate new positions, since the publication is addressed to a sedimented group of people who are already in ideological coalition. Indeed, this post attests to the existence of a specific group of individuals who have their own interests—political as well as ideological—to keep the myth alive. This conservative-leaning part of the population still supports the myth as it remains affixed to the post-civil war discourse, which assigned the exclusive blame for the crime to the partisan guerillas as part of an attempt to shield the community against communism. In addition, this group opposes the reparation claims still demanded by many in Kalavryta, as a potential full attribution of the responsibility to the perpetrator would vindicate the partisan-led resistance. As Sardelianos states, what is at stake in Kalavryta is the right to resistance *per se*.

In this context, the use of the phrase a “man with a capital M” is crucial. Its use is indicative of an apolitical disposition that promotes a humanitarian attitude calling on everyone to relate to others on the basis of being a certain kind of man, “a man with a capital M”. This results in an emotional reading of history, best encapsulated in the sacrificial figure of the unknown Man who saved the day and the lives of so many by performing an exceptional act. As a result, the unknown Man acquires the status of the Savior, thus creating a dichotomy built purely on wishful thinking that differentiates between, on the one hand, an idealized savior with humanistic sensibilities and, on the other hand, a historically extant group of resistance fighters who, far from being safely tucked away in an ideal world, were active in WWII and the ensuing civil war. An immediate consequence of this dichotomy is that the members of the second category, burdened with flesh and blood, as well as a historical existence, will always be found morally inadequate in comparison to the ideal Man-Savior.

In my view, this non-communication and non-engaging with the other side's arguments—which was an attitude often adopted in post-Civil-War Greece and therefore well-established enough for local actors to immediately revert back to during moments of tension—is exemplarily demonstrated in this open debate (or non-debate) between Sardelianos and the anonymous author of the Facebook post. That is the reason why I chose to search for the echoes of *Echoes of the Past* by juxtaposing these two responses to the film's depiction of the good German/Austrian/Alsation. In my view, an important conclusion that can be drawn from studying these two attempts to articulate the feeling of unease the film gave rise to is that the latter succeeded, where the stone faucet and memorial plate initiatives had failed: it monumentalized the “good German soldier”.

Is there, then, any hard evidence to document the existence of a “good German”? Field research shows that there are indeed references regarding specific Wehrmacht soldiers who tried to alert individual Kalavrytans about the execution through isolated words and gestures. The witnesses who recall these warnings stated that they were given a few days before the massacre, in the context of private conversations between Germans and Greeks held in houses requisitioned by the Germans. These warnings, then, are not part of the community's collective memory, as they have never been officially confirmed, and thus can only be classified as rumours. On a pragmatic level, nobody ever claimed to have survived because of these warnings. What is more, these private memories have entered collective memory through the narrations of people describing the highly contradictory information that circulated during the last hours of the massacre, when it was far too late to escape. The only exception to this is an act that has indeed been confirmed in common memory, which was performed by one (or more) Wehrmacht soldiers: the decision to not set fire to a house during the operation because

a woman was giving birth inside. Elderly women cynically attribute the status of “having a soul” to the people who allowed the purpose of life to continue uninterrupted.

Continuing the back and forth between fiction and reality that are the subject matter of this chapter, I would like to conclude this section by quoting some passages from a play written in 1966. No longer writing as a historian, but as an aspiring playwright, Kalantzis, the author of the book denounced by Sardelianos and lauded by the author of the post discussed above, explores the December 13 events in a play entitled *Keravnos sta Kalavryta* [*Lightning in Kalavryta*]. This is a theater piece written as a radio play, which is classified as a tragedy. The action takes place in the Petimeza castle in Soudena, a building of significance during the 1821 rebellion. In the play, Kalantzis weaves together the two historical junctures (1821 revolution and 1943 resistance) by placing the headquarters of the guerillas within the Petimeza castle. In addition, the characters of the play, played by well-known male actors, are given either famous surnames belonging to the heroes of the 1821 revolution or common Kalavrytan surnames, while the female characters are given only first names. In Act II, Scene 3, which takes place in the same location, the women interrupt a guerilla meeting in order to report that the Wehrmacht has attacked and destroyed the town. Here is how the exodus from the burning school is described:

Haji: Then all that world of women became a storm, a hurricane, and a mother's curse, which wipes out oceans, and castles, and flattens mountains. He strode to the great door, he joined the watches, and marched to the station.

Vassonia: Justice, captains! Justice! There, at the great door, there happened to be an exquisite Austrian flower, of poetry and music. He had felt the purpose of the fire and did everything to save us.

Captains: Hail to the lad. Honor to the man. (p. 36)

Here, in addition to the ideological aspects related to the construction of the good German myth, I would like to note the addition of a gendered one. The women are described as ethereal beings dressed in luxurious fabrics (Foteinopoulos, 2004), who, “skouzoun” (a word whose meaning is close to that of howling as it is used both for humans and for animals but also in the context of lamentations) and narrate their experiences in a simplistic manner (Kalantzis, 1945). Following the events, they are depicted as in need of a strong male hand at the moment of crisis, thus exemplifying a patriarchal way of thinking. Those helpless women alone cannot open doors or break windows due to their state of panic, so an imaginary, exceptionally brave male must appear at this moment, in order to save them and thus reverse the flow of history. It seems more preferable to invent a superhero, rather than acknowledge that they, the women themselves, made it out of the building, which had been consigned to flames. Women were deemed inferior, and thus incapable of making any political and/or practical contribution to the war. It seems they were kept alive solely due to the perpetrator’s merciful action. Consequently, in the framework of this patriarchal narrative, in order to create a counterbalance against the narrative held by the Kalavrytan men, who were dead, and therefore incapable of protecting their women, the myth of an imaginary male coming from the side of their killers was fabricated.

The faucet

Let us now go back to the only material manifestation of “the good German” in Kalavryta. As mentioned earlier, this was the much-debated stone faucet, built at the initiative of the Kalavrytan Association of Athens. As this monument to the “good German” is unique, I would like to give some additional information regarding the location selected to host it; discuss what this choice may suggest; and, finally, examine an artwork I believe is intrinsically linked to the aforementioned choice.

In the late 1980s, while the building now housing the MMKH was still the town’s primary school, a large mural was painted on a prominent outer wall of an auxiliary structure adjoining the main building. The mural depicted the town of Kalavryta situated in a green landscape full of blood. Two figures were flying in the sky, holding hands. They wore long dresses bearing names of European cities where the Axis Forces had committed atrocities during WWII, while inside the circle formed by the connected arms one could read the phrase “World Union of Martyr Cities and Cities of Peace”. This mural was a collaborative project developed between a group of young German volunteers (all members of an annual exchange program) and the Kalavrytan painter Costas Koutsouris. The impressive artistic result of monumental dimensions gained warm acceptance locally, due to its anti-war symbolism, antifascist connotations as well as the reference to the World Union of Martyr Cities and Cities of Peace. Shortly after, the artwork was printed on Kalavryta postcards.

Koutsouris was born in Kalavryta in 1913 and had a successful career in Greece following his studies at the Athens School of Fine Arts, the Istituto Centrale di Restauro in Rome, the Louvre Museum and the Munich Art Gallery. There are, however, not many traces left of either him or his art in contemporary Kalavryta. Two well-preserved murals of his can still be found locally at the Kallimanopouleio nursing home, while some of his works are kept in private local collections. Other than that, Koutsouri’s artworks are not prominently displayed

anywhere in Kalavryta. A few framed copies of his work are in circulation while a painting he drew depicting the Church's bell tower in flames is included as a digital reference in the museum's website. The main body of his work, however, is absent from the museum's collection. The same oversight, in my view, characterizes his artistic legacy in general, which is also absent from the town. For all the above reasons, it took some time before I found out about his existence.

During the occupation in WWII, Koutsouris was a renowned partisan fighter known as Captain Kostakis. He was active on Chelmos Mountain and more broadly the Aigialeia area. He lost many of his relatives at the execution on Kappi's hill and the artworks he had produced before the massacre are commonly understood to have been burned together with the rest of the town. It is said that he was the first guerilla who entered Kalavryta after the massacre. His testimony of that day was published in the local newspaper *Alitheia*. After the catastrophe, Koutsouris moved to Athens but kept close ties with the Kalavrytan community and participated in initiatives aimed at keeping the memory of the events alive. As the Kalavrytan Efstathia Tzouda-Mitsiona noted in the speech she gave on the occasion of his death: "You set a goal and cooperated with everyone to preserve forever the memory of the martyrs of Kalavryta and the heroic Kalavryta women and the last word you said before you breathed your last breath was "go ahead, my soul will rest when the museum is built to commemorate the sacrifice". By "collaborating with everybody" Tzouda-Mitsiona refers to Koutsouris' participation in initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among the different sides involved, directly or indirectly, with the December 1943 massacre both in Greece and internationally. Koutsouris was also active in trying to rekindle the relations between Kalavryta and Germany, for example through the meetings he held with a Wehrmacht soldier who survived the execution at Mazi and visited Kalavryta twice after the end of the war. Additionally, he helped

get Kalavryta involved in the network of “martyr” cities that had suffered similar experiences during WWII and thus build connections wishing to promote solidarity among people on the basis of anti-war and anti-fascist ideals. The decisions to include Kalavryta in the network of martyr cities was published in the government Gazette in 1993 (Law 2130/21.4.1993) at a time when many local actors supported this type of small-scale German-Greece initiatives. However, when the war reparations claim came into the picture, the local population grew more reticent regarding the welcoming of cultural and educational projects aimed at strengthening the ties between the two countries, especially larger-scale projects directly funded by Germany.

Among the youth and student exchanges programs initiated by Germany in the 80’s, the one that left its trace most vividly in Kalavryta was organized by Gisella Abel and Pastor Ulrich Probst from Wolfsburg. According to Meyer (2001, pp. 682-3), the program lasted for 19 years, possibly with the support of a Kalavrytan based in Germany. Young Kalavrytans and Wolfsburgers quickly overcame the initial hesitance and suspicion, developing close friendships. Some Kalavrytans involved in the program recall that sentiments shifted once they found out that the German participants did not come from a privileged background, but rather from families facing the same working class struggles as themselves. Others still remember them fondly due to a number of activities they either initiated or became involved with, for example cleaning and painting the playground, weeding overgrown areas in public spaces, or helping Koutsouris paint his large mural. As a general rule, the local community was tolerant towards the new German generation in an effort to put the past behind.

Some young Kalavrytans who visited Germany as part of the exchange program described Abel and Probst as “some kind of missionaries” and the content of the program as “socio-cultural”. They remember Probst as a friendly and easygoing man who enjoyed

spending time with the local youth drinking beer and listening to rock, metal and punk music. Many of the Kalavrytans who had participated in the program, however, still wonder to this day why he did not keep in touch with them after the end of the program. Was his presence in Kalavryta a mere professional engagement and therefore saw no interest in keeping touch? Or did someone say something to him that injured or insulted him? I myself tried to get in touch with him while researching the history of the program, but received no reply.

When the school building was renovated to house the MMKH, the building on which the mural was painted had to be demolished. Ironically, even though Koutsouris was the first to apply science-based art conservation in Greece, meaning that as a result of his work, preserving at least a part of the artwork would have been possible, no attempt was made to save the mural. With time, the only evidence left from the mural is its depiction in a painting drawn by Michalis Glarakis, a self-taught Kalavrytan painter. Although much younger in age, Glaraki had been, a close friend of Koutsouris. He told me that his painting faithfully depicts the image of the initial artwork, the only difference being that he has added more blood. Following Marianne Hirsch (2012), it could be argued here that Glarakis' addition to the original artwork is an act of postmemory, as his composition is based on a story he does not recall from his own memory but through the inherited memories of others.

The wall on which the mural was painted was the same one on which the stone faucet with the inscription "in memory of the German soldier" was later mounted. Tellingly, the poem which the Athens Kalavrytan Association suggested to have inscribed next to the good German memorial stone faucet back in 1977 was written by Georgios Koutsouris, then Vice Chairman of the Athens Kalavrytan Association (Sardelianos, 2021) and a relative of Kostas Koutsouris, although of different political convictions.

I will use the term “overlapping monumentality” to describe this coexistence of memorial materializations that occupy (parts of) the same surface, yet represent opposing memorial/monumental interests, often developed in response to each other. In the case of the faucet, the mural and the museum in Kalavryta, the palimpsest-like nature of this overlapping monumentality generates a game of hide and seek, as can be evidenced in the surviving photo documentation of the mural where the faucet is at times visible, at times not.

The crew placed in charge of renovating the school to house the MMKH said that the auxiliary structure on which the mural was painted had to be brought down in order to increase visibility from the MMKH’s main building. I wonder, however, if the demolition of the wall with the overlapping monumental traces could be viewed as echoing the difficult heritage of the Civil War era (Macdonald, 2009). Was the decision to demolish the building so quickly partly prompted by a desire to forget the divisions of the past? Or could, perhaps, this act be considered an act of responsibility towards future generations? In Macdonald’s words, could this be a “way of—at least partially—avoiding having to continually negotiate the difficult heritage” by physically removing the reminders of its presence (p. 52).



Figure 10. Postcard depicting the mural by Kostas Kotsouris between the two faucets. The one on the right is the faucet the Athens Kalavrytan Association proposed for memorialization (Christos Koutsouris archive).

Untitled

At this point, I would like to integrate in this chapter the artistic results drawn from the PRP project linked with this area of my research. While trying to track down information about Koutsouris' life and work, I was put in contact with his son Christos Koutsouris who currently lives in the Netherlands. Subsequently, I was in frequent contact with Christos, through long phone calls and live meetings. He told me many stories about his father's life, his relation to Kalavryta, his artistic career and, most importantly, his father's participation in the Resistance. Both Christos Koutsouris and his wife, Elisabeth Franken, are art lovers with many artworks in their possession. Among these works was also a small (13 X 11 cm) oil painting on plywood by Kostas Koutsouris, which haunted me from the moment I saw it.

The artwork was framed, so it was not possible for me to check if it was titled or dated at the back. Christos Koutsouris refused to remove the frame, but nonetheless informed me that his father had painted it while he was an *antartis* [guerilla] on the mountains, adding that his father had continued to produce work during his guerrilla years. For practical reasons, his artworks were of a much smaller scale during that period. It turned out that the painting that interested me had been Kostas Koutsouris' talisman. As Christos told me, he always kept it with him wherever he went. As a result, due to being constantly rattled around in Koutsouris' bag, the painting ended up broken in two.

The painting depicts mount Helmos together with the inscription 1821. This was a pivotal, but locally forgotten reference, for the Greek resistance during WWII. As is often the case, a reference to the past can help people better understand their present, so the guerillas of ELAS decided to compare themselves to the fighters of 1821 (Liakos 2019, pp. 248-9). On the painting, the Helmos mountain where guerillas set up camp and took refuge symbolizes a

perennial symbol of the resistance. The guerrillas in the Kalavryta area often appropriated the names of renowned fighters active in the 1821 revolution as their nicknames (Kakogiannis 1998, Rodakis, 1999, Michos, 2018). Through this appropriation, they aligned themselves with a long historical tradition and linked the resistance they put up against the occupation of Greece by the Axis forces to the revolutionary struggle of 1821, proposing an imaginary of similarly glorious results. From this perspective, this painting by Koutsouris, which at first sight appears as landscape art, is best understood as a war painting extolling the Resistance and depicting a battlefield that eventually would claim the lives of so many people.

I see in this broken artwork an embodiment of the trauma the town endured when one of the key elements making up the Kalavrytan identity—its identification as the proud locality that resisted the Ottomans—became compromised due to the community's divided reception of the resistance mounted against the occupiers in WWII. On the one hand, then, there is national pride associated with the rebellion against the Ottoman empire associated with Kalavryta, which, as previously mentioned, holds a highly symbolic place in the country's history; and, on the other hand, there is the communist-led Resistance against the occupiers in WWII, which is proudly celebrated by one segment of the community and fiercely disclaimed by the other.

Interestingly, the painting created as a talisman against the Wehrmacht incorporates elements of German impressionism. The latter can be explained on the basis of the long-term artistic exchanges between Greece and Germany. During the first stages of the newly established Greek state and the rule of Otto, the Bavarian first King of Greece, a delegation of civil servants came from Bavaria to train the artists of the fledgling state (Christopoulos, 2022). Later on, a group of Greek artists moved to Munich to study art. They formed the Munich School, the most influential style of painting in Greece at the time. The strong ties formed

between the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and the Fine Art school in Athens were never severed in the years that followed and can be traced all the way up to the present. Artistic influences from central Europe resulted in what is described by some researchers as a “special integrative power of Greek art” (Christopoulos, 2022, p. 331). To begin with, Greek impressionism integrates several characteristics of German impressionism, while later on it also turns towards French impressionism (p. 339). As a result, Koutsouri’s war painting is realized in a painting technique partly instructed by the occupier. On a symbolic level, this connection is indeed quite interesting, as a talisman incorporating something of the enemy can be said to be even more effective against her.

I wanted to transport the artwork, which has never been catalogued or exhibited anywhere in the world, to Kalavryta and introduce it to the community. However, Christos Koutsouris did not want to let the piece travel, so instead I decided to produce one exact 3D copy of the painting made by a company responsible for reproducing renowned art pieces presented in famous museums in Western Europe. The 3D printing was made in 2019 and will be presented in Kalavryta alongside other artistic results of the PRP project.



Figure 11. *Untitled* (Gouseti, 2019). A replica of an oil painting by Kostas Koutsouris (own picture, 2019).

Artistic conclusions and the turn to Anthropology

The reason why I have examined the Working Group Distomo event, as well as the two films depicting the Kalavryta massacre, in so much detail is that my encounter with these artistic products greatly influenced some core decisions I made in the course of this project, including my involvement with anthropology. The encounter with these artworks made me realise that projects of this kind, which bring the community's past into the spotlight and, as a result, increased visibility for its members in the present, create upheaval on a local level and often end up reactivating past divisions and traumas. Knowing that my own project could have the same results, it was necessary to understand how memory communities dealing with the past of Kalavryta interact with each other and how the wider social relations may be impacted as a result of this interaction. The fact that my artistic/anthropological project has from the outset set as its goal to address the local community furthered my interest in the topic. What conclusions, then, can an artist-turned anthropologist draw from studying these three case studies—these three artistic products dealing with the community's traumatic past— and from following the process of their production?

Let's start with the case of Working Group Distomo. The opening of the second part of d14 in Kassel coincided with the 74th anniversary of the Distomo slaughter. In the context of *the Parliament of Bodies*, which aimed to inhabit "sites of contested histories whose memories force us to question hegemonic and romanticized narratives of democratic Europe", working Group Distomo sought to inform the public about the crime that took place in Greece during WWII. The event took the form of a discussion held between the physicist, poet, translator and survivor of the slaughter Argyris Sfoudouris and the artist, writer and activist Maragarita Tsomou, which was then followed by a Greek traditional women's group singing a lament. According to the event's press release, this meeting was framed "as a practical exercise in the

politics of remembrance”, in the course of which Sfountouris and Tsomou would “campaign for a reappraisal of the atrocities of fascism—which is all the more urgent in light of political developments in Europe and worldwide”. But what kind of reappraisal could ever be pursued on the basis of Sfoudouris’ tenuous claim that “not all SS officers” were equally responsible for the crimes committed by the Nazis? Further to being unsubstantiated, this claim builds on and perpetuates the rhetoric of the superior savior who spared the lives of the subordinate subjects placed in his hand to kill or let live. As I fail to see in which way Sfoudouris’ input could contribute to any of the declared purposes of d14’s *Parliament of Bodies*, I tend to interpret Sfoudouris’ statement and overall presence in the event as the result of poor research. Sfoudouris, a well-known public figure in German-speaking Europe, is neither the only source on the history of Distomo, nor the only survivor of the massacre. Yet, it seems to me that Sfoudouris’ presence in the panel was not the result of a selection process that included other survivors. Had Tsomou interviewed more survivors and been more careful with crosschecking information, the fact that Sfoudouris’ claims are unsupported by historical evidence would surely have come to the surface.

Let us now move on to the second case study I examined. The production process, the results and the reactions of the Kalavrytan audience to the film *Kalavryta 1943: Echoes of the Past* is a case in point concerning the impact a work addressing a general audience can have on the community from which it derives its subject matter. The filmmakers entered the field thanks to the support of certain local individuals whose views and overall stance were not representative of the entire community. Ignoring the reactions their presence provoked and not heeding the advice of the locals who expressly warned against using the figure of the “good German”, the producers adopted a mono-dimensional approach that completely disregarded

the different positions, specificities and complexities WWII memory triggers in Kalavryta. The result of this obstinate decision not to take into consideration the voices of concern was a film that, far from relating the story of a certain traumatic historical event that took place in the town referred to in its title, drew from a mythological construct and, using poetic license, developed it into a full-blown myth of epic proportions, which triggered the local community's divided memory. In contrast to the documenta 14 example, in this case the problem was not the lack of research on behalf of the filmmakers. The problem was rather the lack of care. The team did go to Kalavryta to conduct field research, but did not seem to be concerned about the problems their film could create for the local community: namely, that it could reactivate the divisions of the past. This strategy, however, backfired. Perhaps the producers did not pay too much attention to the locals' reactions as they had not anticipated that the latter would influence the general reception and distribution of the film. But it seems that Kalavrytans had a voice loud enough to also damage the film's international prospects.

The third example I considered was Giannakakis' film *Kalavryta: People and Shadows*. As opposed to *Echoes of the Past*, Giannakakis' film was commissioned locally from the MMKH. As a result, the filmmaker had access to local resources and to several locals willing to help him put their story on film. However, throughout our discussions, I sensed that several of the choices he made as a filmmaker were censored by the people who commissioned the film. I also got the impression that the archival material provided to him did not cover the entire ideological spectrum, nor did the persons to whom he was guided to conduct interviews. What is more, despite Giannakakis' conscientious efforts to research his subject matter in depth before starting to film, the very short deadline he was given to complete the film rendered it impossible for him to produce a narrative as inclusive as he would have liked.

The result of the above situation was the following: even though Giannakakis was

invited by Kalavrytans and shot his film under the community's guidance, a certain part of the local population sympathetic to the resistance found the film problematic and felt that it did not reflect the community's common memory. Engaging as the film's material may be, it is not as historically inclusive as it could have been if Giannakakis had been given more freedom. In my view, the problem in this case was that Giannakakis was commissioned to do a job in a setup that was more interested in his professional capacity as a man who knew how to make movies and not in his intellectual abilities to conduct his own research and weave the stories he would find into his own narrative. As a result, the filmmaker was instrumentalized and the film he shot was not as inclusive as it could have been.

These three examples are just three among many I could have chosen to include. The reason why I selected these ones in specific is, on the one hand, because the pitfalls their creators fell into were particularly instructive to me and, on the other hand, because all three were produced while I was working on the subject of Kalavryta. The study of these three examples helped me understand what I wanted to do and what I wanted to avoid doing in my own research. Already since the first years of my presence in the town, I had sensed that I had to be extremely careful in my overall attitude so as to be perceived as respectful.

In his remark quoted earlier, Katsantonis embraces an oversimplifying view of fiction, which he presents as a vehicle granting its user complete artistic license to start from a real-life event and arbitrarily produce any kind of fable she may choose, including the post-truth version of the "Good German". On the opposite side, there is Oppenheimer's view that the documentary form can offer people a counter-reality to the—distorted, as he claims—reality that surrounds them, and in that sense "restitute" the falsified reality presented in the public sphere.

Posited side by side, these two notions addressing fiction and reality in the context of film echo a long trail of theorizations that have been proposed to tackle different, and yet interrelated, binary oppositions, such as history/utopia, fiction/faction, ficting/facting, etc. (Mckenzie 2020). In the following pages, I will present some of these views, in order to justify my own decision to combine art and anthropology in the context of this project.

While discussing the distinction between fiction and documentary film during a talk given in 2017, Rancière claimed that this very division sustains the traditional logic according to which fiction is viewed as hierarchically inferior to fact. Building further on arguments elaborated in earlier texts concerning the inability to achieve rationality in history as long as reality and fiction are sharply distinguished from each other (Rancière, 2000), in 2017, Rancière states that “we are now in a reverse situation, where fiction has to struggle against the fake obviousness and the fake uniqueness”. According to Rancière, this struggle is a political act, a form of artistic invention that challenges the dominant order. He goes on to propose that in order to counterbalance the “reality” of domination, which we are driven to expect as the only existing reality, what is needed is to overturn the logic clearly—and artificially—distinguishing between fiction and reality and prioritizing the latter.

Antonis Liakos (2011), for his part, while trying to delineate the area of overlap between history and utopia situates history within the sphere of reality and utopia within the sphere of the possible. While the former, he claims, adumbrates the past, the latter carries forward and describes the future. It is through this process, he continues, that people construct a future for themselves. As the present consists of the actions, limitations and choices of the past, history and utopia are two conceptual areas that are not mutually exclusive. As both historical and utopian thinking respond to the same social processes, utopia, Liakos claims, is the potential

equivalent of history, and a necessary stage one needs to go through in order to fully grasp what is at stake in a specific historical era. Exploring the links between historical and utopian thinking—as manifested in poetry, literature and art in general, all of which reveal the spirit of their time better than any other form of writing—is necessary for understanding the horizon of long-term social expectations, which also informs historical writing. In other words, Liakos argues that anyone choosing to shed light on specific aspects of the past is always already creating the future. Significantly, Liakos views this condition not as a catastrophe plunging the historian into a generalized and relativistic subjectivity, but as an opportunity for taking up political action.

Both Rancière and Liakos, then, seem to agree that art—cinema, in the case of Rancière, “literature, poetry and art in general” in the case of Liakos—bears within it the potential to be placed at the centre of politically-engaged acts that could transform or disrupt the established order. In an article written in 2008, Chantal Mouffe moves in a very similar direction: “In our post-democracies where post-political consensus is being celebrated as a great advance for democracy, critical artistic practices can disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism is trying to spread [...] And, in many ways, they can also contribute to the construction of new subjectivities”.

Next to Mouffe’s statement, I would like to place McKenzie’s (2020) suggestion that we should move beyond the categories of fact and fiction when analyzing social phenomena of the present and past, and instead employ the more active concepts of “ficting” and “facting”, which she invites us to “think as practices that do things” (p. 203). My own choice, then, to develop a methodology blending anthropology and art was intended as one such attempt to come up with a practice that “does things”—specifically, does what Kalavrytans believe cannot

be done by relying on facts alone and also what I, through my research, have come to realize cannot be done by relying exclusively on artistic practices.

In my view, then, in order to produce a type of art capable of responding to communities dealing with trauma in a caring way that could potentially contribute to their process of healing, one needs to strike the right balance between facting and ficting. This type of art, which would serve to rework and renegotiate established knowledge or produce new knowledge by addressing silences and/or mapping uncharted territories of human activity can, as I have come to realize through this research, work best by blending together elements of art and anthropology. Relying on a deep understanding of lived experience, this type of art endeavors to offer potentialities that are respectful towards the community and tailored to the needs of its members.

These potentialities are then shaped into artistic results addressed primarily to the protagonists of the stories figuring in the artworks and, secondarily, to the rest of the world. For all the above reasons, and bearing in mind the theoretical approaches discussed above as well as many others I could not examine in depth in the context of this thesis, I propose the coalition of art and anthropology as a way of: care-fully approaching the past from a position of futurity; and producing artistic results that can open up new, broader areas of knowledge, which have previously remained sealed off as a result of the trauma endured by the community. From this perspective, I fully embrace Rancière's notion (2017) that the real needs to be fictionalized in order to be thought.

Interlude: Two Tales of One City

In the previous chapters, I presented the dominant version of what happened in Kalavryta in December 1943 by providing a detailed examination of two post-WWII narratives, i.e., the official historiography (-ies) recently placed on display on the occasion of the MMKH's opening and the one developed around the myth of the "good German". In the course of both these analyses, I have often referred to the existence of an alternative version of events, which the leftwing community of Kalavryta supports and promotes every time memory is triggered. In the following pages, I will be presenting some core differences between this counter version of history and the dominant one, using the memorial traces of Dinos Pavlopoulos' hanging as my point of departure. On the way to the "upper playground", next to a plane tree which is part of a clump one can perceive on the side of the road, a memorial stone marks the spot where the landmark killing of Dinos Pavlopoulos took place. In the period following the capitulation of Italy, German violence escalated and resistance fighting grew fiercer. After the disarmament of the Italian troops in September 1943, Greek guerillas declared Kalavryta a free territory. The Wehrmacht's immediate response was to send a detail to the town to discipline the locals and warn them against supporting the guerillas. On their way up the mountains, the Wehrmacht troops burned down Soudena, a nearby *kalavrytochori* whose inhabitants were supporting the Resistance. The guerillas had already tipped off the inhabitants of Soudena about the Wehrmacht's imminent arrival, so when the soldiers turned up, they found the village empty except for a handful of people who had stayed behind due to mobility limitations and were summarily executed. During the operation, 21-year-old Dinos Pavlopoulos was captured by German soldiers and brought to Kalavryta the following day. The killing took the form of a terrorist act *par excellence*, aimed at disciplining Kalavrytans through inspiring fear

and at warning them of the consequences they would face if they supported the partisans. Pavlopoulos was executed by hanging, while the entire population was forced to witness the event. His corpse was then left on public display, with a broken gun as well as a piece of paper citing the reason for the execution.

Dinos Pavlopoulos was a shepherd. Despite the general ban for gun ownership enforced by the occupation forces on the local population, Pavlopoulos owned a gun. His brother, a guerrilla fighter whom I interviewed in the context of my PRP project, told me that Pavlopoulos was not an active guerrilla, but rather someone who was arrested for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. As Soudena had affiliations with ELAS, the entire population was branded as guerillas, “reds”, while the village was often referred to as little Moscow. This status had important political consequences for the local population both during the Civil War and in the post-Civil War period.

Pavlopoulos was brought in for his execution on a mule. The memory of the last moments of his life is still vivid and a perennial subject of conversation among older Kalavrytans. All those who describe the scene seem to recall how disoriented Pavlopoulos looked, underlining the general belief that Pavlopoulos’ execution was an unjust and unprovoked criminal act. This event holds a significant place in the shared memory of Kalavryta and has been mentioned on several occasions.

The brother of Dinos Pavlopoulos, Giannis Pavlopoulos, lives in Kalavryta. During the early stages of this research, his name had come up as someone with first-hand experience of what took place back then. However, I was not encouraged to meet with him as he was portrayed as a difficult person who kept to himself and would probably be reluctant to share information. When, later during my research, I made the decision to appear at his front step, a tall, smiling elderly woman opened the door. I was in the process of introducing myself in my

(by that point) customary way, “Hello, I’m an artist conducting research on...”, when a loud male voice interrupted me: “What were you doing all those years? You have been asking about me, but you haven’t come to visit. Why? Get in here!” The tall, smiling Maria and Giannis Pavlopoulos looked like a happy couple. They directed me to the wall next to the entrance door and pointed at two framed pictures hanging there. One was the photo of Dinos Pavlopoulos, the other a photo of them in their youth. The two items put together compile a photo of a family consisting of three members, one dead and two alive; one who is the object of post-memory and two who carry on the legacy of the community’s post-memory of Dinos Pavlopoulos execution (Hirsch, 1992-93, p. 22)

Giannis Pavlopoulos asked me to switch on my recorder and started relating his memories from the occupation era. The description of the events surrounding the killing of his brother went as follows:

Giannis Pavlopoulos: Sudena was burned. I was with the English at the time. They caught one of my brothers who was a woodcutter. When the village was burned, my brother came back to see. We had some beehives, so he came back to see if they were burning so he can help the bees. As he was walking back from the mountain, he had a damn rifle, I don't know where he got it from. Probably one of his companions. He didn't have a rifle there. He was two years my elder. And then, out of sheer coincidence... Have you been to Sudena?

Fotini Gouseti: I have, yes.

GP: Do you know where Praxitelis' shop is? Where there's the fountainhead?

FG: I know it.

GP: It’s the centre of the village. About 100 metres away—there's an old cobbled street coming down from the mountain—he heard the boots. The Germans had

gone and burned the village and they had gone to the other village across the road to spend the night. But they were afraid of being hit by guerrillas—like they were any around—and they captured an Olympos whose house was nearby. His name was Douros. He was a young man too and they took him as an escort to bring them to Sudena. Well, when they were a few steps away from the fountain, my brother heard the footsteps and went to hide down in a ravine where nobody could see him. But just by sheer coincidence, as the Olympos who was leading them up to the village happened to stop at that spot and so did the Germans. And the boy said, “Poor Sudena,” Sudena was the name of our village, “poor Sudena, look what has become of you”. When my brother heard these words he thought they were partisans, so he jumped out and they caught him. The next day they brought him to Kalavryta and hung him here on the plane tree in the central square. That was the first story. It was much later that they came and burned Kalavryta and killed all the people, as you know it.

FG: Why did they burn Soudena?

Maria Pavlopoulou: The leftists..

GP: Let me explain something to you: when they came here looking to execute people it was the 12th of Demember, day of Saint Spyridon [an important Orthodox Christian celebration].²⁵ And they got up at night to make their way here, about fifteen Germans. That's what I want to explain to you. How did the Germans manage to find their way to get to Kato Soudena coming from the other village [Ano Soudena] they had just burned? How did they find the path leading to the church

²⁵ The incident Pavlopoulos is referring to is the burning of Ano Soudena, which happened a few days before the Kalavryta massacre. Once Ano Soudena was burnt, the residents fled to Kato Soudena, where they occupied abandoned houses.

so they could get here and start asking where the people are and why they didn't come to church? And when they were told, the people didn't come, they are busy, they are not here the people from this village, so where are the people from the other village [Ano Soudena]? [...] So then they [the Germans] sat and waited, and in the end upped and left empty-handed. They came thinking that since it was Saint Spyridon's day they would find "customers" [at the Church...]

That's why I'm telling you all this... there were Greeks working with them. Most of the crimes were committed by Greeks, not Germans. I can't forgive them... neither the one side nor the other... they were a barbaric race, the Germans, but there were Greek collaborators working with them.

[...]

There were people who followed the rebels and people who followed other fractions... some of them right-wing. [...] As I was small and 17-18 years old, they [the partisans] gave me to the English. In the English garrison, I saw what was going on [...] They were not with the rebels, they were supporting other parties, especially so the king.

At the beginning of our interview, Giannis Pavlopoulos claimed that the execution of the German captives at Mazi took place on the same day as that of the male population of Kalavryta. Such historical order would invalidate the Wehrmacht's claim that the execution was carried out as reprisals for the killing of German soldiers. The leftist community in Kalavryta does not accept that the killing was motivated by revenge, as this order of events places the responsibility for the disaster on the side of the Resistance. This alternative interpretation of history offered by the leftist community is grounded on the claim that both the execution and

the destruction of the town were premeditated acts of war. The Kalavrytan Kostantinos Pavlopoulos, in his MA thesis dealing with his hometown's modern history, examines the ambiguous interpretation of the word "reprisals" in the Kalavrytan context, concluding that it carries with it an extra layer of meaning linked to the accusations against ELAS for the massacre committed by the Wehrmacht (2018: 192). In other words, the very usage of the word "reprisals" when used to describe the massacre is interpreted locally as putting the blame on the Resistance, therefore evoking reactions from the leftwing community.

Furthermore, Giannis Pavlopoulos' statements echo the Left's principal accusations against the Greek collaborators of the Nazis and the British, whose role is thought to be unclear. Overall, the leftist community's view on history privileges the historical conditions that resulted in social divisions and prepared the ground for the civil war, the outcomes of which forced them into a precarious social position for several decades to follow. On the other hand, the right-wing community, presumably relying on facts and objectivity, points to the destruction of the town and assigns responsibility on the guerillas.

When Giannis Pavlopoulos says "Autii tan i proti istoria" ["That was the first story"] to refer to the acts of war culminating in the destruction of Kalavryta in the December of 1943, there is a political choice hidden behind his words. For the Left, Dinos Pavlopoulos' execution is considered as the act that triggered the series of events that led to the revenge killings and, ultimately, the massacre. A relative of Dinos Pavlopoulos named Andreas Pavlopoulos is accused of bearing the responsibility for the killing of three injured German soldiers captured by the guerillas during the battle of Kerpini, at some point between 18 and 20 October 1943. Those who support this version claim that Andreas Pavlopoulos, a doctor and guerilla fighter, ignored the pleas of the Kalavrytan doctor P. Champsas and of the nursing staff and implemented ELAS' decision to have guerillas from Soudena, who happened to be friends and

relatives of the executed Dinos Pavlopoulos, move the three injured captives away from Kalavryta (Meyer, 2010: 275). Andreas Pavlopoulos has always denied the responsibility assigned to him through these claims, instead stating that he had nothing to do with the killing of the three injured Wehrmacht captives. As part of the Kanelopoulos archive, his statement has been published in the local press alongside many other articles on the subject appearing throughout the years. The prevailing view is that this killing was an atrocious act. Following the disaster, children at local schools were taught that killing the injured captives was a base act. This lesson, however, referred only to the killing of the three Wehrmacht captives and injured soldiers and did not extend to the killings of Resistance members, meeting similar criteria. Several articles on this topic are published in the local press every October. This annual tradition harks back to the circumstances surrounding the killings and bears witness to the ongoing attempt to answer the question of who is to blame for escalating the revenge killings that led to the events of December 13th.

The decision to begin unraveling the thread of this chapter of local history from the battle of Kerpini is, in fact, a political choice. One which presupposes the acceptance of the argument granting the conqueror the exclusive right to decide who gets to live and who gets to die, a starting point that has been adopted by both official historiography and, as already analyzed in the previous chapter, by the monument-museum. In contrast to this version of events, there is another narrative which places the beginning of the story of the Kalavrytan massacre not with the battle of Kerpini, but with the hanging of Pavlopoulos. This shift of perspective might seem slight, but it is significant as it extends the “right to kill”, and more specifically to kill in retaliation, also to the conquered. This version suggests that the German soldiers captured in Kerpini and the killing of the three injured German soldiers were strategic decisions taken in retaliation for acts of war committed by the other side; therefore, construing

both sides (conqueror and conquered) as equally entitled to kill. It is, then, evident, that political argumentation in Kalavryta is significantly affected by a kind of post-WWII necropolitical legacy, which is still resonant in Kalavryta to this day.

Every October in Kalavryta, the shared memory of the killings of Pavlopoulos and the German captives killings is publicly revisited. The different versions framing the story into a narrative seem to indicate that there is an unabating urgency to try and find a socially acceptable justification for the killings. Every year, in an almost ritualistic manner, opinion articles are published in the local press discussing the 1943 events with such vivacity one could be fooled into thinking that they happened only yesterday. For the leftwing community, one of the principal areas of interest in this yearly exchange is questioning the measures imposed by the occupants and tacitly accepted by the proponents of the argument that the Resistance was to blame for the massacre. In the order issued by the Wehrmacht, the analogy of deaths was set at 100 Greek captives for every German killed and 50 Greeks for every injured one (DIS Army, 2012: 8). Therefore, the argument goes, when the members of the Resistance killed the three injured German captives, they were only attempting to counterbalance the mathematics of death imposed by the conquering forces and change it to three Germans for one Greek. Nevertheless, the guerillas' attempt to introduce a counter revenge-killing policy has been construed throughout the years as an unthinkable, irresponsible and deadly decision. Additionally, if one examines contemporary analyses discussing the consequences of everything that transpired during those days, it becomes manifest that the calculus of power and rule imposed during the war is in part accepted and adopted as self-evident in the aftermath of WWII. Some killings are considered barbaric (the killings of injured German captives), while others are accepted as routine (the killings of injured guerilla captives by the Germans, for example).

When I asked the brother of Giannis Pavlopoulos to give me his thoughts on the stone monument erected for the execution of his brother, he gestured dismissively and told me there was no point discussing that. He stubbornly resisted providing any further explanations, so I assumed that his denial was ideologically or politically motivated. I knew, however, as the information had reached me through different sources, that Andromachi, the mother of the Pavlopoulos brothers, had refused to set foot in the area of town where her son had been hanged for the rest of her life. According to the same sources, Andromachi would often ask: “Kala, den xerathike akoma ekeinos o platanos?” [“Hasn’t that plane tree dried out yet?”] (MMKH, 2011: 54). The plane tree never dried out, but when the new road was built it had to be cut down. Still, in disregard of Andromachi’s repetitive requests to do away with the tree keeping the memory of the crime alive, after the actual tree was cut, another one came to be rebranded as THE plane tree on which Pavlopoulos had been hanged, which *de facto* replaced the former in its monumental function. At this point, I would like to note a divergence from the image discussed in the previous chapter of the women of Kalavryta presented as grieving widows or mothers. As opposed to other grieving women, whose lament, as analysed, is monumentalized on several contexts and occasions, Andromachi’s lament and her request to have her son’s murder scene removed are persistently ignored.

Despite the fact that Kalavryta was the stronghold of the Resistance in the Peloponnese during WWII, there are only three monumental traces of it in the area: the first one is the aforementioned memorial stone slab commemorating the hanging of Dinos Pavlopoulos; the second, a small monument in a flower bed spot later included in the yard of the town’s secondary school, which commemorates the execution of three guerilla fighters by the Italian army; and, finally, the renaming of a street in the town after Captain Velias^{viii}, where, at the

time of writing these lines, only one street plate remains on display. This condition of limited visibility in the public sphere renders every monumental trace associated to the Resistance all the more important for the left-wing community. According to Sardelianos, the street's renaming was the result of pressure mounted during the 1980s by the Greek association of Resistance Fighters (PEAEA), who were persistently requesting that a Greek Resistance monument be erected in the area. Roughly in the same period, the PEAEA started holding annual events in Kerpini to mark the anniversary of the battle which the Resistance celebrates as a victorious outcome in its ongoing engagement with the enemy, but which official sources interpret as the trigger of the Kalavrytan massacre. However, in the following years, the celebrations were overshadowed by the presence of the Communist Party of Greece and turned into a political rally.



Figure 12. The monument commemorating Dinos Pavlopoulos' execution (own picture, 2016).

Let us now detour back to my interview with Giannis Pavlopoulos cited at the beginning of this section. As the reader will remember, when I asked for his opinion about his brother's memorial stone, my interlocutor told me that it bore no significance for him. However, a few years later, the local painter Michalis Glarakis told me that, shortly before his death, Giannis Pavlopoulos had asked him to coat over the relief letters on the memorial stone with white paint, so that the text could be more legible. To this day, the intervention requested has not materialized, yet the fact that he did approach Glarakis with it is a clear indication that, in the last period of his life, Pavlopoulos' way of remembering history (his family's as well as the town's) has shifted. Giannis Pavlopoulos, who, until then, had accepted the marginalization he had endured due to his connection with the Resistance and had willingly remained on the sidelines, seemed to want to resituate both himself and his brother in the town's life. At least this is how I understand his request to enhance the visibility of his brother's name and the reason for his execution.

The obituary Sardelianos wrote (2022) upon the death of Giannis Pavlopoulos moves in a parallel direction to Giannis Pavlopoulos' late wish, as it too attempts to re-position the Pavlopoulos brothers within the community. Aside from honoring Giannis Pavlopoulos' contribution to the Resistance—as one would expect from a leftwing historiographer—Sardelianos also pays tribute to Pavlopoulos's major contribution to inventing the recipe for Kalavrytan feta cheese, which is a key product in the town's economy. As a result, Giannis Pavlopoulos is rebranded as a successful and well-respected local businessman who was also active in the Resistance, rather than the former Resistance member whose brother the Germans hanged on the plane tree. Significantly, Dinos Pavlopoulos is also mentioned as a member of the Resistance, in tandem, in this case, with the local community, which has also

shifted its initial portrayal of Dinos as a victim vaguely supporting the guerillas to an active member of the organization. From this perspective, even though the coat of paint Pavlopoulos requested was not applied on the memorial stone before his death, the visibility and de-marginalization he sought was indeed achieved right after his death through Sardelianos' article.

The reason why I have dwelt on the legacy of the Pavlopoulos brothers is that, as analyzed above, Dinos Pavlopoulos' death lies at the core of the counter-narrative I am trying to map in this chapter. What I would now like to do is explain why the existence of this counter-narrative is the source of so much contention in Kalavryta. In order to approach this question, I would like to take a step back, and examine the background.

During the occupation, the majority of Kalavrytans held a politically neutral position as, ideologically, they viewed themselves as supporters of the king. In the collective imaginary, this position of neutrality was enough to ensure that the town would be safe from harm, despite being the center of the *kalavrytochoria*, where, as mentioned earlier, the Resistance had a strong base in several villages. In practice, according to the counter version, this proximity actually put the community in harm's way, as the image of the king-loving, law-abiding citizen paved the way for Kalavrytans to let themselves be tricked into believing that even though death was dealt out liberally in the nearby areas, and despite the order issued stating that communities helping or abating the guerillas would suffer consequences, no harm would come to Kalavrytans provided they stayed out of trouble.

To some extent, this belief reflected the sense of entitlement of the privileged members of a class-stratified society (Tzouda-Mitsiona 2015). Kalavryta was a privileged center surrounded by a lower-class, agricultural periphery. The upper classes made all the decisions

(Kakogiannis, 1998), including the one to stay put when it became known that Wehrmacht's soldiers were approaching the town, burning several *kalavrytochoria* along the way. Everywhere else, the villagers were evacuating their homes as the ones staying behind were being executed and their houses set ablaze. When informed about the looming danger, the decision-makers in Kalavryta consulted with other war authorities and ultimately concluded that the politically neutral position they had, to a large extent, observed throughout the occupation was enough to keep them out of harm's way. According to the counter version, it was this decision that caused the loss of so many lives. This was the major strategic and political mistake that led up to the massacre and not the capturing or killing of any number of German soldiers. This is the crux of the argument separating the left-wing interpretation of events from official historiography both on a national and on a local level. This is why, also, the figure of Dinos Pavlopoulos, which members of the leftwing community keep bringing back to public discussions even today (Sardelianos, 2022), is the source of so much tension.

To recapitulate, the mainstream version explaining the reasons behind the Kalavrytan holocaust assigns the blame on the guerillas who captured and killed the German soldiers; the counter version implies that the blame falls also on those who let themselves be convinced by the conqueror, making the decision to remain in town and ending up massacred. As is obvious, reconciling these two versions or compounding them into one is an extremely difficult task. Interestingly, as Efstathia Tzouda-Mitsiona mentioned during our discussion on May 4, 2019, nowadays many among the elderly interpret the 1943 decision not to flee as a form of passive resistance and claim that behind the town's refusal to leave their homes was the belief that an empty Kalavryta would be looted and burned by the Germans, whereas their presence would

deter this scenario. As a result, Kalavrytans decided to stay put and protect their properties. This view too has its mirror reflection in the leftwing community: according to Kakogianis' (1998), one of the reasons why many privileged Kalavrytans ended up staying in town was that they were unable to deal with the harsh winter conditions on the mountain. Kakogianis claims that this is what lies behind the saying, "Τα Καλαβρυτα τα έφαγε η γραβάτα", which translates as: "Kalavryta was destroyed by ties". In my opinion, particularly noteworthy in this context is the fact that the decision-makers in Kalavryta seemed to have endorsed the rules the sovereign power had imposed, as well as the division of the population into those who must live and those who must die (Mbembe, 2019) —while clearly counting themselves among the former.

Chapter 4: Silences: The Years After the Massacre

The pile of corpses and the extremely difficult task of trying to bury the men without access to tools, since the town and practically everything in it had been either looted or lost in the fire, are part of Kalavryta's collective memory and identity. The aftermath of the massacre is also the bedtime story grandmothers would put their grandchildren to sleep with for decades to come. Even though these stories, which all resembled one another, were related to me from the early stages of this research, it took a lot of patience and many years of persistent questioning to find out how the women remembered those first days and years following the massacre, how the graves had been dug and most the bodies of loved ones dragged back to the cemetery, where the women spent most of their days during the first year after the massacre. What was consistently and universally clear is that Kalavryta was plunged into deep mourning.

According to Butler (2004), mourning relates to an agreement of a person or perhaps a community to undergo a transformation (to be submitted to a transformation), the outcome of which cannot be fully known from the outset. There is the loss and the transformative effect of the loss, which cannot be mapped or planned in advance, but may perhaps be formed as a result of a process of selection. What kind of transformations did the community of Kalavrytan women and children experience after the disaster? In the following pages, I will briefly discuss some aspects of the life the women and children led in Kalavryta in the aftermath of the disaster. I will also describe the artworks I made relating to these early years after the massacre, how these artworks helped me to enhance my knowledge of the events, as well as

how they interacted with the Kalavrytan society and what I came to learn through this interaction.

It is important to note, at this point, that the women who have embodied knowledge of the disaster in Kalavryta have decided not to speak publicly about the years that succeeded it, without providing any justification for this decision. The few women who do speak publicly about the events, apart from being present on December 13th, 1943, are usually educated, from a privileged background, active in preserving the community's memory and usually members of the Kalavrytan diaspora. Occasionally, interviews of women who do not meet these criteria have been published in the local press: they are what one could refer to as “ordinary” women, whose narratives stay more or less on the beaten track. Some members of the leftwing community have argued that these publications have given the floor to women to lay the blame for the massacre on the guerillas, and not on women who were proud of the Resistance.

In the following pages, alongside the results of my ethnographic research, I will be presenting some of the artworks that arose out of it and will be discussing how these two parts of my work have fed back into each other.

After the disaster, the only food one could find in Kalavryta was what the dead men had carried with them to the execution spot. The food items were stained with blood, but necessity prescribed that they be consumed. The men who survived the massacre had severe injuries, but there was nothing to cover the wounds apart from some rags found around town. Not all the wounded survived. The first ones to come to the assistance of the remaining population of Kalavryta were the residents of nearby *kalavrytochori* Kerpini —an action much appreciated by Kalavrytans even to this day and lying at the root of the close ties still linking the two villages. In the following days, when the Red Cross arrived in Kalavryta, the first thing

the women asked for was for black dye to colour their clothes with. For many years on, the women who lived in the burnt town of Kalavryta continued to dress in black.

The clothes they were wearing on 13 December 1943, along with some warm clothes retrieved from the bodies of the men would be the only clothes the survivors would wear for a very long time. The women remember not being able to change their clothes and observe personal hygiene, especially during menstruation, as an intolerable experience. In the first few days, they lived together in groups in the few houses that were still standing. Then, gradually, they placed tin over the ruins of their houses to protect themselves from the elements as best they could and lived there or in structures previously used as storage in plots of land they owned in the area. When talking about those years, everyone refers to the ice and snow in the places where they slept. Some infants did not survive the hardships and some pregnant women miscarried. Those who could find a way to leave the town did so, but many chose to stay in order to “honour their dead” and try to breathe new life into Kalavryta. In the years that followed, the Red Cross continued to support the women by providing food, tents and temporary housing. Another important source of support was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRA), which sent packages from the U.S. supplying Kalavryta with food and clothing. These packages are remembered by the distinctive logo they had printed on them: two interlaced hands and the American and Greek flags pictured together. The connotations of the sociopolitical dynamics are evident, as the affiliation to the West as the pole providing assistance and helping to shape memory was becoming evident. Some Kalavrytans remember that the relief items they received were often accompanied by commentary regarding the role of the Resistance in the massacre.

Another newcomer to the burned town was the Christmas tree. Even today, the ultimate test distinguishing between Kalavrytans and *fertoï* is the date when Christmas trees are decorated in each home. The families embodying the catastrophe wait until after December 13, while the *fertoï* who decorate earlier are seen as disrespectful foreigners, unable to understand what the Kalavrytans have been through.

Other women remember as traumatic having to constantly wait in line for food, as members of a community whose livelihood now depended on charity. Rebuilding Kalavryta was a slow process that began after the end of the civil war, when small accommodation units, identical in style and equal in size, were constructed to house each family separately. This too was experienced as traumatic by some women, particularly those who went from living in tall and luxurious houses in pre-war Kalavryta to having to downgrade to small, simple dwellings that were identical to all the others. For many decades after the massacre, living conditions were still extremely harsh. Recovery proved to be a very slow process and Kalavryta was now a poor town. The Kalavrytan diaspora living in other parts of Greece or abroad greatly helped the members of their families who still lived in the town, as well as the community as a whole.

Kalavryta 2012

The first artwork that came out of my research in Kalavryta is entitled *Kalavryta 2012*. It departs from a fond childhood memory set in the ruins of the town related to me by Lakis Vagias, a pensioner shepherd. One day, in the early 1950s, his mother Eleni Vagia sent Lakis to pick up the UNRA package intended for the Vagias family at the distribution spot. As the package was too big for young Lakis to carry, the boy borrowed a donkey to help him transport it back home. When he finally arrived, his initial feeling of accomplishment was replaced by happiness when

he realized that the package, instead of much-needed food and clothing supplies, contained countless colourful silk neckties. The luxury of the fabric and the bright colours shining in front of the eyes of a child living in a burned village mainly inhabited by women dressed in black sparked pure bliss for 12-year-old Lakis.

Eleni, on the contrary, found the content frustrating. Seeing no other use in these accessories associated with masculine symbols of status and still urgently in need of what she did not find in the package, she decided to use the silk parts of the neckties to make a traditional “*kourelou*” [rag] carpet in her loom. “We were cold and hungry, but we were walking on silk”, Lakis joked, concluding our discussion in 2012.

When I asked Lakis how many ties that package contained, he said “about two to three thousand”. I decided to materially reenact the story, so I went and bought 2,000 ties. Financial considerations were not the only reason behind my choice to limit the number to this figure. The current population of Kalavryta is also numbered at approximately 2,000, so I thought that, by weaving together an equal number of ties, I could, on a symbolic level, create a parallel interweaving of their memories.



Figure 12. Eleni Vargia working away at the loom during a workshop (F. Papageorgiou archive).

Eleni Vagia is remembered as a powerful and progressive woman. While working on this project, I also learned that she was the last Kalavrytan to insist on giving loom weaving lessons. A photograph of her during a lesson to a young woman is included in the archives of the Kalavrytan photographer Fanis Papageorgiou. When I decided to reactivate this story, there was no operating loom in Kalavryta. Even though I tried hard, together with a group of Kalavryta residents, to find a way of constructing the carpet in Kalavryta, this proved impossible—especially in the aftermath of the economic crisis, which had significantly disorganized the community. The making of *Kalavryta 2012* eventually took place with the support of the Athens-based Taxideftes Politismou [Culture Travelers] Culture and Folklore Society. The latter was running a loom workshop, so I was offered the opportunity to weave the artwork, which took the form of a traditional *kourelou* carpet. For the making of the work, three male members of the Society—Kostas Manavis, Kyriakos Tsoukalas and Aris Kousidis—wove simultaneously. The carpet weighs a little more than 100 kilos and measures 25.40 by 1.50 meters. During our collaboration, we had long and far-reaching conversations about art and culture, as well as about the possible functions the latter can have. These private discussions were subsequently presented as part of the 4th Athens Biennale AGORA in 2013, in the form of an open discussion where we invited the audience to explore questions raised by such convergences.

For aesthetic reasons, I chose to use all parts of the 2,000 ties included in *Kalavryta 2012*, not just the silk bits as Eleni had done. From my experience of making the carpet, I estimate that the ties Eleni had used were approximately 500.

In the first years of the PRP project, every time one of my works was exhibited somewhere in the world, Kalavrytans found out about it from the local press. *Kalavryta 2012* was first shown in the Netherlands, at Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, as part of the

group show titled “Making Use” organised by the Dutch Art Institute, which opened in 2013. My main concern at the time was how the work would be perceived by Dutch audiences, as I believed that, on a local level, the intervention it performed was very subtle. I was wrong about that, but I will come back to this point later.

The museum and the volunteers working as guards and guides warmly supported the work, which also attracted the interest of the public. The following year, *Kalavryta 2012* was shown for a second time at the Joey Ramone Gallery in Rotterdam, with the support of the CBK Rotterdam art center, as part of a solo show entitled *Light Beige with Little Black Flowers*, alongside other PRP works. In the context of the alarming rise of the far right in Europe, the exhibition hit a chord with the audience, which was intrigued and asked many questions. Some people visited the exhibition more than once. As I was able to be in the venue frequently, I observed and recorded the ways in which the public engaged with the themes of the show as well as the individual works. One of the most interesting moments was when Julian Talamantez Brolaski, a poet, country musician, and scholar whose work deals with issues of indigeneity, resistance, queer/two-spirit, trans, and mixed-race identity, and the healing properties of language and songs chose to read its poems in front of the carpet during Poetry International Rotterdam.

Next, *Kalavryta 2012* was presented as part of a group exhibition expanding on Marianne's Hirsch work on postmemory entitled *From Generation to Generation: Inherited Memory and Contemporary Art* that was held at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco in 2016. In the same year, it traveled to Berlin, where it was shown in the solo exhibition *The Present as a Result of the Past*, and met with a wide range of reactions from the city's multicultural audience. When it comes to the German audience, the responses ranged from curiosity to a certain feeling of unease or, less frequently, to the expression of negativity

—as, for example, in the case of a German curator involved in the organization of the exhibition, who, when shown the work, summarily stated that she was “not convinced”. In 2018, *Kalavryta 2012* was presented as part of a show dealing with the memory of the Arab Spring during the Jaou Tunis festival organised by the Kamel Lazaar Foundation.



Figure 13. *Kalavryta 2012* (Gouseti, 2013). As presented at the exhibition *Making Use, Dutch Art Institute at the Van Abbemuseum* (2013). Photo credits: Fraser Stewart

In all these instances, I observed and recorded the reactions of the audience. What was, however, even more important for me was to try and understand how the work was perceived by the Kalavrytan community, whose reactions I also recorded. In both cases, my aim in studying these reactions was to try and improve the way in which my work interacts with these two types of audience. To begin with, through this process, I came to realise that, for certain members of the Kalavrytan population, finding out that *Kalavryta 2021* would be exhibited at Van Abbemuseum was reason for more concern than I had anticipated. The work prompted discussions about silenced parts of local history—more agitated and more prolonged than I would have imagined—but what struck me the most was to witness and receive the anger of some Kalavrytans, who felt themselves exposed. For a brief period of time, there were some awkward moments in my interactions with the community, as many liked the work, but with others I ended up having heated discussions. It took a while for it to become clear that the stories the community could read on the carpet were not accessible to a wider audience, which does not have access to the same information as they do. It did not take long for the carpet to be accepted by everyone. What was it, though, that caused distress to certain Kalavrytans on the occasion of the work's first presentation to the public, and not during its making?

Kalavryta 2012 has different connotations for the local community than it does for the broader audience. For Kalavrytans, this work was intended to approach areas of silenced history still causing tension and informing everyday life, even if not openly discussed. It refers to the dynamics of the Civil War and raises questions about the reasons why this package ended up at this specific family; who was responsible for the distribution of postwar aid; and how this event relates to other injustices in postwar Kalavryta.

All this information came to my attention once I started researching the story about the ties. When I started asking questions about the package Lakis had told me about, especially the obvious one, i.e., how could a package full of silk ties arrive at a household in dire need of food and basic necessities, let alone in a village without men, the testimonies confirmed the explanation Lakis has already given me. The UNRA packages were not, in fact, distributed equally to all Kalavrytan families, but allocated according to their political affiliations, as it appears to have happened on various occasions and in different localities across Greece (Voglis, 2014). What this meant, in practice, is that some families would get the best packages; some other more modest ones, while some leftwing households would often end up either without a package or with a “mock” package. In response to my questions, people remembered other examples of items, equally “useless” as the silk ties, given out to leftwing families: for example, a pair of two left shoes. Others recalled that those responsible for distributing the UNRA packages would often open them and handpick them in order to keep the best items for themselves or sell them in their shops for profit.

Political discrimination, then, seems the most likely explanation for the Vagias’ family receiving the tie package. Eleni’s husband was a shepherd. Even though politically identifying with the Left, when he had to make up his mind about joining the guerillas in the mountains he decided against it, as the family’s children were still very young. His brother, however, did join, so the Vagias were branded Communists.

In addition, Eleni’s husband Giorgos was not killed during the massacre, as he was with his flock on the mountain outside the town. He did, however, witness an incident that was significant for the local community. This incident took place before the disaster and it involved four laboring shepherds, among them Giorgos Vagias’ two brothers, who were herding a large number of animals to the lowlands for the winter. As the shepherds were making their way

down the mountain, they met a group of Wehrmacht soldiers who stopped them and after a brief exchange made the two brothers dig two pits, killed them and buried them inside. The other two were allowed to continue. By the time the two men who had survived the incident made it back to the village, the execution and destruction had already taken place.

The mother of the two dead brothers had already buried five male members of her family and was waiting for the two she thought had escaped. According to many sources, she spent the rest of her life asking Eleni's husband "Giorgos, why did they kill my children?". Giorgos did not answer her question while she was alive, but he did speak up later. He had recognized among the Germans his own commander from the years of his military service, dressed in a German uniform. Although there are clues that there were Greek collaborators involved in the crime, as there is no hard evidence, this suspicion has been left at the level of rumors. Giorgos, however, remembered not only the face, but also the surname of the man he recognized. The possibility of the involvement of Greek collaborators in the Kalavryta massacre is a subject people do not discuss, as the prospect is particularly traumatic.

A Kalavrytan resident once told me that *Kalavryta 2012* put "a little bomb in every café in the area", since it contributed to breaking the silence and many stories have seen the light of day due to this intervention. In addition, as opposed to what had been the case so far in artistic depictions thematising the Kalavryta massacre or the months and years that followed it, this work departed not from one of the images figuring in the "big" historical narrative, such as the bodies covered in blood or the grieving widows, but from a story from below, related by a member of a working-class family still and active within the present-day community of Kalavryta. Significantly, also, the work refers to the period after the massacre, which was seldom talked about at the time of producing this work.

Unsettled as I was by the initial reactions, they also helped me realize that I needed time to understand the inner workings of the local community, and that I always need to tread very carefully as I may touch upon areas with which I am not familiar. That the carpet may serve to mobilize the dormant field of silenced history was a hope of mine, but this kind of intensity I had not anticipated. I had not, for example, foreseen that the scene to which Eleni's husband had been a witness would be brought up again on account of the work. Through the discussions that came about as a result of the presentation of *Kalavryta 2012*, I had the chance to deepen my understanding of Kalavrytan society and gain insight into how to further develop my work. It is important to point out that subjects linked to the community's trauma are now discussed more freely, and in some cases even in public meetings held to commemorate the disaster.

The silenced Civil War and the first chapter in the narrative of new Kalavryta: from division to tripartition

As I have already mentioned, when I first arrived at Kalavryta there was a gap in the narrative of the past as concerns the period immediately succeeding the disaster, i.e., starting with the Civil War and up to 1952. Although historiography does provide records of the two opposing sides clashing in Kalavryta (with the national army being headquartered in the town and the guerrillas on the Helmos mountain), the focus is exclusively on the operations and ignore the experiences of the women and children who lived in the town during this period. An exception is the testimony of Eleni Lyberi recorded by Yiannis Priooulos (2007), whereby she recounts her experiences of the Battle of Kalavryta and arrives at the conclusion that "they shouldn't have placed them [the national army outposts] in the houses back then". The fact that they did

would seem to indicate that the town's symbolic status rendered it significant for both sides fighting the Civil War. In her book, Efstathia Tzouda-Mitsonia (2018) refers extensively to her own civil war experience in Kalavryta.

The Battle of Kalavryta was held on 11 April 1948. The elders vividly remember the shots and shells and the corpses lined up on the main street outside the building now housing the museum, or outside the cemetery; soldiers being buried outside the cemetery either because there was no space left—when, for example, during one battle there were more casualties than the cemetery could provide space for on the side of the government army—or because they were guerillas and therefore not allowed to be buried in the cemetery during the civil war; bodies being buried in the fields or right where they were found on the mountains, and then, when the snow melted, the bodies of the frozen guerrillas rolling down the slopes, where the children—despite their mothers' strict admonitions to the contrary—ran to catch sight of them before the adults summarily buried them on the spot.

Regarding the Battle of Kalavryta, the memories of the women and children are at odds with the official sources, according to which there were no civilian casualties during that time. Furthering the impact of the violence of war, they remember living in constant terror, often going into hiding and being afraid of combatants from both factions. This event also changed the human geography of the town. Some so-called *antartoplikti* from other areas of the Peloponnese, i.e., rural populations living in areas controlled by EDES and forced to resettle in urban centers to be placed under the protection of the government army, came to Kalavryta and settled within the specially designated camp set up on the outskirts of the town (Paleologopoulos, 2001: 102). Some of these people ended up staying in town for good as *fertoι*.

The phrase "*tous antartes tous efage i Enati ki i Chionati*" ["it was the 9th and Snow White that brought down the rebels"] is a well-known quip in Kalavryta, for which local historians writing about the civil war offer an interpretation that clashes with the usage remembered by members of the community who were children at the time. As part of Operation Peristera launched by the Army General Staff with the intention of "clearing" the Peloponnese of EDES guerillas, the Ninth Division (9 infantry battalion) and two Mountain Raiders Squadrons were transferred to the Peloponnese. By April 1949, the operation was completed (Priovolos, 2007). Concerning the *enati* (ninth) part of the phrase, all commentators agree that it refers to the name of the division of the government army stationed in Kalavryta. *Chionati* (Snow White), on the other hand, refers to the harsh winter of 1948-1949. The huge amount of snow that fell on the Kalavryta area was one of the reasons that made the living conditions of the guerrillas (whose health was already fragile due to the extensive hardships they had to endure, as well as the lack of food and of sufficient clothing and shoes) unsustainable. The guerillas modified the phrase to "we didn't lose to the Ninth; we lost to Snow White!" (Paleologopoulos, 2001: 131). According to a local anti-guerrilla reading of the phrase, however, the "Ninth" refers to Beethoven's symphony of the same name that was often played by the philharmonic orchestra in pre-war Kalvaryta, which is taken up in this context to represent the nemesis falling on those who were to blame for the massacre. I would like to add, at this point, that the Kalavrytans I have been in touch with are not aware of the popularity the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales enjoyed among supporters of German nationalism and, later on, Nazism.

Although erased from public memory, what happened in Kalavryta during and after the war is still a subject of conversation in people's homes. Through this practice, division and hatred are perpetuated. The need to lead a peaceful life has covered the period with a cloak

of silence, but within each household stories are recounted involving specific names and acts that take on mythological dimensions. Violence, fear, hunger, mourning are areas associated with the struggles the women had to endure in the aftermath of the disaster. This struggle, however, is taken for granted and does not figure in the official narrative.

As previously mentioned, however, the gap in the narrative ends in 1952. I would now like to examine the event that marked the end of the silence. In the early '50s, German democratic political parties expressed an interest in rekindling the relations between Greece and Germany. As part of the attempt to strengthen the relations between the two countries, German companies became involved with Greece's reconstruction plan (Schramm, 2004: 67), testifying to a willingness on behalf of both governments to lay the past to rest.

Ehregard Schramm, an MP of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which at the time was in the opposition, was a key figure in these efforts. Schramm initially visited Kalavryta in 1952, finding the ruined town inhabited by women, youths, and visibly undernourished children. She was the first German citizen to visit the town after the massacre. Even though she was warned that the women of the town might not be very welcoming, after overcoming their initial suspicions and hesitancy, she was subsequently welcomed rather warmly. Due to the history of the Agia Lavra monastery (bearing strong connections to 1821 and the beginning of the modern Greek nation) and the symbolic value it added to the area, Schramm deemed that this was the right place to start implementing Germany's reconciliation policies. "We, Germans, have to do something here, right here," she wrote in a request she made to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "If we really helped Kalavryta, it would be an act of symbolic importance. In this way we would make the first step to regain the heart of Greece" (p. 58), she continued.

As far as the Kalavrytan community is concerned, the help Schramm envisioned materialized through an initiative which, in fact, marks the first chapter in the narrative of the new town. It concerns the implementation of a program which gave the opportunity to children from Kalavryta to be educated in Germany at the German government's expense. This initiative put the women of the town before a significant dilemma: send their children to study in the country responsible for the murder of their fathers and the impoverished situation in which they currently found themselves, or refuse the helping hand they were offered and continue raising their malnourished children in a town that seemed to have no future. According to Schramm, the boys themselves were very willing to take up the offer (p. 78). It should also be noted that Schramm, who endorsed the view that the killing of the German soldiers was the cause for the Kalavrytan massacre, expressly stated that the children of guerilla fighters should be excluded from the program.

The two opposing factions which emerged at the time—those who wanted to send their kids to Germany and those who fiercely opposed the prospect—did not overlap with those that had formed during the Civil War. Thus, as Kalavrytans often say, at this moment a community already divided was essentially split in three. This moment was traumatic enough to be remembered to this day and remains relevant enough to continue stirring up passions every time an event triggers an area linked to this tripartition. Most importantly, however, it was recorded in the public consciousness as the first “event” worthy of mention in the life of the new town. Every time, in the context of the interviews I conducted, I asked Kalavrytans who lived through these first few years after the catastrophe to retrace their memories of the time, this is the moment to which they returned.

Schramm saw in this initiative the “chance to combine German interests with the local needs of my Kalavrytans” (Schramm 2004, p. 79), and as part of a wider attempt to influence

Greek public opinion using “psychologically effective means”. She envisioned her plan as a way of assisting the local community and helping restore “human relations” between Greeks and Germans (p. 12). At the same time, however, it is clear that her attempts were also aimed at mitigating the bitterness and hostile disposition towards Germany. The Greek government, for its part, found that Schramm’s project was also to its benefit, as it would help improve commercial and financial relations with Germany (p. 88). According to Schramm, the Greek government’s decision to withdraw from the trial of SS commander Heinz Zabe was indicative of the priorities Greek politicians had set. This, then, was the first event inscribed in the memory of the new society of Kalavryta. But what did this new society look like? What norms, rules and modes of organization did its members follow or invent?

The new society of Kalavryta

At this difficult moment, the women needed to invent new ways of surviving together, find solutions to their myriad problems and take care of their children and families. To achieve this in a more protected way, they started working collectively. They cultivated the land. Those who had the means bought animals, while, in 1964, they founded the very active and dynamic widow and orphan association O Golgothas, whose main objective was to find ways of supporting the community. For many among them, agricultural work was not something with which they had previous experience. Speaking on August 14th, 2022, at the yearly event held in honor of the Kalavrytan mother, the Kalavrytan lawyer Nadia Konstantinou paid tribute to the superhuman efforts the community already credits these women with, and referred extensively to the grief, love and caring for each other that punctuated the daily reality of the women who lived in the town following the disaster. As already mentioned in a previous

chapter, what is special about Konstantinou's speech is that this was the first time these women were referred to publicly as political beings: as female citizens who articulated a vision for a peaceful and progressive society, which would not simply reflect, but in fact improve the mode of social organization that was in place before the war. "Guided by their boundless love for their children and loved ones and genuine concern for their land," Konstantinou said, these women "courageously challenged conventional wisdom and went against the rules of patriarchal society by educating their daughters, demanding that they vote and taking on expanded social and political responsibilities".

Konstantinou envisions the society created by the women of Kalavryta after the catastrophe as a response to the war they experienced and the bloodshed to which they were subjected. She argues that "decades ago, the women acted as the catalyst for Kalavryta's evolving into a progressive and free society, with special respect for women and children, being a bright exception to the norm of Greek reality". This new society founded in post-catastrophe Kalavryta presented some important divergences compared to pre-war Kalavryta. In the following pages, I will briefly refer to the most important ones among them.

Shifting established hierarchies

The first thing to note is that a number of previously existing social distinctions became irrelevant in new Kalavryta, among them the one between the Kalavrytan and the foreigner. In this new era, what defined and determined the social body was the common embodied knowledge of the December 1943 events. Thus, those who were foreign before the catastrophe became fully integrated in the community and were regarded as "the same as the others". This did not only apply to the wives of men who had a higher social status (teachers,

civil servants, etc.), but also extended to all classes. One characteristic example is that of the refugees from Asia Minor. In pre-war Kalavryta, a small community of Asia Minor refugees who lived in the town experienced their social status as clearly inferior. After the catastrophe, most of the members of this community moved away from the town, but the few who remained were as Kalavrytan as the others.

At the same time, class differences seemed to vanish for a brief period of time, although Tzouda-Mitsonia recalls overhearing the following conversation between some working-class women and a woman from a privileged family: “Now, Vakoula [the upper-class woman’s nickname], we’re all equal to each other”, the women said, to get the following answer from Vakoula: “The rings may be gone, but we still have the fingers”.

Be that as it may, the particularly harsh living conditions, as well as the fact that the women had to cooperate and make decisions in common, attenuated the class divisions of prewar Kalavryta. In the years that followed, the women began to work together in groups, mostly with other women from their neighborhood.

Education for all

Supporting their children in every way possible so they could achieve the best in life became one of the highest priorities for the women. Part of this strategy was to send all children to school, regardless of their gender. The Kalavryta elementary school resumed immediately after the disaster. The teachers Aglaia Konti and Eleni Hampsas gathered all the children and lessons were held on the train tracks, in the courtyard of the destroyed school or in the small church of St. Catherine that been spared by the fire. The two teachers were memorialized in a modest ceremony held as part of the 2012 events held to mark the anniversary of the 1943 massacre, during which it was announced that the new elementary school would be named after them.

Sending the girls to school was considered so important that some mothers preferred to return to the ruins of their houses downtown, rather than live in the storage building of the plots of land they owned, in order to be closer to the school so that their daughters could attend classes. As a result of this determination to help the new generation get ahead in the world, a very large number of children grew into educated and successful adults.

Weddings

The first marriages took place at the end of the Civil War and the elders have in their archives the names of brides and grooms. These records function as a keepsake attesting to the patrilineal continuity of the Kalavrytan identity, as they document how many men who married Kalavrytan women originated from Kalavryta. In one of the marriages, the groom was a man who had settled in Kalavryta before the disaster, whereas the rest of the marriages were to *ferto*i and to *symazohtaria*. It should be reminded, here, that *ferto*i is the name given to men who came to the town from other places in general, whereas *symazohtaria* are specifically the “children of the surrounding villages who came to Kalavryta to go to school and then stayed on” (Gouseti, 2013), got married to Kalavrytan women and started families.

The way marriages were arranged had changed radically compared to pre-war Kalavryta, when they were performed with the mediation of a matchmaker and necessitated the agreement of the parents (Foteinopoulos, 2004). Then the fathers would determine the dowry, which was normally household items and not land, as the latter was intended for the male children of the family. Following her wedding, the bride would move in with the groom's family so that she could support the household and her in-laws. After the massacre, the land was passed on to the women, who were free to choose their own husbands. Men from the surrounding villages approached the Kalavrytan women, and it was up to them to choose. As

the women had land, the husbands coming from the periphery were considered inferior. Following the wedding, it was the groom who moved in with the bride's family. As everyone in the community agrees, the *fertoï* and the *symazochtaria* played a big part in bringing life back to Kalavryta, not only through their personal work, but also because they helped overturn the overwhelmingly mournful atmosphere with the birth of the first children. Men from the surrounding villages already started to move into the town on the day after the disaster, when the first *fertos* came to bury his brother who had been executed with the Kalavrytans and ended up staying (Gouseti 2013). To this day, marrying a Kalavrytan woman is considered important for the *fertoï*, and as an indication that they have gone up the social ladder. Some women who were unmarried when the catastrophe occurred, refused to accept the new conditions and remained single. When I moved to Kalavryta, some of them were still alive. People referred to them as “the spinsters”.

The new Kalavrytan woman

As mentioned above, some of the young men living in Kalavryta after the catastrophe got the opportunity to learn a trade in Germany supported by Schram's program. For the girls, on the other hand, more traditional solutions were selected. Several young Kalavrytan women were married to Greek members of the Athenian or American diaspora. The selection would take place based on specific criteria set by prospective grooms. Only the single women fulfilling them could benefit from the offer. These criteria have not been revealed to me in full, but I believe it is important to mention that very young age seemed to be a catalyst, while very often the men who offered their “support” to these young women were much older. Some children (not many) were given up for adoption. An orphanage also operated in Kalavryta, which housed the orphans and destitute children of the area. Some of the children who grew up in post-war

Kalavryta considered the children living in the orphanage lucky because they were not hungry like themselves.

Even though the women of this new society made a point of empowering their daughters socially and politically, they continued to prioritize their boys, thus not breaking entirely with patriarchal norms and values. Another striking proof of this was that there has never been a woman mayor in Kalavryta. However, the fact that these women once managed to set up a “women’s community” is still present in the memory of both the town and the region and can be evidenced in the dynamic and independent nature of the Kalavrytan woman, which is in stark contrast with the profile of the women living in other areas of the Peloponnese.

This difference in perspective can be illustrated through the example of a woman who owns a business and has lived in Kalavryta for many years. During our interview, she volunteered the information that she was not actually from Kalavryta but a *ferti* from a *kalavrytochori*. At one point I asked her if she thought she had been influenced by the way the Kalavryta women lived and behaved in the first decades after the catastrophe. “Yes, obviously,” she replied, and went on to support her claim with an anecdote. When she was 52 years old, she decided she wanted to be a mother. She was single, had no partner and did not want to change her way of life. At the beginning, the prospect of raising a child on her own and of facing reactions from the community daunted her, but the thought of all these women who had made it on their own made her confident in her decision. She had IVF and became pregnant with twins on the first try. The Kalavrytan society fully supported her decision, which, to her, proves that it is very different from other provincial communities in Greece. Again, according to my interviewee, this forward-thinking attitude is also a result of Kalavryta’s post-catastrophe history, when the women shaped all social norms and attitudes. When we conducted this

interview, her daughters were 12 years old. To the typical Greek greeting “what are you doing?” (meaning “how are you?”), instead of “fine, thank you”, etc., she would reply “we are free, we do whatever we want”.

...tis Kanellas/... Kanella's

This artwork of mine refers to a long-forgotten practice established in Kalavryta after the catastrophe. In Kalavryta, as in many other parts of Greece, children are identified by their first name and their father's name, surname, or nickname in the genitive case. As it came to my attention after having many discussions with the elders, this was yet another convention that was *de facto* revised for a brief period of time following the catastrophe, with the model switching from patrilineal to matrilineal and the children starting to be referred to as belonging to their mothers.

The “Kanella” of the title, meaning “cinnamon” in Greek, is also the name of a young Kalavrytan woman who was widowed in December 1943 and left to fend for herself and her two children, known locally as “tis Kanellas”, i.e., Kanella's (2018). Due to her dynamic personality, Kanella became the spokesperson of the women and orphan association *O Golgothas* during all contacts with the government (Tzouda-Mitsiona, 2015: 117). The “problem” with Kanella is that she does not comply with the typical representation of the Kalavrytan widow in popular consciousness. Breaking with the official narrative regarding the widows who never remarried, Kanella took her two children and migrated to the States, where she got remarried, apparently happily. Nowadays, Kanella is mostly remembered as an activist who continued to help the widows and orphans of Kalavryta even after she had left the country and not as a mourning widow. “... tis Kanellas” was initially performed in 2018, at Twixt lab in

the form of a scentscape of cinnamon and a short text explaining her story, which were passed from hand to hand, as part of the group exhibition *gynaikopaida* (2018).

Lack of state support

The solidarity networks the Kalavrytan women formed also responded to the lack of institutional or other forms of support. In 1950, the Greek state discontinued the pensions given out to the widows for three years. According to Sotiris Hamakiotis and Christos Antonopoulos (2010), these pensions were terminated because the women did not have the right to vote at the time, so Kalavryta was of no interest to politicians. Tzouda-Mitsiona recalls how strongly the women in Kalavryta fought to be given the vote. In her archive, we can see a photograph of her proudly posing for a photographer she had invited to capture the moment when she cast her first vote. Next to her in the picture are her mother and the appointed committee, all of them men, looking embarrassed.

According to Pavlopoulos (2018), another reason for the lack of state support for Kalavryta in the period 1950-1970 was the dangerous potential association of the town with the production of heroic rebels fighting all kinds of conquerors, which, as analysed previously, sat uncomfortably with the official post-Civil War narrative. According to Schramm (2004: 78), Frederica of Hanover, the German-born Queen of Greece and wife of King Paul of Greece (rule: 1947- 1964), was also not particularly supportive of the women of Kalavryta, with her reluctance ending up causing significant delays in the distribution of non-governmental financial aid coming from German sources.

Another question worthy of considering is how supportive the men of Kalavryta were towards the networks the women had formed. However, in a society where most of the men had been killed, before answering this question we first need to clarify who exactly the men of Kalavryta were.

In addition to the thirteen wounded men who survived the execution, there were a few more adult men who escaped because they were away on business or for some other reason; who left because they sensed something was wrong (Koutsouris, 2010); who were guerillas on the mountains: or who did not believe the reassurances of the Germans and escaped in the last days (Kakoyannis, 2000). The visibility of these survivors in the official narrative is not objective: it needs to be considered in conjunction with the invisibility of the guerrillas, whether living or dead, already discussed previously in this dissertation. To be visible as a surviving Kalavrytan man one needed to be native, law-abiding, of a reproductive age, capable of working and of waging war, and, last but not least, to have been present on Kappi's hill on the 13 of December 1943.

Having answered this question, let us now go back to the original one concerning the degree of support of local men towards the Kalavrytan women. According to testimonies, in the majority of cases, support was directed towards their own families, rather than the group efforts organized by the women and the children. Apart from the thirteen, who were severely impaired due to their injuries for the rest of their days, the rest of the men continued living in the rubble, abiding by the hierarchies of old Kalavrytans. It is interesting to note that the accounts of the past do not refer to the male Kalavrytans who, for any of the above reasons, had survived the massacre and remained in Kalavryta. In my view, this seems to beg yet another question: is this silence merely aimed at emphasizing the importance of the dead and

of the thirteen official survivors, or is this absence pregnant with other information? According to testimonies, the few men living in Kalavryta adopted the following stances: some peripherally supporting the struggle of the widows and others spotting in the tragedy an opportunity for economic gain.

The poor women did what they could best, but how much leeway did they have when there was so much conflict of interest? There's nothing new about all this. It's just the way things are wherever you go, and Greece is definitely no exception. The ones who stayed behind were out to get them, and they did.²⁶

The man from Kalavryta who stated this to me during an interview is the son of a local woman who was very active in the Kalavrytan women's networks. There is also a series of accounts referring to cases of embezzlement and fraudulent practices. Tzouda-Mitsiona, for example, talks about the wrongs committed during the town's reconstruction (Tzouda-Mitsiona 2015, p. 119), while Pavlopoulos says that most of the money went into the pockets of the contractors (Pavlopoulos 2018, p. 106). It appears, also, that the mediators entrusted with the task of giving out the widows' compensation kept a larger sum of money than they should have or, in certain cases, the compensation was used for other purposes (ibid.: 130). In addition, when several of the widows were forced to sell their properties to feed their children, their compatriots bought them at very low prices, thus making large fortunes. According to testimonies, there were also cases when certain men extended to the widows their ideological battles with enemies who had already died during the execution.

²⁶ Interview with George Dimopoulos, 14/7/2014 (Kalavryta).

At this point, I would like to report a childhood memory of mine. My parents were born and raised in a town in the Peloponnese approximately 100 km from Kalavryta. My childhood memory consists of my father reporting a childhood memory of his own, which involved travelling merchants crossing the mountains of the Peloponnese who would advise each other not to pass near Kalavryta, as hearing the lamentations of the widows would bring them bad luck. As a result, the mourning women were left alone after the crime. “Alone” not simply in the sense that the patriarchal narrative of the museum assigns to the term, i.e. without male protectors, but also alone before the indifference of others to their misfortune and, in certain cases, before those who spotted an opportunity for business among the rubble. In the words of Tzouda-Mitsiona: “Your death is my life” (Tzouda 2015, p. 119). The “human vultures,” as Foteinopoulos names those who gathered to despoil the dead after the execution (Foteinopoulos, 2004, p. 137), maintained their presence in the following years, thus becoming part of the Kalavrytan trauma.



Figure 14. Efstathia Tzouda-Mitsiona casting her vote in 1956. (E. Tzouda-Mitsiona archive).

Panos Michos Theater Group

One of the outlets the Kalavrytan society has developed to help it deal with complicated areas of the past, without falling back into conflict, is the local theatre group. This group holds an important cultural and social position in the life of the town. It implements a politics of care and inclusion within the local community by addressing what needs to be told, rearranging notions of belonging, pursuing dialogue and suggesting new ways of imagining the past and the future. In my view, the theatre group represents the contemporary art scene of Kalavryta, in the sense that it engages in an artistic activity that seeks to promote awareness on a number of contemporary socio-political topics.

Founded in 1982, the Panos Michos Theater Group [Θεατρικός Όμιλος “Πάνος Μίχος”] was initially set up by a group of friends and is named after one of its members who died at an early age while the group was in its infancy. Since the very beginning, the group has been performing adaptations of classical plays. They are self-taught and self-motivated. Everything used in the performances is locally produced. The only exception to this rule has been, lately, the production of the costumes, which, as a result of the rising popularity of the group’s shows and the increased production budget, are ordered from elsewhere.

The group consists of a core team which has remained more or less stable over the years, as well as members who are added on a more temporary basis. As concerns the repertoire, this always reflects what the Kalavrytan society feels it needs to perform (and say) at any given moment. The members of the team come from any social class, have varying political orientations, can be “Kalavrytans” or *fertoι*: in short anyone residing permanently or temporarily in Kalavryta. The head of the group is Efthimia Benaki, a Kalavryta resident in her sixties when I met her, who has been involved with the Panos Michos Theater Group since the very beginning.

The group, as already mentioned, performs a classical repertoire, yet the choice of the play often contains critical and indirect allusions to the contemporary sociopolitical context. It may, for instance, refer to certain behaviours or choices made by local political actors or to the ways in which local institutions are run, vulnerable groups treated, etc. The selection is also determined based on the actors' availability for each season, as the group has a dynamic set up with members coming and going on a yearly basis. For the members of the group, agreeing to be in a play is an important commitment. As Kalavryta today lives mainly off tourism, the actors are usually busy during the weekends, so rehearsals are scheduled for evenings during the week. They last for several months, with the whole team investing time and energy and building strong bonds. Coming up with different ways of being, learning and working together is among the key goals this group of amateur actors and actresses has set itself.

The group takes care of the community not only by addressing what needs to be said (and perhaps cannot be said otherwise) through the mediation of each play selected; they also donate the money raised from the tickets to selected institutions (for example the local nursing home) or individuals/families in immediate need. Even more proactively, the theatre group often takes up the role of observing who has come into difficulty, is at risk of losing one's rights within the community or is moving towards the margins. Once something like this happens, the group selects a play with a character resembling the position of this individual and casts her for the part. Through the process of rehearsals and the actual presentation of the play to the community, the individual thus becomes reintegrated back into the community.

The team also functions as a memory keeper, as it is involved in the yearly celebrations commemorating the launch of the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire held on March 21, in front of the Monastery of Agia Lavra. This is a proud moment for the community, as Kalavryta attracts national attention. The fact that the theatre group has taken up this

performative responsibility is vital for its role and significance for the community. This is not without importance if one considers the group's selection of plays and the often difficult topics it places before the Kalavrytan community for discussion or reevaluation.

A very good example of this function of the group was the staging of Eduardo de Filippo's play *Filumena Marturano* in April 2022, which was locally considered a bold choice. Filumena is a woman leading a life which does not fall within socially accepted norms, while the plot follows her story as she strives to improve her position and that of her children within society. Efthimia, who chose the play, also decided to cast in the leading role the Kalavrytan Youli Kokoti —a dynamic woman with a tumultuous personal history that is difficult to stomach for the average Kalavrytan. Her grandfather was a guerilla while her parents were Jehovah's Witnesses (there is a small community of about 20 Jehovah's Witnesses in Kalavryta). When she was young, she left home and returned divorced with two children and full of experiences also involving working in nightclubs, none of which was very well received in Kalavryta. She then had a second marriage, more children, and became a successful businesswoman without receiving any support from her fellow-Kalavrytans. In 2012, Youli became the local spokesperson for Golden Dawn. She explained to me that this was her way of getting back at the community for treating her so harshly. Her relationship with the party was short-lived, but still long enough to further deteriorate her relations with the locals.

This is precisely what Efthimia tried to rectify with the choice of Eduardo de Filippo's play and the casting of Youli in the lead part. On the evening of the premiere, in the packed hall of the cultural center, the audience watching Filumena's moving monologue burst into applause at the end, while the mayor went on stage in tears to congratulate the group and especially the lead actress. The cathartic objective of the performance, which was to reintegrate Youli into the Kalavrytan community, had been achieved.

One of the reasons why I follow the work of the Kalavryta theater group with interest and remain in permanent conversation with them is that I believe we have similar ways of thinking about art and that the work they have already developed, which I see as a means of attempting catharsis through art, relate to my own objectives.

Beyond the numerous plays they have staged over the years, the Michos Theater Group has also collaborated with the director Yannis Katomeris in the making of the film *Kalavryta, 13 December 1943* (1986), which was based on Frantzeska Nika's book *Kalavryta 1943, Martyria* (*Kalavryta 1943, A testimony*, 1996). During the mid-80s, Katomeris, his wife and crew visited Kalavryta. Their goal, according to Katomeris himself, was to conduct research in order to find out what actually happened during the catastrophe and challenge the then prevalent historiographical narrative which was assigning the blame on the guerrillas. The result of this research was the docudrama which, in the first half, using interviews and archival material absolves the partisans of responsibility for the crime, while in the second half it reenacts the day of the execution with the participation of people from Kalavryta. The women who had survived the massacre, their children and grandchildren gathered in front of the school, where the men were led (by other Kalavrytans wearing German uniforms) to the execution place, while the women and the children were confined in the school. This was a particularly challenging and emotionally charged process for the participants, none of whom, according to testimonies, left the set even though they kept completely silent and played in tears. This filming was a one-off occurrence. No other re-enactment of what happened that day took place either before or after it. The fact that Katomeris collaborated with the Panos Michos Theater Group was what made the film possible, as, in the words of Efthimia during the interview included in *Efthimia (Euthymia) No3*, "the local community is generally not open to strangers".

The first part of the film relates the events leading up to the disaster through interviews of members of the Kalavrytan community, among them guerillas, as well as archival material. Katomeris attempts to compose a more inclusive historical narrative than the dominant one at the time. He never intended to screen the film in cinemas, but instead wanted to leave it as a legacy in Kalavryta with a view to preserving this version of history. As Marita Sturken notes, Katomeris' film is a testimony of the "role of docudrama in history-making" (Sturken, 1997, p. 33).

The film was shown just once on national TV and then left in Kalavryta, where the director had wished for it to be passed on from person to person. Although some of my contacts in Kalavryta had occasionally referred to a film they had participated as children, it took me a long time to find a copy of it, as in the meantime it had been forgotten. In the end, it was Efthimia Benaki who gave it to me, and we had many discussions both about the film and the circumstances of its filming. Efthimia also gave me Katomeris' phone number, whom I met several times to discuss the film. Katomeris considered this film an "old work" and told me he could see no reason to go shaking things up. Since the print that Efthimia had given me in Kalavryta was not complete, Katomeris went to a great deal of effort to find one of his own. But when I suggested adding subtitles to this old work, he replied that he could not see a reason for doing so.

For my part, as I really wanted to include the film as well as the collaboration between Katomeris and the theatre group among the artworks of the PRP project I would be presenting in different venues abroad, I ended up making a video installation. I asked Efthimia to explain the film to me while watching it after all these years and filmed her in the process. As she was not comfortable with the set-up, I installed a fixed camera and sat next to her to ask her questions while we were both watching *Kalavryta, 13 December 1943*. This interview with

Efthimia was conducted in April 2014. She talked to me about the decision to make the film, the conditions and method of filming and the reactions of the local community during the shooting. Furthermore, Efthimia described to me how the guerrillas and their families interacted with the rest of the community. The outcome was an installation consisting of two equally sized screens posed next to the other, entitled *Efthimia (Euthymia) No3*. Subtitles in English appear only on the screen showing Efthimia's interview with me. The viewer watches the film and the interview about the film at the same time, with Efthimia's explanations reinforcing their understanding of the film.



Figure 15. Screenshot from *Efthimia (Euthymia) No3* (Gouseti, 2014).

The work was presented for the first time at Gallery Joey Ramone in Rotterdam. Although I was anxious about how it would be received by the Dutch community and whether the dual narrative the installation proposed would work, there were many people who watched to the end and stayed around to discuss it. When I showed it in Germany in 2016, the reactions were much more lukewarm. However, when the time came to show the film in Athens in 2014 (at a space called Bangladesh), things did not go smoothly. Apart from the general or familiar audience which usually turns up at this type of events, some members of Efthimia's family were also present. This was to be expected, since, apart from Efthimia's interview to me, one

of the people interviewed by Katomeris' crew was Efthimia's father who was a former rebel. During the screening, her brother got up and screamed: "What is she [Efthimia] talking about!". Then he called her on the phone and gave her a scolding right in the middle of the screening. The film continued to play through what was a very awkward moment.

In my view, it was gender and family dynamics, as well as the question of "who has the right to speak" which sparked the fierce reaction against Efthimia's version of events. This is a narrative which, although discussed locally in cafes, does not enjoy universal acceptance and has therefore not been approved to be voiced in public. What is most interesting about all this is that, as an outsider, I could not even pinpoint the parts of Efthimia's interview that could cause so much disturbance. As for Efthimia herself, she is not sure whether she wants this video installation to be included in the exhibition of all the PRP works that will be held in Kalavryta, as, although she still stands by everything she says in the video, she fears there might be reactions similar to that of her brother. This is a decision I had to accept, so there will be one work minus shown in the exhibition.

As discussed in a previous chapter, the 2021 screening of the film *Echoes of the Past, Kalavryta 1943*, directed by Nicholas Dimitropoulos, was met with strong local reactions for a variety of reasons. The Kalavryta theater group, in order to express dissatisfaction with this film and the fact that it was screened in cinemas across Greece, brought Katomeris' "old film" back into the picture. Thus, as part of the 2021 December commemoration events, *Kalavryta, 13 December 1943* had its first public screening in Kalavryta. The screening took place in the packed Cultural Center of Kalavryta, sparking emotional responses from the audience. The screening reactivated engagement with this work. Interestingly, it took thirty-five years for this pivotal work for the community to find its place in the common life and collective memory of the village. As a result of the warm reaction to the film, Katomeris decided to find the original

copy, add English subtitles and screen it again. Up until the moment I am writing these lines, the film is available only in his personal archive.

The Antigones of Kalavryta

In 2010, on the occasion of the 67th anniversary of the disaster, Maria Georgada-Karydi gave a speech in Kalavryta in which she appealed for catharsis. This speech was very impactful, as it put into words what the community needed to say at the time, while the phrase “a need for catharsis”, which I had not heard anyone use before 2010, was subsequently adopted by many Kalavrytans. Resorting to ancient tragedy, Geograda-Karydi referred to the Kalavrytan woman as an Antigone who has “nothing to fear, has been through the worse, knows perfectly well that nobody can or is willing to help her and so decides to risk everything... She is the triumph of human will and perseverance, she gives hope to all the underdogs of this world.” Georgada-Karydi picked up the figure of Antigone from the work *Kalavrita of the Thousand Antigones* by Catherine Delbaud (2001), who, in her turn, draws on ancient tragedy to allude to the extremely difficult yet, according to the women, necessary process of burying the massacred men.

Georgada-Karydi conjures the figure of Antigone —even suggesting that a reference to the latter should be integrated in the statue of the Kalavrytan mother that I will be analyzing in the next chapter. This is because Antigone always opposes the Creons coming her way, raising a demand for catharsis similar to the one voiced by Georgada. Georgada also claims that it is high time “to lift the heavy veils that covered everything during the painful 1940s”, thus broadening the scope of the violence Antigone is rising up against. The Kalavrytan Antigone, as imagined by Georada-Karydi, opposes with all her strength the reign of injustice,

greed, folly, and pleasure at any cost and is determined not to stop until the perpetrator has assumed responsibility for his actions.

Although invoking Antigone in the Kalavrytan context might make sense at first glance, the fact is that no one prevented the widows from burying their loved ones. No one stopped them from performing their age-old duty (Politi, 2014). Politi's "Letter to Antigone" is a manifesto standing critically against the patriarchy's persistence in building the world in its image and declares that the tragedy bearing the heroine's name is a lesson in obedience. The "dirty work" of burying the body (p. 45) Antigone seeks to perform in the play is not, she claims, a revolutionary act, as domination draws its power from the figures of heroes and saints. Antigone's selflessness, Politi continues, is a basic prerequisite for anyone claiming to be a hero and goes on to turn Antigone's line "it is not in my nature to join in hate, but in love" on its head, interpreting it as a fantasy of the loving nature of the woman "masqueraded" by male desire (p. 46).

This appropriation of Antigone to refer to the Kalavrytan woman is blatantly a political act. Traditionally confined within their houses and excluded from suffrage, these women entered the public sphere once there were no more houses in which to be confined. They expressed themselves politically and demanded the right to vote; courageously stood up to anyone trying to wrong them when circumstances demanded; changed the rules (laws) of their community (city), as well as the political connotations, even the most disturbing and dangerous ones, of the dialectic between law and desire (Tzelepi, 2014, p. 16). It was perhaps for all the above reasons that they have been described as "androgynous" by those who understand political action within the gendered confines of old Kalavryta.

After the town was burnt to the ground, the limits of the new town shifted for some time, with the stone fence of the cemetery determining the new community. The cemetery

was still Antigone's domain during the civil war, as the politics of who gets to be buried where and for what reasons created many different Antigones, fighting their just cause and resisting in chorus. It is precisely the limits of this city-burial ground, and this is the point where, according to Tzelepi (2014, p. 13), Creon often comes back and exhorts Antigone to take a stand on the serious issue of the city and its limits, i.e. the city and its enemies. This is also the point where Antigone comes to challenge through her new role as civilian (an androgynous thing, according to Creon), but also as the one who makes the rules of the new city of Kalavryta.

In other words, Antigone of Kalavryta is not defined as such on the grounds of performing the "dirty work" of mourning and burying the massacred men in 1943. Rather, the Kalavrytan woman becomes Antigone after the massacre, in the new Kalavryta, at the moment when she starts resisting unjust laws, norms and policies (Butler, 2014) and shaping new conditions of life for herself, her loved ones and her city.

Chapter 5: Kappi's hill: From Monument to Memorial ²⁷

Kappi's hill is the site on which all men above fourteen years of age were executed by the Wehrmacht. It is situated on a slope only 500 meters away from the center of the town. After the massacre, some women managed to drag the corpses that belonged to their male family members to the nearby cemetery. Others ended up having to bury their relatives and neighbors *in situ*. In the decades that followed, the question of whether the bodies should stay on the hill in order to claim visibility in the form of graves right where the massacre took place or whether it would be better to relocate the remains to the cemetery would emerge as a particularly thorny one.

The site of the execution used to be a wheat field which, until 1943, was owned by a local man named Kappis. For obvious reasons, the field was later donated by his family to the municipality. By 1959, when the memorial monument was built, the only objects on the Kappi plot were the wooden crosses marking the graves and a ten-meter white cross on the highest spot of the slope, which was erected in the 1950s. This cross is visible from a distance and therefore is in conversation with the other key monument of Kalavryta: the Memorial Column for the Fighters of the Greek War of Independence. These two monuments stand above the skyline of the town, thus constantly linking the martyrs and the heroes figuring in the official national narrative. For Kalavrytans, the installation of the cross on Kappi's hill initiated the monumentalization process and is thus a key reference point when it comes to the narrative commemorating the massacre (Drozdewski, 2016, p. 30). The symbolism of the big white

²⁷ The content of this chapter has been presented on two separate occasions: in Bard College, New York (Gouseti, 2022); and at Princeton University's Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies (Gouseti, 2021).

cross marks the local and national response to the disastrous event that defined the nation's history (p. 31).

In the following pages, I will be examining the physical and monumental landscape that hosted the mass execution at the center of the Kalavrytan community's trauma. I will be analyzing the memorial choices and the conditions that gave rise to them and will be arguing that the monument is not, in fact, a finished product, but rather an ever-evolving work in progress. Finally, I will present the performance project I am presently planning together with the theater group of Kalavryta, which aims to turn the monument into a memorial.



Figure 16. View of the monument on Kappi's hill. The town of Kalavryta can be perceived on the background (own picture, 2022).

The making

The story of the monument on Kappi's hill begins in 1959, when the municipal board announced its intention to proceed with this initiative and formed an artistic committee for the purpose of conducting a competition. The project was placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and was partly financed through a fundraising campaign, while the community was informed about its progress every step of the way from the local press (*"Eis mnimin ton thumatou"*, 1959).

The winning entry was a proposal submitted by a team consisting of two professors of architecture, Ilias Skroumpelos and Christos Iakovidis, and the artist Anna Vafia, who, at the time, was studying sculpture at the Athens School of Fine Arts. The local newspapers printed a scale model of the proposed artwork, accompanied by the following succinct description: "Five vertical concrete elements, of alternating height, on which the names of the executed will be listed. Those elements designate a space, where the residents will gather for the memorial service every year on December 13. Due to their height, the elements are visible from a great distance and are projected in combination with the Cross, thus giving the impression of an ascension and arousing an intense emotional response in the visitor. The composition also includes an ossuary, which complements the invisible circle created by the vertical elements surrounding the square within which the sculpture is situated, as well as the shrine on a lower level. The concrete sculpture is a rough, two-meter work depicting the figure of a woman. It symbolizes the pain the local women experienced after the tragic incident..." (*"I maketa tou mnimeiou"*, 1962).

Interestingly, this was one of the very few monumental initiatives referring to the events of 1943 that did not give rise to controversy. The Kalavrytans welcomed the new memorial warmly, while the atmosphere during the monument's inauguration ceremony in 1964 is recalled as being very emotional.

Anna Vafia's sculpture *Petromeni Mana* (Vafia, 1963) is part of the monumental composition erected on the site where the Wehrmacht executed the male population of Kalavryta. When the monumental composition was revealed to the public, this part of it emerged as a clear favourite among the women of Kalavryta, though the structure enjoys universal approval and an appreciation that has been growing over the years. With time, the statue has come to be considered a symbol of the town and, as such, is highly revered by everyone. Kalavrytans may not be familiar with the artist and her career, but the name of their beloved statue's creator is known to them all. Interestingly, although it was not difficult to find information about the two architects who participated in the project, I did not manage to track down anything about the sculptor and her work. As a result, I decided to try and track down Vafia herself. I looked her up in the phone book and, to my luck, it turned out she was listed. This is an extract from the first conversation I had with Anna Vafia²⁸:

FG: How did you become involved with the making of the monument?

AV: I'll tell you all I can remember. At the beginning of this story, I was 22 years old, still studying sculpture at the School under Giannis Pappas. Tobros [Michalis Tobros, sculptor] was teaching another class. When they won the contest, they asked me to work with them.

FG: How did you feel when you arrived at Kalavryta? Did the idea come at once?

²⁸ I have decided to include this long extract from my interview with Anna Vafia, after realising that despite the respect *Petromeni Mana* enjoys in Kalavryta, I was unable to trace any information about the artist online. To me, this absence is strikingly similar to the invisibility of the Kalavrytan women in historiographical sources.

AV: What struck me the most was that there were no men left aged over 13. All the men had been killed and only the women were left behind. When they went to the spot where the Germans had killed them, they were digging tooth and nail to get their people out of the snow. There were only women left, there were no men for many years in Kalavryta after the disaster. Moreover, what struck me when I went there was that without even thinking about it, everyone was speaking in a low voice. It was a place with just wooden graves and the cross above. There was nothing else there. When I went, I noticed a rock on the right, maybe it's still there. That rock gave me the inspiration for the shape, and the fact that only the women were left behind gave me the idea that this should be the central theme.

FG: Were you inspired by other artists for this piece?

AV: No. It was my idea to have two blocks —because first I made the same in a smaller scale, of course. I put one block underneath and then made another one, almost square, and placed it on top. All that in clay. Based on that, I designed the idea that block of stone I told you about had given me. However, when I made the sketch, the others started doubting whether I could do it.

FG: You mean the architects?

AV: The architects, yes. They went and asked my teacher as much. I think there were two other teachers of mine who had also entered the competition. Anyway, Pappas [Giannis Pappas, sculptor], and this is to his credit, said, "Of course she can do it". And the other thing he told my classmates was that "it is to the credit of your colleague [me, that is]) that, although she entered the competition, I didn't know anything about it. She hadn't said a word to me".

FG: Would you like to tell me more about the competition? Was this the same one that had been announced for the monument?

AV: There had been seven more attempts. This was the first time that the decision was unanimous.

FG: Over your work?

AV: Over the project, both the architecture and the sculpture side of it.

FG: So, it was an architecture project that incorporated your work.

AV: Yes, but I was also involved in the overall decision concerning the form the monument would take. Obviously. It couldn't have been otherwise.

FG: Would you like to tell me more about the idea behind the monument?

AV: The idea of the memorial is derived from the people who were killed there, the fact that there weren't any men left and for many years only the women lived in the town. I worked for a month to make this monument, and it was built right up there on the hill. That is, the mould, the cement, everything was done on the spot. I stayed for a month and worked there with the workers.

FG: Is it cement?

AV: Cement, yes. You can't tell, can you? I had to do it because it was scheduled to be finished in December.

FG: And when did you do it, what time of year?

AV: In the dead of winter. I'd go up on the hill, get soaked and then come back down. The mayor at the time was putting me up in a hotel room.

FG: It must have been difficult with the cold.

AV: It was. Then again, I was very young. But the most amazing thing was that even though the monument was a collaborative work, the architects kept complaining because everyone would go straight to the statue. Old women were all over it, stroking and kissing it. They would stroke the woman and they'd kiss her.

FG: How come they chose you? They were professors, these three architects, weren't they?

AV: They were professors at the Polytechnic School and the School of Fine Arts was very near.

Plus, I knew all three of them.

FG: You mean you knew them personally?

AV: Yes, exactly.

FG: So, you all submitted the proposal together. All four of you.

AV: Exactly, yes.

FG: How about the fee, did you also divide it by four? And was it satisfactory?

AV: The fee was negligible. I don't even remember. However, mine was small. We didn't do it for the money. It was more about doing what was in one's heart and what we thought we needed to do.

FG: Why did you want to do this?

AV: I was terribly moved by this story in Kalavryta. It had touched something deep inside me and when I went and saw the place I was moved even more. Also, from the accounts of the people —because there were a couple who had lived through this tragedy.

FG: So, you had talked to women in Kalavryta?

AV: I had talked to a couple of the men, I remember at least one of them. I had talked to one of the survivors. And what they were saying was horrifying, the way they were describing how it had all happened. Mostly, I talked to the people who were building the memorial, the workers, that is, plus the men I mentioned. I don't remember talking to women. But what struck me is what I told you, that the women were very moved and felt that it was their monument. That is, they appropriated the monument. The women were crying, it had made a terrible impression on them.

FG: Was the monument inaugurated during the memorial service on December 13?

AV: Yes. And I was there a month or two before, I don't remember exactly, now. Because I had to finish it before the inauguration.

FG: 1963, as I understand it

AV: Yes, if the dates match.

FG: I would very much like to know more about your career. You studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts, is that correct?

AV: Yes, I studied sculpture, mosaic and ceramics.

FG: I'm sure your career includes some exhibitions in Greece or abroad.

AV: Also some painting shows. At the German Institute, during the occupation we had here, I mean during the dictatorship. I also went to Berlin where I had several exhibitions. I made two reliefs in Kolonaki, in two houses where I lived. I have done a lot of things. I also had a gallery for a long time, it was called "Eu", on Fokilidou Street. But mostly my works are in houses, spread all over.

FG: I would love to see your work. I'll look for it, hopefully I'll manage to find it.

AV: I don't know what to tell you. It's probably difficult as it's mostly in private collections.

Although it was clear to me during our call that Vafia was trying to retrieve long-forgotten memories, I found that the information she shared was significant. In the course of a second conversation, Vafia told me that the woman's face figuring in the sculpture belongs to her grandmother on her mother's side.



Figure 17. Anna Vafia's sculpture *Petromeni Mana* on Kappi's hill (own picture, 2016).

The monumental composition

As is the case with many memorial structures referring to WWII crimes, Kappi's hill monument has a modernist design. Both the architectural installation and Vafia's sculpture which comprise it are based on a simple concept incorporating elements from the fields of art and architecture. Through its design, the monument converts the natural environment into memorial landscape by setting up a dialogue between the landscape and the vertical reinforced cement concrete (RCC) plates, the paved pathway, the sculpture and the tomb—all independent elements interacting dynamically with each other. In order to extend the presence of the landscape within the memorial monument and link the two spheres together, plastic elements are introduced in the surrounding space, creating points of escape towards the natural environment and letting the presence of the historical landscape coexist freely with the monument. The construction covers the community's need for a place to come together for memorial services. A visitor standing on the platform is surrounded by lists of names and surnames belonging to the executed men, listed per family and grouped together on the vertical, concrete columns. At the point where the visitor enters the monumental composition, there is a crypt leading underground. Anna Vafia's sculpture stands visibly next to the entrance to the crypt.

Working-class non-hero

When the construction of the memorial monument was announced, the locals were informed that the relatives of the deceased who were buried at Kappi's hill should move their remains to the cemetery ("To proskinima", 1964). The Kalavryta cemetery, is already attributed monumental status in the minds of the locals, as this is where both the executed men and the members of the old Kalavrytan community were laid to rest. This, also, is the main site at which

the politics of belonging are played out even to this day.

The monumental construction was built a few meters away from the actual spot where the mass of corpses was found after the execution. This location was selected for practical reasons, but also because it is more visible from the town, over which it affords a panoramic view. The metal crosses one can still perceive today around the memorial monument are material references to the initial crosses the locals installed after the execution in order to designate the area as a graveyard, thus rendering it visible and facilitating both communal and individual manifestations of mourning. Interestingly, although the crosses were removed during the exhumation and transfer of the remains to the cemetery, following the completion of the monument's construction new crosses were placed on the site, highly reminiscent of the ones which the local residents originally installed for memorial purposes. One could surmise from this move that the Kalavrytans still believed that the graves should stay right there, at the execution site, so that every visitor has the chance to see them. The few graves which are still visible on the slope belong to occasional workers who happened to be in Kalavryta during the execution. As there were no family graves designated for them at the cemetery, their remains were not exhumed.

There are, however, certain victims of the massacre that are now mentioned among the dead, but are, as such, invisible. The group consists mainly of working-class men who worked at the lignite mines in the areas of Xidia and Paleochori. The exact number of these workers is unknown; some claim there were twenty-one of them whereas others place the figure higher. In addition, as Kalavryta was the commercial center of the region, other individuals were certainly present on December 13th who were travelling for business and ended up captured and executed alongside the locals. As concerns this category, the elderly

recall that the corpses of non-Kalavrytans were buried in mass graves. There is, however, no consensus regarding the exact location of these graves. According to some accounts, the foreigners were all buried in one mass grave, though nobody seems to remember where it was. Given that the actual execution spot is currently converted into a parking lot to serve the monument's visitors, I do wonder whether remains are still buried under that spot. Some place the mass grave at the little ravine situated on the left of the present-day parking lot, while others say that there was not just one mass grave and that the strangers were buried in small groups of two or three corpses.

During the memorial events in 2003 organized to mark the 60 years since the catastrophe, metal lanterns were spread sporadically around the hill in order to mnemonically address the unknown strangers who were executed together with the locals. This intervention further echoes the complicated subject already discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, namely the ambivalence shrouding the exact number of the dead.

In the following years, the religious dimension of the construction was enhanced. Inside the crypt, which, according to the architects' initial proposal, was intended to serve as an ossuary, an installation of ecclesiastical lanterns and religious icons was set up. Reportedly, the total number of lanterns is 1,300. According to an exaggerated—and perhaps mythological, as one can detect an attempt to link the massacre with Leonidas's 300 Spartan warriors—account, this is the total number of men executed on 13 December 1943. What is more, a big cross erected next to the crypt's entry point is another religious addition to the installation.

More interventions were effectuated through the years, extending the monument and enriching the memorial landscape. During the Colonel's Junta (1967-1974), trees were planted in the surrounding area with a view to rendering it more welcoming, despite the fact that the architects who designed the monument had called for the landscape to remain intact.

Decorative bushes, lawn, flowers and a short wooden fence resembling a traditional family grave have been added, with this process continuing to this day. The phrases “no more wars” and “peace” have been inscribed on the ground on either side of the crypt. The route the men took on that day has been paved with stone, forming a path that leads all the way down to the museum. This was a project that took many years and several stages to complete, with the materials chosen contributing to the monumentalisation of an already existing pathway. For the 2019 memorial event, the municipality placed metal plates on either side of the path, adding quotations from accounts of what happened that day given by members of the municipal council and the community.



Figure 18. The model of the Monument of Executed Kalavrytans as presented in the local press (Marios Stathis' archive).

In 2021, the Kalavrytan Efthimios Tzovolos made an installation gathering together hundreds of pairs of men's shoes in the parking lot of the monument. The installation directly refers to *The Shoes on the Danube Promenade* (2005), a monumental installation in Budapest in which Can Togay and Gyula Pauer arrayed 60 metal shoes, fabricated yet with a realistic feel,

invoking the killing of Hungarian Jews during the winter of 1944-45. Tzovolos' installation was repeated the following year. During our phone interview, Tzovolos stated that he does not consider the installation as a work of art but rather as a spatial reminder addressed to younger generations and intended to bring to a more human scale the abstract figure citing the number of the massacred.²⁹ Furthermore, visitors to the memorial site also have the option of listening to a recorded sound piece entitled *Chronicling the Kalavrytan Drama* (2018) narrated by the actress and then Minister of Culture Lydia Koniordou. I also interpret the maintenance that was carried out at the beginning of the 21st century as part of the aforementioned ever-evolving monumentality, since the entire architectural installation was covered with grey paint, thus subverting the modernist character of the work.



Figure 19. Tzovolos' shoe installation (own picture, 2021).

²⁹ Interview with Efthymios Tzovolos, 7/2/23 (phone).

Throughout the 15 years I have been attending the memorials organized on a yearly basis, I have noticed that both the local authorities and the members of the community often express a desire to constantly “improve” the quality of the celebrations held to mark the anniversary as well as of the monumental space devoted to commemorating the 1943 massacre. In my view, this is linked to the Kalavrytans’ demand for catharsis, as well as their need to communicate through different means of expression and to make visible what cannot be said or has not yet been said in a way that is satisfactory to the community.

The aforementioned invisibility of the working-class strangers who were executed by the Nazis remained unaltered during the years, even when the whole population was thrown into traumatic precariousness. Contrary to non-Kalavrytan victims of a higher social status, such as teachers and civil employees who are mentioned together with the locals as partners in death, the anonymous working-class remains are still in a state of non-grievability (Butler 2009). Their inchoate symbolical memorial traces taking the form of lanterns placed within the memorial landscape do not serve any form of grieving, but rather become instruments in an orchestrated attempt to prove that the real number of the dead is bigger than the one indicated on the plates. In other words, the working-class strangers still serve the community that has forgotten where their invisible bones are placed.

When confronted with the memorial at Kappi’s hill, one is reminded of Anderson’s (1983) remarks concerning cenotaphs and war memorials dedicated to soldiers. According to Anderson, this type of monument is the most arresting emblem of nationalism in the modern culture, due to “the public ceremonial reverence accorded to these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them” (9). Anderson then invites us to imagine the reactions that would be provoked if one were to discover the names of the unknown soldiers or perhaps placed in the monument some “real

bones”, thus overturning the key condition that the soldier is unknown and unknowable. Ironically, in the case of Kappi’s hill, Anderson’s scenario has come to pass. With the emptying of the bones, the monument was set up to serve as a kind of generalized cenotaph for the mourning of all Kalavryta —and also, by extension, all victims of fascist violence. Yet, within the cenotaph there are still actual bones, persisting and haunting those who were excluded from the community.

Herbarium

During a period of particularly intensive research—mainly conducted through interviews—touching upon very difficult subjects, I felt the need to take a break from face-to-face meetings and seek other ways of gathering information. The method I found during April 2014 was to start collecting specimens of plants growing on Kappi’s hill.



Figure 20. Plants growing on Kappi’s hill (own picture, June 2013).

The resulting artwork proposed these plants as monuments and narrative prompts. Since the first moment I started collecting the plants, the local community embraced the work enthusiastically. At the beginning it was not clear to me why this action was so meaningful to them, yet things became clearer once I found out about the locals' belief that feeding on the plants which grow on the land is a way to enter into a communion with their ancestors, through the consumption of their blood which has soaked the earth from which the plants sprouted. This notion is, I believe, linked to the post-disaster period, when women insisted on cultivating the land around the city of Kalavryta. The plants I picked were dried and arrayed in a herbarium album. The visual result is the plant catalogue entitled *Kappi Hill, Kalavryta, April 2014* (2014).



Figure 21. The herbarium I made with plants from Kappi's hill (Gouseti, 2014), as shown in Berlin (Grimmuseum, 2016). Own picture, 2016.

The collected monumentalized plants are by no means endemic. On the contrary, many of them are familiar all across Greece and in most of the countries I have visited. Since the flora is the same throughout the region of Kalavryta, the collection refers and connects the stories of Kappi's hill to the stories of other villages in the area sharing similar experiences that are less visible and have not enjoyed the same level of support since they are not, like Kalavryta, a symbol of the nation. It also refers to the numerous unclaimed and un-grieved human remains that are still scattered around in the area —the aftermath of bloody battles held during both wars, still recounted or silenced by the people who were children at the time of narration. Finally, the work attempts to start a conversation with the people in every place that this artwork has or will be exhibited, where the plants feel familiar and create a common ground among viewers embodying similar experiences. Elliana Otta (2022) urges us to try to listen to the dead, to remain silent for as long as it takes until we succeed. For those who have died and those who are dead are connected to them, reminding us of our past debts.

Political appropriation

Every year, during the yearly memorial ceremony, the monument on Kappi's hill attracts both national and local attention as the place where communal memory meets national narrative. The officials seated on the platform typically include the Mayor, the Prime Minister or the President of the Hellenic Republic, the bishop of Kalavryta, accompanied by a delegation of high-ranking Church officials, politicians from every political party, representatives of other communities both in Greece and abroad who went through similar experiences during WWII, as well as the elderly Kalavrytans and the local theatre group. The large crowd that flocks to

the site consists of pupils and students (local and from other areas), citizens, journalists as well as army and police officers. In the past, fighter jets would fly above the memorial, while army officers would fire their rifles in memory of the fallen when the names of the executed men were read at the cemetery. Nowadays, however, this ritual is no longer performed as many complained it was very violent. The crowd often holds banners with anti-war slogans, thus creating a contrast with the army at the scene. The politicians make statements and the event is broadcast on national media.



Figure 21. View of the monument on Kappi's hill during the memorial service held on the 13th of December 2012 (own picture, 2012).

The ceremony, the statements, the names of the people who came and of those who were absent are discussed extensively in the local newspapers. The presence that is the most commented upon is that of the German Ambassador. Since, to this day, Germany has not assumed direct responsibility for the execution and the city's destruction, the Ambassador's every word and gesture is exhaustively commented on, discussed and interpreted by Kalavrytans.

This situation can best be illustrated with an example. The first time a German head of state visited Kalavryta and Kappi's hill was in April 2000. President Johannes Rau's visit received local, national and international media coverage. The statement he made on the occasion included the phrase that he felt "pain and shame". This phrase was interpreted differently by different ideological groups. Leftists read into it the evasiveness of someone avoiding taking immediate responsibility for the act, while also trying to steer clear of the subject of war reparations (Me ntropi kai oduni, 2000). Conservatives interpreted the statement as an "apology for the Kalavryta holocaust". These two positions delineated the axis along which debates that preoccupied the Kalvrytan society would move for a long time.

As discussed in other parts of this dissertation, in Kalavryta the local and the national are often in competition with each other. The ceremony at Kappi's hill is one of these instances. The politicians' statements and overall presence are not only commented on in local newspapers, but also receive national coverage. The presence of so many journalists and outsiders fundamentally changes what was originally intended as a memorial service into a national commemoration event, thus taking presence over the local need to honour their own dead. For that reason, a separate memorial service takes place on Kappi's hill at the eve of the

anniversary just for the relatives of the victims because the following day, with so much commotion, no one would be able to perform one properly for their father, brother, or uncle.

This idea to employ this private memorial service as a mechanism to avoid political misappropriation emerged in December 1987, following the programme designed to mark the 44th anniversary of the catastrophe. On that year, the memorial coincided with the pre-election period. Kalavrytans and their mayor (Panos Polkas) foresaw that the commemoration of the 1943 events could run counter to the needs of the locals, as candidates of different political parties would use the occasion to claim visibility for themselves. In order to preempt such disrespect for their dead, many local people sent a letter signed “residents of Kalavryta” to the heads of the political parties. The letter read : “As residents of this land, we are afraid that some will want to turn the modest memorial intended to honour our dead, which we have been performing for many years in order to keep their memory alive, into a cheap party event,”³⁰ while also calling on all party leaders to respect the place and the memorial concept; respect the women who buried the dead with their own hands and still, to this day, remember this more vividly than anyone; and, finally, respect Kappi’s hill, a world-renowned anti-war symbol. In this letter, the monumental site is referred to as a “martyrdom site”. Additionally, Polkas pinned on every local cafe an announcement that read: “NO POLITICAL RALLIES OR APPLAUSE PLEASE ON 13 DECEMBER 1987. LET US RESPECT THE DAY AND THE LOCATION. ON BEHALF OF THE MUNICIPALITY”.³¹

³⁰ The letter is included in the personal archive of Fillippos Sardelianos.

³¹ As above.

Unfortunately, those pleas were ignored. On the day of the memorial, thousands of political supporters (locals recall 8,000 to 10,000) arrived in (authorized, sponsored) buses covered in posters. The local press (“13 Dekemvriou 1943”, 1988) mentioned 1,000 policemen mobilized for the occasion; they were present in the town even before the crowds reached Kalavryta. The same source mentions kiosks offering snacks “as if in a village fair” and describes the incomers as fans or even hooligans. As Andreas Papandreou and Konstantinos Mitsotakis, then leaders of PASOK and New Democracy respectively, were laying wreaths at the memorial site, the crowd was shouting political slogans like “*Megale, megale*” (“Our leader, our leader”), booing their adversaries, holding banners, clapping, and antagonising each other. This conversion of the town’s memorial service into a political terrain for the upcoming elections sent shockwaves up the spines of many local people.

On that day, the situation was so confusing and tense that an article published in a local newspaper (“Oi manades pou zoun”, 1988) listed the 75 names of the “still living mothers” who lost their loved ones at Kappi’s hill, together with a request directed at the Mayor to ensure proper memorial conditions for them and to put an end to the political appropriation of Kappi’s hill.



Figure 22. Crowds gathered in Kalavryta for the 1988 memorial ceremony (Filippos Sardelianos' archive).

In my view, these memorial services of a more private nature that are performed every year on the eve of the official memorial are the Kalavrytans' way to counterbalance the political appropriation of the monumental site and of the events organized to mark the occasion, which represents one of the many layers of trauma which this dissertation aims to trace and analyse as "Kalavrytan trauma".



Figure 23. *Trisagio* service held on the eve of the memorial ceremony (own picture, 12/12/2012).

Naming the monument

The area where the execution was held used to be called to “chorafi tou Kappi” (Kappi’s field) or *Laka tou Kappi*, with “laka” translating as a depression formed on the surface of the land when the ground is situated lower than its surroundings —which was exactly the case with Kappi’s field. After the construction of the monument, however, this depression is no longer visible.

As already mentioned, the memorial monument was built higher than the actual spot where the massacre took place. As the slope at Kappi’s Hill is very steep, the road that was constructed to serve the monument curves sharply up the hill and continues past the parking lot and around the back side of the monument, i.e., behind the high white cross which has been placed at its highest point. In the following years, a smaller road was built on the other side, which serves as a limit separating the monument from the surrounding area. Due to the height of the construction and of the trees that have been planted, the site started to stand out from the landscape, which is rocky and treeless, and become more of a hill and less of a depression. In effect, it is now called “Kappi’s hill” (*λόφος του Καππή*) although, on official occasions, the locals also refer to it as “i rachi tou Kappi”. “Rachi” literally translates as mountain top or a person’s back. This is not a term descriptive of the landscape, but rather refers to the first verse from an emblematic poem Greece’s national poet Dionysios Solomos wrote about the Psara massacre, where the Ottomans killed thousands of Greeks in 1824: “On the black *rachi* of Psarra”. However, in their everyday life the Kalavrytans mainly refer to the place as “stin ektelesi” (to the Execution).

As concerns the memorial monument itself, during the construction process, it was referred to locally as the “memorial of the Executed Kalavrytans”. In the coming years, this changed to the “the site of sacrifice, thus linking the monument with the attempt to frame the dead as martyrs or/and heroes. However, as the reference to sacrifice created confusion and led to different interpretations, it eventually went out of use. The problem with the notion of sacrifice is that it becomes implicated in the dominant reading of history which, by assigning the blame on the resistance instead of the perpetrators, ends up effacing the local historical context of the Kalavryta massacre and presenting the victims as representative of the entire nation. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, such instances of inscribing public memory served to “legitimize post-war governments and to repress more disturbing memories of internal conflicts and collaboration” (Van Boeschoten, 2006). In that sense, it is perhaps not surprising that the left-wing community, for its part, has chosen to refer to the memorial monument as the “monument of the Kalavrytan Holocaust” —and neither, indeed, is the fact that the complex politics of memory operating in Kalavryta, which I have been examining throughout this dissertation, have left their imprint on this material manifestation of the town’s attempt to set its memory to stone.

This, then, is a monument bearing many names, which is also to say that it is a monument without a name —at least one that is unique and stable. An interesting occurrence which placed into relief the problem of the monument’s naming took place on April 2015, when a delegation consisting of members of the then left-wing government of Syriza and officers of the Russian sailboat *Kruzenshtern* paid a visit to the memorial monument —the first ever involving representatives of Russia (“Sta Kalavryta to pliroma”, 2015). During this visit, which was organized in collaboration with the left-leaning Union of Victims of the Kalavrytan Holocaust, the mission brought the flag of the Reichstag —and, with it, connotations linking

Kalavryta to the intrusion of the Red Army in Berlin on 30 April 1945 and the victory of the Russians against Nazism (“I istoriki”, 2015). As a counterbalance, the Kalavryta mayor met the Russian mission accompanied by representatives of the Church and members of the local community from across the political spectrum. When it was his turn to address the visitors, he diplomatically referred to the memorial monument as the “martyrdom site of sacrifice of the Kalavrytan holocaust, in Kappi’s Rachi” (“O Dimarchos Kalavryton”, 2015), thus creating an amalgam of all the names used by all different sections and groups of the Kalavrytan society.

A case for turning the monument at Kappi’s Hill into a memorial

Addressing the distinction between a memorial and a monument, both Sturken (1997) and Tsiara (2004) argue that while the former commemorates tragic events and defeats, the latter adopts a triumphant tone and refers to past victories. They claim that the same symbol, the same sculpture, for example, may function both as a site of heroic memory and as a site of mourning (Tsiara 2004, p. 41), and can be used interchangeably (Sturken 1997, p. 47) as either a monument or a memorial.

Let us now examine the symbolism of Kappi’s hill as a monument and/or as a memorial. For Sturken (1997, pp. 52-53), the way in which the positioning of the memorial/monument vis-à-vis the ground is pivotal for understanding its symbolism. She argues that as “vertical monuments symbolize power and honour”, the symbol they set in motion is a phallic one. In Kalavryta’s case, the column of the monument at Kappi’s hill is a phallic symbol that mourns not only the loss of the individual men, but also the destruction of the patriarchal family unit, as clearly indicated in the decision to list the men’s names in groups of families.

On the other hand, the opening on the ground that leads to the ossuary, next to the statue of the mourning woman, is an “element associated psychoanalytically with the specter

of the woman —it embraces the earth; it is the abyss; it is death” (Sturken, 1997, p. 53). Perhaps one of the reasons why Vafia’s sculpture has been so popular with all Kalavrytans is that, through its presence in the composition, the male name lists can become the spectators of the anonymous women (Berger, 1972) who took the heroic decision to stay at the destroyed town and fight to bring it back to life (Meyer, 2010).

For Sturken, again, although monuments and memorials may often be expressed through the same materiality, there are “fundamental differences between memorials and monuments. Memorials tend to emphasize specific texts or list the dead, whereas monuments are not as explanatory; a memorial seems to demand the naming of the lost, whereas monuments are usually anonymous” (1997, p. 48). In the case of the memorial monument in Kappi’s hill, these two functions are not interchangeable, but rather fulfilled in a parallel manner. Kappi’s hill is both a memorial commemorating the crime and honouring the executed men by displaying their names on the plaques; and a monument celebrating the heroism of the women who inhabited the ruins and brought the town back to life, in the anonymous—but locally polyonymous—form of Vafia’s statue.

Even if the monument fulfills the obligation to remember and succeeds in “creating a common place of memory” on a local level, it simultaneously “propagates the illusion of common memory” (Young, 1996, p. 231) on a national level. The visibility that the monument attracts due to the symbolic status of Kalavryta in conjunction with the community’s collective trauma linked both to the 1943 massacre and to the local impact of the Greek Civil War results in the need for a constant reframing, reconfiguration and re-interpretation that follows the community’s emotional preoccupations at any given time (Tsiara, 2004, p. 42). One could, as a result, argue that the monument on Kappi’s hill should be perceived not as a given object under observation, but rather as an object under constant transformation reflecting the mutual

relation of the latter both with the Kalavrytan society (Yalouri, 2010, p. 375) and with the imaginary community invoked by the nation state.

In my view, the memorial on Kappi's hill is, as Young (1999) observed, not "a single memorial at all —but simply the never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end". As a result, his remark that in the case of commemorating the Holocaust in Germany, it is, in the end, the debate that becomes the medium of counter-monumentalisation is also pertinent in the case of the monument at Kappi's hill: "instead of a fixed sculptural or architectural icon for Holocaust memory in Germany, the debate itself—perpetually unresolved amid ever-changing conditions—might now be enshrined" (pp. 150-152).

To conclude, the monument on Kappi's hill is an incomplete work which is still in the making, as the Kalavrytans are in a constant effort to materially render the narratives which have not been made visible in ways capable of bringing about a certain catharsis. Another determining factor for this ever-evolving process has been the role that the monument plays in national narratives and in international relations, which seems to have been aggravating for the area I am mapping in this research as the Kalavrytan trauma.

The artwork that came out of this part of the research was based on the proposal that the Municipality of Kalavryta made to me to do the conservation of Vafia's statue. The artist gave me detailed instructions concerning the method I had to use, while I have also consulted with a conservator. In connection with the restoration of the statue and in cooperation with the Kalavryta theatre group Panos Michos, we are also planning an event as part of the restoration work I will be carrying out during which all the names of the women who were in Kalavryta in December 2013 will be read. The process of reading the women's names has direct references to the reading of the executed men's names every year on December 13. With this

action, the memorial on Kappi's hill is re-imagined in an inclusive way: from a monument that commemorates the death of the Kalavrytan men to a memorial that also commemorates the successful struggle that the women gave after the catastrophe.

Chapter 6: Epilogue

This dissertation focuses on Kalavryta and uses anthropology and art in order to investigate, understand and have a therapeutic effect on the injustices suffered by the local community during and after WWII.

In the course of my research, which began as an artistic project, anthropology emerged as a necessary tool to help me produce art that responds to the longstanding demand for catharsis raised by the people of Kalavryta. Throughout the years, what has helped me gain a deep and respectful understanding of the ways through which the past and its interpretations come to bear, each time, on the present, shaping the future, is my many years of involvement with the local community. I have also come to understand that in order to coexist with, and contribute to, the community, the combination of art and anthropology was essential. Anthropology has given me the methodology and theoretical ideas I needed in order to process, cross-reference and keep track of the endless and often conflicting pieces of information I have collected over the years, enabling me to imagine the worlds which made up their original context. Through these methods, combined with artistic research, I proposed to the Kalavrytan people the various artworks I have made over the years. What I have learned from them is the point of departure for these artworks, which, I hope, have served as mirrors contributing to a process through which Katavrytan people may arrive at what they perceive of as catharsis.

Anthropological methodology has enabled me to listen respectfully, wait and record in detail the facts, rituals and ways through which memories are interpreted —and thereby altered. Ethnography has taught me to cross-check each piece of information, to learn from

those whose positions I would otherwise ignore or disagree with, to be patient and return when the time was ripe.

Following a long period of observing and tracing people's silences and a presentation of the first artworks to the community, a part of the history of Kalavryta—i.e., the decade after the disaster—previously placed under a tacit ban of silence came into relief. This gap in the narrative also drew a veil of silence over the efforts of the women who decided to stay in Kalavryta and rebuild life after the war by coming together and making decisions that they successfully carried out as a group. The dominant narrative of the grieving widow who serves as a permanent reminder of the men who died during the war leaves no room for the commemoration of women as agents who set the foundations for a new Kalavryta through the decisions they took together. Throughout the years of this research, I have noticed shifts in this patriarchal mnemonic choice, which is now slowly starting to acknowledge the women and the children. I have also observed that, on a local level, research methodologies are changing, with women starting to be referred to by their names in the context of memorialization publications and practices.

This research has also brought about important changes in my working practice. Without going into much detail about how much I have changed personally through my contact with the local community, I will simply mention that, on a personal level, Kalavrytan people have taught me how to love. Regarding my practice, this project has greatly influenced my perception of how I need to position myself in relation to communities I wish to learn from and how to address the results of my work to that community. My experience of working with the Panos Michos Theatre Group and of observing how artistic expression becomes a means of shaping human relationships, but also a social tool for addressing and resolving the community's problems through the selection of plays and engaging in social and activist

initiatives, has led me to reconsider my methodology and the way I position myself not only in Kalavryta, but also in the wider context of my life and work. Also, throughout this research, the Kalavrytan society's need for art and the high expectations it has of art also has become obvious to me.

I am eager for the reactions of the local community when this dissertation is submitted to the National Documentation Centre and becomes available to the public, even though I realise that the academic format and the fact that it has been written in English will limit its accessibility to the local community. I am planning, along with this dissertation, to present all the artistic results of my research in the form of an exhibition held in Kalavryta, so they may be submitted more broadly to the judgement of the local population. I expect some strong reactions: at first, many might be critical and negative. Although the people of Kalavryta are, by now, familiar with my work, I believe that when all the works are presented alongside each other, an overall narrative will emerge, which is not easy to grasp in its full dimension (perhaps not even by me) through the fragmentary way it has been presented thus far. This exhibition will touch upon many of the subjects I have been discussing with residents for years in the context of meetings and interviews conducted for the project. Many of these topics continue to be considered off limits. The challenge, then, will be to see what happens when these taboo matters are exposed to the light of day in an exhibition that addresses the issues troubling this community, so heavily traumatized during WWII and in its aftermath. My aspiration is that these initial reactions and heated debates will soon give way to a process of shifting the local perspective in a direction needed to bring about the catharsis for which the Kalavrytan people have been calling.

Further, the prospect of presenting this exhibition to an international and general audience could also prove beneficial to the community. As international experience has shown,

building networks of communication with other communities that have similar legacies of trauma can help create a space in which the unjust legacies of the past can be discussed in common and potential solutions sought to change the future in a more just direction.

As I am completing this dissertation, it becomes clear to me that the parts of it discussing the community of women who created the new Kalavryta could be complemented with more research. The following, then, could be a potential research question for a future project: Which of the decisions made by the women of Kalavryta when they took matters into their own hands and organized themselves to run communal life would be useful today to society at large?

Endnotes

i

The events of the 1940s, namely the occupation by the Axis forces and the Civil War that both overlapped with and succeeded WWII, had immense repercussions for Kalavryta and the rest of the country. The polarized political and ideological landscape that divided Greece for decades to come was largely shaped by the events and the aftermath of the turbulent 1940s, as the defeat of the leftwing partisans, backed by the Greek Communist Party, resulted in their exclusion from the political system and the exclusive domination of the right until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974. This, in turn, resulted in the construction of a society of winners and losers, with the losers being punished, exiled, demonized and excluded from civil society, as well as suffering political prosecutions. At the same time, the right-wing government that came to power after the Civil War covered up crimes committed by various groups which had collaborated with the occupying Nazi forces. The state apparatus not only suspended prosecutions, but also accepted members of these groups within its ranks as civil servants, thus granting them a status of impunity and engendering a traumatic division that would torment Greek civil society for years to come. After the fall of the military regime in Greece, the political project of the so-called “national reconciliation” failed to challenge the post-Civil War traumatic heritage. As a result, grey zones of conflicting and overlapping versions of history were established, reflecting the distance separating historical from mythological narratives.

The results of this process played a key role in shaping the post-WWII sociopolitical situation in the country. The vocabulary used by both two sides—the occupying government and the resistance groups— during the Civil War to describe ideological affiliations is still

occasionally used in parliament by members of various political parties or adopted by members of the clergy and, therefore, still shapes Greece's political and ideological landscape. In addition, this vocabulary is diffused within everyday society, employed in public discussions and metonymized to describe similar situations or categorize people into different groups, while it also affects the negotiation of memory and historiography. In recent years, however, the so-called "Greek crisis" whose impact was felt on a financial, political and social level, led many to question the limits of this vocabulary. The result of this process was the emergence of grey zones of another type, which provide space for artists and researchers from different fields to approach issues that have triggered many debates and lie at the heart of existing social divisions.

The sociopolitical situation described above has, perhaps predictably, left a heavy imprint on Kalavryta and on the local community's struggle to remember its past. In a small town like this, nothing is ever really forgotten, especially war crimes. Within the community, a tacit agreement seems to be in place, forbidding any reference to the events of the Civil War from being uttered in the public sphere and ruling out public disputes that could stir up the traumatic events of the past. However, private discourses, usually articulated within family settings, continue to cultivate intense and persistent hatred. To this day, private discussions remain just as spirited, rich in detail and emotionally charged, sometimes giving the impression that the events they refer to happened in a time not so distant from the present. The perpetuation of these narratives is ideologically motivated and results in consolidating and reproducing the political and ideological divisions of the past.

In the pages that follow, I will provide a version of the official historiography of the events to serve as context for the day of the massacre. My aim in supplying this information is two-fold. On the one hand, I wish to give an outline of Greece's official history during the period of interest, so as to help the reader position the interviews and analyses presented in this thesis. On the other hand, I am interested in examining the many different, and often conflicting, versions of local history, the added dimensions these have acquired against the backdrop of the ensuing Civil War and post-war period, as well as the grave significance they continue to carry for contemporary Kalavryta.

As concerns the Balkan region, the German dogma during WWI called for "quiet in the Balkans". The "Southeastern area", in specific, was viewed as an "extra financial zone" complementing the "major European Economic Area" (Hellenic Army General Staff 2012). On October 28, 1940, the Italian army mounted an attack on Greece following the refusal of the Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas to permit their entry to the country. The battles that followed were victories for the Greeks. However, on April 6, 1941, the Wehrmacht entered the picture as well, eventually causing the defeat of the Greek army on April 27. This was the start of the war-time occupation Greece by Axis powers, which ended with the withdrawal of the German forces in 1944.

With the arrival of the German troops, the British, who were Greece's allies, withdrew and Germany formed an occupation government manned with willing collaborators. As the official Greek state did not capitulate, the elected Greek government fled to Cairo. There, they set up special educational centers for the Greek Army of the Middle East, whose mission was to prepare soldiers to fight on the side of Greece's allies in the battle of North Africa. The exiled

government also planned and coordinated operations by British agents against the German forces in Greece. During the occupation, Greece was divided into three zones, with Germany keeping under its control all the strategically important regions and the rest of the country passing under the jurisdiction of its allies, namely Italy and Bulgaria. The Peloponnese came under Italian rule.

Since the beginning of the occupation period, resistance organizations were formed with the ultimate goal of liberating the country. In September 1941, the two main resistance groups were EAM (National Liberation Front, led by the Communist Party of Greece and allies), with its armed division (ELAS) and EDES (National Democratic Greek League). In spring 1942, the various strands of the Greek resistance started mounting their attack, which, by 1943, had evolved into widescale operations led by sizeable rebel forces. Owing to its geographical location and extensive road network, Kalavryta was considered a key strategic point for the Peloponnese. The morphology of the terrain made the area inaccessible and facilitated guerrilla warfare. Very soon, the greatest part of northwestern Peloponnese was controlled by the guerillas. Chelmos Mountain served as base to large groups of the resistance group EAM-ELAS. The resistance groups were facing significant shortage of arms and ammunition. Captain D. Michos was the leader of ELAS in the Peloponnese since 1943, while British paratroopers arrived in the same period in the mountains to support the guerillas and coordinate their actions. Specifically, the British supported the EOB (National Organization of Royalists) and EDES led by Zervas. The armed section of EDES was called EOEA (Rodakis, 1999).

On September 9, 1943, Italy capitulated, and the Italian troops were disarmed by the rebels. The rebel forces entered Kalavryta, which was declared free for a few hours. The local

population celebrated their short-lived liberation, given the general feeling that the Kalavrytans did not accept the Axis occupation. After taking over the Italian arsenal, the guerillas receded back to the mountains. The following day, a German detail was sent to Kalavryta in order to disarm those Italians who still kept their weapons and to warn the residents that support for the rebels would have dire consequences. On their way out of town, they burned the village of Soudena, which supported the EAM group. In that instance, though, the residents survived as they had gone into hiding beforehand. The only person the Wehrmacht did find in the village was a young local, who was brought to Kalavryta and hanged from a maple tree in the square, in order to serve as a warning to the community.

Following the capitulation of the Italians, there were fewer occupying troops in place to clamp down on the resistance groups that were consistently gaining ground. The German forces tried to control the region of Kalavryta, but extensive sabotage action and guerrilla ambushes were proving a constant nuisance. The German command thus deemed it necessary to eliminate all resistance groups active in the region, which, according to the Geneva Treaty, were not officially part of the defeated Greek army. For this reason, German documents and the Greek occupational government refer to all those who joined the resistance as “bandits”.

In order to fight the rebellion in the territories under German rule, the Wehrmacht enforced retaliatory measures throughout occupied Greece. According to an order signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the High Command of Wehrmacht, issued on September 16, 1941, for each German killed or injured 50 to 100 Greeks would be executed (Rodakis, 1999). According to Keitel’s document, the Germans considered that “in any case of uprising against the German occupying force, regardless of the conditions, communist provenance

should be inferred". The result of this order and the mandate it set forth is that the unarmed population was placed in a precarious position, as mass executions of civilians were taking place as reprisals for the Germans who were killed by the guerillas. As the resistance was gaining in strength, the occupying force scaled up its scare tactics by multiplying executions. The same document states: "At this point one has to think that a human life in the affected countries is often of no value and an intimidating effect can be achieved only with unusual cruelty"; or that "the methods of execution should increase the intimidating effect" (p. 524).

On October 16th and 17th, 1943, the Independent Order of Kalavryta ELAS and the 5/749 Schober (= Hunters) Battalion engaged in battle in the area of Kerpini, where the rebels set up an ambush. The German squad was on a reconnaissance mission, aiming to provide intel for an intended operation (Iliopoulos, 2012). ELAS won this battle; nine Greeks and four Germans were killed. Eighty-one Germans were captured and taken to Kalavryta. Among them were three wounded ones who were hospitalized in Kalavryta before being executed by the resistance a few days later. The rest of the battalion was transferred to Mazeika (a village 25 kilometers away from Kalavryta) where they remained for fifty days. From the 7th to the 25th of November, extensive negotiations for the release of the prisoners were held on the basis of a German initiative and with the mediation of Bishop Theoklitos of Kalavryta. ELAS offered to exchange prisoners with Greek resistance fighters who had been captured by the Germans. The negotiations fell through. The Battle of Kerpini triggered the launch of the "Kalavryta Operation" (*Unternehmen Kalavryta*) aimed at clearing the area of resistance groups; searching for captured members of the Schober Battalion; and terrorizing the civilian population through executions and the burning of villages in order to force them to cooperate and stop supporting

the rebels (Gementzis, 2012, p. xi). The order for the operation was signed on 25 November 1943 by the commander of the 117th Velfinger Hunters Division and was carried out from the of December 5th to the 15th, 1943. It was one of Wehrmacht's most violent operations in Europe.

On December 5th, three 3,000-strong battle squads departing from various localities began their ascent on Mount Chelmos. The villages which were friendly to the resistance were burned to the ground and looted, while their food resources were destroyed to break the supply chain of the guerillas. The majority of the population fled, but those who were arrested were executed. Once notified of the imminent arrival of the Germans, the guerillas and their captives left Mazeika and moved to the southeast of Kalavryta. On the 7th of December, German prisoners were executed, and their bodies discarded into a ravine near Mazi village. By February 9th, the guerillas had moved on from the area. Out of the eighty-two German captives, there were two who survived the execution. On their way back, they ran into a German detail. This is how the German side learned what had transpired. A search began immediately to locate the bodies. Meanwhile, the villages they passed through were burned, and the citizens arrested were executed in accordance with the reprisal orders issued by the Wehrmacht. When the Germans entered Kalavryta on December 9th, they used an interpreter to inform the residents that they were not at risk, and that they would only be targeting the members of the Resistance.

The Kalavrytans decided to stay, as they were told that since they were not involved with the guerillas they were not at risk. The Germans requisitioned most of the houses, while they also set up a perimeter around the town, only allowing entry to Kalavryta and forbidding

anyone from leaving. Some Kalavrytans who had already left for fear of reprisals returned to their homes. Despite all assurances given, the town lived in terror. On December 12th, the bodies of the German prisoners were discovered in a very bad condition. Later that day, the three bodies of the murdered German prisoners who were buried at the cemetery of Kalavryta were exhumed by Wehrmacht.

On the 13th of December, the bells sounded at dawn and the residents were asked to gather at the town's primary school. They were told to bring a blanket and enough food for one day. There, the women and the children were separated from the men and the boys over fourteen years old. The boys were selected based on their appearance, so some taller children who were younger than fourteen joined the group of the men. The men and teenagers were taken in groups to Kappi's hill, a site with a panoramic view of Kalavryta. The women and children were told to stay at the school, where the door was padlocked to make sure nobody would leave. At the same time, in the village, German troops were looting houses, shops and warehouses, and bank and public services managers were forced to open the safes. Loot, livestock, and other valuables and supplies were carried away via the railway, while Kalavryta was set on fire. The houses were burned one after the other, and the remaining food supplies destroyed.

Until then, the men who were kept at Kappi's hill watching the destruction were reassured that they would not be killed. At noon, flares launched at a distance giving the signal for the execution to begin. The men and boys gathered at the hill were executed with machine guns, then given the death shot. After the execution, the German soldiers left the town. Unable to breath from the smoke, the women and children came out of the school and started to look

for the men. Eventually, they faced the huge pile of bodies. Thirteen men survived the death blow, albeit with extensive injuries. Amidst the embers, the women could not find any tools to dig graves for their dead, while even transferring the deformed bodies was an immense task. They used the blankets the men had taken with them and dragged their bodies all the way to the cemetery. Some of these women had to bury up to seven family members. The primitive burial took forty days to complete. Almost nothing was left from Kalavryta. Only sixteen houses were left standing out of 620. There was no food and the earth was covered with ice.

During Operation Kalavryta, the following *kalavrytochoria* and monasteries were destroyed: Rogoi, Kerpini, Kerpini railway station, Ano Zahlorou, Kato Zahlorou, Souvardo, Vrahni, Kalavryta, Monastery of the Great Cave Monastery of Agia Lavra, St. Kyriaki, Avles, Visoka, Fteri, Klapatsouna, Pirgaki, Valtsa, Melissia, Omplou Monastery, Lapanagoi, Mazi, Mazeika, Paggrati, Morochova, Derveni, Valtos, Planitero, Kalyvia. In the monastery of Agia Lavra, the blazes swallowed a library of 400 books and 100 volumes of manuscripts dating from the 16th century (Meyer, 2010: 427). At the time, the German sources set the figure of the executed at 696 people, although the actual death toll is still subject to debate.

In the end, none of the three objectives of the Operation Kalavryta was achieved. German military forces did not find any Resistance fighters, the German captives were not released and the attempt to terrorize the inhabitants of the surrounding areas into ceasing their support for the rebels had the exact opposite effect nationwide. The civilian population of the country was incensed by the news of the massacre in Kalavryta, all the more so because the town was already considered a symbol of the nation.

The news of the events led to increased hatred directed towards the German occupation troops, creating stronger support for EAM. About twenty years after the end of the war, when the Criminal Justice of the Federal Republic of Germany examined the massacre of Kalavryta, it ruled that the troops acted as a reprisal and therefore that the operation complied with International Law of War. The United Nations Commission for War Crimes indicted five Germans who were responsible for the massacre. Only one was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment (Meyer, 2010).

The key literature I used for the historical overview provided above are the official publications of the Hellenic Army General Staff; the MMIKH's publications on the Kalavrytan Holocaust; local historian Periklis Rodakis' book entitled *Kalavryta 1941-1944, Resistance in the Province: The Holocaust*, (1999/2001) and Hermann Frank Meyer's book *Von Wien nach Kalavryta, Die blutige Spur der 117. Jäger-Division durch Serbien und Griechenland*, which enjoys widespread consensus as an objective account. As concerns the Hellenic Army's stance on the question of Kalavryta, quite revealingly, the HAGS (Army History Directorate) released its very first publication (in Greek) covering war activities in the region (*Operation "Kalavryta". The Activity of the 117 Hunters Division from the German Archives*) only in 2012. The historical review provided in this chapter is also based on research from a previous work of mine (Gouseti, 2013).

ii The museum's numerous publications crystallize different moments in the MMKH's successive memorial approaches. As a result, they are highly interesting material for conducting comparative study.

iii The yearly reenactment of this first revolutionary act by the local theatre association "Panos Michos" is an excellent illustration of the special symbolic weight that the town carries. During the days of preparing for the event, the locals take the opportunity to bypass urban environmental legislation and strut about on horses wearing traditional costumes. Being cast to play a chieftain of the Revolution is considered an honour locally. For some, this is also a moment for silently celebrating a broader notion of resistance.

https://www.kalavrytanews.com/2022/03/21_16.html Write out the title of the article, [https://columbiacollege-ca.libguides.com/MLA9/newspapers#:~:text=%22Companies%22\).-Newspaper%20Article%20From%20a%20Website,the%20title%20of%20the%20article](https://columbiacollege-ca.libguides.com/MLA9/newspapers#:~:text=%22Companies%22).-Newspaper%20Article%20From%20a%20Website,the%20title%20of%20the%20article).

iv On the link between the Greek Civil War and the Cold War, see Liakos (2019, pp. 230-232).

v I would like to thank Sanem Suavci for her input on this point and for pointing out this connection to me.

vi The Resistance marked a break with Greek tradition when it comes to the participation of women in the political sphere (Vervenioti 2013). Women joined or supported the Resistance and entered into a more egalitarian dialogue with their male counterparts, something that previous norms did not allow.

vii The MMKH is in possession of an archive that includes several artworks (paintings, drawings and woodprints) depicting the day of the disaster mostly through images of grieving women and massacred men.

viii Captain Velias, or else Giannis Katsikopoulos, was a Kalavrytan member of the Ανεξάρτητο Τάγμα Καλαβρύτων (Independent Batallion of Kalavryta). Following PEAEA's suggestion, a street was named after him in Kalavryta. Katsikopoulos fought the occupation forces in the Aigialia area, then took up arms again against the government army who came to Kalavryta during the Civil War, following the Treaty of Varkiza. He was among the guerrillas who committed suicide on Helmos mountains in order to avoid falling captive to the government army and suffering the ensuing consequences (Palaiologopoulos, 2001, p.158). According to Sardelianos (interview 11/12/19), following Katsikopoulos' suicide in April 1949, the latter's mutilated body was brought to Kalavryta, where it was paraded around town. During that period, the government army did not allow guerillas to be buried in the local cemetery. The dead body was left on display and subsequently buried outside the cemetery plot. Katsikopoulos' remains entered the family grave in the 1960s.

Balkah (2019) considers the relationship between sovereign power and the dead body in order to illustrate how corpses become political sites of struggle and resistance. In addition, he shows "how the treatment of the commemoration of the dead marks the difference between martyrs and renegades" and how this condition "serves to delineate the boundary of the nation and its authentic demos" (p. 233). He draws from Bargu's concept of "necropolitical

violence”, meaning the violence that takes the realm of the dead as its object. Bargu (2016) refers to a “longstanding strategy of targeting the dead as a means of governing the living” (p.233). Balkah also cites Verdery (2002) and her “dead body politics to include both aspects of materiality, symbolic power and the association with the sacred”, when referring to instances in which “dead bodies are critical sites of statecraft”. Extending and intermeshing both lines of thought, Balkah describes necropolitical governance over corpses (p.205) as targeting both the dead body itself and the symbolic violence that aims to erase or strip the individual of its identity (pp. 235-236). Through the control exercised on symbolic and commemorative practices, necropolitical governance aspires to (re)signify the dead and ultimately control how they should, or not, be remembered.

The memorial status attributed to Captain Velias through PEAEA’s demand that a Kalavryta street be named after him is effaced not only through the lack of preservation of the monument that was chosen and its falling street signs with his name, but also on Google Maps where navigation shows another name for the street named after him: “Ethnikis Antistaseos” (National Resistance). This further renaming could be interpreted as an attempt to disguise Katsikopoulos’ involvement in the Resistance or it could be linked to Captail Velias’ activity during the “deftero antartiko”, the second phase of guerilla fighting in the area during the Civil War.

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