



Reviving Greek Cultural Heritage in Alexandria: A Heritage Trail Proposal

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the legacy of the Greek community in Alexandria, which was the largest foreign community that left a lasting impact on the city's architecture, economy, and cultural life. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Greek population, which included artisans and skillful workers together with engineers, architects, merchants...etc., played a key role in shaping Alexandria's multicultural identity. Therefore, the study examines unique Greek buildings that vary between schools, villas, houses, cinemas, cafes and businesses to highlight both the tangible and intangible heritage of the Greek community. The study proposes a heritage trail that connects major Greek landmarks across the city and serves as a way to preserve such heritage and share its value with the public. Moreover, the research promotes a more inclusive understanding of Alexandria's past and encourages valorizing the cultural diversity that has shaped the city.

1- Introduction:

For centuries, Alexandria was considered a cosmopolitan crossroads that was shaped by waves of migration, mobility of commerce, economic transformations, and cultural exchange. As a result, Greeks, English, Italians, French, Armenians, and Egyptians lived side by side in harmony. The presence of these diverse nationalities, along with the need for each community to establish its own institutions and consulates, required the need for urban

development. Among the most influential communities to leave a lasting mark on the city of Alexandria were the Greeks, whose presence flourished particularly during the 19th and early 20th century (Awad, 1990).

In the first decades of the 19th century, a great number of Europeans, among them Greeks, started to settle in Egypt, encouraged by Muhammad Ali's (1805-1848) favorable policy,

as they gained privileges and protection under the system of the Capitulations (Mylona, 2018).

Muhammad Ali invited several merchant Greek friends, who had well-established contacts with the European and regional markets, to work with him to support his plan to push Egypt toward economic modernization. He granted them economic privileges and lands to ensure their loyalty and secure their expertise (Tsirkas, 1995).

This wave of migration grew, especially after 1821 (year of Greek revolution) (Viscomi, 2023), and in the second half of the same century, by the cotton boom in the 1860s and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the majority of the foreigners in Egypt in the 1880s were Greek Cypriots and Greek Islanders, especially from the Dodecanese, including Kasos and Kalymnos, settled in Alexandria (kitroeff, 1989).

The *Egyptiot* population (Greeks of Egypt, a term that appeared at the end of the 19th century to describe their hybrid identity) (Argiantopoulos, 2023) reached its peak at the beginning of the 20th century, after the Balkan Wars and World War I (Tomara, 2019). For example, Egyptiots in Alexandria numbered 25,393 by 1917 and their number increased to 36,822 in 1927. (kitroeff, 1989)

During the first quarter of the 19th century, the *Egyptiot* started to establish representative bodies (the so-called koinotētes) to organize their lives. These koinotētes were established by donations of the local Egyptiot plutocracy, namely by wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs, active among others, in the cotton and tobacco industries (Mylona, 2022). The koinotētes were the legal entities under Greek private law, before the formal establishment of the Consulate in 1833 (long before Greece began to have diplomatic representation abroad) (Cavouras, 2023) and the Egyptiot koinotēta in Alexandria (Ellēnikē

Koinotēta Alexandrias (Hellenic Community of Alexandria)-EKA) on 25 April 1843, under the presidency of Michael Tossizza. (Mylona, 2022).

These institutional foundations solidified the Greek community's presence in Egypt, transforming it into a well-organized society with its own infrastructure and maintaining strong cultural ties to the Greek homeland. Such ties helped the community preserve its language, traditions, Orthodox faith, and use Greek curricula while simultaneously engaging in the fabric of Egyptian public life (Cavouras, 2023).

Over time, the Greek community established a remarkable network of institutions that shaped Alexandria's urban, social, cultural, and economic landscape (Tomara, 2009). Their presence extended across diverse sectors, including education, with schools such as Averof, Tossizza, Zervoudakeio, Familiadis, and Salvago (Politis, 1929). Healthcare efforts began with a hospital inside the St. Sabbas Monastery, followed by the "Hospital of the Greeks" (founded in 1825 and opened in 1833), funded by Michail Tositsas. The St. Sofronios Hospital (opened in 1882) was established through Theodoros Rallis' initiative, providing organized medical care to Greeks and the wider Alexandrian public (Argiantopoulos, 2023). Numerous orphanages and elderly shelter, including the Manna orphanage and nursery for children up to six years (built in 1919), Eschyle-Arion (or Kaniskeris Orphanage built in 1917 to support poor children), and the Antoniadis Nursing Home (built in 1925), as well as philanthropic associations like La Melissa (built in 1916 by Greek women to provide clothing to poor Greek children in Alexandria), reflected strong community welfare traditions (الشال، ١٩٩٤). Social and recreational life flourished in clubs such as the Greek Nautical Club (founded in 1909) and the Hellenic Athletic Union of

Alexandria (Alex Med, Bibliotheca Alexandrina), while cultural venues like the Zizinia Theatre (founded in 1870 and now the Opera house of Alexandria) (El Semellawy, 2011), and cinemas including Odeon, Rio, Royal, and Strand brought entertainment to the cosmopolitan city. The community also contributed iconic residences and cultural landmarks, such as Villa Salvagos, Al Safa Palace (formerly owned by Count Zizinia), Atelier d'Alexandrie (once owned by George Tamvaco), and Cavafy's house. The Greeks' religious life centered around prominent churches like St. Savvas (established in 318-320 and renovated many times) (patriarchate of Alexandria), Evangelismos tis Theotokou, and St. George's ((Soulogiánnês, 2005).

Economically, Greeks played a crucial role in shaping modern Alexandria. Beyond their communal infrastructure, they were deeply involved in Egypt's economic development through investment, entrepreneurship, and industrial innovation. They pioneered several sectors, including breweries, confectionery (e.g., the Corona company), tobacco processing, printing, and shipping. Notably, the cotton industry became a cornerstone of their economic legacy. Prominent families such as the Salvagos, Rodokanakis, and Choremis contributed significantly to Egypt's banking and trade sectors and became symbols of Alexandria's commercial vitality (Abdulhaq, 2016). Many of their businesses, along with Greek pharmacies such as Orphanides and former clothing retailers like Minerva, remain as physical reminders of the community's once-thriving commercial life. Today, many of these buildings still stand, some preserved under Greek ownership, others serving as silent witnesses to the enduring imprint of the Greek

community on Alexandria's identity, cuisine, economy, and cultural memory.

2- Methodology:

This research adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach to explore and present the Greek community's cultural heritage in Alexandria through both tangible and intangible dimensions. Given the breadth and richness of the Greek legacy in the city, the study will focus on some representative examples of buildings, each reflecting a different category of heritage: religious, educational, service-related, residential, and economic. Each chosen building will be discussed in terms of its representative value considering its historical significance and the intangible values it reflects.

Thus, the methodology is structured around two main parts. The first part of the research presents and analyzes selected examples from each of the five categories of Greek buildings in Alexandria. These case studies serve as lenses through which the broader narrative of Greek presence and contribution to the city can be interpreted.

The second part of the research will develop this data into a practical application through the design of a tested Greek Heritage Trail in Alexandria. A heritage trail is a planned route that guides visitors through a specific area, helping them explore its cultural and historical landmarks. Furthermore, it has proven a global effect in raising cultural awareness, encouraging community involvement, and promoting inclusive heritage tourism

The trail is not intended as a mere route for visitors but as a tool for heritage interpretation, community engagement, and memory preservation. It aims to make the Greek community's contributions more visible and

accessible, while encouraging Alexandrians and visitors alike to reflect on the city's multicultural identity and the importance of safeguarding its heritage.

Through this heritage analysis and applied heritage design, the research contributes both to the academic understanding of Alexandria's Greek legacy and the practical field of heritage preservation and promotion.

3- The Greek Cultural Heritage in Alexandria: A Surviving Legacy

a) Religious Buildings:

Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Shatby, Alexandria: A Landscape of Memory and Legacy

The Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Shatby stands as a profound testament to the enduring cultural and spiritual imprint of the Greek community in Alexandria. Founded on a large area, part of it was granted by Muhammad Ali Pasha and then expanded in 1853 by EKA with a space of 12,200 cubits; this burial ground encompasses three cemeteries. They not only serve religious and commemorative purposes but also constitute an open-air museum of funerary art and social memory (fig. 1). The sculpted tombs, adorned with marble angels, neoclassical columns, and intricate reliefs, reflect the artistic refinement and wealth of the Greek diaspora in Egypt (Soulogiánnês, 2005).



Figure 1: Greek Orthodox Cemetery

Source:

<https://www.bibalex.org/alexmed/projects/Details.aspx?ID=48415051-c915-443b-b5bf-5088dce404d>

Each mausoleum in the cemetery tells a story of transnational philanthropy, communal devotion, and socio-economic integration. Prominent figures are interred in the 1st cemetery, such as the Greek merchant and businessman George Averoff (1815-1899), a major benefactor who funded schools and institutions in both Egypt and Greece (Kierman, 2000), and Konstantinos P. Kavafis (1863-1933) (fig.2), the iconic Alexandrian-Greek poet whose presence symbolizes the intellectual fusion of Greek and Egyptian cultural life (Kazamias, 2021).



Figure 2: Tomb of Konstantinos P. Kavafis

Source: <https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/10/29/historical-greek-cemetery-alexandria-egypt-2/>

Nearby, there is the tomb of George Antoniadis (fig. 3), who donated his villa and botanical garden (now the Antoniadis Garden) to the city, integrating the Greek legacy in Alexandria's urban fabric. (Greek community of Alexandria EKA)



Figure 3: Tomb of the family of Antoniadis

Source:

<https://greekreporter.com/2018/06/15/alexandrias-greek-graves-are-eternal-monuments-of-the-diaspora/>

Theocharis Kotsika (born in 1857), known as the "King of Spirits," is another key figure, remembered not only for industrial entrepreneurship but also for donating a significant sum of money to build with his wife, Angeliki, the Kotsikas Hospital (Mylona, 2023) by the architect Jean Walter (now Gamal Abd El Naser hospital) (Fig.4). They introduced the first ambulance service in Egypt (Pallini, 2009), a service that benefited people of all religions and nationalities as it treated 134,600 patients from 1938 to 1964 (Soulogiánnēs, 2005). Many more prominent figures are buried there such as Salvagos, Zervoudakis (fig. 5), Kazoulis, Rallis...etc.



Figure 4: Kostikas hospital (now Gamal Abd El Naser hospital)

Source: (Tomara, 2019)



Figure 5: Zervoudakis tomb

Source: <https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/10/29/historical-greek-cemetery-alexandria-egypt-2/>

These burial monuments do more than preserve memory; they narrate the story of a community that actively shaped Alexandria's modern development. The 2nd cemetery includes a cenotaph commemorating over 100 Greek pilots who fell in the Middle East during World War II, weaving Greek national sacrifice into the broader history of the region. (Greek community of Alexandria EKA)

The cemetery thus functions as a hybrid heritage space: physically manifesting the architectural and sculptural tastes of a past era, while simultaneously preserving the intangible values of benevolence, cosmopolitanism, and identity. The Greek Community of Alexandria continues to invest in its upkeep, launching a multi-year restoration plan to conserve this site not merely as a burial ground, but as a symbolic space of intercultural memory and a potential station within a future heritage route that retraces Greek footprints in Alexandria (Annual report of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2021-2022).

b) Educational Buildings

Averofeio School: Education, Identity, and Diasporic Excellence

In Alexandria, education was not merely a means of instruction for the Greek community, it was a cornerstone of cultural preservation and social cohesion, representing one of their most vital expressions of identity in Alexandria. Through their commitment to education, the Greeks in Alexandria contributed to the city's multicultural environment and played a part in its historical development as a center of learning.

In fact, the efforts of the Greeks in the field of education in Egypt began as early as the 17th century, starting in 1645 A.D., when the Greek

community established its first private school in Old Cairo at the Monastery of Saint George under Patriarch Ioannikios. Though that school operated until the 19th century, it laid the foundation for the expanding Greek educational movement, especially in Alexandria (Politis, 1929).

The first Greek school in Alexandria was established at the Church of Saint Savvas, where Greek language and Orthodox faith shaped a curriculum reserved for Greek students. With the increasing number of Greek migrants to Egypt during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the number and scale of schools grew substantially. These schools ranged from primary to secondary levels, both public and private, all managed by an administrative body known as the Ephorate of Schools, a committee that oversaw administration and was renewed every three years. This governance structure itself reflects the collective responsibility of the community toward education (Kitroef, 1898)

Among these institutions, the Averofeio School in Shatby stands as a landmark of educational and architectural heritage. Established in 1890 and named Averofeio Gymnasium after the national benefactor George Averoff, who donated large sums for community education, the school was formally recognized by the Greek government as equivalent to the high schools of the homeland. Initially a four-class high school, it developed rapidly in size and sophistication. In 1909, it relocated to Zervoudakeio School in Shatby in a new building funded by George Zervoudakis with a donation of 15,000 Egyptian pounds. (Fig.6,7,8) By 1913, it had evolved into a five-class school, and in the academic year 1916–1917, the construction of a gymnasium and stadium

hosted the first school games in 1920 (Soulogiánnês, 2005).



Figure 6: Averof School

Source: <https://www.levantineheritage.com/foreign-schools.html>



Figure 7,8: Averof School

Source: taken by Yassen Mahmoud, student in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels

These physical expansions paralleled intangible developments in social mobility and inclusiveness. In 1920, Nicholas Salvagos instituted scholarships for disadvantaged students to pursue higher education, underscoring the school's commitment to educational equity. By 1946, the school divided into Classical and Science Departments, and in 1948 national exams conducted in Egypt enabled its graduates to enroll in Egyptian universities, marking a key moment of

academic integration into local society (Greek Community of Alexandria EKA).

By 1960, the school became a mixed school, and in 1976 it was renamed Averofeio High School of the Greek Community of Alexandria (Soulogiánnês, 2005). Its facilities included physics and chemistry laboratories, a natural history museum, a large library, a school clinic, athletic fields, and the Julia Salvagos Theater, all of which reflected the community's commitment to holistic and progressive education. In 1990, the school was awarded by the Academy of Athens for its exceptional contribution to Hellenic education in the diaspora (Greek community of Alexandria EKA).

The legacy of the Averofeio School extends far beyond its walls. It was a space where the intangible heritage of Hellenism in Egypt flourished, where Greek children learned not only science and literature, but also traditional dances, national songs, and the history of both their ancestral and adoptive homelands. Annual school events like the celebration of Greek national holidays, theatrical performances, and Scout parades illustrate how the school acted as a living repository of Greek cultural practices.

Yet Averofeio was just one part of a broader educational ecosystem. The first Night School in Alexandria was founded in 1905 by Dr. Socrates Lagoudakis, operating from 7 to 9 p.m., to accommodate working students. Technical night schools, launched in 1906, offered both vocational training and cultural education, further supporting social integration. In 1918, the League of Hellenic Women of Egypt established the Sunday School, targeting young workers and offering supplemental education in Greek culture and language (Politis, 1929).

The idea of establishing technical and vocational schools 1908-1901 by Constantin M. Salvago (Fig. 9,10) further broadened educational opportunities and brought qualified experts to Alexandria's workforce, reflecting the community's values of service and development. (Turiano, 2017)



Figure 9: Salvago school

Source: (Turiano, A., 2017)



Figure 10: Salvago School

Source: taken by Yassen Mahmoud, student in the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels

Through these schools, the Greek community of Alexandria transmitted knowledge, shaped generations of intellectuals, and wove its cultural fabric into the very identity of the city. They helped shape the city into a shared space where different communities lived, learned, and built a rich, diverse culture together.

c) Service Buildings:

The Greek community's service buildings were not only functional, but were also living expressions of social values, enabling community cohesion and shaping Alexandria into a multicultural city where shared spaces, shared rituals, and shared responsibilities defined its urban identity.

- **Benaki Orphanage: as a Model of Welfare, Education, and Social Cohesion**

Among the most significant service institutions established by the Greek community in Alexandria was the Benaki Orphanage, founded in 1907 by the businessman and politician Emmanuel Benaki (1843-1929) (owner and Co-founder of the trading cotton house "Choremis-Benakis and Co" founded in 1863, and one of the Board of Directors of the National Bank of Egypt) and his wife Virginia (Orfanou, 2015) with a generous donation of 20,000 Egyptian pounds (Kitroeff, 2019). Located in the Greek quarter of Shatby with a neo classical façade designed by the Greek architect George Lezinis in collaboration with the Italian engineer Abrogio Cassese (Fig. 11), this institution was far more than a shelter, it symbolised the Greek ethos of philanthropy, education, and community responsibility (Pallini, 2009). The orphanage provided food, housing, and structured education to over 1,200 orphaned girls until its closure in 1970. It included a six-grade elementary school (Fig.12) and vocational workshops for woodcutting and handicrafts (Fig.13), ensuring that residents received both academic and practical training. Girls who excelled could continue their education in secondary schools like Averofeio, while others were trained in domestic arts within the facility itself (Politis, 1929).



Figure 11: Benaki orphanage

Source: <https://ekalexandria.org/>



Figure 12: Lessons at the Benaki Orphanage

Source:

https://sharinghistory.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;AWE;gr;29;en



Figure 13: Daily activity at the Benaki Orphanage

Source:

https://sharinghistory.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;AWE;gr;29;en

The Benaki Orphanage was not only a tangible structure with classrooms, kitchens, and dormitories, but also an intangible hub of values - discipline, opportunity, and care - passed from one generation to the next, contributing to the evolution of Alexandria's social services.

In 1972, the orphanage building was reused as the Consulate General of Greece in Egypt, now also housing the Evgenios Michailidis Library-Museum, thereby continuing its legacy of cultural and educational service (Soulogiánnês, 2005).

• Délices Café and Restaurant

Greek cuisine and desserts were served in the numerous bakeries, cafés, restaurants, and patisseries owned by the Greek community in Alexandria. Famous restaurants like Athineos, Pastroudis, Santa Lucia, Delices, and Hamos were popular social spaces frequented by both Greeks and Egyptians, men and women alike. These venues brought together people from diverse backgrounds and classes, reflecting the city's cosmopolitan character and shared social culture (Awad, Hamouda, 2006). Many of these establishments are still in operation today; some are still owned by Greeks, while others have been purchased by Egyptians who are continuing operating them under their original names.

Délices, founded in 1922 by Cleovoulos Moustakas, is one of the most iconic Greek service establishments in Alexandria, situated near the Raml Station (Fig.14,15). It served as a bakery, pastry shop, chocolaterie, and café, offering a wide range of handmade confections including dragée (sugar-coated almonds), bonbons, and dandourma (traditional Greek ice cream).



Figure 14: Délices café

Source: www.bibalex.org/alexmed/gastronomy/Eateries



Figure 15: Délices café

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g295398-d2321542-Reviews-Delices-Alexandria_Alexandria_Governorate.html

Yet beyond its products, Greeks and Egyptians alike shared meals, celebrations, national holidays, and mourning rituals in Délices. It was more than a business; it was a space of memory and continuity. Whether baking the coronation and wedding cake of King Farouk or offering coffee and biscuits after funerals, it became a fixture in the emotional and ritual life of Alexandrians (Awad & Hamouda, 2009).

Today, it continues to operate under the guidance of Ioannis Antoniou, the founder's grandson, preserving original recipes and festive traditions like Greek Easter chocolates, Christmas Vasilopita, bûche and Finikia Kourabiedes, representing a living example of Greek intangible heritage interwoven with Alexandria's cosmopolitan legacy (Alex Med, Bibliotheca Alexandrina)

• Greek Clubs in Alexandria: The Hellenic Athletic Union of Alexandria (AEEA “I Ellinikí Athlitikí Énosi Alexandrías” - Sotar Club):

Greek clubs in Alexandria were not only physical venues for sports and leisure, but also cultural gathering places where community celebrations, scouting activities, and national commemorations brought Greeks together in a

shared spirit of identity. These institutions also served as spaces where generations of Greeks practiced traditions, shared values, and reinforced communal ties, shaping the city's multicultural rhythm.

The Hellenic Athletic Union, established in 1910 in the Shatby district and known locally as the Greek Community Club of Alexandria (fig.16), was one of the earliest examples of Greek-organized athletic and social Institution in Egypt. Bearing the colors blue and white and the emblem of the double-headed eagle, the club stood as a prominent symbol of Greek heritage.



Figure 16: The Hellenic Athletic Union of Alexandria

Source: <https://ekalexandria.org/>

The club offered a wide range of sports, including football, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, athletics, hockey, and table tennis, for men and women. In July 1939, the AEEA began publishing a monthly sports magazine titled "Athletiki Enosis", which documented community achievements, sports events, and youth engagement, preserving community memory in print until at least 1975. Among the greatest athlete it introduced was Alekos Kassavetis, champion of Egypt in 1948 (Ioannis, 1999).

Together with the Greek Nautical Club, it stands as a testament to the Greek community's

commitment to public health, youth development, and social integration.

• **Cinemas: Greek Contributions to Alexandria's Entertainment Heritage.**

Among the service and entertainment buildings that once shaped Alexandria's vibrant social life were the numerous Greek-owned cinemas, particularly common in the city's central areas such as Ibrahimiya and Raml Station. Notable examples included La Gaité (which means the cheerfulness) on Pelouse Street, owned by Athaneos Boulos & Co., and now Mina Mall, Riviera Cinema in Ibrahimiya -Hurriya Road and now Fathalla market), and the still-functioning Odeon Cinema in the Camp Cesar district, owned by the Aslanidis Brothers. (Interview with the last cinema Odeon owner, Michael Arslanidis, 27 October 2024).

For many Alexandrians, the cinema outing became an unforgettable social tradition, intricately tied to the city's cosmopolitan character and the everyday life of its diverse communities (Awad & Hamouda, 2006)

One of the most known figures of this era was Tommy Christo, a Greek Egyptian chocolatier and benefactor, who founded the Royal Chocolate Company (later known as *Corona*) in the industrial district of Hadra in Alexandria 1930 (fig.17). Believing happiness was key to quality, he treated his employees generously and extended his passion to the cinematic world. Christo built Cinema Strand (fig. 18) in Saad Zaghloul Square (طاهر، ٢٠١٧) in 1950 with capacity of 1117 seats (796 Stalls - 206 Balcony - 23 Loge) to serve as a popular leisure destination. However, the site itself was originally home to *Aziz & Dorés Cinephone*, established around 1906–1907 by photographers Aziz Bandarli and Umberto Dorés, making it one of the city's earliest

cinematic landmarks (Alex cinema industry, Bibliotheca Alexandrina). His chocolate brand, Corona, remains a well-known Egyptian name today, symbolizing the legacy of Greek entrepreneurship and its imprint on Alexandria's intangible heritage through food, film, and festive tradition.



Figure 17: Corona Company
Source: <https://corona.eg/about/>



Figure 18: Cinema Strand
Source: <https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/63724>

d) Residential Buildings:

Since the reign of Khedive Ismail in 1869, Alexandria entered a new era of prosperity and urban transformation, attracting more immigrants, Seeking for better economic and social opportunities. By that time, Alexandria's city center became a desirable location for the city's elite, who commissioned elegant villas and residential buildings marked by eclectic architectural styles and refined European

influences (Awad, 1990). Wealthy Greek families played a significant role in shaping this urban fabric, investing in both residential and mixed-use buildings that added to the city's cosmopolitan character (Mahmoud, 2023). It is within this historical and architectural context these significant residences, such as the Cavafy House and Salvagos Villa, emerged attesting to the Greek community's deep-rooted presence and cultural heritage in Alexandria.

• House of Constantine P. Cavafy:

One of the most symbolic Greek residential buildings in Alexandria is the former home of the cosmopolitan poet Constantine P. Cavafy (1863- 1933) (Fig.19), who was born and spent most of his years in Alexandria, and whose life and work were deeply rooted in the city's multicultural landscape (Savvopoulos, 2013).



Figure 19: Constantine P. Cavafy
Source: <https://www.onassis.org/initiatives/cavafy-archive/cavafys-house-in-alexandria>

His modest apartment (fig.20), once used as pension Amir and now preserved as the Cavafy Museum since 16 November 1992 (fig.21), located in a small hidden gem within the heart of Alexandria, on the second floor of 4 Cavafy Street (formerly Rue Lepsius), is more than a historical residence, it is a literary and cultural

sanctuary, mixing and connecting travel with experiential knowledge for the poet. From its windows, visitors can see the St. Sabba Greek Church, integrating the house into the spiritual and urban landscape of the Greek community (Mahmoud, 2023). The apartment's preservation and conversion into a museum ensure that Cavafy's tangible legacy remains preserved, offering insight into the daily life and atmosphere of one of the most prominent figures of Hellenism in Alexandria (Manola, 2023).



Figure 20: Cavafy's house

Source: <https://www.onassis.org/initiatives/cavafy-archive/cavafys-house-in-alexandria>



Figure 21: Cavafy' museum

Source: <https://www.onassis.org/initiatives/cavafy-archive/cavafys-house-in-alexandria>

At the same time, the museum embodies intangible heritage, as through the rooms where Cavafy lived and wrote, the visitor experiences the poet's intellectual atmosphere, one shaped by a multicultural city at the crossroads of civilizations. The apartment conveys his personal reflections on identity, history, and

memory, turning the space into a living narrative of the Greek presence in Alexandria (Savidis, 1983). Today, the Cavafy House stands not only as a preserved residence but also as a dynamic cultural site where Greek literary tradition, Alexandrian cosmopolitanism, and emotional memory continue to resonate.

• Villa Salvago:

Villa Salvago is a notable example of Alexandrian Greek residential architecture in Greek quarter, Rue des Ptolemées (Fig.22), a district that also housed many other prominent and affluent families such as the Benakis and the Rallis family (Orfanou, 2015). The villa was constructed in 1901 by the French architect John Walter in Art Deco style (ALEX-MED, 2007) for Michail Salvagos (Constantinos Salvagos's son) and his wife Argini (Emmanuel Benaki's daughter). It represents the luxurious lifestyle of wealthy families of the early 20th-century Alexandria, showing magnificent interiors and a valuable collection of Ottoman textiles (Mahmoud, 2023).



Figure 22: Salvago's villa

Source:

<https://www.alaintruong.com/archives/2017/04/21/35195519.html>

The Salvagos family's legacy extends beyond the villa itself. Constantinos Salvagos (born in 1845) was a prosperous merchant trading in Egyptian cotton (Glavanis, P. M., 1989), one of the Board directors of the National Bank of Egypt

and served as President of the Hellenic Community of Alexandria (EKA) in the early 20th century (1900-1911). The Salvagos' family initiated the development of the Hellenic Quarter of Chatby in his memory, including the establishment of the Salvagos commerce school in 1906. (Greek community of Alexandria EKA)

Michail Salvagos, son of Constantinos, was one of the most productive and significant Presidents of EKA and was the longest serving of all EKA Presidents for 29 years, from 1919 until 1948. Under his Presidency, the EKA Offices were renovated, the new Familiadis Community school was built for the Greek children in Attarin, named after its benefactor, and the Cairo Railway Station was built in Alexandria (Glavanis, 1989).

Since 1960, the villa is hosting the Russian Cultural Center for culture & Science, serving for cultural activities such as exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and film screenings (Fig.23, 24). Such rehabilitation of historic buildings for cultural purposes is a valuable approach that helps preserve Alexandria's heritage while supporting its vibrant cultural life today.



Figure 23, 24: the Russian Center
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/russianhousealex/>

e) Economic Heritage: The Greek Commercial Chamber in Attarin

The economic presence of the Greek community in Egypt dates to the early 19th century, by the beginning of Muhammad Ali's reign, whose modernization projects transformed Egypt's economy and infrastructure. Alexandria, with its strategic natural harbor and improved connectivity to the Delta via the Mahmoudiya Canal, became a magnet for Greek merchants strongly rooted in Mediterranean and European commercial networks (Mylona, 2022). Early Greek immigrants such as Count Ioannis d'Anastasy (one of the first Greek merchants to emigrate to Alexandria), Michalis Tossitsas (born in 1787, he was the most important Greek merchant to arrive in Alexandria after Ioannis), and Stefanos Ziziniyas (one of Michalis Tossitsas' descendants, born in 1805), played a vital role in Egypt's cotton export economy. Their commercial establishments facilitated trade with key European ports like Marseilles and Trieste, while the Greek commercial fleet served as a vital link in transporting Egyptian goods abroad. These economic activities were initially shaped by Muhammad Ali's socio-political agenda rather than market forces, despite this they set the groundwork for sustained Greek involvement in Egypt's emerging capitalist economy (Glavanis, 1989).

As the 19th century went on, the Greek economic contribution varied significantly, Greeks in Alexandria extended their activities to finance, banking, and industrial sectors, gradually filling the gap of a local Egyptian bourgeoisie (Tomara, 2019). By the latter half of the century, Greek merchants began investing in local banks, firms, and industrial ventures, making their role in Egypt's social and

economic growth even stronger. At the same time, a parallel layer of economic life existed among the lower and middle classes of the Greek community, who worked in a wide range of artisanal and service occupations such as grocers, tailors, carpenters, shoemakers, bakers, coffee-shop owners, and other tradesmen, thus reflecting a diverse and deeply integrated community that contributed to Alexandria's economic history and prosperity (Glavanis, 1989).

An outstanding example that captures both the tangible and intangible dimensions of the Greek economic heritage in Egypt is the Greek Commercial Chamber in 18 Sidi Metwally, Attarin (fig. 25), a building that continues to shape the lasting relationship between commerce and community. Originally built as the Averof Girls' School by the benefactor Georgios Averoff in 1896 (fig. 26), the building later evolved into a key site of Greek economic activity (Politis, A.G., 1929). The Chamber was established by the Ministry of Commerce in Greece in 1901 to maintain trade between Egypt and Greece and to support Greek economic interests in the region, functioning closely with the Greek Consulate and often performing the role of a commercial attaché (Kitroeff, 1989). Emmanuel Benaki was the first president, and its board members (of up to 24 members) were frequently drawn from the executive committee of the Greek Community, reflecting the deep integration of economic leadership and communal governance. The Chamber provided guidance on commercial matters, built networks with other trade institutions, and actively represented the interests of Greek merchants, industrialists, and shipowners, fixing the Greek community's prominent role in Alexandria's economic life (Glavanis, 1989).



Figure 25: Greek Commercial Chamber

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Greek-Chamber-of-Commerce-Alexandria-100065600648549/>



Figure 26: Averof Girls' School

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/307839875934636/>

Since the mid-1990s, the Greek Chamber of Commerce in Alexandria occupied the second floor, while the first floor operated as a Greek cultural center, symbolizing the inseparable connection between trade, heritage, and culture.

It can be concluded that the Greek community in Alexandria was involved in almost every part of the city's socio-economic and cultural life. In this regard, they held a uniquely prominent position compared to other foreign communities residing in the city. Not only were they significant in number, but they also dominated many of the key wealth-generating sectors.

4- Heritage Trails:

Over the past 20 years, numerous research, regulations, and models that link tourism and

heritage as significant contributors to local development and sustainability have been implemented. One of the most crucial initiatives was themed heritage trails, which aim to facilitate historic core visits (Al-Matarneh, 2015).

MacLeod, N. (2017) defined trails as a way to guide the visitor's experience by offering a conscious, interpretive path, and these linear attractions have significantly increased in number over the past thirty years. Whereas Saha et al. (2017) defined the term "heritage trail" as a route that guides visitors to the heritage assets located within a particular area.

Many researchers referred to the trails which are concerned with heritage and historical sites as "heritage trails" (Al-hagla, 2010; Thomas, 2010; Al-Matarneh, 2015 & Barber, 2019). Saha et al. (2017) explained that the terms "heritage corridor," "heritage walk," and "historical trail" are frequently used interchangeably to describe similar concepts. Additionally, Abdelwahed et al. (2017) referred to the term "heritage trail" as "tourist trail".

Heritage trails are valuable tools for interpreting tourism, culture, and heritage. They serve as fundamental means of enhancing the visitor's experience and fostering a deeper appreciation of history (Abdelwahed et al., 2017). Each heritage trail tells its own unique story, shaped by the historical, cultural, and social context it represents, offering an immersive journey through the layers of a place's identity.

The following figure (fig.27) organizes the multifaceted importance of heritage trails into six key areas, showing how they benefit both visitors and local communities.

- **Create Awareness:** The role of heritage trails is to raise public awareness about historically significant areas within a

city, promoting cultural knowledge and fostering a connection between people and their surroundings.

- **Personal Connection:** They offer a meaningful, emotional link to historic sites, deepening both locals' and tourists' experiences. This personal engagement often leads to stronger support for heritage preservation.
- **Tourism Expansion:** Trails guide visitors to lesser-known but valuable sites, balancing tourism across the city. This supports local economies and reduces pressure on overcrowded landmarks.
- **Sensitivity and Pride:** By revealing the cultural value of neighborhoods, heritage trails nurture local pride. This fosters a stronger sense of identity and community responsibility.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Heritage trails can inspire local people, volunteers, and groups to help preserve cultural heritage. This kind of community-led effort is often more lasting and closely connected to local traditions and values.
- **Community Involvement:** Heritage trails show the importance of involving local people and stakeholders in preserving heritage sites. When everyone takes part, the efforts are more respectful of local culture and more likely to last over time.

Overall, the figure shows that heritage trails are more than just tourist attractions. They connect education, cultural appreciation, community involvement, and sustainable tourism to create lasting benefits for both people and places.

(Al-hagla, 2010; Thomas, 2010 & Saha et al. 2017)



Figure 27: The Importance of Heritage Trails
Source: Researcher

Heritage trails can take various forms depending on the landscape, objectives, and intended visitor experience. These trail types differ in structure, access points, and the way information is delivered to the public. Understanding the main types of heritage trails helps in selecting the most appropriate format for each trail. The table below outlines the most common trail types according to Saha, et al. (2017) and explains how they relate to the design of the Greek Heritage Trail in Alexandria.

Table: Types of Trails

Trail Type	Description	Applications / Features	The schematic shows the trail
Linear Routes	Direct paths that follow a geographic or thematic sequence	Applied in the Greek Heritage Trail: the route connects sites in a chronological and cultural sequence across Alexandria.	
Circuit Routes	Looped paths that start and end at the same location.	Ideal for enclosed or managed sites with controlled access; supports logical sequencing of points of interest. Not used in this project; the trail has a fixed start (Greek Cemetery) and endpoint (Greek Chamber of Commerce).	
Network Routes	Interconnected paths offer flexible entry and exit points.	Best suited for urban or village settings with multiple access points; promotes flexible visitor movement and self-directed exploration. Could be considered in future expansions of the trail to include other Greek neighborhoods and access options	

Source: Adapted from Saha, et al. (2017)

5- Presenting the Greek Legacy through Heritage Trail

This heritage trail was created to turn research into a real experience that connects people with the Greek heritage of Alexandria. We tested the route with a group of students from the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University, to make sure it is easy to follow, interesting, and suitable for visitors. These trial walks helped adjust the stops and timing, making the trail both educational and enjoyable for different audiences, and here is the proposed design of the Greek Heritage Trail (Linear Routes), developed by the study.

Title:

Walking Through History: Tracing the Greek Footprints in Alexandria.

Objective

To design and promote a heritage trail preserving the Greek community's tangible and intangible heritage in Alexandria, aiming to foster cultural appreciation, urban awareness, and heritage tourism.

Goals

- Recognize the multicultural identity of Alexandria through Greek heritage.
- Document and preserve significant historical buildings and urban memory.
- Encourage intercultural dialogue and tourism.
- Increase public and academic awareness of the Greek contribution to Alexandria.

Target Audience

Cultural tourists and heritage enthusiasts, local Alexandrians rediscovering their urban identity, university students, educators, researchers, cultural institutions and tourism professionals.

Suggested Key Partners to Approach

- The Greek Community of Alexandria (EKA)

- Greek Cultural Center of Alexandria
- Alexandria Governorate & Ministry of Tourism
- Faculty of Tourism & Hotels, Alexandria University
- Bibliotheca Alexandrina
- NGOs working in heritage and cultural dialogue
- Travel Agencies in Alexandria

Those partners can help provide volunteers to help throughout the walking trail, provide printed materials such as photos, maps and flyers, in addition to promoting the proposed trail and similar ones among the Alexandrians and the visitors of the city. Moreover, key partners can provide means of transportation when needed, help add such trails to the tourism programs of the city and provide support to use the trail as a tool for raising awareness about Alexandrian Heritage. Partners can also help improve the streets and sidewalks along the trail, creating easier walking paths, restoring public spaces, and involving the local community in sharing and preserving these sites.

Trail Route Summary

- **Start:** Greek Cemetery, Shatby – A quiet start reflecting legacy and memory.
- **Stops Include:**
 - Averoff School – Foundation of Greek education.
 - Benaki Orphanage – Social services and philanthropy.
 - Hellenic Athletic Union Club (EAU) – Physical culture and recreation.
 - Salvagos Villa (Russian Cultural Center) – Elite Greek residences.
 - Cavafy House Museum – Intellectual and literary contribution.
 - Cinema Strand – Entertainment and shared public spaces.
 - Délice Café – Culinary and social heritage.

- **End:** Greek Cultural Center & Greek Chamber of Commerce – Economic and cultural interaction (fig. 28).
- **Estimated Duration:** 3.5- 4 hours (A transport facility will be provided from

the Greek Club to the Russian Cultural Center, and again from Délice Café to the Greek Chamber of Commerce).

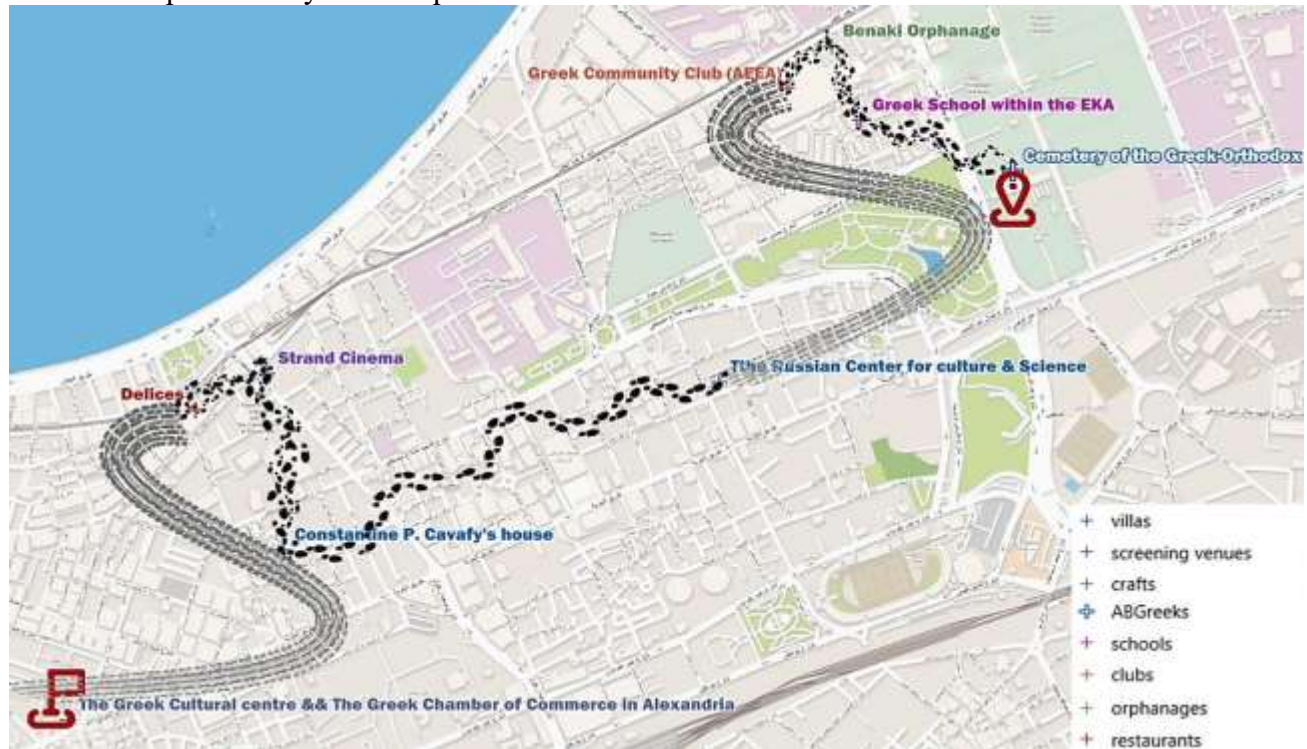

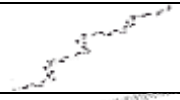




Figure 28: Greek heritage trail map

Source: Researcher

https://rue-ops6.github.io/Alex_communities/

	Starting point at the Greek Orthodox cemetery in Shatby
	Walking trail
	Transportation trail
	Ending point at the Greek Commercial Chamber

Digital Mapping & Spatial Documentation

Mapping Heritage: Application of QGIS in the Spatial Documentation of Greek Contributions in Alexandria.

A spatial component has been integrated into the Trail through the application of QGIS

(Quantum Geographic Information System), using a two-part methodology:

A) Map-Making via QGIS

- **Data Collection:** Team members collected spatial and contextual data on Greek heritage sites.

- **Database Creation:** A structured Excel database was compiled with attributes like name, function, and historical context.
- **Geolocation:** Each site was georeferenced using precise coordinates and aligned with Alexandria's base layers.
- **Data Structuring:** Sites were categorized by function (residential, educational, economic, etc.).
- **Output:** A thematic map visualizing all Greek-related heritage elements in an analytical and public-friendly format.

B) Digital Outreach via Web Mapping

To enhance accessibility and engagement:

A web interface was created and hosted on GitHub, integrating spatial data and interactive mapping.

The project can be explored here: https://rue-ops6.github.io/Alex_communities/

This initiative reinforces the role of QGIS in spatial heritage documentation and exemplifies open-access and community-driven digital scholarship.

6- Conclusion:

The Greek community in Alexandria has left an indelible imprint on the city's architectural landscape, institutional development, and socio-economic life. Their contributions, spanning from education and religion to industry and commerce, have shaped a vibrant multicultural identity that remains visible today. However, much of this heritage, which is part of Alexandria's heritage, is at risk of being forgotten due to rapid urban transformation and evolving national narratives. Therefore, the study highlighted examples of the different types of buildings established by the Greeks, which played a notable role in shaping the identity of Alexandria. The study proposed a heritage trail to serve both as a cultural itinerary

and an educational tool for heritage, fostering awareness among locals and visitors alike.

This trail was tested with students and the study suggested the cooperation with various key partners to ensure the success of the trail's impact. Moreover, the study recommends that the authorities, such as the Alexandria Governorate, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and cultural organizations, consider using the proposed Greek heritage trail as part of the city's cultural and tourism plans. The proposed trail, and similar ones, can help people learn about and connect with Alexandria's multicultural past, enhance cultural understanding, support heritage preservation, and contribute to sustainable tourism development in Alexandria.

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