
What a Museum Cannot Bear Witness To

Bursa City Museum and the Representation of the Jewish Minority

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■ **ABSTRACT:** The primary motivation behind this study is assessing how successful “inclusive” urban museums really are in representing ethnic/religious minorities. The research site is Bursa City Museum, Turkey, where the Bursa Jewish Community used to be one of the key social and cultural elements of the city. In-depth interviews are the main method of study, since the opinions of this minority on the subject are the main focus. The main aim here is to reveal the ideas of the community (whose collective memories are threatened with extinction) about being represented in the museum, and from this analysis to make constructive suggestions for the institution. It seems that the community cares about being identified as part of the city, but is indifferent to the institution of the museum, partly due to problems in the ways in which they are represented.

■ **KEYWORDS:** Bursa Jewish Community, city museums, inclusion, minority, representation, Turkey

Globally, it is becoming more common to establish urban museums as effective centers of protection, communication, and education, rather than as “temples” or cultural institutions serving only the elites on the margins of society (Silier 2010). Such institutions are gradually becoming “solution partners” that provide valid solutions to the accumulated problems of cities. Recently, in the wider literature on museology, and urban museology in particular, striving for inclusion instead of exclusion and forming a mutually constructive relationship that embraces all segments of society has been considered the most important criterion for successful museums (Silier 2010).

This study focuses on the Jewish community of Bursa, which has been resident in the city of Bursa for more than six hundred years, but is now a shrinking ethnic minority with only sixty people (Niyego 2015).¹ The main aim here is to reveal the ideas of the community (whose collective memories are threatened with extinction) about being represented in the museum, and from this analysis to make constructive suggestions for the institution. For this reason, the place of the Jewish Minority in the history of the city is also included in the study, and in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals from the Jewish Community who had experience of working with Bursa City Museum.

This study adopted a qualitative approach to the methodology. Qualitative research is a process in which events and phenomena are revealed in their natural environment in a realistic



and holistic way (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2005: 39). Initially, the study aimed to organize an event at the city museum, together with the participants, and then conduct in-depth interviews with them in the museum. However, it was decided not to do the interviews at the museum, but in places where the participants would feel comfortable, since this would aid the natural flow of recollection. Accordingly, the participants selected from the sample population through the purposive sampling technique had to meet the following criteria: having experienced the museum in some way before; being middle-aged or older; and having an active role in the foundation established to maintain collective community values.² The number of participants meeting these requirements was limited to three, and in-depth interviews were held with these participants at the Turkish Jewish Community Foundation. All three participants were retired males over the age of seventy who took an active role in the foundation and had visited the city museum before. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in April and May 2017.

The participants were asked whether they felt part of the city of Bursa, what they thought about being represented in the Bursa City Museum, whether the representation was sufficient, whether or not it was important for the community to be represented in the museum, and how and where the collective memory of the community could be maintained. This applied, cross-sectional, and descriptive research has a critical orientation that aims to make a practical contribution to increasing the inclusiveness of the museum. It should be emphasized once again that the aim of this study is to present an approach to the subject of representation in the museum from the perspective of the group; revealing the cultural heritage assets of the minority group or making all of their voices heard would require further studies.

Including Minorities in Museums

For Rhiannon Mason (2004), there are three major discourses about the socially inclusive museum in Britain after the nineteenth century: the governmental, the representational, and the economic. This study focuses on the representational aspect of inclusion that considers issues such as cultural democracy, social history, and cultural diversity. Cultural diversity includes and supports communities living according to their own beliefs and practices (Karadeniz and Ayberk 2019). Both cultural diversity and social inclusion emphasize the creation or maintenance of social bonds between specific communities and the wider society.

The social roles and responsibilities of museums are many and varied; they may differ radically from organization to organization. These responsibilities will be influenced by many factors, such as the needs and concerns of communities, the museum's history and collections, and political priorities (Sandell 2004). Richard Sandell (2004) argues that museums can contribute to social inclusion at three levels: the individual; specific communities; and the wider society. This study is especially interested in specific communities represented in the museum.

Museums can be a vehicle for empowerment with particular communities and “contribute towards the creation of more equitable societies” (Aydın 2018: 86). However, the museum collections, especially ethnographic collections, have tended to project an exotic “Other” rather than represent the insider views of the host society itself (Mason 2004: 56). Historically, museums have been among the institutions that serve the homogenizing goals of nation states. However, this has been thoroughly critiqued in recent times (Mason 2004). Moreover, from the early 1980s, with the development of social history, museums have sought to present the histories of previously marginalized groups. These were often non-elite, working class groups in the 1980s, while in the 1990s these projects were followed by community-oriented social inclusion initiatives (Sandell 2004). In this context, museums prioritized creating a platform

for coexistence and avoiding bias; they also worked to address issues such as discrimination and racism (Karadeniz and Ayberk 2019: 60). Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine (2006: 43) emphasize that representing the history and culture of different ethnic groups and exhibiting and raising awareness of cultural diversity are the beginnings of social and cultural responsibility in museums.

However, there are several problems with inclusiveness in the representations of minorities, especially Jews in world museums. Aomar Boum (2010) explores the ways in which Jews are represented in two Moroccan museums. He claims that the ways that Jews allow Jewish history in Morocco to be simultaneously foregrounded *and* put into the background are politically expedient. The author illustrates this with a clear example: when the national museums of Morocco presented aspects of Moroccan Judaism, they did so only in a footnote, so that the Jewish narrative was almost completely silenced. Erica Lehrer and Monica Murzyn-Kupisz (2019) examine Polish folk and ethnographic museums and their approaches to Jewish culture. According to Lehrer and Murzyn-Kupisz (2019: 98), the range of approaches to Jews in Polish museums mirrors their uncertain, and sometimes outright unwanted, place in dominant visions of the Polish nation.

Osman Cihan Sert (2018) analyzes the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews, which is the first and only minority museum in the Turkish public domain, with the aim of showing the advantages and some of the dilemmas of both the Turkish State and the Jewish community. In addition, he claims that the museum “doesn’t question why the Jewish community is radically shrinking but instead suggests continuous Jewish presence between past and present” with the image of nostalgic neighbors (2018: 172).

Of course, in any society, as Szekeres points out, “some have the defining power to include or not to include—to define as important or not so important in the broad picture” (2004: 150). However, increasingly museums are looking to discard exhibitions with a single, authoritative voice in favor of multiple voices (Sandell 2004: 19). As Szekeres argues:

It will never be the whole story, or the whole truth. It will always be our version or someone else’s version of the truth. But over the years, the museum can create a mosaic of different interpretations, which will contribute to shaping the picture of our country. The picture needs to include Indigenous people, immigrants, settlers and refugees, and they need to be placed very firmly in the centre of the picture rather than in the margins or just outside the frame. (Szekeres 2004: 152)

Today, it is argued that the museum is not only a collection of artifacts but also a means of communication (Urry 2009: 209). The role of museums regarding social inclusion varies according to their types and contents, but all museums and curators are, or at least ought to be, aware of their responsibility in such inclusion work. Urban museums are perhaps the most committed to social inclusion by talking about the place of minorities.

Urban museums emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe, associated with efforts to protect the memories, historical documents, and stories of the big cities that were rapidly changing socially and economically (Sevüktekin and Akmehmet 2019: 143). However, in these urban museums curators often ignored the local people (Fleming 2001: 26). If city museums can really include people from all walks of life, they are likely to contribute to the resolution of prejudices and conflicts. By exhibiting different cultures in these spaces, revealing the complexity of the social fabric, explaining the historical background of all these groups and how they ended up in that place, they will have taken a step towards this goal. Therefore, in a broad sense, one of the main functions of urban museums is to alleviate social tension, to reduce hostility towards foreigners, and to help groups accept each other.



Figure 1. The exterior view of Bursa City Museum. Source: <https://rayhaber.com>, public domain.

Exhibiting the City of Bursa in a Museum

Bursa City Museum was opened on 14 February 2004. The museum was funded by the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, and the Bursa Research Foundation provided its collections. The three-story building where the museum is located was built in 1925 as the city's courthouse (see Figure 1). After the courthouse moved from this location to its new site, the historical building in the city center remained unoccupied. Despite some other proposals, those who campaigned for making it home to a city museum prevailed (Erdönmez 2008: 65).

The museum is on three floors. In the thematic gallery *Bursa with Life and Culture*, on the first floor, the names that left their mark on Bursa and traditions of the city are explained. In the basement of the museum, there are sections called *Handicrafts Bazaar*, *Silk City Bursa*, and *Producing Bursa*. The *Handicrafts Bazaar* features original decorations from local shops, such as a fabric maker, a coachman, a farrier, and a saddler.

The ground floor has two galleries. One of them is called *Bursa: The City of Civilizations*. This gallery provides information about the history of Bursa from the first civilizations in and around Bursa to the Ottoman period and the War of Independence. The second gallery is called *Contemporary Bursa*. In this gallery the phases of the city's history during the Republican era are described. Bursa Jews are given a presence here through just two photographs; one of them depicts historical costumes and another is a small one of a synagogue in the *Bursa: The City of Civilizations* section. There is also a short narrative under the title "Minorities and Immigrants in Bursa" in the *Contemporary Bursa* gallery. Although Bursa Jews have an important place in the history of the city, because of their decreasing numbers, the group's heritage is in danger of extinction. However, a more effective presentation of the collective memory of the community could contribute to the reduction of prejudice and the prevention of hostility toward the "Other," as well as providing a holistic narrative of the city's history with its social, cultural, and commer-

cial aspects. At the same time, Bursa City Museum is an urban “memory space” that can give visitors the opportunity to encounter the cultures of other peoples.

The Bursa Jewish Community

The relationships between Turkish and Jewish societies date back to the foundation years of the Ottoman Empire (İnalçık 2002: 3). Today, the Jewish population in Turkey numbers around 15,000 to 20,000, including those in Istanbul. Ninety-six percent of Turkish Jews are Sephardic and there are about five hundred Ashkenazi Jews. Approximately eighty Karay Jews constitute an autonomous group that does not accept the religious authority of the Rabbi (Güleryüz 1993). A religious committee (Bet Din) assists him on religious matters, and he retains fifty advisors on daily matters. Turkey’s first, and only, Jewish museum is located in the Zülfaris Synagogue (restored by the Quincentennial Foundation in Karaköy), which has been open since November 2001.

The roots of the Bursa Jewish community can be traced back to the years before the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, according to statements of the community itself and some Hebrew records. At the time when Orhan Bey (Sultan Orhan) conquered Bursa and made it the capital, a Jewish community had lived in the city for centuries. According to some historical sources, some of these Jews had been exiled by the Romans who occupied Jerusalem; they were known as Romaniot Jews (Niyego 2015).

According to İnalçık (2002: 7), the Jewish community was forced to migrate from the Balkans and Anatolian cities to the capital for the resettlement of Istanbul after 1453, which interrupted the economic life of these cities. Bursa was one of these cities that lost Jews, but in 1492, it was possible to repopulate these cities and towns with Sephardic Jews. This was because King Ferdinand of Spain and Queen Isabella signed an “Expulsion Order” on 31 March 1492, and ordered all Jews to accept Catholicism or leave the country. It is safe to assume that tens of thousands of immigrants settled in the Ottoman lands, especially in Thessaloniki, Avlonya, Patras, Edirne, and Bursa (İnalçık 2002: 7). The Ottoman State, however, made an extra effort to protect the Jewish communities from accusations (blood libels) and false beliefs that they had committed murders related to religious ceremonies, and in particular that the Gentiles used the blood of Christians.³

In the period from 1920 to 1922, when Bursa was under Greek occupation, the Jews of Bursa showed their patriotic loyalty to Turkey. Mustafa Kemal, who visited the city after his liberation, thanked David Saban, the head of the community, for the contributions of the Bursa Jewish Community to Kuva-yi Milliye (National Forces) during the Independence War (Güleryüz 1993). According to Dora Niyego (2015), the Bursa Jewish Community, which was reported to number around 2200 in sixteenth-century records, reached about four thousand people in the nineteenth century. Even though those were the years during which the community had the highest number of members, after the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 there was a great migration, and even before that a significant Jewish population had emigrated to America. With the emigrations to Istanbul and many other places, a population of 250 to 400 remained in the city until 1965. In 2015, there were about sixty Jews living in Bursa (Niyego 2015).⁴

Until recently, the Jewish community of Bursa lived all together in the so-called Jewish neighborhood on Sakarya Street, north of Altıparmak Street. According to Naim Güleryüz (1993), there are three synagogues named Gerush, Mayor,⁵ and Etz Ahayim (Tree of Life) in the region known as “Yahudilik,” and Etz Ahayim Synagogue was built with the permission of Sultan Orhan Gazi and operated until 1940.⁶ Gerush and Mayor synagogues were still open in the 1960s and 1970s. In Mayor Synagogue, prayers were made only during the weekdays, and Gerush

Synagogue was opened only on Sabbath days and holidays. Today, both of these synagogues are well maintained. For security reasons, following the bomb attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul in November 2003, Mayor Synagogue began to be used only for bathing the deceased. Now only Gerush Synagogue is used for worship (Güteryüz 1993) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Some members of the Bursa Jewish Community during a ceremony. Source: <https://www.salom.com.tr>, public domain.

According to Güteryüz (1993), due to their diminishing population, the Bursa Jewish community's weddings and bar mitzvah ceremonies (held when a Jewish boy reaches the age of thirteen) are usually held in Istanbul. From 1900 to 1950, since the synagogues in Bursa did not meet their needs, at times a house belonging to a congregation member was used as *midrash* (*Shalom Midrash*), where *Tefila*, *Minha*, and *Arvit* prayers were performed three or four times a day (Güteryüz 1993).

However, in collective memory, Jews have always been involved in city affairs as wealthy merchants, goldsmiths, and bankers. Raif Kaplanoğlu (2011) states that at the end of the nineteenth century, there were only twenty Bursa Jews whose income exceeded 1000 cents (*kuruş*), and only four of them were traders. On the other hand, manufacturing, peddling, tailoring, butchery, grocery, fishing, marketing, waste collecting, and portage were some of the professions that Bursa Jews pursued, according to Kaplanoğlu (2011). He states that tailoring was one of the Jewish occupations in Bursa, and this was not a lucrative profession. But twenty-eight Jewish porters living in Bursa in 1838 was a high rate for the population (Kaplanoğlu 2013: 107). The references of Kaplanoğlu (2011) from 1864 show that “the poorest of non-Muslims in Bursa are Jews,” and this socio-economic separation was reflected in the space: “While only one Jewish house has a beautiful appearance, two or three houses seem to be above the level of poverty. All other houses stand by force” (2011: 212).

Findings: Bursa City Museum and the Bursa Jewish Community

When the issue came up of the “fear of forgetting and being forgotten” in the city's collective memory, all three of the senior interview participants commented on the community's long

history in the city: “What should we think? What is there to think? We live here (in Bursa) after all! We have been living [here] for generations, for six hundred years ...” (Participant-2). The participants clearly felt that they were part of the city’s history. It seemed that they were trying to escape from the fear of being forgotten, and the silencing of their memory, by seeking solace in the longevity of their survival. Quoting Frederic Jameson, Paul Connerton (2012: 12) argues: “the whole of our current social system is gradually losing its ability to preserve the past.” Thus, in the current study, two factors appear to play key roles in participants’ prioritization of the long history of the community in the city so as not to lose their collective memory. One of these is the cumulative fatigue that has been engraved on the body and mind over the years; the other is being subjected to imminent oblivion and being erased from memory. When the researcher expressed his wish to reach out to more participants for the study, the respondents revealed their awareness of this approaching oblivion as follows: “Who else is there to talk to? Who are you going to find to talk to, anyway?” (Participant-3). Being represented in the museum may mean avoiding oblivion by spatializing the history and social memory of the shrinking community in a public space.

Although the new museology champions the idea of moving beyond objects (Silier 2010), the first element that came to the minds of the participants in relation to representation in the city museum was the “object.” As one participant put it: “No museum! We have no museum. How can we help you? We have had no materials for six hundred years. There has been a circulation here. Lives have been lived; but there is nothing left to show!” (Participant-1). A second participant commented: “When we disappear, the only traces of Jews left in the city will be both these synagogues and a cemetery. They will say that a Jewish community passed through Bursa” (Participant-2). When an object is exhibited in the museum, it enters the field of memories and fantasies (Jordanova 1989: 25). In other words, the object/photograph exhibited in the museum or the written narrative is withdrawn from the space of life and a distance emerges between it and the visitor. Thus, its contextual meaning in everyday life disappears. The participants expressed a certain alienation, ignoring the space reserved for the community in the museum: “In the place reserved for us ... there, they put something like that. Something like this [pointing to the cap in his hand]. There is a section on the second floor, a small place reserved for us in the old courthouse. You can look into that place” (Participant-1). A third participant expressed a similar view: “Yes, there is such a place” (Participant-3).

The first participant’s explanations about the exhibition of objects in the museum include two points. The first is that the building, which has been serving as Bursa City Museum since 2004, is encoded in the participant’s memory with the same function as in the minds of many other Bursa residents. It is still referred to as the “(old) courthouse,” as in the collective memory. Another important point is that the participant talks about a place reserved for “Bursa Jews” in the Bursa City Museum and the presence of certain objects on display. On the one hand, during the interviews conducted for this research, it was found that none of the museum officials was aware of the existence of such a department including objects or wanted to talk about it. On the other hand, although it cannot be described as a “section” of the exhibition, it was seen that Bursa Jews were included in the museum in the form of two photographs and a very short text. The most straightforward conclusion that can be drawn from this is that there is a significant lack of representation and inclusiveness. Considering the possible social and political influences that might have caused this, it is no wonder that temporary exhibitions in museums have begun to prioritize measures such as including minorities. In the transition from modernity to post-modernity, the museum itself has undergone a surprising transformation. While the conventional role assigned to the institution was that of an elitist center of preservation and a fortress of tradition and high culture, this has gradually changed, and the museum has turned

into a mass media tool (Huyssen 2006: 260). It should be not only a collection of artifacts, but also a communication center for social facts.

In the interviews, when attention was again drawn to the subject of representation and belonging in the city museum, the participants shifted the focus of the conversation to a different theme: “We can’t help you enough about the museum. There is also a museum in Istanbul. Check that too, if you want. Maybe you can get information from there; but I can gladly tell you if you want to ask me about how the foundation was set up” (Participant-1). This shift of focus from the museum to the foundation, which seems illogical at first, is not so coincidental. Museums, archives, cemeteries and collections, festivals, anniversaries, agreements, minutes, monuments, holy places, associations, and foundations are all outlier witnesses to another era; they are what Nora calls the dreams of eternity (2006). “These are the rituals of a society without rituals,” he writes; “in principle, these are the de facto differences in an equalizing society” (Nora 2006: 10). In short, museums and foundations are institutions that guard against forgetting and being forgotten, and foundations are often more functional than museums as symbols of belonging and recognition.

Connerton discusses monuments, spaces, and places: “The best streets are those that can be remembered. They leave strong, long-continuing positive impressions. Thinking of a city, including one’s own, one might well think of a particular street and have a desire to be there; such a street is memorable ... They are symbols of a community and of its history; they represent a public memory” (Allan B. Jacobs, cited in Connerton 2012: 7). He cites place names and sacred journeys as examples of monument-space, and gives a street and a house as examples for space (*mahal*). Mahal is the real place of cultural memory in this conceptualization (Connerton 2012: 28). Therefore, when the findings obtained in this study are considered, it is clear that space (*mahal*) is prioritized as a bearer of memory, and this can be considered the most remarkable finding. Consider these comments from participants: “We do not have any special symbols that



Figure 3. The exterior view of Gerush Synagogue. Photo courtesy of the author.

we can put in a museum. If you are looking for a symbol, there are these shrines right in front of you [see Figure 3], there is this street, this neighborhood. You can take their photos if you want” (Participant-1); “This is the Jewish Quarter, called ‘Yahudilik,’ from the foundation of the Ottoman Empire to now, not Arap Şükürü” (Participant-2).

This last statement of the participant, about taking photographs, may be related to Ludmilla Jordanova’s point (1989: 40) that “the photographs and videos taken during the museum visits allow cultural and ethnographic objects exhibited in these spaces to be revived within their social context, which is an important step towards breaking the barriers between the viewer and the viewed.” The shrines and streets where the Jewish community’s memory is produced have a similar meaning. There, the community memory lives on in its own context, and when asked, “Why this street, why Bursa?” the answer reflects a six-hundred-year-old collective memory: “Because it was very similar to Granada in terms of location and water resources” (Participant-1).

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

It seems to me, after analyzing the comments in these interviews, that the participants are trying to escape from a fear of being forgotten, and a silencing of their memory, by “taking shelter” in their continued survival into the present. It appears that the Bursa Jewish community, which fears being forgotten, is somewhat indifferent not to identifying as a person from Bursa but to the institution of the museum itself. This indifference seems to be driven by the idea of not having an adequate number of items exhibited in the museum, as well as the lack of hope and power for their representation in the museum. This is not an unexpected attitude given their marginalized status. Everyday political issues now increasingly influence cultural institutions like museums. However, this should not prevent museums from realizing the ideals of alleviating social tension, but should rather turn them into actors that are more powerful because these very problems create new opportunities.

In the Bursa City Museum, the Jewish minority is represented under the title of *Minorities and Immigrants in Bursa*. The first sentence of the exhibit label states: “Minorities and immigrants are communities that make cities interesting and also enrich life” (Bursa City Museum label text 2021). Portraying minorities and immigrants with the words “interesting” and “enriches” is a way of representing the “Other.” The presentation suggests that immigrants are replaced by minorities, but does not question why the minorities of the city shrank. The only reason cited is the establishment of Israel. The gallery sets out to replace an unequivocal “us and them” message.

On the other hand, equal attention could be given to “sameness” in different stages of the lives of people from different communities, including not only immigrants or minorities but also the “local community,” thereby emphasizing cultures instead of difference. The objects and narratives could be selected to represent the diversity of communities not only in the past but also now living in the city. A balance should be achieved in the exhibition that emphasizes the similarities without seeking to enforce assimilation, or that emphasizes the differences without creating a sense of otherness. There must be another way to represent a group that calls itself the “Turkish Jewish Community” and whose members (for example, all three participants of this study) say, “We were no different from anyone in Bursa; we were really like brothers.”

Museums are expected to evolve from the respectable and somewhat elitist monumental sites on the edge of society to places where social relations are central and common. There is a need for museums that try to connect with the communities they are in and promote intercultural dialogue. Museums can create ideal environments for communities from different cultures to interact with one other.

I turn now to make specific suggestions for Bursa City Museum. The first step should at least be strengthening the representation of Bursa Jews in the museum, but this time not only with a very short paragraph and only two photos, but with stories, more photographs and videos, and with the *ideas* of the community, rather than *objects*. Communication processes, cultural memories, and practices of daily life in minority groups *can* be included in the museum without necessarily having material objects. Everyday life practices of the community include the culture of eating and drinking, ceremonies and rituals, and music practices. These memory spaces in museums should be inclusive in terms of different lifestyles and different cultures in the cities. If institutions such as museums and those in power in the society do not encourage them, as seen in this study, minorities will be inclined to withdraw.

A striking lesson from this research is that museums have to highlight the issues that are important to the communities, allowing them to set their *own* agendas. It is known that communities do not wait “outside” ready to participate. Museums need to get out of their bulwarks and call minorities “in” (Smith and Waterton 2009: 108).

Museums should be integrated with daily life and the street scene, and not sealed off from it. They should also decentralize as needed. Institutionally, Bursa City Museum’s presence should always be felt at more places in the city. For example, it would not be too farfetched or implausible to expect that it could revive a house that was previously used as a Shalom Midrash, and exhibit what happened there. The museum should consider its impact on society and think about what can be done for social equality. For example, to balance the voice of the museum with different communities, groups could be given a place in a gallery for a period of time for telling their history from their own perspective, as The Migration Museum in Adelaide, South Australia, did with *The Forum* (Szekeres 2004: 147).

In order to go one step further than being described only as “the old courthouse building,” the Bursa Museum should work harder on its public relations, and its “City Museum” identity should be strengthened with the right strategy, stressing recognition as well as promotion. In order to free itself from the label of the “(old) courthouse” in the collective memory, the museum should perhaps get in touch with some non-governmental organizations, such as Bursa Turkish Jewish Community and, rather than simply displaying the personal items of the Jewish community, it should tell their stories on site, on the “Yahudilik” street itself.

The six hundred years of history Jews have had in Bursa, and the sense of belonging to this land, should never be allowed to be forgotten. Once the numbers of this community stood at four thousand. Today, with its population of fewer than sixty people, this community is one of the last and most important images of a dying world, a distant past, and of cultural and ethnic diversity that was abandoned during the formation of the Turkish nation-state. The Bursa Museum needs to play its part in this quest to remember and not forget.

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NOTES

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1. As of 2019, the population of the Bursa Jewish Community was around thirty-five people.
2. Foundations are "memory spaces" that preserve the collective memory of the groups concerned (Nora 2006).
3. This false belief continues to hold today even among some local Muslim people.
4. In Jewish belief, some prayers can only be performed with minyan (ten adult males) (Güteryüz 1993). Due to their decreasing population, it has become very difficult to perform these ceremonies.
5. The word "Gerush" means "expelled" in Ladino, and the Synagogue of Mayor took its name from the community that migrated from the Spanish island of Majorca. These two congregations are referred to as "Giroz" and "Mayer" in the Bursa Book of 1573 (Güteryüz 1993).
6. According to Kaplanoğlu (2011), this synagogue was destroyed in a fire in 1965.

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