

Collection of Speeches

written for the opening ceremony

of the exhibition

“Renato Mordo:

Jewish, Greek and German.

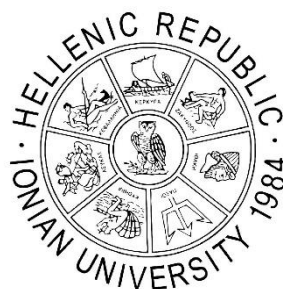
An artist’s life

in an age of extremes”

11. October 2023



**LANDTAG
RHEINLAND-PFALZ**



ASSOCIATION
ALBERT COHEN
CORFU

Μουσείο Χαρτονομισμάτων
Ιονικής Τραπέζης – Alpha Bank
Ιόνιος Ακαδημία

Banknote Museum
of the Ionian Bank – Alpha Bank
Ionian Academy

Renato Mordo

Εβραίος, Έλληνας και Γερμανός.
Η ζωή ενός καλλιτέχνη την εποχή των άκρων
Jewish, Greek and German.
The life of an artist in the age of extremes



Ώρες λειτουργίας / Opening hours

Μουσείο Χαρτονομισμάτων / Banknote Museum
Τρ – Σα 08:00 έως 15:00 / Tue – Sa 8 am to 3 pm

Ιόνιος Ακαδημία / Ionian Academy
Δε – Πα 08:30 έως 20:00 / Mo – Fr 8:30 am to 8 pm

Διάρκεια έκθεσης / / Duration of the exhibition

11 Οκτωβρίου – 9 Δεκεμβρίου 2023

11 October – 9 December 2023

Εγκαίνια έκθεσης / Inauguration

11 Οκτωβρίου / 11 October 2023

18:30 Ιόνιος Ακαδημία / 6:30 pm Ionian Academy

19:30 Μουσείο Χαρτονομισμάτων / 7:30 pm Banknote Museum

Μουσείο Χαρτονομισμάτων Ιονικής Τραπέζης /
Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank
Πλατεία Ηρώων Κυπριακού Αγώνα (πλατεία Αγίου Σπυρίδωνα) /
Plateia Iroon Kypriakou Agona
Τηλ / Tel: 2661 041552

Ιόνιος Ακαδημία / Ionian Academy
Ακαδημίας και Καποδιστρίου / Akadimias and Karodistriou
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1. Introduction (State Agency for Civic Education)

The project regarding Renato Mordo started even before the covid-pandemic changed all of our lives, as we knew them. Twice a year, the State Agency for Civic Education Rhineland-Palatinate chooses a topic around which they will arrange special events for the duration of six months. In 2020, one of these focal topics was “Greece”, thanks to the initiative of Uwe Bader, who was head of the department concerned with memorial work at the time. The exhibition about Renato Mordo’s life and the German occupation of Greece during the Second World War was the central aspect of this focal topic. Along with it came various other events like film screenings of the films “The Balcony” about the massacre of Lyngiades and “Flowers wilt early” about the massacre of Kakopetros. Furthermore, Dr. Anna Maria Droumpouki and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benz gave talks about Greece during the Second World War at the federal parliament building in Mainz.

The exhibition was curated by Torsten Israel and Marita Hoffmann from Llux publishing house from Ludwigshafen upon Rhine was concerned with the graphic design. Uwe Bader acted as project manager. Hendrik Hering, president of the federal parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate, is the exhibition’s patron. The first version of the exhibition was produced in German, later on a second version was produced in German and Greek. Furthermore, a brochure in German and Greek was published to go along with the exhibition. Additionally, Mordo’s play “Chaidari”, which he wrote about the concentration camp near Athens, was published by the State Agency for Civic Education and the federal parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate for the first time in German. It was edited by Torsten Israel and the publication contains an essay by Dr. Droumpouki about the camp in Chaidari.

The exhibition was presented to the public for the first time on 24. September 2020 at the concentration camp memorial in Osthofen, which is part of the State Agency. Since then, it was shown six times in Germany and five times in Greece. Corfu constituted the fifth and last station of the exhibition in Greece. The State Agency is delighted that this important project about the Second World War in Greece was so widely received. As the following speeches will show, the exhibition can further the communication and an understanding between Germany and Greece for what the Second World War meant to both of those countries and its people – between 1938 and 1945 as well as today.

Unfortunately, since the opening ceremony on Corfu, which had been planned for 11. October 2023, had to be cancelled, all project partners agreed wholeheartedly to the idea of publishing the speeches, which had been composed especially for this event. The State Agency for Civic Education Rhineland-Palatinate volunteered to collect the speeches and publish a digital copy of them. The following document contains these speeches by the State Agency, the Jewish Community of Corfu, Alpha Bank and from three speeches from the Ionian Academy of Corfu.

Thankfully, students from the Ionian University of Corfu were so kind as to translate the speeches by Rafael-Victor Sousis, DimitraTzagari, Andreas Floros, Manolis Drakakis and Lito Alexaki from Greek to English. My own speech was translated into English by my colleague at the State Agency, Annika Heinze.

I extend my gratitude to all the project partners for their valuable contributions, especially to Gabriela Scheiner, head of the Cultural Triangle of Prespa. Through her dedication and commitment she made it possible that the exhibition could be presented to the public three times in 2023 throughout all of Greece.

The following speeches with their various and creative writing styles illustrate that the life of Renato Mordo manages to inspire us even today. It is my wish that he may continue to do so and that we may learn from his trials and tribulations that all human beings are equal, no matter their various identities.



Bernhard Kukatzki

Director, State Agency for Civic Education Rhineland-Palatinate

2. Bernhard Kukatzki **(Director, State Agency for Civic Education Rhineland-Palatinate)**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Honoured guests,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the fifth exhibition opening in Greece of the exhibition “Renato Mordo: Jewish, Greek and German. An artist’s life in an age of extremes”. The exhibition here on Corfu at the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank and the Ionian University marks the conclusion of the five presentations of the exhibition by the State Agency for Civic Education here in Greece. Three of which were organised by the Cultural Triangle of Prespa.

The first overall opening at the German School of Athens was two years ago and since then we were able to present the exhibition at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, at the concert hall Megaron and at the Goethe-Institute of Thessaloniki as well as at the Cultural Centre of Ioannina. All of the previous locations in Greece could look back on an interesting and diverse Jewish culture and history. Regrettably, much was destroyed by the German occupation of Greece, by the deportation of members of the Jewish communities to Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka via the concentration camp of Chaidari near Athens (trivialised in NS-language as a transit camp) and lastly by the murder thousands of people. The largest of the deportations in Greece occurred at Thessaloniki. However, here on Corfu about 2.000 Jewish men and women were forced to gather at a central place. Roughly 200 were able to escape the deportation by fleeing to the area surrounding the city. Many of them were hidden by fellow Greek citizens. On 30th of June 1944 the train reached the camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. According to historian Diana Siebert, 1.400 people were taken to the gas chambers immediately, 446 men and only 175 women were taken into the camp. Out of the few people from Corfu who survived the camps, only a limited number returned to the island after the war. Many of them immigrated to Israel. The present-day community – whose beautiful and unique synagogue we were allowed to visit – nowadays consists of significantly less than 100 members. Renato Mordo himself has a connection to this community.

His father was born here on the island and in his function as a merchant he perambulated the Mediterranean area as well as the Levant. While visiting the synagogue a plaque commemorating the Swiss author Albert Cohen, who was born here on Corfu, caught my eye.

Even though he moved away from Corfu when he was just a child, he and his family were strongly connected to the island, just like most everybody feels a special connection to the places where we were born and those where our families came from. Renato Mordo's roots can also be traced back to Corfu. Would perhaps the idea of a similar plaque to remember the Mordo-family and their famous son be worth thinking about?

A further and relevant connection between the exhibition and the island of Corfu is, that the German to Greek translations for the exhibition were done by the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, Department of Modern Greek, in cooperation with the Ionian University, Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting. We are very grateful that this special connection was made possible.

For Corfu too, the Second World War brought devastation, destruction and suffering. The island was bombarded as well as occupied and many lost their lives. Notwithstanding, the history of the island of Corfu is a versatile one, shaped by various cultures. The same is true for the life of Renato Mordo, who lived and worked throughout all of Europe. Even though his life was disrupted multiple times by persecution and discrimination at the hands of the National Socialists, he still found pleasure within his art. He used art in order to work through what he had survived, sometimes just barely so. For instance, directly after having been released from the German concentration camp of Chaidari near Athens, he wrote a moving play about his experiences. It is aptly named "Chaidari".

The Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank and the Ionian University constitute highly suitable venues, in order to present the exhibition to the public. The exhibition can help the public better understand the collective German-Greek past. Furthermore, it gives information about the Second World War in Greece and mediates between our two societies and cultures. The exhibition wants to appeal to adults as well as adolescents. It addresses itself to all those who want to know more about the biography of this extraordinary artist, who survived the horrendous 1940s and who is of great significance for Germany as well as Greece. Regrettably, his significance remained unknown for many decades.

Our exhibition has a special German-Greek focus. The focal point consists of the life and work of Mordo in Athens between 1939 and 1946. During the early years in Athens, the life of the Mordo-family was marked by the general living situation, the overall circumstances of life in Athens, the hunger crisis during the winter of 1941/42 as well as – from 1943 onwards – the ever growing danger of being arrested. Unfortunately, in late summer of 1944 Mordo was detected after all and sent to the Chaidari concentration camp.

Although many Germans spend their holidays in Greece or enjoy Greek food as well as culture, they are rarely aware of the horrific war crimes that were committed in the name of Nazi Germany. Even today, the following aspects are mostly unknown to the general public and are only examined by historians: various massacres against civilians in Greece, concentration camps like Chaidari, executions of Greek resistance fighters, deportations of Greek Jews to Auschwitz and Treblinka, deportations of political opponents to the concentration camp of Neuengamme and to slave-labour programmes in Germany.

The traces of the Second World War are still visible in today's Corfu: For example the ruins of the Jewish School, which was destroyed during the bombings, still stand next to the Synagogue. This makes student exchanges between our two countries all the more important, like the one between the Albert-Schweitzer-Gymnasium from Kaiserslautern, where the exhibition about Renato Mordo was shown a year ago, and the Gymnasio Hortiatias from Thessaloniki. Together, the students focused on Mordo's play "Chaidari" and performed selected scenes during the supporting programme of our exhibition's stay in Thessaloniki. Furthermore, the students from Kaiserslautern, together with their teachers, were invited to present their project during various workshops at the parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate in Mainz. Furthermore, a promising pedagogical concept with a focus on theatre emerged from this cooperation of the two schools.

Specifically these forms of lasting remembrance culture and remembrance work are invaluable in times of rising right wing politics as well as right winged social tendencies. These varied and multimedia-based forms of dealing with the topics concerning the Second World War and the oppression by the National Socialists are of the utmost importance in understanding the past. Furthermore, they can aid in gaining an understanding of and acceptance for "the other" in today's society in order to overcome and tear down walls and differences between cultures and humans alike.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude towards the team that helped bring today's event about:

Thanks to all employees of the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank- Alpha Bank, the Ionian University, the Albert Cohen Association as well as to everyone who helped realise the exhibition here on Corfu, especially, Gabriele Scheiner, the head of the Cultural Triangle of Prespa. She was and is responsible for all organisational aspects regarding the exhibition here in Greece during 2023.

My sincere thanks goes to the estate of Renato Mordo, represented by Elsbeth and Michael Mordo in Stuttgart, Germany. They were kind enough to make parts of their archive available for the exhibition. With this, they paved the way to all former and possible further exhibition openings like the one on Corfu today.

I am grateful towards curator Torsten Israel from Mannheim for his extensive work, the content orientation of the exhibition as well as for the presentation here in Ioannina. Also, I am grateful towards Marita Hoffmann of Llux publishing house from Ludwigshafen for designing the exhibition and setting it up here on Corfu. Furthermore, my thanks goes to my colleague Annika Heinze, who was responsible for all coordination on behalf of the State Agency.

Finally, the overall project about Renato Mordo would most likely not have been possible without my former colleague Uwe Bader. Back then, he coordinated the entire project on behalf of the State Agency. Unfortunately, he was not able to attend today. From the bottom of his heart, he wishes best of luck to the exhibition here on Corfu.

Finally, I would like to end my speech by wishing all of us a pleasant evening and many interested visitors for this exhibition.

3. Rafael-Victor Sousis
(Former President and current Vice-President
of the Jewish Community of Corfu)

Good evening,

My name is Linos Sousis, Vice President of our Community.

I am here to address the greetings of Mr. Matathias, President of the Jewish Community of Corfu. He wasn't able to be here with us today because of Covid.

I want to thank all the organizers of this important and interesting event. Let me refer to the main participant. This is Germany, which pleasantly surprises us with the way that focuses on its dramatic history. The power of memory is immeasurable. Sometimes we need to look back on the past so as to understand the future.

The fact that Renato Mordo, a famous Jewish-Greek and German director who was one of us and we didn't even know him to date, became the first director of the Greek National Opera, brings us very close to the man and the artist, who had lived such a turbulent life. I will not share more details about the life and work of this outstanding personality of art, in order to leave time and space for the main organizers of this event.

Thank you.

4. Dr. Dimitra Tzagari **(Head of Collections, Alpha Bank)**

I welcome you to an emblematic building in the heart of Corfu town, the Ionian Banknote Museum, built in 1845-46 by the leading Corfiot architect Ioannis Chronis, to house the Ionian Bank Branch. Since 1981, the two floors have been used as a museum and the second floor, where the important exhibition that opens today is presented, has been redesigned to host a variety of cultural activities.

We are particularly delighted that the second floor of our Museum reopens today with a landmark exhibition on the life and work of the great theatre and opera director Renato Mordo.

After a period of suspension of cultural activities, we hope that the new temporary exhibition will offer knowledge, excitement and moral uplift to the Corfu public, which, undoubtedly, plays a leading role in the musical events of our country.

With the Albert Cohen Corfu Association, with its multicultural character, and with the Cultural Triangle of Prespa, which puts into practice the impact of culture on society, the cooperation was more than excellent.

Special thanks go to Spyros Giourgas, President, and Roxanne Politis, General Secretary of the Friends of the Albert Cohen Foundation Corfu, and to Gabriela Scheiner, Director of the Cultural Triangle of Prespa, for trusting us and transforming the 2nd floor of our Museum into a real theatre setting.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the realization of this exhibition.

Alpha Bank once again proves that it continues its contribution to the cultural events of the island, for the spiritual and educational cultivation of the society.

5. Prof. Andreas Floros
(Rector, Ionian Academy of Corfu)

*"the summer bears
...as you walk along the shore,
measuring the borders of the sea,
until your shadow merges with theirs."*
(Hebrew poetry. trans. Stathis Komnenos)

Honourable Ladies,
Distinguished Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

Every self-respecting place must preserve the memory of the finest figures who happened to be born on its soil. Rightly, therefore, Corfu is proud of its children. All its children. Regardless of nationality and religion.

For the Greek Jew Albert Cohen, who came into the world on the Ionian island, but shone internationally through his literary and diplomatic work. And for another Corfiot Jew, less prominent but just as special, Renato Mordo.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ionian University considers it a great honour to participate actively and substantially in the commemoration and honouring of this worthy son of Corfu, of late inter-war and occupied Greece. From their family of origin, the Mordo, Corfu remembers and is grateful to this day for the great 19th century medical philosopher Lazaros de Mordo. Founding member of the Medical Association of Corfu. Chairman of the Ionian Academy. Doctor who proposed the introduction of vaccination of the inhabitants of Corfu against smallpox.

Doctor of the soul and of the most delicate human chords, of Music and Theatre, son of Spanish Jews who found a refuge of freedom in the multicultural Venetian Corfu of the 17th century, son of Rodolfo and Regina Mordo, Renato, studied music and performing arts at the famous Academy of Vienna to continue his theatrical studies at pioneering universities in Germany. In Dresden. In Frankfurt. Oldenburg.

A gifted young director, he would have taken over the direction of the innovative Darmstadt Theatre in 1931, had he not lacked a key qualification. If only he had German citizenship. He had, you see, retained only Greek.

It was a hurried night in 1930s Germany when the prevalence of a deep misanthropic Nazi night, would force him to leave the country and seek a refuge of free expression in the Czech Republic, in Prague. And since there too he will be conquered by the deep darkness (1938), a great Greek, Manolis Kalomiris, will give him the hand that will pull him to the land of his only citizenship. The occasion is the establishment and operation of the Greek National Opera in Athens. Renato Mordo made a decisive contribution to its foundation and was rightfully its first Greek director. Renato Mordo.

The beginning of the triple occupation of Greece in the spring of 1941 finds the Mordo family once again trapped. His Nazi persecutors manage to imprison him in Haidari shortly before their own end, but not to send him to Auschwitz, as they deeply wished.

Liberation would find theatrical man Renato Mordo in his natural place directing at the now autonomous National Opera House. The harsh and suspicious civil war Greece, after the Dekemvriana, will be frightened by the imprints of his traumatic experiences in Haidari, by his innovative ideas and will force him to emigrate again to find free places for the expression of his charismatic personality. Ankara, Darmstadt, Athens, Tel Aviv, Mainz, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Basel, Cologne. When Europe began to recognize him, it was time for him to go. Unexpectedly to end his journey. His own Odyssey.

Honourable Ladies,

Distinguished Gentlemen,

This Land is destined, by the very essence of its existence, to receive, to accept the Other, the Stranger. This Land is filled with Light and exists to serve the Light and those who help in its reflection, its diffusion. That is why it considers it an honour to participate in the organisation of the Exhibition and the events for a Man who at all personal costs has served the Art that liberates, the Man who creates, the Light and his Freedom.

Ladies

Gentlemen,

Come to honour another special Man, another charismatic creator of our land. It is worthy to honour the great theatre man Renato Mordo. Of Corfu and of our Greece.

6. Manolis Drakakis
(Associate Professor, Ionian Academy of Corfu)

*There on the wide staircase, on the staircase of tears,
 On the Wiener Graben the deep, the quarry of lamentations,
 Jews and partisans walk,
 Jews and partisans fall.
 Rock on their backs they carry, rock a cross of death.
 There Anthony hears the voice, voice, voice
 O chamberlain, O chamberlain, help me up the stairs.
 But there on the wide staircase, on the staircase of tears
 such help is a curse, such mercy is a curse...*

(Lyrics from the poem “Antonis” by Iakovos Kampanellis)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends of memory and honor,

We visited today the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank – Alpha Bank, which is hospitable for every proposal based on the soul and education. The Museum and its people.

Renato Mordo had to deal with many difficulties in his short life. Stairs and uphill roads.

Always with a quick breath. Always on the run. However, he considered his love for his art and, thereby, the “free human” as a basic orientation.

Fate determined his origin and destiny to be closely connected with this place. Corfu, Greece. Even though he was not treated with the same love.

The Mordo family, which was a family of the Jewish community of Corfu, contributed a lot since 1500 when they left Spain and settled in this place, too.

Lazaros de Mordo was the most well-known. He was a doctor and philosopher with remarkable writing work. He was a founding member of the Medical Association of Corfu, who pioneered regarding the vaccination against plague. He was a founding member of the Ionian Academy. He was a teacher of the Medical College (Collegio Medico di Corfu). He was also close friend of Ioannis Kapodistrias, who was the later Governor of Greece.

Moreover, Mordo was one of the three Jewish, who the citizens of Corfu elected on March 16th 1870, in order to represent them at the first City Council after the union with Greece (Gezouas and Nahamoulis were the other two).

Renato Mordo was born in Vienna in 1894. His father was Rodolfo Mordo, who was a merchant born in Smyrna and Corfu was his place of origin. He was also familiar with all languages spoken in the Mediterranean. Renato spent part of his childhood in the merchant ports of Rijeka, Trieste and Alexandria.

All the years, the Mordo family owned the Greek citizenship. This was life- saving for the young man during the World War I, as he was not sent to war due to this. Thus, he was able to study in the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and to bravely begin his first professional attempts. As if he wanted to cover the wounds of his fellow humans from the gases and mud of the trenches that killed millions of people.

He was invited to the pioneering Darmstadt Theatre in 1928. He worked with great musicians there, while for the first time in 1931 his Greek citizenship was a formal obstacle for him to become Head of the Theatre. He will get soon the German citizenship, but the defeat of Weimar Republic by the rising darker expression of political totalitarianism, Nazism, will force him again to become “Odysseus” and fight with all Laestrygonians and Sirens in the same endless journey of life and eternity, considering the Art of Imitations and Sounds as his weapons. Firstly in Prague and then, due to his best friend and co- creator Manolis Kalomiris, in Greece in 1939. He will live in his place of origin and nationality, feeling Greek.

At that time, the Greek National Opera was being set up and Renato was the best suited to passionately take on directing the first plays. The young Maria Callas made her first steps with him.

However, darkness was chasing him. Athens’ triple occupation will trap him again in 1941. Temporarily, his wife’s Greek citizenship, who despite being German, she owned the Greek citizenship, saved him. Finally, in the summer of 1944, the Germans arrested him and imprisoned him in Haidari, with the aim of sending him to Auschwitz as soon as possible. But they will not be able to.

In October 1944, people of Athens fought for freedom and not only Renato returned to the Greek National Opera, but he also transmuted his and his comrades’ traumatic experiences from the Haidari Concentration Camp into a play, which was enacted by the Kotopouli- Myrat cast.

Yet, the place couldn't find peace. During the "December events" in Athens and the Civil War, the author and director was considered suspicious for his ideas. The authorities didn't allow his renewal of cooperation with the Greek National Opera and Renato returned for a short period of time back in Vienna. However, the Ankara State Opera hosted his work from 1947 to 1951.

He visited again his beloved but financially destroyed Athens in 1951-1952, which can neither support his work nor help him follow his American Dream. The New World Order was more afraid of a stage-poet's ideas than Greece in the post-civil war period was. He will, unsuccessfully, search for his personal "Promised Land" in his ancestors' land, at the National Opera in the capital of the newly established Jewish state. He will, eventually, find it in the Municipal Theatre of Mainz, where he became Art Director in the winter of 1952.

His wife and son returned from America, too. However, happiness doesn't last long. His second stay in Germany will be short. He died in November 1955, the moment Europe began to recognize and honor the gifted director.

The Jew falls on the step and the staircase blushes

And you, my friend, come here, my friend, come here, rock double carry.

I get double, I get triple, my name is Anthony,

My name is Anthony, my name is Renato, my name is...

and if you're a man, come here to the marble threshing floor.

(Lyrics from the poem "Antonis" by Iakovos Kampanellis)

He wasn't afraid that time either. He was still chased by mean people with power. He was sad. The Authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany did not approve his request to be compensated for the deportations he experienced by the Nazi regime.

I don't know exactly what it is to be a Jew. What it is for me to be a Jew. It is, if you like, something obvious, but also something moderately obvious [...], it is not a sign that I belong somewhere, it is not connected to a faith, to a religion, to a practice, to a folklore, to a language;

Rather it would be a silence, an absence [...].

wrote the French novelist and librarian George Perec, who had also Polish-Jewish origin and who as a child during the Occupation. He lost his father in the war and his mother in the Holocaust. He wrote: "I don't know exactly what it is to be a Jew. What it is for me to be a

Jew. It is something obvious, but also something almost obvious [...], it is not a sign that I belong somewhere, it has no connection with a belief or religion or practice or folklore or language; It would probably be something silent, an absence [...].”

We, the visitors of this exhibition, will maybe learn from the silence of modern theater’s “Odysseus” what “human” means and will whisper the life- phrase of Albert Cohen.

As you my brothers and sisters People..

PEOPLE OF CORFU

HARE!

They have accepted that Greece does not deny its glorious and noble origin, and that the words freedom, brotherhood and equality are fully applicable to it.

They acknowledged, finally, that the victory was the progress they had achieved in Corcyra. A new crown of glory to our beloved fatherland, he adds gloriously.

(Phrases from the leaflet of the Jewish Youth of Corfu, 1870 in “katharevousa”)

7. Lito Alexaki **(Assistant Professor, Ionian Academy of Corfu)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Lito Alexaki and I am an Assistant Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation & Interpreting (DFLTI), Ionian University. I am here today because Mr. Olaf Immanuel Seel, Associate Professor of DFLTI, asked me to represent our Department in this beautiful event and to address a small speech on behalf of him, since he unfortunately cannot attend the event as he is abroad. Mr. Seel was responsible for the group of students of our Department, who translated part of the texts that accompany the exhibition, which we are honored to host in our island.

At this point, I would like to briefly inform you about our Department's participation in this project. All started on February 2019, when Mr. Seel visited the Department of Modern Greek Studies in the Johannes Gutenberg, University of Mainz. The first meeting with the creator and curator of the exhibition Mr. Tortsten Israel as well as with Mr. Uwe Bader from the Central Office of Political Education of Rhineland-Palatinate and Head of the Memorial of the Osthofen Concentration Camp and with Mrs. Marita Hoffman from the German publishing house Lux took place there, after the initiative of the Head of the Department, Professor Christos Karvounis.

Both Mr. Karvounis and Mr. Seel were excited to hear about the intention to create an exhibition for Renato Mordo in Greece. They gladly accepted the proposal to assign the translation work, which was required for the exhibition and the accompanying book of the exhibition to their students. The proposal to assign the translation project to their students was accepted with great pleasure by both Departments.

Regarding the translation work that DFLTI was responsible for:

Ten of our Department's students were divided into groups of two and translated about half of the original texts included in the report from German to Greek under Mr. Seel's supervision. These texts had mainly to do with Renato Mordo's professional career, modern political history of Germany and Greece as well as the Renato Mordo's working period in Athens, before his deportation to the concentration camp in Haidari in the western part of Athens. It is worth to mention another part of the original texts translated by our group of students, which was related to personal texts by Renato Mordo, such as essays with humor and critical thinking, 39 either short or long theatrical texts, which the artist had collected in one volume with the title "Erlebt,

erlaust, erlogen” along with many other personal anecdotes from his creative period, especially in Athens. The final editing of the translations was carried out by Mr. Seel. The remaining volume of the original texts was translated respectively by students of the Department of Modern Greek Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University, under the supervision of Mr. Christos Karvounis. Mr. Karvounis edited the final translations of his own team. The two Universities had to translate texts of about 100 pages each. The students of the two Departments who carried out the translation work are listed in the exhibition’s catalogue.

As you can imagine, it is a really interesting and complex translation project with an inter-institutional and transnational character that required proper coordination, contributors’ professional concentration and excellent cooperation in order to finish the work successfully. We hope we achieved this. It is also positive that the students of the two Departments have worked for more than a semester with great zeal and joy, as this project not only gave them the opportunity to show what they have learned during their studies, to gain translation experience and enrich their factual, cultural and historical knowledge, but also to experience the feeling of joy either it has to do with the participation in a common goal or the satisfaction of having contributed to the society and education, given that they have contributed to make such an important man widely known.

On behalf of both the DFLTI and Mr. Seel, I would like to congratulate the bodies that have carried out this excellent project; the Federal State Rhineland-Palatinate, Mr. Uwe Bader and the Rhineland-Palatinate Civil Service, the exhibition’s curator Mr. Tortsten Israel, the architect of the exhibition and editor Mrs. Marita Hoffman and all the other contributors, Albert Cohen Association, the Cultural Triangle of Prespa, the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank – Alpha Bank and of course the Ionian University, which helped to carry out this exhibition in Corfu this time. I would like to thank for the opportunity given to our Department to actively participate in the implementation of this beautiful project.

Thank you very much!

8. Photographs



Building of the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank – Alpha Bank
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Building of the Ionian University of Corfu
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Reading Isle with selected works by Renato Mordo at the Ionian University
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The main exhibition at the Banknote Museum of the Ionian Bank – Alpha Bank
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From left to right: Bernhard Kukatzki (State Agency for Civic Education); Gabriela Scheiner (Cultural Triangle of Prespa), Andreas Floros (Ionian Academy of Corfu); Dimitra Tzagari (Alpha Bank); Manolis Drakakis (Ionian Academy of Corfu); Roxani Politi (Albert Cohen Association Corfu)

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