

MUNICIPALITIES

Kyrenia

Lapithos

Karavas

Kythrea

Morphou

Lysi

Lefkoniko

Akanthou

Famagusta

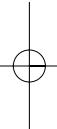
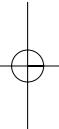
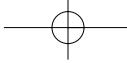


Occupied Towns/ Displaced Municipalities of the Republic of Cyprus: *a Brief Historical Review*

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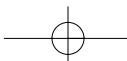
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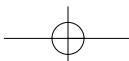
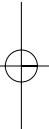
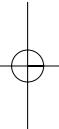
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***“The house where I was born, even if strangers tread on it,
there it stands, haunted, like a soul, inviting
and waiting for me”.***

COSTIS PALAMAS





Map of Cyprus showing the nine occupied cities of the displaced municipalities.

-  Area under Turkish-Military Occupation
-  Cease-fire line

GREETING BY MR.ALEXIS GALANOS, PRESIDENT OF THE OCCUPIED MUNICIPALITIES COMMITTEE

It is with profound emotion and sincere satisfaction that I welcome the publication of this book, which brings to life images and memories from our occupied land.

Regrettably, the consequences of the 1974 Turkish invasion, the partition of the island and the uprooting of thousands of inhabitants, are still being felt today. Hundreds of people are missing; the refugees have lost their property while basic human rights such as freedom of movement and settlement are openly violated. Even now, Turkey and the illegal Turkish Cypriot regime continue to methodically plunder Cyprus European cultural heritage in the Turkish-occupied area, which deeply affects everyone. Churches are desecrated, religious icons are destroyed, ancient relics are smuggled, archaeological sites are illegally excavated and schools are left in ruin.

The nine occupied municipalities of Cyprus, who witnessed the capture of their land and their citizens' dispersal all over Cyprus, are still experiencing the consequences of the tragic events of 1974. Famagusta, Kyrenia, Morphou, Lysi, Lapithos, Kythrea, Karavas, Lefkoniko and Akanthou are temporarily housed in the free areas of Cyprus struggling to keep their memories alive and the longing for return to their homeland.

The nine refugee municipalities are ambassadors for the tragedy suffered by the Cypriot people. They are the link between the older generation who experienced both joy and sorrow and survived the bitterness and uprooting from their homeland and the younger generation who have never seen their parents' and grandparents' villages. This publication brings to life the accounts of those who were born and raised, lived and toiled in the occupied cities and towns. Furthermore, it provides indisputable evidence of the long history of Cyprus civilization, it rekindles our memories and conveys our deep sorrow. The nine occupied municipalities strive to maintain the bonds of their displaced residents as well as the bonds we all have with our occupied land.

It is my hope that this year will be the very last one when these nine municipalities are absent from their land while approximately 37% of Cyprus land remains under Turkish military occupation. I hope that next year our occupied village and city church bells will ring out festively. I hope that the rest of the people of Cyprus will realize that the occupied municipalities are not only struggling to return to their homeland, but also for the survival of Cyprus as a whole.

**On the land that bore us shall we stand tall
as wind-swept trees,
battered by the rains, yet holding firm
preparing their fruit on their branches.
On the land that bore us shall we stand tall
cherishing the memory of those who came
before,
and holding dear those who shall come
and with divine serenity deep within us.**

*Nikos Kranidiotis
"Studies", 1951*

NOTE BY THE OCCUPIED MUNICIPALITIES COMMITTEE

"Occupied towns – Displaced Municipalities of the Republic of Cyprus" is the title of the book which the Committee of the Occupied Municipalities has undertaken to publish.

The goal of this publication is a review of historical facts on the nine occupied towns of the Republic of Cyprus and their displaced municipalities, informing the public about the tragic consequences of the Turkish invasion of 1974, strengthening the common consciousness and preserving the memory of our occupied places.

We consider that this publication constitutes a valuable source of information for the younger generations, a valuable tool to raise awareness of the work of the occupied municipalities, and a testament to concerted efforts for a return to our homeland, to our ancestral homes under conditions of real liberty, democracy, security and dignity. The displaced municipalities shall keep fighting for the achievement of their goal.

It is noted that the order of the occupied towns and the displaced municipalities has been laid out according to the progression of the Turkish invasion of 1974. It is an approach that gives this book coherence and momentum.

The Committee of the Occupied Municipalities wishes to convey its warm thanks to those who helped in shaping this book. It wishes to express its genuine appreciation for the collaboration of Dr. Savvas Kokkinos, who collected valuable information, material from the archives of our municipalities and from other historical sources and who undertook the compilation of this book.

The photographic material was provided by the Press and Information Office, the Antiquities Department, the Byzantine Museum, the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, the Museum of Folklore Art of the Society of Cypriot Studies, the various archives of the nine occupied municipalities, as well as various friends and colleagues who are cited in this publication. We warmly thank them for providing this material.

Sincere thanks also go to the manager of "En Tipis Publications" Voula Kokkinou, for her devotion and her hard work in bringing this publication to fruition.

INTRODUCTION

Cyprus, a Mediterranean island, is at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. Discoveries of prehistoric sites in the Aetokremou-Akrotiri area confirm that it was inhabited at the end of the 10th millennium B.C. Alasia, Aspelia, Kerastia, Sfikia Aerie, Halkoessa, Ourania and Kyprida were some of the terms used to describe the island in antiquity. Because of its location as well as its natural resources and the creative civilization of its inhabitants, Cyprus was a target for successive superpowers. It was raided or conquered by the Phoenicians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, Crusaders, Franks, Venetians, Turks and British, but it never betrayed its Greek soul. Since it was a trade center and crossroads where people of different origins converged, Cyprus became a melting pot for a number of different civilizations, developing a unique culture, which superseded its size.

Mycenaean merchants in Engomi and Palaipaphos (Kouklia) as well as Greek god temples are testimony to the presence of Greeks in Cyprus prior to the Trojan War. Kinyras from Kilikia was the founder-king of Palaipaphos and also the priest of the Temple of Aphrodite (according to Marianus Scotus, 200 years before the Trojan War). Kinyrashosted Agamemnon and presented him with the renowned breast plate. The Greek identity of the island was reinforced by the arrival of the Achaeans around 1200 B.C., after the end of the Trojan War. Cities / kingdoms were founded all over the country by Achaean commanders, marking their arrival in Cyprus. Agapinoras settled on the west coast of the island at Maa-Palaiokastro, and later moved to Palaipafos. The Argives built Curium. The Dryopes from Kythnos island and Golgos founded Asini and Golgous (near modern Athienou), respectively. Amathos, Aeries's son, founded Amathus. Akamantas founded Akamantida and his father Faliros founded Aipeia, which was later renamed Soloi by king Phylokypros. Chytros, Akamantas's grandson, founded Chytros (near modern Kythrea). Tefkros Telamonios, Aiakides's son and Ajax's half-brother founded Salamina near Engomi, in memory of his birthplace Salamina island. The Achaean general Kifeas founded Kyrenia in memory of his homeland Achaean Kyrenia. Praxandros from Lakonia founded Lapithos. These settlements transformed and expanded continuously.

The Greeks' new presence prevailed politically and culturally all over Cyprus. It boosted the island's Greek character, endowing it with a uniform civilization, language and religion. This branch of Hellenism was alluded to by Homer, while the adventures and dreams of its inhabitants were accounted for in ancient Greek mythology/history. Despite being enslaved several times by different conquerors, the aforementioned cities/kingdoms retained their names throughout the centuries. Cyprus, likewise, retained the name that Homer reported in the Iliad for the first time. Some of these cities/kingdoms or their successor cities formed the modern municipalities of the Republic of Cyprus. There is irrefutable evidence that the occupied cities as well as Cyprus as a whole have a common Greek identity. Archaeological findings, Greek inscriptions, Greek monuments, Greek fables and traditions, ancient statues or mosaics depicting Greek gods, preserved ancient Greek texts with relevant references and other literary sources attest to that. Furthermore, the existence of Greek customs and traditions, the Greek language, the Greek-Orthodox religion and in general the Greek culture on the island from the dawn of history is testament to that. All this confirms that the native population of the whole island is Greek and that the culture it developed superseded the boundaries of place and time, thus validating its historical continuity.

The Turkish invasion in July 1974 violently interrupted this historical course through the ages in the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus. During and right after the invasion, Turkey implemented its plans for ethnic cleansing in the occupied areas. It committed unspeakable international crimes as these are defined by international law: indiscriminate bombing, cold-blooded killings of civilians, separation of families, illegal arrests, disappearance of people (missing persons), terrorism, torture, forced labour, rape and forced prostitution, forced evictions, expulsions, forced evacuation of areas, intimidation and looting. Within a short time, 180,000 legitimate residents of the occupied area were expelled from their homes and property because of their national origin, race and religion. The victims of this ethnic cleansing are the refugees who found refuge and employment both in the free areas of Cyprus and overseas. Turkish Cypriots, who had lived in the free areas part, were also victimized since Turkey forced them to settle in the occupied areas; a few years later, a large number of them emigrated to other countries.

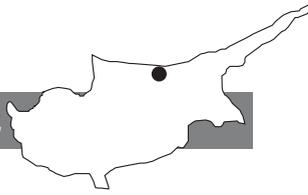
Since 1974 Turkey has occupied approximately 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and all Greek and other Christian refugees are not allowed to return to their homes and property under conditions of peace and security, which is a basic human right under international law and the resolutions of the United Nations and the European Union. Due to lack of decisive intervention by the international community, Turkey continues its violations: the last 200 enslaved residents of Karpasia are intimidated into abandoning their homes and property despite the Third Vienna Convention (August 2nd 1975) which addresses the return of the refugees to their ancestral land and homes, the re-operation of the schools and the unimpeded exercise of their religious tasks, particularly for the people of Karpasia. The Turks applied the agreement unilaterally and continued to exploit the properties of the Greek and Christian refugees and the displaced population. They also committed cultural genocide with the intent of comprehensively Turkifying the occupied parts. The Turkish forces encourage mainland Turks to settle on the island. Their numbers exceed those of the Turkish Cypriots as well as the refugees and the displaced. The Turkish settlers' population is now approximately the same as that of the total population of Greek Cypriots. The occupation allows and encourages the destruction of the Greek and Christian cultural heritage by eradicating anything that relates to the Greeks or other Christians in the occupied territories – replacement of the Greek placenames, neglect of invaluable cultural and religious monuments, encouragement of illicit antiquities trade, looting, destruction and in many cases demolition of religious and other monuments.

The policy of ethnic cleansing and the general Turkification that Turkey aspires for in the occupied territory, is aimed at the partition of Cyprus and the creation of two separate and ethnically homogeneous states. People who had lived in the now-occupied areas since the dawn of time, whose culture is part of the world heritage, have fallen prey to Turkey's relentlessly destructive schemes. The entire occupied territory faces changes to its demographics, placenames, as well as to its character, culture and religion, and this with the aim of alienating the expelled legitimate inhabitants, represented by the elected mayors who are temporarily housed in Town Halls in the free areas of the island.

The presentation that will follow focuses on the history of the nine displaced municipalities, which have regrouped, have organized and handled the situation democratically in the free areas since 1974. The residents of these municipalities trust and depend on them but their work is even harder since they are away from their cities.



Municipality of Kyrenia



Camaraic ceramic vase. Middle Mycenaean Period II (1800-1700 B.C.) or beginning of Middle Copper Age. Links Kyrenia to the Mycenaean civilisation, Crete and the Aegean civilisation.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



Clay model of the sanctuary in Youni cemetery, Bellapais. Early Copper Age period II, 2100-2000 B.C.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

Kyrenia hosted its first inhabitants during the Neolithic age. Its civilisation and history date back to one of the most ancient periods of the history of Cyprus, from 8200 to 4000 B.C.

Archaeological finds at excavations conducted by the Department of Antiquities, undertaken before the Turkish invasion in the area of the city of Kyrenia, capital of the district, and the area around it, confirm that the area had been inhabited since the Neolithic Age (5800-3000 B.C.). Tombs of the Mycenaean, Geometric and Archaic periods were also discovered (1300-500 B.C.). Many warriors of the Trojan War, hailing from Achaea of the Peloponnese, followed the prevailing westerly winds for their return home, which were favourable for the destination of Kyrenia, hence landed there at the northern shores of Cyprus and founded cities. Their sailing and landings in this area were so frequent that these shores came to be known as the "Achaean Coast". The votive offerings found in these tombs indicate the continuous habitation in the wider area, whilst at the same time they underline the close relationship with the Minoan, Mycenaean and generally the Greek world in those times.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Origins of Kyrenia

Historical sources confirm that Kyrenia of Cyprus is connected with ancient Kyrenia of Achaea in the Peloponnese. According to Pausanias (150 A.D.), Achaean Kyrenia constituted a member of the Achaean Confederation. It is also known because of the Kerynites hide of the Goddess Artemis (Diana) that the demigod Hercules managed to capture, thus realising one of his feats. According to Simos Menardos, the Cypriot researcher of Cypriot placenames, the most ancient Greek report for this settlement in the north of the island is attributed to Diodorus, who reports "about Kyrenia". According to Menardos it cannot be precluded that originally it was "Kinyria" or "Kineiria." An Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription, of the Pharaoh Rameses III "1125 – 1100 B.C." was found in the temple of Medinet Habu of Egypt



Agios Epiktitos in the location of Vrysi, a rectangle-based settlement, 4000B.C. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

also refers to it as “Kerena” or “Kelena”, together with another seven city-kingdoms.

The founder of the city was Kepheas, who is referred to by Lykopronas as a military man who sailed to the northern coast of the island, leading a group of men originating from various cities of Achaea. He came from Voura or Dyme, cities of Ancient Achaea, that later were amalgamated with Olenos. In Achaea of the Peloponnese there was, in ancient times, a city named Kyrenia. The inhabitants that settled in the area of Kyrenia of Cyprus were of Greek origin, they spoke Greek, they believed



Clay ship model from Kazafani (1650 – 1050 B.C.).

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

in Greek gods, and generally they based their political, economic, spiritual and material development on the Greek civilisation. Inscriptions as well as other finds in the area testify to the existence of a temple of Apollo and Aphrodite, whilst references to Kyrenians have been found at the Oracle in Delphi. Since historic times, Kyrenia is referred to as one of the city-kingdoms of Cyprus that preserved their Greek character, despite the passage of many occupiers over the island. It has lived through battles and wars, pillage and destruction, but also through days of progress and prosperity, as it was also one of the 30 Cyprus cities, the ports of which sheltered many vessels, which for 33 years dominated the Mediterranean (976-943 B.C.) bringing wealth from all the Mediterranean countries.

The favorable climate, the fertile land, the abundant water resources and the port were the basic reasons for the continuous habitation and development of the land of Kyrenia since extreme antiquity. Spreading to the west of the present castle, Kyrenia thrived in maritime activities, shipping and commerce, which constituted additional factors for the welfare of its inhabitants and also for their connection



Assembly and maintenance of the Kyrenia ship before the Turkish invasion. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

with other civilisations. A proof of the commercial activity of the city is the Hellenistic shipwreck found in 1965 by the Kyrenian diver Andreas Cariolou, on the east of its port, with all its cargo. Based on the finds, the route that the ship followed was Samos – Kos – Rhodes – Asia Minor Coast – Kyrenia, which confirms the close commercial and other relations of the city with the Asia Minor coast and the eastern Aegean islands. To the west and east of the castle were the necropolises and the cemeteries. Towards this end the soft rock of the area was carved forming burial chambers up to the first Christian years.

B. Ptolemaic Period (294 B.C. – 58 B.C.)

During the conflicts among the successors of Alexander the Great, Antigonus and Ptolemy, the kingdom of Kyrenia was



Rhodian amphorae from the Hellenistic shipwreck of Kyrenia, as discovered by Andreas Cariolou. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

subject to the King of Lapithos who sided with Antigonus. When the Ptolemies prevailed in the whole of the island and the Cyprus city-kingdoms were abolished by Ptolemy I (312 B.C.), Kyrenia continued to prosper, because of its port and the commerce that had developed. In the 2nd century B.C., in the lists of the Oracle of Delphi it is mentioned as one of the six cities of Cyprus that enjoyed the privilege of hosting the special agents of the Oracle that collected offerings to Apollo. This proves further that the city was rich and that it prospered. The rich finds of tombs of the Hellenistic period, brought to the surface by the archaeological pickaxe, are proof of prosperity.

During this period many pirates sailed the neighbouring seas. The inhabitants of the 30 cities of Cyprus, amongst them the Kyrenians, abandoned them in order to build safer settlements

further inland, so as to avoid the pirates' onslaught. Thus, the Ptolemies, started, since then, to fortify the settlements. The fortifications of the Byzantines, the Franks and the Venetians were based on the positions of these works. Those initial simple fortifications consisted of walls that offered protection to the city on the sea side and on the land side, up until the Roman Period.

C. Roman Period (58 B.C – 364 A.D.)

During the Roman period, neighbouring Lapithos was the administrative centre of the district. However, as witnessed by the archaeological finds, Kyrenia continued being a large community. Works of upgrading the port installations were carried out, a castle was built and the foundations of the western quay were laid, for the ships to anchor in safety. The road network, connecting the city with the countryside, was also upgraded. Near the sea, Roman villas were built, adorned with mosaic floors, as the one at the location "Paladkia" (Palaces). At the location "Riatiko" (Royal), in Pano Kyrenia, an important stone base of a statue of Claudius Tiberius Julius Caesar was discovered. A statue created there to honor his charitable work, probably the creation water reservoir. In the inscription of this base of limestone the "Keriniton Municipality" is mentioned for the first time (13-37 A.D.).

In the first years of the Christian period, Kyrenia offered a refuge to many Christians. The first known Bishop of Kyrenia, Theodotos, went through a martyrdom for his



The hewn tombs of Chrysokava. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

Christian faith during the reign of the emperor Licinius (307-324 A.D.). The area of Chrysokava, east of the castle, must have been an ancient quarry, where the Christians dug out catacombs and hosted the tombs of the first Christian martyrs. The rocks were turned into arched burial vaults, and small cave churches. Subsequently some of the tombs were turned into churches with beautiful frescos, as the one of Agia Mavri, carved into the rock and adorned with frescos of the middle Byzantine period. Burial caves of the Helleno-Roman period, that were later used by the Christians, are found in Kato Kyrenia, around and under the church of the Archangel Michael, the town's patron saint. The church was built in its present form in 1860. In the sea, opposite the church, there is a reef called the "Rock of the Archangel". According to legend, Archangel Michael uprooted it from the foundations of his church and slung it against the aggressors in order to protect the town. Kyrenia was famous during the period of Agios Spyridonas, and this gave him a reason to visit the town: accompanied by the Bishop of Nicosia Triphyllios, he crossed the Pentadaktylos mountain range and visited the city. Sources of the period mention a number of bishops of Kyrenia, while hagiological texts enrich the list of saints that were active in the wider area. With very few exceptions, the continuous habitation and building up of the city did not allow further archaeological discoveries of the Palaeo-Christian period. In Pano Kyrenia the ruins of a Palaeo-Christian Basilica were located, as well as Palaeo-Christian mosaic floors, along Koronos river. When the Romans divided their empire into East and West (395 A.D.), Kyrenia, as well as the whole of Cyprus, formed part of the Byzantine state and the Orthodox Church.

D. Byzantine period (395 AD-1191 A.D.)

During the Byzantine period Kyrenia was a prosperous city. This is supported by many findings, among which is the "treasure" of Byzantine jewels, found in 1883, which, because of its similarity to the "Treasure of Lampousa", was dated to the 7th century. The Byzantine emperors reinforced the Roman castle of the city and included it in the wider defence planning that they drew up to protect the island from raids. Next to the castle they built a church, dedicated to Saint George, used as a military chapel. After the destruction of

Lampousa by the Arab raids (beginning of 9th century), Kyrenia became very important, because of the safety afforded to it by the castle and its garrison. When necessary, and depending on circumstances, the Byzantine fleet anchored in its port, as was the case during the rebellion of the Byzantine governor of Cyprus, Rapsommatis (mid 11th century). On the orders of the Emperor Alexios Komninos, Ioannis Doukas and Emanouel Voutomytes anchored with their fleet in the port of Kyrenia, where from they assaulted and suppressed the rebellion. The last Byzantine governor of Cyprus, Isaac Komninos, chased by Richard the Lionheart of England - who occupied the island in 1191 - sent his family and his treasures to the Kyrenia castle. After this, Richard the Lionheart sold the island initially to the Knights Templar and almost immediately after that to Guy de Lusignan in 1192.

E. Frankish period (1192-1489 A.D.)

During the Frankish rule, the villages around the city were turned into feudal estates. Kyrenia became the administrative and commercial centre of the area. The Bishopric of Kyrenia was abolished. The Roman Catholic Church endeavoured to

convert the local population, as well as the population of the whole of the island, to Catholicism, an effort that reached its peak with the martyrdom of the Thirteen Monks of Kantara. In the wider Kyrenia area, as in the whole of the island, Roman Catholic Orders were established. Churches in the Gothic style were built, while in Bella Pais the Abbey of the monastic order of Ordo Premonstratensis was established. The Franks enlarged the Byzantine castle of the city, and reformed it adding new bastions and other buildings. They erected walls around the city and the port, and they upgraded the existing Byzantine fortifications of the wider area, i.e. the castles of Saint Hilarion, Buffavento and Kantara. These four castles were included in the unified defence system that protected the city by land and by sea. Kyrenia and its castle also played a leading role in the many disputes among the Frank Kings, and between the latter and the Genoese. The castle of the city was subjected to many and difficult sieges, but it was never captured; characteristic examples are those of the siege of the Lombards by John of Ibelin, of Eleanor of Aragon by the Genoese and of Charlotte by James the Bastard.



Bellapais Abbey. Photo: Fougères & Merle, cf Lucie Bonato, Charis Yiakoumis, Kadir Kaba, *The island of Cyprus, En Tipis*, 2007



The Lusignan tower on the north-east side of the castle. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

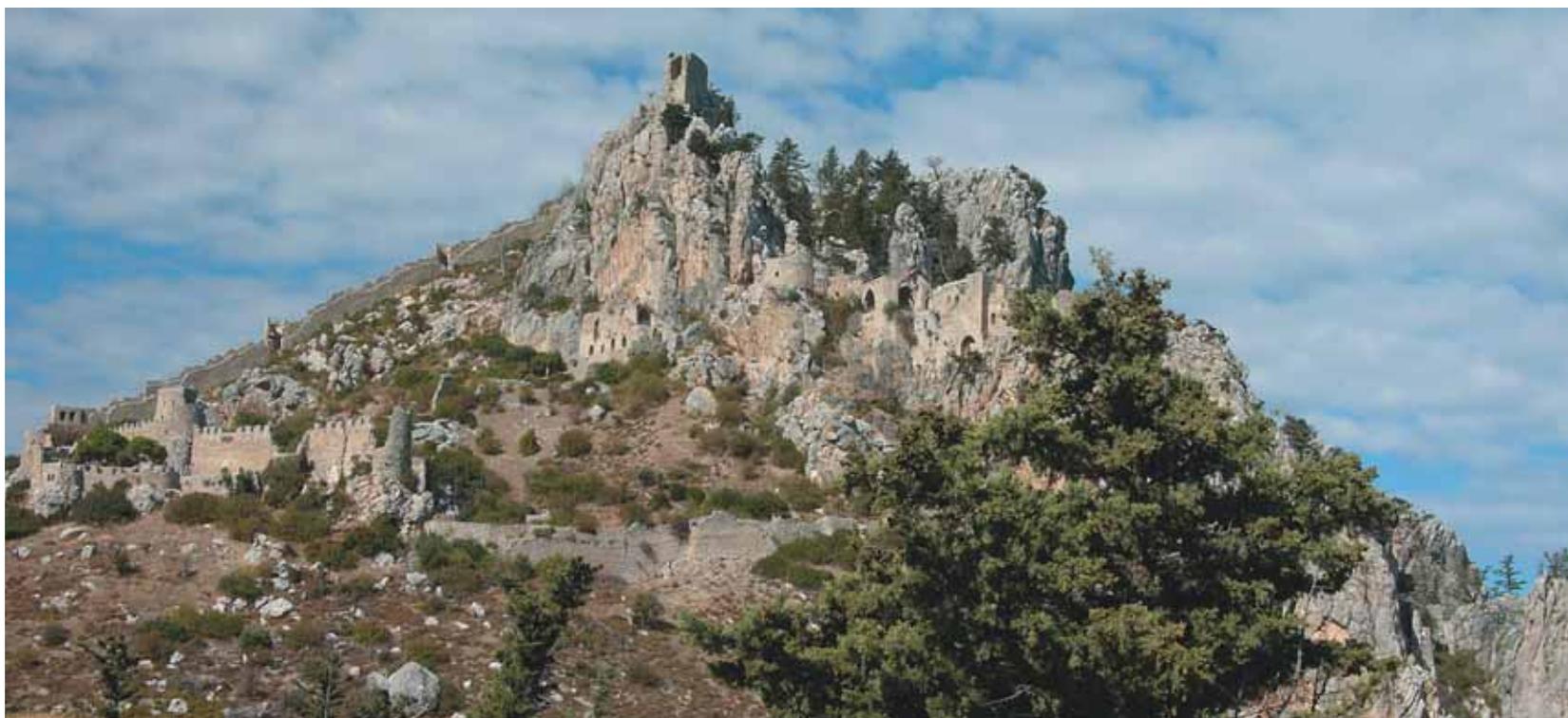


The castle of Kyrenia from the sea (east of the 'Fykia' beach).

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

G. Venetian period (1489-1571 A.D.)

When the Venetians occupied Cyprus, they implemented a harsh economic exploitation of its people, taking full advantage of the economic benefits of the island. The commercial interest, as well as the fear of uprisings, because of the oppression, led the Venetians to attribute greater importance to the fortification of Kyrenia and the other large cities. They neglected or even demolished the most important parts of the remote castles, such as Saint Hilarion, Buffavento and Kantara that protected the city, fearing that, in case of an uprising, they could be taken over and used against them. Thus, they repaired Kyrenia castle and reinforced the existing walls, so that they could respond to the new requirements of the war, i.e. the invention of gunpowder and large cannons. They pulled down the three of the four elegant and slim towers of the Lusignans, as well as the royal quarters of the castle on the second floor. They opened holes for the cannons and extended the outside wall, where they constructed thick curved defensive towers, so as to withstand cannonfire. The castle became so spacious inside that it resembled a small town. Constructed of hard rock, it withstood the salinity of the sea and enemy onslaughts from



The castle of Saint Hilarion. Photo: G. Sfoggaras

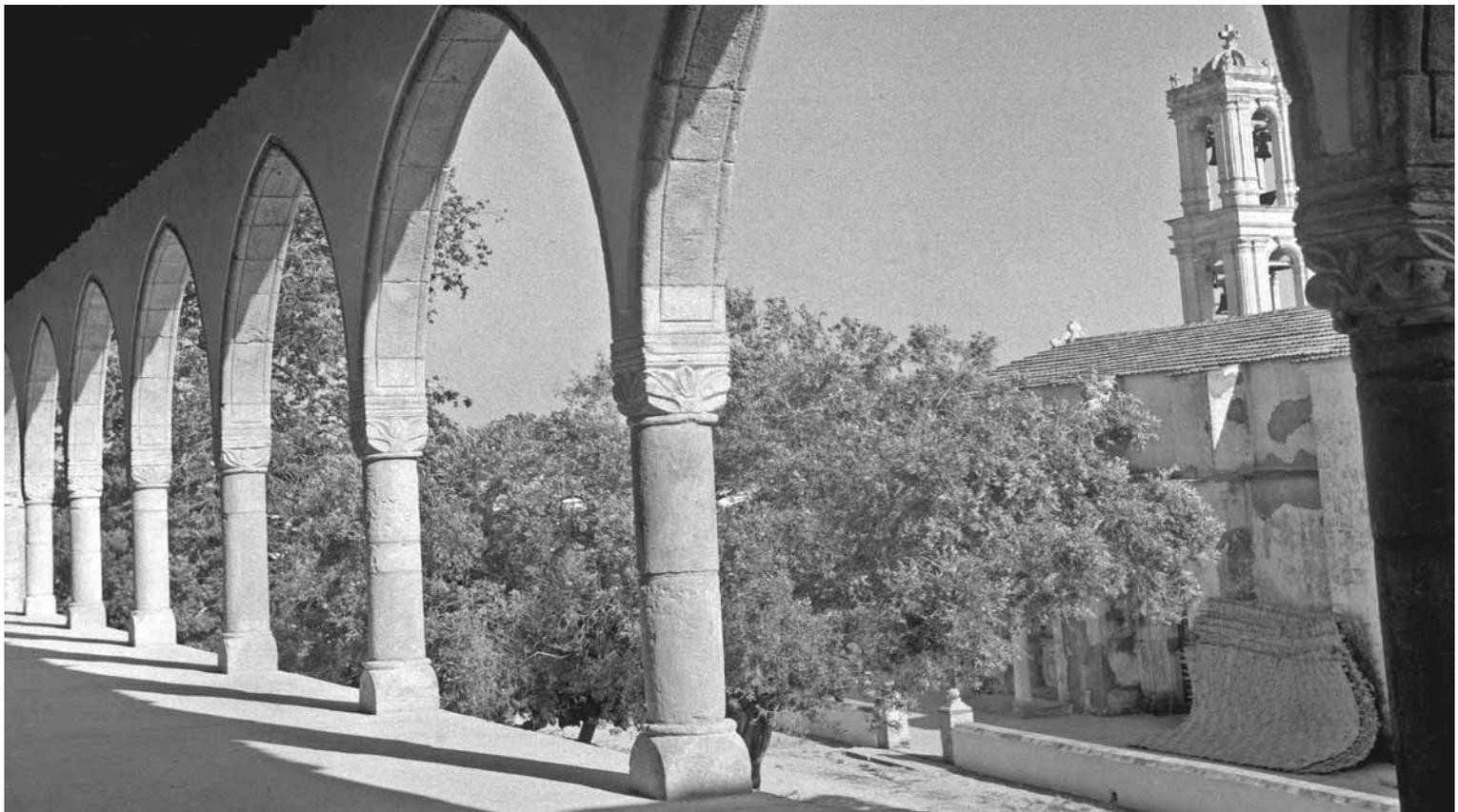
land and sea. It was truly impregnable. Despite all this, the Venetian Commander surrendered it to the Ottoman Turks together with the city (1570) without a fight. A short time after the Ottoman onslaught, the Turkish captain of the Ottoman fleet, Sadik Pasha, died and was buried there.

H. Ottoman period (1571-1878 A.D.)

Following the administrative division of Cyprus by the Ottomans, Kyrenia became the capital of one of the initial four, and later six, districts. The settling of Greeks and other Christians in the city within the walls was forbidden. Their entry was also forbidden into the castle where the regiment of the Turkish fusiliers lived with their families; they terrorized the inhabitants of the surrounding area through plunder and other crimes. This was the reason why most Kyrenians moved to Pano Kyrenia, to Riatiko and other nearby villages. The few indigenous inhabitants of Kyrenia that dared remain in the city were mariners. They lived in houses around the ruined walls. At the end of the 16th century, for the first time, we come across a report on the existence of a Bishop of Kyrenia. At the

time Kyrenia was one of the four dioceses of Cyprus. The seat of the Bishopric was in the monastery of Agios Panteleimon in Myrtou. Because of the merging of the diocese of Solea with the Kyrenia Bishopric, it was moved to Agios Mamas of Morphou during the middle of the 17th century up until the beginning of the 19th century; and moved back again to Agios Panteleimon in Myrtou.

Kyrenia was enlivened by her mariners, who bribed the occupiers, and were in good terms with them so that they could maintain their commercial activities with the Asia Minor coast and the Aegean islands. In 1783 they renovated Chrysopolitissa church in Kyrenia and established better living conditions. Kyrenia next experienced certain important events. The Turkish guardian of the castle, Hadji Halil, rebelled against the Turkish authorities in Nicosia, because of the heavy taxation. With armed men, he twice threatened the capital; he was arrested by trickery and was put to death. With the start of the Greek national liberation struggle, together with the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos and the Bishops of Paphos and Kitium, on the 9th of July 1821, the



Monastery of Agios Panteleimonas in Myrtou. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



The port of Kyrenia in around 1890. Photo: Fougères & Merle, cf Lucie Bonato, Charis Yiakoumis, Kadir Kaba, *The island of Cyprus, En Typis* Publication, 2007

Bishop of Kyrenia Lavrentios, the former chorbishop of Lampousa, died a martyr's death; according to legend he was a member of the "Philiki Eteria" (The Greek revolution's Friendly Society). When in 1856 by order of the Sultan (Hatti-Hümayun) some rights were ceded to the enslaved Christians of the Ottoman Empire, Christians were allowed to live within the old city and repair their churches. Thus, many of them returned to the city, which was set up as a municipality. The municipal council was mixed. It consisted of two Christian and two Muslim councillors; however the chairman was always a Turk. The inhabitants started from nothing. They engaged in commerce and shipping, they bought their land again, they cultivated it, they educated their children and they rebuilt the church of the Archangel Michael on a rock opposite the sea. In 1878, by secret agreements, Cyprus was ceded by the Turkish occupiers to the British occupiers.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

From the beginning, the change of occupier was felt by the inhabitants, because of the anchoring of British navy gunboats

outside the port on the 12th of July 1878, the hoisting of the British flag on the castle and the encampment of 900 men of the Anglo-Indian contingent just outside the city. Many of them contracted malaria and were buried near their camp, at the point which later became the British cemetery of Kyrenia. The presence of the new occupier filled Kyrenians, as well as all the inhabitants of the island, with optimism. They looked forward to a more liberal change and mainly to a complete purging of the previous occupier, who had held back their development and progress.

During the British occupation (1878-1960), initially there were no administrative changes; this is why Kyrenia continued being the administrative centre of the whole district and went on developing. Under an occupier who, culturally, was relatively close, the future of the city of Kepheas appeared more hopeful. As time went by, apart from an administrative centre, it developed into a cultural and commercial centre of the district, offering its services to all the inhabitants of the area. Under British colonial rule, the city seemed to register a better cultural and economic development than it had under the Turkish rule.

A. Cultural development

Demetris A. Michaelides of Mytilene became the first mayor of Kyrenia and served the city from 1878 to 1879. The first important work was the planting of eucalyptus trees covering marshy areas and ridding the city of the breeding-ground of germs and epidemics. Following this, a road was constructed connecting Kyrenia with Nicosia, and the port was restructured. A rich nobleman, George Ludovic Houston, who came to Cyprus at the beginning of the new occupation, was one of the benefactors of Kyrenia and generally supported the rights of the Cypriot people against the British administration. In 1880 he bought a large estate and built a beautiful and large house. The young people of the period used the private road that led to his house for their afternoon leisure walks. Since his arrival, Houston became involved in the public affairs of the city as a municipal councillor. He took an interest in the hospital of the city; he built a police station in the passage of Boghaz and the Apostle Andreas' church. Additionally he donated property to the municipality. In many occasions, he and his wife, would anonymously offer their charity in various ways, in order to help the poor.

In 1880 and 1882, the British amended the Ottoman legislation regarding local government. The dominant role in the public affairs of the city was left to the British District Commissioner appointed by the High Commissioner of Cyprus. The municipal boundaries of the city extended to an area of one mile around the castle. However, the city was unfortunate in having as the commissioner Lieutenant Andrew Scott Stevenson, an autocratic and curious man. Among other things, through various ways, and together with other British officials, he acquired antiquities which he shipped and sold overseas.

From 1879 to 1884, Cemal Bey and Hassan Fakki Effendi are reported as mayors. It seems that the British from the outset endeavoured to drive a rift between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, appointing mayors who did not represent the majority of the population of Kyrenia. In 1884 Captain Ioannis Demetriades-Kazinieris became mayor of the city. Two years after he took office, the foundations were laid for the new market and the town hall. Educated and cultured men of the time, such as Savvas Christis, a friend

of Houston, Nicolaos Katalanos, Georgios Loizides, Nicolaos Karatzas and Demetris Michaelides zealously offered their services towards the education of the youth, aiming for the improvement of their beloved city and generally for laying the spiritual foundations of the society of Kyrenia thus rendering it a spiritual centre of the district. Mayor Georgios M. Shakallis (1886-1887), assisted by the prevailing economic affluence that was based on the flourishing maritime commerce, contributed significantly to the efficient operation of the municipality. The city began to progress substantially. Finding its flourishing self again, Kyrenia became a vibrant and progressive city. It acquired a new school building, charitable, artistic and athletic societies were formed, and in 1891 the first hospital was established; this was expanded in 1893 and later it was improved through private donations. In 1894 an evening school was established by the teacher Kyrillos Pavlides and the brothers Nicolaos and Costas Caratzas, offering knowledge to the working class.

In 1898 the British Commissioner of the district J. Tankerville Chamberlayne used convicts imprisoned in the castle of Kyrenia for excavations, bringing to light important finds. Kyrillos Pavlides, publisher of the newspaper "Phoni tis Kyprou" (Voice of Cyprus) played a leading role in the formation of a Teachers Association for the intellectual upgrading of Cypriot society and for the teachers' profession. During the same year, Georgios Stavrides published the satirical newspaper "O Rayias" and a year later the savings bank "Kyrenia" was established. In 1900 the reading society "I Proodos tou Laou" (Progress of the People) was established and was presided over by the lawyer Georgios Loizides, who founded a new night school. Nicolaos Caratzas disseminated knowledge and enlightened people who were interested in learning. During the same period the city experienced the dispute for the Archbishopric throne between its Bishop Kyrillos Vasiliou and the Bishop of Kition Kyrillos Papadopoulos. The Diocese of Kyrenia was the traditional centre of the unwavering demand for enosis (union with Greece), with the exception of the years 1895 – 1916, during the episcopacy of Kyrillos Vassiliou, when a milder approach was adopted. In 1906 the reading societies "Paligenesia" (national rebirth) and "Evangelismos" were founded in the city. At the time a Turkish school, a Greek school for boys with two teachers and a Greek school for girls with two female teachers, also operated.



Bishopric of Kyrenia. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



Entrance of the high school of Kyrenia.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

Christodoulos Phieros, a merchant and money lender, was the mayor of Kyrenia from 1907 to 1962, with a small intermission from 1935 to 1943. His long term in office allowed for the commencement and completion of basic infrastructure works. The streets were repaired, street lighting was installed, refuse collection was organised, and municipal baths were erected on the beach. In 1907 Chamberlayne, the District Commissioner, himself a Roman Catholic, erected the Roman Catholic church of Santa Elizabeth of Hungary. In the 1910's the first Cypriot university degree holders, from universities in Athens, Beirut and France, returned home and embarked

on several activities mainly in the “Laiko Kentro” (Popular Centre), which included a library, a mandolin orchestra, a theatrical and an athletic branch. Many cultural societies were formed, cultural clubs were established such as the “Armonia” (Harmony), with a diverse cultural activity, the “Severion” Elementary School (1912) and the Greek High School of Kyrenia. In 1916, when Makarios Myriantheas was elected Bishop of Kyrenia, a Bishopric Palace was built in Kyrenia (1922) and the seat of the Diocese was transferred from Agios Panteleimon. The formation of the Athletic Society “Praxandros” in 1918 that played an important role in the athletic progress of the area, was also his idea. In 1928 an electricity power generator was purchased and electric lighting was secured for streets and homes. By filling in part of the port in the west, the new quay promenade was formed, where the Kyrenians took their afternoon leisure walks. In 1926 a group of young people founded the Society of “Enosi Neon” (Union of Young People). During its short life (it was disbanded by the colonial government after the October events in 1931), the union organised many activities: it took part in the first football tournaments, it organised lectures and excursions, it produced theatrical plays and undertook the organisation of the Kataklysmos activities.

When, after the treaty of Lausanne (1923) it became evident that Great Britain intended to keep Cyprus under colonial rule, the Bishop of Kyrenia declared an unrelenting struggle against British occupation. In 1929 the National Radical Union of Cyprus was established, with the aim to resist British colonial rule. In 1931 Kyrenians revolted along with the rest of the Cypriots. After the morning service at the church of Archangelos Michael, Kyrenians under the guidance of Bishop Myriantheas marched to the Commissioner's Office where they lowered the British flag and hoisted the Greek flag. Then they gathered in the square in front of the Bishopric palace. The British used armed force, subdued the revolt, exiled the Bishop for 15 years and imposed oppressive measures. In the period 1934 – 1935, Niove Demetriadou – Phrangou founded the English school and played an important role in the educational matters of Kyrenia. Education was immensely served by bright professional educators and teachers of the Kyrenia Gymnasium such as Nicos Kranidiotis, Frixos Vrachas, Costas Prousis, Kyriakos Hadjioannou, Cleanthis Georgiades, Christos and Froso Mourouzi and many others.

Greece's heroic participation against fascism in World War II

inspired many Cypriots who joined the Cyprus Volunteers Regiment and took part in the fighting on the Albanian front. The relaxation of the strict colonial measures, because of the war, resulted in the intensification of political life in Kyrenia. Associations with political orientations started to spring up, such as the Kyrenia Gymnasium Graduates' Association (SANG) in 1943, and the Kyrenia Athletic Society in 1945 that contributed to culture and sports. During this period, the Secretary of the Bishopric, Polycarpus Ioannides published the newspaper "Kyrenia," after the prohibition of the publication of a previous one, "Ephimeris" (Newspaper). In 1945 the castle was turned into a police academy. In 1946 the Bishop of Kyrenia Makarios Myriantheas returned from Greece, and in 1947 he was elected Archbishop of Cyprus. From his election until his death, he devoted himself to the anti-colonial campaign. The peak of this campaign was the Plebiscite for Enosis (Union with Greece) in 1950, thus paving the ground for the liberation struggle of E.O.K.A. 1955 – 1959. On the outbreak of the anti-colonial struggle, Kyrenia castle was turned into a prison. Sixteen prisoners, among them the hero Marcos Drakos, escaped from this prison. Gregoris Afxentiou and Kyriakos Matsis were some other outstanding figures who operated underground in the area of Kyrenia.

After the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (1960), the intercommunal conflict, induced by the British rule, did not impede the cultural development of the people of Kyrenia. On the 2nd of December 1964 Mr. Stelios Katsellis was



Scene from a protest against the closing of the road leading to Nicosia by the Turks during the 1963 crisis. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

appointed mayor of Kyrenia. The city livened up again after the problems created by the Turkish insurrection in 1963. Intellectual people such as Nicos Liverdos, Christos Mourouzis, Demetra Tsoudi, Tefkros Chimonas, Michalis Louloupis, Athanasios Meremetis and others, substantially contributed to the progress of the society of Kyrenia. In 1965 Andreas Cariolou, a scuba diving instructor and municipal councillor, discovered the shipwreck of an ancient Greek vessel at the bottom of the sea opposite the Chrysocava area of Kyrenia. The seabed site was excavated and the hull and cargo of the vessel raised to the surface by a group of marine archaeologists and divers, headed by the American underwater



Left: Museum of Folklore Art of Kyrenia before its destruction by the Turkish invaders. Right: President of the Republic of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios III and the President of the Folklore Association Mr. Nicos Chiotellis, during the inauguration of the Flower Show, May 1, 1971. The show also included works of folklore art. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



Scene from the Flower Show before the Turkish invasion of 1974. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



'Ifigenia en Avlidi', play performed by the high school of Kyrenia in the Katselli Theatre, 1953.

Photo: Faedra Hadjigeorgiou

archaeologist Michael Katzev. The ship was reassembled, preserved and exhibited, in the castle, together with all its cargo, amphorae and paraphernalia. The ancient boat of Kyrenia is, up to present time (2012), the oldest vessel in the world with more than 50% of its ancient hull in an excellent state of preservation. The special room in the castle where it was placed attracted the interest of local and foreign visitors.

Cultural activities were greatly boosted by the formation of the Folklore Society of Kyrenia (1966). In 1970 the new town hall was erected in the heart of the city with funds donated by Zena Gunther. It included a geological museum, an art gallery and a library. It also had large halls for exhibitions and hosted other cultural events on the ground floor. It also included spacious offices on the first floor. Also a Folk Art Museum was established, in a traditional house next to

“Trypiti,” donated by Lady Lock. The municipality’s property was also properly and effectively utilised. In the place of the ex municipal library, a small block of flats was built. The large mansion house of judge Th. Mitzi, in Pano Kyrenia, was demolished and another block of flats was erected, whilst tennis courts were built in the area. A small distance away, a nursery was established for the benefit of working mothers. The problem of the city's water supply was also solved by drilling two boreholes on the mountain. Provision was also made for the asphaltting and lighting of all the streets.

The municipality continued to strengthen and promote cultural activities, a large part of which were undertaken voluntarily by the Kyrenia Folklore Society that was housed in an underground hall of the municipality building. In its two large ground floor halls, art exhibitions were organised and local and foreign music groups were hosted. There was a permanent bookshop of Cyprus publications. Every year a children's carnival and parade were organised. At the suggestion of the municipality, the Kyrenia Folklore Society undertook to organise, every spring, a Flower Festival. This started in 1967 and it was unique in its kind, attracting visitors from Cyprus and abroad.

In the Castle, theatrical plays and dance performances were staged; concerts as well as a variety of other artistic activities were held. In a coastal city like Kyrenia, sailing regattas were also organised, whilst the Kataklysmos fair was a sight to behold. At the turn of the century, this traditional festivity had been undertaken by the municipality. Later on, it was undertaken by various societies of the city, returning again under the wing of the municipality that undertook the coordination of activities. Among other participants it included dance groups that performed traditional Cyprus dances, ordinary people skilfully playing characteristic tunes of the countryside on their reed flutes, and folk poets who competed in couplet improvised poetic banter and witty teasing. On that day, the people lived and danced in the carefree traditional rhythms and tasted the traditional products of the rural areas of the district, by the side of the beloved sea of Kyrenia.

Many traditions, habits and customs survived in Kyrenia, as in the whole of Cyprus; these were connected with important holidays (Christmas, Easter, holidays in honour of Panagia (mother of Christ) and other saints, with important events in human life (birth, marriage, death, family, people’s everyday



The port of Kyrenia before 1960. Photo: G. Sfoggaras

occupations etc). Many traditional functions survived throughout the centuries despite the influence of foreign people and civilisations, until the Turkish invasion and occupation. Many customs, traditional festivities, folk songs, beliefs and tales, folk art and medicine, traditional trades, habits and notions still functioned, confirming the Greek origins of the city and its inhabitants. In their daily life or in group activities the Kyrenians experienced their rich cultural heritage with great respect and love. Their conservatism and deep self knowledge, but also their progressiveness in various areas, balanced out the traditional with modern social life. The cultural development of the city was closely connected with economic development.

B. Economic development

From 1896 onward and every time the Turks embarked in genocidal activities against people of different religions in the Turkish mainland, many Armenian and Greek refugees found refuge in Kyrenia, increasing its population and, at the same time, contributing to its dynamism and progress. The cultural development of the city, however, was accompanied by many difficulties and hardships of the inhabitants, who

had to face the oppressive British policy, heavy taxation, frequent periods of drought and the global economic crisis. All these caused the emigration of young people from the district, and particularly from the city of Kyrenia, to Egypt initially and later to the United States. Notwithstanding this, the city did not cease developing and gradually it became a popular recreation destination for the inhabitants of Nicosia. The visitors stayed in various guest houses, in the Inn of Savvas Antoniadis or in hotels such as "I Orea Kerynia" (Beautiful Kyrenia) of Constantinos Georgiou, and the hotels "Victoria" and "Kypris" of Theodoulos Panayiotou. There was also the famous "Akteon" (Coast) of Petros Vrachas on the beach, built in 1906, opposite the Church of the Archangel Michael, which was the first hotel of Kyrenia with all the amenities, and in 1907 the newer hotel "Pafsilippon" of Iakovos Antoniou.

The year of 1922 was a turning point for Kyrenia. The Greco-Turkish war, which ended in the Asia Minor disaster, as well as the building of new engine-powered merchant ships, had serious repercussions on the economics of the city. Trade with othershores was no longer possible and the port was deprived of its importance. Without its main economic



'Kataklysmos' event. The competition of 'olisthiros istos' (slippery mast) in full swing. Photo: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation archive

resources, the city risked decline. During this difficult period, a Kyrenian emigrant to the United States returned to his birthplace and established, on the beach front, the first modern hotel units: the "Sea View" in 1922 and, in 1932, one year after the October events of 1931, he established the "Dome" as designed by the British architect Carol, using the church of



'Kataklysmos'. Photo: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation archive

Antiphonitis as a model. Thus, the foundations of the tourist industry were laid, which was the aim of the founder of these hotel units.

In 1924, following a bank loan, the Municipal Market and offices were built for accommodating the municipal services. Its small size spared the city of the disadvantages of large cities and made it more attractive. One or two-day excursions of young people from most parts of Cyprus were organised with exquisite and tranquil Kyrenia as their destination. The many antiquities, the picturesque harbour and generally the natural beauty and the idyllic landscape combining sea, the green valleys and the mountain, as well as the climate and the hospitality of the Kyrenians, together with the modern hotel facilities, soon attracted local and foreign tourists. Nicosians continued considering the area as the most ideal for their relaxation, whilst many foreigners chose to have their vacations there. The hotels hosted hundreds of tourists daily. Thus, Kyrenia was among the first tourist towns of Cyprus. Tourism helped the town avoid economic decline, and revived it. Tourist development contributed to filling the municipality's coffers but also allowed many people from the surrounding area to

be employed in the hotels or other establishments serving the tourists. British pensioners, who since the 1930s came to the city to settle permanently, assisted financially both the city as well as the municipality treasury. Also young people from other districts flocked into the city on organised excursions.

After independence and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, the newly- established state renovated the small Kyrenia port to offer safety for yachts and small vessels. Its original northern entrance was closed and the northern main breakwater and quay was extended up to the Roman breakwater in front of the castle. Because of outside interference resulting in the intercommunal conflict of 1963 – 1965, the Turkish Cypriot insurrection against the legitimate state isolated the city from the capital, and its economic growth was suspended. Although in Kyrenia there had been no conflicts and nobody was killed, armed Turkish Cypriots occupied saint Hilarion and blocked the short Kyrenia – Nicosia road, ending free transit to and from the capital. Visits and overnight stays in Kyrenia by Nicosians and foreign tourists were reduced substantially. The Canadian contingent of U.N.F.I.CYP. made the passage possible through Gionyeli by two convoys daily. Most of the people though, preferred longer routes with more traffic but greater safety. At the same time the Turkish Cypriot leadership, forced Turkish Cypriots who lived in Lapithos village to abandon their homes and take up residence either in Kyrenia or Templos village, thus creating an artificial increase of Turkish Cypriots in the city. In 1964, the administration of mayor Stelios Catsellis contributed to the city regaining its old liveliness. The hotels filled again with tourists and the city's development moved forward at a quick pace. New building blocks and sites were offered and a building boom was observed. Irrespective of the problems created by the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community under the guidance of Ankara, all the residents of Kyrenia - Greeks, Turks, Maronites, Armenians, Latins and British - continued coexisting and cooperating peacefully and constructively, developing their city economically and raising the standard of living to a satisfactory degree. Living together, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, mainly in Pano Kyrenia, developed unique friendly relations. Differences did not impede their harmonious creative coexistence, and meanwhile imparted a multicultural dimension to the society of Kyrenia.

The economic and trade transactions among its inhabitants and with visiting tourists, as well as mutual respect between



The SCUBA diving vessel of the nautical tourism pioneer Andreas Cariolou, approaching berth.

Photo: G. Sfoggaras

ordinary people of the various ethnic and religious groups showed that the city of Kyrenia flourished and prospered. The permanent population of the city increased significantly, making it suffocate within its 1080 square hectares of its municipal boundaries. Thus, it outgrew its traditional neighbourhoods, Pano and Kato Kyrenia. It spread to the west towards the mountain, forming a new neighbourhood, the so-called "California". It had almost joined with the villages of Themia and Karakoumi to the east. To the west it had joined with Agios Georgios and there were thoughts of including these villages in its boundaries. This expansion created the need for a sufficient water supply, so at the beginning of 1974 work began on building a large water tank. Between



Teachers in the garden of the Severeio School of Kyrenia before 1974. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



Scene from everyday life of Kyrenia fishermen before the 1974 invasion. Photo: G. Sfoggaras

1970 and 1974 the new relatively short road to Nicosia through the villages of Klepini and Mia Milia was constructed and the city continued hosting tourists in its hotels. Up to that time, Kyrenia had 12 hotels within its boundaries and another 12 outside them. Regular public transport and private transportation helped the residents of the villages around to relocate and work in the city. Many Kyrenians went to Nicosia for work daily using the new route.

Before the Turkish invasion (1974), the percentage of the Turkish Cypriots in the whole district of Kyrenia was 13.45% and their percentage of immovable property 12%. Kyrenia's total population then was 32,586 out of whom only 4,382 were Turkish Cypriots. In the whole of the district there lived 1500 Maronites and 3000 others, mainly British pensioners. In the main Kyrenia city area, only the villages of Kazaphani and Templos included a Turkish Cypriot majority. According to the 1973 census, the total population of the city was 3,892. Despite the tense situation the city was active in all sectors and everything suggested that Kyrenia met all the economic, social and cultural conditions securing a better and more creative future.

Turkey's strategy for the region, in combination with the plans of the Cold-War super powers for the division of Cyprus, supported by the internal unrest of the Greek-Cypriot side, lay the groundwork for a gloomy future for the town of Kyrenia and Cyprus in general. Turkey formed in Cyprus the ille-

gal underground organization T.M.T, whilst later on the Greek military junta created its counter part EOKA-B. On the 15th of July 1974 the Greek junta of Athens, in cooperation with the illegal underground organization of EOKA-B, staged a coup against the elected President of the Republic of Cyprus Makarios III. Using this coup as a pretext, five days later Turkey - with the excuse of intervening in order to restore the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus as one of the three guarantor powers - commenced a merciless and indiscriminate bombardment of Kyrenia and the Kyrenia district using war planes. The Greek military junta's betrayal left the famous "Achaean coast" totally defenseless and an easy prey for the Turkish invaders as they entered the town of Kyrenia on the 22nd of July 1974. Since then life and progress have been violently frozen in the town and district of Kyrenia.

III. KYRENIA MUNICIPALITY AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

The landing of the Turkish army at Pente Mili on the 20th of July 1974 resulted in the occupation of part of the Kyrenia district, which was completed during the second phase of operation "Attila" in August 1974. Since then it is the only district of Cyprus that, as a whole, remains under Turkish occupation. The small unit of the Cyprus navy based at the castle was put out of action during the first days of the invasion. Its two torpedo gunboats were sunk. On the 22nd of July Turkish troops occupied the city of Kyrenia. Breaking the ceasefire agreement, they occupied other areas as well, aiming at creating a purely Turkish enclave in the whole area of the district.

It is a fact that the perpetrators of the military coup were overthrown and democracy was restored within a week, Ankara- taking advantage of the inaction of the international community and its failure to intervene dynamically in order to stop the invasion - went even further. Contravening even the commands of the super-powers and the United Nations Security Council, put into effect the "Attila 2" operation by occupying 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, even as the Geneva peace talks were ongoing. The primary aim was the creation of a Turkish canton, in the Kyrenia district, as provided for in the Turkish plans prior to 1974. The Turkish attitude during and after the invasion confirmed earlier fears of the Greek Cypriots regarding Ankara's



UN soldiers providing the refugees with food supplies at the Dome Hotel Kyrenia.

Photo: Jonathan Blair



Kyrenians seeking refuge in Dome hotel during the invasion.

Photo: Jonathan Blair



Captives, including many Kyrenians at the Adana, Amasia and Antiyama prisons in Turkey. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

real plans for the island. Since the Turkish invasion and occupation, the course of a civilisation and its creators in the occupied lands has been brutally interrupted. The inhabitants of the city and district of Kyrenia were the first to be uprooted, leaving behind them a history to be distorted and a civilisation to be destroyed thoughtlessly by the modern Attila, under the guilty tolerance of the international community.

A. Kyrenians, the first victims of the Turkish onslaught

The Turks embarked on widespread killing of Kyrenians so as to drive them away. Under strafing and bombing by Turkish military planes, Kyrenians fled finding refuge in underground quarters for protection. Three days after the invasion, the Turks violated the ceasefire agreement, and their troops entered the city. They pillaged houses, took prisoners,

murdered and tortured civilians and raped indiscriminately. Confronted by these atrocities the inhabitants of the city were forced to abandon their movable and immovable properties, in order to save themselves. The Turks loaded onto ships and transported to Turkey the belongings of the local population: cars, refrigerators, washing machines and anything else that could be moved. In order to save their lives over 600 Kyrenians took refuge in the DOME hotel which was guarded by a small group of British soldiers serving in U.N.F.I.CYP. However, at one point the British yielded and handed over to the Turkish army more than 100 civilians purportedly for identification purposes at the Kyrenia Police Station promising their safe return to the DOME. The Turks, on the contrary, forced them onto ships as hostages, and transported them to prisons in Adana, Amasia and Antiyama in Turkey. The rest of them remained hostage in the DOME (400 beds). The Turkish army transported hostages, among them many

Kyrenians, to Saint Hilarion and elsewhere, where they executed them in cold blood, burying them haphazardly in group graves. The displaced Kyrenians left for the free areas, with only the clothes on their backs, without knowing where they were headed and how long for.

The fleeing Kyrenians, women, children and old people, with desperation etched on their faces, had to walk by the dead bodies in the streets, and reached the closest areas that still remained free, carrying their terrible experiences with them. They had their first bitter taste of what it means to



Kyrenia property being sold illegally – Photo taken after the invasion.

Photo: G. Sfoggaras

be a refugee. They received the first assistance for lodging, water, food, care and support, by their compatriots who, later on, met with the same fate in the face of the advancing Turkish invading army.

The advance of the Turkish army forced them again to flee along with many other displaced persons, moving farther away from their homes and property. They spent days and nights out in the open, until they were given tents, in which they lived for a long time in camps, and after that in settlements, which were put up for this purpose, in the hope that this would be a temporary arrangement. Unfortunately, they are still away from their beloved city living in uncertainty, and suffering a new unbearable blow, seeing Turkish settlers taking their place, usurping their properties that they had acquired by working all their lives. Turkey, which brought in a number of settlers, shares out to them the properties of

the expelled native residents and allows Turkish businessmen to take advantage of their properties, to build on their land and sell houses and flats to Europeans and other nationalities, despite rulings by the European Court of Human Rights condemning these practices.

Turkey and the occupation regime primarily aim to completely Turkify the city, as well as all the occupied areas. For this reason, apart from the organised international crime of occupying and settling the city and district of Kyrenia, they engaged in a frenzied cultural genocide.

B. The city of Kyrenia without its legitimate residents

After the displacement of the native residents of the city and district of Kyrenia and their replacement by Turkish settlers and Turkish Cypriots, Turkey and the occupation regime embarked on another crime, the international crime of cultural genocide. Houses, churches, public buildings and schools have been pillaged and destroyed or have been taken over by the Turkish occupiers. The occupation regime, through foreign exchange facilities and lax housing regulations, allows the illegal sale and exploitation of Greek Cypriot properties. The once picturesque beachfront of the city has been littered with ungraceful cement hotels, and the area is full of casinos concealing the harmony of the architectural beauty of the castle and the grace of the old storehouses. The uprooting of centuries old trees (olives, carobs, cypresses) for the purpose of constructing roads, dividing building sites and the vulgar disorderly housing development, offend the environment and is at odds with the urban planning of the town.

The fundamental Turkish aim is the complete Turkification of these areas, the eradication of any element that would connect them to the past and consequently with their local inhabitants. The Turkish Cypriots have not been spared, because they have lived with Greek Cypriots and can make comparisons; many of them oppose the present situation. In a way, their mentality is part of the culture of the city and, therefore, of the local residents. Their Kyrenian mentality is in constant clash with the mentality of the settlers and the Turkish policy, and this is why they are targeted by the occupiers. Many of them have been forced to flee overseas or to the free part of the Republic of Cyprus, where the mentality is closer to their own; they feel more secure, and their rights are respected.

The invaders, however, feel embarrassed, by the material inheritance of centuries, i.e. the works of the local inhabitants of occupied areas, which they sell overseas or give away to those who approve their policy. When it is not in their interest to destroy them, as they are profit-making, such as archaeological sites, they claim them as their own, presenting them to the unaware as products of the Turkish civilisation. Otherwise they change them giving them a false appearance, as is the case of Christian churches. Others are left to the ravages of time or used for vulgar purposes without any respect for what is sacred for the Greeks and other Christians. A few examples of this:

The Geological and Folk Museum, the Gallery, the Library, the church, the school and the private collections of books, ancient articles and artefacts, have suffered unprecedented plundering and destruction. The collection of Byzantine icons, manuscripts of the Middle Ages, ancient manuscripts and wooden icon screens that had been collected in the Kyrenia Bishopric Palace, are missing since 1974. Thousands of other archaeological finds, church items, manuscripts, ancient manuscripts and works of art have been pillaged by the invaders; their fate is unknown since then. Many of these have ended up in collections overseas. The Republic of Cyprus and the Church of Cyprus, but ordinary citizens as well, are trying to locate and repatriate the stolen cultural heritage of Kyrenia, and the occupied areas of Cyprus generally, which is dispersed all over the world, as are the Cypriot refugees.

For many years now, the Turkish occupation authorities do not allow even experts of the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus to visit the famous world-wide Kyrenia shipwreck and conserve it, the result being that its fragile material is at great risk of destruction. Thus, the formerly best-preserved ancient wreckage in the world (50% of its wooden hull has been re-assembled at an excellent state of preservation) lies unprotected in the castle of the occupied city. The occupation regime does not seem to pay the required attention to the matter. The ship is an additional indisputable testimony of the age-old ties of Kyrenia with ancient Greece. This is why the Kyrenians have turned it into a symbol of hope and return to their city and district.

It is also impossible to approach the necropolises and cemeteries situated to the west of the castle. The area has been fenced off by the Turkish army that does not allow their protection and preservation. The same situation exists in



Kyrenia, Roman Tombs.

Photo: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive

the ancient quarry and the early Christian cemetery in Chrysokava, east of the castle. This has also been fenced off by the Turkish occupation army, turning it into a military camp and rendering access to the archaeological remnants of the area impossible. The church of the Archangel Michael in Kato Kyrenia, after it had been pillaged, has been turned by the occupation regime into a so-called icons museum for profit making. Works of art from only the last century are exhibited there. The Middle Ages icons of Kyrenia have disappeared. Because of their high value they have been channelled to the international market by illicit dealers in antiquities, while the occupation regime tolerated or even assisted this. The occupation regime did not take any care of the archaeological sites around and under the church of the Archangel Michael, with the burial caves of the Helleno-Roman period, which was used by the Christians later. They have been turned into parkinglots. In the centre of Kyrenia, the church of Panagia Chrysopolitissa, probably built on the ruins of an older church, has also been desecrated and looted; its roof has collapsed, as has the four-pillared church of Agios Georgios in the Kyrenia castle. Under the Turkish prohibition on the Kyrenians to be buried in their age-old cemetery, the latter has been trampled upon. The graves, the crosses and the excellent marble busts of the buried Kyrenians have been smashed to pieces, while the cemetery chapel of Agios Gregorios is used now as a store room for agricultural implements. The destruction frenzy has also struck the Anglican church of Saint Andrew together with the British cemetery.



Church of Agia Barbara: before and after. Photographs: international archive of Religion and Culture of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos and the Byzantine museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive



Frescoes, Chrysokava location.

Photographs: international archive of Religion and Culture of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos and the Byzantine museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive



Panagia Chrysopolitissa after 1974.

Photographs: international archive of Religion and Culture of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos and the Byzantine museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive



Pillage of cemeteries. Photo: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive



Vandalism at Kyrenia Cemetery.

Photo: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation archive

The same situation prevails in the wider area. More examples: the carved tombs of the early Copper Age, in the “Vouni” area (Bella Pais) and in Vasilia (2300 – 1900 B.C.), the pre-historic cemetery of the Middle Copper Age at “Palialona” in Karmi village (1900 – 1650 b.C.), the ancient cemeteries of the Late Copper Age, discovered at Kazaphani and are found dispersed from the location “Lapatsa” up to the beach, the 13th B.C. temple with horns of high credence at the location “Pigades” in Myrtou, the outdoor Temple of the 7th century B.C. discovered at Agia Ireni and others. These locations of high archaeological and historical value have been abandoned to the ravages of time, as the Turkish occupation army does not allow their upkeep and repair. Also mid – Byzantine churches such as that of Panagia Chrysotrimithiotissa at Trimithi, of Antiphonitis at Kalogrea, of Panagia Kriniotissa at Kyparissouvouno, of Agios Ioannis Chrysostomos at Koutsoventis, of Panagia Apsinthiotissa at Synchari, of Panagia Ypati at Agios Amvrosios, of Agios Pavlos at Gomaristra, of Agios Ilarionas on the peak with the same name and others as well, are at the mercy of antiquities illicit dealers, victims of the indifference and frenzy of the Turkish occupier. Almost all the monasteries of the district have been pillaged and turned into camps for the Turkish occupation army. Church and monastery icons and many frescos, having been removed from the walls, have been stolen; many of them have been located in private collections overseas. Finally, because of the prohibition imposed by the Turkish occupation regime on the repair and restoration of Christian monuments, these collapse one after the other as is the case of Panagia Melandrina and the deterioration of the condition of the frescos in Panagia Potamitissa at Kazaphani.

Phrixos P. Vrachas, one of the most important intellectuals of Kyrenia states: “. . .in Kyrenia and all the area around, the occupier makes every effort not to leave anything standing. . .Kyrenia is not what it was. It is and it will remain what it was only inside us. . .”. The Turkish occupier may wipe out every trace of Greek or Christian material culture, but cannot remove from the spirit and the souls of Kyrenians the memory, the conscience and the love for their city and district. Displaced people and refugees go on representing their city and district, their culture. They have regrouped and rallied round their municipality or other administrative authorities in the free areas of Cyprus.



The temporary Town Hall of the Kyrenia Municipality in exile, near the Ledra Palace seize – fire barricade, Nicosia. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

The Kyrenia Bishopric has undertaken the healing of the wounds and the spiritual rehabilitation of Kyrenians. The mayor and the municipal council follow developments, and they intervene and inform public opinion locally and abroad about their rights and freedoms that are being violated since 1974. Together with other organisations they maintain ties among the Kyrenians and keep alive the memory of the city and the passion for return. At the same time by various practical methods they transfer knowledge and experiences to young Kyrenians in an effort to discover means to preserve the basic material and monumental elements within the occupied city of Kyrenia.

C. Activities of the displaced municipality within Cyprus

Driven away from their ancestral homes and properties, the Kyrenians have been and are still going through many hardships having been deprived of all they had acquired through their lifetime efforts. However, they have not ceased struggling, despite having to start a new life having nothing. Despite the forced uprooting and their dispersal in the free areas of their country or in foreign countries, they constitute an active and composed community. The love for their city and district, as well as the unquenchable desire for their return, strengthen their resolve. They go on being active citizens in the temporary places where they have found hospitality, participating constructively in the political, cultural and economic life. Thus, the Kyrenians declare that they exist and struggle until the day of liberation and return. Besides, this is



The Kyrenia Bishopric in exile in Nicosia. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

dictated by 40 centuries of history and culture that their ancestors bequeathed them to safeguard.

The bishopric of Kyrenia is also one of the bonds connecting the Kyrenians. Its reestablishment and operation in the free areas of the Republic arms them with patience and strengthens their will for struggle. After the Turkish invasion and occupation of the ecclesiastical area of the diocese, for five years Bishop Gregorios and the seat of his Diocese were offered hospitality in the Kykkos Annex and, in 1979 the offices were moved to the Archbishopric. After the death of Bishop Gregorios, Pavlos Mantovanis from Larnaca was elected Bishop in 1994. In 1995 the Archbishopric leased to the diocese of Kyrenia a small building in Aglandjia, for which the diocese pays a low rent. Its offices are temporarily accommodated there with a few employees; this is also the bishop's residence, until liberation and return to the diocese seat in Kyrenia.

After the death of Bishop Pavlos in 2011, elections were held to fill the diocese throne. A Kyrenian refugee, Archimandrite Chrysostomos Kykkotis, from Lapithos' Lamaca, became the new Bishop. He is a cultured, educated man, a fighter and popular among the Kyrenians and other faithful. He has called upon all to pray for a "blessed by God return", thus proclaiming his basic target, which is his wish for this to become the common target of all Kyrenians and for them all to fight together for its realisation.

Besides, this target is the focal point of the political representatives of Kyrenia, three M.P.s of the district, the mayor of occupied Kyrenia, the municipalities of Lapithos and Karavas as well as the communities of Kyrenia's district, which work closely with the Bishopry.

The local Kyrenian Greek Cypriot voters, together with the Armenians, the Maronites and other Kyrenian citizens, exercise their voting rights on separate ballots and elect their representatives to the parliament. A number of Kyrenia M.P.s have worthily represented their community in the Cyprus House of Representatives. Among them, Rina Katselli holds an outstanding place having been the first woman to become an M.P. From 1981 to 1996 she defended courageously the interests of Kyrenia, and all displaced persons in general, while she took the initiative and played a leading role on many other issues, paying particular attention to the protection of our cultural heritage.

The displaced Kyrenians have rallied mainly round their displaced municipality. Mayors by appointment included Stelios Katsellis (1964 – 1988), Georgios Tsimon (1978 – 1988), Costas Constantinou, Georgios Chrysochos, Krinos Elisseou, and Constantinos Orologas (1988 – 1992), Elli Leptou (1992 – 2001). Later on, the following were elected to the office of mayor: Constantinos Orologas (2002 – 2006), Maria Ioannou (2007 – 2011) and Glafkos Cariolou (2012 – 2016), the son of Andreas Cariolou; the man who discovered the ancient shipwreck of Kyrenia. The municipality is temporarily housed in a building allotted by the Government, near the ceasefire line and close to the Ledra Palace in Nicosia. The main aim of the displaced municipality within Cyprus is the return to Kyrenia, the preservation of the identity and entity of Kyrenians, as well as the unity and cooperation among them in all sectors. In achieving this target the municipality pursues a policy of frequent contacts and creation of meeting places for Kyrenians, reaching out to young Kyrenians, involving them in voluntary activities, the application of EU programmes and the activation of athletic societies. The mayor and the municipal council have established various coordinating activities, which constitute the linchpin that keeps the Kyrenians united. In cooperation with various societies, groups and clubs they successfully maintain the local traditions, habits and customs of their city. The municipality shelters and supports the Folklore Society of

Kyrenia, which is under its auspices. The Society that was founded in 1966 has offered a lot to the city of Kyrenia. After the Turkish invasion it has focused on studies and publications relating to the culture, the manners and customs and the history of Kyrenia. The Football Athletic Union of Kyrenia, which after the invasion was expanded to include the district as well, the reactivated (in 1982) Kyrenia Nautical Club, the Society of Olympic Gymnastics "Pentadaktylos" founded in 1979, the School Supervisory Board, the Choir "Phoni tis Kerynias" the Kyrenia Chrysocava Cultural Foundation (owner of the experimental vessel of KYRENIA-LIBERTY), with many others, make up the organised groups of the city. In 1986, the Greek Institute of Nautical/Marine Tradition, in cooperation with the Kyrenia Nautical Club built an exact replica of the ancient wreckage found in the waters off Kyrenia. The "Kyrenia II" repeated the sea voyage Samos – Kos – Rhodes – Cyprus, with members of the Kyrenia Nautical Club among its crew. In this way Kyrenians disseminated the message that they can regenerate the centuries material civilisation, which Turkey and its subordinate occupation regime are trying to obliterate, and that they still exist so as to demand what they have been deprived of by force.

Between 2006 and 2010 the municipality organised a children's



Experimental ship replica of the ancient ship of Kyrenia "KYRENIA LIBERTY". Photo: Glafkos Cariolou archive



Choir 'Voice of Kyrenia' during a municipality event in 2011.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

dance group and a children's choir. Also every year it organises competitions that strengthen sportsmanship among the young people, keeping them in touch with progress and culture: a pancyprian competition on essay writing among elementary school pupils, a pancyprian competition of painting among high-school students and a pancyprian competition

in essay writing among senior high-school and private school students. Established activities of the displaced municipality are: the Exhibition of Kyrenia Artists, reunion cruises, children's camping, the pensioners excursion, the get-together and lunch every Easter Monday, the Three Hierarchs holiday, "Letters Day," the vespers of Panagia Glykiotissa, the vespers of the Archangel Michael, patron saint of Kyrenia, the Kyrenia annual symposium attended by academics and intellectuals with studies and research regarding Kyrenia, as well as a series of programmes aimed at creating experiences of return in young Kyrenians under the title "Kyrenia Repatriation".

In an interview the new Mayor of Kyrenia, Glafkos Cariolou pointed out, among others, that the descendants of the displaced Kyrenians must know the history of Kyrenia, the streets, the monuments, the churches, the major mountain characteristics and generally the geography, the geology, the flora and fauna of Kyrenia and, through systematic education and exploratory trips to Kyrenia itself, to acquaint themselves with the place and the exact location of their properties, so that they can at any moment return and claim these as a group, or as individuals. He promised that the municipality will help its citizens secure the relevant data, so that they maintain ties with their land, but also keep alive the tradition and customs of their city, that



Protest event during remembrance day for the capture of Kyrenia on July 22nd 1974. Transport of flame from the temporary town hall to the Makedonitissa tombs. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

will keep them united until their return.

Within Cyprus the mayor and the municipal Council together with organised groups and societies work collectively. In a spirit of solidarity and cooperation they strive toward their final just cause and aspirations. They do whatever possible to keep Kyrenians united and fulfil their debt to their ancestors and descendants. They maintain the memories of their city and district; they keep lit the flame of return, and claim their fundamental human rights as well as of all the other Cypriot refugees and displaced persons. The activities of the municipality are not confined locally. The mayor and the municipal Council have contacts overseas where they raise awareness among interested parties and create constructive collaborations and ties.

D. Activities of the displaced municipality outside Cyprus

In July 1989, Titina Loizidou of Kyrenia filed an application with the European Commission of Human Rights, concerning the forfeiture of her right to the peaceful use of her property in Kyrenia. In November 1993 the case was referred to the European Court of Human Rights. By a second decision, in December 1996 (see case of Loizidou vs Turkey 40/1993/435/514) the Court upheld her fundamental right to her property. Turkey was forced to comply and paid Mrs Loizidou the amount of money decided upon by the Court for depriving her of the income from her property, which still rightfully



Offering of honorary keepsake from former mayor Constantinos Orologas to the mayor of the twinned town of Panorama, Ignatios Katentzidis in 2005. Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



Event honouring international children's day, in the gardens of the temporary town hall.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

belongs to her. Evaluating this appeal and its positive outcome the Kyrenia municipality pointed out to all, the need for legal action and the need to maintain the hope for return.

In an effort to further raise awareness and improve the dissemination of precise information regarding the Kyrenians' plight and the Turkish invasion problem beyond Cyprus, the Kyrenia municipality became an active member of the Ancient Greek Mediterranean Trading Ports Association, the Amphictyony of Twinned Cities and Areas in the Mediterranean and has twinned with Chios, Pythagorio in Samos, New Erythrea, Aegio, Skopelos, Panorama in Theassaloniki and Kyrenia of Achaia – municipality of Diakopto. Apart from these channels of communication and mutual support, the municipality set as a priority the raising of awareness overseas, by every possible means, over the violation of the rights of its citizens and the documentation of their inalienable rights of property, safe return and free movement. It also takes part in conferences of Cypriots abroad, in the International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus" (PSEKA) held every year in the USA, informing Cypriots abroad and gathering strength to continue the struggle for the vindication of its citizens and Cyprus as a whole.

The mayors of Kyrenia always express the fighting spirit of the Kyrenians in their messages. In one of her messages the former mayor of Kyrenia Maria Ioannou states: "We are still living under occupation, uprooted from our homes, driven

away from our own land, humiliated... We are not allowed to exercise our rights or our basic and fundamental freedoms as European citizens. Why do our reactions and protests remain unanswered? Let us intensify the struggle for return, let us unite under one flag and one identity, that of Kyrenia, and let us start from the beginning a new battle for claiming our homes and for our just cause..."

The spirit and the soul of Kyrenia are her people, who today are far from her. They are the town's memory and conscience. The displaced Kyrenians know what has been stolen from them, what they want and they shall claim it, until



Informational event in Brussels.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive



PSEKA Conference in USA in 2012. The mayor of Kyrenia, Mr Glafkos Cariolou, talks to students about occupied Kyrenia.

Photo: Kyrenia Municipality Archive

that great day of return, which is bound to come, because a place is defined by its people and can achieve greatness only with them. It cannot tolerate occupation. The following are messages transmitted by intellectuals and authors within and outside Cyprus. Nicos Demou writes, among other things: "...The only thing that I have been able to do when I learned about the destruction, was to write the words "I do not forget" and transmit them to the whole world. For if I forget you Cyprus, I shall diminish as a Greek, I shall be poorer as a man, I shall become smaller, I shall whither."

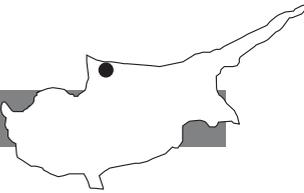
Rina Katselli, castigating the so-called modern civilised world, writes: "Alas, I know that these fundamental human rights that I enjoyed for so many thousands of years are too much for our century". Theodora Pavlidou emphasises the importance of Kyrenia, writing among other things: " No, I was not born in Kyrenia; I have nothing there, neither home nor any green orchard. However, Kyrenia is simply our boundary; the boundary of ourself and our homeland..."

The Kyrenian intellectual Phrixos P. Vrachas (1910 – 1993) sends out significant messages: "There is nothing that can dampen within us the memory and the customs of Kyrenia (...) And the love for our city and land cannot become a passive contemplation. It must continuously be worked like pain and a desire and a need for life (...) the conscience must always be there, to remember, to claim, to writhe and to enliven (...) It is the strange and unrelenting vigilance of the soul not willing to capitulate (...) Because Kyrenia was our roots and our home, our truth and our life (...) Because the homeland is one and undivided, and nothing, absolutely nothing can shred it in our soul or thoughts (...) the struggle rests with us both for Kyrenia and for our country as a whole".

Nicos I. Kranidiotis, also a Kyrenian, takes an optimistic approach, stoking the hope of Kyrenians and advising: "times change, conditions vary and nothing – within the scope of what is humanly possible – is unattainable. The only thing needed is faith, memory, readiness, vigilance and a fighting spirit. It is imperative for us to keep etched within us inextinguishable, vigilant and unassailable the memory and anticipation of a free, liberated Kyrenia".



Municipality of Lapithos



A composite vase from Vrysi of Parpa in Lapithos. (around 1800-1700 B.C.).

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive



Footed bowl from Agia Anastasia in Lapithos. 1050-950 B.C.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

Throughout the centuries the town of Lapithos has been called by many names, such as Imeroessa, Lapithea, and Lampousa. The town is located about 14 kilometres west of Kyrenia. It borders with Karavas to the east, with Vasileia to the west, Sysklipo, Agridaki and Larnaca of Lapithos to the south, whilst the seafront lies on its northern side. The ancient town is built amphitheatrically at the foot of the highest peak of Mount Pentadaktylos, which rises above the settlements. Spanning a smaller area, the modern-day town is roughly situated at the same location as its ancient counterpart.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Lapithos

Burial findings have revealed the existence of small Neolithic Age settlements dating back to 3000 B.C. while other discoveries have brought to light two settlements, of the Chalcolithic Period (3000-2500 B.C.) and the Bronze Age (2500-1900 B.C.) respectively, which included underground structures. In addition, at the 'Prostemenos' area, a tomb dating to the Geometric Period was found along with a plethora of offerings. In an era when the art of pottery flourished, ancient legends talk about Kinaras (or Kineras), son of Agrypas, who is said to have invented this craft. Ceramic furnaces found in the area demonstrate that Lapithians practised pottery since the Chalcolithic Period. Several other archaeological discoveries demonstrate that the art of pottery remained intensely popular throughout the centuries. These discoveries also prove that from 3000 to 1200 B.C. Lapithos (in the Attic dialect, or Lapathos in the Doric dialect) was established as a significant historical and trade centre, with links to Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Crete.

Lapithos was founded by Praxandros, the leader of the Laconians, who arrived in Cyprus when Achaeans settled on the island after the Trojan War (13th-12th centuries B.C.).

He was also the first king of Lapithos as well as the king of modern Milos, Thira and Western Crete.



Silver coin of the kingdom of Lapithos (415-390 B.C.).

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

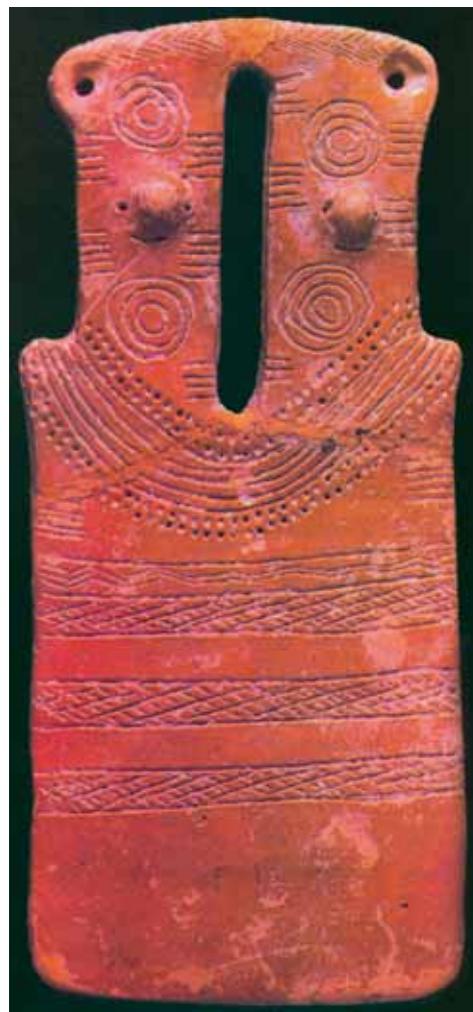
It is believed that Lapithos was named after the Lapithon mount in the west Peloponnese, which Lapithians found similar to Pentadaktylos, while the landscape reminded them of their motherland, Laconia, hence the decision to found their city at that location.

Captivated by the magnificent scenery, Alexander the Ephesian, an ancient poet, described Lapithos as “Imeroessa”, meaning beautiful and attractive; a place that arouses desire and radiates beauty (Vilou via Kition and Imeroessa Lapithos). Having a rich tradition, culture and religious worship, Lapithos was also a financially independent, progressive and prosperous kingdom, as discoveries of numerous Lapithian coins suggest. Among the many archaeological findings and carved tombs in “Parpa’s Fountain” area, the ruins of the ancient temple of Apollo are considered the most prominent. Various other artefacts and ruins discovered at Lapithos’ acropolis are also of archaeological significance, revealing the existence of the temples of Demetra and Athena.

According to Diodorus Siculus, the “Lapithian Mysteries” took place in Lapithos: a twelve day-long ceremony in honour of the gods, which was similar to the “Kavirian Mysteries”. The ceremony began with a large procession from the area around Apollo’s temple, which then headed to the peak of

mount Pentadaktylos. The “mystics” would then return to the town, and other ceremonies followed in the temples of Demetra and Athena. The mysteries concluded at the Temple of Poseidon, situated at the location of modern Lapithos, as it was believed that Poseidon would discard all evil into the sea. ‘Minallagia’ (weather prediction), nostrums, witchcraft and clairvoyance are all considered remnants of the Lapithian Mysteries.

The historian and geographer Strabo, (63 B.C. – 25 A.D.) reports that Lapithos was founded by Praxandros. He also argues that shipyards were present at Lapithos and that the city was established as a major port, which is confirmed by the explorer Scylax (second half of 6th century B.C and first half of 5th century B.C.) in the ‘Periplous’. By taking advantage of the geographical location and utilising the resources from the nearby cypress forests, the Lapithians built a fleet making their kingdom more powerful and prominent. This is also



Red polished plank-shaped human figurine from Lapithos. Clay: Copper Age.

Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive

reported by Diodorus Siculus, who notes that in the mid-4th century B.C. Lapithos was one of the wealthiest and most powerful among the ten kingdoms of Cyprus. Evidence of Lapithos' participation in the "Cities Community" of the island was found on an inscription referencing the "Common of Lapithians".

Many other notable kings succeeded Praxandros, including Pisistratus, Demonicus and Praxippos, the last king of the city. During the campaigns of Alexander the Great against the Persians, Pisistratus, together with the king of Salamis Nicocreon, and the king of Kourion Stasanoras, allied with the Macedonian king providing a fleet for the conquest of Tyre, which freed Lapithians from Persian oppression.

B. Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (294 B.C. – 364 A.D.)

Claudius Ptolemy (100-170 A.D.) defines the geographical location of Lapithos at the estuary of the Lapithian River. Conflicts that broke out among the successors of Alexander the Great eventually led to the downfall of the Kingdom of Lapithos. King Praxippos allied with Antigonos, the king of Syria, displeasing the king of Egypt, Ptolemy, who, aided by the king of Salamis Nicocreon, turned against him. As a result, Praxippos was captured and imprisoned, and the kingdom of Lapithos was destroyed. In 161 B.C. when Ptolemy the Benefactor, king of Libya and Cyrene (to the west of Egypt), was instigated by the Romans to conquer Cyprus, his brother and King of Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor sent an army to the island, forcing him to take refuge within the walls of Lapithos, where he was later besieged and eventually forced to surrender. The Ptolemies subsequently abolished the ten kingdoms of Cyprus, creating a united administration under the king of Cyprus and Egypt.

During Roman times, Cyprus was divided into four districts. Lapithos was the capital of Lapithia district until 200 A.D. In 130 A.D., when the Roman Emperor Hadrian visited Lapithos, he was declared "saviour and benefactor of the city" by the assembly and the municipality, for fighting the Jews — as did his predecessor Trajan — out of the island following the great massacre of Cypriots. An inscription dating back to the 2nd century A.D., held in the local museum of the monastery of Acheiropoietos, proves the existence of a theatre and a gym-



Map of Cyprus from the Roman period, referring to the region of Lapithos as 'Lapithia'.

Photo: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

nasium. Furthermore, the city had a port, shipyards and was surrounded by fortifications. Apostle Barnabas describes how during his second journey to the island with Marcus he had to stay outside the city walls as they were refused entry by the locals because of ceremonies and sacrifices to the gods that happened to take place at the time. The two Apostles met with Timon who was ill and was being accommodated in the city. The Apostle Paul also happened to visit Lapithos and a chapel was built in his honour on top of the "Gomaristra" hill.

Mosaics as well as a marble inscription dedicated to the Roman emperor Tiberius — believed to be part of the base of a statue placed at the square of the ancient city — were found around the area of Acheiropoietos' monastery. Together with remains of walls and a lighthouse found there, these provide evidence of a well-organised and prosperous state. From the 2nd to the 7th century A.D. Lapithos was also called "Lampousa" (bright/illuminated). Some say that this epithet came about from the city's legendary treasures, while others believe it came from the bright light of the lighthouse that illuminated the city at night.

C. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

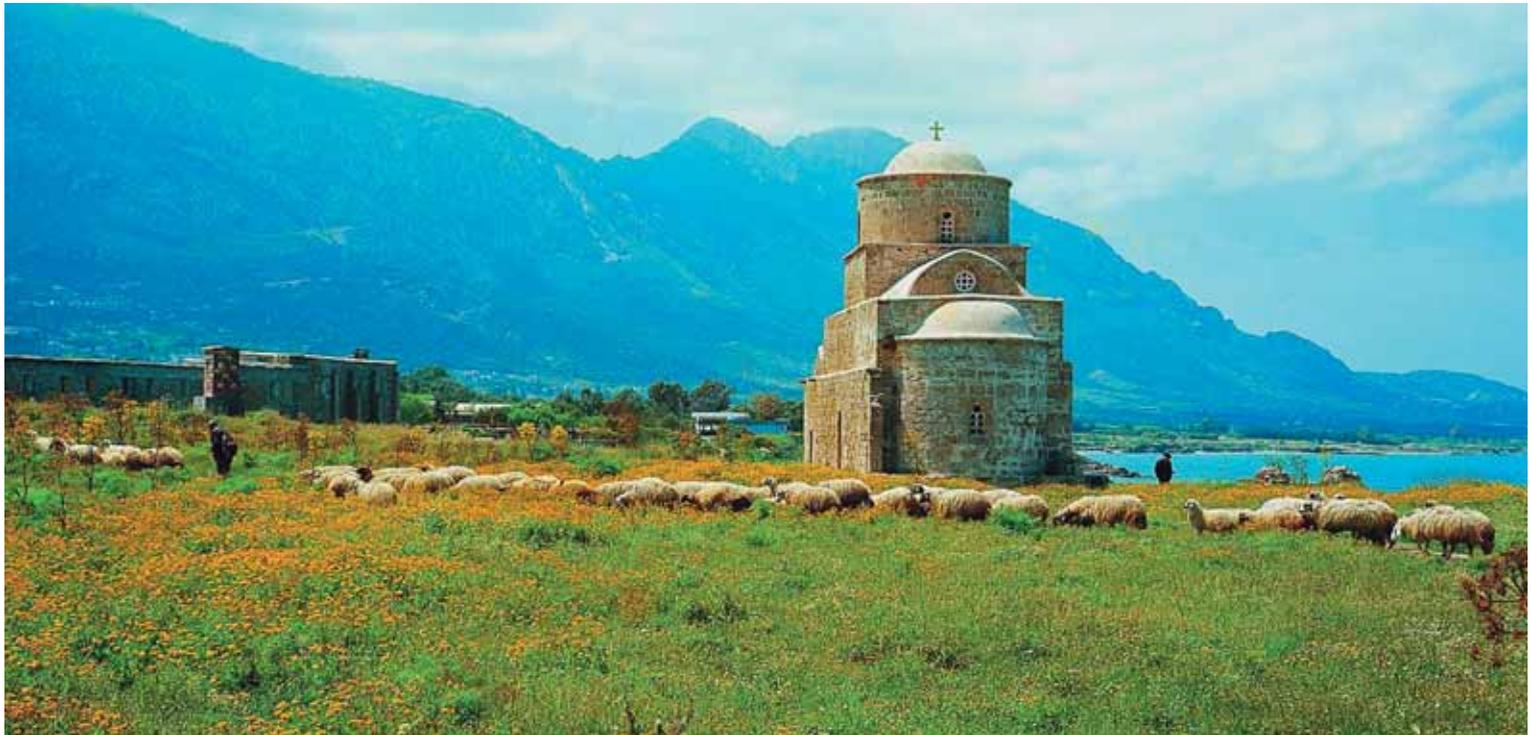
Christianity was established in the region since the early years of Byzantium. Early Christian basilicas were built, including the monastery and the five-aisled church of Mary Acheiropoietos and other early Byzantine buildings. A pre-Christian tomb carved in rock, discovered close to Acheiropoietos monastery, was used as a catacomb in the early years of Christianity and subsequently as a church devoted to Agios Evlambios, who was a victim of Christian persecution by the Roman Emperor Maximilian. According to local tradition, the monastery of Acheiropoietos was named after the Holy Shroud, brought to Cyprus by Bishop Evlalios from Edessa, Syria. It is said that the depiction of Christ on the Holy Shroud is drawn in such a way that it would have been impossible to be drawn by man; in other words it was drawn without human intervention (a-cheiro-poiitos in Greek). The Holy Shroud was stored together with the painting of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church was also dedicated. Lapithos was the seat of one of the 15 Bishops of the island. The first bishop of Lapithos was Agios Evlalios, and during his time Acheiropoietos became

the religious centre of the region. Other Lapithian bishops of the same period include Theodotos (314-324) and Didimos. Herocles (6th century A.D.) reports Lapithos to be among the 15 Byzantine Cypriot cities under consular command.

Lapithos developed into a prosperous and wealthy state because of its port, its size, its vigorous trading activities and its large marketplace. By becoming a significant trade centre, it provided wealth, cultural development and prosperity to its citizens who numbered more than 10,000 at the time. A plethora of findings—discovered close to the Acheiropoietos monastery, including golden and silver trays, necklaces and other artifacts that are now on display at the Cyprus Archaeological Museum, as well as at the London Metropolitan and New York museums—truly reflect the fact the city enjoyed great prosperity and justify the epithet “Lampousa” (meaning bright/illuminated). During the Arab raids of Cyprus (7th – 10th century A.D.), Lapithos suffered widespread destruction, which eventually led to its decline. The church of Panagia Acheiropoietos was destroyed and the residents abandoned the city seeking refuge on the mountains and



Early Christian, Byzantine church of Panagia Acheiropoietos built in the 6th century A.D. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas



The single-domed church of Agios Evlalios, built in the 12th century A.D. Photo: Takis Mourettos

inland. After the conclusion of the Byzantine Emperor Nikiphoros Fokas' campaign against the Arabs, Cyprus was liberated and people began returning to the area, building their homes close to the foot of mount Pentadaktylos in order to use the coastal area as farming lands. The church of Panagia Acheiropietos was rebuilt, having only three aisles this time, and at a short distance to the east the Byzantine church of Agios Evlalios was built in honour of Lapithos' first bishop. (Note: the church of Acheiropietos and the church of Agios Evlalios are also mentioned in the section about the municipality of Karavas, since both of the aforementioned religious monuments lie on the municipal borders between Karavas and Lapithos).

D. Frankish and Venetian periods (1192-1571)

As had also been the case in earlier periods, during Frankish rule (1192-1489) Lapithos had a larger population than Famagusta, Limassol and Paphos. It was a fiefdom of Clarion (or Charles) de Lusignan called "Le Field de la Pison," which was later confiscated by King James in 1464. A recorded incident links Lapithos to the civil war between Queen Charlotte and her illegitimate brother James; during the siege

of the fort of Kyrenia in 1461, Viscount Hector Kevides was leading a convoy carrying food from Lapithos, but he was captured and killed by James' men. The city was built around the monastery of Acheiropietos which was the religious centre, and hosted "Greek monks," whilst a Frankish church was also built closer to the seafront. The diocese of Lapithos was abolished by a papal edict in 1222 and was subordinated to the Archbishopric of Nicosia, to which it paid taxes from 1196 onward.

Many historians regard the era between the Frankish and the Byzantine periods as the "Golden Age" of Lapithos. Various historical sources indicate great progress in literature and science and refer to some distinguished people, including Gregorios the Cypriot, who was ordained as the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople in 1283, and Georgios Lapithis (14th century), an exceptional scholar who also served as an imperial advisor. The city returned to prosperity and experienced growth in areas such as trade, literature, the sciences, folk art (especially in "smeared" pottery, called Byzantine pottery, lacing and embroidery) and in innovative (for the time) agricultural crops (citrus, cotton, linen, etc). Lapithos was famous for the extensive cultivation of sugar, as well as of



**Left: Byzantine painted glass dated to the 14th century A.D.
Right: Processed silk threads.**

Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive



Byzantine Christian church dedicated to Agios Ioannis Theologos, built in the 12th century A.D. In the 16th century it was converted into a mosque. It is situated in the town centre.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

fruits, madder and silk which was exported in large quantities. A great variety of feral and domesticated plants and flowers flourished in the area, including jasmine, cyclamen and the distinctive "Orchid of Lapithos".

During the Venetian era (1489-1571), an army camp was built in Lapithos manned by 300 soldiers. Earthquakes, fires and pirate raids weakened the city and led to a period of decline as the inhabitants were forced to abandon Lapithos. They fled to other areas where they created new settlements such as modern-day Lapithos, Karavas and other villages, away from the seafront, where the ground was solid and safer from pirate attacks.

E. Ottoman occupation (1572-1878)

When the Ottomans invaded Cyprus in 1571, Zaneto Dandolo led the Lapithian army. He died during the siege of Nicosia. The Ottoman occupation brought new troubles to the locals. The once-thriving Lapithos lost its glitter and began to decline, while all progress and development ceased. Its wealth diminished as Lapithos was forced to hand over part of its income plus one piaster per year for the upkeep of the Janissaries. The same fate was shared by fifteen other towns. Attracted by the fertile soil, the Ottomans started to seize properties and to settle in the land of Greeks and other Christians, and in this way Turkish populations started to appear in Lapithos, including Christians who became Muslims in order to avoid torture, heavy taxation and confiscation of their land. At the same time two Christian Orthodox churches, of Agios Georgios and Agios Ioannis, were converted into mosques. During the Greek revolution (1821), admiral Constantinos Kanaris secretly arrived in Lapithos. After concluding some meetings with the locals, he sailed from the Asprovisis port carrying supplies and volunteers to fight against the Ottomans alongside the Greeks in the Greek mainland. However, the Ottoman Turks learned of this incident, and responded with killings, beheadings and confiscations of properties of noteworthy Christians in the area. In 1855, in an effort to preserve their language and provide their children with basic education, Lapithians founded the first primary school in the community of Agia Paraskevi. Andreas Sava, who was brought up in the aforementioned community,



The fountain-head Lapithos (Voda) today.

Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive



Monument of the Heroes of the Greek revolution of 1821 (detail). Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

became the first teacher and was subsidised by the church of Agia Paraskevi and the neighbouring church of Agia Anastasia. In 1860 another school was founded in the monastery of Acheiropoietos, having the local bishop as the school teacher. The school, however, closed down three years later, as residents founded a new school that opened in Karavas and one in Agia Paraskevi which were more convenient, as they were located closer to urban areas.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

In 1878 British rule succeeded the Ottoman era, and Lapithos, as with the rest of Cyprus, became a British colony. Rapid population growth created further organisational needs that eventually led to improvement of local administration. Lapithos was one of the first communities that became a municipality, when the new occupying power started organising the island's administration. Andreas Koumides, the

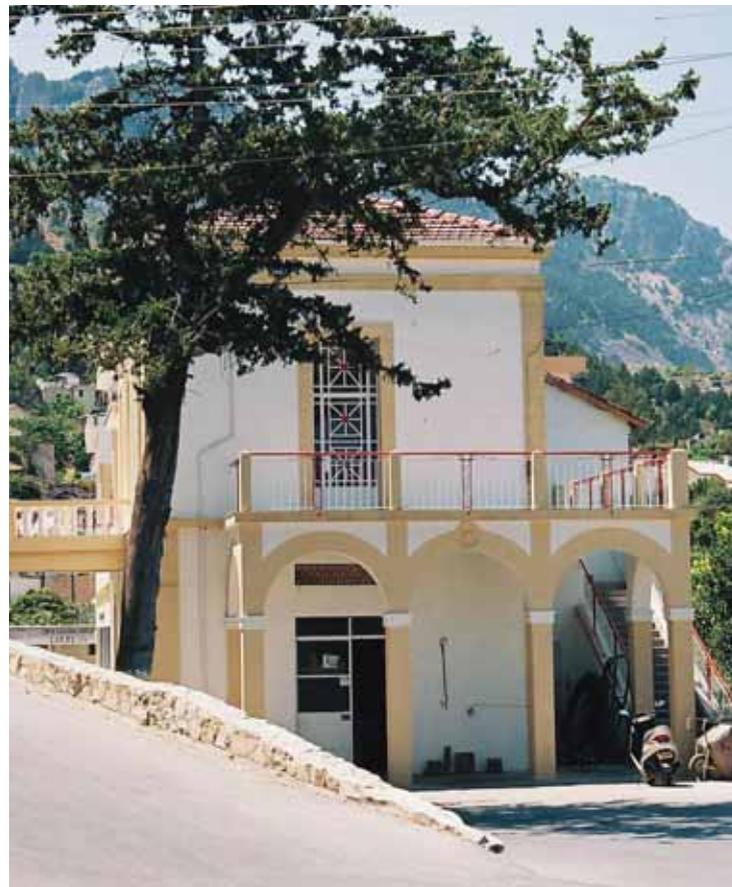
first elected mayor of Lapithos, as well as his equally capable successors, helped the town re-establish itself, its residents free from fear and introversion that came with the Ottoman repression. Activity slowly started to resume in the town as it gradually regained its old prosperity and reputation from the Lampousa period. By creating new infrastructure and utilising available services, Lapithos became a beautiful and well-organised community, promoting cultural and economic development and improving the standard of living for its residents.

A. Cultural Development

Being culturally closer to the British rather than to the Ottomans, the peaceful and progressive Lapithians felt liberated. They started acquiring new skills, becoming literate and developing their culture. The Town Hall was built in 1923, while other infrastructure and services were created in order to



Monument of the Heroes of the liberation struggle of 1955-1959. Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive.



The occupied Town Hall of Lapithos, to the west of Plateia Iroon (Heroes Square). Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

better serve the public. The municipality had public toilets, a fire station, a police station as of 1946, a telephone centre as of 1948 that provided new services for the time, a post office in 1950, and a hospital in 1963 that served the local region. There was also a tax collection service, a health service, a garbage collection service, a building plan permit service, and a street naming and sign placement service. Many important infrastructure works that took place until 1974 included asphalt laying, road lighting installations, and expansion and maintenance of road networks. Other than the traditional spring water fountains, the municipality also installed fountains in central locations linked to the water supply network that provided drinking water to the residents until 1960 when water plumbing was installed in every household. A municipal abattoir was created for supplying fresh meat to the residents and in 1935 a municipal market opened in a spacious area on the ground floor of the Town Hall. During the tenure of Mayor Phedias Paraskevaides, the zoo and

public gardens opened, which included various trees, flowers, lakes, benches and lighting and was considered pioneering for the time. Furthermore, the municipality funded the construction of the town square, which was named "Plateia Iroon" (heroes' square), a marble monument in honour of national heroes of the armed struggle of 1955-1959 erected on the rocks of the ancient Acropolis "castle," next to an older monument devoted to the heroes of the Greek revolution of 1821. The Lapithians have always felt proud of their two national heroes Kyriakos Matsis and Gregoris Afxentiou, who both served as regional commanders in the area, while the latter secretly married in the convent of Acheiropoietos.

In order to promote education among young people, the municipality created the "Lapthos Communal Library" in 1962 that offered book lending, stimulating socio-cultural development. Up until 1974, the library contained around 1,000 selected, and occasionally rare, volumes. Moreover, primary schools and a communal nursery opened, the latter



The entrance of the First Urban School of Lapithos.

Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive



Group of students participating in the Flower Show.

Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive

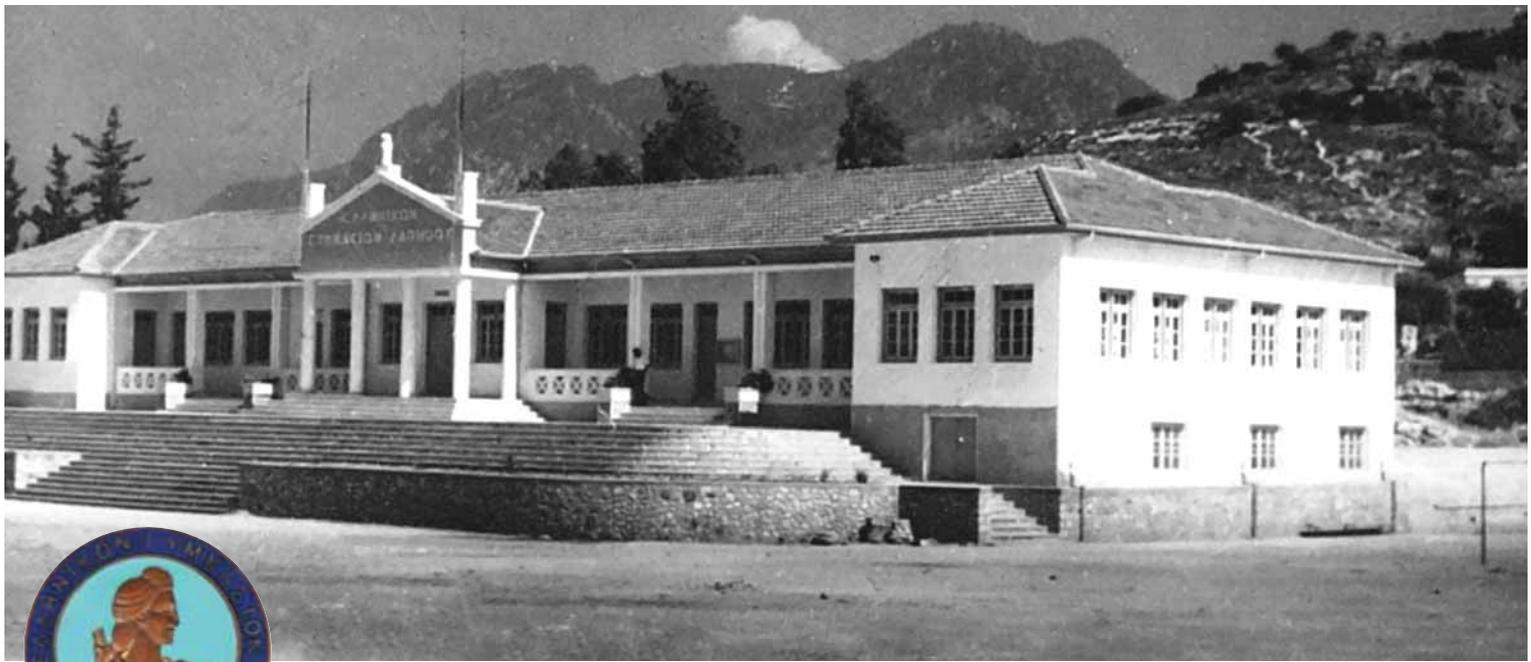
of which was fully equipped and included a school bus with an attendant to service children who lived in distant areas. Toward the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, two elementary schools for boys and one elementary school for girls operated in the area. In 1944-1945 a boys' high school built on the top of the rock in the town centre, and a girls' high school built at a higher elevation, on the courtyard of the Saint Anastasia church, merged into a co-educational school. Each year, and depending on student population, similar arrangements were also made in other schools. During the 1973-1974 school year, Lapithos had two elementary schools, the Urban School A and the Urban School B. To the east of the former boys' school, a sports field was created to cover the children's sports needs, whilst the large student theatre hosted several plays. Many notable teachers offered their services, not only in education but also in the religious, national and cultural fields.

The strong desire for education, as well as the new conditions and requirements of the time, led to the establishment of the first "Greek Higher School of Lapithos and Karavas" in 1910, under the guidance of the Bishop of Kyrenia, Cyril Myrantheas. Two years later however, the school was closed down as a result of serious disagreements between the committees of

Lapithos and Karavas. In 1917 organised efforts began by the Lapithians in order to re-open the school, which was eventually re-established in 1923 under a more organised basis, and funded by the six parishes of Lapithos. In 1938 the school was renamed to "boarding school of Lapithos," and in 1943 it acquired proprietary premises, funded by charities and by donations from locals and expatriates. In the following years the school attained six grades and was renamed to "Greek High School of Lapithos." In 1965, in addition to the Classics section, a Science section was also established. Up until 1974, special classrooms and laboratories were created. More-



The building of the Reformatory of Lapithos, to the west of Panagia Acheiropoiitos today. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas



The District Greek High School of Lapithos, the educational “beacon” of Lapithos, Karavas and the surrounding area. Photo: Lapithos Municipality Archive

over the school premises included a folk art museum, a library, a ceremony hall, an athletics track and field, as well as football, basketball and volleyball pitches. The school became the cultural centre of the area, leading the socio-cultural development of the town and the surrounding region. Its philharmonic orchestra, the choir and dance groups featured in every national celebration and parade. Moreover, the school also organised excursions, student plays and cultural events that included singing, dancing and ancient Greek tragedies. At the “Anthesteria,” a popular event organised by the school, floats were decorated with flowers, inspired by themes from Greek mythology. Furthermore, the school informed and enlightened the community of Lapithos through its own publications, such as the Student Library Association “Progress” (1955,1959), the journal “Student Pursuits” (1967-1969), the Yearbooks (1970-1972), the student newspaper “The Lighthouse” (1969-1970), “Lectures of Lapithos High School” and the “Register of folk art collection exhibits”.

Situated on the coastal front in the direction of the area of Acheiropoietos, and established in 1943, the Reform School of Lapithos was a unique school in Cyprus. Boasting extraordinary results, as attested to by the British, it was among

the top schools in the countries of the Commonwealth. The school developed a philosophy of educating rather than punishing young offenders and children that needed special care and protection. By living together, the students participated in skills development and social education courses as well as in sports and other events, thus learning to cooperate and develop friendships. Under the guidance of their teachers, students built their halls of residence, houses for the school staff, rest and recreation rooms, laboratories, a hospital, and a gym hall. Roads, as well as football, basketball and volleyball pitches were also created, and fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs were planted. A former carob warehouse was converted into a small theatre, while the former “Taliadoros Casino Hotel” was transformed into a compound that included offices, classrooms, a modern kitchen and a dining hall. It was a modern establishment that enabled children to develop their skills and abilities while preparing them for re-integrated into society. The students’ participation in various events including sports, the arts and cultural events was always evident and prominent. The school also served as the base of the Kyrenia Scouts Movement which also had a football team, and participated in the annual

celebration of 'Kataklysmos' (Festival of the Flood) at the play-field and the port of Lampousa. Sport events and students' handicraft exhibitions attracted people from all over the island.

Many associations supported the town's cultural life by organising public lectures and looking after social development, including the association of the "Friends of the Poor, Sisterhood of Lapithos" (1930) which was later renamed to "Association of Greek Women of Lapithos" (ASEL) and the "Religious Association of Lapithos." In 1955, as then suggested by the organisation for the liberation of Cyprus (EOKA), the "Lapithos Greek Athletic Association," the "Lapithos Social Welfare" and the "Arbitration Committees" were formed and were embraced by the entire society of Lapithos. Funds raised by the aforementioned associations were used to assist the EOKA fighters and their families. The "Arbitration Committees" were used to settle disputes among the residents in order to avoid presenting these cases to colonial courts. The "Lapithos Social Welfare" continued its work even after Cyprus' independence, by helping the poor, actively participating in other associations' events, supporting the National Guard and the island's defences; it even provided assistance to the wounded during the time of the Turkish invasion in 1974.

By organising lectures by distinguished speakers and literary events, the contribution of the "Lapithos Literary Society" was also significant. It however closed down after the Turkish mutiny of 1963-1964. In 1973 the "Lapithos Red Cross Youth Section" was formed by a group of forward-looking young people, with the purpose of protecting the environment, providing help to people in need, organising blood donations, and promoting a spirit of understanding and harmony through various events. After the creation of the Communist Party, the first one ever established in Cyprus, other popular organisations emerged, including the Educational Association "Progress" (1935), Athletic Union of Lapithos (1950), the Shopkeepers Association, the Working Women's Association, the Progressive Association "Parnasos" and the Youth Recovery Organisation. After Cyprus' independence, other local associations emerged representing organisations of the leftist movement, such as the political party AKEL, the Workers' Federation, the United Democratic Youth Organisation (1959),



The IRIS cinema after the invasion. Photo: Marios Ioannides

the Pancyprian Federation of Women's Associations and the Cypriot Farmers' Association. In addition to promoting their ideological policies, they also initiated considerable social and cultural activities.

Some notable athletic associations that also contributed in sports, the arts and letters, and culture included the E.P.O.L club (1950) which was succeeded by A.S.E.L (1960-1968) and which was later succeeded by the Athletic Literary Society of Lapithos (A.P.O.L., 1968). In addition to its football team, A.P.O.L. also had volleyball and basketball teams. It also had a dance group, organised various events, trips, lectures, and theatrical plays, and participated in various sports events including the "Matsia," which were games in memory of the national hero Kyriakos Matsis. It also had a women's branch which was involved in various activities, such as the publication of the "Lapithos Chronicles" under the supervision of the famous Lapithian historian Costas Kyrnis, documenting and preserving interesting information of historical, literary and cultural significance.

The modern municipal cinema "Cine Iris" operated in Lapithos until 1974 and functioned both as an open-air venue in the

summer, and as an indoors one during the winter. It had 350 seats, a spacious stage and well-designed lighting and sound. Selected films were shown daily, while theatrical plays performed by troupes from the capital also took place there. It also accommodated student plays performed by the three elementary schools and by the Lapithos Reform School. In town there was also Kazeli's cinema, the outdoor cinema "Lampousa" and the Tsaggaridios Theatre Hall located inside the town's high school, where various events were hosted including theatre and musical performances that contributed to the cultural development of the region. The municipality also organised celebrations on national holidays that included traditional Cypriot and Greek dancing, speeches, recitations, choirs and orchestra performances.

Lapithians were religious, and attended church service consistently. Their great faith in God and Christianity is evident from the many chapels scattered around the town. The courtyards in churches often became social gathering venues where people met to discuss various social, professional and other issues, whilst during celebrations various games and entertainment events took place there.

As regards to cultural life, a long list of intellectuals and distinguished personalities helped in building the reputation and promotion of Lapithos, some of whom are mentioned below without underestimating the value and contribution of others: the historians/ -writers Costas Kymis and Fokas Fokaides, archaeologists and experts on Byzantium Andreas and Judith Stylianou, the proprietor of the "Elenion Elementary School of Nicosia" Constantinos Loizides, and the veteran General Ioannis Tsaggarides who took part in the Balkan wars and in the Asia Minor campaign.

B. Economic Development

The great spring of Kefalovrysos, the combination of sea and mountains, the beautiful scenery, and the fertile soil, the simple production process of building materials from limestone, wood from the nearby forests, and the excellent climate played a determining role in the economic development and prosperity of the people of Lapithos. Innovation, creativity, support from local authorities, as well as the qualities of the Lapithians were also decisive factors in utilising the area's natural resources. Born and raised in Greek Christian val-



Remains of the watermill Hatzilia, one of the largest in Lapithos, located in the town centre. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas



Panoramic view of Lapithos. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

ues, Lapithians were hard-working, honest, peaceful, compassionate, cooperative and helpful, and had been the greatest human resource for developing Lapithos to its full potential.

The fertile soil and the climate significantly contributed to the development of agriculture and farming to a level where Lapithos eventually became self-sufficient in agricultural and farming products. From 1961 until the Turkish invasion, the residents grew their crops over the largest area ever of Lapithos and also owned land in nearby villages. The inhabitants mainly cultivated lemon trees, especially in the area from the valley up to the sea where there were many citrus-tree orchards. In 1938 the Lapithos Lemon Producers Association was formed in an attempt to protect the local producers against speculating traders, by encouraging and helping producers sell their product themselves and set their own prices. In 1963 the local associations of Lapithos and Karavas founded the Kyrenia District Cooperative Union of Lemon

Producers (SELEK). In 1966 SELEK began to directly export lemons to France, England and subsequently to the countries in the East. A packing plant built close to Famagusta significantly reduced the cost of packing and distribution, created new job and contributed towards the economic development of the town. In 1971, the lemon tree orchards of Lapithos covered an area of around 230 hectares, while production reached its peak a few years before the Turkish invasion. Having Lapithos and Karavas as its core production centres, SELEK accounted for 60% of the entire national production and 85% of the Kyrenia district's total production. Lapithos became a financial and trading centre from the production and trade of lemons, aptly nicknamed "Green Gold".

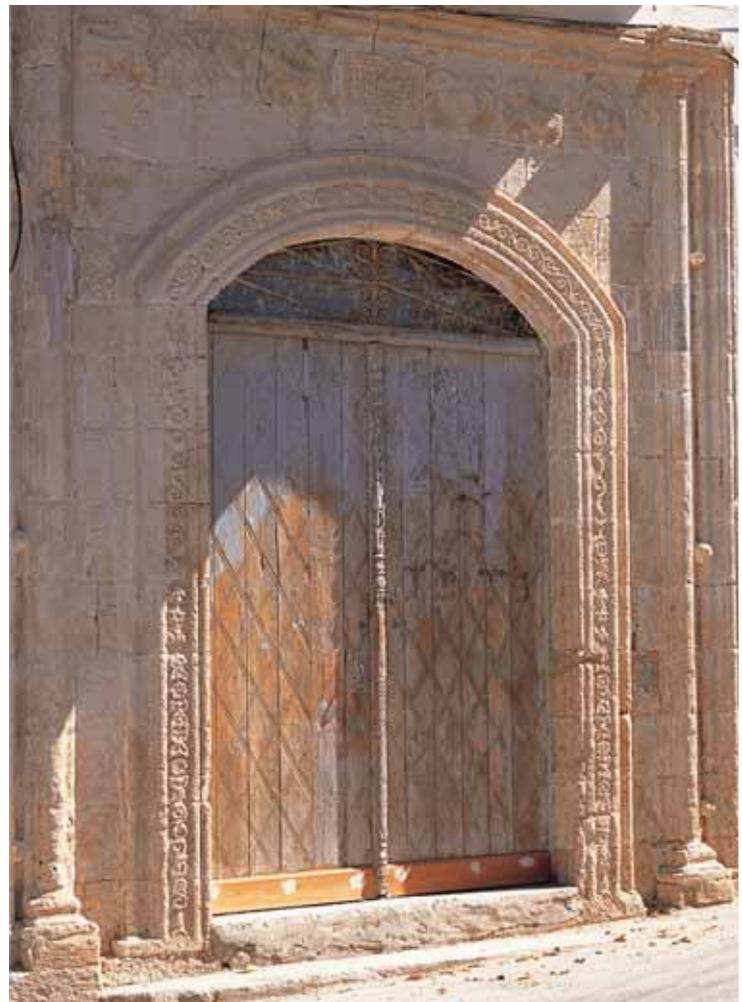
From 1913 onward various attempts were made in order to establish a Cooperative Savings Bank, which was eventually founded in 1938, eliminating the Lapithians' reliance on outside lenders and traders. The bank became a key financial pillar

of the community's economy, gaining financial and social status. Before 1974 it ranked second among cooperative saving banks in Cyprus, in terms of a turnover. In 1965 the bank was renamed the 'Lapithos Cooperative Lending Company', and supported agriculture, property development, tourism and the overall economic growth of the town. In 1955 a cooperative grocery was founded, satisfying the public's demand for low prices, quality and good service. In the following years it expanded and managed to establish five branches, while in 1973 its turnover exceeded 150,000 Cyprus pounds. In addition to the share capital and reserve fund, it also owned real estate. The fact that the cooperative grocery was highly regarded is evident from the fact that its secretary served for many years (1957-1974) on the committee of the Cooperative Supply Union of Nicosia.

Other than the cooperatives projects, private initiative also contributed to the overall economic development of the town. Lapithos had two cinemas, two olive oil extraction plants (one of which was ultramodern for its time), and small hotel units. Transportation services were also established, including private vehicles used for public transport, and the "Transport Company: Lapithos" was established in 1930 operating the route Lapithos-Karavas-Kyrenia-Nicosia. In 1947, the Lapithos Transport Company was founded, but faced difficulties after the start of the anti-colonial struggle. The 'Popular Transport Company' was founded after the independence of Cyprus. The Turkish mutiny of 1963 posed new financial problems and created new transportation needs, as the use of the shortest route from Kyrenia to Nicosia through Mpogazi-Gionnelli was prohibited by the Turks. The transport company "Lampousa," subsequently formed through the merger of various companies based in Lapithos and Karavas, owned 32 buses (some of which were very modern) and a truck during the time before the Turkish invasion. It operated 35 different routes daily, and employed 45 people. The existence of public transportation significantly contributed to the staging of excursions and pilgrimages, the transportation of goods, and helped in the transportation of hundreds of workers as well as thousands of tourists who visited Lapithos and the Kyrenia district on a daily basis, especially during the summer season.

Lapithos also developed into one of the largest workshop centres in Cyprus, as various cottage industries were established, including some that had existed in ancient times, generating extra income for the residents' families while allowing them to further hone their artistic talents. The deep connection between the arts and labour, together with the cultural evolution, significantly contributed to Lapithos' economic development.

Lapithos was always the home of many renowned, skilled and experienced builders and construction contractors. Using their skills, their passion and talent, they erected many distinguished architectural masterpieces, including mansions, schools, churches with imposing bell towers, and other structures which resembled small ancient monuments. This layman's architectural art was also promoted by other crafts such as blacksmithing, carpentry, stonemasonry and lime



House entrance in Lapithos. Photo: Eleni Papademetriou

kilns. Marbles and pillars were carved by craftsmen and were decorated with capitals based on Ionian, Dorian and Corinthian style, adding a magnificent level of detail to buildings. Limestone was extracted from the Pentadaktylos mountains, then heated in lime kilns in order to produce lime, gypsum and other construction materials. Gypsum was also used in sculpture for moulding statues and various other plaster decorations. All kinds of buildings constructed by the multitalented and skilful Lapithians were flawless in almost every aspect: beautiful, robust, functional and comfortable. Old mansion houses in Lapithos were usually built using sandstone that was abundant in some areas of Lapithos.

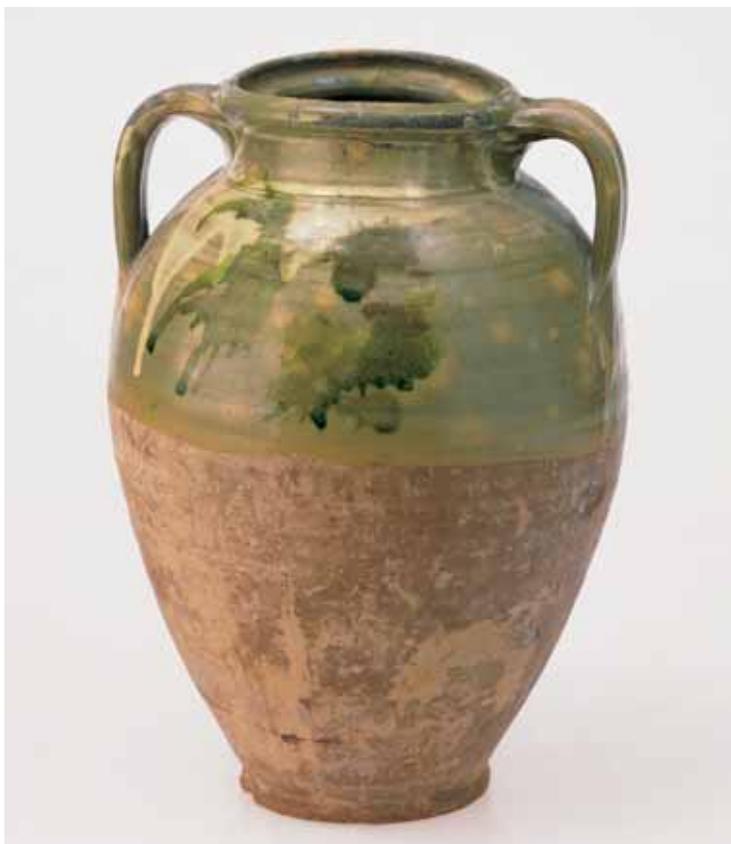
The metal working industry, including blacksmithing, was a lucrative business that Lapithians inherited from ancient times, thus Lapithos was home to several distinguished craftsmen. Metal workshops created various tools and artefacts for many uses such as building and farming tools, measuring instruments, water extraction tools, axes, ploughshares, sickles, nails, chains,

knives and guns. In the mid -20th century, however, when industrially manufactured steel products started being imported into Cyprus, only a handful of metal workshops, with enough customers from across the island, managed to continue operating until 1974.

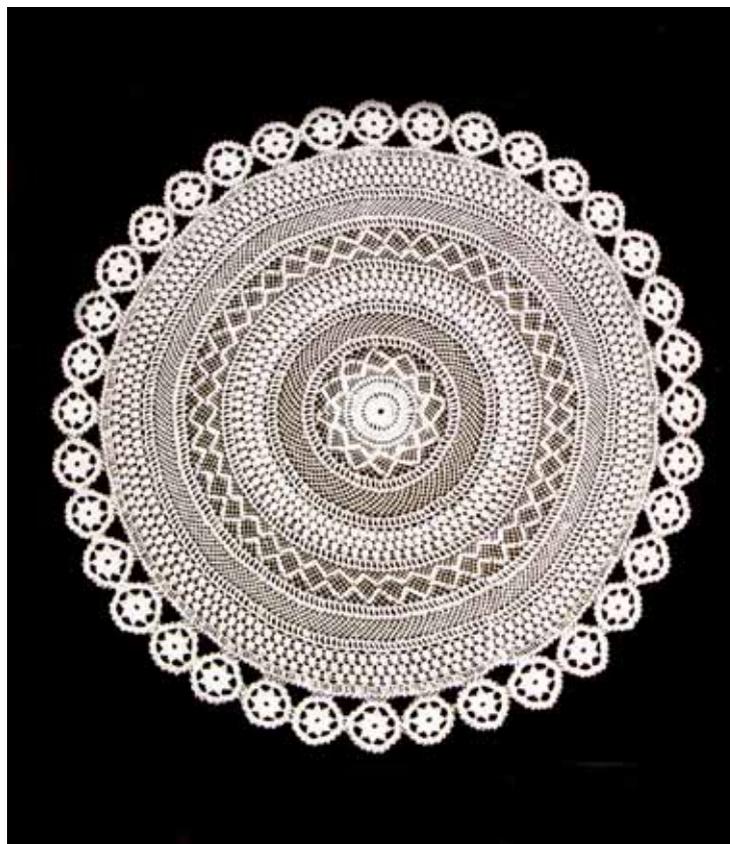
Woodcraft and carpentry were also popular among the Lapithians, who began practising it a long time ago, and these crafts supported and contributed to, the town's economy and culture. Wooden materials and artefacts from Lapithos were very popular and dominated the Cypriot market. Furniture, imposing carved church chancels, altars, wooden crucifixes and seats were just some of the creations of these skilled craftsmen. Furthermore they complemented the work of builders (by creating doors, windows, stairs, balconies etc), as well as the work of blacksmiths (by fixing wooden handles and grip metal tools), while they also crafted wooden farming (ploughs, yokes, threshing and reeling tools etc) and weaving tools (looms, cupboards, spinning wheels).



Local silversmith in Lapithos in his workshop, working on steel processing. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas



Glazed pot for the storage of cheese (early 19th century) from the workshops of Lapithos. Photo: Nicos Louca



“Velonokomvos”: Lapithos handmade embroidery by needle and thread. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

Archaeological findings (from 5000 B.C.) suggest that since ancient times Lapithos has always been famous for its pottery and in fact many contemporary pottery creations resemble ancient pots and vessels. The skills and creativity of the Lapithians, together with the abundance of clay and running water, were all factors that contributed to the flourishing of pottery. Many well-known potters, such as Demetris Tsiouris, Costas Christodoulakis, Kypros and Aristophanes Charalambous, acquired this craft by trying to fulfil their everyday needs, developed into fine artists, and opened pottery workshops. In this way, a new labour sector was created leading to increased income for the community. Lapithian pottery, and especially the “smeared” kind, became very popular, not only in the Cypriot market but also abroad. While some people bought them for everyday use (pitchers, jars, vases, plates, cups), others collected them for decorative purposes. Pottery was also a major tourist attraction, as many visitors wanted to buy and learn about the pottery-making process.

The ancient art of weaving was something that Lapithians had a long tradition in since Hellenistic times, and together with pottery this was considered the most important form of folk art that contributed to making the community famous. In 1955 Lapithos had around 500 looms and weaving was the most popular occupation among the female population. With local production of raw materials (silk and cotton) at their disposal, weavers created threads which they used to weave cotton garments known as “alatzies” and “itaredes”, as well as other traditional cloths, including the well-known “gauze” silk weave, one of the most beautiful and expensive textiles of Cypriot weaving art. Lapithian weaves were exquisite and famous for their thickness, elegance, durability and their extremely high quality. Embroidery was also practised by the women of Lapithos, and especially by the youngest. Starting from an early age, many girls gradually developed solid skills and earned their income by becoming professionals in weaving, embroidery and tailoring. Various traders sold



The impressive church of Agia Anastasia Farmakolytra, built in 1869. Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

their products both to Cypriot and foreign markets, and won numerous prizes at different exhibitions. Lapithian embroidery was found in churches in Venice and in several areas of Asia Minor. Hand-made embroidery flourished until 1960, after which it was mostly replaced by machine-manufactured fabrics, although some women have continued to create hand-made embroidery to this day.

Silkworm breeding and silk-works were two other occupations with deep ancient roots. Sericulture development was supported by the large berry plantations, as silkworms were fed berry leaves. Lapithos was the largest cocoon and silk production centre in Cyprus. In 1925 about 3/4 of the total cocoon and 4/5 of the total silk production of Cyprus came from Lapithos. The silk industry was a great source of wealth for the Lapithians. Furthermore it facilitated the development of weaving and embroidery, while it supported a host of other professions.

Flour milling was another popular occupation in Lapithos, especially in older times. During the nineteenth century about

20 water mills operated in the community. Clever and inventive as they were, the Lapithians utilised the declination of the ground in directing the rushing waters from the Kefalovrysos spring, emanating from the foothills of Mount Pentadaktylos, through the deep stone furrows and into the water pits. Releasing the water from the pits caused it to fall on the wheels, rotating the water mill stones that ground the wheat. Providing exceptional service and low cost, Lapithos' water-mills operated continuously from May through to October to serve people from all over Cyprus. The very last one of them ceased operation in 1974.

In addition to the aforementioned main occupations, the people of Lapithos were also involved in several other well-known traditional activities such as basket weaving, the fabrication of dyes, horseshoes, saddles, laurel oil, rose water etc., creating jobs and generating income for the people and the community. This creative lifestyle for Lapithos as for the other occupied territories was brought to an end in 1974, when the people and their civilisation were struck by the

cruel and unexpected Turkish attack. All activity ceased, while people were displaced and for the umpteenth time their livelihood ruined, as were all their dreams and toils. The occupier is casting his shadow over the shine and the liveliness of Lapithos. The soul searches for its body.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAPITHOS AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Lapithos covers 13,619 hectares of land, of which 9,586 were owned by Greeks, 825 by Turks, 12 by other foreigners, while 284 were covered by roads, rivers and other public grounds and 2,912 by forest and state land. Before the Turkish invasion, the city's population consisted of approximately 3,500 residents. The Muslim community included around 400 people, almost 10% of the total population, and owned 8.6% of the land. Due to its large size and its relatively large population, Lapithos was divided into seven administrative quarters. Six of them were Greek, each bearing the name of their respective church, and a Turkish Cypriot quarter was located in the centre of the town. Every quarter had its own municipal council, religious administration and



The church of Agia Airkotissa in the cemetery of Agios Theodoros. In a forest of eucalyptus trees, behind the church, the significant battle of 6 August 1974 took place, which determined the fate of Lapithos and Karavas.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas.

cemetery. The Turkish Cypriot community had its own school and two mosques, which before 1572 used to be Byzantine temples dedicated to Agios Ioannis Theologos and Agios Georgios Tropaioforos. Under these conditions the residents of Lapithos had a prosperous life together.

The community's development and progress were violently interrupted by the Turkish invasion. On July 20, at 4:30 a.m., the residents were awakened by the loud noise of Turkish military aircraft while Turkish warships were spotted off the coast. On August 6, at 4:50 a.m., the Turkish invaders occupied the town after having captured Kyrenia (22 July 1974). They breached the ceasefire agreements by carrying out a number of air, sea and land assaults on Lapithos and Karavas. Only 400 soldiers were available in Lapithos, disorganised and insufficiently equipped due to the preceding coup d'etat. On August 6, the neighbouring villages of Lapithos – Karavas relived a modern-day version of the Greek Thermopylae. The Turkish Major-General Fazit Polat confessed that the Lapithos battle was the hardest for the invaders. Between July 23 and August 5, the embattled Lapithos residents, terrified of the Turkish bombings, escaped towards Morphou, Nicosia and the Troodos mountains, leaving behind them unburied corpses, as well as missing persons, captives and people trapped in Lapithos. Since then, they have been living far from their occupied town, where the occupier perpetrates the crime of cultural genocide.

A. The occupied town of Lapithos without its legitimate residents

The town has been occupied by Turkish troops since 1974. Lapithos is considered one of their best spoils. The conquerors call Lapithos 'Lapta', while in English they retain the names Lapethos, Lampousa etc. An estimated 6,000 people comprise the illegal population of Lapithos which includes the descendants of the Ottomans (i.e. the local Turkish Cypriots), Turkish Cypriots from Pafos who were forced to move there, and settlers from Turkey. Their main occupations are agriculture, tourism and the construction sector.

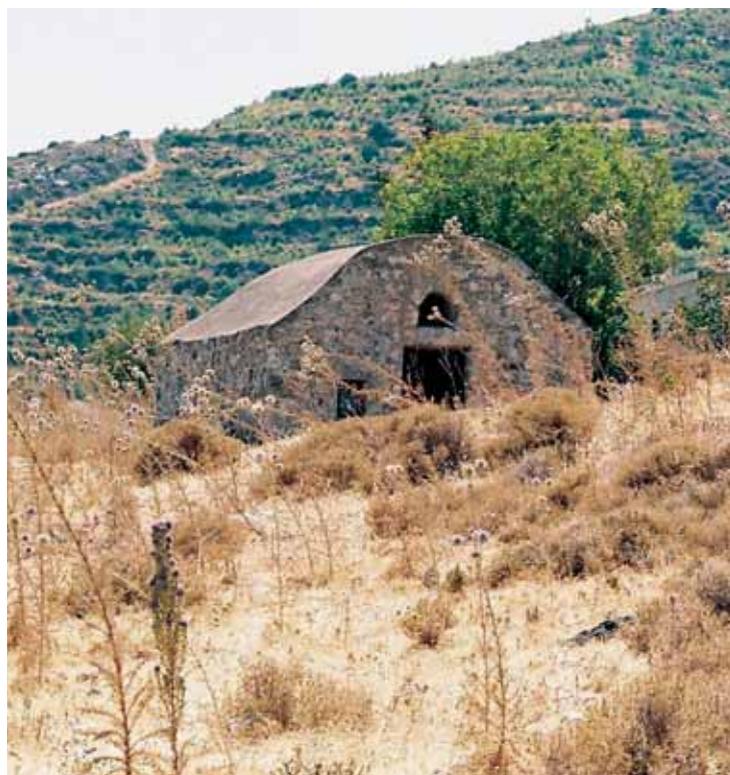
The green areas of Lapithos have been significantly reduced, due to the numerous illegal construction works, while the surviving areas are neglected. Tourist centres, apartment



The remains of the Byzantine church of Agios Pavlos (12 century A.D.) in Pentadaktylos.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

blocks and hotels are built in many areas including Airkotissa, Vrysin tou Parpa and Yeronisos, violating the basic rules of respect for the natural environment and for historical monuments. No maintenance works have been carried out on the roads, apart from some minor repairs; therefore they are gradually deteriorating. Several houses are uninhabited, while new ones are built, mainly in fields and orchards, where the plants have dried up or been uprooted. Trees have been replaced by other annual crops. Groves and lemon trees are neglected and left to die out. The fountain of Kefalovrysos dried up as a result of the drought and bore holes dug by the Turks in Pentadaktylos. A 1,000-foot deep bore hole carries water, through a conduit pipe, to the water supply facilities in Kefalovrysos — which were installed by its original inhabitants for supplying water to their homes— leaving no water for the crops. Even the smaller water sources, springs and wells, have dried up. Only a handful of wells can still supply water for the irrigation of plantations. Because they do not love the place or because they feel that they are there temporarily, and hence consider themselves as foreigners,



The Byzantine small church of Agia Marina, to the west of Agios Theodoros, near the Katsouris area.

Lapithos Municipality Archive



The small church of the Archangel Michael, the cemetery of the northern villages of Agia Paraskevi and Agia Anastasia.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

the illegal residents are indifferent to the town and destroy or neglect whatever the Greek Cypriots had created with their sweat and love. The statue of Atatürk in the city centre, the Turkish flags, the enormous antenna of the breakaway regime's television channel in Kyparissouvouno and the illegal tourism development, all this cannot convince anyone that the place is actually theirs.

There is limited agricultural development and production. Moreover, any residential activity is significantly reduced, while the tourism sector develops rapidly. Important buildings and institutions of the town, including the City Hall, the High School and the elementary schools still operate, except for the School of Agia Anastasia. The church's surrounding area was initially converted into a hotel and then into a nursing home for the elderly. Some buildings were abandoned to be ravaged by time, others were destroyed, while some have been re-built to be used for other purposes. For example, the Cine-Iris was converted into a carpeting factory and the Municipal Grocery into an enclosed gym and storage space. The Folk Arts workshops no longer operate. The items

that the legal residents produced and were forced to leave behind (pottery, weaving, embroidery, etc.), are now found in private collections, mainly belonging to mainland Turks, or have been sold by the illegal residents to Turkey or elsewhere. Libraries with rare books, collections and other priceless works of cultural importance and works of art have been destroyed, including those of the remarkable scientist-researcher, writer and painter Andreas Stylianos which he left in his house in Lapithos.

Archeological sites are unguarded, neglected, exposed to illegal antiquity dealers, and abused by people who ignore their value and importance. The six parish churches, of the Apostle Luke, Agios Theodoros, Agios Ioannis o Baptistis (St. John the Baptist), Agia Paraskevi, Agia Anastasia, and Agios Minas, and the chapels of Lapithos, are deprived of their pilgrims and have been deserted for so long that their exterior has deteriorated, while their interior was vandalised and destroyed. Some examples include: Agia Varvara, Agia Marina, Panagia Airkotissa, Church of the Metamorphoseos tou Sotiros (Transfiguration of the Saviour), Agios Mamas, Agia



The monastery of Panagia Kriniotissa (12th century A.D.) to the north side of Pendadaktylos.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas



The church of Agios Georgios Spilotis, carved in a rock, in the cemetery of the parish of Agios Minas.

Photo: Neoptolemos Kotsapas

Anastasia, Agia Evdokia, Agios Georgios o Exorinos, Agios Koumoutas, Agios Pavlos, Archangel, Agios Andronikos, Agios Georgios o Spiliotis and Panagia Kriniotissa. The missing holy icons and other valuable items are testament to the work of Turkish antiquity smugglers. The Christian cemeteries are damaged, graves have been opened and crosses destroyed. The whole area of ancient Lapithos is under the Turkish army's control and no entry is permitted, even for repairing and restoring the monuments there. These include the temple of Agios Evlalios and the Monastery of Panagia Acheiropoietos that was turned into a camp for the Turkish occupation army. Furthermore all portable icons, holy vessels and other objects have disappeared. This is the current condition of the occupied Lapithos. The historical municipality and the legal residents of Lapithos still fight, even if they are far from their city. They have a single, common goal: to return.

B. Activities of the displaced Municipality of Lapithos

Eighty percent of the displaced Greek and other Christian residents of Lapithos now live in the two large cities and provinces of Nicosia and Limassol. The rest are scattered across Cyprus or abroad. Their displaced municipality is still active and operates provisionally in Nicosia. It is mostly concerned with the communication and cooperation of its citizens on various issues. It preserves, promotes and strives to save Lapithos' rich historical and cultural heritage. It organises and promotes anti-occupation events in Cyprus and overseas. It seeks to protect and safeguard the rights of the displaced Lapithos residents, to raise awareness among locals and foreigners regarding the occupation, to keep the memory of history alive, to be informed on the fate of the missing persons, to fight for the liberation of the occupied territories, and accomplish the removal of the settlers and the Turkish troops from the occupied areas in order for the refugees to return to their ancestral homes and properties under conditions of security, dignity and freedom of movement.

The municipality shares premises with organised groups of Lapithos, together they strive to achieve the above objectives despite their limited resources and difficulties. After their displacement, the School Board and the 144th Lapithos Sea Scout



The temporary offices of the occupied Town Hall of Lapithos, located at 36 Prodrromou street, 2063, Strovolos, Nicosia.

Lapithos Municipality Archive

Group were re-established. Furthermore the Refugee Association of Lapithos was re-established in 1987, the Cultural Foundation of Lapithos in 2003 and the Youth City Council in 2007. These groups organise various national, religious, cultural, humanitarian, sports, social and other events and festivals that keep the memory of Lapithos alive and cultivate the spirit of return, unity, cooperation, solidarity and understanding among the residents. In collaboration with the municipality they organise dances or gatherings, exhibitions, artistic and theatrical plays, Christmas feasts for children, excursions for senior citizens and donations to the blood bank of Lapithos. There has been tree planting in a grove called "Kyparissouvounos" near Kakoratzia, a cultural exhibition entitled "Lapithos yesterday and today" (1992) that featured Lapithos crafts, photo exhibitions, events celebrating Lapithos' 3,000 years, and book publishing. In 1990 a competition was held for the composition of the "Hymn of Lapithos".

The temporary City Hall owns a library with a rich collection of books of historical and scientific content on Lapithos. The municipality and the other groups are striving to restore the Cultural History Museum of Lapithos. Due to Lapithos' historical origins, this effort honours the residents of Lapithos and their occupied land. Elements of its history and culture are found at the Archaeological Museum of Cyprus



The protest resolution submitted to the British Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, on the 23rd of May 2005, by the representatives of the municipalities of Lapithos and Karavas.

Lapithos Municipality Archive

as well as in various other museums around the world. Others are preserved in archives, in books, in people's memories, pictures, and works of art. When the above are collected, the history and culture of Lapithos will be well-known especially to the next generations. This will enable the next generations to learn about the place where their ancestors lived, to truthfully love it and to acquire the necessary arguments to claim the freedom of their land and its rightful return. This is the main objective of the municipal authorities, of the organized groups and intellectuals of Lapithos. They support the refugees and keep in touch with the immigrants of Lapithos who currently live overseas. The immigrants provide information and promote certain issues with regard to Lapithos and the Cyprus problem in many countries, particularly in the UK, where an association of Lapithos-Karavas operates. In the context of the struggle for freedom and justice, the Lapithos municipality has been twinned with the municipalities of Mandraki, the City of Sparta and the ex-municipality of Millies Magnesia, now known as the municipality of South Pelion. Through the exchange of visits and frequent contacts with the Greek municipalities a strong basis for contact has been established. In this way the



Twining ceremony of the municipalities of Lapithos and Sparta, on the 10th of November 2002. The protocol was signed by former mayors Mr. Athos Eleftheriou and Mr.

Demosthenis Matalas. Lapithos Municipality Archive

people involved are able to exchange ideas and establish closer relations by underlining their common past, thus supporting the struggle of the refugees for freedom and return to their town.

C. Distinguished personalities of Lapithos

Just as they survived in the past, Lapithos' people have managed to survive using their productivity, despite the difficult living conditions. Many people from Lapithos are distinguished personalities who excel in various fields, such as in science, politics, literature and the arts. After their displacement, many craftsmen moved to the free areas where they set up shop and were able to transfer their knowledge and experience to the younger generations. A case in point are the displaced ceramic workers, who re-organized in their new location within a short period of time. Even if they were far from the place that offered so much to their craft, they imported the necessary raw materials, used new technologies, simplified their work, reduced costs and increased production. They convey the love for their craft to younger people who study abroad and who on returning to Cyprus are able



The representatives of Lapithos and the Association of Lapithos – Karavas visit the British parliament on the 23rd of May 2005 to meet with MPs A. Love, R. Vis, A. Dismore, T. Villiers and R. Gale. Lapithos Municipality Archive

to offer their insight and knowledge on new techniques, forms and styles.

A number of Lapithos' scions are an asset, since their work and careers honour not only Cyprus but also their countries of residence. Just a few of the numerous examples: Doctor Phedias Paraskevaides who after the Turkish invasion founded the Pancyprian Refugee Committee, of which he was president for many years, representing and helping refugees. He died in 1998, away from his birthplace of Lapithos, of which he served as mayor and helped in the regaining of her old status as "Imeroessa" and "Lampousa". Another example is the architect Giorgos Paraskevaides, who with Stelios Ioannou founded the world-renowned Ioannou and Paraskevaides company. His hometown is proud of him, since he provided significant help, in various ways, to those in need, both as a person and as a businessman. He founded the charity Foundation of Georgios and Thelma Paraskevaides, and the Surgical Transplant Centre for Cypriots with serious health problems. He established the Cyprus Cultural Centre in Athens, which he provided with rare books, photographs etc, so that both Greeks and foreigners can be informed about Cyprus. He has been recognized for his social and charity

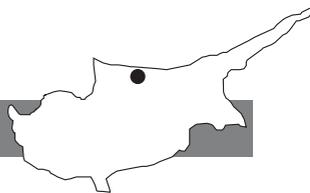
work on an international level and has been honoured by the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Medical Society of New York, the AHEPA organisation of which the Cyprus branch bears his name, universities, organisations and the President of the Greek Republic. He was also awarded several prizes, such as the Peace Prize in 1991.

Andreas Stylianou is also an important personality and has received various international awards, including the Athens Academy award in 1985 and in 1998, and an award for excellence in the Arts and Letters from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus. Efrosini Proestou is an exceptional personality from Lapithos, well known throughout the island. During the Turkish invasion she rescued 12 soldiers who were trapped in Lapithos. The Turks tortured her in the castle of Kyrenia, but she never revealed the soldiers' whereabouts. When she died in 1993 the municipality of Lapithos, the Lapithos Society and the soldiers she had saved erected a bust in her honour at the Ledra Palace checkpoint so that it can watch over Pentadaktylos mountain until the day of liberation and return to Lapithos, when they plan to erect a monument as tribute.

This is Lapithos, the former Imeroessa and Lampousa, whose displaced legal residents prove the love for their motherland every single day. Their memories and the wish for return lies inside them. Their occupied town is what defines their lives. It is the force that empowers their struggle for justice. Only upon their return will lemon trees re-grow in the valleys, and the cyclamen will fill the mount of Kyparissovouno, the bells of the churches will chime again and the cultural life of the neighbourhoods will revive. Lapithos demands the return of her soul, and its residents ask for the return of her violated sacred body. They wish to baptise it again in the light of liberation, singing the anthem: "You are within me / In my soul, in my mind / , Enthroned in the depths /in my heart's beating (...) I adore you, I admire you /I have you in my heart / and I cry out loud/ Lapithos I love you".



Municipality of Karavas



Overview of Karavas, 1962.

Photo: Press and Information Office archive



Archaeological excavations in the area "Yirisma," Pano Geitonia, Karavas. Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities

Administratively Karavas falls within the district of Kyrenia which is currently under occupation. It lies on a strip of land between mountains and the sea. It is built on a rather flat land compared to the town of Lapithos with which it borders to the west, separated by the river Vathyrkakas. Both towns have much in common: origin, beauty, growth and potential. To the east Karavas extends to the regions Pente Mili and Pikro Nero, and borders with Agios Georgios. Southward Karavas reaches the foot of the Pentadaktylos mountain range on the sides of which lie perched the picturesque hamlets of Motides, Paliosofos, Elia and Fterycha. To the north lies the sea. Archaeological finds to this day are evidence that the area had been inhabited continuously since the prehistoric period. Ever since its establishment, the town of Karavas had been entirely Greek land as it had been inhabited solely by Greeks up until 1974 when they were expelled by the Turkish invasion.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Karavas

The roots of the town of Karavas run deep into the centuries, just like its twin sister Lapithos. Though there have not been extensive and systematic excavations, field research and random findings in the location "Yirisma" in the area Pano Geitonia and Agios Andreas confirm the existence of settlements in Karavas both of the Neolithic and the Paleolithic Ages as well as of the middle Mycenaean period. Test excavations by Porfirios Dikaios in 1934 revealed circular houses and tombs carved into rock. A necropolis of the Geometric Period (1050-700 B.C.) was also excavated at the location "Vathyrkakas" within the municipal boundaries of Karavas, east of the river. At the location "Troulli" (area of ancient Lampousa), tomb caves were discovered of the Late Classical period (4th century B.C.). Ancient coins depicting the goddess Aphrodite, in combination with inscriptions and references by travellers, confirm the existence of the Temple of Aphrodite. An inscription refers to Elaiochristion, indicating that "Aphrodisia" ceremonies in honour of Aphrodite were also celebrated here.



Archaeological finds in Karavas, “Vathyrkakas” area.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities



Archaeological excavations at the location “Katalymata” in the area of Ancient Lampousa, Karavas.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities

Drummond writes that he found a section of the foundations of a particularly grand building, with a mosaic floor of meticulous craftsmanship, and he assumes it was a temple.

The present heights at the location “Katalymata” are the remains of larger hills which overlooked the bay, starting from a rock-carved chamber and stretching up to the hill “Troulli”. There are heaps of stones throughout the region, as the rock-carved houses were reinforced with additional walls.

On the east side of the hill “Troulli” lies a chain of artificial caves. Tombs of the Late Classical period (4th century B.C.) covered anything that pre-existed. The unique excavations carried out at Lampousa revealed clay figurines and pieces of Neolithic axes, shells of the Middle Bronze Age, Phoenician-Greek items of the Early Iron Age, items from the Attic, Hellenistic periods, Greco-Roman pottery, and a plaster pillar. During the Roman period, Lapithia was one of the four districts of Cyprus. Tradition has it that the



Gold necklace and earrings of the Early Byzantine Period from the treasures of Lampousa.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities

Apostles Paul and Barnabas landed on the coastal borders of Karavas-Lapithos in order to preach Christianity. When the disciples reached the top of the Pentadaktylos mountain range (west of the castle of Agios Ilarionas) they quenched their thirst at a spring which began to flow as they sat down to rest. At this very site the inhabitants built the chapel of Agios Pavlos, which today lies derelict with only the south wall standing.

Archaeological finds and other historical sources confirm that ancient Lapithos, established by the Laconians, is the fore-runner town of Karavas and present-day Lapithos from which they both originate. The people of Lapithos and Karavas are descendants of the Spartans who arrived in the region at the end of the Trojan War, led by Praxandros. The two towns followed a common course until historical events led them to diverge, however, they based their development on their original cultural and economic foundations. Aspects of the common history of both towns have already been expounded in the section on Lapithos. This section will present facts on Karavas as well as additional information on sites that currently fall within the municipal boundaries of Karavas.



The rock-carved chapel of Agios Evlampios today.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

B. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

From the Hellenistic until the Early Byzantine period (3rd century B.C. – 7th century A.D.) ancient Lapithos experienced great prosperity. As already mentioned, its brilliance, wealth and beauty were such that the Byzantines called it “Lampousa” (sparkling). Lapithos’ economic and cultural growth was conducive to it becoming the first capital of the district of Kyrenia, and a Bishopric seat. Byzantine Lampousa-



The church of Acheiropietos, 1936. Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities



A mosaic fragment from Ancient Lampousa.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities

Lapithos developed in the area now called “Katalymata” and lies in the municipal boundaries of Karavas. Archaeological findings from this area go back at least to the Classical period. Research and other historical evidence indicate an abundance of Early Christian settlements both along the coast, from the locations “Katalymata” to “Moutti tou Pianou,” “Zephyros” and “Pikron Nero,” as well as in “Pano Geitonia.” The area is dotted with pottery, marble and mosaic ruins.

Archaeological remains and inscriptions testify to the existence of city walls that date back to the Early Byzantine period (3rd-5th century B.C.). Traces of the old pier with tower walls discovered in the area “Varkes” confirm the existence of a harbour. Within the walls there stood a church dedicated to Agios Evlalios, first Bishop of Lampousa. According to excavation findings, the church was reconstructed three times (6th, 11th and 16th centuries). The rock-carved chapel of Agios Evlampios was also found, which Rupert Gunnis likens to a catacomb and mentions traces of frescoes. Athanasios Sakellarios compares it to chambers of the “Tombs of the Kings” in Pafos, which also have square niches, carved family tombs on the sides and a hole in the roof, and he associates it with an ancient altar. Others present it as a burial chamber. It is assumed that in ancient times it was a place of worship which the Christians continued to use, with certain modifications, for the same purpose. At the site of ancient Lampousa, near the sea, stood also the basilica of Panagia (Virgin Mary) Acheiropoietos of the 6th-7th centuries, sections of which, like marble columns and embossed parapets, are incorporated into the current church. The early Byzantine presence

in the region is also evidenced by the early Christian church apse of the monastery, marble, mosaic floors, inscriptions and other archaeological finds. The hermitage of Panagia Galakterousa on the hill, west of Karavas is probably of the same period. To the south of the chapel there is a rock-carved structure, possibly an early Christian cemetery.

Following an Arab siege in the 7th century (653-654) Lapithos-Lampousa was captured, looted and destroyed, just like the capital of Cyprus Salamis. The famous “Lampousa treasures,” which include precious objects of supreme art and craftsmanship, demonstrating the economic and cultural growth as well as its relations with Byzantium, belong to the same period too. Despite the devastation suffered by the city, archaeological finds indicate that its prosperity continued through to the Middle and Late Byzantine periods. During the Middle Byzantine period, new temples were built in “Pano Geitonia” of Karavas: the small basilica of Agia Marina with frescoes of the 12th century, Agios Panteleimon and Agios Andronikos with an altar on a small marble column from Lampousa, as well as the small basilica of Agios Antonios to the west of the town. During this same period, older churches were decorated as for example the 11th-12th centuries frescoes of the



Early Byzantine silver tray illustrating the marriages of David, from the second treasure of Lampousa.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities



Fish hatchery or, according to tradition, the Baths of the Queen in the area of Ancient Lampousa.

Photo: Karavas
Municipality archive

cave-church of Panagia Galakterousa (child bearing Virgin) in "Pano Geitonia," named "Panagia Stazousa." Agios Ioannis (Saint John the Baptist) and Agios Nicolaos are depicted on either side of the child-bearing Virgin, while fragments of the figure of the enthroned Christ can be seen. Further evidence is also the second phase of the main church of Panagia Acheiropoietos, an 11th century construction, in cruciform style, while its frescoes are dated to the 12th century, as is the nave, which is roofed by a barrel vault and bears a semi-circular dome.

At "Troulloi," where the Acropolis was built, structures were found which had their lower sections carved into the rock. Additionally, a large four-metre wide rectangular chamber was unearthed, which bore traces of fire and indications that it was a two-floor building with mosaic floors on the upper level as well. The building is thought to have belonged to the governor of the city. To the east side of town, outside the walls at the location "Loutra tis Vasilissas" (Baths of the Queen), there was a fish hatchery which Florios Voustronios wrote about in the 16th century: "By the big residence, probably near the kings' palaces there were rock-carved fish hatcheries, and fish and sea water entered them through the sewage ...". Rupert Gunnis also refers to the fish hatcheries, while Athanasios Sakellarios, perhaps influenced by local tradition, consid-

ers that it was the "Baths of the Queen." Despite the raids that Lampousa was subjected to at times, it continued to flourish throughout the Latin occupation and its inhabitants were prosperous and productive.

C. Latin Period (1192-1571)

Byzantine and post-Byzantine chapels indicate the areas where inhabitants had settled after the disasters experienced by Lapithos-Lampousa. Within the municipal boundaries of Karavas there are fourteen chapels located on the slopes of the hill near Kefalovrysos and the seafront, in the parish of Agios Andreas. During the Latin dominion, the monastery of Acheiropoietos was at its peak. There were 44 Greek monks, a large number compared to other monasteries in Cyprus. Archaeological finds on the side of the sea also revealed the existence of a Frankish church. Referring to the rivalry between Charlotte and her illegitimate brother James in 1473, Georgios Voustronios wrote that on August 15, day of the Assumption of Mary, all the residents of Kyrenia went on a pilgrimage to the church of Panagia Psithion and the church of Panagia Acheiropoietos.

In the 16th century, an outer nave and an arcade of Gothic style were added to the church of Panagia Acheiropoietos.

Two tombstones were also found there. The inscription on one of them was 'Caesar Kariotes 1546' and on the other 'Alexander Flatros 1563'. The church of Agios Evlalios had a similar history as that of Acheiropoietos. According to archaeological finds and written sources, the church of Agios Evlalios was rebuilt on the ruins of older churches dated to the 7th and 11th centuries respectively. These successive phases of construction are confirmed by earlier structural building materials used, such as columns, foundations and mosaic floors. The sanctuary doors of the church were painted in 1692 by the monk Leontios "from Nemesis," and depict illustrations of the Annunciation, while on the lower part there are illustrations of four bishops.

Towards the end of the Latin dominion Lampousa ceased to exist. It was destroyed by earthquakes, fires and pirate raids. These were probably the reasons why the inhabitants fled the coast and moved to higher ground where they established new settlements such as Karavas, present-day Lapithos, Motides, Fterycha, Paliosofos, Elia and other villages to the east and west as well as to the south, on the mountain range of Pentadaktylos and behind it. Away from the sea, the ground was more solid and also better protected from pirates.

During the Latin rule there was already a separate settlement

by the name of Karavas. The earliest reference to the name "Karavas" (Prastio di Caravo), was traced in documents of the late Frankish rule (1482) and Venetian rule (1492, 1504, 1528). The word Prastio refers to small settlements of the Frankish period. There are several explanations regarding the origin of the name of the new settlement. One version connects Karavas with the Greek world, where there are also villages with the same name. An element that may be related to the origin of the name is the existence of the harbour. The naturally-formed bay, which today is included in the boundaries of Karavas, was the port and fishing base of the area. This assumption is confirmed by subsequent travellers' attestations, which refer to traces of an ancient port and pier. This version is supported and interpreted in a report by Nearchos Clerides, stating that apparently a ship-owner resided in the area. Because of this man's profession, people used to say we shall go to "Karavas" – the Greek word for shipbuilder - and later on "Karavas" was identified with the place and gave its name to it. Menardos notes that during Turkish rule shipping and trade between Cyprus and the southern coast of Asia Minor flourished in Karavas. The boats travelled from one coast to another, trading goods. Many people also came from across the sea as pilgrims to holy sites and to attend festivals.



The area of Ancient Lampousa with the lighthouse ruins.

Photo: J.P Foscolo, Laiki Cultural Centre

D. Ottoman Occupation (1572-1878)

During this period the entire coastline and the area of Karavas-Lapithos were raided by Arabs or Ottoman Turks who plundered and wrought destruction. The inscription on the icon of Panagia Acheiropoietos dating to 1765 states that the Turks, who came from the shores across, destroyed the monastery. Local tradition describes events on a small island, located exactly opposite the site Pidaoulia at sea, which the inhabitants call "Shiro." According to tradition, "Shiro" was a boar originating from the mountains of Karamania (Asia Minor), opposite the island and it was destroying everything, until Panagia Acheiropoietos turned it into stone following pleas from the inhabitants.

A map of Karavas by Louis de Mas Latrie (1862) refers to a population of over 500 people. Its administrative boundaries also included the villages Motides, Paliosofos, Fterycha and Elia. The inhabitants of Karavas prospered through the trade conducted between its coastal area

and its counterpart in Asia Minor, as well as through plantations mainly of cotton, and its flax and silk production. Throughout this period, the inhabitants of Karavas excelled in woodcarving, weaving and the cultivation of lemon trees.

The building of churches in a period of ruthless repression and the participation of the people of Karavas in the national liberation struggles reveal their piety and devotion to Orthodoxy, intertwined with their love for their homeland. In 1804, the church of Agia Irini was built, paid for by the rich landowner Hadjinikolas Lavrentios and his father Chief Chancellor Lavrentios, cousin to the national martyr Kyprianos. They also donated the icons of the church which date back to 1766-1824. Moreover, the church was endowed with chandeliers, precious holy relics, stalls and icon stands produced by the finest craftsmen. In addition, trees were planted all over the hill where the church was situated. During the Greek revolution of 1821, the revolutionary captain Con-



The harbour of Karavas in the area of Ancient Lampousa. Photo: Takis Mouretos.



The church of Agia Irini before 1974.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



The Church of Agios Georgios in the "Mezere" area.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

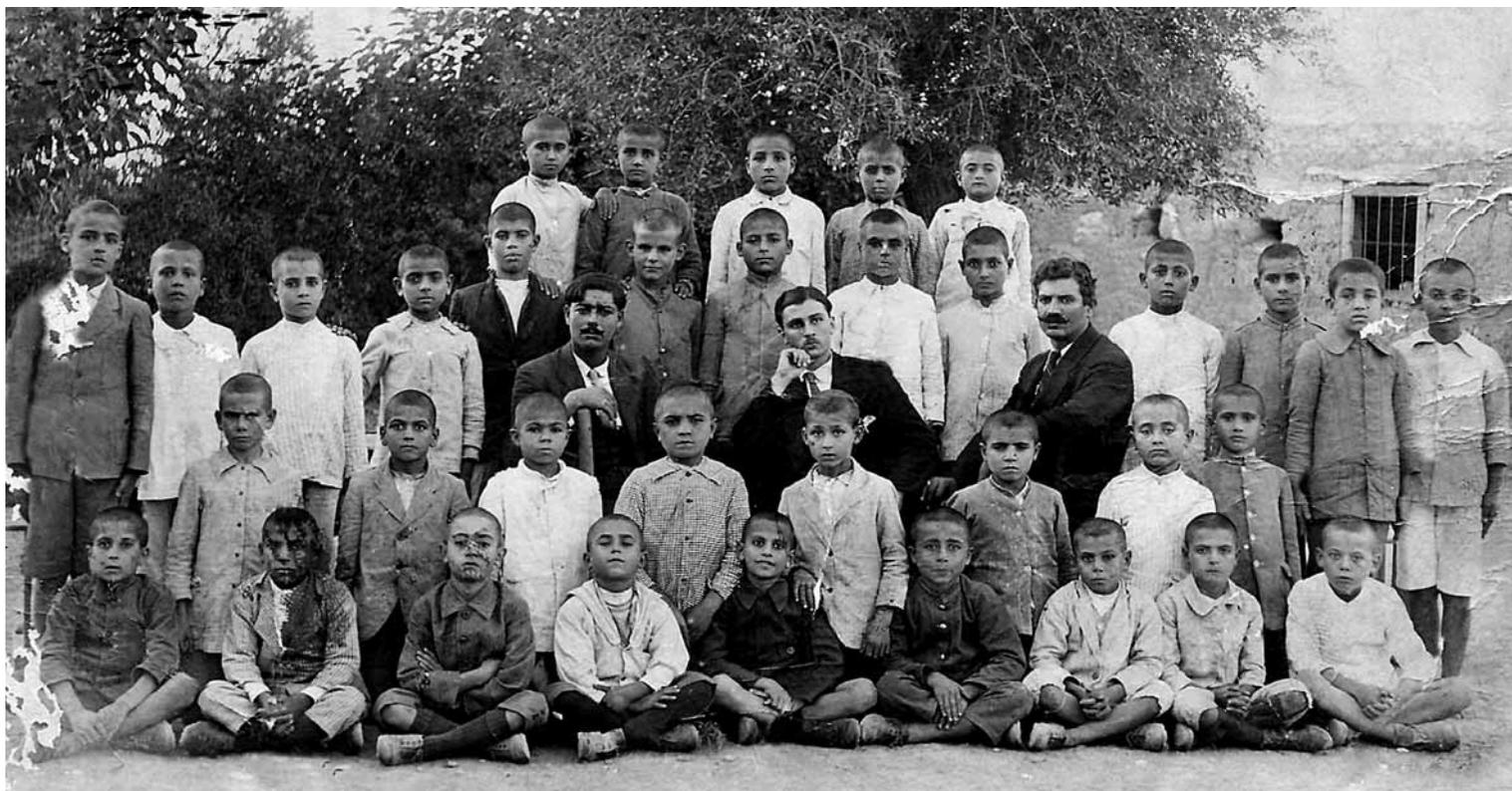
stantinos Kanaris from Psara Island came ashore at Asprovrysi (Lapithos area) and was hosted by the elders of the two towns, Karavas and Lapithos. The people of Karavas participated actively in the clandestine preparations of the Greek uprising against Ottoman rule and secretly collected financial aid at the monastery of Acheiropoietos led by Abbot Meletios. The aid, along with food supplies, was handed over to Kanaris. During the extensive massacres of Greek Orthodox priests and notables by the Turks (July 1821), the Bishop of Lampousa and Kyrenia Lavrentios (1816) was executed as well as the elder Hadjinikolas Lavrentios along with other people from Karavas and Lapithos.

The church of Agios Georgios Mezere was built in 1843 on the site of the earlier church which belonged to a small monastery. The iconostasis with its carved figures of prophets at the top, the crucifixion and the Holy Gate were illustrated by the painter Michael. The significant icon of Agios Georgios of 1771 was destroyed and redrawn in 1829 with illustrations of the life of the saint. During the last phase of Ottoman rule, the progressive and wealthy people of Karavas exerted particular efforts concerning their children's education. Originally, the monastery of Acheiropoietos was used as a school for children from Karavas, Lapithos and the neighbouring villages. The first regular school in the town opened in 1855 in an area that belonged to Kykkos monastery. It was situated at the site where subsequently the magnificent church

of Panagia Evangelistria was built. In 1863 the Community School was built, paid for by the inhabitants. Among the first teachers were Athanasios Triantafyllidis from Messolongi who implemented the peer tutoring method, the priest Demetris Economides from Karavas, Laios, a Greek married in Karavas, Georgios Papadopoulos from Larnaca and Georgios Psyllos from Pallouriotissa, who continued to teach into the British occupation.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 -1974)

Karavas is one of the oldest municipalities in Cyprus. The joint request of the inhabitants of Karavas Motides, Paliosofos, Fterycha and Elia for the establishment of a municipality in their area, based in Karavas, was approved by the British High Commissioner Robert Biddulph (Decree 20/1884) and on June 7, 1884 Karavas was declared a municipality thanks to the economic prosperity and forward-thinking inhabitants. It was the second municipality in terms of population in the district of Kyrenia, after neighbouring Lapithos. The first recorded mayor was Kyprianos P. Douvlias or Daktyliadis (1884-1887). After 1933, the four small villages, which until then formed part of Karavas, became separate communities with their own community leaders but continued to be closely linked to Karavas, the municipal boundaries of which were adjusted. The last mayors of Karavas just before the Turkish invasion were Panagiotis Kalavas, Ioannis Harmantas,



Students of the Primary School of Karavas with their teachers around 1926. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

Philotheos Hadjidamianou and the community leaders were Tsentas Lambros, Christodoulos Neophytou, Tsiamouros Nicholas and Elias Manoli.

From its inception the municipality had to tackle several problems, remnants of the previous obsolete Ottoman administration, by implementing projects of development and growth. Within the constraints of the British colonial administration and under harsh and adverse conditions, municipal councils struggled to improve the finances of the municipality in order to meet the needs and demands of the community. Following Cyprus' independence, the town was called upon to address the risk of economic collapse, which emerged from the lack of appropriate legislation and the abnormal political situation that prevailed after the Turkish Cypriot revolt in 1963. Despite the hardships, the finances of the municipality improved remarkably, thus laying the foundations for the cultural and financial growth of the town of Karavas.

A. Cultural Development

Step by step, municipal infrastructure projects were implemented which made it possible for the town to provide

efficient services to its citizens, upgrade their cultural standing and raise their standard of living. The town was constantly expanding in line with the general town planning schemes, thus assuming the features of a modern and thriving city. Initially, the municipal offices, the municipal markets and other municipal services were housed in private rented buildings. The Town Hall was built in 1958 and housed the offices of the municipality, the Municipal Market, the Municipal Theatre, the Community Library, the Social Welfare Services, the Foundation of the Union of Greek Women, a patisserie, cafeteria and other services. Apart from the central Municipal Market, a branch operated in its own building to serve the residents of the southern and central sections of the town. Moreover, a new municipal abattoir was built at a distance from the residential area, which applied modern methods and complied with hygiene regulations. The municipality ensured that all the squares and streets of the town were given names and numbers, that mail was delivered, that public post boxes were available and that postal agencies were established. The municipality promoted the maintenance and asphaltting of streets and built new roads, including the road that connected Kefalovrysos with the southern part of town and the forest

road of "Gomaristra". To ease congestion and better regulate traffic, some streets were converted to one-way streets, while specific bus stops and parking lots were designated. Gradually, street lighting was renovated (oil lanterns, mercury lamp brackets, electric lighting). Following persistent efforts on the part of the municipality, the problem of the town's water supply was solved through government water well drilling.

Conscious of the citizens' craving for learning and the importance of education, the municipality included the establishment of schools in its list of immediate priorities. As already mentioned, at the end of the Ottoman rule, Karavas began to turn towards the development of the letters, having as its intellectual hub the monastery of Acheiropoietos, and later on the famous old boys' school of Karavas (1863-1925), which functioned as a co-educational school. Teachers who served at this school in the first years of British rule were Georgios Psyllos from Pallouriotissa (1880-1885) and Yiannis Constantinidis, who lived in Lapithos (1886-1889); then followed Georgios Ch.

Spourdis, Michael Tsiakkas and Nicholas Kalavas from Karavas. Meanwhile, a girls' school was established in 1883 in the yard of the church of Panagia Evangelistria. A boys' school was built in 1930, with Michael Tsiakkas as headmaster, and a girls' school in 1940 under the direction of Eleni Christoforou. The great interest the people of Karavas showed for development and progress was enhanced by a rare figure of the times, the liberal, patriotic reformer and inspired doctor of medicine, Ioannis Pigasiou. Besides his diverse social action, as Chairman of the School Board he was very particular about organisational matters in schools, and he contributed to the development of extra-curricular activities of the teachers in the community which in fact became a tradition in Karavas. Before 1974 there were two primary schools, the First and Second Urban Schools of Karavas. Around 1930, a kindergarten operated briefly. After the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, the kindergarten functioned at first under the supervision of the municipality and later on of the state.



The church of Panagia Evangelistria in Karavas before 1974. Photo: Press and Information Office archive



The First Urban School of Karavas today.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

A number of children attended classes for one or two years after primary education at the Acheiropoietos monastery. The Higher School of Lapithos-Karavas opened between 1910-1912, while in 1917 students from Karavas studied at the Higher School of Lapithos, built on the east side of Lapithos on the border of the two sister cities. Subsequently, the school evolved into the Coeducational (mixed) Greek Gymnasium of Lapithos, focusing on the classics and science, which functioned as the intellectual breeding ground of the area. Notable and zealous teachers worked at the school making it known throughout the island. The school also had students from the outskirts of the town which resulted in the development of close links among the inhabitants of surrounding villages. Private higher schools operated in Karavas at the same time. In 1920-1922, the teacher Nicholas Xenis founded a higher school and in 1930 Savvas Sergiou followed suit. His school had 35-40 students. Moreover, the Karavias School operated from 1969 until the Turkish invasion, providing studies in English and Business. During the 1973-1974 school year there were 235 registered students. In 1960, the Diocese of Kyrenia founded a modern camping site to the eastern borderline of the Lapithos Reform School, next to the monastery of Acheiropoietos. Twice a year and for a period of 22 days, the camping site hosted about 120 boys and 120 girls from the Sunday schools of the Kyrenia district. After the revolt of the Turkish Cypriots in 1963 and up until the Turkish invasion of 1974, the site was used as a military camp by the 190 Artillery Squadron stationed in the area.

The schools, the athletic clubs, the scouts, which were initiated in 1948, and other organised groups, such as the committee for intellectual development, the Committee on Heroes' Monuments, the Karavas art lovers club, all these functioned under the auspices of the municipality. They played a key role in the intellectual, social and cultural development of Karavas. Equally significant was the establishment of the Folk Art Museum (1961) by the Karavas art lovers club. National and religious celebrations, sports events, lectures and other activities were held. The activities of the athletic clubs of the town offered indispensable support to the cultural development of Karavas. The first athletic club in Karavas was founded in 1930 under the name Aris. The club boasted many sport and cultural activities over the years of its operation until 1974.

The Union of Karavas Youth was established in 1943 and it functioned alongside Aris. It was dissolved in 1957, merging with the new association Athletic Union of Karavas (AEK). All the athletic associations of Karavas, including Aris, joined AEK. This new athletic club of the town demonstrated rich athletic and cultural activity at a very difficult time. Of particular significance was its role in bringing together the youth of Karavas and encouraging them to engage in intellectual, cultural and athletic pursuits. Aris athletic club was reestablished in 1960, as a result of certain problems regarding the autonomous orientation of the club. Aris continued its athletic and cultural activities until 1974.

From its foundation up until July 1974, the athletic club AEK had a remarkable journey in athletics and cultural activities, and achieved many distinctions. During the years 1973-1974, the football team of the club participated in the third division championship. The club also excelled in basketball, volleyball, table tennis and track-and-field sports. Its contribution to culture was substantial and qualitative through dance groups and theatrical performances. In addition, the Cultural and Athletic Association of Karavas (PAOK) was established at the beginning of 1974. During its brief existence, PAOK managed to assemble 350 members from Karavas in order to engage in cultural and other activities.

Volunteers, schools and organised groups also participated in events held by the municipality. The most important of these events were: a) the two-day long Whitsun festivities held at Lampousa which were attended by almost all the residents as well as many people from surrounding areas.



Ceremony at Karavas Municipality courtyard, around 1965. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

The first day consisted of field and track competitions and the second day included water sports as well as dance and rhyming couplets song competitions. b) the feast of the people of Karavas living overseas which was launched after the independence of Cyprus by the mayor Ioannis Harmantas in honour of the natives of Karavas living overseas, who were concerned about their home town. It should be noted that there were so many natives of Karavas living in the USA that they created their own association, "Lampousa." The feast was held every summer at the "Mills" or the Municipal Theatre and included lectures, theatre performances and Cypriot dances, which many expatriates attended. In the same context, the book "Karavas" was published, dedicated to the people of the town living overseas. c) The third and important festival was the "Lemon Dance," a tribute to the major product of Karavas. It was held since 1951, usually in mid-September, when the lemon harvest was due. Couples danced balancing a lemon on their foreheads. The couple that

held the lemon the longest won the contest. The judges also picked the prettiest girl from the participating couples on the dance floor, and she was declared Miss Lemon.

Karavas stretched from the foot of the Pentadaktylos mountain range to the coastal region and was divided into four quarters (parishes). The upper quarter (Pano Geitonia) was built on the site where the old mills were located near Kefalovrysos (old fountain), around a green valley with huge trees and pine trees. In the area of Mezere was the church of Agios Georgios. The lower quarter stretched out over the flat plane of the town. It was the neighbourhood with the neoclassical mansions, in the midst of which the church of Panagia Evangelistria dominated. It was built in 1906-1917 by the inhabitants, during the tenure of mayor Gregoris Hadjilambrou. The cafes, clubs and shops were in the centre of the town. On the west side lay the quarter Exo Geitonia. At the highest point to the west of Karavas was built the chapel of Agia Irini. A few years before the Turkish invasion, a new quarter came into



Lemon traders in Karavas, 1964.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Festival for the migrants of Karavas, 1968.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

being at Exi Mili, near the ruined chapel of Agios Andreas (Ai Antria). The people of Karavas grew up and thrived in a constantly improving natural and cultural environment, confirming through their overall activity their strong intellectual background and their Greek origin.

B. Distinguished personalities of Karavas

Karavas society has sired people who have been brought up with Greek-Christian values and principles, providing excellent examples of humanity, hard work, fighting spirit and patriotism. They have participated in the national struggle

for liberation against the Ottomans and in the Balkan wars, just as the ancestors of the Karavas people participated in wars against the Persians, led by Onisilos, Kimon, Evagoras and Alexander the Great, and under Iraklios, during the Byzantine period, again fighting the Persians. It should be noted that 46 Karavas people were recruited as volunteers in the Greek army during the Balkan wars, among them Nicholas Maouris and Christoforos Tofas, who were killed in Macedonia in 1913. Others, such as Gregorios Maouris, a teacher, and Costas Efstathiou were wounded. Apostolos Apostolou wrote in one of his letters that he is "fighting on the front line for the freedom of our Great Motherland." Later on, he was killed during World War I, in the battle of Scra in Macedonia in 1918, and Constantinos Maouris fell in Verdun, in France, in 1916 fighting as a volunteer in the allied French army. The municipality put up a plaque at the First Elementary School in Karavas in their honour, which read: "fell while fighting bravely." It is worth noting the following prominent personalities of the beginning of the 20th century: Gregoris Hadjilambrou, a notable of Karavas who served as mayor (1908-1926), was very active in local society and was a pioneer in building the church of Evangelistria. Ioannis Pigasiou, as a medical student at the University of Athens, fought as a volunteer with other Karavas people in the First Balkan war. His reports from the war front were published in the newspaper "The Voice of Cyprus." Karavas people also contributed a great deal to World War II. These included Georgios Mouskis, who fought on the Maginot Line, in Dunkerque and in Malaysia, Eftychios Lefkaritis, who fought with the American army in the Philippines, in the big battle of Guadalcanal in the Pacific Ocean, and Loukas Pieri Hadjiloukas, who also fought with the US army, and was wounded in the big battle of Monte Cassino in Italy. Five Karavas people participated in the Korean War, serving in the US army.

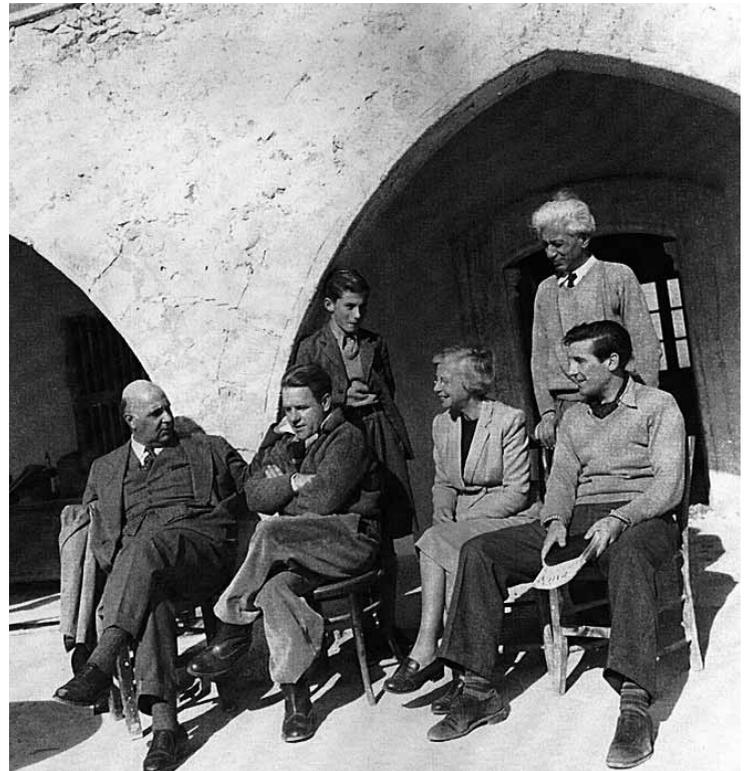
In the liberation struggles of Cyprus, there are references to Michael Trifourtzis, who along with other Karavas people took part in the October uprising of 1931, known as the Octovriana, and was killed in Kyrenia. After independence, the municipality named the street where he lived after him and his photograph was put up at the Municipal Library of Karavas. A planned memorial in his honour and in honour of Kyriakos Matsis was never built because of the Turkish invasion. During the EOKA liberation struggle of 1955-59, the

'Golden Eagle of Machairas', Gregoris Afxentiou, was given shelter in the homes of several people from Karavas. With the help of other members of EOKA from Karavas, Afxentiou married secretly at the monastery of Acheiropoiotos on June 10, 1955. The 'Golden Eagle of Pentadaktylos' Kyriakos Matsis, just as many others who were on the wanted list, would find refuge in the Karavas area where they would coordinate the struggle. Many people from Karavas were imprisoned and tortured by the English. One such leading personality was Iakovos Patatsos, from Karavas. The painter and folk writer Adamantios Diamantis is another such person, who inspired the Folk Art Museum of the Society of Cypriot Studies and served for a number of years as Museum Director.



Doctor Ioannis Pigasiou, photo from Ipiros in 1914.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Adamantios Diamantis with Nobel winning poet Giorgos Seferis at the monastery of Acheiropoiotos.

Photo: Cyprus, memory and love through the eyes of Giorgos Seferis, Nicosia 1990, Laiki Cultural Centre

When the Greek Cypriots decided in 1962 to organise themselves to protect the newly established Republic of Cyprus from paramilitary Turkish Cypriot groups, which Turkey had begun to train immediately after the independent state of Cyprus was declared, about 100 volunteers from Karavas formed the Karavas Company. During the armed conflict instigated by the Turkish rebellion in 1963, these volunteers guarded part of the shores of Kyrenia and took part in many battles. Once the Company concluded its mission, it passed the baton to the National Guard, which was established in 1964 and in which many Karavas people have served.

It was inevitable that Karavas, having such fighters and intellectuals as their role models, would develop culturally and become a distinguished town with possibilities and prospects of becoming a prosperous town. The staging of national, religious, sporting and cultural events organised by schools, clubs and the municipality, their social character aside, which provided entertainment and enjoyment, also brought to the community financial gains. They were an attraction for



The inaugural ceremony of Karavas Folk Art Museum.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

locals and foreign visitors, who in combination with the economic activity and the hard work of Karavas people, promoted economic development as well.

C. Economic Development

The town of Karavas is built on prime land, sandwiched between the mountains and the sea. Its geographical location has offered its residents the possibility of engaging in various professions. Many were fishermen, based in the picturesque fishing harbour near the monastery of Acheiropoietos, others worked in animal husbandry and others in the building industry. However, the main pillars of its economic development were farming, trade, small industries and tourism. A decisive factor that has led the residents to become farmers was the morphology of the soil, coupled with the water from Kefalovryso. In the irrigated planes, in the old days, they planted cotton, taro, vegetables and mulberry trees to breed silk worms. At the same time, they cultivated cereal, olive trees and carob trees, while the watermills in Karavas ground wheat, olives and carobs. In more recent times, lemon trees were cultivated on a scientific and organised basis, thus contributing further to the economic development of the town. The fertile land, the climate and the plentiful supply of water from Kefalovryso, on the one hand, and the hard-working inhabitants on the other, turned Karavas into a “sea of lemons.” According to a population census in 1972, there were 203 businesses in the town, employing 495 people. The residents

were farmers or fishermen or worked in animal husbandry, and during the last years prior to the Turkish invasion, many Karavas people had developed the tourist industry, even though their main occupation was the cultivation of lemons. Lemons were distributed to every corner of the island and thousands were exported, thus rewarding the hard work and the toil of the producers.

The founding of the Karavas Cooperative Society “Soteria” (meaning salvation in Greek) in 1917 played a pivotal role in the development of the town. This was the third such cooperative established in Cyprus. Ioannis Pigasiou was a pioneer in setting up the cooperative, who gave it its name, declaring that ordinary people would be spared from money lenders by using the cooperative. At the end of 1973, “Soteria” served more than 1,000 members and had a turnover exceeding one million pounds. In 1947 the Cooperative Grocery was established and two years later, in 1949, the Cooperative Society of Olive Oil Producers. In 1954 the Cooperative Society of Lemon Producers was founded, since the main product of the area was lemons. An important step was the establishment of the Cooperative Society of Lemon Producers of Kyrenia District (SELEK) in 1962, a secondary organisation which brought together local cooperatives with the participation of the lemon producers of the entire district, including Karavas producers. This helped exports to be sent abroad directly from Famagusta port, where SELEK had its own packing plant, in the Famagusta industrial area.

Tourism was another source of income for the local economy. Monuments, green pastures, the combination of the mountain scenery with the sea, the climate and the beautiful beaches attracted local and foreign visitors throughout the year, mainly in the summer, when people gathered from every corner of Karavas to enjoy its thousands of colours and aromas, which emanated from the sea, whisked through the fields full of lemon blossom and combined with the pine trees on the mountain. In the old days, visitors used to stay at the monastery of Acheiropoietos or in small hotels in the village, such as “The Paradise” hotel owned by Christos Frakala, which opened in 1931 and the “Pantheon” hotel which was built in 1960. Increased demand led to fast tourist development. Villas, hotels, restaurants and holiday resorts were continuously being built on the beach and on the mountain slopes, all of them in an authentic natural



Zephyros hotel in Karavas, 1974.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Zephyros hotel after the modifications made by the illegal Turkish regime. It was renamed 'Merit'.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

environment. The most known holiday spots on the beach were at Pente and Exi Mili. Some holiday spots were: "Pente Mili" (five miles) and "Exi Mili" (six miles), "O Xrysos Vraxos" (the golden rock), "I Neraida" (the fairy), "Klearxos," and further east "Pikro Nero" (bitter water). Near the sea, there were the holiday spots of "Anemomylos" (windmill), "Churchill Gardens," "Fontana Amoroza" and "Prasini Kilada" (green valley). Further up on the mountain slopes, we see "Myloi" (mills), which provided serenity and a cool environment, in the shade of plane trees, and guests would listen to the gurgling water from Kefalovrysos. Shortly before the Turkish invasion, the hotel "Zephyros" opened, a four star hotel

on the beach, with 400 beds, and further to the west the "Mare Monte" hotel with modern facilities and small apartments by the sea, with 152 beds. Prior to 1974, there were applications pending for building permits for another three hotels and tourist apartments, with a capacity of 1,500 beds.

Folklore art as well as crafts were also developed and were in fact thriving before the Turkish invasion. Woven items, wood carved objects, lace, silk and folklore architecture were some of the folklore art works made in Karavas. Nature helped develop a sense of taste and elegance. Economic prosperity, water and the land provided the means, while the know-how and the skills of the residents created works which demanded specialised knowledge. Karavas had skilled workmen in all fields: wood workers used to make chests, chairs decorated with various designs, ploughs, wooden planks with sharp stones used in farming and looms. Other skilled labourers worked for the construction and maintenance of watermills and olive mills, and dealt particularly with cutting and assembling mill stones, since Karavas had four water mills and 37 olive mills.

In Karavas, just as in nearby Lapithos, there were important workshops for woodcarving. Karavas wood carvers produced - with exceptional skill - facades of buildings, chests, trunks with embossed illustrations, mainly of flowers, cypress trees and birds. Harvadjiounis is a renowned Karavas wood carver, who at the end of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th century, built a two-storey building in the centre of the town for his daughter. Older houses in Karavas were important examples of folk architecture. On the front door, the words "Jesus Christ the Victorious" and the date of construction were embossed in plain geometrical décor. Once you entered from the front door, there was the courtyard and a hall, a necessary room for any house, which was covered, with arches and the floor was constructed from sea pebbles. Decorated with flower pots and every kind of flower, it was a place of work as well as a place of rest for the members of the family. From here, one could see the superior expression of beauty and love of their homes which characterises Karavas people. The rooms of the house, usually two of them, opened up in the main hall. Then there was the "makronari," a narrow and long room, used as a kitchen, with carved cupboards, shelves and a fire place. It was also a working area with a loom. The room with the arch was the



The bread given as a gift to the bride on the first Monday after the wedding.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

bedroom of the house and had the second loom of the house. Some of the wealthy homes had a second floor too. In the modern part of Karavas, the majority of the houses were neo-classical in style, built with taste and affection by the skilled workers of the village.

Weaving was the main occupation of the women of Karavas. They weaved fabrics for their dowry but on several occasions they used weaving for commercial purposes, thus contributing to the family income. Depending on the time of the year, either they would work for tradesmen, or they would tour villages in the area selling their products. In older times, because of the water from Kefalovryso, Karavas produced cotton and the women weaved cotton material as well. "Alatzies," made of cotton, were used as towels, table cloths, and clothes for women and men. Women also made lace and embroidery. A unique lace, made only in Karavas, is "fervolites," and as people used to say, "Karavas is the birthplace of fervolites." This kind of lace is however also made in other European countries. The name, it must be said, comes from the French language (frivolite). To make this type of lace, one needs a small shuttle (makoukoudi), around which the thread is wrapped. Another kind of lace is needle lace, with very delicate and complex designs. "Asproploumi" (white décor) was a typical type of lace for the dowry. On silk material, women applied a lot of taste and craftsmanship,



The traditional embroidery of Karavas "Fervolites".

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

and produced what is known as "lefkaritiko lace" (from the village of Lefkara). They also made various other types of silk embroideries, thin or thick, with twisted or plain silk, for shirts, underwear and generally clothes, bed covers, sheets, silk embroidered pillow cases, all of which were a basic part of the dowry of Karavas women. The breeding of silk worms and the production of silk helped in making silk garments. The silk industry in Karavas reached very high levels in terms of quality.

Karavas hosted very noteworthy private collections of all these types of folklore art. Unique samples of this art are proof of the wealth of the place and its people. The town had reached a high level of development and prosperity, which was enviable. Increasing prosperity was certain, had it not been for the Turkish invasion and occupation, which destroyed and reversed a centuries-old course and displaced its inhabitants. In 1973, Karavas numbered 3,000 people and it was the third largest town in terms of population in the Kyrenia district, after Lapithos and Kyrenia.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF KARAVAS AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Karavas was the first witness of Turkey's invasion. The Turkish invaders made their first landing on the coastal area known as "Pente Mili" (Five Miles) and "Pikro Nero" (Bitter Water)

on July 20, 1974. The first victims were the owners of restaurants or cafes in the area, who were either killed in cold blood or taken prisoners. On August 6, during a ceasefire, the Turks managed to capture the entire area of Karavas-Lapithos. The list of those killed or missing (17) includes 42 residents of Karavas, among them Karavas community leader Elias Manoli, who was murdered in his garden. Thirty seven people, not hailing from Karavas, who defended the place, were either killed or went missing. In addition, 81 people were injured. After the capture of the town by the Turkish invaders, 31 residents found themselves enclaved in the town in October 1975 and 23 in February 1976. They were all expelled in August 1976.

Since then, their human rights, just as the rights of all displaced people in Cyprus, are being flagrantly violated. They watch the fruits of their labour being demolished and see their dream to rebuild Karavas as being based on the hope to return to the land which for centuries they have looked after, revived and which blossomed, spreading its cultural light. This land is the Ithaca of all the people of Karavas, of the municipality and the organised groups and associations of the town. Having expelled all the legitimate residents of Karavas, and after the town was settled by Turkish Cypriots and Turkish immigrants, Turkey proceeded to the next stage: to eradicate every shred of evidence of Greek and Christian civilisation.

A. The occupied town of Karavas without its legitimate residents

The premeditated plan to turn this area, as well as others, into a Turkish place includes the expulsion of the legitimate

population of Karavas and the arrival and settling of Turkish Cypriots from the southern part of the island and settlers from Turkey itself, in their stead. These people have usurped the properties belonging to Karavas' residents, under the instructions of the occupation force. Illegal buildings and other constructions now lie in many Greek Cypriot properties. The unrestricted construction boom, without even the least respect to the environment, cements and wipes out the greenery, the town's beauty.

The intimidation and expulsion of the legitimate residents, which is in line with a political decision, was followed by premeditated and organised looting, starting with the homes of the indigenous population, with all their belongings: household items, wood-carved chests, shelves, wardrobes and beds, embroideries, fervolites, needle and silk lace made with taste by the women of Karavas, private collections of folklore art were all loaded onto boats and transported as loot to Turkey. Houses with an impressive folklore architecture, but also more modern wealthy houses of urban architecture, have been looted, destroyed or handed over to Turkish conquerors, proud of their counter-civilisation mindset. Through systematic efforts aimed at obliterating any evidence of Greek civilisation as well as at changing the historical past of this area, the Turks aim to consolidate an occupation regime and to force the displaced people of the region accept the fait accompli of the invasion and the occupation. This policy also includes giving Turkish names to places, including Karavas, which has been named Alsancak (Red Region).



The "Pente Mili" beach in Karavas, where the first landing of the Turkish troops took place on July 20, 1974.

Photographs: Left: Karavas Municipality archive Right: Press and Information Office archive

The archaeological site of Lampousa lies abandoned, without any upkeep, and many priceless items as well as archaeological finds have been stolen or destroyed. The presence of the Turkish occupation army in the area of Acheiropoietos and in the significant archaeological site “Katalymata,” the illegal razing to the ground carried out by bulldozers of the Turkish military, in addition to the construction of private installations on the coastal area, rich in archaeological finds, annihilate Karavas’ cultural wealth each passing day. At the same time, they deny scientific research of important findings, which are either destroyed or become part of the illicit trade in antiquities.

The monastery of Acheiropoietos has been turned into an army camp of the Turkish occupation force and its chapel has been pillaged and portable icons and holy objects have been removed. The carved “Cave of Agios Evlambios” has been turned into a storage room for useless material of the nearby Turkish occupation army camp. The church of Agios Evlalios has suffered the same fate. These religious sites lie within a military zone and the Turkish occupation troops do not allow any conservation, and as a result these Christian monuments are at risk of being lost forever. The wall paintings that adorned the caved church, the early Christian hermitage of Panagia Galakterousa, fell victim to the destructive lust of Turkish illicit art dealers in 2011. They had apparently been looking for treasure

and they destroyed large chunks of these wall paintings. The Christian monuments of the area have been abandoned and the occupation regime does not allow any repairs or refurbishing. The only thing left standing in the chapel of Agios Antonios is a very small part of its apse, while the half-derelict chapel of Agios Andronikos has been turned into a hen pen. Out of the 14 chapels within Karavas’ municipal boundaries, some are in ruin, others have disappeared and others have been reduced to rubble, the only reminder of their prior existence. The district churches – Agia Irini (1804) and Agios Georgios (1843) – pillaged, bare and in ruin, with no doors or windows, are now home to pigeons and are at risk of collapse. The third and largest community church, of Panagia Evangelistria (beginning of 20th century), at the centre of Karavas, has been turned into a mosque, which only confirms the intentions of the Turkish conquerors.

An entire centuries-old cultural heritage is being obliterated because of the racist and counter-civilisation Turkish policy, while humanity is deprived of important evidence of its history. An entire physical and spiritual civilisation has in reality been destroyed. However its indigenous creators are always ready to rebuild it whenever Karavas is freed and they return to their homes and properties. Liberation and returning home is an oath taken by the displaced municipality of



The invaluable frescoes of Panagia Galaterousa with clear signs of destruction. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

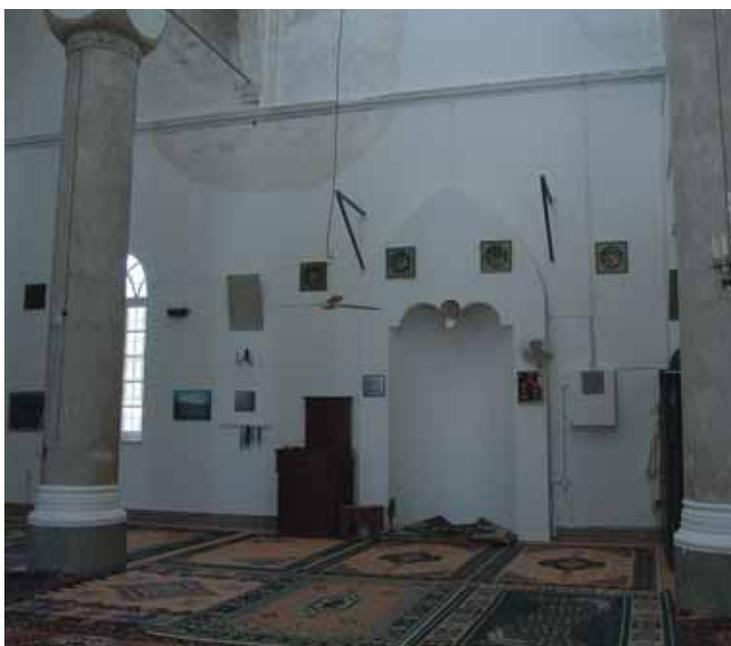


The archaeological site of Lampousa today in the municipal boundaries of Karavas. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

Karavas, which is active at home and abroad to achieve this fundamental goal.

B. Activities of the displaced municipality of Karavas

The modern-day Attila has turned the town into a land of pain and despair for its displaced inhabitants. Nonetheless, in the memory of those who created this beautiful town of



The church of Panagia Evangelistria which now operates as a mosque. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

Karavas and for those who knew it before the Turkish raid, it remains an untouched example, an image of rebirth, for whenever the day of return comes. Today, the inhabitants of Karavas are spread throughout the government-controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus, mainly in Nicosia. There are also Karavas people living in Limassol, and others abroad, in the USA, Britain, Australia and South Africa. Karavas people have organised themselves, in Cyprus and overseas, into associations and clubs with an impressive array of events. The municipality of Karavas has taken a notable initiative to publish on an annual basis the review "Karavas News," which lists all the activities of the municipality and the organised groups from Karavas, giving at the same time historical and other information about the occupied town before the Turkish invasion and occupation, in addition to information about the displaced people of Karavas.

In Cyprus, the municipality organises various events and activities linked to the town's history, civilisation, traditions and customs. The main objective is to preserve the memory of the town until the people of Karavas return to their ancestral homes, following a just and viable solution which will secure the three fundamental freedoms of movement, settlement and the right to property throughout the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and which will safeguard the human rights of all the inhabitants of the island. All these efforts are being coordinated, wherever possible, by the Karavas municipal council, in cooperation with older and more recent organised groups from the town.

In December, 1991 elections were conducted among the displaced residents of the town of Karavas in order to elect a Mayor and council members. Panicos Tsentas was elected mayor, and was then re-elected for a second term (1992-2001). In December 2001 Yiannis Papaioannou was elected to the post and was subsequently re-elected for two consecutive terms (2002-present).

The refugee association "Karavas" was established in 1987 with the sole aim of strengthening the links among the scattered people of Karavas and to prod them into action with a view to promote the town and intensify the struggle for justice and return to their homeland. In 1994 the sports club of Karavas town, Karavas Sports Union AEK, was reactivated and was soon embraced by all the people of Karavas at



The premises of Karavas Cultural Foundation in Strovolos which houses all the organised groups of Karavas.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

a solemn ceremony together with the other two sports associations of the town which operated before 1974: the sports association Aris and PAOK association. These two associations were incorporated into AEK which was renamed into Karavas-Lampousa Sports Union and which has rich cultural activity as a refugee organisation. In the recent past, the Union has achieved particular distinctions in volleyball. In 2010 it won the cup in the men's first division and in 2012 it won the championship.

The Karavas School Board also has some remarkable activities to show for and it contributes significantly to educational issues. Working in close cooperation with the municipality, it organises various events relating to the education of pupils and students from Karavas. In 1998 the Cultural Foundation of the people of Karavas was founded as part of an initiative to enhance the town's cultural tradition. Its primary objective was to promote and preserve cultural data and works of folklore art which relate to Karavas, an effort which all the people of Karavas have embraced with great pride. The Karavas Cultural Foundation was established with the collaboration of Karavas Municipality and the refugee association "Karavas," with a grand objective: to acquire premises which will house all clubs, associations, societies and organizations of Karavas. This was achieved through a long process and the support of all the people of Karavas. The building was inaugurated in November 2001 and since then all organised groups from Karavas, the



The mayor of Karavas Yiannis Papaioannou offers a true copy of one of the silver trays from the second treasure of Lampousa to Mr. Nikos Shacolas for his invaluable support towards the mission and work of the municipality. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

municipality and associations have their own premises in Strovolos and use it for different types of activities and events. The cost of the building was funded by the government, donations from various people from Karavas, and friends of the town. The largest donation came from Nikos and Elpida Shacolas, who also offered an additional generous donation to set up a fund for scholarships for the municipality of Karavas (2002) for young people hailing from Karavas for their academic achievements.

It is worth mentioning the initiative by Karavas municipality and the refugee association "Karavas" to set up a provident fund for Karavas people (2008) to help families with financial problems. Another initiative worth noting which was welcomed by the municipality and the "Karavas" refugee association was the establishment of Karavas Youth Municipal Council in 2007. Young people, through their own institution, have supported the work of the municipality, consolidating its mission through significant events.

The municipality's annual itinerary usually includes national and religious celebrations, anti-occupation events, conferences, speeches, exhibitions and in general cultural, sports and other events as well as events for young people, the elderly and Karavas people who live abroad, who are also organised in their countries of residence. In the USA there is the "Lampousa" association of New York, in Australia the "Melbourne Lampousa" and in England the "Lapithos, Karavas and suburbs".



Photo from the “Lemon Dance” event organised by Karavas Refugee Association in 2011. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Cultural event with the participation of all the organised groups of Karavas, 2010. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Demonstration against the illegal Turkish invasion and occupation at Makedonitissa Cemetery, 2010. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



The mayor submits a resolution to the Prime Minister's residence in London, October 2010. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Meeting at the Greek President's Karolos Papoulias office in 2009. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

All these organised groups related to Karavas support each other and enjoy close cooperation with the municipality. The common denominator of their efforts is to project the history and the culture of Karavas prior to the Turkish raid and its occupation, thus preserving its memory and stressing the desire of the people of Karavas to return to their ancestral homes. At the same time, there are concerted efforts to raise awareness both locally and abroad with a view to gaining the attention of decision makers, in the hope that they will contribute towards a just, viable and workable solution of the Cyprus problem.

As part of these efforts is the twinning of Karavas municipality with various regions in Greece. Specifically, the municipality was twinned with the island of Lepsi in the Aegean in 1995, the community of Kithera Karavas in 1997 and the municipality of Amyndeio in Macedonia in 2008. In addition to this, a Protocol of Cooperation has been signed with the Fourth Municipal Department of Thessaloniki Municipality. Such twinning moves strengthen relations between the municipality and the people of Karavas with the local authorities of these Greek regions and their inhabitants, and subsequently foster cooperation, solidarity and mutual exchange of information on issues of concern to both sides.

The municipality of Karavas is active in other countries as well. It participates in missions abroad – England, the USA and European countries – organised by the Cyprus Union of Municipalities, the displaced municipalities or by Karavas municipality itself. The objective is to brief political and other public figures in these countries on the continuing international crime of

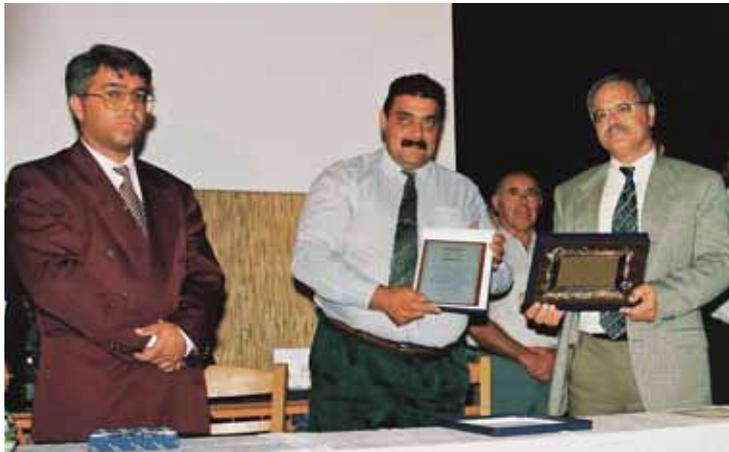
Turkey's invasion and occupation and its tragic consequences, such as the displacement of Greeks and other Christians, the illegal colonisation of the occupied territories in Cyprus, the usurpation of properties and the changing of place-names.

The Turkish invasion, and the consequent displacement has turned upside down the lives of the indigenous people of Karavas. Their violent displacement from the land where they were born and raised has caused serious financial, social and psychological problems. In spite of all this, their faith in their just struggle for freedom and return to their homes, their industrious nature, their yearning for education, their progressive spirit, and in general their activities in the places which host them temporarily, are testament to strong cultural back-



Excursion - pilgrimage in Chania, Crete, 2003.

Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



The twinning ceremony with the Community of Karavas in Kithera, 1997. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



The twinning ceremony with the Municipality of Lepsi, 1995. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive

ground and their resistance to the injustice they have been forced to endure since 1974. The people of Karavas, the older ones as well as the younger generation, are proud of their origin, and in cooperation with the municipality, the associations and their organizations are trying to preserve the memory of this very beautiful town until new circumstances allow the reunification of their homeland under conditions of real freedom and dignity, helping the town rediscover its lost glory.

The spirit of the displaced and the soul of Karavas are not complacent, they stir and preserve the memory but primarily they keep the hopes of returning home alive. Constantina Pitta Pisiali writes: "The key-symbol, the key-hope will be passed on from one person to the next, no matter how many

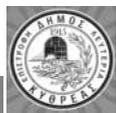
years it takes. One day we shall unlock our ancestral home because when we left we did say that we would come back to continue our life from where we left off. This is a human right and nobody can deprive us of this right." Eleni Christophidou also shares this firm objective, of returning home. This is what she writes in one of her poems: "We knew it then, we also know it now, the road we followed on that hot day, at noon, led nowhere. It always leads back there." Chrystalla Hadjilouka Charalambous, addressing the young people, as if appealing to them, seeks to convey the passion for freedom of the previous generation: "You, the young people of Karavas, hope of our enslaved land (...) Give a fresh branch to freedom which is looking for a place to blossom".



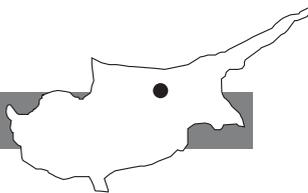
The twinning ceremony with the Municipality of Amyndeio, 2008. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



The Karavas Youth Dance Group – The group took part in a cultural event organised by the "Portokalia" Association in Karavas Kithera during August 2012. Photo: Karavas Municipality archive



Municipality of Kythrea



Kythria, Kyrka, gorgeous and blissful Kythrea, is one of the municipalities of the district of Nicosia. It is part of the region of Mesaoria, thirteen kilometres northeast of the capital, at the foot of the Pentadaktylos mountain range. To the north it shares boundaries with the district of Nicosia and Kyrenia. Kythrea extends over a large area, stretching from the plain to the top of Pentadaktylos. It borders with Klepini, Trapezou and the government forest to the north, and Chartzia to the east. It lies on the boundaries of ancient Chytroi together with the villages Palaikythro, Voni, Trachoni, Exo Metochi and Neo Chorio. Archaeological findings at the locations of “Agios Demetrianos” and “Aspropotamos” indicate that the area has been inhabited since the Neolithic Age. Circular houses were discovered in the area of Kythrea, just like those found at Erimi village, as well as similar pottery and steatite figurines of the Copper Age (locations: “Skali”, “Kamares”, “Sellas” etc.). The key reason for its continuous habitation was the abundance of water and the high plains.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Kythrea

Two kilometres east of Kythrea lie the ruins of the ancient city of Chytroi. According to the historian Xenagoras, Athenians arrived in Cyprus (1200 B.C.) after the Trojan War, led by Chytros - grandson of Akamas and great grandson of the famous king of Athens Theseus. They settled in a city which had been built by Thraco-Phrygians of Asia Minor. The name of the city is not known, since writing had not yet been invented and therefore its name could not be inscribed. Chytros gave his name to the city, probably in remembrance of Locris near Thermopylae, where there is a large water spring like that of Kefalovrysos. The locals called “chytroi” the hot sulphur springs at the entrance of Oiti, as the Greek historian Herodotus reports (“At the entrance there are sulphur springs, called Chytroi...”). References to the city of Chytroi are made by many in ancient times, among them the orator Lysias the son of Kephalos (458-379 B.C.) and

Xenagoras (2nd century B.C.). The latter is cited by several authors such as Alexander of Ephesus (86 B.C.) and Stephen of Byzantium (Stephanus Byzantinos 500 A.D.), who says: “A Cypriot city which, according to Xenagoras, got its name from Chytros, son of Alexandros who is son of Akamas.” The city became an important ancient kingdom of the island, bordering with Lapithos, Kyrenia, Ledra, Idalion, Golgoi and Salamis. It continued to exist and prosper for many centuries. Besides the founder of the city, the only known king of Chytroi is Pylagoras (Pilagura), who paid tax to the Assyrians. An inscription on the royal prism of Esarhaddon (673/2 B.C.) lists Pilagura as the king of Chytroi (Kitrusi), one of the ten kingdoms of Cyprus. As early as the Bronze Age it was already a trade centre. The choice of site was probably made in conjunction with Salamis of Tefkros. During the reign of the king of Salamis Evagoras I, Chytroi, like all the Cypriot kingdoms, were placed under his single command.



Copper-stone figurine of the birth-giving goddess.

Photo: Cyprus Department of Antiquities

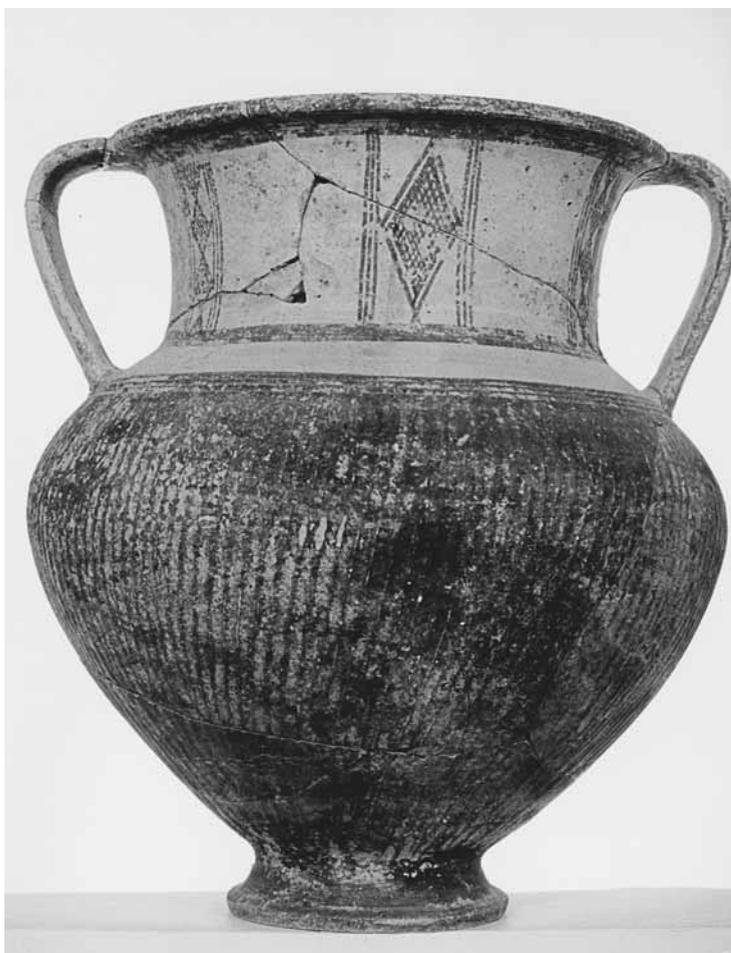


Inscribed limestone cap (ca. 700-500p.Ch.) From the Sanctuary at Skali in Kythrea.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

It is worth noting that the water of Kefalovrysos was transported to Salamis via an aqueduct.

At the top of the mountain Katsourkas stood the ancient citadel of Chytroi, which was encircled by walls. Remains of temples were located in the surrounding area, dedicated to Aphrodite (Skali), Apollo (Voni) and Artemis. Tombs and



Amphorae (Black Slip Painted I ware).

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

a votive statue of Kilikas - son of Stasikrates (500 B.C.) were found on Katsourkas mountain where the temple of Aphrodite stood (500 B.C.). An inscription in the precinct of the temple of Aphrodite refers to a king, not necessarily of Chytroi, as a benefactor of the sacred area of Kythroi. Many other inscriptions refer to people worthy of note, like the family (330-260 B.C.) of Aristocrates, father of Skythinos, Nayia wife of Skythinos, their children Leonidas (doctor) and Apollonia, Python (Epicurean philosopher) brother of Skythinos. Other inscriptions refer to the family of Glykon and to ordinary Greek names of inhabitants of the ancient kingdom.

B. Origins of the name of Kythrea

According to many history scholars like K. Spyridakis, N. Clerides, J.C. Peristianis and K. Kyris, Kythrea succeeded the city of Chytroi. They believe that even its name is rooted there (Chytroi-Kythroi-Chyttria-Kythria-Chytrea-Kythrea and Chyttria-Kyrka-Jirka). An inscription from late antiquity indicates that the day dedicated to the ancient flower festival at Chytroi also bore the name Kithros-Kythria. Hieroclis confirms the existence of a city called Kythroi. According to Simos Menardos, it seems that Kithroi was in fact Palaikythro. This compound name indicates relocation to a new village. As per Savvas P. Christidis, former mayor of Kythrea, it was founded in the first century B.C., long after the already known and thriving city of Chytroi. He argues that both cities coexisted for several centuries, until the destruction of the earlier city by the Arabs (806 A.D.), and therefore Kythrea is not its continuation or successor. He also believes that Kythrea derives its name from Kythira, the Ionian island situated between the Peloponnese and Crete. Kythira has running waters just like Kythrea while its inhabitants from time immemorial engaged, among other things, in transit trade in the Aegean and the Mediterranean basin. One of the products traded were the millstones from Nisyros in the Dodecanese, which were a vital part of the new mill technology of the times. The morphology of the ground and the abundance of water in the area of Kythrea led to the establishment of a city and to the construction of mills, making use of the millstones and the water of Kefalovrysos. The origin of the new inhabitants lent its name to the city Kyth(i)raia and not Kythrea as it had come to be known. This interpretation may also be supported by the fact that the feasts of the cult of Aphrodite took place both at Kythrea

and Kythera, from which (Kythera) Kytheria Aphrodite derived its name, as cited by K.Spyridakis and K. Kyris.

Regardless of the name's origin, it is certain that the findings of excavations at Kythrea (remains of temples, public buildings, abundance of pottery, tools, inscriptions, mosaics and coins) of the Neolithic, the Copper Age, the Mycenaean, Geometric and Classical periods through to the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, indicate wealth and superior Greek culture, which has not yet been studied in depth.

B. Ptolemaic and Roman Period (294 B.C. – 364 A.D.)

There is very little information about Chytroi during the Classical period. Nevertheless, it appears that the city flourished from Alexandrine times onwards, when it had a senate and municipality. Under the Ptolemies, Chytroi was self-governed, like the other city-kingdoms of Cyprus. Various inscriptions found in the region confirm the rule of the Ptolemies. One such inscription refers to Arsinoe of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and was dated to 277-271 B.C. Another refers to Queen Cleopatra, and a third is a dedication by the son of the overseer of the torch relay races Astyanax, to King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra, the Philometors, and to the gods Hermes, Hercules and Tyche (Fortune), who probably had temples in the kingdom of Chytroi. Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek mathematician, astronomer and geographer (2nd century B.C.), refers to the city in the feminine singular form and includes it among other important cities of the island: "Chytros, Tremithous, Tamassos".

The Romans maintained the existing legal and administrative system. The city had a Senate, a Gymnasium and its representatives made offerings to the Greek gods of the times. The Gymnasium catered not only for sports but also for the general public education of the youth, under the master of the Gymnasium. The inhabitants continued to be engaged in the cultivation of the land, in manufacturing and decorating clay pottery, as well as in the trade of the goods they produced. According to inscriptions, it appears that olives were a major crop, along with honey production referred to in the agricultural treatise "Geoponica" of Dioscorides (1st century B.C.); others cite Dioscourides (1st century A.D.) who reported: "Attican honey is excellent, particularly that of Himittos, and from Cyprus that of Chytroi". The stone aqueduct of the ancient times was repaired, expanded and

continued to supply the citadel with water, the city of Chytroi as well as the heavily populated city of Salamis. The road network was apparently designed over the remains of the older one, Hellenistic, classical or even earlier. Although it was a circular, coastal network, it also traversed Chytroi. In addition to the aqueduct and the road network, archaeological finds at the locations "Katsourkas," "Skali," "Plataniotissa" etc. (coins, funeral gifts, pottery, tomb inscriptions), as well as the magnificent statue of Apollo (found at Voni), and partic-



Bronze statue (1st century A.D.) of Septimius Severus – Kythrea.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

ularly the larger-than-life sized bronze statue of Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211A.D.) discovered at the location "Agios Demetrianos" of Kythrea (both at the Museum of Nicosia), indicate that the city continued to flourish throughout Roman rule as well. (Note: the statue of Septimius Severus was found in 1928 by Turkish Cypriots, who broke it into pieces looking for treasures. Reassembly of the statue was completed in 1940). The link between Septimius Severus and Chytroi may be related to the reconstruction of the aqueduct from the location of the spring to the citadel - from the city of Chytroi to Salamis. The aqueduct was upgraded and completed by Emperor Justinian. It is also considered likely he was honoured for interrupting transportation of water to Salamis, to the benefit of Chytroi. In 45-46 A.D., the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, following the Roman road network of Cyprus in their mission to preach Christianity, also passed from Chytroi. The local inhabitants embraced the new religion, demolished the temples of the old religion and built Christian churches in their place.

C. Byzantine Period (330-1192)

During the Byzantine period, the city was among the 14-15 dioceses of Cyprus. The first recorded Bishop was Nikitas, with no further information given. The next Bishop of Chytroi was the renowned Pappos (311-368/9), who ordained Bishop Epifanios of Salamis, later Archbishop of Cyprus. The chronicler Machairas refers to other bishops of Chytroi like Efstathios, Fotinos, Spyridon and Demetrianos. The Diocese of Chytroi was represented in several Ecumenical Councils. Its seat was possibly the monastery of Agios Antonios near Kefalovrysos, which owned large estates. It is said that Agios Demetrianos served in the monastery. According to information derived from the 'Life' of Agios Spyridon, it seems that the city lived peacefully and in prosperity. A contributing factor to this was the spring of Kefalovrysos and the city's geographical position as a road junction to Kyrenia via Pentadaktylos. However, in 806 A.D. Kythrea endured for the first time the devastating raid by the Arabs. The Sultan Harun Al Rashid wanted in this way to avenge the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros for refusing to pay the taxes they had agreed. The 'Life' of Agios Demetrianos (890/1-915) contains important information. The raiders fanned out across the city, slaughtered those who resisted, plundered, and, on leaving, set fire to the dwellings. The city was reduced to



Portable icon of Agios Demetrianos, Bishop of Chytroi.

Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

ashes and ruins. The soldiers carried away spoils and captives - men, women and children - but showed respect to Bishop Demetrianos who followed them to Baghdad. There, assisted by the diplomatic mission of Istanbul, he made to the Caliph his arguments on the innocence of the faithful and the unfair treatment they were subjected to. Thereafter, the Caliph ordered the release of the captives and their return to Cyprus along with whatever had been taken from them. When the inhabitants returned to their burnt city, they divided themselves into large groups and built several villages nearby. Most of them chose to live in Kythrea, which Byzantine authors like Hieroclis Grammatikos (500 A.D.) mention by the name Kithroi-Kythria which seems to be a variation of the pronunciation of the words Chytroi-Chyttria. The first to cite the city by the name Kythireia among the 15 cities of the island

was Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (911-959 A.D.). At the same period, the Patriarch of Constantinople Photios lists the city of Kythros among the dioceses of Cyprus. The use of all three names at this time shows the close relationship between them, even a match of the two cities that make up present-day Kythrea. Towards the end of the Byzantine period, Byzantine generals of Armenian descent set up garrisons, forts, passages and a small number of Armenian frontier guards, at strategic points around Kythrea.

D. Frankish Rule (1192-1489)

The arrival of the Franks on the island marked the beginning of the persecutions of the Orthodox Church, which peaked in 1222 when the Catholic Church reduced the number of the Orthodox dioceses from 14 to four. The Diocese of Chytroi was abolished and a large part of its property was confiscated. Among the property confiscated was the monastery of Agios Antonios, which ceased to function as an Orthodox monastery. Most of its property was sold or handed over to Maronites or Armenians from Cilicia, who settled in the area and were accorded preferential treatment. Out of the entire estate of the monastery, the Franks kept the "Tsifliki" (the Manor) which devolved to an Order of monks from the Italian city of Mantua (Mantova), assuming that the chapel of 'Agios Georgios ton Mantoudon' refers to them. The Franks also usurped the monastery of Theotokos (the Virgin Mary). Other usurpations included the renowned water mills of Kythrea. In the early 13th century, the Queen of Cyprus Alice endowed the mills to the Latin Archbishop of Nicosia who in fact had jurisdiction over the whole region. However, the water mills were destroyed by the Lombard soldiers of Emperor Frederick II as they retreated from Famagusta to Nicosia.

The most important crops in the city at this period were cotton and silk. They were two very valuable raw materials, among Cyprus' major export products, which at the same time sustained the Cypriot weaving industry. Moreover, reeds from the reed bed of Xeropotamos, were used extensively in construction, fences, mats, baskets and other useful objects. The parish of Syrkania in Kythrea derived its name from the French words 'sur cannaie' (at the reed bed). Another account says that it is the neighbourhood of Syrkanian people, who are Syrian Christians who found refuge on the island and escaped the Muslims. The name of the hill Sielouvarta, overlooking the church of Panagia Chardakiotissa, is also a

Frankish remnant and originates from the words 'à ciel ouvert' (in the open skies). Similarly, the name of the quarter Syrkale comes from the words 'sur galere' (in the gallery - galley). It is probable that there were convicts in this quarter who were used in forced labour. West of the Syrkale lay Draperko, from the French word 'draperie' (a workshop for bed covers and woven textiles). It appears that lime was produced in the area above Kefalovrysos named "Fourtoulisia," which is a distortion of the French words "Four de la chaux" (lime kiln). Also noteworthy are the names for the city used by the chronicler Leontios Machairas (1426) for this period, detailing dioceses and bishops: "Nikitas, Bishop of Kythirea" and elsewhere "to Kythrian Agios Epifanios".

E. Venetian Rule (1489-1571)

A great number of documents during Venetian rule, providing information regarding management and use of the wealth of Kythrea, confirm that Kythrea with its water mills excelled as a financial centre and as a source of wealth and support for state funds. During this period it was regarded as a principal village since it had more than 60 houses, three priests and more than 1,000 inhabitants. The low-rank administrative posts were held by Greeks, while the higher-rank positions were held by Venetians, who were appointed by Venice. The officials held both ecclesiastical and administrative offices. The governor "tzivitanos" was responsible for the maintenance of order and was at liberty to impose mild punishments. A juror (homotes) was a sworn local judge, over 60 years old, who tried cases in the village. The jurors, like the priests, belonged to the class of emancipated serfs (fragkوماتon). By decision of the Council of Ten, homotes and castellans (governors of castles) were obliged to keep separate birth and death records of the colonists.

During this period, the chronicler Frangiskos Adami (1566) and Florios Vustronios (1570) refer to the city by the name 'Chyttria'. Inscriptions on tombstones link the city with Hellenized Venetian nobles. One such tombstone is that of Akylina, daughter of Ioannis Smerlinas and wife of de Nolia Frangiskos Flaggini. Members of the same family were also the Orthodox Bishop of Limassol and Thomas Flagginis. Flaggini bestowed his property to the Greek community of Venice where the Flaggini institute was founded. Greeks and Greek Cypriots could attend the institute gratis.



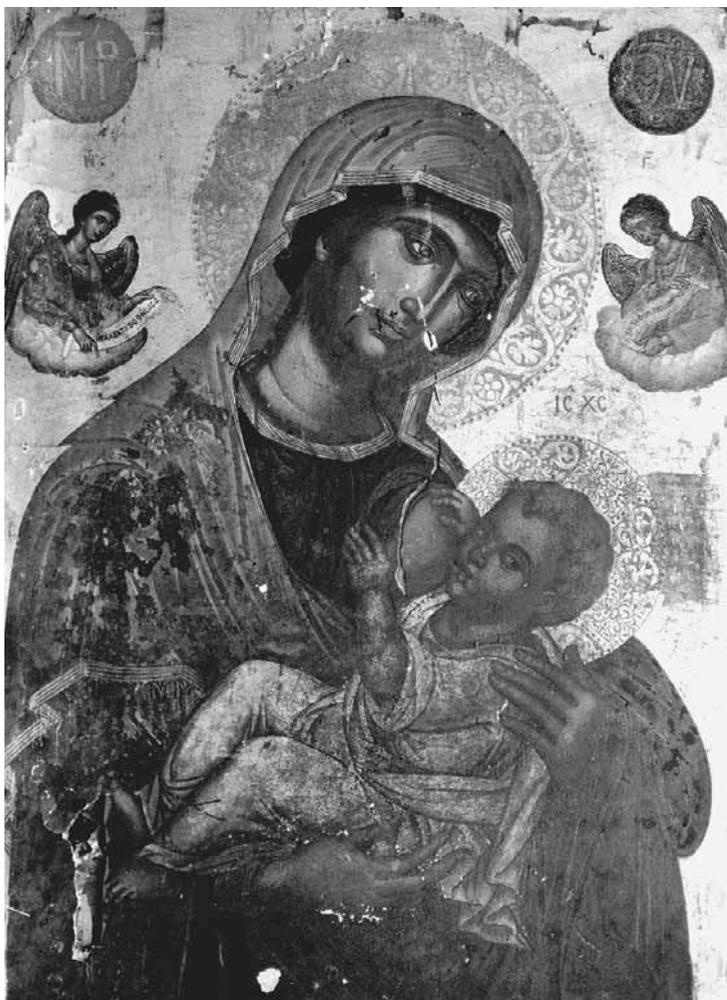
Current photo of the parish of Syrkania. The Church of Agia Anna tis Syrkanias was built around 1850. The Church has been converted into a mosque. Many of its icons had been brought from the older church of Agia Anna. Its iconostasis dates to the 17th century. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

E. Ottoman Occupation (1571-1878)

When the Ottoman Turks conquered Cyprus, parts of the Orthodox Church property that had been taken by the Franks were returned to it. The area of the "Tsifliki" (the Manor) came under the ownership of the Archdiocese, along with the church of Agios Antonios. The section of the monastery that had been given to the Armenians by the Franks was not returned. At this time, influential Latin and Latin-Greek families in the region of Kythrea converted to Islam. Several uprisings took place between 1572-1670. Armenians and Maronites also participated in the uprisings, under the direction of the crypto-Catholic leadership of the Orthodox Church of the time. After each failure, several defeated members of the military personnel reached a compromise on condition they convert to Islam. In the 17th century, instigated by the propaganda of Rome, the Maronites caused friction with the followers of the Orthodox Church in Kythrea. Archbishop

Chrysanthos, along with the dragoman (interpreter) Hadji-iosif and later on the dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, invigorated the Orthodox followers. The conflict was concluded with an agreement which envisaged that the Maronites return to the Orthodox Church the premises of the monastery of Theotokos as well, while the Orthodox Church returned to the Maronites the church of Agios Antonios. Over the course of time, the few Maronites of Kythrea sided with the Greeks in order to confront the heavy taxation and Ottoman maladministration. Archimandrite Kyprianos records significant information about the prevailing situation in his work "Chronological history of the island of Cyprus (1788)". Also, a monk from Kythrea (Kythreotis) Joakim makes a similar reference in his Chronicle titled "Together with the Holy God (1750-1786)".

The Ottoman Turks found the town to be ahead of its times in agriculture, animal husbandry, sericulture and trade. It is



Current photo of the parish of Syrkania. The Church of Agia Anna tis Syrkanias was built around 1850. The Church has been converted into a mosque. Many of its icons had been brought from the older church of Agia Anna. Its iconostasis dates to the 17th century. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

worth noting that in 1604, traders from Kythrea exported cabbage to Europe. The prosperity of the inhabitants was evident in the large number of churches and chapels in the area. With the entrepreneurial spirit, scientific achievements and hard work of the people of Kythrea, the town continued during the Ottoman occupation as well to be an administrative, financial and political centre, though with a declining trend. Travelers describe the town as the largest settlement of Mesoria, verdant all over because of the Kefalovrysos spring. It was full of orchards, vegetable gardens, lemon trees and many mulberry trees, a highly productive town with the largest production in silk and cotton on the island. It is interesting to observe the names attributed to it: Richard Pockocke (1738) and Alexander Drummond (1745-1754) called it 'Citraea';

Jovanni Mariti (1760-1767) refers to 'Citrea' or 'Cirga'; Archbishop of Sinai Constantinos (1765 or 1766) calls it 'gorgeous Kythrea' or 'Kytheria'; Michael de Vezon (1792) calls it 'Cithrea'. Don Domingo Badia (1806), who calls it 'Cuhera', says he abandoned "with an indifferent soul, poor Kythrea which has retained very little of the beauty that singled it out..."

Documents of the time refer to financial matters, property management like leases and purchase of land, use of flour-mills etc., as well as to major incidents, which victimized Kythrea because of its wealth and the importance of the mills for food supplies. Control over the 32 flour mills in the area meant dominion over any central administration. This explains the uprising or rebellions of the Aghas which aimed at taking charge of the town. Two major rebellions are cited

which accomplished their aim as they cut off the supply of flour. One was in 1680 by Ahmet Agha Tzifoutoglou and the second in 1765 by the commander of Kyrenia, Halil Agha. A second rebellion by Halil Agha in 1766 failed because the flour mill had not been seized. In 1821, Kythrea too offered her children to the Greek national liberation struggle. Among them were Hadjichristodoulos Hadjipapagiannis (Pellopapas), Hadjipetrakis Kythereios and Kostis Petrakides. Besides the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos, whose sister had married in Kythrea, victims of the brutality of July 9, 1821 from the area of Kythrea were Hadji Ionas, Hadji Attalias and Christodoulos Protopapas, and Father Ioannis from the area of Kythrea. There followed confiscation of Greek Orthodox property and other atrocities.

Problems in the Ottoman Empire obliged the Sultan to grant some basic freedoms to Christians. The people of Kythrea began to pay priests and laymen to teach their children. In 1855, two boys' schools were established, one in Agios Andronikos and one in Chardakiotissa with teachers from Kythrea. A private school too began to function in 1856 with Hadjikonstantinos Papapetrou as teacher, while in 1860 a school

of mutual instruction was founded by Hadjipetris. The first school building was constructed in 1868, in the grounds of the church of Agios Andronikos and at its expense. Michael Severis, who had studied in Smyrna, was appointed the first teacher. That same year, the church of Agia Marina financed the construction of a girls' school in the church precinct, with first teacher Polyxene Papazacharia, a graduate of Phaneromeni Girls' School (1860). Furthermore, a boys' mutual instruction school was built in the parish of Chardakiotissa where Constantinos Papadopoulos from Constantinople taught until 1878.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

From the first years of British rule, it was apparent that Kythrea was slowly but surely recovering its former vitality and reputation. The foundations of the church of Panagia Chardakiotissa were laid as early as 1878 and the building was completed in 1912 with voluntary work. Feeling that they had been liberated from the Ottoman yoke, the people of Kythrea began to reconstruct their city, with industriousness and open-mindedness. However, a local authority was



The deserted and desecrated by the Turks Church of Agia Marina has been plundered by the occupation regime.

Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive



The Church of Panagia Chardakiotissa has been converted into a mosque. The extremely valuable icon of Panagia Chardakiotissa is the only one salvaged along with the relics of Agios Demetrianos and the Holy Belt of the Virgin Mary.

Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

needed to organize and coordinate all the activities. It took several years to satisfy this need, while other communities had been declared municipalities immediately after adopting the relevant legislation (VI, 1882). The delay was due to the objections on the part of owners or tenants of water mills and water resources as well as producers, regarding the management of the water of Kefalovrysos. In 1910, Costas Milidis, native from Kythrea residing in Egypt, made a considerable contribution towards the cost of transporting the water. At long last, the interested parties agreed in 1915 to the establishment of a municipality, which would undertake the implementation and general management of the project. Subsequently, despite intrigues on the part of the colonial administration and the struggles to shake off the colonial yoke, the inhabitants of the town, and indeed all of Cypriot Hellenism, worked conscientiously and with integrity, making the most of the, albeit restricted, freedoms, for a better future. From 1960 to 1974, the imposed “quasi-independent” Republic and the conflicts between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, largely prepared and instigated by the colonial regime, affected but did not prevent the cultural, social and economic progress of Kythrea. The growth rate was such that raised the standard of living and quality of life of the inhabitants.

A. Cultural Development

Kythrea was divided into six parishes: Syrkania, Chardakiotissa, Agios Georgios, Agios Andronikos, Agia Marina, and Chrysida which was added in 1915. The various accounts regarding the origin of the names of some parishes are fascinating. An interpretation given regarding the name of Syrkania (ibid, Sec. ID) is that it was customary for residents of other parishes and nearby villages to go there for a promenade (syriani-syriania-syrkania). According to another view, the name derived for Tzyrka + nia (new) (New Kythrea) = Syrkania. The name Chardakiotissa was drawn from its location as it is built in a ravine-charadra (Charadrakiotissa - Chardakiotissa). Alternatively, it could stem from Chordakis, an individual who carried there the icon of the Virgin Mary after the fall of Constantinople (Chordakiotissa - Chardakiotissa). According to tradition, the name Chrysida comes from the name Chryseis, daughter of Chytros, the founder and first king of Chytroi. The other parishes were named after churches bearing the same name.

The first elected mayor of Kythrea was Nicolaos Kattamis (1915-1919). The limited funds the municipality had at its disposal (proceeds from professional practice licenses, gateway charges,

weighing fees, slaughter taxes), as well as the size of the town and the nature of the terrain did not allow the implementation of significant projects. As a result, the water piping project did not move forward, neither then nor during the next two terms of Kyriacos Lemonofidis (1919-1929). Similarly, the elementary schools of Chrysidea (1880), Chardakiotissa and Agios Andronikos (1882) continued to operate on this scanty budget. The Girls' School of Agia Marina (1885) was built, pavements were built, roads maintained and improved both within the town and those leading to the fields, and a bypass was constructed for wheeled vehicles in order to avoid the steep hill. Oil lanterns were installed to provide street lighting and limited facilities were provided to abattoirs. Efforts were made at times to apply strict regulations in order to protect water from pollution. The police station at Kythrea, with eight to 10 officers, was responsible for all the villages in the area except Mia Milia. During the term of office of mayor Lemonofidis, the new primary school "Agios Andronikos" was built at Toumba, at some distance from the upper parishes of the town. As a result, along with the failure to implement the water supply and irrigation project, Lemonofidis lost the elections to his rival Christos Kattamis (1927-1937).

The financial crisis of 1929, the arson attack against the Government House (21 October 1931) and the illiberal laws that followed, adversely affected the activities of the municipality. Nevertheless, the water piping project was completed (1932-1933) and public water taps were installed in convenient locations in the town. Another important project carried out was the construction of a road that solved the problem of the steep roads. After the October 1931 popular uprising, the colonial administration appointed the municipal councils. With the resignation of C. Kattamis, Antonis Attalides was appointed mayor in 1937, who resigned three years later when C. Kattamis was again appointed to the position. Around 1940, a single-classroom school was established next to the church Chardakiotissa, which bore the expenses. The school was to cover first and second grade elementary school needs for the parishes of Syrkania and Chardakiotissa. A few years later, the school was dissolved and all the pupils of both parishes attended the new elementary school built in the parish of Chardakiotissa at the location of the old school. Along with liberalization and the reintroduction of elections (1943) came the ideological confrontation of the Left and Right wing candidates. The Right wing coalition of C. Kattamis won the

two electoral contests. Kattamis remained mayor until his death in 1948. The deputy mayor Everton Iacovides assumed office until the expiration of the term of the council. During this brief period, the new road from Seragio to Kefalovrysos was paved, a first for Kythrea. During World War II, the municipality took on the distribution of goods for the Supplies Department. In the meantime, the ideological confrontations in Cyprus assumed dimensions of national rift. In the 1949 municipal elections in Kythrea, the candidate of the Right Stylianos Athanasiades was declared the winner (1949-1953). Taking advantage of the conflict between the Right wing candidates Athanasiades and Lemonofides, the Left joined forces with a third candidate, Georgios Kyriacou, who won the elections in 1953 and remained in office until 1963. The London-Zurich Agreements which established the independent Republic of Cyprus envisaged separate municipalities in five major towns. Municipal councils in other towns were appointed so that the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community would not seek separate elections and thus divide these municipalities as well. In 1964, Savvas Christides was appointed mayor. As a consequence of the damage caused by the struggle of 1955-1959, in which the participation of Kythrea was universal, and the 1963 crisis, there was lack of respect toward municipal regulations. The revenues of the municipality were also restricted as the majority of the people of Kythrea worked elsewhere; the water of Kefalovrysos was distributed to 13 other villages of the Mesoria plain, the water mills shut down and agricultural production dropped. Property taxes, which included houses, remained the only revenue. Despite these initial difficulties, through scrupulous management of government loans during the decade 1964-1973, the municipality implemented major projects in the town that promoted its cultural and social development. New employees were appointed; roads were repaired; remote settlements and houses that had not been provided with electricity in 1958 to save funds, were now supplied with electric power; electric light bulbs were installed in roads, and trees were planted in the hills around Kefalovrysos. Moreover, a new water pipe network was installed allowing home supply, a garbage collection truck was bought, the telephone network was expanded and the number of public phone booths increased, a new modern municipal abattoir was constructed, arrangements were made for a government doctor to visit the town in appropriate installations, the mail



Kefalovrysos before the Turkish invasion of 1974. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

delivery system improved with a suitable office and a permanent employee. Through the intense and continuous efforts of the municipality, the government adopted the proposal for the construction of a new Nicosia-Kyrenia road through Kefalovrysos of Kythrea. With the arrival in Cyprus of the Greek Contingent, Kythrea became the headquarters of a regiment which essentially became part of the town. Moreover, a branch of the Red Cross was established which had all-round significant activity. In 1968, it helped flood victims and in 1974 the refugees of Kyrenia after the first phase of the Turkish invasion. A stadium was constructed in 1970 off the Nicosia-Kyrenia road. Finally, the municipality planned to set up a new tourist centre in the square of Kefalovrysos. It also intended to upgrade Seragio square and to smooth out the sharp turns on the roads. These projects did not materialize because of the Turkish invasion. According to reports, in 1974 there were more than 2, 000 applications pending with the

municipality for plot division permits for housing construction.

In the field of education, a new elementary school was built in Chardakiotissa, expansion and improvement works were effected on the installations of Agios Andronikos School which encompassed a large site and a forest. The reading room "Kythrea" resumed operation with the aim to encourage intellectual development and infuse the youth and society in general with moral principles. The other two elementary schools, Chardakiotissa and Chrysidas, as well as a municipal kindergarten and a nursery were also functioning before the Turkish invasion. School management until 1963 lay with the municipal council. From then on it was taken over by the School Board. In 1965, a municipal library was established and accommodated in premises below the municipality. It served as a lending library and reading room. The Kythrea Regional High School was established in 1969. Following actions by the



Visit of Archbishop Makarios to Kythrea after the devastating floods of 1968. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

municipality, major improvements were made to the roads that connected the town with the outskirts, using district administration funds, in order to facilitate student access to schools. In 1973 the school was adapted to offer four years of education incorporating science and studies in commerce. It was well-equipped and had twelve classrooms, an art room, three laboratories (physics, woodwork and domestic science), a typing room, a music room with a piano, a teachers' room, a library and an auditorium. These schools fostered significant personalities of the letters, the arts and the sciences who excelled in various sectors of activity on the island and ascended to high office in society, both in the private and the public sectors. Kythrea acquired particular reputation as "daskalomana" (mother of teaching) and many Cypriots had teachers from Kythrea in primary and secondary education.

The municipality also developed significant national, social and cultural activities, organizing various events in the squares

and the cinema hall of Kythrea to mark national and religious anniversaries, particularly in communal gatherings on Easter Monday, the feast of "Easter tap" (29 June) and the fair of Agia Marina (17 July). An important place in the cultural life of Kythrea was held by theatre productions. At first it was the shadow theatre. Subsequently, the teacher Stavros Kypragoras set up theatre groups of young people in the upper and lower parishes which, either competing with each other or working together, staged several performances with great success both in Kythrea and elsewhere. The performances took place in the courtyard of the churches of Chardakiotissa, Agios Andronikos, in the courtyard and the hall of the Girls' School Agia Marina, and in squares. The emergence of radio, television, professional troupes and the opening of a cinema hall in town brought an end to theatre groups. In the ten years before the Turkish invasion, these groups were replaced by pupils of both primary and secondary schools which staged contemporary plays or Greek tragedies in the context of various events.

The various organisations and associations of Kythrea played a significant role in the cultural development of Kythrea. Among them three athletic clubs: The Athletic Union of Kythrea (AEK), founded in 1950 and which owned premises at the Seragio square; CHYTROI, founded in 1957 with premises in Chardakiotissa, and the Intellectual Athletic Club (PAOK) founded in 1962 also with premises at Seragio square. The clubs owned stadiums, libraries, various amusement games, and had dance groups etc. Apart from the spread and development of sportsmanship, the clubs developed remarkable social, artistic, cultural and intellectual activity: they organized national and Christmas celebrations, dances, lectures and theatre performances, which attracted the interest of the inhabitants; they highlighted the cultural heritage and developed a sense of solidarity among them; they invigorated, entertained and helped the society of Kythrea improve intellectually but mainly proposed a way out, and offered young people constructive pastime, keeping them away from bad habits.

It is certain that the intellectual, cultural and social life of the town would not have reached such levels without the possibilities afforded as a result of concurrent economic development.

B. Economic Development

Beyond the beauty of the inspired, age-old culture of its people, nature has further endowed Kythrea with an abundant and unique variety of plants, many of which are endemic, rare and endangered. One of these is the uncommon plant *Salvia veneris* (*Salvia Aphrodite*—Kythrean sage), which is found exclusively in the area of Kythrea. The natural wealth and beauty, the diligence and brainpower of its inhabitants and the water of Kefalovrysos are the components of the economic growth of Kythrea. The spring of Kefalovrysos is considered its creator. Without it, it would not have been possible for so many people (2955 inhabitants in 1960) to live in such a limited stretch of land. On completion of the project of cementing the furrows in 1958, a process initiated in 1956, a significant reduction was noted in the quantities of irrigation and domestic water supply of the town and 13 other villages in the eastern Mesaoria. The Irrigation Association of Kythrea-Kefalovrysos was established in 1962 to defend the rights of water proprietors. The Irrigation Association shared premises in Seragio with the Association of Lemon Producers. The following year, the expansion of stone furrows was completed. Thanks to the availability of water, agriculture and animal husbandry flourished in Kythrea. An assortment of fruits and vegetables were cultivated, among them the renowned cabbage of Kythrea, considered the best in Cyprus. There were huge areas with olive trees, lemon trees and other fruit trees. It was the time when the town supplied Nicosia, Limassol, Lamaca and Famagusta with canned olives. Kythrea also supplied Nicosia and villages of the eastern Mesaoria with vegetables. The juicy lemons and the considerable production opened up the possibility for exports. In 1925, the first Farmers' Association of Kythrea and the surrounding areas was founded, to protect the interests of the farmers in area. The founding of the Association of Lemon Producers of Kythrea, in 1960, contributed successfully towards the marketing of citrus. Subsequently, the association joined the Cooperative Society of Lemon Producers of Kyrenia.

Apart from the above crops, cereals were also grown, especially wheat, and mulberry for silkworms. The cultivation of land was the main activity of the inhabitants of the lower parishes, while for many it was an additional source of income. The area above the Kefalovrysos and Koutsoventis was covered with carob trees which mostly belonged to the



The plant *Salvia Veneris* (Kythrea sage).

Photo: George Hadjikyriakou

inhabitants of the upper parishes. Part of the carob bean production was also exported, bringing profit to producers. Large areas, especially in Syrkania and near Xeropotamos, were covered in reeds. They were used extensively in construction and basketry, which was another source of income. The dense vegetation, nourished by the abundant quantities of water of Kefalovrysos, also fed herds of sheep, cattle and other domestic animals (donkeys, pigs, rabbits, etc.). In the upper parishes there were mostly very agile goats of local breed, which grazed on highland and were responsible for the destruction of vines in the region. In the lower parishes, there were sheep which did not cause particular problems. Sheep and goat milk was used for the production of halloumi and anari (white cheeses) which were well reputed in the market.

The water of Kefalovrysos was the driving force of the 32 flour mills in Kythrea. During World War I and the first postwar years, the mills operated at full capacity. It is thanks to them that the flow of visitors to the town increased. The town began to grow rapidly and soon it became the most significant centre of the flour-milling industry in Cyprus. What

favoured this development, apart from the water of Kefalovrysos, was its location in the wheat-producing area of Mesaoria, as well as its proximity to a consumers' centre, namely Nicosia. In the mid 1920s, the import of flour and the introduction of automated flour mills adversely affected the operation of water mills, which began to close down one after the other. By the end of World War II, almost all the water mills were rendered useless. In 1956, the company of the Christides brothers was founded, taking the flour milling industry of Kythrea, which now operated using electricity, in a new direction.

The limestone and concrete industries (1960) of the Makris family in the upper parishes were also sufficiently advanced, because of the limestone deposits of Pentadaktylos, called 'kythreika'. With the introduction of electricity, businesses acquired new equipment and expanded these sectors employing large numbers of workers. The excellent quality of lime of Kythrea swept local and foreign markets, with production reaching its peak a few years before the Turkish invasion. Both these industries, as well as the flour-milling industry of the Christides brothers constituted an important source of income for the inhabitants, contributing at the same time to the growth of the local economy and of the country as a whole. Among the industries and crafts developed in Kythrea was the production of carbonated drinks, as well as pottery, because of the abundance of water and suitable soil. Pottery was a traditional craft that began with the establishment of Chytroi and continued and improved through the centuries. Kythrea pottery was much sought-after in Cyprus (Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Famagusta) as well as abroad (mostly in the Arab world), while trading of pottery reached its peak in 1922-1923. Crafts of lesser significance were bee-farming and silk-growing. By the end of the 1930s, sericulture was of such value for Kythrea that special classes were held at girls' schools. Foreign travelers confirm that the silk from Kythrea was of superb quality. Women, particularly of the upper parishes, engaged in weaving on a regular basis, because arable land was limited and thus women had more free time. The loom was an essential piece of equipment for every house. Trading of woven textiles of Kythrea was also a good source of revenue.

Agricultural, livestock and industrial products rendered Kythrea one of the most advanced towns in Cyprus. These products brought significant profits to the inhabitants. They were also a source of revenue for the municipality, which

implemented various beautification projects, thus offering a better quality of life to the inhabitants. At the same time, trading of these products filled the state coffers. The construction of the new Nicosia-Famagusta and Nicosia-Kyrenia roads, shortly before the Turkish invasion, greatly boosted the town's economy. It should be noted that after the Turkish uprising of 1963, the Turks closed the road Nicosia-Kyrenia via Kioneli. Therefore, somehow the new roads set Kythrea free, reduced distances and facilitated the movement of people and goods, again turning the town into a transport junction. There were inns, restaurants, bakeries in Kythrea and everything that could serve locals and passersby. Most renowned was Seragio Square with its many cafes. It was a cosmopolitan centre, especially on Sundays and on major holidays. All the cafes and the edges of the paved road were packed with people, locals and visitors from the outskirts and Nicosia. Intellectuals also gathered there turning the square into a cultural centre.

The proximity of Kythrea to the capital, its natural beauty, efficient road connectivity, economic growth and prosperity, are the reasons for the population increase and the absence of urbanisation. From 1881 until 1931, Kythrea ranked second in terms of population (1630 inhabitants) in the district of Nicosia, after the town of Morfou. In the following years, the population continued its upward trend, raising the number of inhabitants in 1960 to 2955 by 1960. It has always been a



White Painted I ware.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

purely Greek community. The few Muslims of the town were mainly policemen or civil servants and not permanent residents. The 1891 census records only seven male Muslims and one female. Of the 23,771 donums of land, which is the total area of Kythrea, 17,238 belong to Greeks, Maronites and Armenians, 6383 is state land and 150 donums belong to Turks. In the early 20th century, there was only one Turkish house which was built on 20 donums of land that had been purchased from a Greek. The people of Kythrea lived peacefully, preserving customs and traditions, and enjoying the fruits of their labour; until Turkey invaded the island on July 20, 1974, forcibly displacing them. Turkey continues to occupy their town. The people of Kythrea maintained friendly relations with the neighbouring Turkish villages. Many Turkish Cypriots were employed in their workshops and in their estates as assistants.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF KYTHREA AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Kythrea offered shelter to people from Kyrenia who had been displaced during the first phase of the Turkish invasion and attended the wounded, victims of Turkish brutality. On August 14, 1974, once the defence line at Mia Milia collapsed, Kythrea itself and the surrounding villages were seized too, that is, Neo Chorio, Exo Metochi, Voni, Palaikythro and Trachoni. Turkish soldiers entered Kythrea, looted, burned, raped, tortured and killed innocent women, children and elderly people. Many went missing. The people of Kythrea fled, taking the road to displacement, as they were being bombed and strafed with machine-gun fire from Turkish airplanes and tanks. Several people were taken prisoner and were detained in the concentration camp at Voni, the church of Agios Demetrios in Kaimakli and the Pavlides Garage, where they were subjected to every kind of humiliation. The toll for Kythrea was 20 dead and 60 missing, out of a total of 118 dead and 203 missing in the area. Uprooted from their homes and possessions, the remaining population scattered in the free areas of the island, mainly in Nicosia, or fled abroad. Since then, Kythrea is under the occupation of Turkish troops. Houses and properties were taken over by Turkish Cypriots and Turkish settlers. The legitimate inhabitants of Kythrea, who excelled in all the struggles for freedom of their country, found themselves displaced. After difficult years in refugee camps and then in refugee settlements, just like the other Christian



Since the invasion of 1974, the municipality of Kythrea is temporarily housed in premises in the traditional quarter of Nicosia. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

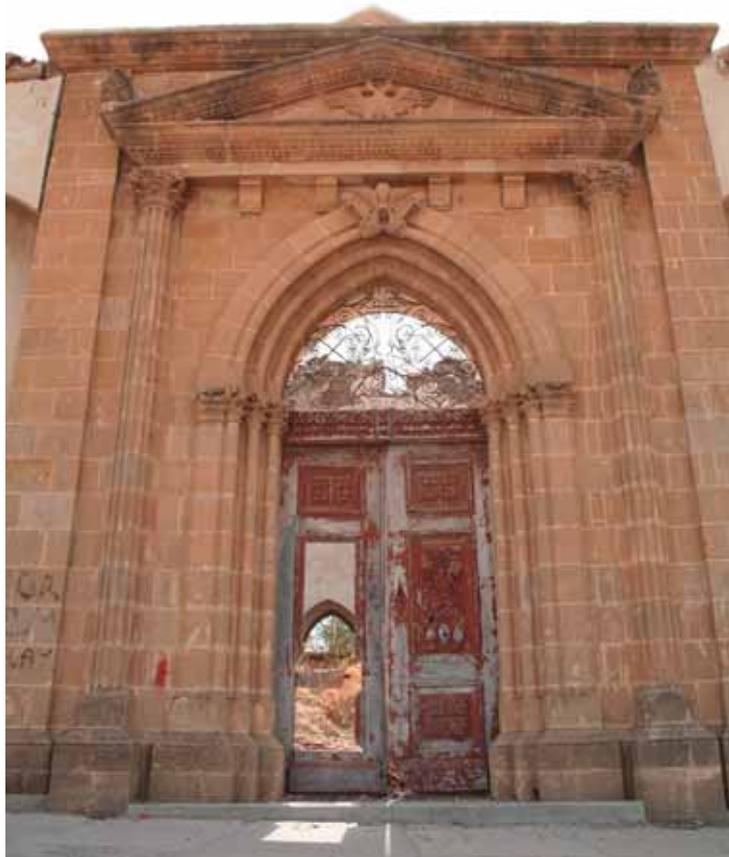
displaced persons, they began a new struggle for survival, starting their lives over from scratch, watching the rape of their town and the pillaging of their memory. Their displaced municipality - temporarily accommodated in premises in the traditional quarter of Nicosia granted by the Ministry of Interior - always stood by them. In collaboration with citizens' groups, the municipality offers its services to its displaced citizens, and participates in the struggles for freedom and vindication of the homeland. A new municipal council was appointed in the elections of December 2011. The new mayor, Dr Petros M. Kareklas, pledged intensified efforts on the part of the council in order to fulfill its mission. Many activities are in the process of materializing either through actions of the municipality of Kythrea alone or in cooperation with other displaced municipalities.

A. The occupied town of Kythrea without its legitimate residents

In August 1974, Kythrea regressed to the "poor town" of the Ottoman-Turkish rule, as described by the traveler Don Dominico. The occupation forces had Turkish Cypriots settle in the lower parishes, and Turkish settlers in the upper

parishes, in order to minimize conflict between them. As a rule, Turkish Cypriots consider the settlers foreign, with a different way of thinking which they do not tolerate. However, having been converted into a military hub for the entire region, Kythrea is mainly inhabited by Turkish soldiers. Blocks of flats have been built to accommodate their families. The illegal residents of Kythrea do not show any respect for the history and the culture of this historic town. They roam the streets indifferent and impassive. For them Kythrea is just additional booty, drenched in the sweat and toil of the now displaced, indigenous inhabitants. The big lime and concrete industries are being exploited by the occupation regime and, if reports are true, they are being usurped by the Denktash family.

Today's general outlook of the town can be outlined as follows: the stadiums at the entrance of the town are in a military zone and are inaccessible. The occupation regime tampered with the Kefalovfrysos spring which dried up as a result, causing irreversible ecological disaster. The once vibrant



The entrance of the church of Agios Andronikos as it stands today ruined and devastated. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

square has been silenced. The statue of EOKA hero Spyros Hadjiyiakoumi has been dismantled. The water mills have been destroyed. The olive groves and orange orchards have withered away. The indifference of the illegal residents is evident even in the condition of the houses: some lacking maintenance, stripped of their furniture and fixtures, others without doors or windows, and others damaged or demolished. Even houses currently appropriated by Turkish Cypriots, settlers or soldiers, remain without maintenance, like the house of Savvas Christides, former mayor of Kythrea, which is now used to accommodate the illegal Turkish "Town Hall"; or the then newly-built house of businessman Christofi Makris, which was initially used as a residence by an officer of the Turkish army and later by Turkish Cypriots. Next to the house of Savvas and Chloe Sawvidou, the invaders erected a statue of Kemal Ataturk. Clubs, schools, cafes and shops are ruined. The Greek signs on some premises have been removed and some have been replaced by Turkish ones. Libraries with valuable books, private collections of antiquities, collections of works of art, workshops and generally anything linking the indigenous population with their land has been sold or destroyed. The once Grand Lady, "geloessa" (joyous) and "kekallopismeni" (gorgeous) city, has been deformed and has fallen to decadence. Archaeological surveys were interrupted abruptly, leaving in the dark crucial aspects of its course through the ages. Archaeological finds, testimonies of history and culture, have been looted or destroyed, always as part of a cultural genocide organized by the conqueror. The huge archaeological site of Chytroi is in essence pillaged and looted.

The conquerors' contempt for what is sacred to the Christians is also evident in the looting, the abandonment and desolation of churches and chapels of the six parishes of the town. After looting and stripping them of any Christian element, the single-aisle church of Agia Anna (19th century) in Syrkania, and the church of Panagia Chardakiotissa (19th century) have been converted into mosques. The valuable objects stolen from the two churches include the icon of Agios Demetrianos, Bishop of Chytroi, which is of immense archaeological and sentimental value. The church of Agios Andronikos (19th century), neglected and burnt, collapsed, and its frescoes have been ruined. The signs of neglect are also evident in the church of Agia Marina (18th century). The Christian symbols on the bell tower have been removed.



The church of Agios Andronikos, ruined and devastated. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

The church has been stripped of its ancient and immensely valuable icons which date to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The two frescoes of the church, of Agios Georgios and the Archangel Michael, have been scraped and thus permanently damaged. There is nothing to recall the old Byzantine splendor of this single-aisle church. The Turks built a huge mosque right next to it. The single-nave church of the Holy Cross (1830) was at first converted into a store and then into a needlework classroom while its cemetery has been eradicated. The church of Agios Georgios Stratiatis (20th century) falls within a restricted military zone and is used as a storehouse for military equipment, while its cemetery has been destroyed. The monastery of Theotokos, in the same area, has been demolished by the Turkish troops. The Maronite church of Agios Antonios has also been looted and lies in ruin, as the occupation regime does not permit maintenance works. The chapels of Agios Georgios ton Mantoudon, Agios Georgios Fileriou, Agios Georgios

Potamitis, the Archangel Michael and Apostolos Loukas, have all had the same fate. Icons, iconostases, and holy relics of churches and chapels of Kythrea and its environs, have been damaged or stolen by Turkish illegal antiquity dealers. Many of these objects have been located in overseas markets. Cemeteries, too, experienced the contemptuous and destructive mania of the conquerors. In their pursuit for treasures they opened up graves, smashed tomb stones and crosses to pieces. Human bones are scattered everywhere.

The displaced municipality of Kythrea exerts strenuous efforts, informs international public opinion and makes representations to international organisations. The objective is that pressure is exerted on the occupying power to allow at least the restoration and maintenance of churches of the town. These efforts are part of a wider policy of the municipality directed both in Cyprus and overseas in cooperation



The church of the Holy Cross in Chrytida today. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

with organized citizens' groups of Kythrea. The ultimate goal is liberation and return to the town and region of Kythrea.

B. Activities of the displaced municipality of Kythrea in Cyprus

Like all other displaced municipalities of the Republic, the municipality of Kythrea regrouped in the free areas and assumed the mission to lead and represent its own displaced citizens. It coordinates them and stands at the core of the struggle for liberation and return to the hometown. This just struggle is backed by the Diocese of Chytroi, which has recently been reconstituted, under Bishop Leontios, Abbot of the monastery of Agios Neofytos in Pafos. The people of Kythrea rallied around their municipal and religious authorities, with whose support and assistance they maintain their unity and militancy.

The restructuring of the municipality was a decisive factor in reviving the historic associations, AEK, CHYTROI and PAOK.

AEK even created a football team, accepted by the Cyprus Football Association. Presently, the club is in the process of renovating and expanding its temporary premises in Aglantzia. In 2002, CHYTROI set up a dance group which is made up of children of refugees from Kythrea. This further enhances and upgrades the activities for the annual event "Traditional Dances Festival." The club also plays a leading role in the religious ceremonies for the Virgin Mary, making available for public pilgrimage the historic icons of Panagia Chardakiotissa that have been salvaged. As was the case before the Turkish invasion, all the associations organize cultural, sporting, social and religious events.

Their work is strengthened or complemented by new groups of organized citizens. In August 1975, the Association "Eleftheri Kythrea" (Free Kythrea) was established, embracing the entire region from Exo Metochi to Mia Milia. Since 1978 the association publishes a magazine bearing the same name, with



Anti-occupation protest march organized by the Municipality of Kythrea and the coordinating committee of the broader region of Kythrea, at Mia Milia checkpoint. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

noteworthy informative material on Kythrea and Cyprus in general. It had a leading role, led by the late Christodoulos Petsas, in mobilizing people to demand a return to their ancestral homes and vindication. The efforts of the association to acquire its own premises, which began in 1983, materialized in 2001. The premises were given the name "CHYTRION GI" (Land of the people of Chytroi) TH.O.I. of Palaikythro and the "Women's Club of Kythrea" are also accommodated there. The objective of the club, which was founded in 1991, was to preserve the cultural customs of Kythrea, serve as a vehicle to pass them on to the next generations, and bring the children of natives of Kythrea together, through their heritage. The club also pays tribute to intellectuals from Kythrea, for their contribution to the society of Kythrea and Cyprus in general. The latest events are indicative of the activities of the club: on March 6 2008, as part of an event marking International Women's Day, the club honoured painters Chrystalla Demetriou and Katina Ch. Petsa, and singer Kalliopi Spyrou, all natives of Kythrea. At a special gala event held on April 22 2010, the club also honoured the teachers of the region of Kythrea, Athanasios Petsas, Stelios Sykallides, George Koki, Nikos Mantis, Melantho Hadjida-Constantinou and Margarita Kyragora. The "Folklore Group of Kythrea" was founded in 2006 by former folk dancers, folk singers and musicians from Kythrea. The aim was to entertain but also to create bonds between young and old

with the sole purpose of preserving the folk culture of Kythrea and of Cyprus in general, through participation in all the events of the displaced municipality and organisations, as well as in other events both in Cyprus and abroad. Efforts in 1991 on the part of water proprietors and personalities of Kythrea to revive the Irrigation Association "Kefalovrysos" were not successful.

The municipality supports and coordinates the activities of all these organized groups; chairs the Coordinating Committee of the Greater Region of Kythrea; publishes books on the town or assists, wherever possible, in the publication of books by natives of Kythrea; contributes financially to the publication of the journal "Eleftheri Kythrea (Free Kythrea) and since 2001 publishes a desk calendar; organizes national and religious festivals, photo and art exhibitions of artists from Kythrea, and trips for senior citizens and pensioners. Also, the School Board awards prizes to excellent students who have their origin from Kythrea and the surrounding area. The municipality itself honours intellectuals and distinguished athletes from Kythrea, as for example the Junior World Champion in Skeet, Tassos Hapeshis, who was honoured in 2007. In addition, with the participation of the citizens' groups and in collaboration with the Coordinating Committee of the Greater Region of Kythrea, the municipality organizes annual anti-occupation activities at the checkpoint of Mia Milia, an annual memorial service for the victims of the Turkish invasion and those who died away from home, as well as prayers regarding the fate of missing

persons and the return of all refugees to their ancestral homes, outdoor vespers on the name-day feast of Agia Marina every year on July 16, and many other events. Following representations by the municipality to the United Nations, a mass was held in 2009 in the occupied church of Agia Marina, officiated by the bishop of Chytroi Leontios. Unfortunately, this could not be repeated in the following years because of the refusal of the occupation forces. The hope is, under the guidance of the municipality, to preserve the unity of the displaced citizens of Kythrea in pursuit of common goals and visions, at the core of which lie the liberation and return to the homeland.

The Cultural and Athletic Club of Kythrea (PAOK) built a modern building in Strovolos to serve as its temporary premises. A monument has been erected in the grounds of these temporary premises in memoriam of people from Kythrea who fell, or are listed as missing. The inscription on the monument reads: "Eternal honour and everlasting gratitude to the dead and missing of the land of Chytroi." The unveiling ceremony for the monument was held on May 2,

2010, under the auspices of the municipality. The President of the House of Representatives Marios Garoyian attended the ceremony as well as many other officials and natives of Kythrea and its environs. A service before the ceremony was officiated by the Bishop of Chytroi Leontios, with pleas and prayers for the missing, and a memorial service for the natives of Kythrea who fell during the liberation struggles. In his address, the mayor of Kythrea Michalakis Savva said, among other things that the monument "is a historic duty, a debt of gratitude and appreciation to the dead and the missing." He also emphasized that the difficult days ahead "will be a test for our determination and our unity" and that "it is imperative, under the present critical moments, to have solid unity". In his address, the president of PAOK Loukas Orphanides said that "in paying tribute to the heroes and martyrs of the motherland Kythrea... we honour our martyred town with its gardens and rivers, its lemon blossoms and jasmine, which we left behind that tragic month of August. Our very own Kythrea as we knew it and not the stabbed town, ragged, with the tattered image and distorted figure".



Anti-occupation protest march organised by the Municipality of Kythrea and the coordinating committee of the broader region of Kythrea. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

Unveiling the monument, the President of the House of Representatives Marios Garoyian stressed that “return to the motherland of Kythrea and to each fragment of the occupied homeland is a firm and permanent objective of our struggle,” and in this way “the sacrifices and martyrdom of our honoured heroes and missing will have been justified”.

The municipality is present in all aspects of social life of its citizens. Currently, it is trying to activate the youth and achieve their involvement in public affairs. Through speeches at events or through the media, the mayor and representatives of organized citizens' groups of Kythrea encourage them, so as to keep alive the desire for freedom and return. Furthermore, they appeal to the sensitivity of public opinion in Cyprus about the problems young people from Kythrea face and generally inform people of their positions on the Cyprus issue. Several of the messages communicated are addressed to the international community, foreign governments, public opinion abroad, international and regional organisations.

C. Activities of the displaced municipality of Kythrea overseas

The messages conveyed to recipients abroad are mainly resolutions adopted unanimously by the people of Kythrea during anti-occupation activities which are presented by the municipal authorities and representatives of Kythrea organisations to the Secretary- General of the United Nations. The resolution of 2 November 1986, presented during the second anti-occupation march, stressed that the Cyprus problem is an issue of invasion, occupation and as such should be considered in the pursuit of a just solution, and that the withdrawal of Turkish troops and all the settlers is a prerequisite. In his speech at an anti-occupation gathering on July 16, 2008, the first Chairman and later Honorary Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of the Greater Region of Kythrea, Dr Petros Kareklas, sent the message both in Cyprus and overseas that “Kythrea and the surrounding area, which has been Greek land throughout four millennia, emerges as a symbol of adherence to universal values, as a symbol of resistance to political expediencies and lawless pursuits”.

A resolution adopted during anti-occupation activities of July 16, 2010, states that the Cyprus problem “is a clear-cut case of massive, flagrant and systematic violation by Turkey of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, contrary to the



“Kythrea” square in the municipality of Egaleo in Attica, Greece. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

principles of the UN Charter and the provisions of numerous UN resolutions ... The Turkish army continues to occupy the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus with over 43,000 heavily armed troops, refusing to allow about 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees, who were forcibly uprooted, to return to their homes (...). The occupying forces continue, on a regular basis, to plunder and destroy the island's cultural heritage in the occupied area of Cyprus. Church property continues to be pillaged with the purpose of altering the religious and cultural heritage of Cyprus. Moreover, thousands of illegal Turkish settlers have been moved to Cyprus in order to change its demographics.” Concluding, the resolution declares that the refugees of the region of Kythrea will never relinquish their right to return to their homes and their property “for all the riches in the world (...) The Cypriots are true EU citizens and do not intend to become either privileged or second class citizens”.

During the tenure of Costas Frangoudis, the displaced municipality of Kythrea twinned with the municipality of Egaleo, Greece, with the purpose of enhancing the bonds with Hellenism. Interactive relations of solidarity and support have developed between the two municipalities. Frequent contacts bring the citizens closer and provide the opportunity to inform and be informed, to share experiences, exchange views and reinforce their struggles to confront the new threats that Hellenism is facing. The dance ensembles of the two



A reproduction of Kefalovrysos at Kythrea square, in the municipality of Egaleo in Attica, Greece. Photo: Kythrea Municipality Archive

municipalities, the dance group of the Cretans residing in Egaleo, and the Folkloric Group of Kythrea participate in events organized by the municipalities themselves or by other organisations. Each year, a delegation of the municipality of Egaleo, comprising the mayor and councillors, attends the anti-occupation events, and expresses unwavering support in the efforts to restore justice for the displaced. In her address at the anti-occupation event of July 16, 2008, councillor of the municipality of Egaleo, Chrysi Kopitsis, conveyed this very support, while sending a strong message to the world powers: "... You are not alone in this struggle. We stand by your side. We are your fellow fighters. (...) Here, at the checkpoint of Mia Milia we declare that we shall continue the struggle with you. We declare that together we will endure the difficulties for as long as it takes, in order to stop the destruction and looting of our cultural heritage and your property (...) If the mighty in the world want a solution, then the churches in the occupied areas must be able to hold mass again, fraudulent purchases and transfers of land belonging to Greek Cypriots should stop (...) We are here, we stand by you ... To fight together... The people of Egaleo will stand by you, until a just solution is achieved".

In one of his speeches (PASYDY, 22 December 2007), former mayor of Kythrea Michalakis Savva, called on everyone from Kythrea, young and old, to attend all events and activities of the municipality and organized groups of the town, in order

to send the message that uprooted Cypriots are present, struggling, that "Kythrea is alive, and awaits...it dominates our minds every day, every hour, every minute, it is alive and stunning, it has become one with our soul which cannot be enslaved, a gleaming beacon of struggle." This vigour and struggle of the displaced people of Kythrea are communicated by the Folklore Group of Kythrea through its participation in various events. Such events include: performances in the presence of representatives of the European Commission for the preservation of folklore of European nations, and European Networks (October 2007); the great feast of Sourmena-Pontos in Athens; a number of events in New Delhi of India and other cities. On February 22, 2011 the municipality of Kythrea organized in Athens an event dedicated to occupied Kythrea. Dr Nicos Orphanides delivered a keynote speech on "Kythrea: history and culture- the town of the past and the present." In 2012, the municipality of Kythrea held a fundraiser event for the relief of citizens of Egaleo from the adverse financial situation. The mayor of Kythrea, Dr Petros Kareklas, delivered in April 2012 large quantities of food. Other such missions will follow. The new municipal council formed after the elections of December 2011 is very active in various fields.

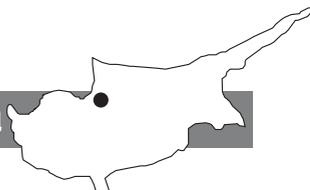
Like all displaced Cypriots, the people of Kythrea have never lost their faith in freedom, nor hope of return to their birthplace. With Kythrea intellectuals in the vanguard, the people's hope becomes a certainty, a vow and a struggle to annul the injustice and return safely to their dearest Kythrea. The aspiration for freedom and return to the occupied town has become a vow by the people of Kythrea to their patron saint, Agios Demetrianos, protector of refugees. A new icon has been designed and when that holy day arrives, it will be placed in the church of Chardakiotissa together with the relics of the saint and the icon of the Virgin Mary - which was rescued from the Turks by the priest of the church Costas Papanastasiou and Michael Kyriacou, Chairman of the Church Committee.

This conviction is illustrated by the teacher Georgios Kokis, in a poem/plea to Pentadaktylos "... Pentadaktylos, my mountain, shield, and protect my village. / Pentadaktylos my mountain, guard my home (...) Pentadaktylos my mountain, await my return".

The ever-shining light of freedom shall then once again brighten the hearts of all the citizens of Kythrea, the surrounding area and the whole of occupied Cyprus.



Municipality of Morphou



Archaeological excavations confirm that Morphos, Theomorphou and later Morphou, as well as the surrounding area, has a rich history. The eastern periphery up to the west end is strewn with important archaeological findings, which reveal its continuous habitation, its Greek origin and the constant human activity and prosperity. In the “Drakos” and “Petra tou Limniti” locations it appears that there was a settlement of the Neolithic period (7000-5300 B.C.). Near the village Kyra and in the valley of the river Ovgou, residential remains from the Chalcolithic period (2900-2500 B.C.) were discovered as well as remains of a settlement, and ceramic and copper workshops from the same period were discovered at the location of “Agios Georgios”, close to the village Ampelikos. At the “Vasilikos”, location chamber tombs were found with rich funeral findings

from the early Bronze Age (2500-1900 B.C.). Furthermore other findings were discovered in “Aletri”, which prove the existence of a settlement in “Alonia”. The above-mentioned along with many other archaeological sites constitute indisputable evidence of a long-standing culture, which demands the return of its founders.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Morphou

The archaeological site discovered at the location of “Mantres”, only a few kilometres from the town of Morphou, includes settlements, a necropolis and copper objects from the Late Bronze Age (2500-1050 B.C.). The settlement appears to have been continuously inhabited, at least until the Archaic period (475 B.C.).



Rock-cut chamber of the Early Bronze Age (2500-1900 B.C.) discovered in the area of Vasiliko in 1942.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



Bronze attachment depicting two lions attacking a bull (475 – 325 B.C.), from the area of Vouni.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Clay miniature of a sanctuary (circa 2000 B.C.) from Vouni.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

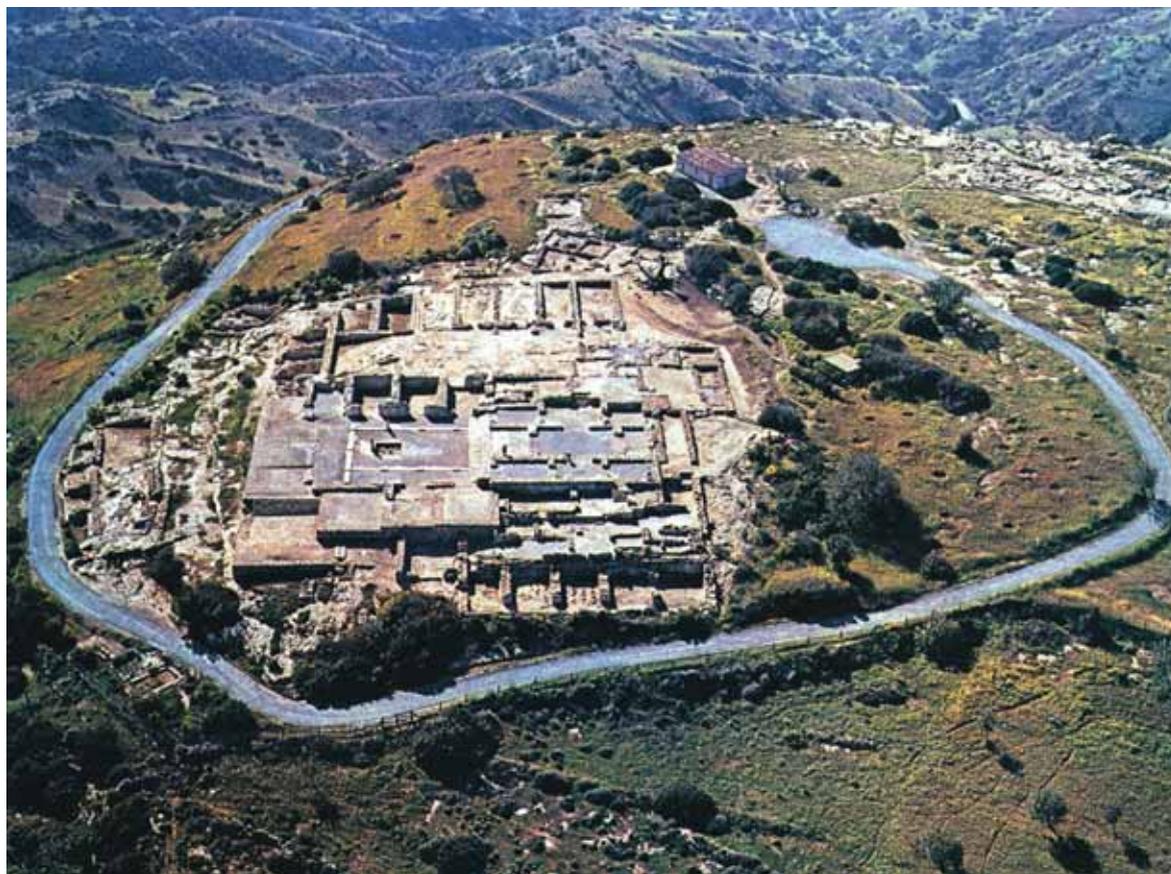


Clay female figurine (IIth Century B.C.) from the area of “Toumba tou Skourou”. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

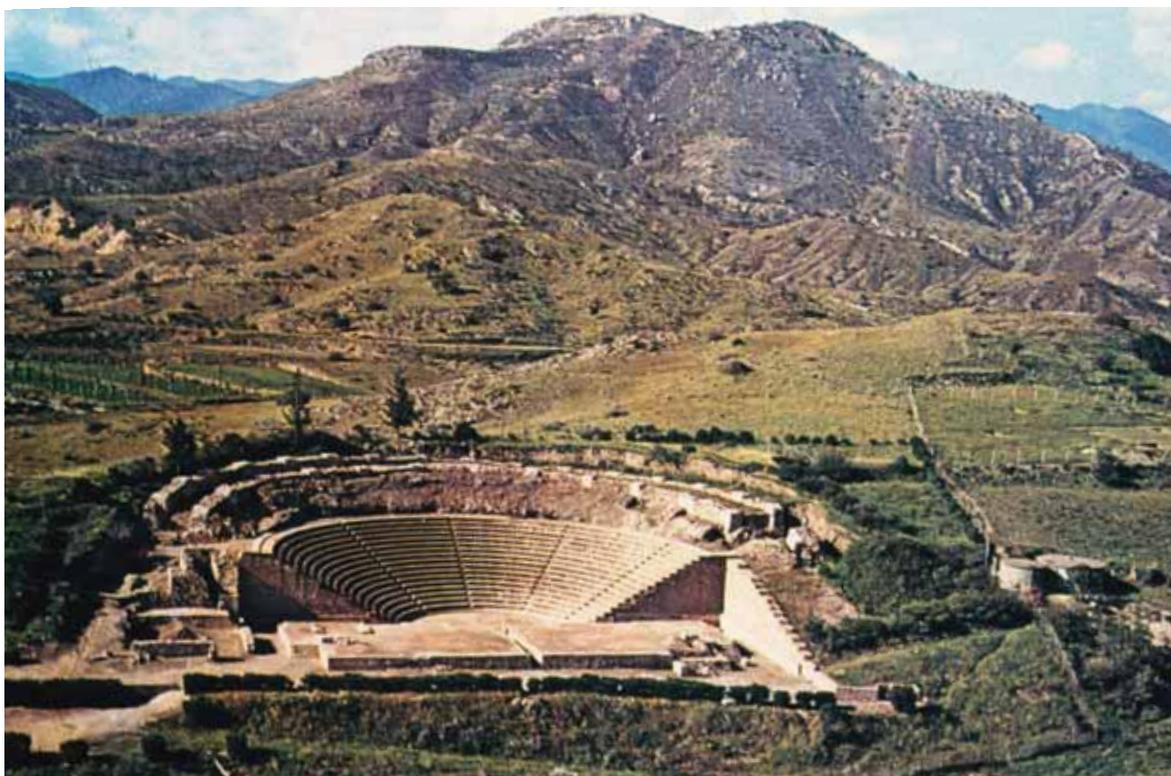
The settlement remains of “Toumba tou Skourou” are dated back to the late Bronze Age (1650-1050 B.C.). The first settlements of that area, which were founded by the first Greeks who arrived there (16th to 12th century), were numerous.

Near “Toumba tou Skourou” and very close to another prehistoric site, on the west of the village Chrysiliou, in “Alonia”, excavations brought to the surface remarkable findings such as a sanctuary from the Hellenistic period (325-350 B.C.). The same area includes remains of buildings and a large cemetery dating back to the early Geometric period until the end of the Hellenistic era (1050 B.C.). These two archaeological sites most probably belong to another town of the Iron Age period, which apparently succeeded the Cypriot Mycenaean city in “Toumba tou Skourou” of which the successor is the current town of Morphou. At the Ampelia location, which belongs to this ancient Cypriot town, the sanctuary of goddess Aphrodite, presented as an soldier bearing arms, was found. The Laconian settlers of the area used this way of worshipping the goddess, in memory of their homeland, where they had a similar sanctuary named Morphou. Because of their warlike nature, the Spartans displayed Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and fertility, armed in the middle of a war camp next to Ares, the God of War. The goddess was called “Morphou” by the settlers, which was how they referred to her in their homeland. The town they founded was named the Town of Goddess Morphou. The identical way of worshipping and the name of the goddess, acted as catalysts throughout the history of the region and marked its Greek identity. The current town is not only the successor of this long-standing neighbouring town, but also inherited its ancient Greek name and continued to be inhabited by the Greeks.

Ruins of the temple of Athena and of the only palace in Cyprus of the Classical period (475-323 B.C.) were found on the steep hill site of “Vouni”, in the east of “Petra tou Limniti”. Excavations in the area of Mersinaki revealed the small stoned temple of Athena Hippias and Lycian Apollo that also date back to the Classical period. A few kilometers away in the eastern part of the mountain were found the ruins of the capital of the ancient kingdom of Solon. According to the historian-geographer Strabo,



Aerial photo of the Vouni palace. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Aerial photo of the Hellenistic Theatre of Soloi. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Limestone female-figure statue (4th century B.C.) from Soloi.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

it was founded by the Athenians Faliro and Akamas (and according to Plutarch by the King Philokypros of the earlier town of Epia). Herodotus claims that the founding of the city was instigated by the Athenian King Solon, from whom it got its name. The kingdom supported the Athenians in their struggle against the Persians (5th century B.C.), while during the Hellenistic period it provided Alexander the Great with troops to support his campaigns in the East.

Morphou, being situated between the kingdoms of Soloi and Lapithos, was not fortunate enough to have a kingdom; it was subdued by the kingdom of Lapithos (just as Kyrenia) or the kingdom of Soloi. The settlements, and studies of the toponyms of the region (for example Asinou, Pentagia, Filia, Zodia, Setrachos-Serrahi, Klarios, Epia, Morphou), show that it had a dense population, which was Greek. By the river Serrahi, traces of an ancient temple of Aphrodite and remains of buildings were found, coinciding with the arrival of the Achaeans in the 13th century B.C.

B. Roman Period (58 B.C. - 364 A.D.)

Successive excavations at the site "Palaia Chora" revealed the Greco-Roman theatre of the town of Soloi (2nd century B.C.). At the site Chollades, a complex of five Hellenistic and Greco-Roman temples (250BC-early 4th century A.D.), dedicated to Oreia Aphrodite (beautiful Aphrodite), Cybele, Isis and Serapis. In 166 A.D. the prominent physician Galen (Galenus) and the head physician of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, visited the mines of Soloi to determine the therapeutic qualities of the sulphur salt. Apostles Barnabas and Timon also visited the city and founded the first Christian community. According to one theory, the city named after Aphrodite's epithet "Morphou", gradually became Christian and was renamed "Theomorphou". The first prefix "Theo" was eventually removed, hence the name Morphou prevailed. The participation of bishops in synods confirms that Soloi was an Archdiocese. Evangelist Marcos baptised and ordained Agios Afxivios as first Bishop of Soloi who served there for fifty years. One of the largest Early Christian basilicas was built in his honour; This basilica had impressive mosaic floors. According to an inscription dating back to the 7th century, in the wake of violent earthquakes the inhabitants had to rebuild the city, along with the basilica. Therefore



Limestone tombstone (second half of the 4th century B.C.).

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

the spreading of their culture continued during the Byzantine period. The various construction stages of the basilica confirm the continuous habitation of the area and the honouring of Agios Afxivios. Another basilica of the early Christian period was found underneath the present church of Agios Mamas in Morphou. The area was Christianised early on and became the religious centre of the area, with continuous activity during the Byzantine period.

C. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

The city of Soloi was destroyed by the Arabs in the 7th century and its inhabitants were scattered inwards, forming smaller communities. The name "Soloi" was kept in the area of Solea, which was part of the inner areas of the kingdom. Morphou in a way became the successor to Soloi and was settled by the Akrites. Due to the frequent and devastating Arab raids, the Byzantine emperor Tiberius (698-705 A.D.) moved them to Antalya and Cyprus. In honour of their patron saint Agios Mamas, they painted his



Agios Mamas, 15th century, from the church of Agios Mamas at Korakou. Photo: Holy Bishopric of Morphou

form on their clubs and built a small chapel to honour him in their camp in Morphou. From then on the worship of the saint spread across Cyprus. A source from the mid-Byzantine period (10th century A.D.) refers to the monastery of Agios Georgios Oriatos near the village of Kyra of the Byzantine Theomorphou. During the Byzantine period the caves around the monastery were probably used by monks for habitation.

D. Frankish Rule (1192-1489)

During the reign of the Franks (1192-1489), Morphou was a well known, large feudal estate. When Amaury de Lusignan was crowned King of Cyprus by pledging fealty to Emperor Henry VI, he offered Morphou to the French landowner Laurin de Plessis, who added "de Morpho" to his feudal titles Contes d'Edesse Griniers. During that period, feudal owners used to append the name of their lands to their own names and give to feudal estates their last

names, for example Plessis for the area Plessias, Griniers for the village Krini, Piquigny for Pigaineia and so on. In 1373 King James collected food from the fertile land of Pentagia for the war against the Genoese. The Franks built a monastery in the area of the Akrites camp that became the religious centre of the area for many years. Moreover, upon the foundations of the small church of Agios Mamas was built a magnificent church (16th century). During 1426-1427, Morphou was one of the regions that supported the democratic revolution under King Alexis. The vanquished captains, Morphou and Lefkas, were severely punished. During this period, it is reported that Morphou (la Baillie du Morf) was the royal site for sugar cane cultivation. Its processing was done at the outskirts of the town. Medieval and latter-day travelers reported that in 1470 Morphou was not affected by the plague, and many nobles moved to the region for safety.

E. Ottoman Occupation (1572-1878)

During Turkish rule, Morphou was one of the sixteen sub-provinces that belonged to six provinces. Morphou was the capital of the district which belonged to Kyrenia. The population around the monastery of Agios Mamas increased and it is possible this led to its destruction. Due to financial, technical and other difficulties, the town houses were mainly constructed with mud bricks. Its inhabitants were engaged in agriculture, animal breeding and the silk trade. The traveler Michael de Vezén (1780 – 1790) reports that Morphou's main products were cotton, wheat and barley. Morphou, just as the rest of Cyprus, suffered from heavy taxation, droughts, locusts, natural disasters and earthquakes. The earthquake of 1758 destroyed the Ottoman palace and killed the harem of the savage Salih Pasha. In the massacre of 9 July, 1821 the Turks decapitated the deacon of the church of Agios Mamas. A private school was founded in 1840, whose first teacher, Leontios, was a highly educated man. Dervis Hasan, a crypto-Christian, also served in that school. He was a man well-versed in ecclesiastical literature. He was a Greek Christian, named Nicholas Protopapas and in 1821 was forced by the Turks to convert to Islam. The first public school operated in 1852, in a room of the monastery of Agios Mamas, under the guidance and support of the Bishop of Kyrenia,



Marble sarcophagus of Agios Mamas at the medieval arch in his church. Photo: Loukianos Eggrafos

Meletios, who had Morphou under his jurisdiction. The room was repaired in 1867 and monk Christopher covered all the expenses from his income as a teacher. The first teacher of the school was Michael Ioannides from Prodromos, nephew of the Bishop of Kyrenia. The school operated as a single-teacher school until the arrival of the new occupiers, the British.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

During the British occupation, in 1883 Morphou was declared as a rural municipality, under the legal Act VI of 1882. It had a City Council, which consisted of eight councillors, elected by non-Muslim voters. It remains unknown who the first Mayor was, however according to reliable sources in 1890 the chairman of the City Council was the merchant Christofis Lymbouris, who developed the town. From 1890 to 1896, two Ottomans were appointed as Mayors of Morphou: Chadjirasif

Efendi and Aziz Smymios. The appointment of the Ottoman mayors in a strictly Greek community indicated the ambitions of the new conqueror. From 1896 to 1899 Ioannis Kyriacides, the “wise teacher,” served as Mayor.

Being the most important settlement dominating the western central plain of the island, stretching from the west of the capital to the sea, and thanks to its location between Troodos and Pentadaktylos, Morphou benefited greatly from being situated at a crossroad. Its position helped it develop into an administrative, cultural and commercial centre of a large area while it continued to be the capital of the area. From the British rule and onwards the use of Morphou's rich aquifer, the construction of a dense network of road transport, the creation of basic infrastructure and the hard work, good character and love of knowledge of its inhabitants, affected in a positive way the economic development of Morphou.

A. Cultural Development

When Morphou was declared a municipality, it became the regional centre for progress. In 1899 the British decided to educate the trilingual Cypriots (Greek, Turkish, English) to work for the State and within the community services. They encouraged young Greeks to learn Turkish in Muslim schools or Turkish and English in their own schools. It is believed that Morphou was the centre of this initiative since bilingual Muslims lived in the southwest areas, and they were in fact crypto-Christians and Greek-speakers forced to convert to Islam under Turkish rule. In collaboration with the Turkish ruling class, the British appointed a bilingual “Hotzas” and bilingual teachers in villages, in order to convert Greek Cypriots into Muslims and to increase the numbers of their collaborators, who would be rivals to of Greeks.

In 1899 Kostis Georgiades was appointed Mayor and when municipal elections took place for the first time in 1908 he was also the first elected mayor. In 1914 Judge Joseph Cheimonides was elected Mayor for three years (1914-1917), then Georgiades was re-elected Mayor until 1927. During his long service a number of important community projects were completed: the Public Garden, the Cemetery (1901), road repairs, tree planting in various areas, drinking water supply to various neighbourhoods, and the

construction of a bridge crossing the river Serrahi. When the doctor Ierides Eratosthenes was elected Mayor in 1927, electrical installations lit up the roads. Furthermore roads were asphalted and the plans drawn for the construction of the Municipal Market. From 1943 to 1969 doctor Polycarpus Nicolopoulos served as Mayor. He completed the building of the Municipal Market, asphalted all the streets and started the construction of the Municipal stadium. He also constructed a contemporary abattoir and renovated the public garden, where a nursing home was built in the north side. His successor, the doctor Polykleitos Iacovides, completed the Municipal stadium. He remained Mayor of the Municipality even after the displacement.

A number of infrastructure projects took place under the supervision of the municipality. At the same time the intellectual and cultural foundations of the city were laid. During the 1930s private kindergartens operated. Following Cyprus' independence three more kindergartens were opened: one public and the other two private, which operated on a systematic pedagogical basis. The thus far single-teacher primary school appointed more teachers, and after the first quarter of the 20th century two more primary schools began their operation: a boys' and a girls' school. During the academic years of 1959-1960 the Lower Education Mixed School was established and operated in a new building within the girls' school courtyard. In 1968, the girls' and the boys' school merged and formed the First and Second Elementary School. During the late 19th century efforts were made to lay the foundations for secondary education, through the establishment of reading venues, where the youth received advanced level lessons. In 1917 the "Greek Higher School of Morphou" was founded which gradually became the "Greek High School of Morphou" in 1949, which was equivalent to the high schools of Greece. The school published the magazine "Student Reveille". Due to the increase of the number of students during the academic year of 1967-8 the school was initially divided into a girls' school and a boy's school, while in the following years it changed into the First High School and the Second High school. In 1934, the English teacher Costas Silvestros founded a private school, named after him, which was later renamed first as English School and then Commercial School. Following the independence



The building of the Morphou School of Commerce.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

of Cyprus, the founder of the school donated it to the Republic of Cyprus. It operated as a Commercial Vocational Training School, until 1971 when it was transferred to a building in the north of Morphou, and was renamed as Morphou's Third High School, where the last three classes were for students who wished to specialise in commerce. In 1940 the biennial Central Agricultural School was founded on government-owned premises, under the management of the British Department of Education. After Cyprus' independence it was turned into a public school, under the jurisdiction of the School Board of Morphou and was renamed as the Agricultural High School of Morphou. In 1962 it acquired its own premises and accepted students from all over Cyprus, operating as a proper six-grade school with specialised courses in agriculture. It consisted of spacious premises, including student halls, warehouses, workshops, animal farms, large water tanks and cooling chambers. From 1937 to 1958, the Morphou Teaching College was founded and operated within the Municipality of Morphou, where teachers from all over Cyprus completed their studies there. Training courses in agriculture were offered for the future teachers who were studying there so that they could help the villagers whom they would later teach. The contribution of the college to the community was significant, due to the involvement of its students in the cultural, social, educational and athletic progress



Theatrical high-school plays by students from Morphou.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

of Morphou. From 1958 to 1970 it was replaced by the School for the Deaf, which was transferred there from Nicosia. In collaboration with the Cooperative school for the Deaf it offered a professional placement program, which also demonstrated significant progress in productive work.



Inaugural ceremony of the Orange Festival in the Municipal Gardens of Morphou, attended by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

At the same time, a number of cultural workshops were founded, which organised various activities or helped in organising them, which contributed to the development of cultural awareness. In 1922 the Athletic Association "Freedom" was founded, and in 1931 the association "Digenis Akritas". Both associations promoted various activities, such as the establishment of a drama group, a choir, a Philharmonic orchestra and a mandolin club. The association also organised lectures and exhibitions on Morphou's national, moral, artistic, intellectual and cultural development especially of the youth, as well as for the promotion and cultivation of the spirit of sportsmanship. In 1933 the Philanthropic Society Philoptochos and in 1940 the Orthodox Religious Foundation Agios Mamas were founded in order to help develop and stimulate a national and religious consciousness for the people of Morphou. They organised lectures, conferences, religious gatherings, national celebrations, charity fundraising and offered food to the poor people. They also organised night school for young people who could not complete their high school education and founded the Youth/Junior Association (O.X.E.), which organised national celebrations, trips, took part in Christian student groups and



School chariot during the Orange Festival.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

drama plays and much more. In 1944 the association "Neos Asteras" (new star) was founded offering cultural, educational and artistic programs, theatrical performances and football games. A year later, the female population of the town founded the "Greek Women of Morphou Association" that organised lectures and meetings and participated in the organised flower exhibitions, "Anthesteria", and other artistic events. In 1958 the association "Apollo" was founded, and in 1960 the Athletic Union of Morphou, which also contributed to the cultural life of the town.

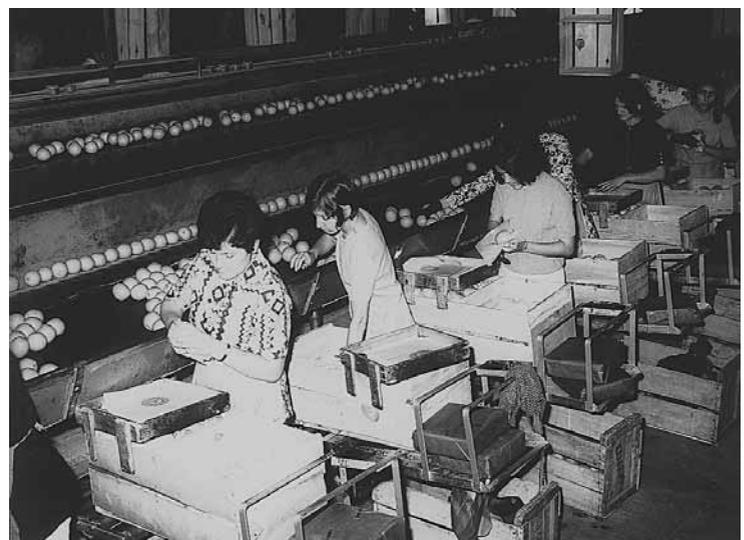
The contribution of the above-mentioned organised groups was important even after the independence of Cyprus. In 1960, the associations "Neos Asteras" and "Apollo" merged with the "Sports Association of Morphou" and focused particularly on the development and promotion of football while at the same time organising lectures and artistic performances, aiming towards the cultural development and intellectual development of the members and friends of the association.

Other cultural events were also organised, such as the two major festivals in honour of Agios Mamas: on the 2nd of September and on Palm Sunday. The latter was called the "Olive Festival" and the whole city took part in it. The festival highlighted the economic prosperity of the region and the abilities of its inhabitants. The building of the Bishopric of Kyrenia was renovated in 1963, its lecture room was equipped and its library enriched, offering spiritual nourishment to the residents of Morphou.

In 1965, under the guidance of the Municipality of Morphou, various associations and institutions were founded, like the "Coordinated Committee for Morphou" which in 1967 organised the first Orange Festival that was then established as an annual event until the Turkish invasion and occupation. This particular event, which constituted the largest of all the other organised events, included a parade dedicated to oranges, which was attended and enjoyed by crowds of people. Another significant institution was "Morphou's Cultural House", which was founded in 1968 and its members were teachers and scientists of Morphou. It organised lectures of national, social and economic interest, which were later published in book form. It also organised chess and backgammon tournaments for entertainment and social interaction for its members and

friends. Scientists from Morphou also founded in 1973 the "Group of Morphou's Friends," which issued the weekly newspaper "Observer", from January to July 1974, when its publication was interrupted due to the Turkish invasion and occupation.

Students, particularly high school students, contributed to the town's intellectual life. Student performances and choir festivals were organised. A number of ancient tragedies of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus as well as Aristophanes' comedies were performed in the auditorium of Soloi every year. In these particularly interesting events, schools from Morphou's school district also participated. The active participation and attendance of Morphou's residents in the various events of their town confirmed their heritage and their great love for culture, customs and traditions. The local museum and the private collection of the lawyer Christakis Loizides strongly indicate this. The spiritual blossoming of Morphou was emphasised by its intellectual offspring like Loukis Akritas, a teacher who provided remarkable writing material. Others were Kamintzis Georgios, a benefactor of the high school who offered a great deal in the educational sector and served for several years on the School Board as Vice President, the teacher of the first high school, Arsenios Nicolaides, the School directors Nicholas Eliades, Chadji Ioannou Kyriacos, Ch. Petronidas, the teacher Antonis D. Koudounas, the teachers-poets Anthos Rodinis, Costas Montis, the merchant



SODEM (Morphou) Citrus packaging procedure for export purposes. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

Christofis Lympouris and many others. Examples of patriotic heroism were the EOKA fighters (1955-1959), who were born in the area of Morphou, and the leading hero Deputy Chief Marcos Drakos who hailed from Lefka.

A year before the Turkish invasion, the municipal boundaries extended to the boundaries of the village of Chrysiliou, and so the Metropolis of Morphou was formed. Until then it was separated into four parishes: Agios Mamas, Agios Georgios, Agia Paraskevi and Chrysiliou. Apart from developing into a religious, educational and spiritual centre, the town also became an administrative, commercial and financial centre of the area due its financial growth.

B. Economic Development

Morphou was gradually being transformed into a commercial centre and a port of call for traders, transporters, employees and people commuting to various places in Cyprus, hence a number of large and spacious homes were transformed into hotels, for example the houses of Christofi Lymbouri, N. Chadjichristodoulou and Tzirkou in 1901. The operation of such hotels, with overnight guests, was very profitable. The residents however concentrated more on the utilisation of their land. They cultivated cotton, hemp, sesame, beans and cereal. During the harsh winters of 1894-1897 they cultivated huge quantities of anise, which they even exported. The rainfall allowed the inhabitants to build water tanks and small water sluices. The inhabitants also focused on animal breeding. These traditional occupations were replaced by the extensive cultivation of citrus during the first decades of the 20th century, when they started using the rich aquifer of the area that helped this sector to blossom. Pits were dug and water tanks built. The first small orchards included a variety of trees, covered the needs of growers, while the surplus went to market. To improve irrigation the burrows were connected to a tunnel, and running water used for the needs of the Municipality of Morphou.

In time, great quantities of seasonal and cereal crops were being produced and boomed with the onset of technological progress in the 1940s. During this decade the first Labour Unions were founded under the leadership of AKEL and after a few years the new Unions under



The well known “Lefkaritika” embroideries, made by thread and linen cloth and weaved by the women of Morphou.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



Before the Turkish invasion citrus cultivation was considered very profitable for the area of Morphou.

Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos

SEK. Every union worked with persistence and determination for professional progress, the improvement of the working conditions of their members, as well as for the financial development of the area. In 1960, when the production of citrus advanced, the Gardening Association was founded in order to protect the producers from being exploited by merchant-exporters. During the following decades there was a quantitative and qualitative increase of the cultivation of citrus. The overuse of the aquifer caused



View of Skouriotissas' mine. Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos

inflowing of sea water into the aquifer, creating in this way an irrigation problem. This was solved however by the construction of two dams, one in Morphou in 1962 and another in Ovgou in 1964. Due to the high demand of the European markets exporters opened additional branches and offices in Famagusta. Through efforts of the Gardening Association and other stake holders, the Cooperative Organisation of Citrus was founded and operated a juice factory that included a modern-packaging division. These products were available to Morphou's residents but were also aimed at foreign markets. For example, in 1966 Morphou produced 34% of Nicosia's consumption, and 51% of the consumption of the whole of Cyprus in 1974. The cultivation of citrus proved to be highly profitable for the region and also beneficial for the economy of Cyprus. Watermelons, melons and various vegetables were also produced.

During this period animal breeding was reduced significantly even though it used to be a traditional activity of the inhabitants. Morphou however was the fourth largest manufac-

turer in the district of Nicosia. Industrial activity was developed, especially after the independence of Cyprus. By 1974 there were 160 factories in Morphou, particularly for food manufacture, including the ones for fruit and vegetables packaging, clothing, plastic, wood and metal. The production of thread that derived from the processing of flax was also important for the economy. The thread and linen fabrics woven by the women of Morphou were the main commercial products of the region and were supplied to Lefkara and the surrounding villages for the creation of the well known "Lefkaritika" linen cotton and linen-silk scarves, towels, tablecloths and sheets.

Morphou's dense road network contributed to its development. It was an important crossroads, of the west central plain between Nicosia-Tillyria-Pafos, and the mining area of Xeros-Mavrovounio as well as of Nicosia, the west part of Kyrenia district and the area of Kykkos. It was also connected with the surrounding villages. By 1948 the rail connection (1907) became important for Morphou's communication with the capital, with Famagusta, the central



port of the island, as well as with Evrychou and the mining area of Skouriotissa (1915). The network facilitated the transport of the local residents, workers as well as the distribution of products. The town of Morphou gradually developed until it became a large administrative, agricultural, commercial and educational centre of the western Mesaoria. After 1970 there took place a marked growth in the economy, property and population. Morphou was one of the most prosperous areas in Cyprus. Due to its rapid development there was an increase of the population. From 2,267 habitants in 1881, there were 3,228 in 1911 and 4,335 in 1931. According to sources, in 1946 out of a total of 5,460 habitants, 5,267 were Greeks, 179 Turks and 14 of other ethnic groups. In 1960, out of a total of 6,642 residents, 6,480 were Greeks, 123 Turks and 39 of other ethnic groups. During the 1963 Turkish riots, the Turks were forced to move to neighbouring Turkish Cypriot villages.

In 1973, after the ecclesiastical coup by the bishops of Pafos, Kition and Kyrenia against Archbishop Makarios III, two new bishoprics were formed, based in Limassol and Morphou.

Thus the area of Morphou no longer belonged (ecclesiastically) to the Bishopric of Kyrenia. The First Bishop of Morphou was Chrysanthos Sarigiannis. Administratively, the area belonged to Nicosia, but it was obvious from its great development that it would soon become a separate province. In 1973, its population increased significantly making Morphou the fifth largest town in the province, and it was soon destined to become the fifth largest in Cyprus. The fast growth of Morphou prevented depopulation and enhanced the area's prospects to develop into a large town. Its development however was violently disrupted in August 1974 with the Turkish invasion and occupation. The 7,466 Greek inhabitants were forcibly expelled by Turkish troops and were settled in the free areas of the Republic or emigrated abroad.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF MORPHOU AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Once the Turkish invaders secured a bridgehead at Kyrenia they took advantage of the cease-fire and captured Karavas, Lapithos, Vasileia and other villages. Morphou has been filled with refugees ever since. The inhabitants offered all the help they could, but on the 13th of August 1974 everyone was forced to leave the town. After suffering countless hardships in the countryside, the Morphou residents scattered and ended up in refugee camps and later in refugee settlements mostly in Nicosia, Limassol, Pafos, and others went abroad. Turkey and the occupation regime replaced the displaced residents with Turkish settlers and Turkish Cypriots from the free areas. The formerly prosperous town was now illegally inhabited by people foreign to the land and its culture. The institutions of the town and the residents' everyday life were violently disrupted. The Town Hall, the Court, the hospital, the schools, the theaters, the houses, and many others, were under occupation. The hard work of so many centuries was now in the hands of people who neither appreciated nor respected them. Without its legal residents the town was gradually dying. This cultural genocide, which forms part of the occupier's plans, has been going on ever since.



Detail on Morphou's condition after the invasion - occupation.

Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos

A. Morphou after the displacement of its legitimate residents

Morphou was a lively town before 1974 but after the invasion it was doomed to fade, as a victim of abandonment and indifference. Associations, houses, schools, churches, archaeological sites, all these lack the presence of the people who built them and are under the control of outsiders, who loot, steal, destroy and are subjected to day-to-day cultural cleaning and Turkification, with the tolerance of the powerful nations that authorize these international illegalities, undermining in this way moral values and international laws.

Without their rightful inhabitants, Morphou and the rest of the occupied areas face amongst others, serious financial difficulties, despite the assistance they get from the occupier. This economic collapse has influenced Morphou and its broader area the most. During the first days of the invasion, the occupiers acquired so much stolen property from the Greeks that they could financially support their settlers for a long period of time. Due to this the occupation regime dubbed Morphou its "bloodline". Subsequently the occupation's indifference and the behaviour of the settlers led to the immigration of many Turkish Cypriots. Coexistence with the settlers and the gypsies, who settled in the area, was impossible due to their different mentality and more importantly because most of them were criminals or

illegal workers. These intruders cannot love Morphou in the same way as its displaced residents do. They even bury their deceased outside the church of Chrysosoterios in the Muslim cemetery of Chrysiliou.

The occupation regime has turned the broader area of Morphou into a province, called "Morphou Lefka". Morphou was illegally renamed Guzelyurt, just like other locations which were given Turkish names. In order to erase the entirely Greek-Christian character of the city and give it a Muslim identity, the Turks built a mosque with two minarets near the church of Agios Mamas. This region with its picturesque villages used to be green, clean, tidy, with plenty of water. After the Turkish invasion and occupation it has been neglected, left to decay over time and violated by every manner of opportunist. The citrus plantations, which used to be the main source of income for the Greek Cypriots bringing prosperity to the area, were destroyed and became a cause of dispute between illegal Turkish settlers and Turkish Cypriots. The distribution of land caused friction and conflicts between them. As reported by Turkish journalists in various articles, these conflicts might be the result of a curse by the Greek owners, deprived the fruits of their labour. The trees dried up and are used for firewood, while the orchards are converted into building plots. More than 50% of the orchards have now disappeared. The water in the district is unsuitable for irrigation and all natural sources have dried up. Nobody dares to invest in the region. They even avoid repairing their homes or taking care of the orchards that they were granted by the occupation regime. The only investment made is that of the hotel "Golden Lion". The Turkish Cypruvex, which replaced the Greek Cypriot Citrus Organisation, went bankrupt. According to publications in the Turkish Cypriot press, people are either protesting or migrating. Shops and businesses have closed down, while in the streets there is strong presence of Turkish settlers and Turkish troops. In the once full of life central Market of Morphou, these days only a few customers go there who are disappointed with the high prices and lack of goods. The Greek signs of coffee shops, restaurants and shops were replaced by Turkish signs. Coffee houses are meeting places for the jobless and idle settlers. The town of Morphou and other areas are enduring a cultural genocide. Turkey

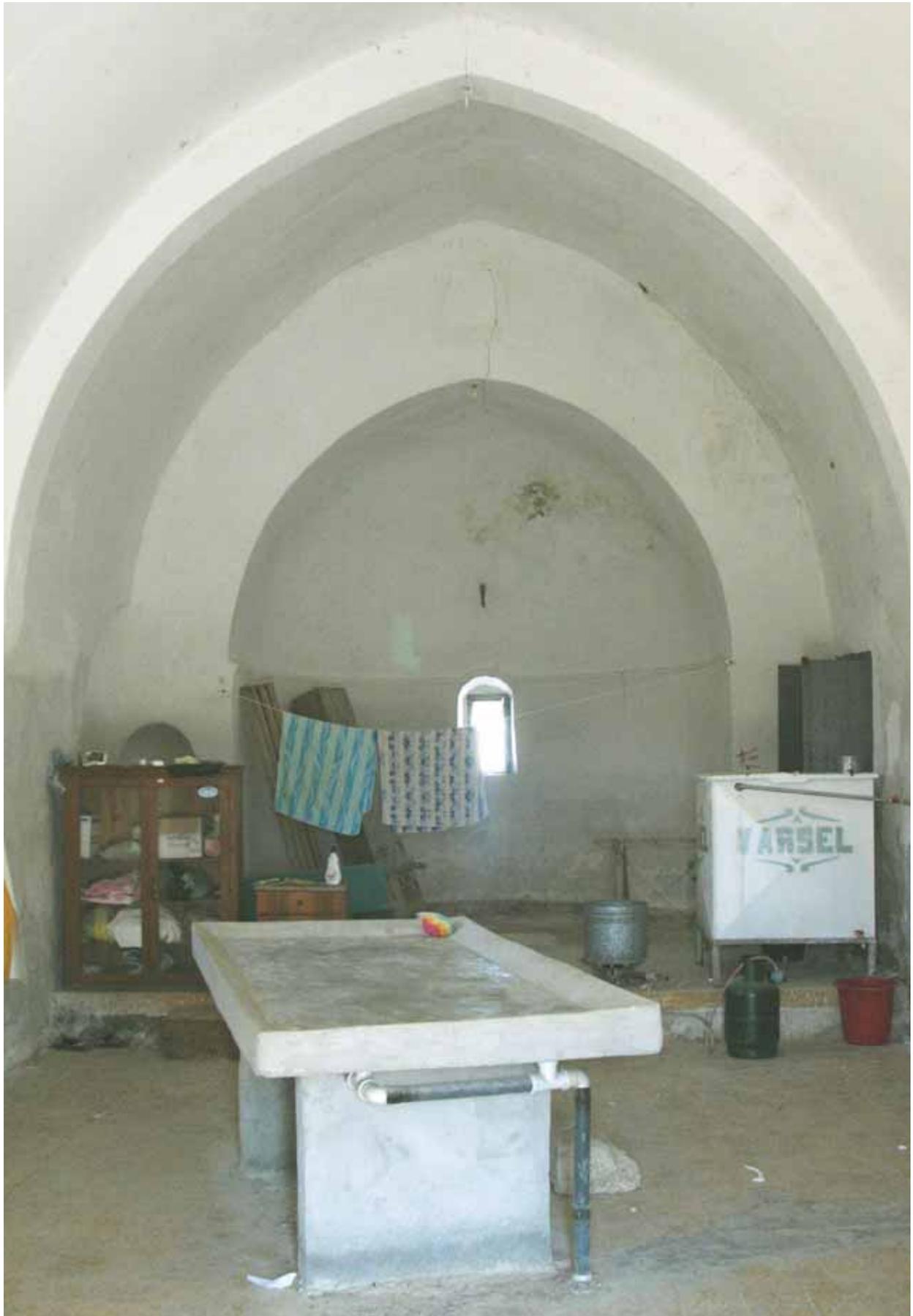
and the occupation regime exiled the legitimate residents in order to eliminate the Greek Cypriots' creative culture. According to data gathered by the Cyprus Cultural Foundation and based on recent observations by the displaced and other visitors after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 the Turkish occupation forces have significantly damaged the cultural heritage of Greeks and other Christians in the area. Antiquities, ancient theaters and churches are looted while cemeteries are destroyed together with everything else that brings to mind their connection with their native inhabitants. They are therefore looted or demolished; defaced, left to be destroyed or are presented as works of Turkish origin. The violent attempt to disrupt the continuity of the Greek and Christian culture is obvious.

The Turkish troops and the occupation regime do not allow the legal residents of Morphou to return there and consequently the occupiers freely use the monuments

for their businesses, stockyards, warehouses or as venues for their events. Significant archaeological sites, such as Toumba tou Skourou, Fila, Petra tou Limniti and Soloi, suffered great damage, were plundered, left to the elements and to the devices of illegal antiquity dealers. Even the storage rooms of the foreign archaeological missions are destroyed. The ancient theatre of Soloi, which is used for certain events, is not being maintained properly and as a result it risks decay and eventual destruction. This is a violation of the fundamental human right of freedom of religion and belief, in regards to the Christian religious places and their legitimate owners. The municipal courthouse was sacked and turned into a museum. Valuable items were stolen from the church of Agios Mamas, such as the large old monstrance, the shrine of the Saint and other sacred items. Agios Mamas was turned into a museum, the Bishopric Palace into an Archaeological Museum and Museum of Natural History. The church of Agios Georgios was turned into a dancing school and the church of Chrysilios in a morgue. The Church



The Municipal Market after the Turkish invasion. Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos



The church of Chrysosoteris in Chrisiliou. The church is ruined and its holy icons and items were stolen, while the church was converted by the Turks into a morgue. The altar has also been destroyed.

Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos



The church of Timios Prodromos in Argaki as seen today after being looted by the invaders. Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos.

of Agia Paraskevi was converted into a mosque, as were many other churches (Agios Georgios in Kapouti, Archangel Michael and Timios Stavros Holy Cross in Zodia, Agios Stylianos and Agios Georgios in Prastio, Agios Nikitas and Agios Nicholas in Pentagia). Several churches in the area are deserted, like Prophitis Elias in Filia, Panagia of Mnason, and Agios Nicholaos in Syrianochori. The church of Agios Georgios in Oriatos near the village Kyra, which is subordinated to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, remains deserted and looted while even the floor has been removed. The churches of Agios Georgios of Soleas, Panagia Chryseleousa in Kyra, Agios Vasileios and of the Saviour in Petra, the church of Agia Marina and the chapel of Agios Georgios in Avlona are located within the so-called "military zones" of the Turkish army, where no access is allowed to verify the extent of the damage. The church of Agios Andronikos and of Agia Athanasia, as well as of Modestos in Kalo Chorio have been transformed into animal pens. A number of occupied villages in the Morphou area, such as those

of the Panagia Akentou in Lefka, Agios Antonios in Massari, Agios Vasileios in Petra, Agios Georgios in Kapouti and in Avlona and others, had their walls torn off in order to remove the frescoes to probably sell them abroad. Cemeteries, as for example Morphou's cemeteries have been desecrated and destroyed. Finally, a large number of antiquities have been stolen. Some stolen items from Cyprus that were discovered in markets abroad, were purchased and repatriated by the Church of Cyprus or other refugees. The disrespect towards these remarkable monuments, which constitute ancient cradles of world civilisation and provide significant information on the history of humanity, not only affects the religious, historical and cultural awareness of the Cypriot people, but of every civilised human being.

The history of Morphou and its culture have been documented. They cannot be corrupted or altered by Turkey, the numerous Turkish settlers or Turkish Cypriots, by the replacement of the legal residents, the changing of names,

looting or by the destruction of the Greek Christian heritage. The roots of the ancient Greek culture of the uprooted Greeks are profound and the footprints are still there. It is difficult for the occupier to eliminate them completely. Under International Law, the Turkish invasion and its by-products are illegal and do not create a legal precedent. The culture of the occupied area is part of the cultural heritage of humanity. Forcible displacement and colonisation are international crimes and cannot be stricken from the record, no matter how many years have passed. The right of people to return to their native land, where they developed their own culture, will remain unaltered, unless they themselves renounce their own right by accepting a solution that would deprive them of this. That is why the displaced residents of Morphou regrouped in the free areas, and just like modern-day Laconians they insist on claiming what is theirs, until the final vindication.



The Morphou municipality building today, at 16 Zinonos Sozou street in Nicosia.

This is where the administrative council tries to keep Morphou's memory alive and plans how to inform the people of Cyprus and overseas on the Cyprus problem. It also brings together the displaced residents of Morphou and helps, wherever possible, to resolve their problems.

Photo: Loucianos Eggrafos

The residents of Morphou and the surrounding area, even if they are displaced still find the courage to fight for return. They have regrouped around the administrative and ecclesiastical authorities, keeping alive the memory of their town and province, ready to be revived. Memories and justice function as their guidance. The displaced Municipality together with associations, clubs and other organisations of Morphou, serve as communication channels between the people. Various events and cultural activities are organised to keep them in touch with their local customs. The Municipality has a rich publishing activity and it is present in every anti-occupation event, informs its citizens about political developments and issues that concern them. It is also active abroad and has twinned with other municipalities, it discusses the problems of the Turkish invasion and of occupation of Morphou and demands, on behalf of its citizens, the return to their ancestral property. It expresses the belief that they are the natural heirs of the ancient culture of the area and that Turkey will not be able to deprive them of their legal right of return.

B. Activities of the displaced Municipality of Morphou in Cyprus

The elected Mayor of Morphou, Polykleitos Iacovidis, served the office even after the displacement until his death in 1976. The lawyer Andreas Pantelides was then appointed in his place, and served until 1988. Upon the common agreement of the council, the Mayor were rotated every six months until 1991, and the following party representatives served the municipality: Andreas Charalambous, Christakis Christofides, Andreas Siittis and Andreas Fridas. The political parties agreed on an eight-member council, which elected Andy Pantelides, a lawyer by profession, as Mayor. Antigone Papadopoulou's election followed; when she later was elected as a member of the European Parliament, Charalambos Pittas became Mayor. During Antigone Papadopoulou's term in office in 1997 a building in Nicosia was rented, named "House of Morphou", which still functions today. It is also a meeting place for the refugees, associations and institutions of Morphou.

The Municipality and the residents of Morphou do not remain inactive even if they are displaced. They organise

various annual events, of which anti-occupation protests are the most prominent. From 1975 to 1989, women's marches to the checkpoints are organised by the women of Morphou, demanding the restoration of the human rights of the citizens of Cyprus. Since 1980 the Municipality of Morphou, working with schools, associations, foundations and authorities of the community of Morphou, organises annual anti-occupation marches to the checkpoint between Astromeritis and Zodia, during the month of October. To honour these marches, other events are organised that take place for a whole week. The protests are part of the Municipality's efforts to keep the memory of Morphou alive and also to demand the inalienable right for return, not only to their town, but also to every part of the occupied territories. They deliver speeches and resolutions, pre-approved by all its members to the United Nations office. This gives the chance to the refugees to gather and demand the return to their ancestral land, to be informed of the fate of the missing people, and to demand an end to the ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide. As genuine descendants of the Spartans, they declare that Life and Freedom are interchangeable. This slogan shows that, for them, Freedom and Life is the raising of the flag of their town in the land of their



Anti-occupation protest en route to Morphou and the 25 villages of the Morphou parish. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



Left: from the march of the displaced to Astromeritis, wishing to convey to the new generation the desire for return. Right: submitting a resolution to the UN. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



fathers, in their own land, where Agios Mamas awaits them, a symbol of their resistance to injustice, a symbol of freedom and return. They make it clear that for them there is no lost land and they do not forget; they will continue their struggle and lay claim to the land of Morphou that awaits them.

In 1997, when Antigone Papadopoulou was Mayor, the magazine "The Voice of Morphou" was published, under the supervision of the Mayor. The magazine featured the activities of the municipality and general issues of interest for the community. During the same year, the newsletter "Morphou" was published and the New Orange Festival of Morphou was organised, as a reminder of this magnificent festival, which had been repeated every year before the Turkish invasion. This new festival included artistic events, music, songs, dances as well as photographic exhibitions, bringing the refugees closer. In 1999, Costas Sofroniou implemented the council's proposal by funding the publication of the bilingual book titled "Morphou: 3600 Years of History". In the preface of the book the Mayor sends a message of hope: "We stand proud, ready to face our duty and keep the anti-occupation struggle by applying the three-part slogan "I Do not Forget – I Fight- I Claim... We do not negotiate our inalienable right to return.. For us there are no lost countries. There are only temporarily enslaved countries, waiting for our return".

The displaced Bishopric of Morphou is also a part of this fight. Bishop Chrysanthos Sariyiannis set his Bishopric in Evrychou, from where he directed the religious, spiritual and other projects of the Bishopric. After his death he was succeeded by Archimandrite Neophytos Mansouras (1998), who continued to guide the refugees by organising masses, sermons, speeches, religious gatherings and camping excursions on a specially-constructed grounds in the monastery of Agios Ioannis Lampadistis at Kalopanayiotis. An important event was the exhibition of treasures of the Bishopric of Morphou at the beginning of the new millennium, entitled "Holy Bishopric of Morphou: 2000 years of Art and Holiness", and a publication of the same name. In the preface of the book, the Bishop of Morphou Neophytos argues: "Our tradition gives us voice, gives us words and speech, gives us a face to discuss with people... We cannot have a more credible suggestion than the one offered by the face of our culture we cannot have (...)

We now stand before history to be judged on whether we are bearers of this culture and this faith. If we are worthy to once again operate the church of Agios Mamas in Morphou, if we are worthy to preserve and restore the Basilica of Agios Afxivios in occupied Soloi ... And in any case 'if they are silent, the stones will cry out' (Luke 19:40)." The Bishopric is constantly developing in order to preserve and promote the religious heritage of Morphou and also to keep the refugees in touch with their roots and traditions. Through different approaches, the Bishop has managed to persuade the occupier to allow the citizens to operate the church of Agios Mamas, which once a year has become a place of meeting and for prayer for the people of Morphou. Even when faced with difficulties, their efforts came to fruition, given that the Republic of Cyprus always gave Turkish Cypriots the right to move freely and pray in their places of worship in the free areas, but mostly because Cyprus is now a member of the EU, which Turkey wishes to join. The combined efforts of the Municipality of Morphou and the Bishopric will bring success to the efforts of the displaced.

During an anti-occupation speech on the 31st Anti-Occupation March (10/09/2011), the Bishop stated: "... the land of Morphou does not give birth to slaves ready to abandon their land to the occupier (...) It is true that a single sermon takes place there (in Agios Mamas)... this does not weaken the desire for return, but ...it is a function, which reunites the residents of Morphou with their Christian past ... they are joined freely, ... under the present circumstances, heaven and earth, refugees and non-refugees. I even dare say that Greek and Turkish Cypriots are reunited. This proves that today there are some ways to help the communities come closer. And we promote these ways. " For his part, Mayor Charalambos Pittas noted: "We are gathered here ... to unite our voice against the fait accompli of the brutal Turkish invasion and the ethnic cleansing that Turkey is perpetrating in our divided country (...) Morphou today is a town immersed in silence despite its wounded pride; it is awakened and awaits us. That is the message from our occupied town... the opening of Agios Mamas. A message towards Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Eroglu who deny the return of Morphou to its rightful owners and residents".

In 2006 the Municipality issued a photo album, titled,



From the 1960s to the Turkish invasion in 1974, the municipality with other town associations organised the Annual Orange Festival. In order to preserve the memory of these events, every June the displaced municipality organises, with the help of other organisations, the Morphou festival in Nicosia. The festival includes folklore dances, a Flower Show, photographic exhibitions and others. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

Morphou: A Cry of Agony. The Mayor mentions in the prologue: "This edition ... is yet more proof of the remembrance, struggle, resistance and demands on behalf of the people of Morphou and generally of all the refugees. It sends out the message that we have not ceased to love, remember and fight for our land ... We long to see you again, Morphou, but not in this way, under these circumstances, which are being imposed upon us in order to serve foreign interests (...) we shall fight together and unite our voices with the voices of other refugees from every corner of the occupied land (...) it is fortunate that some things cannot be stolen or deformed. It is the undying love, the memories and the hope for tomorrow that keep us standing".

That same year the Municipality issued a study by Anthony D. Koudounas, entitled *Morphou / Modern History and Culture*, and in 2011 a book by Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou

and Diomedes Myrianthefs, *Morphou: The Looting and Destruction of an Ancient Heritage* was published.

Several efforts were made for the re-establishment of certain institutions of Morphou including the Cooperative Credit Society that opened its offices in Limassol. Due to its progress a new building was inaugurated in Limassol, with Costas Pittas as the Chairman and Charalambos Pittas, Morphou's Mayor, as the Secretary-Manager. The association "Digenis Akritas" also became active, renting two buildings in Nicosia and Limassol, despite its financial straits. Besides its successful athletic activities, galas, dances, ethnic, cultural and intellectual gatherings, it organised other events, organised by the Municipality and other bodies. The Association "Athletic Union of Morphou" contributes significantly to the struggles of the refugees of Morphou, with the collaboration of other operators.

The refugees established new groups to inform the refugees, remind them of their occupied land and boost morale by establishing their main objective, which is that of return. In 1990 the Group "Women of Morphou" was founded with national, cultural, spiritual, artistic and social activities, supporting the struggle for return and the restoration of the rights of all Cypriot refugees. The group cooperates with the Municipality in staging various events. The Municipality itself organizes a number of these events working with the other associations. The "Cultural Association of Morphou" was founded in 1994 by the youth of Morphou. It supports the struggle for return and organises intellectual, cultural national and entertainment events. A dance group, a band and a choir were introduced and an outstanding monument dedicated to the dead and missing persons of 1974 was erected in Astromeritis and Zodia. It also presents the work of Morphou writers, publishes books such as the "Dedication to the deceased and missing people of Morphou and Morphou-Birthday, Land-Memories, it takes part in the preparations of events organised by the Municipality, especially in the marches towards Morphou where its choir accompanies them. The City Council of the Youth of Morphou was also founded in 2004 and the newly founded association "Free Morphou" actively participates in various events of the Municipality and other bodies and associations.

Finally, retired football players founded the Morphou "Veteran Players Club", which organises football matches with other clubs. Some of the activities undertaken by the Municipality are: the annual free trip for the elderly refugees of Morphou that includes an excursion to various parts of the island, lunch, music, dancing, singing, joke-telling, and visits to charitable institutions where refugees live, as well as visits to military outposts, which have been adopted by the Municipality. Additionally, Christmas celebrations for the children of Morphou, blood donations, memorial services for former mayors and the municipal councilors of Morphou, memorials for the ambassadors of literature, awards and honours for students and teachers.

Mayor Charalambos Pittas sends a clear message regarding the provocative actions of Turkey and the illegal activity of the Turkish settlers and the Turkish Cypriots: "no right and no legitimacy can create illegal faits accomplis ... even

under the state of occupation and deportation of the legal residents and owners of Morphou and its broader area," he said, adding: "the Mayor and the City Council condemn the illegal fait accompli in the occupied land by the invaders, whose goal is to divide, not reunite, our country and our people". In collaboration with the organised groups of Morphou the Municipality of Morphou actively informs public opinion abroad and performs visits abroad in order to contact officials and other powerbrokers who can help the struggle of the refugees to return and solve the Cyprus problem.

C. Overseas Activities of the displaced Municipality of Morphou

The Morphou Municipality expanded its activities abroad, in order to raise public awareness around the world about the problems created by the Turkish occupation and also to find a solution to the Cyprus problem. In a bid to maintain and strengthen ties with Greece, from where the culture of Morphou and of the whole of Cyprus derives, the Municipality and its organised groups are in contact with municipalities and other Greek organised groups. Their agenda includes visits to other countries, mostly within Europe.

Between 1991 and 1996, when Andy Pantelides was Mayor, there was increasing town-twinning activity, such as with the municipalities of Sparta, Kalavryta, Syros, and Barnet of London. Additionally there were exchange visits and organised agreement-signing events. When Antigone Papadopoulou was Mayor, the Municipality was twinned with Orestiada in Evros, and during Charalambos Pittas' tenure with the municipalities of Zurrieq-Malta, Saint Cyr Sur Loire-France, Slovenj Gradec-Slovenia and Messolongi-Greece. During the exchange visits with Messolongi, on the occasion of the celebrations of the Exodus of Messolongi, a photo exhibition entitled "A Cry of Agony" was organised. The same exhibition was held at the "Great Britain" hotel in Athens and in various parts of England, with the help of the Expatriates Union of Morphou. In September 2011, at the invitation of Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia, the Mayor and the members of the City Council of Morphou visited Slovenia, on the occasion of the organisation of the exhibition entitled "Morphou: The destruction of an



Photographic exhibition titled “The Destruction of the Ancient Heritage,” in the Greek Parliament, Athens, 2011.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



Participation of the municipality, with representatives from 16 other international municipalities, at the 23rd conference of the International Organisation “Cities messengers of Peace,” which took place in Cyprus. The agenda of the conference consisted of discussions on international problems including the Cyprus problem. Several suggestions were sent to the UN Secretary-General.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

ancient heritage”. The day after the exhibition the Mayor and municipal councillors met with local officials of Slovenj Gradec and then visited Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, where they toured the Slovenian Parliament and met the Mayor and Member of Parliament representing Slovenj Gradec, Mr. Matjaja Zano Kar, as well as other members of the Slovenian Parliament, who were briefed on Cyprus' situation and exchanged views on various subjects. On the

21st of September, (World Peace Day and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Slovenia), the representatives of the Municipality of Morphou attended the celebrations and participated in a tree planting event with the Deputy Mayor of Slovenj Gradec. The visit was a great success and was aired by the local media.

From 18-24 October 2011 representatives of Morphou Municipality participated in the conference of the Executive

Secretariat and General Assembly of the “Peace Messenger Cities” in Kragujevac, Serbia. A resolution was submitted, which for the first time was passed by unanimous vote, calling on the Secretary-General of the UN to exert influence so that the peace talks between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot leader would lead to a solution of the Cyprus problem based on UN resolutions. During their visit, the representatives met the Mayor of Kragujevac and attended various events. Moreover, the vice president of the Municipal Council of Morphou, Chadjiavraam Victoras, was appointed by the General Assembly to chair an ad hoc committee responsible for developing new activities. During 25-29 of October a photographic exhibition was organised in the Events Hall of the Greek Parliament, entitled “Morphou: The desecration and destruction of an ancient heritage”. Numerous important people attended the inauguration ceremony. A film was presented, prepared by the Morphou Municipality, entitled “Morphou’s Embrace,” impressing the audience. During important events of the Municipality, such as anti-occupation marches, representatives of Morphou’s twinned towns attended, such as representatives from Brighton-England, Truyes- France, Plonsk-Poland, New Mexico-Mexico, and Chania-Crete, as well as representatives of foreign organisations, who have close relations with the Municipality of Morphou.

In collaboration with the Women's Group of Morphou the Municipality contributes to the cultural heritage and history of Cyprus by organizing exhibitions for the artists hailing from Morphou, such as in London and Athens. In collaboration with the Morphou Cultural Group they also organised plays and events in various parts of Greece, while the Group has twinned with Greek Cultural Groups. In the same spirit, the Association of Veteran Footballers organises games, particularly with groups from twinned Municipalities in Greece. The Municipality is also responsible for children's participation in the football tournament Europousse that takes place in Morphou’s twinned French town of Saint Cyr Sur Loire. Morphou’s youth take part in international youth conferences in Europe. Also, every July the Municipality organises a cruise to the Greek islands. After the scheduled anti-occupation march, in



Photographic exhibition in the European Parliament in Brussels, entitled “Destroyed Civilisations, stolen Lives,” in 2010.

Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

November, the Mayor and the members of the City Council organise visits to London, where they talk with British politicians and other officials and submit a memorandum calling for the return of Morphou and the other occupied territories of Cyprus to their rightful owners. A number of visits have taken place to the European Council in Strasbourg, where Morphou’s representatives met the leaders of the Council. When circumstances allow, the Mayor and the City Council meet with representatives of foreign embassies in Cyprus, particularly of those nations that are permanent members of the UN Security Council. The present Mayor of Morphou Charalambos Pittas is a member of the Executive Secretariat of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, a permanent member and one of the vice-presidents of the Committee of the Regions, which has its headquarters in Brussels. As the Vice-President of the Committee of Cyprus Occupied Municipalities, he attends various events in London and elsewhere. The activities of the Municipality are diverse, and this underlines the fact that, while the refugees may be away from their land for a long period of time, their creativity does not subside. Under the framework of its responsibilities, the Municipality tries to offer justice to its citizens by influencing governmental policies towards freedom and the return of all Cypriots to their ancestral homes. Even though the Turks can currently alter the occupied territories of

Morphou, the souls and memories of the refugees remain unchanged. Their creativity, their literary and artistic spirit are alive and generates culture, expressing their love for their town and province, through speeches and visual presentations. To those who wonder whether the memory of the refugees is fading or whether they have forgotten their homeland, the teacher Louis Kilonis replies: "No! It's not fading. We are the descendants of Ulysses. Those who deny we can return to our Ithaca shall have a rude awakening".



Mayor of Morphou Charalambos Pittas together with the Mayor of Barnet (UK) and councillors of both towns, during the tree planting ceremony at Morphou street in Barnet town, November 2008. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive

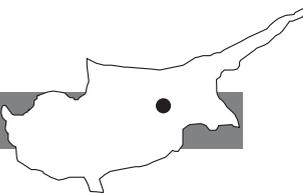
Kouris Papacharalambous writes: "These toils; this heritage, this place called Morphou, called an enslaved country, shall be remembered. Morphou is not a dream. It is a reality." Yiannis Podinaras does not forget and does not cease to sing for his hometown: "Morphou, a bridge in the heart / of foreign land. / Morphou, a bridge in a deep well / of homesickness." Costas Montis, spiritual father of the refugees, chooses the ever-vigilant guard Pentadaktylos to represent the refugees, by informing the new-conquerors: "Come now! I've seen before the likes of you, / many a time my eyes have seen the likes of you ...". The spirit of the remarkable Loukis Akritas from Morphou urges the people to "stay united, do not scatter to the winds of our times." The refugees of Morphou, like all other Cypriot refugees, do not ask for much; they just want to return home. Niki Ladaki Philipou demands the self-evidents: "I'm not looking / for flashes of triumph. / I do not dream / of vain trophies/ I ask for little / Very little ... / The minimum in the vastness of the world / I ask for/my birthplace." Rodiki Lambrou addresses her enslaved town: "Morphou, glow of a dream, / if for a moment I go deaf /in your lamentation lies your silent scream / I will no longer be worthy to be called your child". The refugees are convinced that Aphrodite and their Patron Saint Agios Mamas will help them in their struggle for return, until the Turkish conquerors deliver back to them what they treacherously and violently seized.



Photographic exhibition titled "The Destruction of the Ancient Heritage of Morphou," in October 2011. During these events Europeans were informed about the Cyprus problem and the island's occupation. Photo: Morphou Municipality Archive



Municipality of Lysi



Lysi is located in the south-east of Mesaoria, in the centre of three cities, Nicosia, Famagusta and Larnaca. Administratively, Lysi belongs to the province of Famagusta. Its privileged location along with the fertile ground of the area, have been, since ancient times, the main reasons for the creation of settlements in the area which developed into powerful and prosperous towns. Lysi's development started in the Byzantine Period. As the successor of the ancient Greek settlements Elisso, Elissi or Elysi and Alasso, Lysi, in around 1700, gradually developed to one of the greatest communities in Mesaoria, and eventually became a town and a municipality with only Cypriot residents. Since its foundation, Lysi never ceased to contribute to the economy, the culture and the struggles of Cyprus for freedom, democracy and justice. Just like before the Turkish invasion and occupation, Lysi's municipality and its citizens continue to honour their hometown, origin and the history of their place. They are worthy of their ancestors, proving that they belong to Lysi and that Lysi rightfully belongs to them.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. The origins of Lysi

Lysi was founded in an area strewn with archaeological remains and findings, which prove the existence of flourishing ancient settlements of the past and also confirm the Greek identity of the place. Excavations held in Alasso, Elissi, Laxies, Aglassyka, Sida, Drosisti and Agios Georgios of Mandres brought to light ancient tombs (known as "caverns"), gems of tombs, sculptures, coins and other objects, which belong to the Mycenaean, Classical and Roman periods. In the ancient Greek settlement Elissi, more specifically in the area of Agios Georgios of Mandres, a headstone was found, which is dated back to the middle of the 5th century and is exhibited today at the Cyprus Archaeological Museum in Nicosia. It depicts a Greek warrior, who wears a helmet, a



Funerary stele of the classical period found at ancient Lysi depicting a Thracian warrior.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

breastplate and holds a circular shield in his left hand, a pike in his right hand, while a knife is hanging from his right shoulder. On the right side of the headstone the warrior's name and origin are reported: DIONYSIO KARDIANO. The Greek warrior, who came from Kardias (Thrace), died while fighting in Elliso. He was a soldier in the army of the great leader Kimonas, who came to liberate Cyprus from the Persians in 478 B.C. At the location "Panagies," archaeological remains of a Hellenic and Roman settlement were traced. Hellenistic tombs were found at the gymnasium's track, while at the location "Niolita" a Roman residence with a mosaic floor was found.

There are various accounts about the origin of Lysi's name. According to one, the reason why it was called Lysi is because where Lysi was built, copper used to be melted in older times, which was carried from the neighboring Copper-Hill, west of Lysi. According to a different version, the name "Lysi" (Greek for 'solution') derives from the fact that two kings resolved their disagreements in that place. Some people claim that these two kings were Isaakios Komninos and Richard the Lion-heart, while some even argue that there were administrative courts for "solving" the problems among citizens and administrative staff. There are many more accounts regarding the origin of Lysi's name, but the most predominant is that it derives from the ancient settlements of Elisso and Elissi (Lissi) from which its first residents came from. That is why, according to Nearchos Clerides, it would be better if "Lysi" was written with an "i" (Lisi) and not with the Greek letter ypsilon or "y" (Lysi). Despite of the origin of its name, Lysi, which was founded in the Byzantine period, is the successor of the ancient Elysi or Elissi (coming from the Homeric "λίσση πέτρα" = smooth and flat rock), in the east of the village and southwest of Elisso.

It is not easy to say with certainty exactly when the village was built in its present location. However there is evidence that confirms the existence of ancient settlements in the area, which were later replaced by some other small settlements of farmers and cattle breeders. These settlements grew or declined, depending on the needs and the difficulties of each period. It is also certain that Lysi was one of those settlements and its development began during the Byzantine Period.

B. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

Archeological finds confirm the habitation of the area during the Early Byzantine period. Furthermore the various scattered monasteries, as well as the existence of famous monks (Efimianos, Synesios, Theodoros and Ionas), also constitute indisputable evidence. The first residents came from Elisso-Elysi in groups and built their new settlement. Due to the increase of population a three-aisled basilica was built at close proximity, to the west of present-day Lysi. Based on current evidence the rise of the three-aisled basilica is dated back to the 7th century. It became well known when a "treasure" was detected in its ruins, which contained a silver disc with a monogram as well as an abundance of golden, silver and copper Byzantine coins. At a

distance of 500 m, remains of the second Early-Christian basilica devoted to the Virgin Mary were found. It was decorated with marble inlays, while other objects were also found including a pectoral copper cross and an Arabian coin, that were dated back to around the 7th century. These two basilicas were probably destroyed during the first Arabian incursions (649/650 and 653/654).

In the same area remains of the Middle – Byzantine period (10th-11th century) were also detected. The decorative frescoes of the church of Agios Synesios seem to be also dated back to the Byzantine period. There are no historical sources as to when the monastery of Prophetis Elias, which was very popular for many years, was founded. What few findings exist point to it being built during the 10th century, and refer to the structure of monastic life and prove the existence of habitation. It seems that there were workers from the neighbouring villages who came to work on the farms of monastery. According to tradition, during periods of raids, disease and lack of water, residents of neighbouring settlements found shelter at the monastery or the surrounding area. This was due to the fact that the monastery had water supply and offered certain privileges including asylum. The fact that people there could find a "solution" (= λύση>Lysi) to their sufferings and disease is an additional account about the origin of Lysi's name. Remains of the monastery were found in the west and north of today's church of Panagia (Virgin Mary). The monastery declined during Latin rule and was revived at the end of that period, at the beginning of Ottoman rule.

C. Frankish Period (1192-1571)

Lysi is included in reports and catalogues on the Cypriot villages of the late Frankish and Venetian periods. According to Florios Voustronios, in 1464, James II offered as a fief Lissi (Lysi), Panaia (Panagia) and S. Thodoro (Agios Theodoros) to Alfonso Rivera and his daughter's husband, Avigo d' Alvet. The feudal lords converted part of the extensive rural area near the abandoned monastery of Prophetis Elias into an olive grove. On other farms cotton and corn were cultivated. Lysi is also reported in a census of Cypriot villages, which was held at the end of the 15th century by the Venetians and was published by G. Grivaud. In this document the area is recorded as Casal Lissi or Lysi (village of Lysi). Other villages are also reported in these catalogues such as: Casal Macrassicha (village Makrassyka), Casal Pomagia (village Panagia), Casal



The desecrated Byzantine chapel of Agios Efimianos.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

S. Todero (village of Agios Theodoros). In an anonymous Venetian report of 1523, which was kept in the National Marciana Library in Venice, Lysi is referred to as “empalio” (Lo baliazzo de Lissi), that means district, and includes Lysi, Panagia, Makrassyka, Agios Theodoros and Laxia. There are other reports of the same period where Cypriot villages are recorded and Lysi is one of them. Reference to the area is found in Venetian documents of 1530 and 1534, in which the Venetian authority seems to have leased the land of Lysi to the nobles for a short period of time. From these documents it appears that the feudal lord was paid tax and did not own the land. . Father Eusevios (now Archimandrite Barnabas) conducted thorough research on old manuscripts of papal documents of the Frankish dominion and testimonies of the residents of the surrounding area to discover that there was a very prosperous monastery in Lysi, the only one at that time in Mesaoria, which was built during the 11th century. During the 15th century the monastery was in danger, because of the Mamluks, so the monks collected its treasure, similar to that of Lampousa, and hid it in a well, which they built themselves. The treasure included holyicons, various gold jewels, coins, holy trays and ancient vessels of exceptional value. Eventually, the monastery was entirely destroyed by the Mamluks, but the treasure remained there. A small church devoted to Agios Efimianos (or Agios Themonianos), which is located between Lysi and the village Troulloi, is of the same chronological period. It was believed, without any proof though, that Efimianos was one of the 300 foreign saints who came to

Cyprus, lived an ascetic life and were eventually declared saints. The church devoted to Efimianos was dated back to the 13th century and was decorated with impressive frescoes.

Towards the end of Frankish rule and under the Turkish threat, many Venetians sold farms and monasteries to the natives and then abandoned the island. It is assumed that during this period a native man bought Lysi and started the reconstruction of the monastery of Prophetis Elias. Apparently though, it was destroyed in 1424-1426, by the Mamluks, during their invasion of Cyprus, under the rule of the Egyptian sultan Al-Ashraf Sayf-ad-Din Barsbay. Al-Ashraf Sayf-ad-Din Barsbay.

D. Ottoman Rule (1572-1878)

The gradual emigration of the habitants from Lysi’s surrounding areas to Lysi was noted during the Ottoman rule, while up



The holy icon of the Virgin Mary (14th century), which was stolen after 1974. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

to 1700 many small settlements still existed, such as Aglassyka, Agios Efimianos and Panagia. The emigration towards Lysi was intensified around 1800. The reasons that forced many families to emigrate to Lysi at the time, thus leading to an increase of its population, were the epidemics, forced conversions to Islam, and the safety and the abundance of water that the monastery provided. As time passed, some villages listed in the Venetian catalogues, such as Panagia, Agios Efimianos, Agios Mamas (Silitzi) were permanently deserted in 1572. Later on, the residents of Sida, Pergamos, Pistatziou and Aglassykas also moved to Lysi. They took the holy icons of saints and honoured them as ancient Greeks used to do, who regularly carried with them to their new residences objects related to their own gods. The holy icon of Panagia (Virgin Mary) of 1568 was brought from Pistatzi and the holy icon of Jonas dated back to 1790 was brought from Pergamos. Where the abandoned settlements used to be, some small churches such as Agios Georgios of Aglassyka and Agios Efimianos were found, marking the existence of the past settlements. At this period the monastery of Prophetis Elias officiated again and a homonymous church was constructed. These two temples coexisted in Lysi and supported the residents. The priest-monk Ioannikios supervised the farms and the monastery.

The development of Lysi's settlement was peaking. Its population reached 250 residents around the year, 1805 and 435 in 1825, 88 of whom paid taxes. In their effort to provide their children with basic education and to maintain their Greek identity, Lysi's residents constructed a rudimentary primary school in a room donated to Prophetis Elias's church by Anastasia Hadjipitsilou. The first teacher of the 12 students was Hadjimichael. He hailed from Kaimakli and his father was one of the victims of the Turkish atrocities of 1821. He escaped the slaughter and fled to Egypt. He had a mastery of the Turkish language and Byzantine music, which he taught to his students with great enthusiasm. Thanks to this teacher the Byzantine music tradition developed in Lysi.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878-1974)

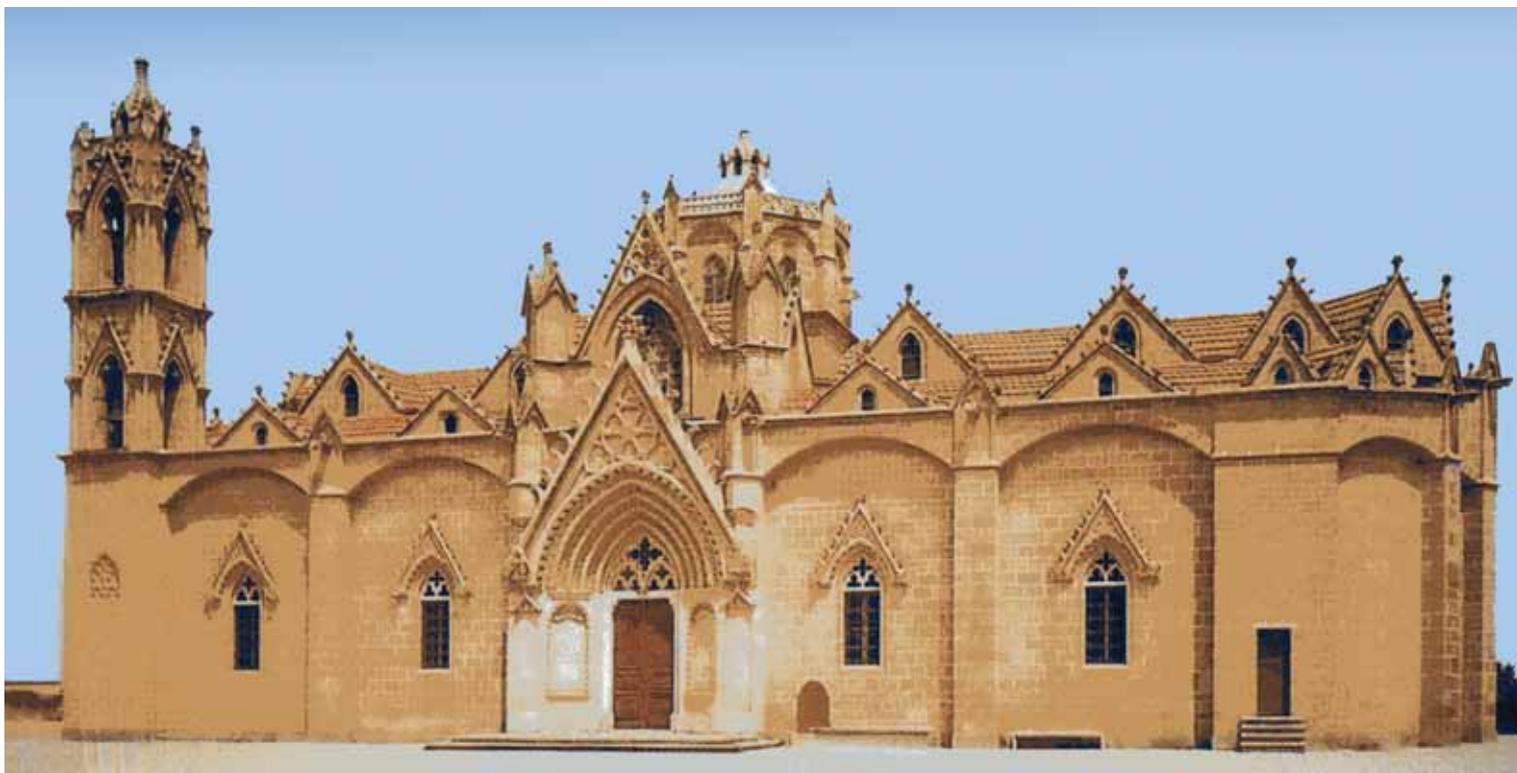
With the arrival of the British (1878) Lysi's residents, like all Cypriots, felt that they were liberated from the Turkish oppression, which had slowed down their development and progress. Influenced by the uplifting of their national spirit, struggles for liberation and the integration of various formerly enslaved areas to Greece, they believed that the new conqueror would support the full independence of Cyprus and its union with

the rest of Hellenism. At first this initial positive feeling allowed them to turn their abilities towards progress and prosperity. From 1878 until the 1974 Turkish invasion, Lysi developed culturally and financially due to its hardworking, progressive and determined residents.

Under British colonial rule, the residents of Lysi, apart from their struggles for freedom, also struggled to make their dreams come true and to lay the foundations for a community that complied with the Greek - Christian principles and values. The oppressive British rule could not be compared to that of the Ottoman conquerors. The new conditions favoured the restructuring of Lysi's community as well as the whole Cypriot Hellenism. They started exploiting Mesaoria's wealth and beauty, improving in this way their living standards. They all worked with eagerness and team spirit in order to lay the foundations for a spiritual, social and financial progress. After the independence of Cyprus, Lysi's residents, as well as all other Cypriot people, took advantage of the chances that freedom and the structured Republic of Cyprus offered, and managed to successfully transform their small village into a prosperous Mesaoria town, despite the problems that arose due to the Turkish uprising of 1963 and onwards.

A. Cultural Development

Emigration from neighbouring settlements led to an increase of Lysi's population. Because the church of Prophetis Elias was not large enough to cater to their religious needs, the residents decided to build a larger one, at the same location. In 1888 the construction of a magnificent church began through the voluntary work of the residents. During the construction works they discovered a well where, as mentioned before, the treasure of the large monastery had allegedly been hidden in order to keep from the Mamluks. The treasure, cleverly hidden, was not found. They found however three old holy icons of the Virgin Mary. This unexpected discovery was perceived as a miracle and a divine order, thus the people of Lysi devoted the new impressive church to Panagia (Virgin Mary), instead of to Prophetis Elias, and since then the Virgin Mary has been the patron saint and protector of Lysi. Later, they enlarged the church, and the holy water (well) was in this way positioned in the centre of the church. The new three-aisled basilica was constructed, in a neo-Gothic style with rich carved exterior decoration with influences from the church of Agios Nicholaos in



The Church of Panagia (Virgin Mary) at Lysi. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

Famagusta Few churches could be compared to the magnitude and beauty of Panagia's church. The church was Lysi's pride which spread the faith, the collective voluntary work and people's skills in building. In the middle of the new church there stood the 15th century dry-well with the treasure.

The people of Lysi had a particular love for literature, art and sports, and were eager to provide their children with the best education, so they took the initiative to construct the appropriate institutions. As soon as the British took control of the island, in 1878, the locals transferred their communal school to a new building in which the boys' and gradually the girls' school were accommodated. Remarkable teachers worked at those schools, such as Constantinos Elias Tompolis and his son Anikitos Glykeriou Loizos. In 1920, the first primary school was built, in a neoclassic style. In 1938 the outstanding Lysi Hospital, an innovative project for the time, was built thanks to the and voluntary work by the people of Lysi. The hospital was constructed on land which was allotted for free by the church of Lysi. Individuals, who had Lysi's interest in mind, put aside their personal ambitions in order to serve the common interest. Lysi's people started to establish associations offering the youth activities and moral virtues, which constituted a safeguard for their development. Around

95% of the youth attended these associations, which operated based on regulations and obligations which members had to respect. Hence they became workshops for social education and creativity, where the youth could fruitfully spend their free time, away from possible dangers or antisocial behaviour.

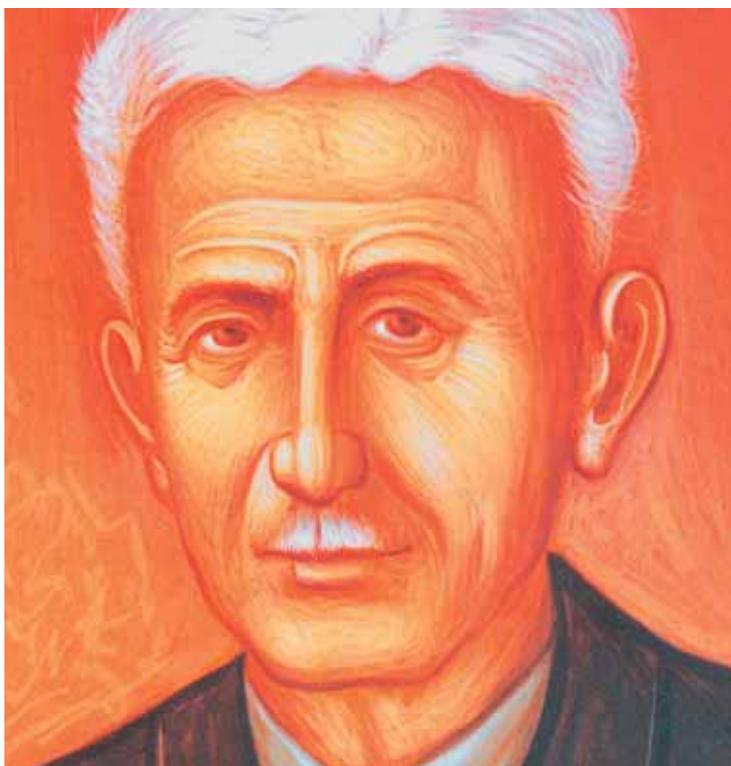
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The first constructed associations were the reading rooms "Pan-Hellenic Desire" (1909) and "Love of People" (1919). The latter was turned into the historical association "Club Love of Lysi's People" with great cultural and athletic contribution, which continued after the independence of the island. In 1932, the "Athletic Union of Lysi, Ischis" (Force) was founded, which is known in Cyprus for its exceptional performance in sports and its great cultural contribution to society. In 1953, the Union had its own building, which was constructed on land offered by the church. In 1942, the Agrarian Union "Demetra" was founded. It continued to operate as an Agrarian local union - pancyprian union of farmers until 1951, promoting agrarian development as well as national education. In 1946, the Religious association "Prophetis Elias" was founded which in 1955 was renamed to "Religious Orthodox Institute - Holy Shelter" with religious activities, , catechism and charitable missions. The leaders of the Religious Orthodox Institute were the old

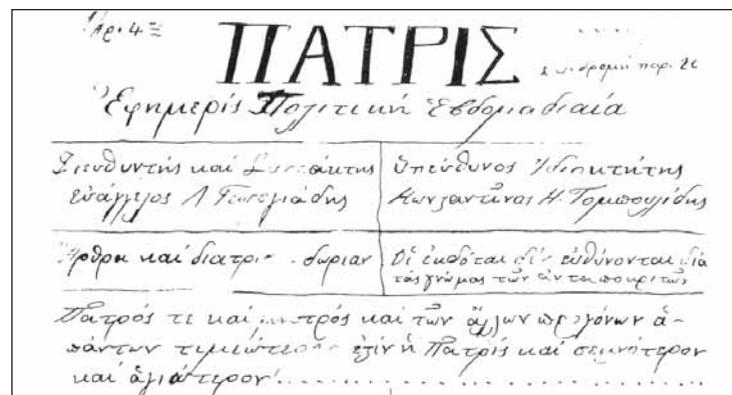
man Panagis Hadjiionas - Ilamiou and abbot of the Sacred Monastery of Apostle Barnabas, the old man Gabriel (George Siokouros). They influenced the character of Lysi's residents with their work and their exemplary lives. In 1950 the Christian bookstore "Tiverias" opened and in 1955 Bishop Gennadios of Salamina and Ourania Kokkinou founded the Orthodox - Christian Union of Youth which promoted religious activity. This union was very active in the social, spiritual and national fields. In the same period, Lella Tsaousi founded the children's association for girls, "The Cyclamens." Other associations and unions were also founded: the Athletic Union of Lysi (1943), which was renamed to 'National Liberating League' (1948) with cultural and athletic activities, the Union of Cypriot Farmers of Lysi, the trade union PEO (1948), the Union of Animal Breeders and SEK (1953). These unions and associations organised theatre plays, choirs and mandolin orchestras, founded libraries, dance groups, set up football teams, organized football matches , district track sports competitions, lectures, excursions, agrarian exhibitions, national and religious celebrations, provided volunteer work on projects of public benefit, and gave financial support to those in need. They promoted the prosperous lifestyle and customs and traditions of Lysi. In 1953 the premises housing the "Athletic Union of Lysi, "ASIL," was constructed through volunteer work. The intellectual and artistic tradition of Lysi covered a wide range of the arts and the letters, producing exceptional people in the fields of education, literature, prose, poetry, folklore, music, painting, sculpturing, engraving, dancing, etc. Many of those became very distinguished in their area of interest, and have endured in the memory of the people of Lysi as part of the history of their place.

Some indicative examples are Constantinos E. Tompolis, an



Yiagkos Souroulas, the first mayor of Lysi. He was a teacher of Byzantine music and a composer.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive



Frontispiece of the newspaper "Patris".

Photo: Klaelia Tompoli-Theodoulou

outstanding educator, composer and chanter at the Virgin Mary church of Lysi. Constantinos Tompolis was a man with extensive general knowledge, an admirer of the ancient Greek spirit, which he wanted to instill with great enthusiasm in his students. With his creativity, progressiveness and his overall activity, he contributed to the cultural development of his community. In 1902, when he was still a student, he became the editor of the political newspaper "Homeland," the first handwritten Cypriot newspaper, which was distributed until August of the same year, and in 1909 he founded the reading room "Pan-Hellenic Desire." He wrote a plethora of articles, conducted various studies and in 1939 he edited the musical collection "School Songs." Together with his student Giangos Souroullas, a composer, chanter and later mayor of Lysi, he revived the Byzantine musical tradition. They taught Byzantine music, cultivated and promoted musical education and sensibilities in the people of Lysi, making the town stand out from the other communities in Cyprus. Giangos Souroullas, who had a Byzantine choir since 1918, taught more than 350 chanters. Thanks to Souroullas Byzantine music became a significant part of Lysi's cultural heritage. He also composed many national songs, which were sung by



The well-known poet Pavlos Liasidis.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

his choir during national celebrations and memorials. During the EOKA struggle (1955-1959) his musical compositions were spread by the people of EOKA throughout the island, contributing in this way to the elevation of the national spirit. The contribution of the musician Costas Kasianos, collaborator of Giangos Souroullas, was also of great importance.

Some other important personalities, who contributed to the spiritual and cultural development of Lysi's society were the outstanding educator Kosmas Lysiotis and his son the awarded poet, Xanthos Lysiotis, the well-known prose writer Melis Nicholaidis, the gifted violinist Kyriakos Kapsalis, the painter and sculptor Konstantis Tompoulas, the sculptor Panagis Hadjigiannis and the popular poets Pavlos Liasidis, Yiakoumis Atsikos and Christakis Chasapis. In the poems of these three popular poets of Lysi, their birthplace, their homeland, the citizens and their struggle hold a special place. Sozos Tompolis, who was also a prominent educator, chanter, musician and folklore scientist, spent his childhood in Lysi.

After Cyprus' independence, from May 13th to December 20th 1962, Lysi functioned as a municipality. As a result of the elections, which were the first municipal elections from independence to 1974, Giangos Souroullas became the mayor of Lysi. Seven months later the municipality was abolished and the Council for Amelioration took its place so that the Turkish-Cypriots would not claim separate municipal elections in mixed municipalities. This issue constituted one of the 13 points of the proposals submitted by President Makarios, in his effort to avoid the separation of the population and the division of the country. In spite of all this, it should be mentioned that after World War II and the softening of colonial control, due to the Cypriot participation in the war, Lysi developed rapidly and claimed the title of the administrative centre of Mesaoria, which was eventually awarded in the first years after independence. Almost every governmental ministry had branches in the area and the local hospital became nationalised and was upgraded to a district hospital one. In 1960 the second primary school was constructed, which also functioned as an eight-grade school, up to 1967, when Lysi's high school was founded. The high school was housed in its own modern premises in 1969. At the same time a private kindergarten and private tutorial schools opened in Lysi.

During the same period the impressive premises of the Cyprus Workers Union, the Agrarian Local Union - Pan Cyprian Farmers' Union and the 'Association of Love for the people



SIKALI in front of the church before the exile.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive



Gregoris Afxentiou Stadium (ASIL) at Lysi before 1974. It was the first stadium with planted grass and electric lighting.

Photo: ASIL Archive

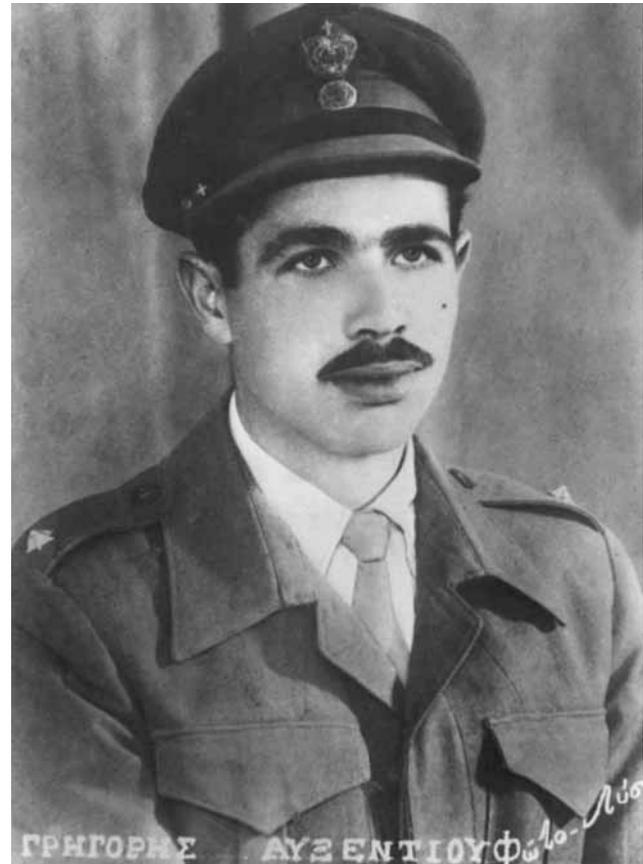
Lysi' were founded on church land, through volunteer work by the residents. The municipal building as well as the modern second square of Lysi, were created around the same period. The square attracted several crowds from Lysi and the neighbouring villages. The old unions were also active and continued to bring young people together. New organised unions were also established. The 123rd Organization of Lysi Boy Scouts was founded in 1960, which was immediately embraced by young people. Due to its diverse programme it had a leading role in all the events organised by the community and developed in this way its great cultural activity. The Artists' Union of Lysi was founded in 1961. It was inspired by Kostis Kosteas, who was a very significant figure of Cyprus' cultural life and added his personal touch to the entire culture of Cyprus. The Artists' Union was one of the first Cypriot folk bands that performed musical and dance shows, dancing performances based on traditional dances, popular melodies, legends and local traditions. It traveled all around Cyprus, it published books, records and gave lectures. Furthermore on several occasions it represented Cyprus abroad and won many awards. The Athletic Instructional Association of Lysi, which organised physical and cultural activities, was founded in 1963. The Hunters Union was

established in 1963, and the Intellectual Student Association that had a rich cultural activity was founded in 1968.

After Cyprus' independence, the "Educational Athletic Union of Lysi (AMOL)" was established, which was responsible for many athletic and cultural activities. It belonged to KOP (Cyprus Football Federation) and was upgraded to the First Division, where it became a leader in athletic events. It built its own stadium (1964), the "Gregoris Afxentiou," the first one in Cyprus that had grass and spotlights. During the summer, three famous evening football tournaments were conducted (Agrarian, First Division and International) which were associated with Lysi. The town was filled with thousands of football fans, hence the event constituted a festival of joy and amusement. A year before the Turkish invasion (1973), 300 football teams participated in the Agrarian football tournament, which means that the entire island took part. The person who initiated this remarkable endeavour is Panayiotis Hadjikostas. In the same year, the Department of Antiquities took over the preservation of the church of Agios Efimianos and restored its famous Byzantine frescoes. The church and its wall paintings constituted a unique cultural treasure for Lysi's people as well as for Orthodoxy in general. A far more valuable treasure for Lysi were its children who with their struggles and sacrifices made Lysi the "Mother of Heroes".

B. Lysi: "Mother of Heroes"

Lysi contributed to all national fundraisers and offered Cyprus many fighters and heroes, thus proving its high standard of civilization. In 1931, the people of Lysi participated in the rebellion known as the "Octovriana" and were severely punished by the British colonial rulers. In 1940 a large number of people from Lysi voluntarily joined the Allied Armed Forces, hoping that the British would reward them with independence for Cyprus. In 1950 all Cypriots, without any exception, signed the referendum petition for the union of Cyprus with Greece. In 1951 the colonial government passed a law regarding the Council for Amelioration in order to undermine and weaken the determination of Cypriot Hellenism. Lysi rejected the law, because the residents did not want to cooperate with the conqueror. Then, as punishment, the British commander abolished the law on public health of Lysi. The British governor abolished community taxes, causing serious problems to the community of Lysi since it could not finance with its projects. The people reacted by electing a local committee, which was named "Communal Council of



The Hero Gregoris Afxentiou. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

Lysi." In order to stress their "self-rule," they built in the central square of their community one hexagonal basis on the sides of which they wrote the initials CCL i.e. "Communal Council of Lysi," and hoisted a Greek flag. The council's task was to take over the voluntary collection of taxes, the repair of roads and the water system of the community, and provide solutions to other issues, mainly related to health. It was a self-ruled community, based on volunteer work and contributions from Lysi's people.

The people of Lysi had deep religious faith and a special love for Greece. They were raised with certain ideals and were equipped with self-knowledge. That is what enabled them to gain a leading role in the EOKA struggle for liberation, which started in 1955. They took part in this struggle from the beginning until its end in 1959 and with their sacrifices gave Lysi the honorary title "Mother of Heroes." The first hero from Lysi who sacrificed his life was Patroclos Kokkinos. His fellow villagers kneeled in front of his body, while his parents, resembling the Spartans, greeted his body by saying: "Our Homeland is worth it" and "Since you did not give up, let our blessings be with you" The participation and action of many

people from Lysi was widespread. Seven other young men from Lysi died heroically during the struggle for liberty: Gregoris Afxentiou, Anastasis Souroullas, George Hadjiionas, Christofis Panayides, Michael Sialos Kailis, Kallis Sakkas and Anastasis Phanis. Furthermore, seven more men from Lysi were imprisoned at the Central Prisons, four of whom were initially sentenced to death, others were confined and tortured in concentration camps, and three elderly, Peter and Pavlos Nikoletti and Michael Toumpas were murdered by Turkish collaborators of the British.

The legendary hero Gregoris Afxentiou, second-in-command in the EOKA hierarchy was active in Famagusta in Pendathaktylos and Pitsilia. When his hideout in Machairas was surrounded by the British, he ordered his soldiers to surrender and he was left alone. The British gassed his hideout and burnt him alive on March 3. He then became a symbol of struggle and sacrifice. Even his opponents recognised the strength of his Greek heart. They feared him even after his death, and buried him at the “Filakismena Mnimata” (Imprisoned Graves), instead of allowing his body to be buried in his birthplace. Many young men were active in Lysi, among them the hero of Dikomo, Kyriakos Matsis, the heroic teacher Fotis Pittas, Elias Papakryiakou and many others. The community became the centre of building and supplying bombs and issuing brochures on EOKA’s struggle. Lysi offered hospitality and provided refuge to the fighters who were pursued by the British. Lysi’s community became a district centre for the demonstrations of the Passive Opposition. The Political Committee of Cyprus Struggle and the militias operated there with the purpose of monitoring British movements. They also sought to protect neighbouring villages from the Turks who, following commands from the British, were causing damage to properties and were killing defenseless Greeks.

The fighters of EOKA were supported by the entire population of Lysi, irrespective of gender or age. Everyone helped in every possible way. Many young people, members of ANE, apart from writing slogans, distributing brochures, making transportation arrangements and hiding weapons, also elevated the people’s spirit. They gave speeches during national celebrations and memorials for the community’s heroes, in order to rekindle their enthusiasm. In OXEN (Orthodox – Christian Union of Youth), the women wore Cypriot textiles (alatzia), organised national celebrations, markets, raised the Greek flag at their houses and offered hospitality and support

to the fighters who were being chased by the British. The rage of the British against the people of Lysi was so intense, that at times they forcibly imposed long curfews and bombed houses.

After the Turkish uprising Lysi hosted a unit of the Greek army, while people of the area voluntarily participated in various battles in Pendadaktylos and defended the surrounding villages. Lysi has its fair share in confronting the Turkish invasion of July 1974, with seven dead, 19 missing and 4511 displaced people. Lysi is still under the occupation of its usurpers, exposed to the control of people who are not sensitive of its culture, and hence subjected to a cultural genocide.

C. Economic Development

Parallel to its cultural development, Lysi also evolved financially. During British rule, the activities of Lysi’s residents were mainly concentrated on agriculture and cattle breeding. They cultivated grain, olive trees, carob trees, vineyards and many other crops. The cattle breeding included the breeding of sheep, goats, pigs and poultry. Every household was self-sufficient and had all the necessities. Very few people worked in the employ of others in order to survive. During that period other traditional jobs flourished, which served the surrounding villages as well, such as horse carriage and trunk workshops, silk breeders, blacksmiths and carpenter



Living room, traditionally decorated with cadres, plates and pots. Residence of Vassilis Dakkas in Lysi.

Photo: Eleni Papadimitriou



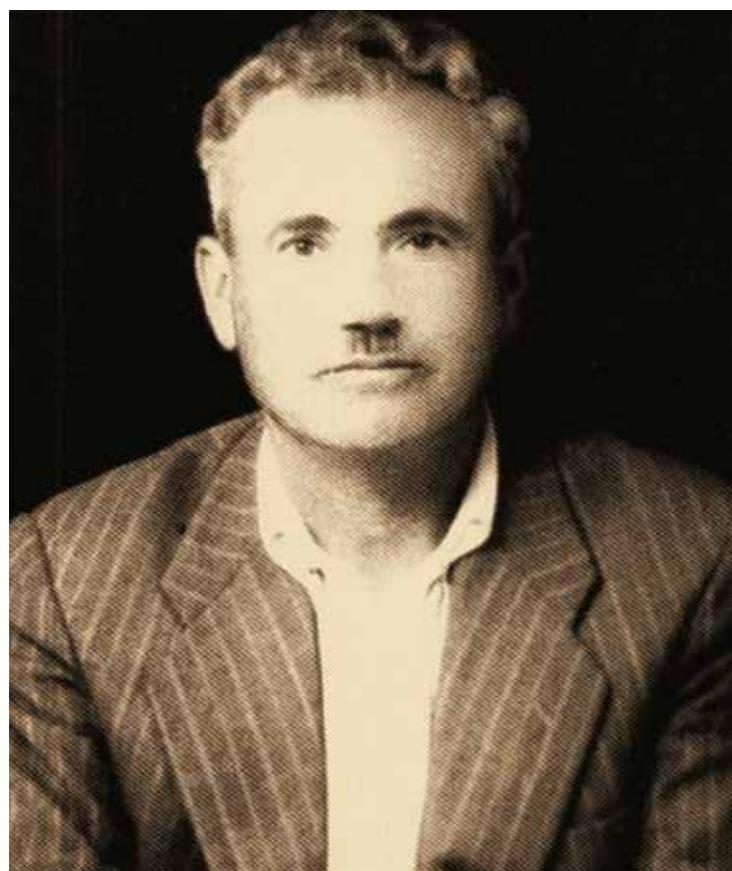
The sculptor Constantinos Tompoulas. Right: One of his sculptures. Photo: Alekos Diamantis

workshops.

Resident, who did not own any land or could not perform any rural activities because of the drought found other ways to survive, using their talent and creativity. Folklore arts were developed, though to a small degree, including folk painting. The popular painters were also engaged in glass paintings which they combined with other activities, in order to earn more money for their family. For some people folk painting was their livelihood. Because of the relatively easy communication with the surrounding areas, the painters were informed about new art trends, they were influenced by other styles and widened the range of themes according to the demands and the aesthetics of the people. Their themes were mostly related to kings, heroes, girls, married couples, Olympian gods and goddesses, biblical figures, scenes depicting the fall of Constantinople, the Greek national liberation war of 1821 and the victorious Balkan wars. A significant painter among the popular painters of Lysi, who practiced the glass-painting technique was Ioannis Athanasiou, who later became a hagiographer. His folklore paintings informed the people on various heroes and historical events. They became the main decorating objects of Mesaoria's rural houses and especially Lysi's. Other similar folklore arts were also practiced by people in Lysi. Through these arts the creators improved their skills and put their talents to good use. Another folklore art was the engraving of dry pumpkins. Konstantis Tompoulas, a rural constable and cattle breeder, known for his sculptures, carved the heroes of 1821 on dry pumpkins. He also created copies of ancient sculptures, as did his

fellow-villager Hadjiannis and other artisans of the area, like Kasialos. After their expulsion from the archaeological services, they used other techniques, such as the carving of ring stones and scarabs, painting and micro-sculptures. The women, in addition to other activities, were skillful weavers too. All these people's workshops, often located inside their homes, fought to make ends meet, while at the same time they developed their artistic skills as well as other abilities.

In Lysi there were craftsmen specialised in various construction jobs, who preserved the traditional popular architecture. They constructed paved roads and built houses with mud bricks, following the specific design that characterizes almost all Mesaoria's houses. Irrespective of the house's location, the arch of the entrance hall had to face the south. The orientation of the houses helped the sunlight enter the rooms during winter, when the sun was low, while in the summer when the sun was higher up in the sky, there was shade keeping the rooms cool. Another reason for this specific orientation were the southerly cool summer winds of the area. In current



Savvas Xystouris: the great synergist and folklore scientist.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

terminology, this was a type of bio – architecture, which was appropriately used by Lysi's residents. Professional craftsmen worked on embossed stone decoration of lintels and door-frames of the residences' entrances and provided the house interior with woodcut furniture.

The cooperative movement was the pinnacle of team spirit for communal development among Lysi's people. It developed to varying degrees and in various fields, saving many people from bankruptcy and upgrading the standard of living within the community. A great contributor, pioneer, inspirer and leader of the cooperative unions of Lysi, as well as a folklore artist and an agrarian leader was the memorable Savvas Xystouris. The contribution of the cooperative unions to financial development gradually became more perceivable with the creation of the first Savings' Bank of Lysi in 1916 by Constantinos Tompolis with the name "I Mellissa" (the bee). In this bank Constantinos Tompolis served as a clerk. The cooperative unions also helped the constitution of the Cooperative Credit Society of Lysi in 1923, the Cooperative Association for the Disposal of Rural Products and the Cooperative Grocers Union in 1935, the Cooperative Union for Olive Oil Production in 1945, and the Cooperative Union of Transport in 1946. The establishment of the Irrigation Association also contributed to the financial development of a large area, south-east of Lysi, with the creation of a common borehole. It should be noted that since 1910, closed cisterns were used for the watering of Lysi, at a time when no other village used this means of irrigation.

After Independence, Lysi's people, who stood out in the fights for Cyprus' freedom through their hard work and volunteer work, helped their community progress. Agriculture and cattle breeding, which were their main activities, were further developed. Lysi's fertile ground provided a variety of products: citrus trees, cereals, olives, grapes, potatoes, figs and vegetables. Carrots, as a new agricultural product, increased to such a degree, that Lysi provided one third of the whole island's production. In the animal breeding sector, along with existing traditional methods, Lysi developed a great number of large piggeries, aviaries and cow farms. Until 1974, Lysi together with the other large Mesaoria villages constituted the granaries and the main suppliers of meat on the island. Moreover, Lysi developed impressively in other fields of the economy. The existing workshops became small factories and the shops got bigger. The Cooperative Grocers Union became a super-market and bank branches were opened. Many small

industries, clothing factories, shops, car sales offices, etc. were established employing many people and providing the same facilities as other large towns did. There were many artisans, carpenters, blacksmiths and shoemakers. Hundreds went to work to the three towns that surrounded Lysi, daily. Many women went to work in factories and farms in other parts of Cyprus by bus and came back in the afternoon to enjoy the liveliness of their hometown. Lysi's significant geographical position, between Famagusta, Nicosia and Lamaca, helped the development of trade. The movement of people to Lysi increased, whenever football matches and athletic events or festivals were held. People from all the surrounding areas visited Lysi, bringing in this way financial support to the community. The visitors combined their visits with shopping and also enjoyed Lysi's traditional cuisine. The transfer of governmental ministries -such as the Department of Lands and Surveys - the department of District Administration, the court, the police department in the municipality premises, all this transformed Lysi into the administrative centre of Mesaoria. Moreover, the community offered a private kinder-



"Lysi's Manor House". Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

garten and a hospital that provided services to the people in surrounding areas. Thus Lysi, apart from being an administrative centre also became a district health care centre. Thanks to the services that Lysi provided and the high standard of living, it attracted residents of neighbouring villages. Restaurants, entertainment establishments and two cinemas started to operate while theatre as well as other forms of entertainment were often available. Lysi had everything that a small town needed to have in order to prosper. The hard work of Lysi's people along with their keenness and enthusiasm

contributed to the local economy and to the national budget.

Lysi was experiencing a golden age in its long history . From the independence of Cyprus up until the Turkish invasion, 14 years in total, Lysi achieved staggering cultural and financial growth . The now-neglected by its conquerors top village of Mesaoria rapidly became a modern town. Lysi's central location, the services it provided, its proud residents with their special virtues, and successful planning ,were the reasons for its development, which by re-enforcing each other managed to tap into the dynamics of constant progress and creativity. It is no coincidence that in 1972 foreign scientists expressed an interest to conduct a social study on Lysi and publish the book "Lysi".

The strong faith of Lysi's people in the Greek – Christian principles and values, volunteerism and love for their homeland, led to the development of a communal spirit which made Lysi develop into a culturally and financially flourishing town with a continuous increase in population. Like all other large towns, Lysi satisfied the needs of its residents who therefore did not feel the need to leave their town and seek a better life elsewhere. They stayed in their town where they built their homes, like many other residents of the surrounding areas, who chose to live permanently in Lysi. The outcome was a remarkable residential growth and a spectacular increase in the population. Lysi's residents, from 759 in 1881, numbered 2,927 in 1946, 3,737 in 1960 and 4,537 in 1973. All its residents were Greek and were violently expelled from their town during and after the Turkish invasion. Turkey continues to this day to deprive them of their right to return to their homes and claim their properties. They people of Lysi are scattered around the government-controlled areas and abroad where they fight for freedom and justice.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF LYSI AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

The initial experience of Lysi's people as emigrants was strong enough to make them settle in their town and avoid immigration. Thus, they developed a healthy localism and adopted behavioural rules and rules of coexistence and cooperation. Their strong religious feelings constitute their main characteristic and that is why they came to be called "apostles." A special tradition, which is arguably unique in Cyprus, is that men used to build the house for their wives with the help and volunteer work of their relatives and friends,

underlining in this way their skills. Other characteristics of Lysi's people are their pride, team spirit, respect and appreciation ("saitissi" in the local dialect) for the elderly, relatives, neighbours and friends, volunteerism, dignity, patriotism, good taste, diligence, solid work ("takkoumi" in the local dialect), frugality, cleanliness and studiousness. All these features constitute the base on which a spirit of communal development was built turning Lysi into an example to be imitated.

Lysi's material and spiritual richness and its Greek character were handed over to the next generations as a centuries-old invaluable heritage. All generations, with their hard work and creativity, led Lysi towards progress and prosperity making the town the pride of its people. The town would still have significant prospects had it not been for the Turkish invasion, in July and August 1974 with the expulsion of its native residents. which halted its strong path towards development.

A. The occupied town of Lysi without its legitimate residents

Nowadays, Lysi is subjected to the damage of its wealth and culture, due to the Turkish occupying forces and the occupation regime. The Turks, in a bid to extinguish all Greek elements which connect Lysi's native residents with their place of origin, destroyed works of art, libraries, usurped houses and properties, schools and administrative buildings. They also altered buildings of admirable architecture in order to present them as Turkish constructions, they demolished monuments of freedom and replaced them with monuments of aggression, they left archaeological sites to the ravages of time and the elements, they desecrated churches, stole antiquities and illegally sold them in markets abroad..

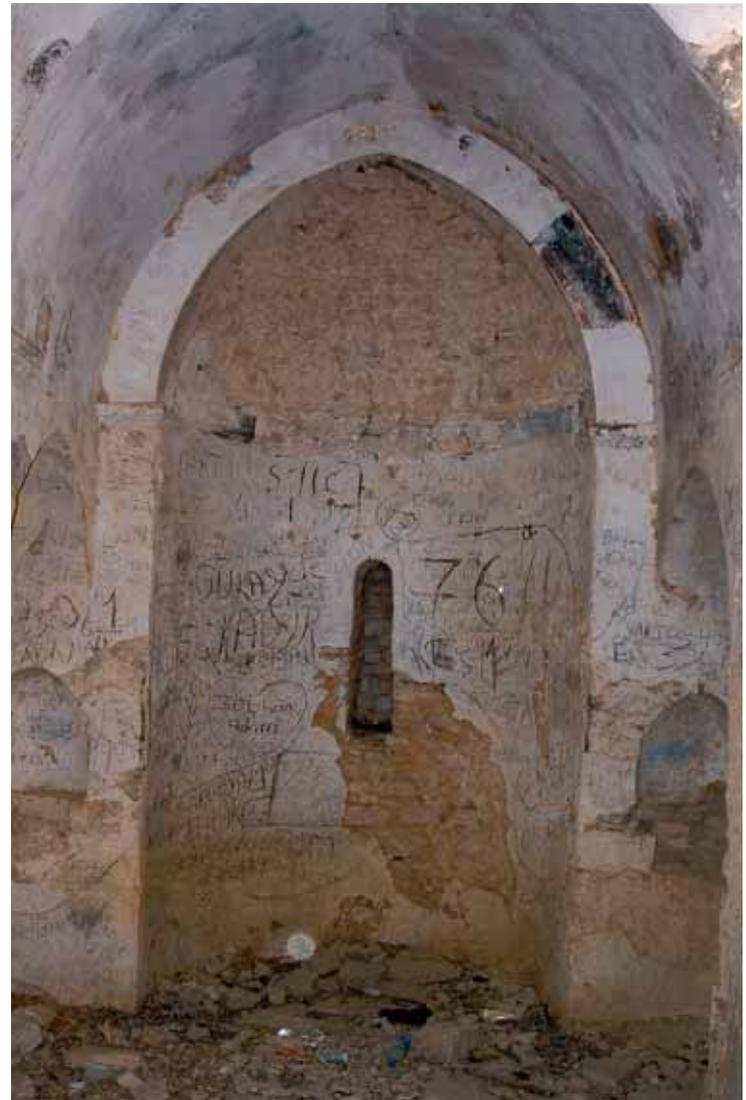
Today the appearance of Lysi attests to the cultural genocide that is being perpetrated by the Turks and the occupation regime. The archaeological settlements "Elissi," "Laxies," "Agios Georgios of Mandres," and the locations "Panagies" and "Niolita," are not protected or preserved appropriately, and as a consequence important historical and cultural findings risk being lost forever. In 1983, the 13th-century frescoes in the Byzantine chapel of Agios Efimianos were stolen, the chapel's door was torn off and its yard was converted to a farmyard, in spite of being located in a military zone at that time. The dome frescoes depict Christ Pantocrator Almighty and his throne, and the frescoes in the apse of the sanctuary depict the Virgin Mary praying to God. The internationally



The despoiled fresco of Christ the King, Agios Efimianos.
Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

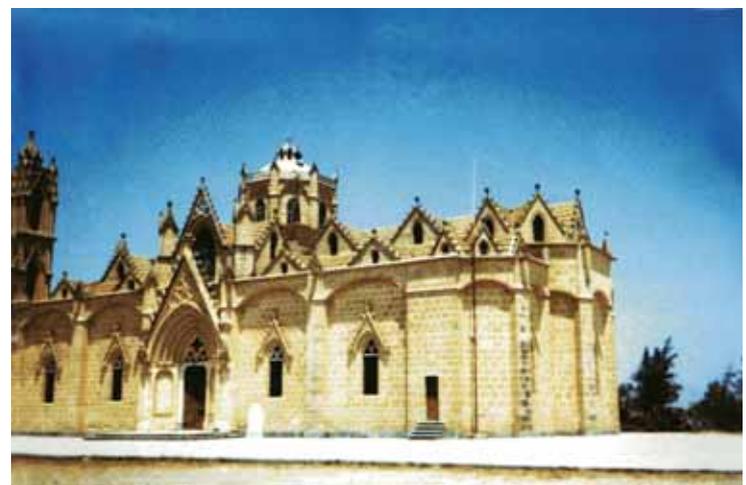
known Turkish antiquity dealer, Aydin Dikmen, sold the frescoes to the Menil Foundation for US \$900,000 dollars and after their restoration by Ove Arup Foundation they were transferred to Houston, Texas. Agreements were made (1983 - 1985), between the Foundation, the Department of Antiquities and the Church of Cyprus, providing for the frescoes to be hosted in the Foundation for a period of 15 years and to be displayed as cultural heritage of the Republic of Cyprus and as property of the Church of Cyprus. It was also agreed that the Foundation would be responsible for restoring and preserving the frescoes.

After the invasion, Panagias' church of Lysi was desecrated as well. The holy icons, the habits and other sacred objects were stolen. The cemetery, north of the church, was destroyed and then the church was turned into a mosque. The crosses from the belfry and the dome were removed and a loudspeaker was installed in order for the muezzin to be heard. Out of the three extraordinary holy icons of the Virgin Mary, which were found during the church's construction in 1888, only the one of Eleousa (14th century) was left in the church after the Turkish invasion and occupation, and it has since then gone missing. The inscription with the church's inauguration date (2 February 1918, situated inside the church just above the north entrance), was erased by the Turks. All the holy icons disappeared from the wooden iconostasis (1909), which were dated back to the 14th century up to 1914. The old bell, the habits, the holy relics and the other relics also disappeared. In 2002 it was confirmed that the Turks dug up the well located in the centre of the church from where the holy water once came out and discovered its valuable



The desecrated interior of the church of Agios Efimianos.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive



Left: The church of the Virgin Mary at Lysi before 1974, beside the church, the chantry of Prophetis Elias. Right: The chantry was demolished after 1974 by the Turkish invaders. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

treasure. According to sources, excavators from Turkey were sent in order to dig under the church. The operation lasted for a long time and a path was created, which linked with the destroyed cemetery of Lysi. The chapel of Prophet Elias in the churchyard was demolished. The room of the church, which in 1878 constituted the first school of the community, currently houses the rubbish disposal services of the occupation regime. The chapel of Agios Georgios of Lysi, two kilometers away from Aglassyka, was also vandalised and its floor was dug up by looters looking for treasures. Its roof collapsed and there is an imminent risk of total destruction. The Byzantine chapel of Agios Synesios (11th century), was looted, dug up, converted into an animal feed storage room and was later



The desecrated cemetery of Lysi.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

set on fire and destroyed inside. Today it has been left to the ravages of time.

The Heroes Monument and the busts of the hero Gregoris Afxentiou were destroyed and replaced with statues of Ataturk. The archives of Lysi's municipality as well as thousands of books belonging to the Community Library, the folklore artworks of the Community Museum, the archives and properties of schools and associations (premises, fields and installations) and the unique folklore treasures, in every house in Lysi, were stolen or destroyed. The folklore collections of the unforgettable Savvas Xystouris are forever lost. The old houses with their unique architectural design, their equipment and decoration were looted, demolished and destroyed. The Turks stole or destroyed the unpublished poems of Pavlos

Liasidis, whose work of art had significant historical and cultural value. The same happened to the precious belongings of the Artists' Union of Lysi that included: videotapes with previously unseen folklore content on customs and traditions, songs, music, local myths and legends, handwritten texts of folk poetry, libraries with rare Cypriot publications, record boxes, golden medals and diplomas won in international competitions.

With this method Turkey and its occupation regime intend to impart a Turkish character to the town. They hope that with Lysi's disconnection from its native residents and with the corruption of its identity, they will achieve the legalization of the Turkish occupation. The town however, cannot survive and progress without its creators. The body dies without the soul, especially if this soul has been implanted in the body for centuries. Today, over 7,500 people from Lysi live in 85 villages and four towns in the free parts of Cyprus or abroad, where they work and create providing for their towns which are fortunate enough to accommodate them. Even though the people of Lysi are scattered, they join forces with the municipality and their organised groups and fight with courage and patience claiming the return to their hometown.

Due to its population increase, Lysi was re-declared a municipality in 1986, in order to represent, serve and guide its exiled citizens. After its reestablishment, the municipality of Lysi started to operate in Lamaca. From its temporary base it regulates and directs the struggles for freedom and return to the occupied town. Collaborating with Lysi's organized groups, the municipality brings its citizens together, keeps their memories alive and defends their interests. It is active both within Cyprus and abroad. It informs and raises awareness about the problems caused to the town and its residents by the Turkish invasion and occupation.

In collaboration with other organized groups, the municipality organises various cultural, national and social events promoting the local tradition. It publishes books and builds memorials related to Lysi's history and culture. The municipality twins with other municipalities abroad and takes part in international forums raising awareness about the Cyprus problem and the destruction of the island's cultural heritage.

B. Activities of the displaced municipality in Cyprus

Lysi's municipality has the responsibility to preserve the feelings for the occupied town by reminding its people of their



“Monument of Lysi’s Heroes” in Larnaca. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

roots and ties to the occupied land. For this reason its activity aims at strengthening the relationship and preserving the unity and identity of its people while instilling morals and traditions into the younger generation by educating them about their history and refreshing their memory and love for their occupied town.

In order to achieve all the above, the municipality of Lysi has carried out a series of enduring projects of that express Lysi’s unconquerable spirit: In 1994, the municipality built a statue of Gregoris Afxentiou in Kalo Chorio village and in 1995 it constructed, in Larnaca, a memorial dedicated to the eight heroes of the 1955-1959 struggle and the three fellow villagers who were assassinated by the Turks. In 1996 it created the Municipal Library, it released records and tapes with national songs melodised by Giangos Souroullas, such as “Zidros,” “Tha Paro Mia Aniforia” etc., as well as Byzantine hymns, adapted by the same composer, in order to spread Lysi’s musical tradition. For the same reason the municipality has its own Byzantine choir called “Souroullas’s Choir,” which was founded in 1918. Lysi’s municipality also published the book Pavlos Liasidis by George Moleskis, Reverend Varnavas Kousiappa’s book, Saints and churches of Lysi, the books Lysi – Fight for return and Lysi during the 1955-1959 struggle.

It also had the book Lysi, which was published by the Centre for Scientific Research in 1972, translated from English to Greek. In 1996, in collaboration with the Boy Scouts, Lysi’s municipality built in the area of Kornos a showroom for the permanent Photographic Exhibition of Lysi’s cultural heritage as well as a flawless replica of the chapel of Agios Efimianos. Events denouncing the violation of the Greek-Christian cultural heritage, called “Lysi’s Memories,” are organised there. Every first Sunday of the month a mass is held at the chapel of Agios Efimianos and Lysi’s people are able to meet, hold memorial services for the people they lost and organise other events in order to revive the memory of their roots.

In the same year the “Provident Fund for the people of Lysi” was also founded to help families with financial problems on an annual basis. In 2000 the municipality constructed a memorial in Larnaca to honour the seven heroes who died fighting during the Turkish invasion of 1974 and a memorial dedicated to the 19 missing people of Lysi. In 2010 Lysi’s Cultural Centre “Pavlos Liasidis” was built in Tsiakkilero in Larnaca, where the poet had spent the last years of his life. The municipality attempts to preserve anything that belongs to Lysi and its citizens. When the Turks stole the treasure from Lysi’s church, in 2002, the former mayor Andreas Tofias

called on the Republic of Cyprus to protest and demand the preservation and return of the treasure that constituted not only part of Lysi's heritage but also part of the world heritage. In 2005 the Municipality regained possession of the gold-plated Virgin Mary's holy icon in exchange for money. It was not the ancient holy icon which had been stolen, but nevertheless constitutes a religious relic for Lysi's people.

Within the framework of municipal activities, events on national anniversaries, religious celebrations, heroes' memorials, dance events, protests and anti-occupation are organised, as well as anything that helps Lysi's people to remain united, boosts their morale, and reinforces their most important goal; the return to the homeland.

The organised associations of Lysi stand by the municipality



Lysis's Cultural Centre "Pavlos Liasidis".

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive



Demonstration of Lysi's Memory in the new chapel of Agios Efimianos in Kornos. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

with the struggles and efforts of the members of their administrative council.

The "Cooperative Savings' Bank of Lysi" constitutes Lysi's second financial lifeline. Its prudent administration turned it into one of the safest financial institutions. It provides its services to many customers, it guarantees its members' interests, and it financially support the event "Lysi's Memories." It also supports families with financial problems and thus functions as the municipality's right hand.

The "Athletic Union of Lysi 'Force'" organises various exhibitions to keep the banner of memory, sport, culture and of service to society flying. During the first difficult years of exile and displacement, the Athletic Union was reestablished in Limassol through the personal sacrifice of a members of the group. Later its headquarters were moved to Lamaca and from there it established local councils in Lamaca, Nicosia and Limassol. Gradually it acquired its own premises in Lamaca, close to the governmental houses of Tsiakkileros and later it built the temporary stadium "Gregoris Afxentiou." Furthermore, the Union also founded the "Women's Department of the Athletic Union of Lysi," which boasts extraordinary social and charitable activity for Lysi's families with financial problems. It also established, together with Lysi's municipality, the "Lysi Blood Bank".

Even though the Turks stole everything that belonged to the "Artists' Union of Lysi", they did not manage to steal its soul and faith in its founders' goals. Following in the tracks of the violently displaced people of Lysi, the association was reestablished in Lamaca. Despite all the difficulties, due to its limited financial resources and its scattered members, the association started from scratch, providing an invaluable example of struggle to all Cypriot Hellenism. The association's reactivation offers joy, it revives the memory and consciousness, and strengthens the hope for return to the motherland. The "Athletic Educational Association of Lysi" (AIAL), was also reactivated and organizes various cultural events.

The "Association of Lysi's Old Boy Scouts" organizes events to maintain ties with the occupied town. With its own initiative the "Organisation of Lysi Boy Scouts" was reactivated and the church of Agios Efimianos was built in Kornos. The "System of Lysi Boy Scouts" is temporarily situated in Meneou, Lamaca, where it nurtures the new generation and cultivates the love for their occupied town. It also supports Lysi Municipality in every event.



The 123rd Lysi boys' scout marches in Larnaca. Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive

The charitable foundation of Panagiotis and Elli Malli, "Panagia of Lysi," which was established in 2000 by the couple, provides on an annual basis scholarships children with financial problems who have displayed academic excellence. It also helps Lysi's citizens in need and provides financial support to events organized by Lysi's organised groups.

C. Activities of the displaced municipality of Lysi overseas

Lysi's municipality has twinned with other municipalities and issues demarches to organisations abroad providing information regarding the Cyprus issue and the destruction of its cultural heritage. Drawing on the love of Lysi's people for their place, as well as on their cooperation and fighting spirit that characterizes them, the municipality conveys to the rest of the world their desires and anxieties about the situation in Cyprus, making its mark and seeking to meet the people's desires.

Aware of the feelings of gratitude and love for Hellenism, the mayor of Lysi and the municipal council continue to develop and cultivate their close links with Greece. They have twinned Lysi with other corresponding Greek towns, creating channels

of communication and keeping constant contact. From 1994 to 2003, Lysi's municipality was twinned with four Greek municipalities: municipality of Myrina in Limnos (1994), municipality of Agioi Anargyroi in Attica (1996), municipality of Vistonida in Xanthi county (1999) and municipality of Doirani in Kilkis county. During the meetings of Lysi's representatives with their counterparts of the twinned towns, they inform and exchange views on various topics regarding the municipalities but also the Cyprus issue. The solidarity developed among them was such that Lysi's municipality created within the towns' municipal boundaries enduring projects in order to seal the eternal links between Cyprus and Greece.

After the twinning with Myrina of Limnos, the Memorial to Cypriot Fighters, which already existed since 1958, was renovated. Furthermore, new names were given to streets, related to Cyprus, such as Cypriot Fighters' Street and Lysi Street. Since 1994 the Cypriot flag has been proudly waving over the Memorial of Cypriot Fighters, both in the town hall and the building of Myrina's District Administration. In collaboration with the municipality of Vistonida, a monument

was built in 1961 in the village Afxentio (former New Katramio) to honour Gregoris Afxentiou and the other heroes of Lysi. The inauguration of the Centre's Popular Cultural Heritage of Thrace – Cyprus, "Gregoris Afxentiou," was held on the 31st of May 2008 in the village Afxentio. It was financed by the Leader Project to the tune of €360.000. A bust of Gregoris Afxentiou was built in the village Akritas of Doirani's municipality. Lysi's municipality has concluded an agreement with the Defence Ministry of Greece that the latter would offer a restored building for the construction of the "Gregoris Afxentiou Museum" in the village Akritas of Doirani, which is where Gregoris Afxentiou served as a soldier, when he was under the Greek army's orders.



Signing of the contracts for the twinning of the municipality of Lysi with the municipality of Myrina.

Photo: Lysi Municipality Archive



Signing of the contracts for the twinning of the municipality of Lysi with the municipality of Agioi Anargyroi of Attica. Photo:

Lysi Municipality Archive

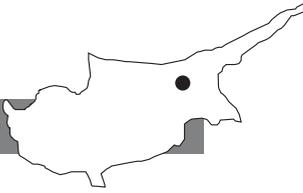
Representatives of Lysi's municipality together with other representatives of the Committee of Cyprus Occupied Municipalities, participate in seminars, which are conducted in Brussels, relating to European development programmes and the strengthening of the European municipalities' relations where information and exchange of views on various topics are given. The municipality is also in contact with Lysi refugees who live abroad. It informs them, encourages and unites them, so that the demand for the restoration of Lysi's people back to their town does not lose momentum.

There have been optimistic signs after the return of the stolen frescoes of Agios Efimianos's church in 2012, which were constantly demanded by the Cyprus Church, after being kept for 27 years in the Menil Foundation. They are temporarily housed in the Makarios III Museum in the Archbishopric until the sacred day of their return. Agios Efimianos and all the other saints of Lysi have joined with the flock in chant the Beseeching Hymn, which was composed by the great Pleading Canon hymnographer Dr Charalambis M. Mpousias: "Providers and assistants of Lysi,/ we will all return forever/ quickly back to our homes/ which are occupied/ by Attila's hordes/ you who are honorable/make it so". The Great hymnographer offered to Lysi's people the Beseeching Hymn as an intellectual too to honour their patron Saint, Panagia (Virgin Mary) of Lysi: "Mother Mary of Lysi.../ send away Attila's hordes/ from your town and to our dawn/ for liberty to rise soon(...) send away Agar's descendants/ who illegally occupy your town (...)/ Dissolve/ Attila's slavery's mist from you town/ admirable Mother Mary of Lysi (...) and demand your refugees back quickly/ return back to your township, which honors you. (...) Send away, Agar's sons' hordes/ from your township ... and your supplicants/ demand in their homes/ paternal return/ back, all hymns honor you, Mother Mary".

Lysi is waiting for her founders to return. The people shall never forsake their town. Their character, their love for their land and their faith in their saints and "Lissiotiki Panagia" (Virgin Mary of Lysi) help them to neither forget, nor accept this injustice. Their memories are etched where their parents and their grandfathers are buried. Their residence in refugee settlements, villages and towns of the free parts Cyprus, does not satisfy them, they want their town back and they will keep fighting until the day of return.



Municipality of Lefkoniko



Lefkoniko, (consisting of the words “Lefkos” and “lkos” meaning “white” and “house”) is situated in the northeast part of the largest plain in Cyprus, Mesaoria. Before the Turkish invasion and occupation Lefkoniko was divided into the upper and lower parish by the stream Siezia. Administratively Lefkoniko belongs to Famagusta. It extends from the foot of the Pentadaktylos mountain range in the north to the centre of the valley in the south. It borders with the village Gipson to the east, with the village Psyllatos to the west, with the village Platani to the north, and to the south with the villages Pigi and Peristerona. It is situated 30 kilometres from Famagusta and 50 kilometres from Nicosia. Lefkoniko has been inhabited since ancient times and has developed a 3,000-strong population, following in the footsteps of Hellenism with which it has been associated and still preserves a common language, religion, customs and tradition. Lefkoniko’s history is a reflection of the whole island’s history as well as of the adventures of Cypriot Hellenism.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Lefkoniko

Lefkoniko is a Greek compound word. It was created by combining the existing words “Lefkos” and “lkos” in the accusative case form. According to Nearchos Clerides, the name of the settlement was given during the Christian Era, when ancient Greek was the spoken language. According to tradition the first house that was built was white. Therefore, when people went there they used to say “I’m going to the white house” (lefkon oiko). When gradually other houses were built, the inhabitants named the settlement “Lefkonikon,” by combining the two words. Due to the fact that there were several white-sand fields around the village, people used the sand to paint their houses, giving a white-coloured impression to the village. This is why the village is called “Macuca” in the 17th century European maps, which means “Lefkothea” and it is translated in English as “white view”.

Ancient remains that were found in Lefkoniko point to the

existence of an ancient settlement, dating back from the 17th century B.C. to the Byzantine period. This ancient city was Lefkoniko’s distant ancestor. Ancient remains that were found in Lefkoniko point to the existence of an ancient settlement, dating back from the 17th century B.C. to the Byzantine period. This ancient city was Lefkoniko’s distant ancestor. Assuming that the explanation of a half-ruined alphabetical



Limestone head of a colossal statue (around 600 B.C.) from Lefkoniko. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Standing male statue from the ancient sanctuary at Lefkoniko.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

Statue of standing flute-player from the ancient sanctuary at Lefkoniko. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

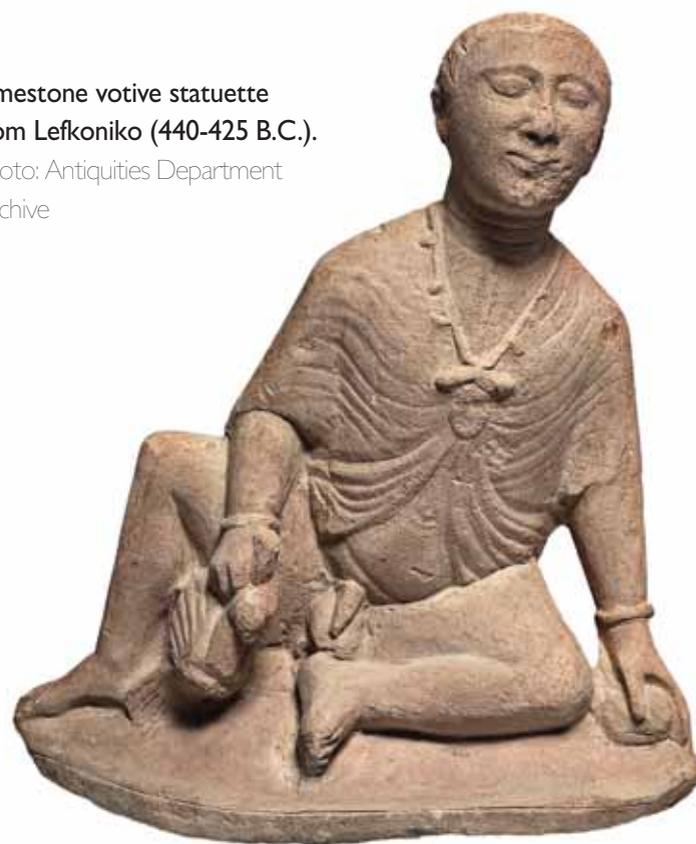


inscription, found in the area of "Kafitzin", is correct, then the name of the village originates from a farm (or a town) of that period which was called "Lefkos Ikos." Onasagoras Filouniou, who is referred to on the inscription as a barber and a donor of various objects (vessels), in other inscriptions found in the same area is also mentioned as a priest. Perhaps he was a priest in the temple of Apollo, the remains of which were revealed during excavations in the area. Nevertheless, the theory that "Lefkoniko" was the temple of Apollo itself, the god of light, cannot be disregarded. On an inscription written on clay that was found in the temple of Apollo in Lefkoniko, the epithet "Dafthnaforio" (crowned with laurel) is mentioned, which is a name that was used to describe the god Apollo.

In this temple many offerings were found, among other objects, which were dated back to the Archaic period to the Roman period (7th-4th centuries B.C.) The stone sculptures which were dated between the 7th and the 4th centuries B.C. adorn the Cyprus museums and many other museums abroad. Limestone statues of the Hellenistic period and bronze statues of the 6th century were also found. A huge statue of the Roman period, which presents an orator or a philosopher of the time, was transferred from the sanctuary and placed outside the building of the football association "Anorthosis" in Lefkoniko. An ancient

Limestone votive statuette from Lefkoniko (440-425 B.C.).

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive





Diptych painting of evangelic scenes from the church of the Archangel Michael in Lefkoniko. It is exhibited today in the Byzantine Museum of "Archbishop Makarios III Foundation" in Nicosia and it is registered under the number **BMIAM.068**.

Photo: Byzantine Museum Archive

settlement was also found in the village "Agia Kinoussa" which is located between Lefkoniko and Peristeronopigi near the chapel of the village Agia Zoni. However, there is no sufficient information on it, due to the fact that all archaeological excavations were stopped in 1974. Older scholars believe that the original ancient settlement was located in Agia Kinoussa, which was eventually abandoned by its inhabitants, who moved north to create Lefkoniko.

B. Byzantine period (364-1191)

There are few sources on the Byzantine-era Lefkoniko, mainly due to the fact that the archeological investigations remained unfinished. According to Leontios Machairas' historical testimonies, Agios Efimianos, one of the 300 Aleman or German saints who lived in Cyprus, led an ascetic life in Lefkoniko. Another connection to the Byzantine Lefkoniko is through the churches of the village which however have a more modern appearance

today. The existence of various wonderful works of Byzantine art suggests that these churches were built in the place of pre-existing Byzantine churches. Fortunately many Byzantine works of art, probably the best of them, were preserved and are kept in the Byzantine Art Museum. Even though these works are not all from the same period, the influence of the Byzantine style is obvious. Some characteristic examples: part of an icon depicting three figures of Apostles that was found in the church of the Archangel Michael dating back to the 13th century A.D., which is considered the golden age of Byzantine Art. A diptych icon of the 15th or the 16th century A.D. was also found in the same church. Furthermore an icon of the Virgin Mary holding a Child (Panagia Vrefokratousa) sitting on a carved throne dating back to the 15th century was found in that church. Finally, up to 1974, there were two door panels of the Beautiful Gate and an icon of the Virgin Mary (both from 1680) in the church of Timiou Stavrou (Holy Cross).



The church of Sotiros in Lefkoniko, now a mosque.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive.

C. Frankish Rule (1192-1571)

During Frankish rule, Lefkoniko was a royal manor and a very productive grain centre. It is speculated that Lefkoniko was the centre of one of the four administrative divisions of Mesaoria. Due to its close proximity to Famagusta it was considered an important crossroads in the area. A medieval church of the Archangel Michael, with strong western architectural elements, confirms the importance of Lefkoniko. In around 1400, Cyprus became a pirate-base, with the consent of the Frankish feudal lords who benefited from the wealth of the pirates' looting from the coastal regions of the neighbouring countries Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Due to this fact in 1425 the Sultan of Egypt sent a fleet to loot the villages and towns of Cyprus for revenge. When the same was repeated the following year the Mamluks of Egypt captured the king of Cyprus Iano and killed twenty feudal lords. This whole situation and the poverty it caused, led to the 1427 Peasant Revolution; the revolution against the feudal lords took part mainly in Mesaoria and specifically in

Lefkoniko. According to Leontios Machairas, the peasants proclaimed Re Alexis as their king and leader of Cyprus; he was a daring young man from the village Milia. He used to serve the palace as a messenger and was aware of the poverty, the hunger and the misery of the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the island, as well as the weaknesses of the ruling class. This inspirer and leader of the revolution chose Lefkoniko as his base. Nevertheless the revolution failed because the king's brother, Hugo, with only a small army succeeded in terrorizing people with murders and hangings. Re Alexis was abandoned by his followers. Later he was imprisoned and hanged in Nicosia on 12 May 1427, on the same day that it was heard that the Sultan of Egypt freed King Iathos, who came back to Cyprus. Re Alexis became the symbol of Hellenism during the medieval period.

D. Ottoman Occupation (1572-1878)

Throughout the 300 years of Ottoman rule Lefkoniko suffered oppression, heavy taxation and poverty. Lefkoniko was

one of the villages that had to pay a special tax for the support of the janissaries. In around 1833, after the massacre of 1821, three revolutionary movements took place in the island. The inspirer of one of these movements was the monk Ioannikos from Agios Elias Karpasias village who encouraged the peasants to rise up against the Turkish conquerors. The Turkish government sent troops to suppress the rebellion hence a bloody battle took place near Lefkoniko. The Archbishop's lists provide information on the population and the cereal production of the island. It appears that during the 19th century Lefkoniko was the largest village and the richest in production of the whole island. The wealth of its inhabitants is also evident by the poll tax they used to pay.

Younger children who wanted to get a basic education were usually taught in the fields or at their home by the priests. In return the parents of these children gave an acre of land to the priest in order to cultivate crops as long as their child was being educated. The first community school opened in 1840 and was financed by the parents of the children. The first teachers were Hadjichristofis and Charalambos Hadjikooubaros, who hailed from Lefkoniko. It is important to note that writing was taught on sand. During this period two great figures of Cyprus' history were born. Kyprianos, the Bishop of Kition (1833-1886) and our national poet Vasilis Michaelides (1849-1917). Until 1870 the children were only taught ecclesiastical material. Later on Georgios Efstratiou from Larnaca applied a regular curriculum and the children started writing on paper. Due to the fact that the teachers were receiving a really small salary the parents provided them with various kinds of food every Saturday.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

In the beginning of September 1878, the first British Commissioner of Famagusta, Captain Swaine, while touring the province, spent a night in Lefkoniko, which was the agricultural centre of the area. This fact was published in the Illustrated London News and a picture of Lefkoniko on the arrival of the Commissioner was also included. The periodical referred to a village with a large population, noting that upon the arrival of the governor "many hundreds" of people were gathered. The British felt that Lefkoniko was the most important village of the province and the most suitable to host the officials of the colonial government.

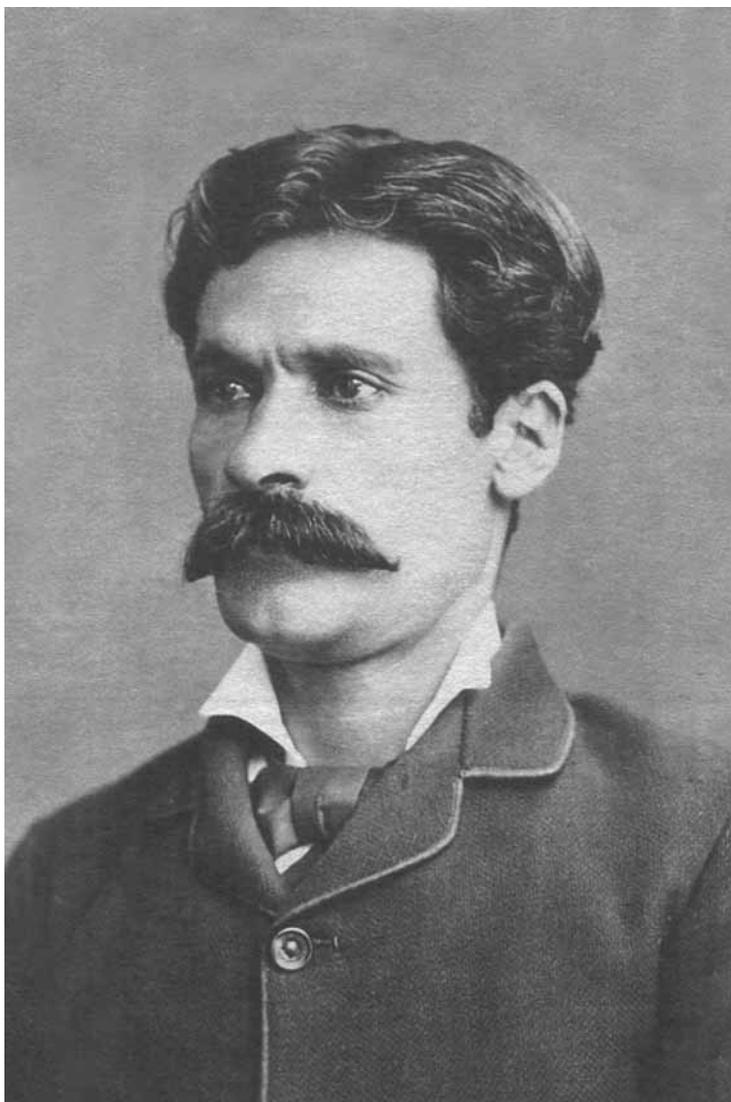
During British rule there was an organised administration and control throughout the island. The inhabitants of Lefkoniko felt more liberated, wanted to be educated, hence became more

active in improving their lives and developing their skills. The necessary infrastructure for the operation of the community was built, while the community developed rapidly making great achievements, cultural and financial progress.

A. Cultural Development

In 1926 MP Kyriacos Rossides submitted a proposal in order for Lefkoniko to be declared a municipality. This was approved by the Legislative Council but was rejected by the colonial government. In April 1939 the British governor Palmer finally declared Lefkoniko as the 15th municipality of Cyprus. Since municipal elections were prohibited, due to the uprising in October 1931, the governor appointed doctor Christos Michalopoulos as the mayor of Lefkoniko and formed a six-member municipal council. He also appointed a Muslim to represent the minority Muslim community. The offices of the municipality were housed in a classical two-storey building in the centre of Lefkoniko, which belonged to Archangelos' church. In 1932 the association "Eleftheria" was housed on the ground floor, and shortly after the football association of Anorthosis. The offices of the municipality were on the upper floor which had a large hall, very comfortable rooms and an assembly hall for ceremonies.

One of the first projects that the municipality took over was to solve the problem of the water supply (1939). The source of this problem was an epidemic of typhus from the carrying of water in containers from Gypsos village. For this reason three cement containers were built, which were filled by water from the mountain Pentadaktylos. The water was distributed to 35 fountains, located in several neighborhoods. In November 1940, the mayor appointed a secretary and three other clerks in order for the municipality to be able to improve its services. As a doctor, the mayor paid great attention to hygiene. In order to avoid the spread of infections from flies, the mayor supplied the poor people with free fly traps. Another method that the mayor used to improve the hygiene standards of the village was to remove manure from house yards, and built a lavatory in each house. Furthermore a rural hospital was established which provided the necessary medicines free of charge. During World War II there was great poverty. In order to tackle the problem the mayor proposed that bread should be sold at low prices and even given for free to the destitute. Also food was provided for poor children, which was bought with the Town Hall's donations and the wealthy people of Lefkoniko. Other infrastructure projects included the creation of a municipal market



The national poet Vasilis Michaelides who hails from Lefkoniko.

and the installation of oil lamps, which lit up the roads and were under the responsibility of the municipality. In 1952 the municipality arranged for a town lighting structure, which was powered by electricity from the generator of a flour mill. The roads were covered in asphalt, trees were planted on the pavements and a telephone network was created in a room that was also provided by the municipality.

The people of Lefkoniko wanted to offer some basic education to their children so the community school which was established under the Turkish rule continued to operate. Pericles Kissonergis, whom the governor of Famagusta characterized in his report in 1879 as a superior man, served as a teacher during the first year of the British occupation. In 1941, in cooperation with the municipality and other services, the elementary school was moved

into a large building complex with many classrooms, an assembly hall and beautiful gardens. In 1943, the elementary schools for both boys and girls were merged. In the building which used to be the elementary school for boys, the “School for Higher Education of Lefkoniko” was established. This school, with the active participation of the first mayor, accepted students from neighbouring villages as well.

When the colonial administration restored democratic procedures, due to the participation of Greeks and Cypriots in the World War II, many foreign-inspired ideological movements appeared. Two opposing ideological movements, the Left and the Right, came to the fore, both fanatically fighting to win the elections. The Local Agricultural Association (EIP) of the Right Movement was the winner. The new mayor, Loukas Gregoriou together with the municipal council continued the work of their predecessors. There were extensions of the town roads as well as of the agricultural roads, increase of water supply in central locations, better street lighting and stricter regulations for sanitation. Due to the war there was a shortage of food and other essentials such as oil, sugar, rice, bread etc. In order to solve this issue the municipality organised and established points of sale for basic foodstuffs.

The municipal elections of 1946 were held under the shadow of Greece’s civil war, at a time when ideological passions and fanaticism were at their peak. The tie between the two parties led to the selection of three councilors from each party and Anastasis Charalambous of the Left became the mayor of Lefkoniko by lottery. The municipal council continued to successfully implement infrastructure projects in the town. In 1947 a new school building was built on the hill of Prophetis Elias. The “Lefkoniko Higher School” which was renamed “Kamitzeios Lefkoniko Higher School” after its benefactor, Georgios Kamintzis from Lefkoniko, was housed there. The Agricultural Union of the Right became more organised, in order to confront the well-prepared Left. New workers’ unions were established by the TEC to challenge the old unions of the leftist PEO union. The elections of 1949 took place in an intensely polarized environment. The right wing won the elections by majority and since then they had control of the municipality. Loukas Gregoriou became the mayor of Lefkoniko. He served the municipality effectively until he was arrested, imprisoned and tortured by the British in the detention cells of Pyla and Kokkinotrimithia villages, during the uprising of 1955.

The patriotism, the fighting spirit and resistance of Lefkoniko



The desecration of a grave in the destroyed cemetery of Lefkoniko of Anastasios Zarvos who fought in the battles of Tillyria. Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

residents against British colonialism can be seen through the work of the poet Vasilis Michaelides, who participated in the uprising of October 1931 and contributed to the struggle for liberation of 1955-1959. Due to the fact that the high school of Lefkoniko hosted many active militants, the colonial government stopped its operation for one year. On 4 November, 1955 Afxentiou with his team stole weapons from the Lefkoniko police station. Also of note was the burning down of the post office by high school students (3 December) as a protest against the hard measures taken on behalf of Governor Harding, and the damaging of the power station of Lefkoniko in November 1956.

In 1960 after the death of mayor Loukas Gregoriou, and the declaration of the Republic of Cyprus as an independent state, Marcos Spanos was appointed as the new mayor of Lefkoniko.

He remained in this post until 1974. Under the new circumstances the residents worked very hard for the progress and the prosperity of their hometown. Water was distributed to every house, public toilets were built in the town, as well as a municipal market, a municipal abattoir, a municipal library and bridges for the safe transportation of the residents. Moreover, a large stadium was built where many football matches took place. Migration and urbanisation were limited while the place flourished. The coexistence of the few Turkish Cypriots with the Greek Cypriots was harmonious. The Turkish Cypriots used to take part together with the Greek Cypriots in all festivals and fairs of the village enjoying both Christian and Muslim celebrations. In 1963, however, due to the intercommunal clashes, Lefkoniko once again lamented for its children who lost their lives. But it never ceased to strive for the best. Several mayors served Lefkoniko selflessly and offered great services, setting an example for their followers. By 1974 the community of Lefkoniko had all the necessary services, which made it comparable and equal to any big town.

The existence of educational institutions had an important role in the social and cultural life of Lefkoniko. Particularly the “Kamitzeios Lefkoniko Higher School,” after a successful track record as an ideal model educational institutions of the Republic of Cyprus, was renamed “Lefkoniko Greek High School,” with classes in classics and economics. The school had one of the best assembly halls in Cyprus, where several events for the entertainment of the community were held. The work of our national poet Vasilis Michaelides, who hails from Lefkoniko, stands



The premises of the municipality of Lefkoniko are on the upper floor. Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive



Archangel Michael Square after the Turkish Invasion in 1974.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

a timeless monument of the Greeks. His work was used for the national restoration of Hellenism and patriotism in Cyprus, through the cultivation of its profound principles in the minds of the youth and the rest of the citizens. The town honoured him by erecting his bust near the walls of the church of the Archangel Michael. There were other important personalities who also encouraged, inspired and honoured the society of Lefkoniko. One of them was the Bishop of Kition, Kyprianos, who is considered one of the most eminent prelates of the island with rich, religious, social and national action. Another important



The Elementary School of Lefkoniko as it is today.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

personality was Theodoulos Kallinikos, who studied and dealt regularly with Byzantine and Cyprus folk music and wrote several books on these subjects. The Church of Cyprus awarded him the title of “Master Chanter” in 1974. Another figure was Christodoulos Simeonides, who was one of the greatest sportsmen in the 1930s. Many educators also offered a great deal to the society of Lefkoniko. Some of these were: Marcos Charalambous, Nikiforos Theocharides, Irini Ioannou, Ourania Charalambous, Lefkios Papanikolaou, Kyriacos Patsias, Andreas Loizides, Lycourgos Kapas, Doros Theodoulou, Andriani Perdiou, Eleni Protopapa and Rhea Bailey. Moreover, many associations and cultural societies played an important role in the development of Lefkoniko. These were: the “Eleftheria” association, which was actively involved in athletics, music and drama; the football association of “Anorthosis,” which also functioned as a reading room for intellectuals; the “Youth Association of Lefkoniko” (1971), which had a football team as well; the “Religious Society” and the “Sunday School Hall,” where many religious and national events were organised; the “School of Byzantine Music” and the “Hunting Club.”. Their national, intellectual and cultural service to the society was great. Apart from the above, the economic growth of Lefkoniko had a key role in its social development.

B. Economic Development

Even though the soil of Lefkoniko was fertile there was an acute problem with water supply and irrigation. When the land was watered by the rain and streams, the harvest was rich and profitable. In the winter it was irrigated by four streams that criss-crossed Lefkoniko from the north to the south. The low annual rainfall severely affected the development of agriculture, which together with farming were the main occupations of the inhabitants. Until 1974 the main crops were cereals (wheat, barley etc). However their productivity depended on weather conditions. The people of Lefkoniko also cultivated trees. After discovering groundwater on the foothills of Pentadaktylos, to the north of the community, people started growing fruit trees, such as apricots, peaches, pears, apples and citrus as well as various vegetables.

The most important achievement, for which Lefkoniko is especially proud of, is the formation of the cooperative movement. The main pioneers of this historic financial project were Ioannis Economides (1864 – 1934) and Marcos Charalambous (1876 – 1932), who are considered to be the founding fathers

of the cooperative movement in Cyprus. After they had conceived the idea and convinced their conservative and cautious fellowmen, they started implementing their project. In 1909, under the wise guidance and active involvement of a group of farmers, the “Cooperative Bank of Lefkoniko” was founded. Marcos Charalambous became its Secretary General. This was the first cooperative bank in Cyprus and relieved ordinary people from the unbearable usury. In 1914 Ioannis Economides, who was a member of parliament and head of the Bank of Cyprus in Nicosia, recommended the establishment of cooperative credit societies. The relevant law was passed by parliament while Ioannis Economides was in charge of overall planning and securing the capital/deposits. In 1917 Marcos Charalambous managed to bring the idea to fruition, and the “Lefkoniko Cooperative Credit Society” was founded. This provided great help to the farmers of Lefkoniko and later on to the farmers of the whole island. The cooperatives owned huge grain warehouses where farmers stored their crops. There was also a Cooperative Market with excellent quality groceries at fair prices.

Even though the problem of irrigation caused many problems for the farmers of Lefkoniko, they adapted their demands and needs according to weather conditions. In this way they managed to carry on for the benefit of the community. The population of Lefkoniko increased steadily and in 1946 Lefkoniko had 2,596 inhabitants. Due to the short distance between Lefkoniko and Famagusta, Nicosia and Lamaca, many craftsmen and clerks who worked in other towns preferred to live in their own community; so the population was increasing. The effectiveness of the municipality, the diligence and hard work of its inhabitants made Lefkoniko known as one of the most important villages of Mesaoria. Most governmental services were concentrated in Lefkoniko, including a Post Office, Court, Police, Revenue Offices, Land Registry, Hospital, Veterinary Services, Agricultural Department and many other services which also served the surrounding area. There were also bus companies, taxi offices and a Livestock Centre where they bred animals for reproduction purposes. The community was full of life and gave the impression of being a large city.

The uncertainty in the agricultural sector, due to low rainfall, led the people of Lefkoniko to develop their entrepreneurship skills, helping in this way not only the advancement of their family revenue but also the economy of Lefkoniko. There were all sorts of businesses in the village: ceramic workshops, electrical workshops, soft drink factories, chair makers, cobblers, blacksmiths, furniture stores, tailors as well as car mechanics,



A house in Lefkoniko as it is today.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

cleaners, dentists, bookshops, barber shops, taverns and restaurants, coffee shops, patisseries, bakeries, pharmacies, and a guest house. Apart from the huge municipal market, which was at the city centre, there were also other large stores and smaller ones among the streets of the neighborhoods: clothes shops, shoe shops, textile stores, stores selling glass items, construction material stores, stores for car tires etc. Finally there were also mills, a dairy factory, an apiary, a large grocery store equivalent to the ones of larger cities, open-air and closed cinemas, and stoves where the well-known oven baked lamb (ofto) from Lefkoniko was prepared by the local butchers. A traditional farmhouse, which was close to the church of Agios Theodoros, was turned into an entertainment centre for tourists and travelers. It is important to note that during the intercommunal conflicts, which took place in 1963, around 100 Turks left the community under orders from their leaders, leaving their stores to be rented and used by the Greeks.

The construction workers and the hewers of stone were professions of particular interest. They were employed to decorate the churches and the luxury houses with carved stones. The decorative carved stones, of religious and folkloric nature, that were found on doorframes, doorways, skylights and colonnades of schools and coffee shops were some of Lefkoniko's important and well-known works. Lefkoniko was also known for its textiles, the “lefkonijiotika.” Most women, in addition to their usual chores, also weaved on the loom the well-known “lefkonijiotika” and other colourful cotton sheets, curtains, tablecloths and towels. The “lefkonijiotika” were unique due

their variety of shape and colour. Furthermore talented women used to practice the glass-painting technique in order to create several beautiful portraits to be sold in the various fairs of the village and the surrounding areas.

This kind of entrepreneurial activity helped the job market as well as the cultural and financial development of the city, raising in this way the standard of life in Lefkoniko. Such economic prosperity was very important for the development of the city's infrastructure and also promoted the progress of the city in all areas. It is important to note that during the 1970s foreign companies were searching for oil in the area where the church of Agias Zonis is located. Just before 1975, due to migration and urbanisation, the city's population was reduced to 2,116 inhabitants. Some of the inhabitants moved to other cities in Cyprus while others emigrated abroad, in order to pursue a better life, but the desire to return home and offer to the prosperity of their birthplace never faded.

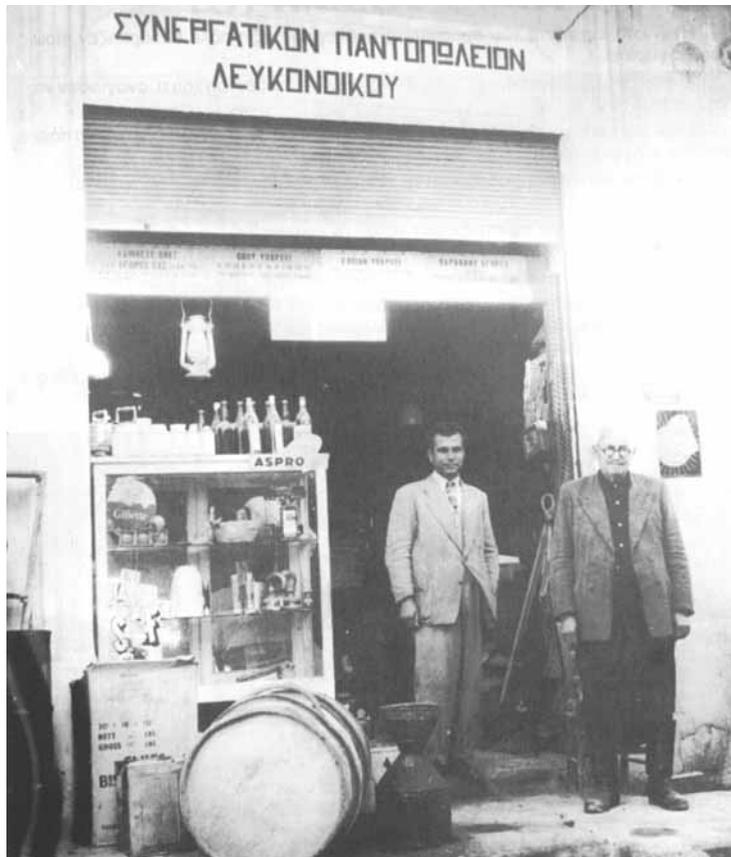
The importance and the wealth of Lefkoniko, as well as its Christian identity, is evident from its numerous churches and chapels. The church of the Archangel Michael church, which was

located on the upper parish, had a very impressive exterior while inside there was an exquisite Byzantine wooden temple, old Byzantine icons and an imposing fresco of the Archangel. In the lower parish there was the Church of Metamorphoseos of Sotiros (Transfiguration of the Saviour), which was small but beautifully decorated. Near this church there was also the Holy Cross Church with its well-known old sanctuary doors dating back to the 1680s. On the hill where the Lefkoniko high school used to be, the chapel of Prophetis Elias could be seen. Furthermore, among the Turkish estates, there was the church of Agios Theodoros (1700). To the north of the community there was the church of Agios Georgios, while in Melounta village, close to Platani village, there was the chapel of Agios Fokas. To the south was the remote church of Agia Zoni (Agia Kinousa).

This is the general picture of Lefkoniko just before the Turkish invasion and occupation. Its inhabitants were people with goals and visions for the future and their well-being while they had a carefree and yet constructive life. The community of Lefkoniko was cohesive due to the respect, understanding and unity between its people who were raised under Hellenic and Christian principles, ideals and values. The people of Lefkoniko had a special bond due to their common origin, culture, language and religion. They loved and respected the land which provided them with so much and for this reason they took care of their city. Even the few Muslims of Lefkoniko, who lived there since the Ottoman occupation, were raised with the same cultural ideals as the Greeks. Basically they were offspring of the Islamicised Greco-Christians (Linovamvakoi), who had been forced to convert to Islam to save their life. Due to this they shared a lot in common with the Greeks, including their upbringing. The harmonious atmosphere, the progress and the prosperity of Lefkoniko was halted by the Turkish invasion that took place on 14 August, 1974. They invaders used the 15th of July coup to justify the attack.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF LEFKONIKO AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

It was the eve of the Virgin Mary's name day. Since the early morning one could hear the bombing by the Turkish military aircraft. The Turkish army surrounded Lefkoniko while setting fire, destroying and killing indiscriminately. The terrified people of Lefkoniko fled their homes to escape the destructive frenzy of the Turks, thinking that they would return at night when the



The cooperative grocery store of Lefkoniko.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

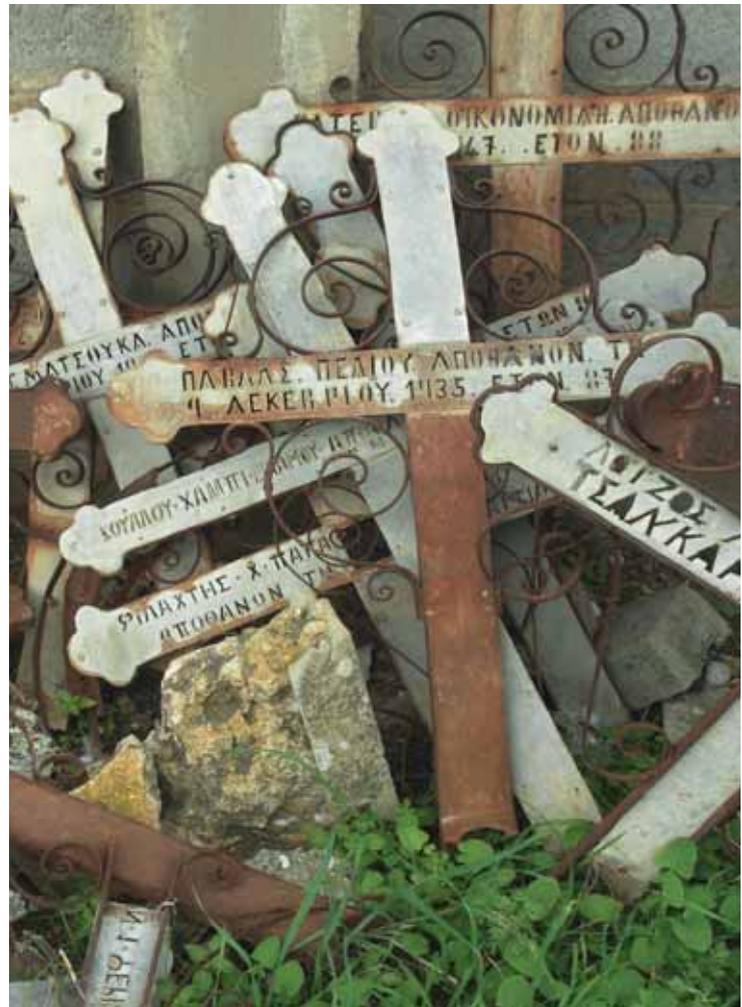
troubles would subside . All they took with them was their house keys so that they could return home. Sadly they have not returned yet. They left behind them 14 dead , 16 missing people, their lives, the sweat of their brow, their dreams. When the Turks entered Lefkoniko the inhabitants had already fled to Kokkinochoria, where they felt safer. They were planning to stay there until the invaders left. When they were informed that it was doubtful they would be able to return to their town they had to consider their future. Most of them went to Lamaca, while some moved to Nicosia and Limassol, and others to Pafos. In order to make a new start and survive despite their great loss, they had to change occupations and therefore became workers, traders or entrepreneurs.

Despite the tragedy these people suffered during the war, as well as the difficulties they still face while living in exile, the people of Lefkoniko want to convey to the younger generations the wish to return to Lefkoniko and to their homes. They want to go back where their ancestors' graves are, where the Turkish invader keeps violating their parents' properties and still perpetrates the crime of cultural genocide against Cyprus. The people of Lefkoniko are struggling to survive and to find a way to get their homes back.

A. The occupied town of Lefkoniko without its legitimate residents

Lefkoniko remains subjected to the cultural genocide that was so carefully organised and so brutally executed by the invading Turkish forces and the occupation regime on all occupied grounds of Cyprus. After the city's legal residents were expelled from their houses and their offices, their stores were destroyed, the city's monuments were looted, churches were violated, and the Turks stole every valuable item and left archeological sites to be plundered by illicit antiquity dealers and eventually to be destroyed.

The houses and the properties of the displaced Greek-Cypriots were given to the Turkish-Cypriots and to settlers from Kofinou village. The so-called officials of the illegal occupation regime used the public buildings for their own purposes, while the archeological sites were turned into military camps where some very important monuments of historical value are entrapped. The invaders, in order to eradicate any Greek-Christian element and make everything look like it was created by Turks, undertook several construction and landscape projects and changed the character of Lefkoniko. From the "Pano Geitonia" (upper parish),



Detail from the destroyed cemetery of Lefkoniko.

Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

from where P. Spanos' grocery store used to be, up to the school of the Turkish community, everything was demolished and turned into a large square, in the middle of which now stands the statue of Atatürk.

Very few icons were salvaged and can be found in the free areas. For the same reason the invaders showed no respect for the Christian cemetery where a number of demolished crosses and open graves are found, creating a very depressing atmosphere. Some chapels were turned into mosques while others were neglected to be eventually destroyed. The aisled small basilica of the Church of Metamorphoseos of Sotiros in "Kato Geitonia" (lower parish) was turned into a mosque. The frescoes of the Archangel Michael were vandalised while the church is almost ruined. The Turks refuse to carry out any maintenance or repair to preserve these Christian monuments. The area where the



The church of the Archangel Michael used to be the centre of the upper parish of Lefkoniko. The church is now ruined and its frescoes have been destroyed by the Turkish invaders. Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos





Fresco inside the church of the Archangel Michael, destroyed by the Turks. Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

chapel of Agia Zoni (Agia Kinousa) was, which was going to be excavated due to the existence of an ancient settlement, after 1974 was turned into an illegal military airport. Any archaeological evidence has been forever lost.

A 3000-year heritage was left to the destructive appetites of a conqueror with an intense anti-cultural action. The creators of this heritage however, carry Lefkoniko's culture within their souls. The cherished memories from their past as well as the bad memories from the 1974 invasion is what enables them to persist in claiming the return to Lefkoniko in order to re-build what was destroyed, and to restore what was lost. For this reason they do not accept that the illegal occupation of their houses is a permanent situation. The unfair displacement they had to suffer is exactly what keeps them united in exile, drawing their inspiration from their ancestors' values for guidance and their municipality. The municipality of Lefkoniko is still active and organises various events in order to keep its people united. Even after their displacement the mayors and the councillors of Lefkoniko, along with the rest of the organised unions in Cyprus and abroad, strive to keep their people united to achieve their common goal, which includes the liberation of their town and return to their homes.

B. Activities of the displaced municipality of Lefkoniko in Cyprus

After the Turkish invasion and occupation the municipality of Lefkoniko continued to elect a mayor and other council officials. From 1960 up to 1985 Marcos Spanos served as the mayor of Lefkoniko. From 1985 to 1990, by consensus among all political parties, Marcos Spanos, Nikos Souglis, Kyriacos Yianni, Georgios Papadopoulos and Kyriacos Hadjicharalambous served as mayors for a period of six-months each. In 1990 all parties agreed that Lycourgos Kappas should be the mayor while in 1995 Kappas was re-elected since no one else claimed the position. In 1998, when Lycourgos Kappas was appointed Minister of Health, Lefkoniko had its first elections after 55 years and Michalis Pilikos was elected as the new mayor of Lefkoniko. In 2001 and in 2006 Michalis Pilikos was re-appointed as the mayor of Lefkoniko, by the common agreement of all parties. During that period the municipality of Lefkoniko was given premises in Plati in Aglantzia and in 2003 the first building was built, which includes offices and a cultural centre. The completion of this project would not have been possible without the financial support of the government, Christofis Economides and other benefactors. At the same site there is a monument dedicated



The building where the displaced municipality of Lefkoniko is temporarily housed. Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

to those who died and are missing since 1974. Furthermore there is a refugee association called "Lefkoniko," as well as the schools authority of Lefkoniko.

The Refugee Association "Lefkoniko" was founded in 1981 with the initiative of a group of people from Lefkoniko who are living temporarily in the free areas of Cyprus. The official establishment of the association took place in 1985. It is administered by a council and four other provincial branches. The main goal of this association is to work with the municipality of Lefkoniko in order to unite the displaced residents of Lefkoniko, help the preservation of their memories and strengthen their faith that one day Lefkoniko will be freed and they will be able to return to their homes. In order to achieve these goals the Refugee Association, together with the municipality of Lefkoniko, organizes several intellectual gatherings, cultural events, fairs and trips. There is also a Refugee Association in the former Turkish Cypriot neighbourhood in Lamaca. The land was provided by the Republic of Cyprus and its building was completed with the financial support and volunteer work by many people from Lefkoniko and other areas. This building includes various offices and a cultural centre.

The mayor of Lefkoniko and the President of the Association, with the help of other officials of the association, re-operated SPE Lefkonikou, which had been inactive for a number of years.

M. Pilikos is the president and Louis Athanasiou the Secretary General. The municipality of Lefkoniko founded the “Lefkoniko Archive” and the “Lefkoniko Youth Council.” In addition to the above, a dance group called “Lefkoniko” was established in Lamaca and in 2005 the futsal team “Lefkoniko” was created in Nicosia sponsored by the municipality of Lefkoniko. Through a large number of activities, organised by the above foundations and unions, the people of Lefkoniko have the opportunity to get to know each other better, work together on various matters, have fun together and develop a team spirit.

The main aim of the municipality of Lefkoniko is to help its people bond with each other in order to preserve the memories of their occupied city and the desire for return and justice. Therefore various events are organised every year. It is important to note that also a large number of anti-occupation events are often organised, where people discuss the history of Lefkoniko and can enjoy various exhibitions of pictures, works of art etc. A notable event, which was organised by the municipality of

Lefkoniko, was an event titled “Lefkoniko is alive and still creating” which took place at the municipal building of Lamaca. This event included a photographic exhibition for the occupied city of Lefkoniko as well as textiles, paintings, holy icons, copper works, ceramics and various other traditional works. Other important events are the ones that celebrate the Sixty Years (1999) and the Seventy Years (2008) since the creation of the municipality of Lefkoniko. Many officials and other people enjoy and participate in these events which celebrate love and memories, and honour Lefkoniko. The celebrations for Lefkoniko's sixty years began in February 1988 until December 1999. These celebrations included a cultural event to honour Vasilis Michaelides as well as the missing people of Lefkoniko. Moreover there were competitions for the best article and creative essay on Lefkoniko, an exhibition of Byzantine holy icons, and a celebration event for the 90 years of the cooperative movement.

Since 1994 the municipality of Lefkoniko has organised and



The municipality of Lefkoniko honoured its councillors who served between 1939 and 1990.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

sponsored excursions for pensioners. Furthermore there is a Student Essay Competition on Lefkoniko. On the occasion of the International Year for the Elders (6 October, 1999) the municipality of Lefkoniko organised the first Cypriot Festival for the elders of Lefkoniko. This included visits to charitable foundations and to National Guard outposts, where gifts are given and blood donations are organised. In this way the municipality of Lefkoniko helps in any possible way its people, especially those in need. The municipality of Lefkoniko also sends representatives to funerals and memorials, and lays wreaths at the Tomb of Makedonitissa and the Imprisoned Graves.

The municipality of Lefkoniko publishes a press release about its organised activities and an annual magazine entitled "Lefkoniko." It also sponsors the publishing of other books regarding Lefkoniko, such as the "Lefkoniko Guide" written by Kyriacos Rigas, the "Album," "The Municipality of Lefkoniko 1939-2000", and "The Municipality of Lefkoniko 1939-2009". Representatives from the municipality of Lefkoniko and the association of Lefkoniko participate in radio and TV shows and write articles or essays in order to present the history and the culture of Lefkoniko. In this way they keep memory of Lefkoniko alive, as well as the people's desire to return to their occupied town.

The municipality of Lefkoniko also presents awards to persons for their efforts to promote the progress and prosperity of their community. Some of these people are: the priest of Sotiros church Nicholas Economou, the founding members of the Lefkoniko Cooperatism Ioannis Economides and Marcos Charalambous, the former mayor Lycourgos Kappas, and the councillors who served between 1939 and 1998. Ministers and the members of parliament who hail from Lefkoniko were also honoured, as well as two very important figures: the first mayor Christos Michalopoulos and Solomis Souglis, who was the president of the village council for almost forty years. A special event was organised to honour the Refugee Association.

This association, with the help of other associations, aims to unite its people and foster a feeling of solidarity. By promoting social, artistic and cultural events the municipality of Lefkoniko succeeds in preserving the tradition and the customs of Lefkoniko and in this way it also helps its younger members to feel proud of their origins. Overall, these events seek to uplift the spirit of the people in order that they find the strength to face the difficulties caused by their brutal displacement. The municipality of Lefkoniko supported and promoted the listing of the

church of Sotiros and the Archangel Michael on UNESCO's Cultural Heritage sites, while in 2008 it was agreed between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the leader of the breakaway regime to re-build the church of the Archangel Michael.

The municipality is determined to fight the occupation, with any available means, in order for justice to finally prevail and the people to return to their houses and claim back their properties. The municipality of Lefkoniko is also very active outside Cyprus.

C. Activities of the displaced municipality of Lefkoniko overseas

The mayor of Lefkoniko Michalis Pilikos expressed his deepest wishes and convictions in his speech on the occasion of the celebration for the sixty-years anniversary of the municipality of Lefkoniko. Among other things, he said: "We reject the division of Cyprus and capitulation to the Turkish invasion. This country cannot accept the presence of foreign military troops and settlers. We must establish the practice of human rights, the right of return to our birth place, and find out what happened to those who are missing since 1974 (...) We must draw strength from our Greek roots and enforce our souls with the power of the spirit and justice. It is by using the above as our weapons that we have survived so far, and we need to rely on these to overcome the difficulties we are faced with." These are the messages that the representatives of the municipality of Lefkoniko wish to convey to the officials they meet in Cyprus or abroad.

In 1993 the mayor of Lefkoniko, with the mayors of Famagusta and Latsia, were appointed by the Executive Committee of



The twinning of the municipality of Lefkoniko with the municipality of Nea Ionia. (First Phase, 2008). Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive



Photographic exhibition of the occupied Lefkoniko and the awareness-raising seminars to the schools of the municipality of BIWER in Luxembourg, 2010. Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

the Union of Cyprus Municipalities to represent the Union in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe/Council of European Municipalities and Region. This gave the mayor the opportunity to express his deepest thoughts to matters related to occupied Lefkoniko. The government of Cyprus and the government of Greece decided, within the framework of the programme 'Cyprus-Aegean-Thrace', to proceed with the twinning of the municipality of Lefkoniko with the municipality of Mithimna in Lesbos. On 14 April 1994 the municipal council of Mithimna stated that it agreed with this. The reason for this, according to the mayor of Mithimna, Mr. Demetris Vatis, lies in the common historical and cultural identity of the two cities, throughout the centuries, that "confirm our common fate and the course of the Greeks throughout history, the unity of the Aegean area, and expresses the brotherly emotions of the people of Mithimna and towards the people of Cyprus".

The former Greek Minister for the Aegean, Mr. Costas Skandalides, invited the mayor Mr. Lycourgos Kappas, to meet in Athens (25 April 1994) with the rest of the mayors of the occupied cities, where the first phase of the twinning was decided, and on 20 April 1995 the two municipalities met in Nicosia at the P.A.S.I.D.I. Amphitheatre and gave their pledge to develop permanent relations and promote communication between the two municipalities in all areas. Therefore it will be easier to achieve their goal, which includes the strengthening of the national ties between Greece area and Cyprus, through the preservation, the strengthening and the projection of the national identity as well as the participation in the creation of a united front for confronting the various dangers that Hellenism faces. They also agreed to promote a team spirit within the European Union in order for peace and prosperity to be achieved.

Ever since, a close relationship between the two municipalities

has been developed. Every year, at the meetings of the Refugee Association of Lefkoniko, representatives from the Municipality of Mithimna attend. The same applies to other events that the municipality of Lefkoniko organises. Furthermore the children from Mithimna were hosted at a Troodos camping site (21-29 June 1999). On 6 November 1999, the municipality of Mithimna renamed the main square of the city to 'Lefkoniko Square'. The inaugural ceremony took place during Easter of 2000 and representatives from the municipality of Lefkoniko and the Refugee Association attended. The bond between the two municipalities is still strong. Their common fate, the need to preserve their memories and keep struggling for justice in order to return to their homes, led to the twinning of the municipality of Lefkoniko with the municipality of Nea Ionia (8 November 2008). Every year, children from Lefkoniko go camping to Nea Ionia while other children participate in the celebration of their national anniversary of the 25th of March 1821.

In order to promote Lefkoniko, the municipality supplies airports, ports and other buildings with informational material on Lefkoniko. Furthermore it provided the Post Office with a stamp of the municipality of Lefkoniko. There is also a bilingual edition of an album for Lefkoniko. Finally the municipality of Lefkoniko submitted a protest resolution regarding the Turkish occupation of Lefkoniko (8 February 1977) to the embassies of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and to representatives of the European Union in Cyprus.



Photographic exhibition of occupied Lefkoniko in London at the house of the Greek Cypriot Community, 2011.

Photo: Lefkoniko Municipality Archive

The mayor, the municipal council and other organisations carry out official visits to Greece and other countries, where they are either invited or go on their own initiative. Here are some examples: following the invitation of the Prefect of Attica, the mayor addressed other Municipalities in Attica (24-27 of April 1996). During an organised excursion to Rethimno, the representatives of the municipality and the Refugee Association were greeted warmly. The mayor had the opportunity to meet, discuss, inform and exchange ideas with other representatives of European Municipalities in Madrid, where he was sent to represent the Union of Cyprus Municipalities. Furthermore, he was also sent to represent the Union of Cyprus Municipalities in the House of Commons in the UK where they talked about the displaced municipalities (7 December 1998). The mayor and councillors were guests of honour at a dance which was organised by the Association of Lefkoniko. There they had the opportunity to converse with their fellow refugees. On 28 January 2006, the municipality and the Association of Lefkoniko in the UK organised a protest outside the Turkish embassy in London.

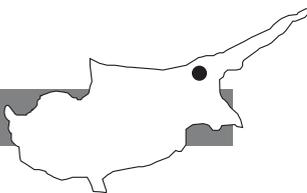
In October 2010 there was a photographic exhibition in Luxembourg, on occupied Lefkoniko, which the Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus, the mayor of the municipality of BIWER and the Cypriot representative on the European Court of Auditors attended. On the occasion of an event on Lefkoniko held in Athens on 25 November 2010, representatives from the municipality of Lefkoniko attended a meeting with the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias.

Lastly, the municipality of Lefkoniko organised a special honorary festival for the Lady of Ro in order to convey a message of unity and struggle to the rest of the Greeks, because in people's minds the words of the famous poet Vasilis Michaelides from Lefkoniko are etched: "The Hellenes are the world's most superior race/nobody has managed to extinguish it/nobody because God is watching over it (...)". The displaced people from Lefkoniko are very proud of their origins and they never forget to fight for the return to their homes. The teacher Kyriacos Rigas paraphrased some quotes from the Holy Bible in order to adapt them to the situation of Lefkoniko: "If I forget you Lefkoniko let my tongue stick into my neck, if I cannot remember you."

This is also confirmed by Koula Paraskeva, in the last verses of her poem "Lefkoniko": "The Turk took you and you are chained/ but I carry you within my heart".



Municipality of Akanthou



The town of Akanthou is located at the foot of the Pentadaktylos mountain range, under the peak bearing the ancient name “Olympus”. For over 3000 years, Akanthou has covered a narrow strip of land of about 90 square kilometres, stretching west of the village of Flamoudi up to the borders of Kyrenia-Famagusta, east of Kalograia village. The sea to the north and the Pentadaktylos mountain range to the south keep it cool and fresh. Although it is the smallest in population among the occupied towns, it has been declared a municipality because of its extensive area, its robust economy and its long distance from urban centres. It is the only municipality in the Karpas, and administratively it is part of the district of Famagusta. Before the Turkish invasion of 1974, it had around 1,500 inhabitants and 1,700 immigrants. In terms of population, Akanthou is the smallest among the displaced municipalities with about 1,300 registered voters. Out of the 39 municipalities of the Republic of Cyprus, Akanthou ranks second to last after the municipality of Lefkara.

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Akanthou

Mounds of elephant fossils and pigmy hippos can be seen along the beach of Akanthou. Archaeological findings confirm that the broader area of Akanthou had been inhabited since ancient times. Some of the most ancient settlements in Cyprus, dating back to the Neolithic Age (approximately 7,000 B.C.) were discovered at a location called “Arkosyko”. This prehistoric settlement consisted of circular houses, like the settlement at Kalavassos, surrounded by a defensive moat. Historians refer to the area of Akanthou as Akti Argion (Argos coast). Mycenaeans/Achaeanes disembarked there after the Trojan War, seeking a location that would remind them of their homeland (Argos in the Peloponnese) and established their cities. Hence, the area is strewn with remnants of ancient settlements bearing Greek names. About 30 such settlements have been documented. Among them, an entire necropolis of the Early Bronze Age that has not been excavated methodically).



Archaeological site Vounari, Akanthou.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive



Necropolis near the chapel of Agios Theodoros.

Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

At a distance of seven kilometres east of Akanthou lies the well-known site “Melissa,” where human habitation has been traced to the Middle to Late Bronze Age (18th – 13th centuries B.C.). The plethora of important discoveries at the site suggests a potters’ settlement with imported pottery both from the Aegean and Syro-Palestine. Remains located at the site “Moulos” (ancient Malaria) on high ground in the peninsula near Akanthou belong to the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 B.C.). Minoan earthen jars found there point to links between Crete and Cyprus.

Finds unearthed at the locations “Laxia,” “Agios Charalambos,” “Mavri Skala” and around the church of Panagia Pergamiotissa date back to ancient times. Earlier remains at the latter location belong to the Archaic period, confirming continuous settlement and activity at least until Hellenistic times. Ancient spolia and settlements have also been found at the locations “Epsilon,” “Kastros” and “Kastrouli.” The most prominent of the pre-Christian settlements was the coastal town Aphrodision (supposedly the first place to worship Aphrodite in a temple before she became a Paphian) east of Ourania and three miles north of Akanthou at what is today known as Liastrika (Ilion). The goddess Aphrodite was worshipped at this location from which she derived her name. Excavations have revealed the mosaic floor of a temple, possibly dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite. To the west of this old settlement lies the site Tzioura (= kivouria = tombs of the old city), where rock-carved tombs have been found as well as many ancient jewels, some of which are on exhibit at the Cyprus Museum. Further to the west, the remains of the ancient city Makaria (fertile land) have been found as well as the remains of the acropolis, which was later given the name “Kastro.” To the east of the settlement there is a small shallow bay. It is called ‘Nerades’ because as the waves broke on the numerous small reefs, they created foam which from a distance looked like fairies (the Nereid nymphs, daughters of the god Poseidon). Nearby, there was another ancient city, which alternately was called Argos Coast, Adriaki and Pergamos. The settlement of Pergamos is the only one which maintained its old name, as it continued to exist right through to Christian times. There were many other ancient cities in the area of Akanthou, which today are listed as placenames on maps of the area (Melissa, Trika Teratsia, Kaligkri- ni, and Dichorka etc.). Besides the Greek civilisation that these



Agios Charalambos. Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

cities developed, their names also verify the purely Greek roots and their continued Greek presence, from ancient times to the present day.

B. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

Through the Greek cultural and intellectual development of the times, the religion of love, Christianity, was accepted and consolidated in the region. In his Chronological History of Cyprus, Archimandrite Kyprianos says that Epafras, the associate of the Apostle Paul, was Bishop “at the coastal city of Argos, namely the area of Akanthou, where he suffered martyrdom” spreading the new religion. The devotion of the people to the new religion is demonstrated by the 22 Early Byzantine and Middle Byzantine churches scattered in the region, which were built on or near ancient settlements. Examples are the church of Agia Marina and that of Agios Georgios, near the tiny coastal village of the ancient settlement Kapsalo; Panagia Melissa located in the ancient city bearing the same name; Agios Charalambos in an ancient settlement of the same name; Panagia Pergamiotissa at the ancient settlement Pergamon six kilometres east of Akanthou, and the church of the local saint Agios Mikallos at the beach bearing his name, where there was also a Byzantine cemetery nearby. Equally important are the two cemeteries and their respective chapels, Agia Fotini and Agia Varvara. Current topographical maps show a large number of placenames around Akanthou bearing the names of saints.



The Church of Agios Charalambos under the shade of the perennial tree “Invisible” which was cut down by the Turkish invaders after 1974. Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive



The chapel of Agia Fotini at the cemetery of Agia Fotini (Fotous) in its present condition. Photo: Angelos Hadjisophocleous

According to one tradition of undetermined date, a ship arrived at the shores of Akanthou carrying icons made by saints, as well as fake ones. The church warden went to the ship to select a specific icon of Christ, after an angel of the Lord had advised him to do so while asleep. For three days the captain tormented the church warden by proposing a different icon, but the warden always selected the same one. Eventually, the icon was taken ashore and loaded on a “Melissa” she-mule, which had never been saddled before, nor had it been ridden by man. In a state of panic, the mule ran until she reached a sun-drenched spot where she leaned on the ground and she breathed her last breath. According to the local inhabitants, as the mule had carried the son of God she did not want to carry anything ever again. The name “Melissa,” which has been given to the region, as well as the presence - until the Turkish invasion - of an icon and a candle under a mastic tree (from which the locals do not remove a single leaf), reveal there is some truth behind this alleged incident. Later on, when the church of Chrysosoteris was built following prayers, vows and penance by the people of Akanthou, the icon was transferred there.

It appears that a basilica was built in the Early Christian period, six kilometres east of Akanthou. This was succeeded by the church and monastery of Panagia Pergamiotissa. The architecture of the church suggests a 10th century construction, which is confirmed by the first layer of frescoes on the apse. The date and name of the church, the existence of Pergamos village in the area, and the existence of a church in the village of Piroi dedicated to the bishop of Pergamos (Agios Antypas), suggest that Panagia Pergamiotissa is related to the refugees from Pergamos in Asia Minor. The refugees had fled to Cyprus after the victory of the Turks at Matzikert (1071), bringing with them their holy relics. Moreover, the new settlement of Akanthou was built during the mid-Byzantine period, not earlier than the Arab raids of the 7th century and 8th century A.D. But how did this relatively new settlement derive its name?

C. Origins of the name 'Akanthou'

There are three interpretations regarding the name of Akanthou. The first, suggested by Simos Menardos and Nearchos Clerides, is that it comes from the ancient Greek word “akanthon” (genitive case: akanthonos) which is a concentration of thorns, a place where thorns grow. When



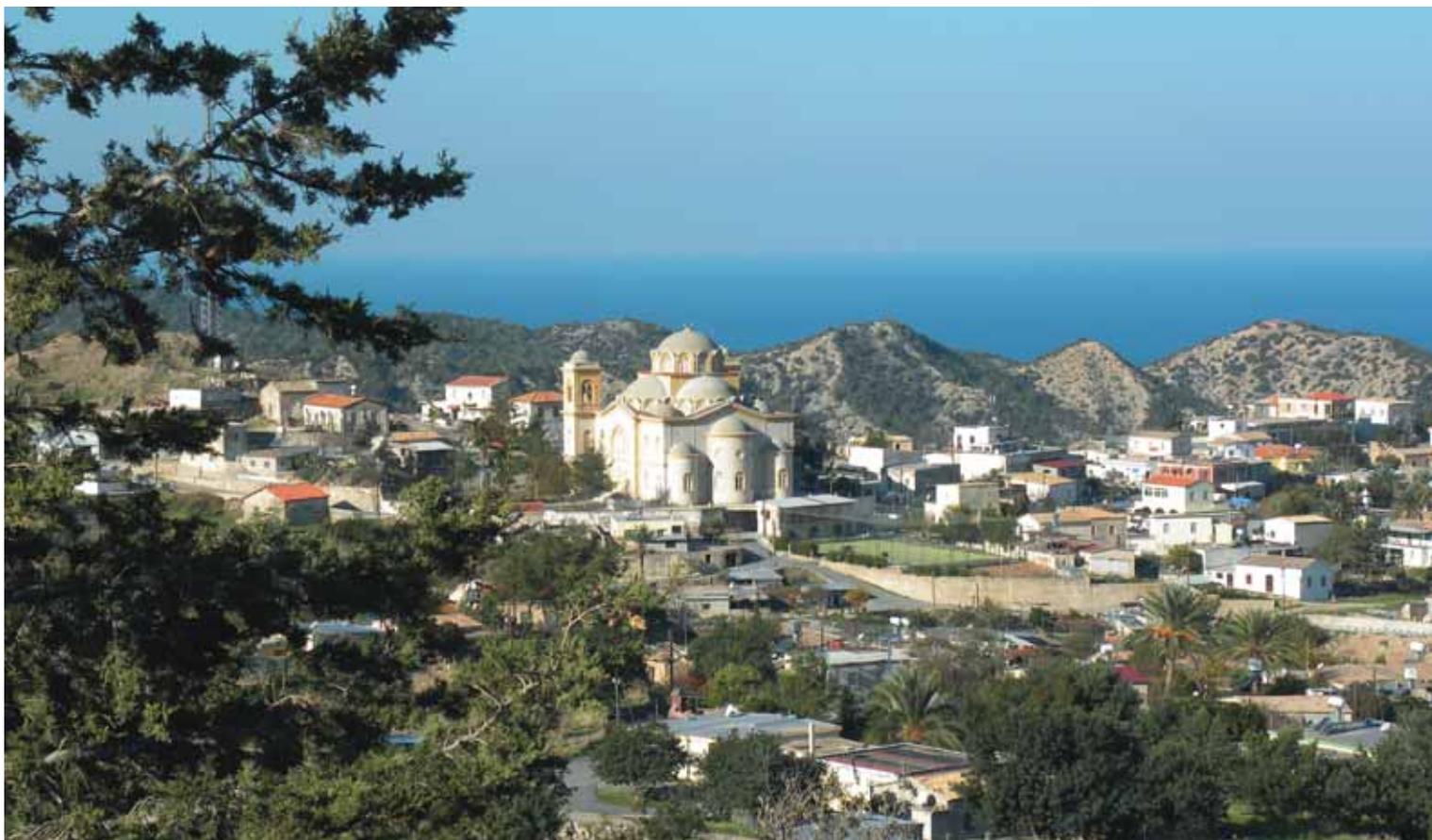
The icon of Christ the Saviour (Chrysosoteros). Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



A view from the west of the Church of Akanthou and the watermill. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

“komi” (the village) was built there, it was called “Komi tou Akanthonos.” To keep it brief, the people called it Akathou and later on Akanthou. A second version, proposed by Athanasios Sakellarios, is that it is probable that Akanthou refers to the ancient village of Alkanthou komi, to which reference is made by the Greek sophist of the 2nd century A.D. Polidevkis (Julius Pollux): “Is Akanthou the ancient village Alkanthou to which Polydevkis refers?” According to Pieris Zarmas, Polydevkis could not have been referring to present-day Akanthou since it did not exist at the time. He considers that the reference is to Pergamos on the coast of Argos, a city founded by Alkanthos together with the people from Argos, like Afrodasio and Liastrika, when they settled there after the Trojan War. Nevertheless, it is quite probable that the descendants of the inhabitants of the ancient cities in the region derived the name of their new city from there (Alkanthos=Akanthos=Akanthou komi), in remembrance either of ancient cities by the name Alkanthos or of their Greek ancestor Alkanthos himself who settled in the area.

The third interpretation, which is probably the prevailing view, is linked to the legend of Anthousa. There was an earlier settlement, the name of which is unknown, at the location “Koufos” at the foot of a hill, three kilometres west of the present-day town and about one kilometre from the bay of “Kononion.” The reason the settlement had been abandoned was the scourge of the Saracen pirates, who at the time looted and destroyed the coastal settlements of Cyprus, terrorising the inhabitants. According to one legend, beautiful Anthousa was about to get married with Yiannis in the old settlement. When the pirates set anchor in the bay to gather water, they saw the lights and went up to the settlement where they received the hospitality of the hosts. The chief of the pirates joined the singers and sang a song in Arabic, through which he gave orders in code to his comrades to take the beautiful bride to the ship at the opportune moment: “For as long as the moon shines / the bride stands in pride / And when the moon sets / off to the ship there goes the bride.” A villager who could understand their language because he had been captured once and taken to Baghdad, approached the groom and whispered in his ear the words of the song and urged him to take his bride and go away into the mountains. The groom did not waste any time, he took the bride and hid in an area packed with thorn plants, about three kilometres away.



Panoramic view of Akanthou, with the church of Christ the Saviour (Chrysosoteris) in the centre. Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

When the pirates realised they had lost the bride - the valuable loot they would sell at a high price in gold - they were infuriated, looted the village and fled.

Because the inhabitants of these settlements often suffered such devastating raids, they decided after this incident to move to the site with the thorn plants which had served as shelter for Anthousa and Yiannis. The fertile valley guaranteed their relocation and survival. Hidden as it was by the huge hill Vigkla (observatory) and the hills Mantrin, Kamila, Vounarouthkia and Psarouta, the valley was not visible by the Arabs from the sea. The inhabitants felt safer and so they built a new settlement around the spring "Mana tou Nerou" (mother of water), which provided them with an additional essential element to develop their creativity. Combining the word thorn and the name of the beautiful Anthousa, people named their village Akanthousa, which then evolved to Akanthou (Agkathia=thorn bush+Anthousa=Akanthousa=Akanthou). Apparently, the survivors of the devastating Arab raids joined forces and established this new settlement, which was the successor of

many old settlements that pre- existed in the region. Using the limited information available, an effort will be made to draw a picture of Akanthou, a brief one at that, regarding the subsequent eras up to British rule.

D. Further historical facts on Akanthou

Although the available information to this date does not shed adequate light on the historical course of Akanthou under the conquerors that followed, what is certain is that it maintained throughout the centuries its Greek name while its inhabitants preserved the Greek-Christian culture and the Greek language. References to Akanthou during the Frankish period (1192-1571) are very sparse. A relevant piece of information provided by Leontios Machairas confirms that in 1383, during the Frankish dominion, the King of Cyprus James I granted the whole of Akanthou as fief to John Gorab, who was of Armenian descent. Athanasios Sakellarios also states that in 1393 "a devastating famine befell the city of Lamaca and

the small town of Akanthou, whereof it spread throughout the island". Regardless of the persecution inflicted on Orthodoxy in Cyprus by the Catholic Church and the oppression suffered by the Orthodox Christians, the people of Akanthou tenaciously maintained their religious beliefs and safeguarded their culture, customs and traditions as a bulwark against efforts to force them into submission.

Armed with their cultural traditions, they managed to survive under an even more ruthless conqueror that was totally alien to their own culture, the Ottoman-Turks (1571-1878). It is noted that the traveler Marini (1760) refers to Akanthou as Akattou, adding that it was previously called Acte Argivorum. Despite the suffering from heavy taxation, inhuman treatment and cruel oppression, the people of Akanthou never ceased to nurture their spirit and soul, drawing strength from their deepest Greek roots and their Christian faith. The combination of these forces with the singular beauty of the natural environment had a positive effect on the disposition of the inhabitants of Akanthou. This is illustrated in their excellence in the letters and the arts, as confirmed by Ottoman documents. An indication of this is a report in 1860 by the then governor (vizier) of Cyprus Ishak Pasha (Kamil Pasha) to the Sublime Porte regarding the operation of Christian schools on the island. The Mutual Education School of Akanthou was among the just 22 schools functioning then on the island. The people of Akanthou, well ahead of their time, realised that agriculture as a main occupation could not give them a better



Agios Mikallos. Photo: Department of Antiquities Archive

life. They felt that the safest investment for a better future, with prospects for freedom and prosperity, was education and thus they invested in it increasingly. Their inclination for literature and the arts continued during British rule, yielding progress and prosperity for the people and Akanthou's society in general.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

The creativity of the inhabitants of the town began to unfold after the island was freed from the Ottoman yoke and administration was taken over by the British conquerors. Despite the repressive measures imposed by the colonial power, the restriction of liberties and violation of democratic principles, there were incentives and opportunities for economic and social development, always in the context of British colonial policy. Like the rest of the Greek population of the island, the people of Akanthou used the new state of affairs to create, as far as possible, conditions for development and prosperity under the leadership of the mayors during this period, Kyriacos Hadjimichael (1908-1914), Fotios Savva (1914-1924), Kleanthis K. Kramvis (1924-1926, 1929-1943), Georgios Michailides (1926-1929), Kleanthis G. Kramvis (1943-1947, 1949-1953), Sotiris Hadjigeorgiou (1953 -1963) and Sotiris Karpasitis, who took office in 1964 and continued after the Turkish invasion until 1978. The independence of Cyprus in 1960 opened up new potentials for Akanthou as well. Until the Turkish invasion of 1974, the engagement of both the municipality and the citizens in activities in every field reached its peak. Despite the institutional separation of the inhabitants of the island into Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots through the Zurich-London Agreements (1959), and the undemocratic Constitution imposed - which was the cause of discord and conflict - the people of Akanthou developed their economy and culture.

A. Cultural Development

Welcoming the British Governor to Akanthou in 1908, Fotios Savva, a teacher and later the mayor of the town, conveyed the request of the entire community that Akanthou be declared a municipality. Though reluctant at first because of the small population, the governor finally consented, having ascertained the cultural level of the inhabitants and

their progressive demeanour. The formal decision was taken on June 26, 1908 and was published in the Government Gazette on July 10. The date is considered the birthday of the municipality. Two years after the October uprising of 1931, during Governor Palmer's tenure, the colonial administration was seriously considering abolishing the municipality under the pretext that there were larger communities that had not yet become municipalities, like Rizokarpaso, Yialousa and Lefkoniko. Ultimately, cooler minds prevailed. The same issue was raised in 1941 by the colonial government to the Queen of England, on the grounds that the municipality could not meet its financial obligations. The request was rejected because many citizens of Akanthou volunteered to enlist in the British army during World War II. In 1947 the then mayor C. Kleanthis Kramvis, addressing the Colonial Secretary Roland Turnbull, referred to the centuries-long aspiration of the Greeks of Cyprus for union with Greece. The Secretary, clearly irritated, walked out. As a consequence, the mayor and the municipal council resigned in protest. The Secretary then appointed a three-member Municipal Committee, chaired by the community head Pavlos C. Pavlides. In the elections that took place in 1949, the coalition of Kleanthis G. Kramvis, the only one contesting the elections, was re-elected in 1949 with Kramvis as mayor.

Activities in Akanthou were administered entirely by the municipality. Up until the Turkish invasion and occupation, successive mayors tackled the various problems of the community with prudence and a sense of responsibility. The very existence of the municipality as a local government agency was a determining factor in implementing public utility projects. Such projects included water and electricity supply, town cleaning, construction of a new Town Hall (1950), construction of a new elementary school (1963), road construction and paving, establishment of an abattoir, and many other infrastructure projects which promoted social development and upgraded the standard of living of the citizens. The eagerness to learn, the spirit of cooperation and solidarity, and the love for their country cherished by the people of Akanthou, were all conducive to the cultural and social progress of the town. Akanthou citizens have always been willing to contribute towards achieving a humane and civilised society.

Akanthou students pursued their secondary education either in Lefkoniko, where most students commuted by bus



The new elementary school in 1963 with the headmaster M. Phinieas. Akanthou Municipality Archive

every day, or in Famagusta and Nicosia. After secondary school, they sought to continue their studies at the best possible universities or colleges. Mostly they strived to enroll in teachers' training colleges in order to embark on a teaching vocation and contribute to education, so essential for the community and the country in general. Thus, Akanthou produced a large number of intellectuals, especially teachers, which earned it the title "daskalochori" (teachers' village) of Cyprus. Among the intellectuals was the late baritone Pieris Zamas who, was the lead baritone at the Bonn Opera for almost four decades. Investment in education began to bear fruit, since the progress and prosperity of the inhabitants was founded on and promoted by these intellectuals, educationalists, artists and scientists who emerged from within the



Adolescents of Akanthou, secondary school students, at "Mana" waterfalls during the 1960s. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Baritone Pieris Zarmas.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Detail of a wood-carved painted chest, depicting birds and a double-headed eagle. Photo: The

Folk Art Museum in Nicosia, Society of Cypriot Studies

community. The development of folk art, particularly wood-carving, frequent local theatre productions, the good track record in sports and continuous distinctions in the educational field, turned Akanthou into a vibrant hub of culture far outstripping its size.

The devotion of the citizens of Akanthou to Greek-Christian ideals and their collective consciousness were exhibited in their participation and excellence at every national call to arms. In 1905, they made the largest financial contribution to the national fleet of Greece. This gesture was repeated during World War I, the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 and the campaign in Asia Minor of 1919-1922. The keenness to be of service to the nation was exemplified by fundraising efforts for the purchase of a new cruiser to replace "Elli," the Greek warship which was torpedoed by an Italian submarine in 1940, and by the massive voluntary enlistment of the people of Akanthou in the British army during World War II. They also honoured the Cypriot struggle for liberation in 1955-1959 with their active participation. The entire community offered invaluable services to the cause: the people provided their homes as hideouts, sheltered those on wanted lists and participated in task forces. Moreover, they endured arrests and brutal torture in British detention camps. It is worth noting that during 1957-

1958, the British shut down the elementary school of the community because the people refused to remove the Greek flag. Consequently, the "clandestine school- kryfo scholio," perhaps the only one in Cyprus, began to function in the Church of Metamorphoseos of Soterios (Transfiguration of the Saviour). This area and its people was chosen by the deputy chief of the liberation struggle, the hero Gregoris Afxentiou, and the hero Kyriacos Matsis for their first hideouts.

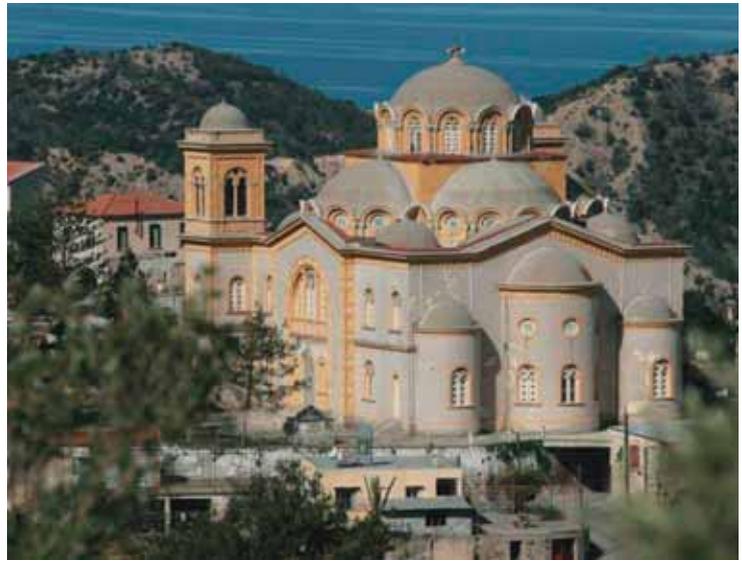
An example of the great love the people of Akanthou have for their town, of their loyalty but particularly of their spirit of cooperation and teamwork, is the voluntary work they put into building the church of Chrysosoterios, a church of exceptional beauty. They had pledged that they would build a church larger than the one that existed since 1862, so that all the inhabitants could be accommodated. The promise became a vow to Christ the Saviour. Appreciating this unprecedented cooperation for the common good, the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyrillos gave his official consent and blessing. Based on designs by Theodoros Fotiadis and Yiakoumis Pavlou, who had also built the Church Panagia tis Lysis, as the chief craftsman, everyone joined forces and the foundations were laid in 1916. As Eleni Hadjimichael reports, the foundations were dug using hoes and shovels. Animals were used to carry away

the soil and bring in the stones for the construction. Instead of wheat, the watermills ground broken pottery which had been guarded for centuries in the bowels of the land of Akanthou. They were turned to powder, mixed with gypsum and water, making the clay stronger even than cement, which was unknown at the time. Young and old carried and hewed stone with their bare hands. Construction lasted 20 years (1916-1936), bonding together citizens and expatriates in a team spirit and understanding which follows them to this day. The Church of Chrysosoteris, 25m high, 32m long and 22m wide, the largest in Cyprus, rose up magnificent, with a high-rise dome, the perfectly crafted capital of the pillars, the semi-domes, the windows and towers, all evoking awe in every visitor. The famous painter Frangoulides put the final touches painting the portable icons. The church was inaugurated by the locum tenens, Bishop of Pafos Leontios, on 14 September, 1941.

Under the auspices of Bishop of Pafos Leontios, locum tenens of the Archbishopric throne, the Church Chrysosoteris of Akanthou was inaugurated on Sunday September 14, 1941, with the contribution of our pious brethren from Akanthou living in London” (inauguration plaque).

Rarely have people come so close together by their love for such a noble cause, thus definitely disproving the myth about material goods and money. Construction work went on for years, but both locals and expatriates sustained the team spirit of generosity and understanding, which accompanies the people of Akanthou to this day.

Good governance and innovative management of the enormous assets of the Church of Chrysosoteris rendered it one of the main sponsors of public benefit community projects. Moreover, with its substantial contribution to the financial support of people in distress, the people's gratitude grew even further. For their part, the people impulsively responded offering voluntary work (known as chores) to the community during harvest, particularly working in the olive groves owned by the church on Sundays during the months of November and December. Voluntary work was reciprocated, by shared free dinners, which evoke the early Christian love feasts “Christianikes agapes”. This exemplary spontaneous cycle of contribution-gratitude-reciprocity-contribution, confirmed the collective spirit and solidarity of the people, as well as their piety towards the sacred canons of the Orthodox Church.



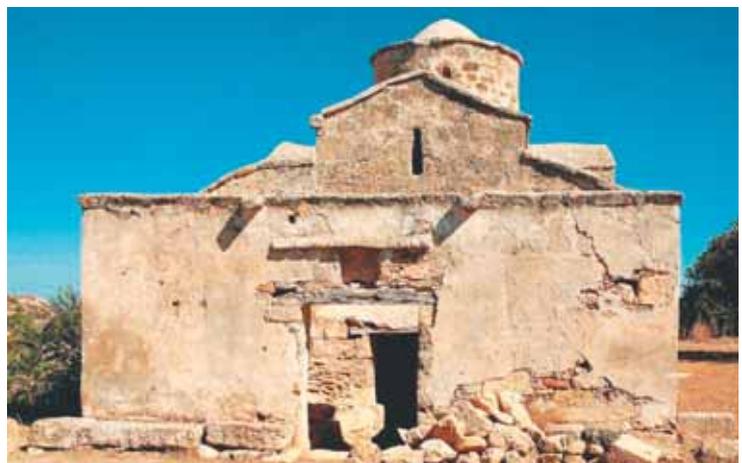
A view of the church of Chrysosoteris.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive.



The occupied Town Hall of Akanthou, built in 1950.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



The Church of Panagia Pergamiotissa after the Turkish invasion.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Carnival in Akanthou. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

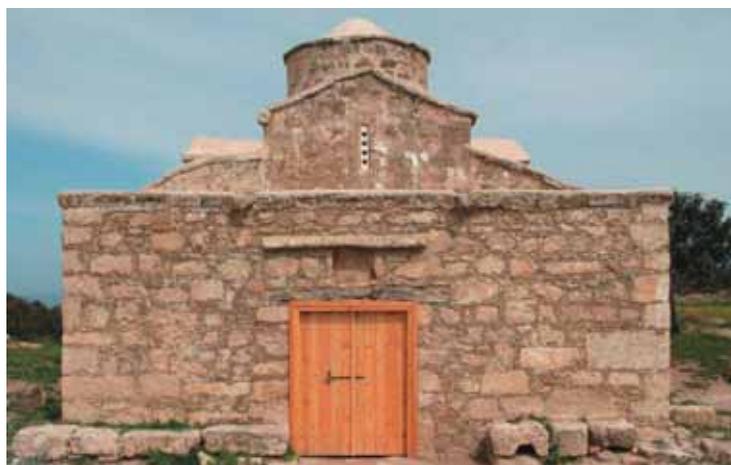


Christening at the church of Panagia Pergamiotissa, 1958. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Icon procession in 1960.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



The Church of Panagia Pergamiotissa after its restoration by the American programme SAVE 2009 the Turkish invasion in 1974.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

The church of Chrysosoteris was the nucleus of the daily life of the people of Akanthou. Worth noting is the original and unique custom in Cyprus of blowing up Judas on Easter Monday, an event attended by crowds of people. Many people also visited the church and the surrounding villages, not only on the 6th of August, the day of the Transfiguration of the Lord, but all the year round. Under the Lord's imposing but considerate eye, the people found the solace and peace they sought. An unprecedented bond developed between the citizens of Akanthou and the Saviour, attested to by the fact that every family had someone named Sotiris or Soteroulla, as a votive offering to the patron saint of the town. The piety of the people was also illustrated in the feasts, held once or twice a year, in all the churches in the area of Akanthou. Combining cultural with economic development, the municipality of Akanthou created the appropriate conditions for a prosperous society, an essential element for the survival and progress of Cypriot society in general.

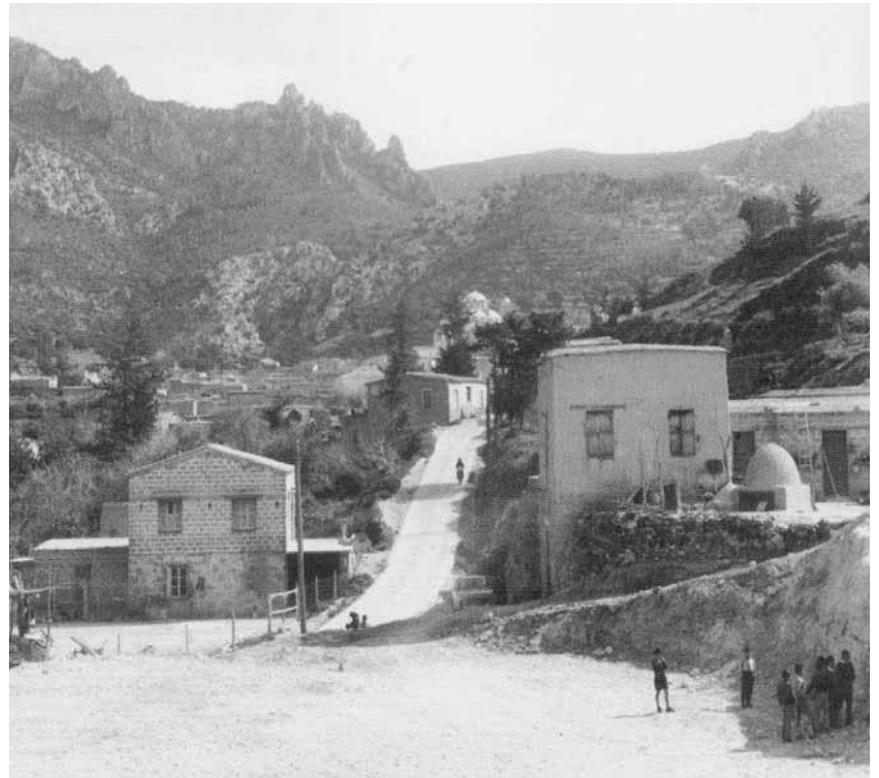
B. Economic Development

The natural beauty of Akanthou had a positive effect on its inhabitants. Taking advantage of the opportunities the area offered, they developed their skills constructively and contributed to the economy of their community and the economy of Cyprus in general. Apart from timber, the people of Akanthou were able to engage in animal breeding on the mountainous areas, and cultivate wheat on the plains. Many

authors make references to Akanthou. Among them Evryviadis N. Frangoudis (1885) writes that Akanthou "... produces cheese renowned in Cyprus, but which cannot be compared to European ones". Pericles Michaelides describes it as an area covered with different kinds of trees. Athanasios A. Sakellarios (1890) describes Akanthou as having fields bursting with olive and carob trees, with 1,200 inhabitants who engage in agriculture and animal husbandry. As he says, the oil and cheese of Akanthou were at the time in great demand all over Cyprus, and cheese was even exported to Egypt and the cities of Asia Minor.

Cooperative, progressive-minded and hard-working, the people of Akanthou struggled and managed to render productive the biggest stretch of arable land in the district of Famagusta. They cultivated mostly olive trees, cereals and vegetables. Intensive mixed cropping of carob trees and olive trees, which grew even on the precipitous slopes of the region, yielded a respectable income to farmers and the municipality. The quantity and quality of Akanthou's oil made it known nationwide as the top oil-producing village. Another main occupation was the sowing of grain, which made the people proud of the quality and quantity of their crops. In the intermediate space there were strips of irrigated land where fruits like apricot, peach, pear, apple and almond trees were grown, as well as vegetables such as cucumbers, tomatoes, aubergines and courgettes. There were also small family units producing potatoes, onions and beans..

The contributing factors behind this notable agricultural growth were the great diversity and fertility of the soil of Akanthou, the diligence of its inhabitants, the satisfactory level of rainfall, which annually reached around 530 millimetres, and the so-called "Pigi tis Manas" (spring of the Mother). The abundance of water is the main reason for the continuous habitation in the area of Akanthou since the Neolithic Age. However, the centuries-old inexhaustible spring of the Mother dried up when bore holes were dug on higher ground. To meet their needs in water, the people of Akanthou drilled in 1955 a well 500 metres east of the old spring, at the site known as "Dafnes tis Mazeris" located on the dirt road towards "Styllarka." Some years before 1974, irrigation was enriched with the construction of water dams, thereby supplementing tens of wells which catered mainly to horticulture. The establishment of innovative partnerships played a significant role in better



Entrance to the town of Akanthou before the Turkish invasion in 1974. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

promoting the products and improving the standard of living of the community. These partnerships enabled farmers to manage their own affairs, avoiding usury, through which many a fortune was lost at humiliating prices. The Co-operative Society, founded in 1923 by 13 pioneers from Akanthou, proved life-saving for farmers. Apart from the structured marketing and promotion of the products, the Co-op granted loans to the inhabitants, facilitating financial transactions, and funded many charitable projects. Subsequently, the Co-op expanded its activities. The Cooperative Credit Society led to the establishment of the Association of Perishable Products Producers, which managed exclusively the marketing of vegetables and provided the inhabitants with pesticides and fertilisers.

The Church of Chrysosoteris can also be considered as a source of income as it attracted large crowds all year round, but especially on its name day on August 6 and during the three-day celebrations. It also provided an opportunity for large-scale commerce. Other contributors to economic development were the large or small farms island-wide in which thousands of chickens, pigs and goats were reared. An inventory prepared in 1973 showed that poultry amounted

to the incredible number of 122,410. "Mintikis" farm, one of the first to be established in Cyprus, held a prominent position in the sector. About 3,370 goats were being reared before the Turkish invasion. These units employed a large number of workers both local and from neighbouring villages. Another bread-winning occupation for about ten families was fishing. To assist fishermen, the fishing shelter of the Archangel was completed a few years before the Turkish invasion, providing for up to seven vessels. It is also noteworthy that the hills, the mountains and the flora of Akanthou, offered an ideal environment for nurturing the rich fauna. This converted Akanthou into a most sought-after hunting destination. It was also the proper environment to host the unique to Cyprus eagles that perched on the steep slopes of the limestone peaks.

Self-sufficient in most commodities, Akanthou held an enviable position with regard to standard of living, full employment and high per capita income, aided also by remittances from relatives residing in Britain. The road network also contributed to the economic growth of the town, as it made easier the movement of people and goods to larger urban centres. To the north, Akanthou linked with the main road Kyrenia-Davlos, access to Mesaoria was through Lefkoniko and through the passage from Bogaz, to Karpasia through Komi Kebir-Davlos. To the south, a dirt road linked Akanthou to the crest line of Pentadaktylos and Olympus. These were determining factors in the steady population increase of Akanthou from 1881 until 1946. From 1,162 in 1881 the inhabitants increased to 1,588 in 1911 and to 1,790 in 1946. In 1960, the population decreased to 1,507 as the immigration wave to Britain had begun, and in 1973, one year before the invasion, the population decreased to 1,294. It was evident that without the development of industry and tourism, the population of the town could not be sustained through agriculture alone. There was never any doubt that the people and nature of Akanthou would jointly find solutions to problems that emerged, as they had done over the centuries. The worthy son of Akanthou, Pieris Zarmas, expresses this confidence in the preface of his book "Place Names in Akanthou", saying that in his home town "... Greek virtue has become an art and a tradition." The people of Akanthou drew "strength and hope in life" from the gifts with which nature has endowed the town, the "Thkiatrypito," "Styllarka," "Kataraktes tis Manas," "Stalaktites tou

Agiou Mikallou," as well as from Chrysosotera (the Saviour), thus developing an unrivalled creative imagination for survival. There were plans to promote and capitalise on these exceptional natural monuments, not encountered elsewhere in Cyprus, in order to upgrade Akanthou to a centre for the tourism industry which would enhance the economic potential of the area.

The "Thkiatrypito" is one of the peaks of Pentadaktylos, above the town. It consists of giant grey rocks, strewn with ivy and endemic wild flowers which grow in that area alone. These granite rocks with their peculiar shapes form a hole or passageway, allowing access from the north of the mountain to the south. At sunset, the rocks acquire a soothing rose colour. During full moon, before the moon it rises over the crest, its light goes through the opening of "Thkiatrypito" and falls on the majestic church of Chrysosoteris, revealing a spectacular view. Overall, the peak resembles a huge giant lying down, resting. It represents the aesthetic beauty and splendour of nature and separates the land of Akanthou from the plain of Mesaoria. During the liberation struggle of 1955-1959, the first hideout of the hero Gregoris Afxentiou was carved at the root of this huge rock. At the foot of the mountain lies the town, crowned by the hills "Likos", "Poularokremos" (a name also found in Crete), "Vigkla," "Voukranos" and "Psarouta" with crustacean fossils, from which it derives its name.

Further to the east of the "Thkiatrypito" lies another miracle of nature, "Styllarka," also called "Meteteora of Cyprus." The vertical cliffs of "Styllarka" are 30-50 metres high, rising up to the heavens like the spears of warriors in a battle of giants. According to some descriptions, they appear like legendary



The location "Thkiatrypito".

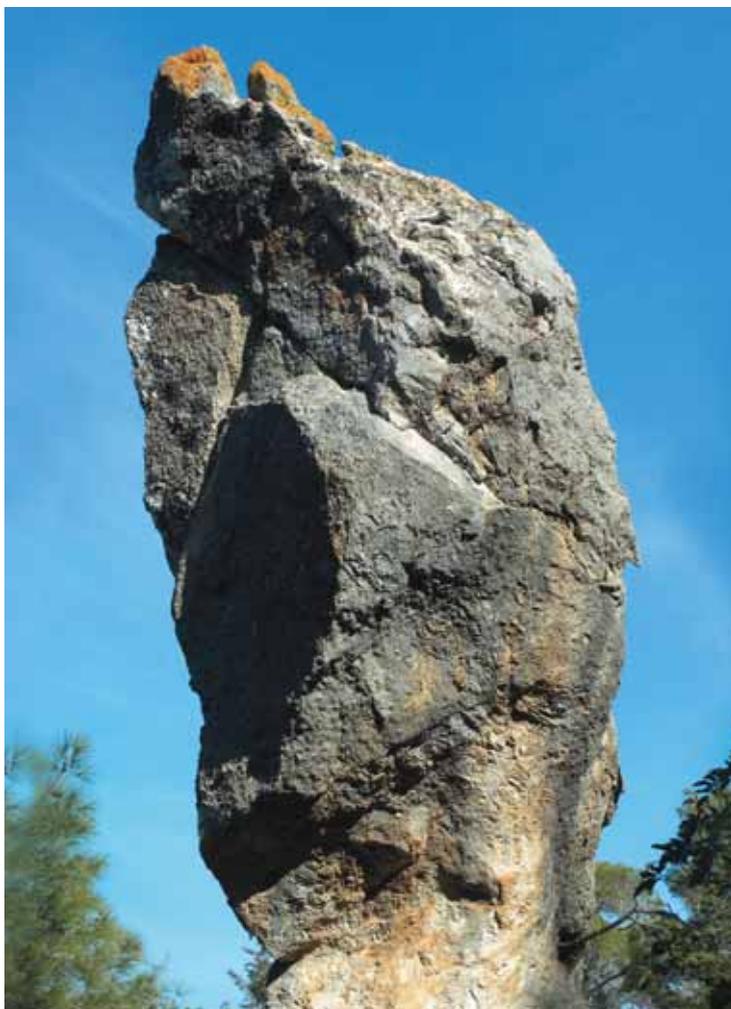


The unique natural beauty of the landscape of Akanthou. A panoramic view of "Styllarka". Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

and biblical figures, or even as huge votive candles which stir religious awe in the beholder. The result of geological processes and chiselled by time, these rocks are natural works of art of inestimable beauty. Their foot is lost in a green forest of giant fennels, laurels, cyclamen plants, ferns and trees. The "Styllarka" is one of the most beautiful locations in Cyprus and the spectacle is truly exceptional. Further southwest of the "Thkiatrypito" and about 500 metres south of the church Chrysosoterios, there are three "Kataraktes tis Manas" (Waterfalls of the Mother). In winter, small torrents used to carry water from the crest of "Litharkos" and "Kolotzia" through to the valleys of the "Plakes" and discharged it with a thud from a rocky massif of 200-metres to the "Koufi tis Manas" (the snake of the mother). It is an area with rich vegetation and stunning beauty. About six kilometres from the town of Akanthou, near the ancient city of Pergamos, lies the chapel of Agios Mikallos, among many ancient ruins. Somewhere

there, close to the base of a cliff there is a large cave with stalactites. The water dripping from the roof of the cave is considered the holy water of Agios Mikallos, which the locals considered to have healing qualities.

Lying in the arms of the blue sea and the verdant Pentadaktylos, with the grey or grayish-green colour of huge ravines, gullies, and the valleys, the deep green of carob trees, the silver of olive trees and the gold of pine trees, Akanthou seems like a painting drawn by the infinite brush-strokes of the Great Creator. Being the gateway to the land of Karpasia and a unique phenomenon of natural beauty, as well as combining sea and mountains, Akanthou was ideal for tourism development. Such a re-orientation of the economy of Akanthou could at the time generate new sources of employment, income and prosperity for the inhabitants. At the same time, it would increase the population of the town which consisted of eight



The unique natural beauty of the landscape of Akanthou is stunning. Photo: Nikiforos Orphanos

neighbourhoods: Avlatzia, Kouttoutzi, Laura, Sortina, Pano Geitonia, Mantis, Kamila and Mazeri. However, the Turkish invasion of 1974 put a halt to the implementation of the plans and goals of the people of Akanthou for economic advancement. The Turkish troops invaded Akanthou violently, killed, tortured, pillaged and terrorised the civilian population, those who refused to take the road to exile.

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF AKANTHOU AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

After the Turkish invasion, all the inhabitants of Akanthou were displaced and scattered across Cyprus and overseas. With their dreams shattered, their lives and families torn as under they began a colossal struggle in their new, temporary accommodations. Along with their displaced municipality, they

are struggling to restore their own dignity and that of Cypriot Hellenism in general. They assumed their duty towards their occupied city and their culture, towards all those who struggled and sacrificed themselves for Akanthou and their homeland. The memory of Chrysosoteros, the icon which was first on the list of their missing loved ones, enhances their will and reinforces their efforts. The Turkish conquerors assumed that by terrorising and displacing the indigenous population they would solve the problem of their illegal presence in Akanthou and the other occupied areas of Cyprus. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate a centuries-old culture. The collective memory and consciousness, harmony and the militant spirit of the Greek Cypriot displaced persons stand firm as solid barriers against attempts to annihilate this culture. Tolerance to the conquerors so far has not allowed for a full-scale assessment of the power of these barriers. After being uprooted, the people of Akanthou have regrouped and are fighting for their return to their own Ithaca, their land which is drenched in their love and sweat, but currently alone and exposed to the will of the invader.

A. The occupied town of Akanthou without its legitimate residents

In a bid to wipe out anything that recalled the Greek-ness of enslaved Akanthou, the Turkish conquerors embarked on an unprecedented cultural genocide, in violation of the rule of law and international treaties. Having plundered the movable property of the citizens of Akanthou, they moved Turkish settlers and Turkish Cypriots into their homes and properties, altered the character of the area and even changed the name of the town from Akanthou to Tatlisu (= sweet water). Schools and other public buildings, private businesses, homes and property, the toil of the indigenous population have become spoils in the hands of contemporary pirates, and a centuries-old culture runs the risk of annihilation. Greek-placenames, prehistoric and historic settlements, archaeological treasures are at the mercy of antique smugglers and all sorts of dealers who, overtly or covertly implement the genocidal Turkish policy of aggression. Irrefutable testimonies of culture remain neglected and ravaged by time. Anything portable has become the object of transaction in international markets, for profiteering and with the basic objective to eliminate all traces of the indigenous inhabitants of the area

because of their Greek origin and their Christian faith.

The church of Panagia Pergamiotissa has not only been plundered and devastated, but many of its frescoes have been forcibly removed and transported abroad to be sold. Some fragments of frescoes have been found in the possession of the Turkish antiquities dealer Aydin Dikmen in Munich. The other 21 chapels of Akanthou have also been subjected to looting, desecration and devastation. Wooden-carved iconostases, icons, holy vessels and manuscripts have been removed, flooding the illicit antiquity markets abroad. The church of Chrysosoteris has literally been stripped and has been converted into a mosque. As reported in a written denunciation by the Pancyprian Cultural Association to the World Council of Churches of UNESCO and to the Human Rights Committee of the UN, the Turks have hoisted the Turkish flag on the main dome of the church, removed the cross from the belfry and have stolen the portable Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons, including the golden icons of Christ the Saviour and the Virgin Mary, gospels, monstrances, chalices and other vessels and treasures of great historical and cultural significance. The two cemeteries of Akanthou have also been desecrated, the crosses have been broken and the graves have been dug open in search of jewelry and other valuables, while the two churches are now used as stables.

A firm demand of the displaced indigenous inhabitants of occupied Akanthou is the implementation of the Third Vienna Agreement (2 August, 1975), which envisages, inter alia, the immediate resettlement of the inhabitants of all 29

Greek Cypriot villages in the Karpas region, the unfettered exercise of their religious duties and the reopening of schools. As European citizens, the people of Akanthou demand implementation of the principle of the three basic freedoms (movement, settlement and ownership), the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation troops and settlers from their European territories, implementation of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and implementation of the Security Council resolutions. These messages are delivered by the displaced municipality of Akanthou, both in Cyprus and abroad, expressing the will of its citizens, who will not compromise with the faits accomplis of the invasion and occupation.

B. Activities of the displaced Municipality of Akanthou in Cyprus

After 1974, the registered voters of the municipality of Akanthou by district are: 36% Larnaca, Nicosia 32%, Limassol 22%, Famagusta 8% and Pafos 2%. Although no precise data is available, it is estimated that the displaced from Akanthou and refugees living overseas number at least 5,000. Wherever they are, they remain united, demanding what belongs to them until the final vindication. A typical example is the late baritone Pieris Zamas who sought foster parents for orphans of the Turkish invasion, organised fundraising in Germany under the slogan "Aid for Cyprus" and who in 1974 handed to the Accountant-General of the Republic 6,502,716 German marks as aid to displaced Cypriots. Zamas served as media advisor at the Embassy of Cyprus in Bonn for 14 years and



The Church of Agia Irini. Photo: Angelos Hadjisophocleous



The Church of Agia Paraskevi. Photo: Angelos Hadjisophocleous



The chapel of the Archangel Michael today. Photo: Angelos Hadjisophocleous

edited the “Newsletter” targeted at the German public from 1984-1995. The memory of the icon of Chrysosoteris, the icon which tops the list of the missing from Akanthou, enhances the people's efforts to return to their homes. The municipality too is in exile along with its citizens. Up to 1978, the mayor was Sotiris Karpasitis. Subsequent mayors were Savvas Fotiou (1978-1987), Sotiris Chailos (1992-2001), Kyriacos Hadjisawa (2002-2006) and Savvas Savvides (2007).

With the reactivation of the municipality, the Cooperative Credit Society of Akanthou was also reconstituted. Having their temporary headquarters in Larnaca, both institutions constitute a source of inspiration and serve as a gathering point for the people of Akanthou. The municipal council stands by them, to support and assist them, fighting battles every day in defence of justice and their rights, as well as for the repatriation of their stolen heritage. Aware that the people of Akanthou have always been and still are loyal to their religious traditions, the municipal council decided to include in its priorities the repair or restoration of the 22 churches in the occupied town, which bear unmistakable signs of the ravages caused by time and the occupying force. Among its goals is also the conservation of the church of Chrysosoteris which, as already stated, unfortunately has been converted by the conquerors into a mosque.

Convinced that culture, customs and traditions constitute a shield against Turkish expansionism, the municipality, in collaboration with the Refugee Association “Akanthou” and the other citizens’ groups (School Board, football team of Akanthou), organizes events to revive these traditions as they existed in the town before 1974, and to pass them on to younger generations. A typical custom of Akanthou, which was revived in 2007, is the blowing up of Judas, a custom probably unique to Cyprus and perhaps Greece as well. All the activities related to Akanthou are supported financially by the municipality and are placed under its auspices, the aim being to maintain the unity of the people of Akanthou, and to keep alive the memory of the occupied town. Part of the commitment of the municipality and the citizens to what has been handed down to them, is the painting of two copies of the icon of Chrysosoteris. One has been placed in the church of Metamorphoseos (Transfiguration) in Anthoupolis, Nicosia, and the other in the church of Soteris in Larnaca, in the hope that the faith of the people will assist



The temporary premises in Larnaca of the displaced municipality of Akanthou. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



The chapel of Chrysosoteris in Oroklini.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

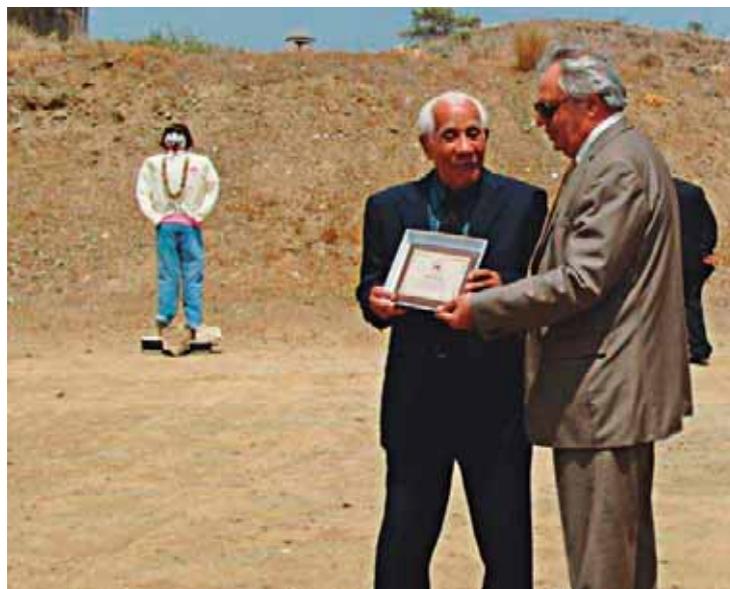
them and lead them towards liberation and return to their homes.

In 2009, the Chapel of Chrysosoteris in Voroklini was inaugurated. The Church was constructed thanks to donations from the inhabitants of Akanthou and other members of the congregation. It is a true architectural copy of the grand church of Chrysosoteris of Akanthou. Mass is held once a month and it is a gathering point for the people of Akanthou until the much longed-for day of return.



Easter Monday in exile (Delikipos).

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



The mayor of Akanthou honours Fotis S. Ktoris, chief craftsman of the effigy of "Judas". Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Memorial service for the fallen citizens of Akanthou.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



First Oil Festival in exile, 2010.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

The municipality stands by all the citizens, but particularly by the students, contributing financially and morally, with assistance and awards. In 2008 it established the prize "Nicos Schiniou" for ethos and outstanding performance, (€500), in tribute to the 18-year old Nikos Schiniou from Akanthou who was killed. The constant and substantial contribution of the people of Akanthou to the arts and letters was instrumental in the decision of the municipality to honour every year the Feast of the Letters, on January 30. In this context, various events are held in tribute to educationalists from Akanthou but also to distinguished personalities of culture in general. As part of its activities, the municipality publishes books on Akanthou, on literature, the arts, such as the "Complete Works" of Kyriacos Akathiotis in 2008, and the newspaper "Akathkiotissa"(also 2008). Each year, during the first half of August, the municipality organises a memorial service in honour of citizens of Akanthou who fell or are missing; the services are attended by these persons' families. Following the opening of the checkpoints, almost every year a delegation of the municipality, the only municipality in the area of Karpasia, headed by the mayor himself, visits the gymnasium (secondary school) in occupied Rizokarpaso and spends a few hours with the children of the enclaved, whom the municipality supports both morally and financially. The municipality has established as a regular event every January the cutting of the New Year's cake. Similarly, it is trying to establish as a regular event every



A delegation of the Municipality of Akanthou with students of the Rizokarpaso High School, 2008. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

two years the “Oil Festival,” which began in 2010, as a reminder that before 1974 Akanthou was the largest oil-producing village (“Ladochori”) in Cyprus.

C. Activities of the displaced municipality of Akanthou overseas

The municipality of Akanthou is the link between the citizens of Akanthou wherever they are. In collaboration with the Refugee Association “Akanthou” and the “Anglo-Akanthou Aid Society,” founded in London in 1953, it organises events and conferences. The municipality is exerting particular efforts to protect Akanthou's cultural heritage. In collaboration with the United Nations, it raises awareness both in Cyprus and abroad, in order to achieve conservation and protection of the occupied monuments of Akanthou, and to locate stolen holy relics..

As part of the Greek Letters Feast, which as mentioned above takes place every year on January 30, the municipality honoured two prominent figures of literature and the arts: Eleni Glikaji-Ahrweiler and Giorgos Dalaras, proclaiming them honorary citizens of Akanthou. For the overall contribution of the people of Akanthou to culture, particularly under the current difficult conditions of displacement, the Academy of Athens honoured Akanthou in 2007 for holding six folklore and

scientific conferences. The minutes of the conferences include major papers on historical, archaeological, social and folk tradition topics. They are organised biannually, in collaboration with the Faculty of Letters of the University of Cyprus with the support of the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture and with the participation of the municipality of Akanthou and the Refugee Association “Akanthou”.

The municipality of Akanthou twinned with the Municipality of Naxos in 1995, with the objective of raising awareness and further developing fraternal relations. For the purpose of raising awareness two photo exhibitions were organised, displaying the looting of the Greek and Christian cultural heritage of Akanthou by the Turks. One was held in 2009 in Thessaloniki and one in London in 2011. In London, following an invitation by the House of Commons, a delegation of the municipality had the opportunity to brief MPs on the Cyprus problem, colonisation, the changes in the demographics of the occupied areas of Cyprus, and the destruction of Greek-Christian monuments. In addition, the views of the displaced people of Akanthou are promoted through visits of representatives of the municipality, along with other members of the Union of Displaced Municipalities, to the USA and to the annual conferences of PSEKA (International Coordinating Committee Justice for Cyprus) where Senators and other US officials are present.

After strong demarches on an international level and intensive consultations with the US Embassy in Nicosia, through



A delegation of the municipality at the exhibition “The plunder of the cultural heritage of Akanthou by the Turks” in Thessaloniki.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



The mayor of Akanthou Savvas Savvides with the President of the Hellenic Republic Karolos Papoulias.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



A delegation of the municipality at the Prime Minister's House in London. Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive



Meeting of the Committee of the Occupied Municipalities with the mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg.

Photo: Akanthou Municipality Archive

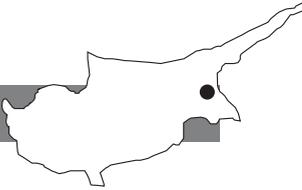
the SAVE (Supporting Activities that Value the Environment) project, the current Mayor of Akanthou managed to begin in spring of 2007 and complete in 2009 the restoration work of the church of Pergamiotissa and conservation of its murals. This church was declared Ancient Monument Schedule B, because of its remarkable architecture, its archaeological value as a Byzantine church and its rare murals. The next target of the municipality is to open the church for a mass in the presence of the citizens of Akanthou. Constant efforts through the UN have not been successful so far, because of the negative stance of the Turkish conquerors.

Following concerted efforts by Mayor Savvas Savvides, the US Embassy in Nicosia, the friends of Akanthou and particularly the Bishop of Morfou Neophytos, the icon of the patron saint Chrysosoteris was located along with some other icons of the church in the cells of the Bishopric of Morfou. After strenuous efforts, a Cypriot conservationist was allowed to preserve the icon of Chrysosoteris. Subsequently, it was placed in the church of Agios Mamas in Morfou for the benefit of pilgrims. It remains there to this day. The municipality and the Church Council are doing their utmost to bring it to the government-controlled areas.

The people of Akanthou draw strength from the icon of their patron saint Chrysosoteris in their struggle for freedom and justice. According to the author and chairperson of the Refugee Association "AKANTHOU" Eleni Hadjimichael, refugees and displaced people of Akanthou "... await for the Lord to transform the people's cruelty and turn the impossible into the possible. And just as the icon arrived in the village in a miraculous way, in the same miraculous way they hope they will be able to ...return to their homeland". She captures the deepest feelings of the people of Akanthou by noting: "Your uphill slope never scared me, my dearest Akanthou, because it led me to His Grace. It was the downhill which made me a refugee that scared me my dearest Akanthou." The people of Akanthou carry hope within their soul, and are in the service of freedom the way their own poet Kyriacos N. Akathiotis has taught them: "What if dragons howl around my life now / and chaos, cliffs and pits gape before me / what if they persist that I become their own corpse / hope still shines, a dim light, still in my soul" (Hope). "... Oh Freedom! You alone a divine image, / ever-lit torch in every struggle (...)Gloom has made us hammerers/ uncompromising servants of your Faith" (Freedom).



Municipality of Famagusta



Famagusta is situated in the southeastern part of Mesaoria. Throughout the centuries Famagusta has always been one of the most developed towns of Cyprus. Its long history goes back to the ancient Mycenaean Engomi (Now Komi or Eggis Komi) and on to Salamina, Arsinoe, Constantia, Farmakousta. Around 1600 years ago it took the name 'Ammochostos' (which in Greek means 'hid in the sand') indicating in this way its sandy location. The Greek names it had from ancient times until present prove its Greek origin. Most of the Famagusta area has been inhabited since prehistoric time. In its north-eastern part there existed a small settlement since 1700 B.C. Because the sea reached the land forming a bay, the particular settlement was a sea-side one. It is said that because of pirates raids the settlement was abandoned in the beginning of the 16th century B.C., to be revived and developed into an important town

in the middle of the same century. It was the town of Engomi or, according to other historians, Alasia (which means salted water or seashore) that became the centre for the copper production process. This prehistoric town was widely developed during the 14th century B.C. when the Mycenaean - Achaeans settled there. Archaeological findings show that the worship of the god Apollo of Keratiaton, an unquestionably Greek god, took place during the 13th and 12th centuries. The progress of the town reached its peak during the second half of the 13th century B.C. Nevertheless, devastating earthquakes, which affected the whole of Cyprus, destroyed Engomi. Excavation findings show that before the earthquake Engomi had been burnt to the ground by a great fire and was rebuilt. After the earthquakes only a small settlement was revived that was completely abandoned around 1075 B.C.



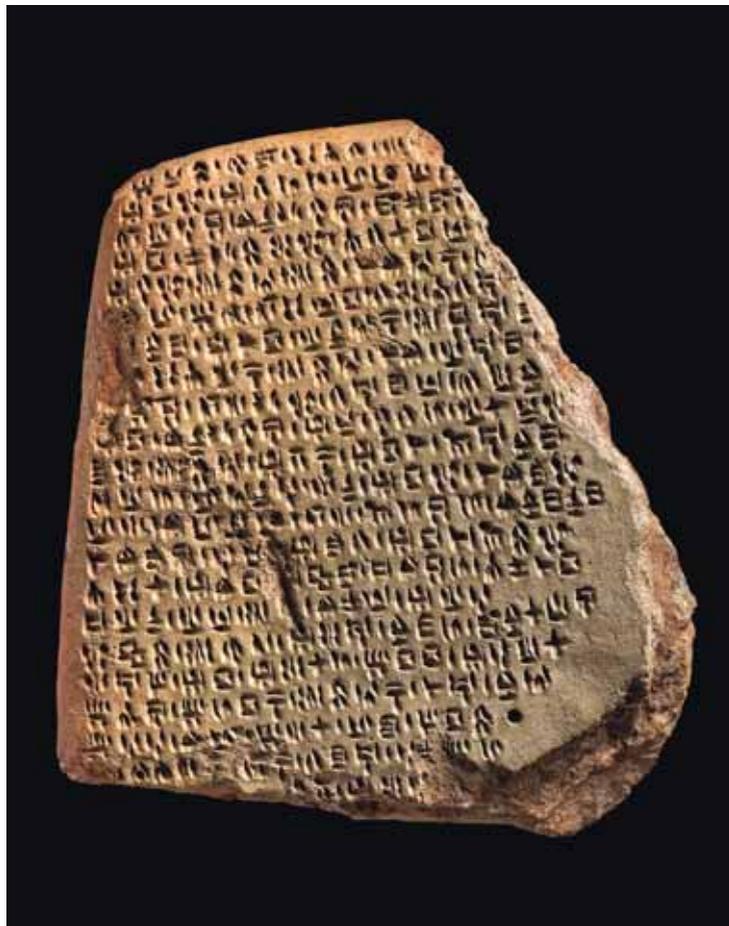
Enkomi. The sanctuary of the "Horned God" (1650-1050 B.C.).

I. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A. Origins of Famagusta

The city of Salamina was founded near the destroyed Engomi by the exceptional archer of the Trojan War, Tefkros, the son of Telamonas and Isioni and half-brother of the hero Ajax, in memory of his birthplace, the small Greek island in the Saronic Sea. According to the tragic poet Euripides (Eleni 148-150) the town was founded by the order of the god Apollo: "... On the sea-caressed island of Cyprus / where I was destined to inhabit by Apollo, and name it / Salamina to honour my country..." .

The Greek kings of the historic Salamina were proud of their divine descent from Tefkros, who according to Isocrates was the grandson of Aiakas who is Zeus's son. Therefore they proudly believed that they were descendants of Tefkros and by extension of Aiakas and Zeus.



Part of inscribed clay plate from Enkomi.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Silver coin of King Evagoras I. 411-374/3 B.C.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

The Greek origin of Salamina is testified by ancient writings, archaeological findings, language, arts, religion as well as by the Greek names of its kings such as Tefkros (12th century B.C.), Evelthon (560-540 B.C.), Onisillos (499-498 B.C.), Evagoras I (411-374 B.C.), Phnytagoras (351-332 B.C.), Nikocreon (332-310 B.C.), to name but a few.

In 538 B.C., during the Persian occupation, Evelthon introduced the first Cypriot coins. Onisillos was a historical figure admired by the Cypriots for his heroism. He dethroned his brother Gorgos who was pro-Persian, rebelled against the Persians and was killed while fighting in the battle that took place in the Salamina area. The Phoenician Avdimon was the only non-Greek king of Salamina who, according to Isocrates, defiled the city. King Evagoras I, who was highly respected and acknowledged as a democratic political figure both in Cyprus and Greece, succeeded in restoring Salamina. He restored the Greek identity of Salamina and assisted in safeguarding the Greek identity of Cyprus by thwarting the imperialistic plans of the Phoenicians. Furthermore, he succeeded in uniting all the Cypriot kingdoms in order to confront the constant threats of the Persians. Moreover, he managed to become the sovereign ruler of Cyprus with the assistance of the Athenian fleet and the Egyptian Pharaohs. He spread the Athenian spirit and Greek language and promoted the development of the Greek arts. At the same time, he even developed a multi-faceted foreign policy of alliances and military operations overseas. He formed an alliance with the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War and after their defeat

in the battle of Aigos Rivers, he collaborated with the Athenian Captain Kononas to free Athens from Spartan control. Both Kononas and Evagoras were honoured with statues by the city of Athens. Isocrates considers Evagoras to “be capable of ruling not only Salamina but also all of Asia” due to his multi-lateral personality and accomplishments. Phytagoras dethroned Evagoras II, who was pro-Persian and his son and heir Nicokreontas, who is the last king of Salamina, offered naval support to Alexander the Great in order to lay siege to Tyre. Cyprus voluntarily joined the empire of Alexander the Great. Military troops followed him to the depths of Asia. Nicokreontas continued Evagoras I’s task and developed relations with the rest of the Greek areas. Following his death, the people of Salamina built a tomb in his honour.

B. Ptolemaic Period (294-58 B.C.)

Later on, the Ptolemies, kings of Cyprus and Egypt, came to control Cyprus. They abolished all ten Cyprus kingdoms and established a unified administration. They founded cities in various parts following Alexander the Great’s example.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, founded three cities in Cyprus naming them after his beautiful and intelligent sister and wife Arsinoe (a Homeric name): one located in Mari, known today as Polis Chrysochous and another near the village of Yeroskipou, both in the Pafos District, and third in the area where the city of Ammochostos developed. Strabo defines precisely the location of this third city of Arsinoe. It was situated between Salamina and the port of Lefkollas, possibly today’s Protaras and the Pidalio Cape, today’s Cavo Greco. It was founded in 274 B.C. as a port-city which complemented or replaced that of Salamina in the same way as the latter had earlier replaced that of prehistoric Engomi. Arsinoe’s traces are below the modern city. The city existed until the first half of the 4th century B.C. that is for more than six centuries. The messengers of Christianity - Barnabas, the founder of the Cypriot church and Mark the Evangelist during their second apostolic tour (49 or 50 A.D.) - embarked from Kiti en route to Salamina and disembarked at the port of Arsinoe. The city was devastated by



Silver cup from Enkomi (14th century B.C.).

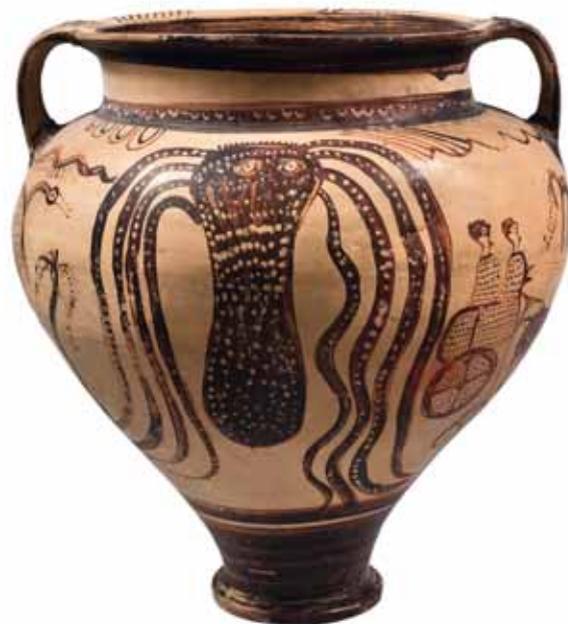
Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Golden earrings from Enkomi (14-13th centuries B.C.).

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

Golden pendant in the shape of a pomegranate from Enkomi (14-13th centuries B.C.). Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



**Mycenaean amphoroid krater from Enkomi
(about 1410-1390 B.C.).**

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



**Bronze cauldron standing on an iron tripod from Salamis
(late 8th century B.C.).** Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

earthquakes registering 7 - 8 on the Richter scale in 332 A.D. and by earthquakes of 8-10 on the Richter scale- in 342 A.D., which damaged neighbouring Salamina. All this information is derived from a naval manual called 'Stadianos' by an unknown Greek geographer which was written in the 4th century A.D., the first one which mentions the city of Ammochostos: "... From Pidalion to the small islands 80 stadiums (=14,720 metres). There lies a deserted city called AmmochostosIt has a port protected by the wind even though there are reefs at its entrance ...," according to Pliny, "the islands of Salamina".

C. Roman Period (58 B.C. - 364 AD)

In 58 B.C. the Romans, taking advantage of the conflicts between the Ptolemies, took over Cyprus and divided it into four districts, one of which was Salamina. The development and prosperity of the city as well as of the whole island is historically documented. Timber, copper, agricultural products, wine and the fabric trade flourished. Linen weavers, who undertook the donation of a statue of the Emperor Hadrian to Salamina Gymnasium, were cited on an inscription. Imbued with the Greek civilisation, the Romans used the existing establishments and they expanded them or constructed new ones with the same characteristics. Public buildings (the gymnasium, theatre, baths etc) and a number of Salamina sanctuaries were decorated with wall mosaics and murals, and marble statues of gods or Roman Emperors such as the torso of Vespasian or Titus at the Theatre. A considerable number of archaeological findings were attributed to this period. Other important public buildings such as the gymnasium, the stadium, the Nymphaeum, the baths, the conservatory, gradatorial amphitheatres, the city Theatre and the aqueduct are testimony to the significance and prosperity of Salamina. The theatre was first constructed during the Hellenistic period and restored by the Romans, while the rock-carved aqueduct was replaced by a new, more extensive and solid one. The necropolis of Salamina was traced west of the city.

It is worth mentioning that following the devastating earthquakes in 78-79 in Palaipafos and Pafos, which led to their decline, Salamina became the capital of Cyprus. The destruc-



View from the excavations at Salamis Gymnasium.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Marble head of Aphodite, 5th century B.C. from Salamis Gymnasium, which was reused during the Early Christian period. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Roman marble replica of Apollo from Salamis Gymnasium. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

tive earthquakes of 332 and 342 A.D., which destroyed the ancient city and the flood that buried its largest part under the sea, were preceded by another significant destruction: the Jews of Salamina who participated in the general Jewish revolt in 116 A.D. and which spread throughout Cyprus, nearly destroyed the city for reasons unknown. The Romans after suppressing the revolt banned all Jews from the island. Emperor Hadrian supported the city financially in order to revitalize it, and its inhabitants honoured him for his patronage with resolutions and statues. In the Byzantine period, after the destructive earthquakes, the Emperor Constantine (337-361), one of the heirs of Constantine the Great, supported the reconstruction of Salamina in the same location but smaller, renaming it Constantia. Having gradually gained its former glory, it was declared the Metropolis – the capital of the island - thus its bishops were considered to be the Archbishops of Cyprus. The existing ruins of the two basili-



Panoramic view of the Salamis Theatre.

Photo: Antiquities Department Archive



Columns and statues in the eastern stoa of the Salamis Gymnasium. Photo: Voula Kokkinou

cas, Agios Epifanios and Kampanopetra, are testimony of its prosperity. Even though Salamina was revived as Constantia after the destructive earthquakes, few of the neighbouring Arsinoe residents returned, living in temporary structures among the debris. Golden sands gradually covered the old city and the people in the area referred to it as the ruins of the sand-buried city. They used this term to name their small settlement. This name was subsequently used for the city of Ammochostos (=sand-buried).

D. Byzantine Period (364-1191)

Cyprus, as a Byzantine district, was an area under constant attack by the Arabs, who were carriers of a new religion, Islam. Between the 7th and 10th centuries the island suffered a series of destructive Arab raids. Constantia/Salamina, the capital of Cyprus, was raided twice, in 649 and 653. It survived the first raid but not the second. The Arabs looted it for 40 days resulting in its total destruction and desertion by its

residents. It was never rebuilt again. The new capital became Lefkousia, which was later renamed Lefkosia (Nicosia). With the support of Byzantium, Cyprus began to revive and progress. Fortresses were constructed on the east coast in order to shield it against invaders. The fortresses of Kantara, Voufaveno, and Agios Ilarionas on the Pentadaktylos mountains, the castle of Kyrenia and the small castle in Ammochostos, which later developed into the medieval castle, were built. After the destruction of Constantia, the Bishopric of Constantia was transferred to Ammochostos and its port began to operate again. In the mid-10th century, the insignificant settlement of Ammochostos began to develop, thus succeeding the ruined Constantia/Salamina. Merchants in the West were granted commercial privileges by Byzantium, thus a considerable number of them settled there and both the city and its port became a significant trade centre.

E. Frankish Rule (1192-1489)

In this period Famagusta became the financial centre of the Lusignan dynasty, the most significant transit centre for trade between Europe and the East and the most important port in the Mediterranean. New fortresses were constructed and the Byzantine ones were maintained and expanded. Magnificent buildings were built such as the royal palace and churches all over the city like St Peter and Paul, for the Greeks, St George for the Latins and the cathedral of Agios Nicholas, where the Lusignan kings of Cyprus were crowned as kings of Jerusalem and Armenia. Famagusta became the most prominent city of Cyprus. It was one of the wealthiest and thriving cities of the world at that time, and came to be known as Famagusta. This new name was given by visitors of the ancient ruins of Salamina, whose fame was attributed to the presumed king of Konsta and father of Agia Ekaterini (Fama Costi = Fame of Konsta = Famagusta).

In this way, the medieval Famagusta was reconnected with Salamina/Constantia, which used to be named Ammochostos and later Old Ammochostos. Famagusta-

Ammochostos thrived up until it was conquered by the Genoans (1374-1464) who looted and destroyed it. The city remained under Genoan occupation for 90 years.

F. Venetian Rule (1489-1571)

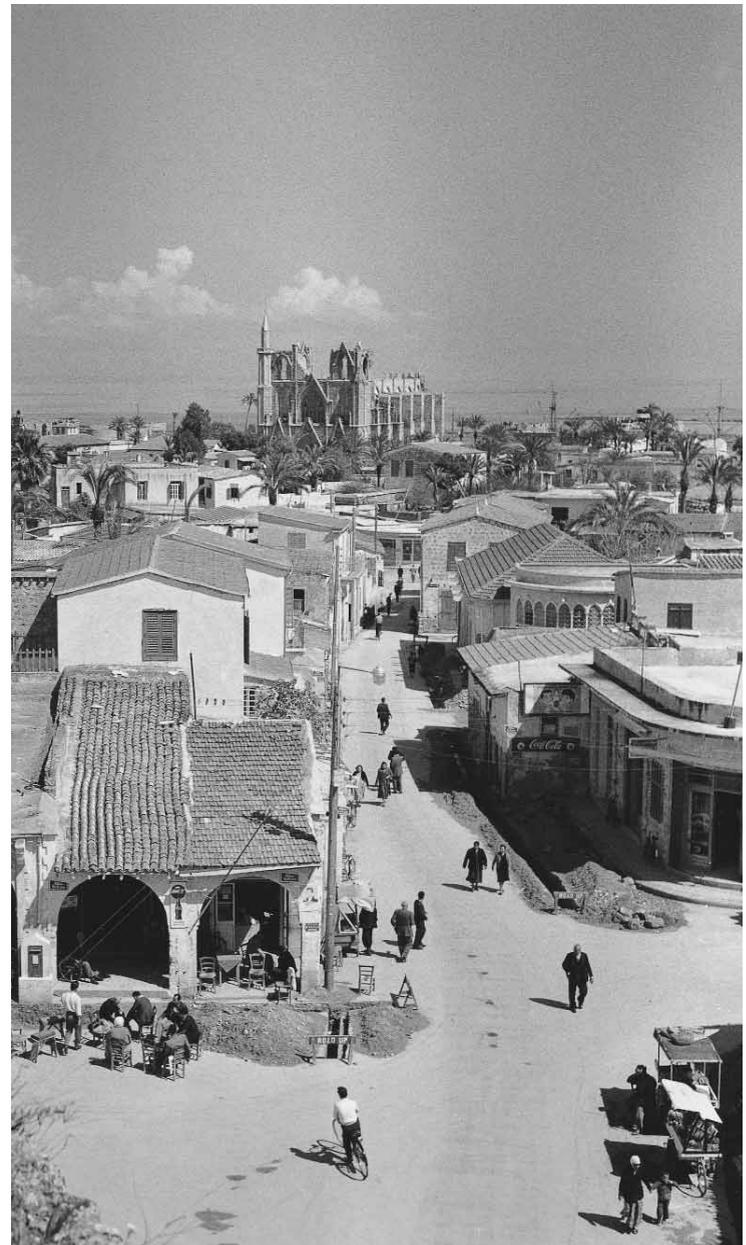
When the Venetians took control of Cyprus, Famagusta was a devastated city due to the long conflicts between the Lusignans and the Genoans. Due to constant Turkish threats, the Venetians brought in engineers from Venice in order to reconstruct the island's walls. The new walls of Famagusta were designed by the young engineer Giovanni Girolamo Sanmichele, who became ill during the project and died there. The application of the most up to date castle construction design was later applied in the rest of Europe. It is remarkable to note that despite the military, financial, cultural and religious superiority and the long period of foreign rule, the poverty-stricken people of Famagusta, as well as the rest of the Greek Cypriots, managed to culturally assimilate the foreigners, many of whom became Hellenised. The names of places in Famagusta and the surrounding area as well the ones all over Cyprus remained Greek while in many cases they were used as the names of foreign noblemen.



View of Famagusta walls. Photo: Lakis Demetriades

G. Ottoman Occupation (1572-1878)

During the Turkish siege of Famagusta by the Ottomans, the Venetians ordered the destruction of the renowned Gardens of Famagusta (orchards and other fruits), which extended from the city to Agios Memnonas, so as not to be plundered by the besiegers. The Greek, Italian and Greek-Cypriot defenders of the city under the leadership of the capable Venetian commanders Astore Baglione and Marcantonis Vragadinos, heroically resisted the constant attacks and gunfire of the Ottomans for eleven months. On August 5, 1571 Famagusta surrendered due to ammunition deficiency and exhaustion of its defenders while there were 80,000 dead Ottomans outside the walls. The Ottomans not abiding to the honourable terms of surrender tortured or slaughtered the inhabitants and savagely looted the city. The legendary leader Marcantonio Bragadin was tortured, shamed and flayed alive. In 1573 the “infidels,” as the Greek residents were called, were relocated and settled into “varous” (Turkish term meaning suburbs), away from the walls and they were not permitted to enter the walled city. The Greeks of Famagusta painstakingly founded the new settlement - which they called 'Varosin' or 'Varosia' - in the area of the Gardens. Years later, it developed as the thriving city of New Famagusta. New churches like Agios Nicholas and Agia Zoni, borrowing the names of the ruined temples of the old city, were constructed. However, during Turkish rule, Famagusta as well as the whole island declined. Entry to the walled city, which was inhabited by the army, was forbidden to Greeks and Europeans. Thus there was absolutely no financial or any other progress. The Turks had no intention of reconstructing the city after the devastating earthquakes. Towards the end of Turkish dominion, restrictions on entering the old city were lifted so some Greeks began to re-inhabit it. In 1821 however they were forced to abandon it once more due to widespread massacres and looting by the Turks across the island. Because of the diligence and creativity of the Greeks in the newly founded city outside the walls, the city thrived. Despite heavy taxation, the forced or voluntary –out to fear- individual or group Islamisation, the looting, and the overall oppression, the Greek inhabitants of Famagusta revealed once more their liberal, progressive, industrious and Greek spirit. In 1860 they established the



Famagusta 1950-1960. Photo: Reno Wideson

“School of Varosion” which was restored in 1878. The persecuted Greeks developed various agricultural practices, expanding the new city. Thus, when the British succeeded the Ottomans, the Greeks predominated over the Turks even though the latter did not pay taxes.

II. THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT (1878 – 1974)

Once the British took control of Varosia - population 2,000 – the city advanced in all areas. At the beginning of the 20th century the restoration, expansion and upgrading of its port

as well as the rail connection between the city with the capital, Nicosia, benefited it commercially. While the Turks opted to remain in the old city, without any prospect for development, the outside--the-walls area advanced rapidly and was transformed into a modern and prosperous city. It experienced a unique upward trend in all sectors.

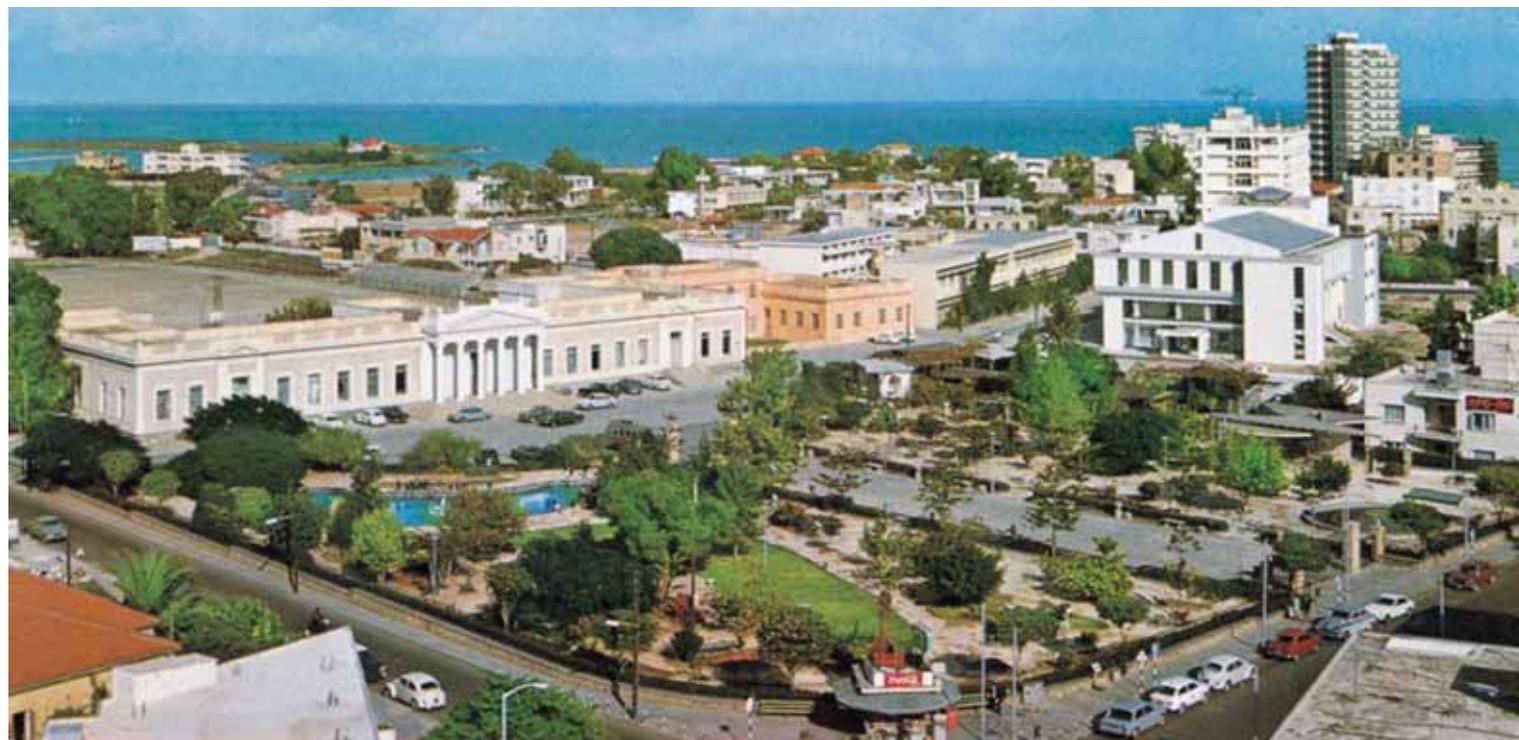
The independence of Cyprus in 1960 turned Famagusta into the commercial and tourist jewel-in-the-crown of the Republic of Cyprus. It was a model city of cultural rebirth and financial growth. The city limits, as recorded by the land surveyor Christodoulos, Claire Angelidou's father, extended to the west up until the third mile of the Famagusta – Larnaca road, to the north-west up to Acheritou's borders, continued onto the borders of Engomi village, reaching "Klapsides" along the sea to the east until "Monastiraki," along the borders of Derynia village, and ended at the third mile on the Famagusta – Larnaca road. Between 1944 until 1974, during the tenures of mayors G. Emfietzi, Adam Adamanta and Andreas Pougiouros, great progress was achieved. The city was built according to town-planning design. All the roads were asphalted-, beauti-

ful buildings were constructed, Kennedy Avenue was constructed along the "Golden Coast," squares were built, parks and access to the beaches, which were sparkling clean. Famagusta became synonymous with development and progress.

A. Cultural Development

Under British rule the city began to develop intellectually. In 1892 there were three boys' schools, two girls' schools, a primary school in Agios Memnonas and the Greek School. In 1899 the Education Board founded more schools. In 1903 the Sports Club "Evagoras" was founded and in 1907 the "Evagoras Folk Reading Hall" was established. In 1911 the association of "Anorthosis", a cultural centre providing a variety of sports and cultural activities, was founded. In 1958, it was blown up by the British, exactly 10 years after the founding of the "Nea Salamis" association (1948).

Five EOKA freedom fighters (1955-1959), Gregoris Afxentiou, Kyriacos Matsis, Fotis Pittas, Elias Papakyriacou and Petrakis Yiallourous, graduated from the Greek Gymnasium of Fama-



View of the cultural centre of Famagusta featuring the Greek Gymnasium, the library, the theater and the public garden.

Photo: Claire Angelidou "Dialogues with my sister Ammochostos, Parallel Lives" 2001

gusta. In 1930 Maria P. Ioannou founded the Greek Lyceum of Famagusta, which contributed greatly to the culture and the anti-colonial struggle for freedom. According to Claire Angelidou "...it was the centre of intellectuality of the city". Distinguished scholars graduated from it. The Public Library and the Art Gallery, founded in 1953 and 1959 respectively, were the places where intellectual and cultural development flourished. The Art Gallery housed works of distinguished artists. In 1960, after the independence of Cyprus, Kyriacos Hadji-ioannou founded the Scientific and Literary Association of Famagusta, which organised lectures, cultural events and published a science calendar. In 1905 the Ladies' Charity Association was founded, organising festivals, especially post-independence; the most famous ones being the Flower Show and the Orange Festival every March. The parades of flower or orange- decorated floats were a spectacular and entertaining show, which attracted a great number of people making Famagusta a vibrant city. Greek tragedies were performed at the Famagusta Educational

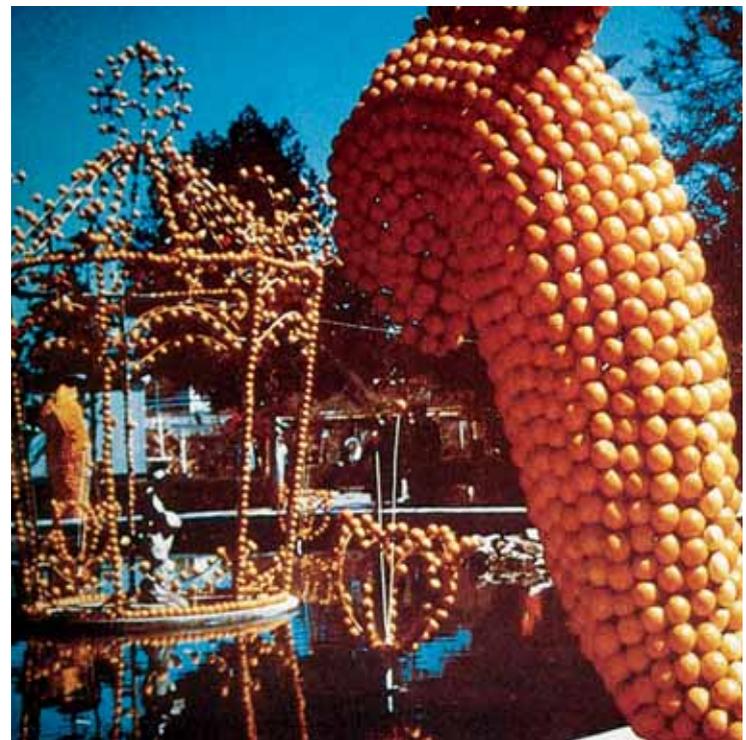
Institute and the ancient theatre of Salamina, which attracted numerous tourists as well.

Locals and tourists alike visited the remarkable District Museum, which was in the city and housed marble statues from the Gymnasium and Salamina Theatre, Mycenaean pottery and jewelry from Engomi and many more findings representative of the rich archaeological heritage of the whole district. There were also significant private archaeological collections in the city. Mr. H. Hadji-prodromou boasted the richest collection of the island, which consisted of local masterpieces of art, some of which were unique, from the Copper Age up until the Middle Ages. The pottery of Famagusta was also renowned. It was mostly crafted in Ermou Str., where anthropomorphous pots with wooden mould faces primitively ornamented, were made. These pots were reminiscent of ancient Greek pottery.

Famagusta was also renowned for its publications. Several literary magazines circulated in the city, for example, "Pyx Lax," "Kopanos," "Salamis," "Estiades," "Nea Epochi,"



The fine marble manor of the Greek females of Ammochostos Lyceum. Photo: Claire Angelidou "Dialogues with my sister Ammochostos, Parallel Lives" 2001



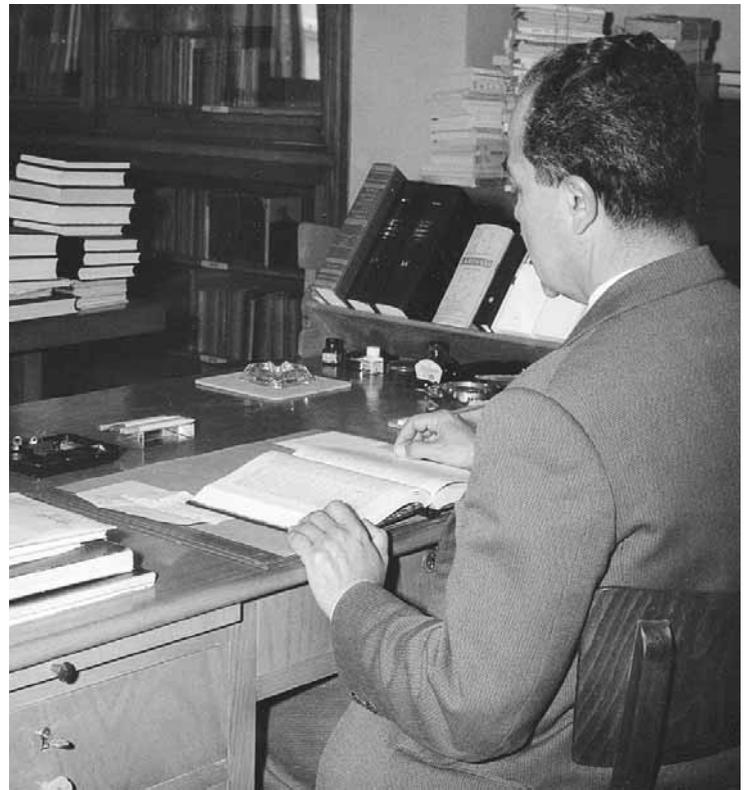
Orange-decorated floats during the Orange Festival at the municipal gardens. Photo: Claire Angelidou "Dialogues with my sister Ammochostos, Parallel Lives" 2001

“Elefthero Vima,” “Proodos,” “Dimiourgia” and “Acropolis,” which informed, educated and entertained readers. The schools in Famagusta were involved in national and cultural activities. There were nursery, primary, public and private secondary schools and the “Agios Barnabas School” for children with special needs. There were also private secondary education schools, such as the “Centre for Advanced Studies,” “CTL Academy,” “New Horizons,” “Xenia - Hotel Management School,” “Famagusta Grammar,” and the girls’ school “St Francis.” The schools became intellectual hubs by organising numerous events with their choirs, orchestras, theatrical performances etc. Mr. Demetris Marangos’s library, which was an intellectual treasure, offered unique books. Other intellectuals such as Giorgos Filippou Pierides, Paul Georgiou, Giorgos Skotinos, Maria Ioannou, Demetris Lipertis, Kyriacos Hadjiioannou, Eleni Matsi, Anthimos and Naso Panaretou, Andreas Gavrielides, Panagiotis Sergis, Michalis Koumas, Eleni Hadjipetrou, Christakis Hadjiprodromou, Evangelos Louizos, Evgenia Kapsourachi, Chrysanthis Pierides, Christakis Michaelides, Theodosios Nicolaou and many others offered their works and knowledge to their city, boosting its reputation as the intellectual centre of Cyprus. Greek customs, traditions and arts were promoted by the scholars, schools and cultural events, constantly reminding them of their origins.

At the same time, economic growth transformed the city into a vibrant centre of the district, which made it a breeding ground for cultural development. Art, poetry, theatre along with ever increasing cultural events, turned it into a lively city with intellectual and creative inhabitants. The population increased rapidly. From 5,000 inhabitants in 1910, it rose to 17,500 in 1946, to 35,000 in 1960 and 39,000 in 1973. The highest increase was recorded in 1930 due to the construction of the port. As a result, Famagusta developed into the third largest city in Cyprus boosting the state budget and its residents’ prosperity.

B. Economic Development

In 1913, the city boundaries enveloped the city, the suburbs, Agios Memnonas, Upper and Lower Varosia and Agios Loukas. After Cyprus’ independence in 1960, the city began



George Philippou Pierides at the Famagusta Municipal Library.

Photo: Marina Philippou Pierides Hatzikakou Archive

to develop and grow rapidly. The city boundaries expanded and incorporated the parishes of Agios Nicholas, Agia Zoni, Stavros, Agia Triada, Agios Georgios of Salamina, Agios Ioannis Theologos, Agios Memnonas, Apostolos Loukas, Chrysospilotissa, the areas Laxi, Karaolos and Kato Derynia. Public buildings, charming streets, beautiful houses and hotels were built. The infrastructure and the progressive and diligent residents raised the standard of living. Up until 1974 the city advanced rapidly. Agriculture, industry, commerce and mostly tourism were the main sources of income.

Famagusta was known for its citrus orchards, which extended throughout the city and up to the coast. The mild seaside climate favoured these cultivations. Increased production created distribution problems at first because they only exported to neighbouring countries. However, in 1934 due to the direct sea-link between Cyprus and Europe, they were able to export to England thus promoting exports to a high degree. Citrus became one of the main export products of Cyprus. At the beginning of 1960, however, production levels dropped due to a water shortage caused by the



View of Famagusta beach before the Turkish invasion.



View of Famagusta beach before the Turkish invasion.

Photo: Claire Angelidou "Dialogues with my sister Ammochostos, Parallel Lives" 2001

over-pumping and salinity of underground water springs. In the meantime Famagusta branched out into other sectors and turned to new financial activities.

Agricultural and farm products were produced in the highly populated area providing the city with financial and commercial services. Mesaoria, the major wheat producing area in Cyprus and the situation after 1960 favoured the development of animal breeding, vegetable production and potato farming in Kokkinochoria contributing to its further development. In 1972, compared to the other cities on the island, Famagusta housed 19.5% of commercial establishments, which employed 21.3% of the total workforce. The industry also expanded and employed 2,932 people, a number which represented 9.2% of the total industrial workforce across the island, with 8.5% of its total production. In that particular year 16,045 jobs were recorded: 4,427 in the services sector, 3,097 in the construction industry and 1,513 people in the transport business.

Up until 1974 the Famagusta port was the major port of the island both in terms of its capacity and the traffic of goods



Aerial view of Famagusta before the Turkish invasion. Photo: Antiquities Department Archive

and people. The contemporary port, which was constructed in 1932 and expanded in 1965, doubling its capacity, could host 16-18 ships simultaneously. This major infrastructure project brought about great development of the city. Famagusta became a centre for imports and exports, boosting its financial influence on Cyprus. In 1973 exports amounted to 491,510 tons. In the same year 48.6% of imports including fuel took place in Famagusta port. Exports including minerals represented 42.7% of the total. Due to the large number of maritime, clearing and forwarding offices for the port operation, employment opportunities arose.

Tourism was the sector which experienced the greatest progress. Famagusta was the most significant tourist area of the island before the war. New restaurants, shops, banks, high-rise buildings and luxurious hotels mushroomed. There were 33 hotel units with a 4,859-bed capacity in 1973, which represented 31.5% of all the hotels and 45% of

the total capacity all over Cyprus. Bookings in 1972 constituted 49.5%, reaching 53.5% in 1973. In 1974 there were 39 star-hotels of a 6,164 bed-capacity, seven hotels without a star of a 148 bed-capacity, motels of a 90 bed-capacity and 33 apartment units of a 2,772 bed-capacity. The hotels King George, Constantia, Aspelia, Grecian, Florida, Marianna, Sandy Beach, Salamina, and Famagusta Palace were some of the most significant in the city, which turned into the premier tourist destination in the Eastern Mediterranean. The development of the tourist industry supported the construction industry and created employment opportunities. A great number of people lived and worked in Famagusta. Tefkros's city became the industrial and tourism gem of the Republic of Cyprus; a model city of intellectual rebirth and financial development. It developed and turned into a major tourist and commercial centre in less than a hundred years. It became a contemporary and prosperous city of 40,000 inhabitants. Cit-

rus farming, the wealth of the greater area, the port, tourism and industry formed a solid background for its financial progress.

After the Turkish occupation on August 16, 1974, this cultural and economic boom was abruptly and violently halted. The Turkish army after fencing the city condemned it to a slow death. Its inhabitants were forced to abandon their homes and property which they had toiled for. The houses, hotels, shops and churches were plundered and the loot was transported to Turkey. Part of the city fell silent, lifeless, and as time goes by, its banished inhabitants suffer more and more. In 1977 Jean-Olof Bengtson, a Swedish reporter who visited the port with Swedish UNFICYP troops, described the deserted city: "the paved road is cracked and bushes sprout on the pavements... laundry hangs on the lines and the electric bulbs are on. Varosi is a ghost town." (Kvallsposten newspaper, September 24, 1977).

III. THE MUNICIPALITY OF FAMAGUSTA AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Following the Turkish invasion of 20 July, 1974 and the taking of Kyrenia, looting, there began killings of civilians in cold



Refugees from Famagusta after the Turkish invasion.

Photo: Claire Angelidou "Dialogues with my sister Ammochostos, Parallel Lives" 2001.

blood, rape, torture, and expulsion of Christians from their homes, villages and towns. Masses of displaced Greeks began flooding in from the occupied areas. The situation was reminiscent of Attila the Hun, the codename given by the Turks to the operation, and brought back the memory of all the hardships under the Ottoman occupation, the genocide of the Greeks and Armenians in Asia Minor in 1915, the Turkish crimes in 1922, the sacking of Smyrna, the looting and persecution of the Greeks of Constantinople in 1955 and much more. The first messages that were conveyed by the uprooted and the first accounts of Turkish crimes led the inhabitants of Famagusta to abandon their homes before even the arrival of the Turkish troops so that they would not experience what their compatriots and ancestors had gone through, in the hopes of returning some day.

The 50,000 inhabitants of Famagusta have been displaced and are refugees since then, living either in the free parts of Cyprus or in other parts of the world. In the premeditated crime of Turkey against Cyprus, Famagusta was not included. But although the capture of Famagusta came as a surprise to the Turks themselves, Turkey, held onto Famagusta in order to later negotiate its return in exchange for the legalisation of its crimes or the unlawful acceptance of its plans, such as the creation of two states in Cyprus. The return of Famagusta thus became part of negotiations.

A. Negotiations for the return of Famagusta

The return of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants became the object of negotiations. In 1978, the American-British-Canadian Plan called for the resettlement of the residents of the city, under the auspices of the UN with the simultaneous launch of negotiations for a comprehensive Cyprus settlement. The high level agreements, between Kyprianou and Denktash, on May 19 gave priority to the return of Famagusta regardless of the outcome. The Turkish side however not only breached the agreement but threatened to settle the city.

The Republic of Cyprus appealed to the UN Security Council and denounced the Turkish provocations. In its Resolution S/550 (11 May 1984) paragraph 5, the Security

Council deemed unacceptable the threat of colonisation of the city by people who were not its residents and sought to put the area under the command of the United Nations. The resettlement of its legal residents was also called for by Resolution S/789 (1992). Turkey's obligation to return the town to its lawful inhabitants was stressed by a resolution of the European Parliament on 10 February 2010 (B7-0068) and by Petition 733(2004) of the Committee on Petitions.

Turkey insists on not respecting the decisions and resolutions of the UN and EU, which denounce the fencing-off of the city by Turkish troops and the continuous ban on the return of its legal residents to their homes and properties. Despite refusing to comply, and instead of suffering the penalties provided for under international sanctions, Turkey was accepted as a member of the UN Security Council, it chaired the Council of Europe and was allowed to apply for accession to the European Union without previously showing any respect for international law or the EU *acquis*. While Turkey is rewarded for its intransigence, the Republic of Cyprus is obliged to make additional unacceptable concessions.

With the negotiations and using the return of Famagusta as bait, the Turkish side wastes time and takes advantage of the Greek concessions which it takes for granted, while at the same time putting on a different mask for the benefit of the outside world. Its ultimate goal is to clear itself from the accusations, to consolidate the *fait accompli* and become a mem-



Famagusta after the Turkish bombing (1974).

Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

ber of the European Union. Every time that Ankara and the occupation regime do not succeed in legitimizing the international crimes in Cyprus, Turkey threatens to colonise the city of Famagusta.

After so many years of occupation Famagusta, like all the occupied territories, continues to await its legal residents - who continue to be illegally displaced- to return to their homes and restore it to its former glory. Since then the city of Famagusta has been deserted without the presence of its inhabitants. It has become a nesting ground for pigeons and other birds. It has become a city of grassy roads, ramshackle houses and buildings full of reptiles and birds of prey. In the once-thriving Greek town silence now prevails, the place is crying out for it to be re-inhabited with its legal residents.

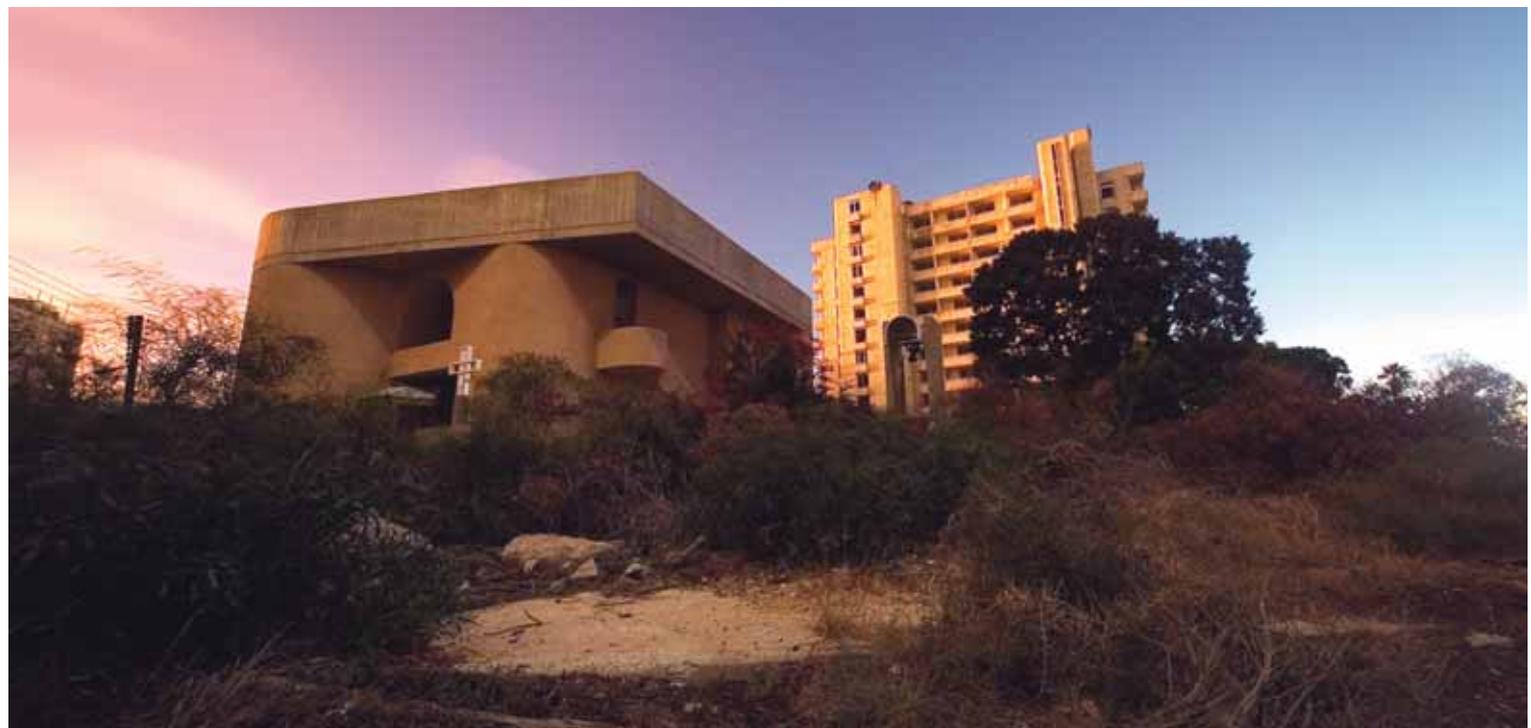
Apart from the displacement of its population, which consisted of hard-working, creative and intellectual persons, Famagusta suffered a cultural genocide as well, like all the occupied parts of Cyprus. Turkey's goal has been to extinguish any shred of evidence that would bring back memories from the past, by severing every link between the city and its creators.

B. Famagusta after the displacement of its legitimate residents

Since 1974 the once full of life Famagusta has been silent. The image of the trapped and abandoned city is eerie. Roads and sidewalks cracked openwide; facades of the hotels demolished, and the doors of their rooms are broken and wide open. The rooms became the place for rats and birds the manure of which covers everything. Creeping plants come out of the gardens of the houses crossing roads and climbing everywhere. Trees are seen inside the houses, most of which have no roofs. On the whole the city is wasting away. There is dust and sand everywhere as if the fate of Famagusta has come back. The rusty barbed wire around the city keeps away the displaced souls of the dead bodies. "Does it protect the ghosts or the turtles *Caretta Caretta* which nest in the sand?", wonders Alan Gouaisman, author of the book "The Earth Without Us." The splash of the sea, the hum of the air that passes through the open doors, windows, cracks in the walls and the cooing of the pigeons break the



View of ruined hotels in Famagusta after the Turkish invasion. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



View of the fenced city of Famagusta today. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



Detail of the deserted Famagusta following the Turkish invasion of 1974. Photo: Nikiforos Orfanos

monotony of silence and sound like the wail of an ancient Greek tragedy.

The premeditated and organised cultural genocide of the city began with changing all the Greek placenames. For example the village Engomi was given the name Tuzla, the name of Greek origin 'Famagusta' was renamed Gazimavusa, New Famagusta took the name of Maras, which is seemingly only Turkish since it draws its origin from Nicholas the Knight who took his surname from Morampit Mora village where he owned a great deal of property. Richard Pokok (1738) gave the name 'Merash' to New Famagusta (the root of Maras and Moras is the word 'Day' from the Homeric word 'Moro' which means the part that is given by the gods, hence fate). On the outskirts of Famagusta the village

Agios Sergios was named Yeni Bocazici, the village Stilloi was given the name Mutluyaka, Limnia became Mornenekce, Acheritou was called Guvercinlik and so many other places had their names changed. These changes are part of a wider Turkish plans to wipe out everything that reminds them of the Greek character of Famagusta and Cyprus in general.

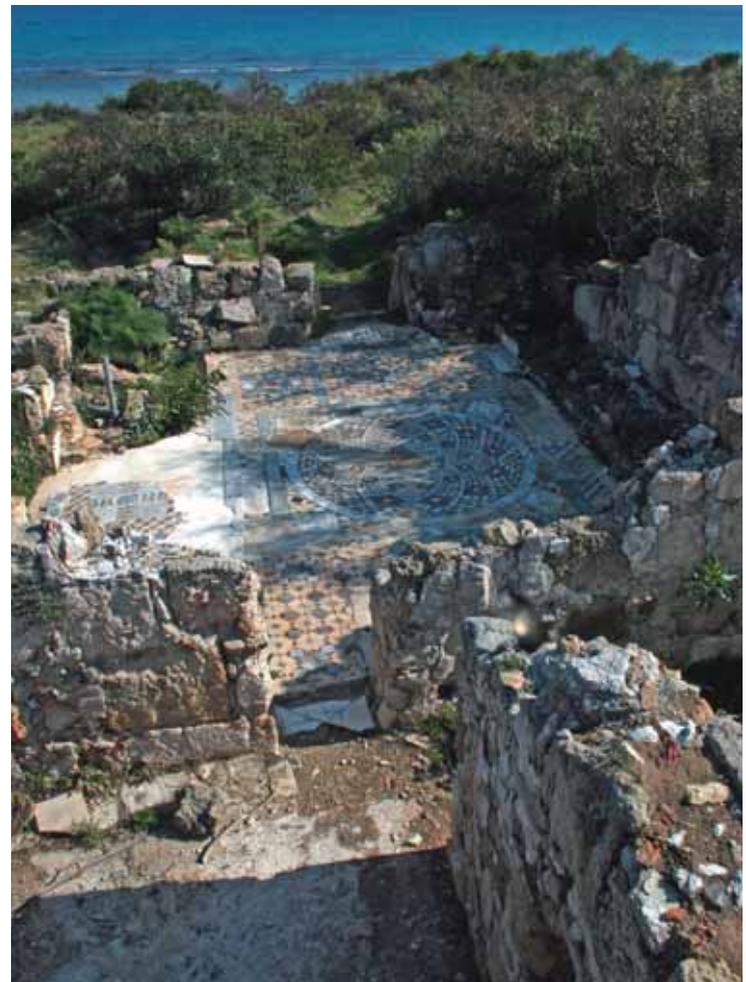
Because the identity of the place is not only confirmed by the Greek names, but mainly by its history, archaeological sites, archaeological findings, its ancient monuments and generally from its past and present, the Turks aim to eradicate or alter any and all traces of Greek. Unfortunately for the Turks, however, all these names have been documented, the artifacts are exhibited in museums around the world with the indication of their origin, thanks to the work of foreign

archaeologists as well as Cypriots like Porfirios Dikaios and Vassos Karageorghis. The criminal policies of the Turks, which go on with impunity, makes them hope that one day everything will be forgotten and so they will be able to dominate the whole of Cyprus. That is the reason why they have left at the mercy of time and the elements archaeological sites, which with great respect had been brought to the surface by local and foreign archaeological missions. This results in their gradual deterioration, in this way wiping out important information about the history of Humanity.

The Turkish invasion halted repairs, restoration of monuments and excavation sites at Salamis-Engomi, predecessors of the city of Famagusta. The sites became inaccessible to archaeologists who had worked very hard for so many years excavating and studying their history. In Engomi an entire archaeological site was desolated, plundered and left to ravages of time; moreover, one section of the storerooms, which contained archaeological findings, was destroyed by the Turkish army. Salamis was left neglected and unpreserved. It is used as a tourist destination, which Turkish guides show as a supposed relic of "Turkish civilisation." To visit Salamis there is now an entrance fee, something that hurt very deeply the Cypriot archaeologist Vassos Karageorghis, since he worked so hard to bring to light the ancient Salamis of Cyprus. In violation of the Hague Convention of 1956, the University of Ankara had been carrying out illegal excavations at Salamis that do not comply with scientific methods. A representative of the UNESCO organisation visited the town a few years after the invasion, and found the cases emptied of small valuable archaeological findings in the Famagusta District Museum. The important archaeological objects of private collections disappeared. Some objects of the collection of H. Hadjiprodomou have been found at auctions in London shortly after the invasion, and were returned to their legal owner. Other findings were sold on the black market in France, and photographs of other valuable objects proved to be in the hands of potential buyers in Europe and America.

The remains of the basilica of Agios Epifanios in Constantia, which is one of the largest basilicas in Cyprus, the ones of the impressive basilica of Kampanopetras with rich marble, have been left to the ravages of time and at the hands of the illicit dealers in antiquities and grave robbers. The holy water of

Nicodemos with the oldest surviving frescoes in Cyprus, as well as many sections of the old Christian Salamis, which had been brought to light by the French Archaeological School, before 1974, are also closed off and exposed to various dangers by depriving the French mission of any right on them. The basilica and the monastery of Agios Barnabas as well as the occupied churches, were plundered, and monks were expelled, prohibiting any free access to the faithful or performance of religious duties. The medieval Gothic monuments and cultural heritage of the town has also been left in desolation. Many other Christian churches of Famagusta, after being looted, were destroyed and left at the mercy of the illicit Turkish dealers who, with the complicity of the occupying troops and the occupation regime transfer ancient artifacts, pictures, mosaics, frescoes and many other items



View of Loutra at the Christian Basilica of Kampanopetra at Salamis. Photo: Lakis Dimitriadis.

to illegal dealers of stolen goods from Japan to the USA and from Australia to the Netherlands and Germany, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Hague Convention of 1956 of which Turkey is a signatory. The fate of the frescoes and other exhibits is also unclear; libraries with rare, very expensive books like those of Marangos' library, works of art of great historical value like those of Paul Georgiou, are also missing. It is necessary to note here that one of the most important pieces of art of Paul Georgiou was inspired by the exodus of the Jews and the creation of the state of Israel which took place in Famagusta at the area of "Tessera Mili" (Four Miles). A fact that is deeply remembered by both the people of Israel as well as the Jew emigrants. The Republic of Cyprus, the Church of Cyprus, as well as individuals are trying very hard to track down and repatriate Cyprus' cultural property.

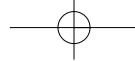
After 1974 the ancient monuments of Famagusta were not only neglected but also exploited by the Turks who used them for their own purposes. This constitutes a particularly provocative form of desecration. Christian churches were converted into warehouses for cattle feed, hencoops, stockyards, mosques, places of entertainment, restaurants etc. Some other churches were completely demolished and cemeteries were flattened. These actions show disrespect to the Christian faith and religion but also reveal the lack of cultural awareness of the conqueror. The glorious heritage of Famagusta is, thus, under the constant threat of the Turkish genocidal policy. The way in which the Greek Christian civilisation has been treated in the occupied Famagusta has led the city to be listed among the one hundred sites in the world at the highest risk of destruction, as listed by the World Monuments Fund. The Turkish invaders, illegal as they are, will never stop looking over their shoulder. Every time an archaeological excavation brings to the surface statues of Greek gods and heroes, or an inscription in the Greek language or entire rooms in museums proclaim the Greek origin of the regions which are forcibly held, the violence and illegal occupation of the Turk invader is exposed. The Turkish counter-civilisation is derided when compared to the Christian Greek civilisation and its historical value on earth.



Views of the Church of Agios Memnon. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



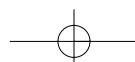
The Town Hall of occupied Famagusta. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



The well-known Faliro today. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



Dimokratias Avenue to Agia Triada today. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive





The ruined town of Famagusta today. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

The Turkish invaders will be confronted by the refugees and the displaced residents and their love, fighting spirit and determined resistance.

After the displacement, the residents of Famagusta found the courage and strength to be re-united and become active citizens in the free areas of Cyprus. Through the voice of their local and parliamentary representatives they declare that they will never forget or cease to struggle against the invader. They are ready to re-inhabit their city and give life to it whenever they go back. With the collaboration of all organisations and associations of Famagusta, the Municipality organises a plethora of anti-occupation activities, events, exhibitions and twinning activities with other municipalities. They never cease to show their determination to return to their hometown. They also inform the outside world about the Cyprus problem and the ongoing fencing-off of Famagusta and their property, the violation of the Christian cultural heritage by Turkey and by the occupation regime. Worldwide, the displaced residents of Famagusta contribute in different ways to this struggle for the liberation of their city and of all the

occupied homeland and the return of all Cypriot refugees to their ancestral homes.

With hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit, the residents of Famagusta became actively involved with strength and determination in the free parts of Cyprus achieving great commercial development, strengthening in this way Cyprus' economy which was devastated after the invasion. Despite their displacement, drawing on their strong will for advancement, their courage and leadership, the citizens of Famagusta emerged as a promising and essential building block of Cypriot society amid the difficult struggle for survival conducted by all Cypriots. The intellectual Famagusta began gradually being restored overseas as well. The emigrants of Famagusta continued their creative work abroad. The reactivation of the old cultural organisations and associations, the foundation of a cultural centre of the occupied Famagusta and their overall activities both at home and abroad helped the displaced population to maintain their identity and to keep struggling for the return to the enslaved homes.



The temporary residence of the Famagusta municipality.

Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



Greek President Karolos Papoulias observing occupied Famagusta during his visit to Cyprus. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

C. Activities of the displaced municipality of Famagusta in Cyprus

The glorious past of Famagusta stands as a beacon of light for the present and the future. After so many years in displacement people have managed to stay together. Their love for their city is concentrated on their struggles for unity which is expressed by the municipality through the 55 organisations and associations founded by different groups of people among which: "Anorthosis football association," "Nea Salamina," "Marathon Kato Varosion," "Doxa Neapoleos Ammochostou," "Displaced And Overseas Agios Memnon Famagusta," "Famagusta Refugee Movement," "Likion Ammochostou," "Alumni Association of Famagusta Commercial High School," "Famagusta Welfare Association for the Blind," "Charity Ammochostou," "Tennis Club," "Nautical Club," etc. These cultural workshops have never stopped fighting for their rights, for the freedom of their island giving in this way strength to the public to increase its creativity and progress but also its strong will for return to their ancestral homes and properties.

In 1996 the Famagusta Occupied Cultural Centre was founded by decision of the Cabinet. It is located in Derynia, which is situated just before Famagusta next to the cease-fire line which divides the island illegally. The main objective of this organisation is to inform the public about the occupation of Famagusta by the Turkish troops and also to function as a cultural institution organising on its premises many cultural events such as film screenings, painting, photographic, iconographic and sculpture exhibitions. Its lobby features a great deal of informative photographs and material about the history, culture and folklore art of the occupied area. There is also information about decisions and resolutions of the UN, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and other international organisations. Officials from foreign countries, journalists from different TV channels, Greek and foreign tourists as well as children and students visit the premises daily. On the second floor of the centre there is an observatory where the visitors can see through binoculars the city of Famagusta and the occupied part of Cyprus. In the new cultural centre, which opened in 2001, there is a small library with books about the occupied areas. There is also a

showcase of art crafts and replicas from the museum of the district of Famagusta. Several organisations and associations use the premises for seminars, lectures and presentations of books and CDs, literary and memorial services and other charitable events. The Centre is actively involved in all these activities, which are hosted every year. Anti – occupation events also take place every year.

On 12 February, 2007, the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus decided to reconstitute the old dioceses, which for historical reasons had ceased to exist. Among those was the Diocese of Constantia - Famagusta. On 11 May, 2007 the Bishop of Trimithounta (1996 - 2007) Mr. Vasileios was elected as the First Bishop of Constantia and Famagusta. The enthronement took place on the 12th of May at the church of Agios Georgios of Paralimni. So the throne of Agios Barnabas, which during the Byzantine period was the Archdiocese, was turned back to Bishopric, temporarily based in Paralimni, until the liberation of Famagusta and the return of its legal inhabitants. The decision to reconstruct the church is of historical importance and also a great debt to the founder of the Church of Cyprus, the Archbishop and guardian of the place Agios Barnabas and his successors, among whom Agios Epifanios. The administrative, intellectual religious and economic reorganisation of the displaced inhabitants of Famagusta helped the municipality of Famagusta to regain its strength in order to become active in claiming the rights of its citizens.

The municipality of Famagusta informs its people, gives out awards and stands by the people, inspires them, and brings them in touch with intellectuals, artists and scientists. It also organises events where people have the opportunity to meet, talk and nurture their spirit in order to gain strength for their struggle, for survival and the liberation of their beloved city. The voice of municipality officials within and outside Cyprus joins the voices of the officials of the Republic. Examples are the following activities: Between 8 and 14 of April, 425 volunteers worked in 25 centres throughout the island where 26,000 displaced people from Famagusta signed a declaration which, among others, expressed the desire and determination to fight for the return of the city. On 14, April 2007, the Mayor of Athens during a visit to Cyprus met the officials of the municipality of Famagusta and was informed about issues of concern. On the 6th of July



From the visit of Mikis Theodorakis in Cyprus.

Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

the Minister of Education of the Republic of Cyprus, Akis Kleanthous, addressed a keynote speech at a ceremony organised by the municipality of Famagusta. The professor of international relations and European affairs of the University of Cyprus, Joseph Josephides, talked about: the need for a solution in Europe, the "Koinon Kiprion" (Common League) and Famagusta. On 30 October 2008, the Mayor of Famagusta inaugurated a painting exhibition of members and friends of the Alumni Association of the Commercial High School of Famagusta which was held at the Famagusta Occupied Cultural Centre in Derynia.

The peaceful anti-occupation activities which are organised every year by the municipality of Famagusta, the several associations and organisations of the city form treasure trove of memories. They consummate the patience, resistance and determination of the legal residents for freedom and return to their homes, and emphasize their love for their city. These events serve to denounce the criminal behavior of Turkey and expose the indifference of the civilised world. In these events the mayor recalls the tragedy of the Turkish invasion and occupation, assesses developments, and suggests ways



Snapshot from an anti-occupation event of Famagusta Municipality. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



Reception of marathon runners at an anti-occupation event at Derynia roadblock. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive



Event at the small Salamis theater in Fasoula. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

of enhancing the struggle for liberation and return by charting the relevant policies of the municipality. These elements were included in a characteristic speech by Mayor Alexis Galanos at an anti-occupation event on August 7, 2010, where among other things he noted the following: "We now gaze upon our city behind the barbed wire, living proof of the crime of occupation and the tragic division of our country (...). But tonight our gathering does not intend only to recall our beloved city. We are not here to preserve memory. We do not live to mourn what we lost but to claim it back. We are here to give voice to Famagusta (...). We are concerned about the growing intransigence of the Turkish side which leads the ongoing dialogue towards deadlock. We are frustrated with the reluctance of foreigners to listen to us and understand the real role and responsibilities of Ankara (...). It is sad and frustrating because in all our contacts abroad we see that it is Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots who, without making any substantive moves, gain favourable impressions (...). If we consider that things in Cyprus have reached a deadlock, a quagmire, then, yes, we need to take a hard look at this and devise new

strategies. New strategies that will bring us closer to the solution, not further away from it. Strategies of reunification, recovery of our ancestral homes rather than strategies of total loss (...). Isn't it time we told our European partners and Ankara that the Turks should first withdraw their occupation troops from Cyprus and then continue on their path towards Europe?"

The Mayor believes that raising the issue of Famagusta will show foreigners that Turkey is an invader and will stop Turkey from taking advantage of the talks between the Greeks and Turkish Cypriots in order to gain time and undermine the status of the Republic. "Famagusta", said Galanos, "can be used as a trumpcard for the whole of Cyprus because it is exclusively occupied by Turkish troops," and he affirmed that the intention of the city is not to liberate just Famagusta, ignoring or leaving the other parts of Cyprus occupied, stating: "... the return of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants will be the starting point for the withdrawal of all occupying forces from the island (...). The return of Famagusta is our desire, our passion, but our ultimate goal and destination of



From an anti-occupation event at Derynia road block. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

our struggle is the liberation of Cyprus..." This speech by the Mayor was directed to quarters both in Cyprus and abroad.

D. Overseas activities of the municipality of the displaced Famagusta

The events and activities of the mayor of Famagusta and the municipal Council are not limited to within Cyprus. They are engaged in raising awareness abroad, in order to deflect Turkish propaganda and influence public opinion. A delegation of the municipal council of Famagusta, led by the Mayor Mr. Alexis Galanos, visited Brussels between 26 - 29 June 2007. There they had contracts with officials of the European Commission, MEPs, important personalities from all political groups of the European Parliament, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Belgian MPs as well as Belgian friends of Cyprus. As part of the visit, the delegation presented to the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Hans-Gert Poettering, a book with 26,000 signatures from Famagusta refugees, who demanded their return to their hometown. Mr. Galanos also presented the

issue of Famagusta at a scheduled meeting of the Committee of Petitions. The issue gained ground and several suggestions were made for initiatives. The delegation returned to Cyprus satisfied with the understanding and the response they received.

On 30 January 2008 an event about Famagusta was held at the European Parliament which was part of the visit to Brussels by the mayor of Famagusta and members of the municipal council. A short film on Famagusta, donated by the Leventis Foundation, was shown and the book of signatures was presented. Many officials including Cypriot and foreign MEPs and officials of the European Parliament were present. MEPs who spoke there expressed their support for the return of the occupied part of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants and voiced their strong dissatisfaction with the fact that an EU-candidate country illegally occupies the territory of a member state. The delegation also held a series of meetings with MEPs, including members of the Foreign Affairs Committee on Petitions and the EU- Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee. Mr. Galanos also participated in

the regular meeting of the Group “ Union for the Europe-of Nations,” held during a mini plenum of the European Parliament and attended by more than 200 people. The mayor informed those attending about the efforts of the citizens to return to their homes, stressing that progress on the issue of Famagusta would help reach a comprehensive settlement on Cyprus. He received a commitment from the President Marcin Libicki that in the final report about Famagusta there would be explicit references to the responsibilities of the Turkish army and the content of the relevant UN resolutions. Later, the mayor and the municipal council members, together with the Cypriot archaeologist Vassos Karageorghis, toured several European countries. The visit to each country was accompanied with a photographic exhibition, a film screening on Famagusta and speeches.

During a visit to Berlin by Mr. Galanos and the head of the municipal group of the Democratic Rally party, Mr. Costakis Hadjikakou, which was completed on 15 May 2009, a number of important meetings were held. The purpose of the visit was to promote the return of Famagusta and in particular through organising a photographic exhibition in Berlin in autumn, similar to that held in the European Parliament. Equally important was the meeting with Mr. Christoph Heusgen, General Director of Foreign Policy and Chancellor Merkel's security advisor. The mayor suggested that Turkey should allow UN and EU experts to enter the fenced-off area of Famagusta in order to draw up plans for the future reconstruction of the city. Also effective were the meetings with the President of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and of the Bundestag's Parliamentary Control Panel Mr. Ruprecht Polenz, the President Dr Dietman Bartsch, members of the German-Cypriot team in the German Parliament and other German officials. Mayor Galanos elaborated on the current status of the Cyprus problem and especially the problem concerning Famagusta. In every meeting he called for an active involvement of Germany and Europe, stressing that the Cyprus problem is not only an international issue that concerns the UN but a European one as well.

On September 15 2009, a delegation from the municipality held a meeting with foreign diplomats of the USA, Germany,



Twinning with the municipality of Chania. The mayors of Famagusta Alexis Galanos and of Chania Kyriacos Virvidakis.

Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

UK, Russia, China and France. The mayor submitted a resolution on Famagusta, which was approved at a large anti-occupation event (12 September) organised by the Famagusta municipality. Mr. Galanos referred to the unique case of Famagusta and asked the diplomats to inform their governments about the fair demand that the town should be returned to its legal residents as per UN Security Council Resolution S/550 (1984) and also according to the Kyprianou-Dektash agreement of 1979. On the 22nd of October of the same year, the mayor visited the President of the House of Commons in Greece, Mr. Filippos Petsalnikos, who confirmed Greece's support for every struggle for the return of the legal residents to the occupied towns of Cyprus. On February 2 2012, at the initiative of the Cypriot MEPs, the collection of the signatures of all MEPs was completed, following a request by the Famagusta Refugee Movement. The initiative was supported by many Greek and foreign MEPs and the municipality of Famagusta. The written declaration called for “the Turkish government to act in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions (S/550 and S/789) and the recommendations of the Commission report of 2008 which



From a delegation visit of the municipality to the European Union. Photo: Famagusta Municipality Archive

supported the return of the town to its legal citizens who should be settled in safety and peace". This resolution is another diplomatic tool at the disposal of the Republic of Cyprus. It was intended to be sent to all official members of the EU. On 21 February, 2012 by secret ballot, the mayor of Famagusta Mr. Galanos, with 61 votes in favour, was elected President of the Committee of Cyprus Occupied Municipalities and also became head of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities. His contender Mr. Andreas Christou, mayor of Limassol, received 29 votes. This shows the power of the displaced Municipalities who make their voice heard even louder, within and outside Cyprus.

This short historical review of the municipality of Famagusta and its people is just a sample of today's tragedy and hints at the extent of the tragedy. Famagusta has many voices and its prayers for return will be heard someday. One of those voices belongs to Claire Angelidou, an author, poet and former Minister of Education of the Republic of Cyprus. In the introduction of her book "Conversation with my sister Famagusta/ Parallel Lives," (Nicosia 2001) she writes: "In my book 'The Road' I once wrote that if I ever publish

my biography it will be a story for the people who can handle the pain, the loss of happiness that comes from the loss of a whole city. I now pay back a small debt to those who fought and abandoned their dreams in this piece of land which is called Famagusta. Famagusta is the city of our heart, she is waiting for us tirelessly, unkempt, smiling. And I am writing her history, my own experiences, for my children, my grandchildren, for all the children and grandchildren of Famagusta who were or were not born in that sacred land, who were or were not born refugees but live with the expectation to return someday. I assure them that our city is waiting for us. We will rebuild it and we will make it as beautiful and blessed as it used to be." In her poem "The Last Word" she reaffirms her certainty and provides instructions until the day of return "Save the key. It belongs to the house/ When you go there you can open the door/ Keep it in a safe place/ and clean it once in a while./ It must not get rusty./It has to be ready for when you are told / you can go back...". In her poetic collection "Salaminies Avres" she expresses her certainty that "Justice will come with an iron sword/ the skies will flash (...) Nemesis will come".

CONCLUSION

This brief historical review describes the establishment and the history of the occupied towns, the displaced Municipalities and their residents. Furthermore, it draws attention to the systematic and deliberate efforts by Turkey, the occupation power and the breakaway regime, to desecrate the Greek and Christian cultural heritage of the occupied towns, having as their ultimate goal the Turkification of the entire island. The historical review of the occupied towns, as well as the events that occurred before and after the Turkish invasion and occupation, reflect the life but also the tragedy that all the occupied territories of Cyprus experienced.

The Turkish invasion of 1974, the displacement and uprooting of the Greeks and other Christians, their replacement with a large number of Turkish settlers, as well as the desecration, destruction or demolition of Greek and Christian monuments and other sacred places are crimes against humanity. The international crime, which is perpetrated against the Republic of Cyprus, does not only consist of war crimes perpetrated by Turkey but also of the tolerance shown by other members of the international community toward these crimes, and even their participation in them. The Turkish policy targets the Greeks, Maronites, Armenians and Latin Cypriots who share the same national origin, religious beliefs and language. These actions ultimately harm the Turkish Cypriots who were born in Cyprus, because they differ from the Turks. Turkey's racist treatment of the legal residents of the island confirms the real goals of Ankara, which have always been ethnic genocide, altering the demographics of the occupied parts of Cyprus and the creation of two states with the ultimate goal being full control of the whole island. Since the accession of Cyprus to the European Union these issues are not only of international concern but also of European concern.

The once full of life nine towns, which until 1974 constituted the majority of Cyprus, have fallen prey in the hands of the occupying force since 1974. The civilisation that was developed and established throughout the centuries by the indigenous inhabitants has been exposed to neglect and destruction. Ancient and contemporary settlements were abandoned and ruined, churches were desecrated, properties were usurped and people were tortured and murdered. Houses, schools and various associations are deprived of their administrators and the public. The tolerance of the world powers preserves and supports this illegal state of affairs, which affects the entire civilised world. In order that political, ideological, economic and strategic interests are served, moral values, principles and the rules of international law are ignored. The displaced Municipalities of Cyprus and their people together with the Republic and the Church of Cyprus are struggling to save a great civilisation, which is precious and profound. This civilisation does not only belong to Cyprus but to the whole world as well.

All nine displaced Municipalities express the longing of their people, which is the liberation of their homeland, the return to their homes and properties, and peaceful coexistence with the Turkish Cypriots. They know that their rights are protected by international law, no matter how many years have passed since the invasion and the illegal occupation. They believe that it is their

duty towards their ancestors and their descendants to persist in demanding the restoration of justice. They are ready to accept a reasonable compromise, that is functional and sustainable, ensuring the return of the people to their homes under safe conditions. For the displaced residents, compromise does not involve indefinite acceptance of Turkish intransigence nor renouncing their own internationally protected rights and liberties.

The mayors of the displaced Municipalities took on a very difficult task, which includes the re-establishment and restoration of their previous duties. The fact that the former residents of the Municipalities are displaced and dispersed across Cyprus and abroad makes their task even harder. However they have managed to set as their priority the promotion of the culture and tradition of their communities, which were brutally violated by the Turkish invasion and occupation. They also strive to inform and raise awareness not only in Cyprus but also abroad. For example they remind the public of the occupied towns, the hard work of the people and the injustice they have suffered. They inform people of their rights, guide them and reinforce their love for their occupied towns. Broadly speaking they set an example to be followed by all displaced people and refugees while at the same time they raise awareness among all Cypriots who share in the agony and struggle for liberation and return. They stress their existence, struggle resolutely, and are guided by the words of the unforgettable former President of the Republic of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios III(died 20th of July, 1977): "We cannot forget our occupied villages; we cannot forget our occupied land where our houses are built and where our parents and our ancestors are buried...".

The displaced Municipalities resolutely declare that they will not disregard the rights of their residents and that they will keep struggling for their restoration. The international community must understand and sympathise with the longing and frustration of the displaced Municipalities. Only then will they be able to truly support and respect the struggle of the refugees, and the rules of justice will be implemented. If the officials who are responsible for applying these rules cannot do it effectively they need to find ways to improve or even change the entire system of international peace and security in order for true justice to prevail. Only then will there be real peace in the world. Cyprus is a place where these values and virtues are tested. Cyprus marks an opportunity for the international community, especially the European Union, to properly inform the people and demonstrate the determination required to respond effectively to its duty, which is to defend and protect these values and virtues.

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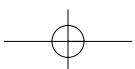
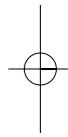
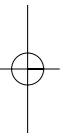
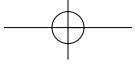
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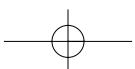
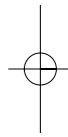
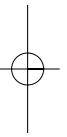
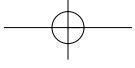
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