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Conflicts and Uses of Cultural Heritage in Cyprus

Costas M. Constantinou, *University of Cyprus*
Olga Demetriou
Mete Hatay

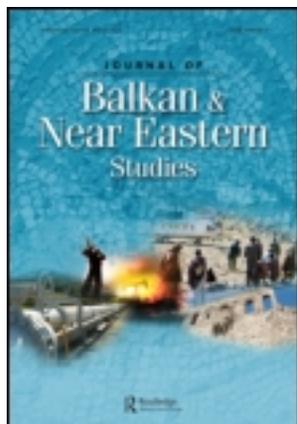## Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies

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This paper examines the conflicts and politics of heritage within communities and across the ethnic divide in Cyprus. By looking at three case studies of religious, antiquarian and modern heritage, it underscores the selective appropriations and restorations of heritage as well as problems of heritage identification and protection. Specifically it is concerned with the status of churches and building of mosques in the northern part of the island, the symbolic uses of the Kyrenia shipwreck and its replicas, and the difficulty in politically appropriating the ruined Nicosia airport that is located in the UN Buffer Zone.

The intersection of conflict and heritage is one loaded with assumptions about identity, otherness and the past, and fraught with tension over cultural violation and communal obliteration. This is clearly the case in Cyprus, where references to cultural heritage destruction abound in public discourse on both sides of the dividing line, but where also, the restoration of particular sites of cultural heritage has become the showcase of reconciliation efforts at local authority and civil society levels. The choice of which sites of heritage are targeted for restoration (e.g. churches and mosques) or given emphasis in political rhetoric (e.g. ancient monuments and artefacts) is of course the outcome of many factors that require research and understanding. However, the consistent overlooking of other sites (e.g. modern buildings, minority heritage, non-ethnicizable heritage), is equally instructive of those factors that do not come into the equation of cultural heritage identification and protection.

In this paper, we aim to illustrate some of the issues at stake through case studies that exemplify the above approaches to cultural heritage and its embroilment in the conflict in Cyprus. We start from an iconic image of what 'cultural heritage' has come to mean in relation to the conflict: the use, abuse, and restoration of churches and mosques. In reviewing the attitudes to the destruction and restoration of Orthodox churches in the northern part of Cyprus post-2003, Mete Hatay presents some of the paradoxes that the communalization of religion as the par excellence site of Cypriot cultural difference has thrown up in the last nine years. We then turn to another image that has become emblematic of cultural heritage in Cyprus: the ancient 'ship of Kyrenia'. In exemplifying the ways in which the ship has been invariably appropriated

as a sign of ethno-national identity over the last few decades, Costas Constantinou points to the blind spots of local nationalisms, which often assign totalizing or exclusionary meanings to 'culture', 'antiquity' and 'ownership' of the past and its relics. Lastly, against these images we counterpose the case of an unintended heritage site: the Nicosia International Airport. Lying outside the bounds of public access and still relatively untargeted for rhetorical exploitation, the heritage value of this site, as Olga Demetriou shows, is nevertheless instructive for the analysis of Cypriot postcolonial identities.

In bringing these case studies together, we offer a reflective glimpse of the issues at stake in discussing conflict and the political uses of heritage in Cyprus. We have undertaken similar and more in-depth analysis of other cases elsewhere (Constantinou and Hatay, 2010; Demetriou, 2012).[1] To that extent, the visual metaphor is intentional here, for the illustrations that accompany this paper are intended not simply to complement, but effectively to support the development of a critical perspective on the politics of heritage in Cyprus. At the same time, acknowledging the subjectivity of such 'glimpses', we have divided the paper not only through the visuals, but also in a way that allows the voices of each researcher to be heard through the case-study description. This is because in experiencing heritage in Cyprus, we have each witnessed the proliferation of contested sites and restorations on the landscape, antiquarian imagery on documents and graphic scenes of ruination in art productions. We may have done so in different ways, however, and with different levels of investment. Our first person singular in each case, therefore, reflects the particularity of the subjective gaze and its anxieties.

Heritage Anxieties after the Opening of the Checkpoints

In April 2003, to the surprise of the outside world, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities opened the checkpoints that had divided the two communities since 1974.[2] The opening allowed thousands of displaced persons from both sides of the island to visit their former villages, houses and properties. Religious heritage sites also became important destinations of private and spiritual visits. However, just as these visits were emotionally loaded, they were also politically so. Photographs were taken and used to document the poor condition of religious heritage sites that had been 'trapped' on the 'other' side of the divide.[3] Obviously, such documentation stressed one community's own victimization while directly or indirectly emphasizing the care taken by one's own communal authorities to preserve the cultural heritage sites of the other community.

In Cyprus, both sides have suffered losses, including of cultural heritage, either as a result of the intercommunal conflict during the 1963–74 period, or as a result of the 1974 war and its aftermath. The destruction of heritage sites associated with/belonging to 'the Other' was part of the intimate violence of the conflict, and today its traces are still visible in the landscape. It is quite common to see vandalized and ruined Greek-Cypriot cemeteries, churches and houses in the north, and similarly to see destroyed Turkish-Cypriot cemeteries, mosques and villages in the south. Although Cyprus has not experienced significant violence since the division

of the island in 1974, this damage remains, influencing the ways that Cypriots experience the conflict now.[4]

In the physical absence of those persons for whom these sites were important, a damaged church or mosque or a ruined cemetery could fade into the background, occupying a minimal place in the landscape of everyday life. However, with the opening of the checkpoints and the visits of these sites' original owners or spiritual inheritors, the vandalized cemeteries or ruined religious sites became noticed again, as devotees lit candles in the shells of churches or rummaged through broken tombstones looking for the names of relatives.[5] The people living near these sites also began to experience them differently, spurring new official policies towards these sites. While in the island's south there was an increased renovation of mosques that had been ruined or left untended for decades, in the north there was a sudden change in attitude not only towards churches that had been ruined, but also towards those that had been converted into mosques in the post-1974 period.[6] This change of policy of the Turkish-Cypriot authorities towards Orthodox religious heritage sites had unintended consequences that revealed public and official anxieties about the 'Other's' heritage.

Following the war and flight of Greek Cypriots from the island's north in 1974, most of the abandoned villages were repopulated by Turkish-Cypriot refugees who fled from the southern part of the barbed wire or by returning displaced Turkish Cypriots who had fled these same villages during the violent period of 1964–74. Additionally, many Turkish settlers were brought from Anatolia and resettled in the empty Greek-Cypriot villages or neighbourhoods to bolster the Turkish population of north Cyprus. During this period, the spatial order was thoroughly Turkified. Those villages and streets with Greek names were immediately changed into Turkish, Turkish flags and slogans began to decorate nearly all the hills, every single one of the Greek commercial and official signs was replaced by Turkish ones and all of the Greek nationalist monuments such as EOKA heroes' monuments were torn down or vandalized, usually replaced by Turkish ones. Additionally, Atatürk's busts and statues (some brought from villages in the south) began to populate squares and school yards.[7]

Within this newly built Turkish environment, nationalism, lack of economic resources and fear of Greek Cypriots' potential return had shaped Turkish Cypriots' preservation and protection policies regarding Greek-Orthodox religious sites that were left in the now-Turkish north. Only a few Greek-Orthodox churches that were deemed of historical value were spared from the general looting and destruction during and after the war. These few churches were turned into icon museums, being brought under the auspices of the antiquities department of the internationally unrecognized breakaway state, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which had, by 1983, unilaterally declared its independence. One of the main, expressed aims of restoring these sites and using them as museums was to demonstrate Cyprus's multiculturalism. They thus were used as cultural assets in promoting tourism and showing the 'tolerance' of the new state's authorities towards other faiths.

However, only a handful of the Greek-Orthodox churches and chapels shared this fate. The rest were either turned into mosques to cater for the needs of the new

inhabitants, or left in ruins, or used for other purposes, ranging from art galleries and cultural centres to barns. In the case of mosque conversions, the building was left intact but cleansed of all its Christian symbols and artefacts (icons, crosses, bells, etc.).[8] Adding a conical metal hat and loudspeaker on the belfry, covering the floor of the church with carpets and placing a *mihrap* facing Mecca symbolized and sealed faith transformation (Figure 1). Starting in the 1980s, tall minarets were also added to some of these churches (Figure 2), and these were usually built to one side of the belfry. According to the former Mufti, Yusuf Suiçmez, in 2009 there were 182 functioning mosques in north Cyprus. Of these, 48 were churches that had been converted into mosques after 1974.

With the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, one of the first visits that Greek-Cypriot refugees usually paid in their villages was to their village's church. This encounter usually ended in painful disappointment.[9] Many found that while the building was intact and well maintained, all the icons and other artefacts that gave it meaning had disappeared, and these had been replaced by Islamic symbols and rugs on the floors. Other churches had become museums, and Greek Cypriots had to pay an entrance fee to walk through the door. Although there were no violent incidents during this historic period, seeing the poor condition of their most respected religious places left many refugees with feelings of confusion and bitterness. The Greek-Cypriot authorities were quick to bring to European and international attention such destroyed and misused heritage sites and to put pressure on Turkey, internationally seen as 'having effective control' over the north.

Apart from such official pressure, the visits of Greek-Cypriot refugees and the way they reacted to the 'destruction' also played a role in the drafting of the new heritage policies in the north. Many refugees, when visiting their churches, brought icons and

Figure 1 External Façade of a Church Converted into a Mosque
Source: Photo taken by Mete Hatay.

Figure 2 A Church/Mosque with a Minaret Added
Source: Photo taken by Rebecca Bryant.

candles and placed them at church entrances, or within the church itself, wherever entry was possible. In the case of ruined churches, they often attempted to clean them, and used particular corners for candle-lighting, thus reclaiming the site (Figure 3). According to many Turkish Cypriots, such peaceful attempts to reclaim religious sites created considerable anxiety in the locals living near them or using them. Ömer, the Turkish-Cypriot *mukhtar* of a former Greek-Cypriot village that is now populated by Turkish-Cypriot refugees from the south, told me that in the said village the church had been converted into a mosque. Many people, he said, 'stopped going to mosque in the wake of such visits, because they kept finding lit candles and small icons at the entrance of their mosque'.

As a consequence of this experience, many Turkish-Cypriot villagers began to put pressure on their local authorities to build mosques to replace the converted churches. Coupled with international pressure (to restore churches to their original status), this prompted Turkish authorities to pay attention to these sites and find new formulas to calm these anxieties. One of the first measures that they implemented was to stop adding minarets to these church/mosques.[10] Soon, the pro-Islamist party currently in government in Turkey, AK Party, added a new budget line to its supplements to the Turkish-Cypriot government that would enable them to build new mosques, with priority given to those villages where churches were being used. In this way, they were able to move Muslim worship to new mosques and to hand the churches to the TRNC Antiquity and Heritage Department. It should be noted, however, that the evacuation of these converted mosques has only left them empty, as they have not been reopened for religious services, either Christian or Muslim. There were altogether 10 new mosques built between 2003 and 2008, and the number of churches used as mosques gradually dropped from 58 to 48 by 2009. According to Yusuf Suiçmez, construction

Figure 3 Reclaiming a Site
Source: Photo taken by Lisa Dikomitis in 2004.

continued during 2009 on another nine mosques, and the building of seven further mosques was being planned.[11] Crucially, almost all the new and planned mosques are located in villages where churches are used as mosques.

Interestingly and perhaps ironically, the proliferation of these new mosques in the north won the ire of many Greek Cypriots and leftist Turkish Cypriots. While the former perceived the new situation as the continuation of a Turkification process of north Cyprus, the latter saw it as the deliberate 'Islamization of secular Turkish Cypriots' that they believed to be a policy of the AK Party. It is certainly highly likely that the current pro-Islamist government in Turkey was more than willing to

facilitate the construction of these mosques and perhaps used the demands of the Greek-Cypriot authorities as a pretext to realize their ideological goals, namely, the promotion of a more Islamic spatial zone in north Cyprus. However, it is also clear that the legitimate grievances of Greek-Cypriot refugees and the international pressure by their government had the unintended consequence of contributing to governmental rationales for the construction of new Islamic religious sites in formerly Greek-Cypriot villages.

Although as mentioned above, many leftist secular Turkish Cypriots showed their resentment towards these new mosques and blamed more religious Turkish settlers for demanding them or the AK Party for imposing them, in fact, many secular (Kemalist) but nationalist Turkish Cypriots were very often instrumental in creating such demands.[12] A good example of this kind of attitude can be seen in the following anecdote, told to me by a relatively nationalist journalist friend who is originally a Turkish-Cypriot refugee from a village of Limassol district. Some years ago, Okan joined an envoy who visited Rauf Denktaş, the former leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community, to seek his support to build a mosque in a former Greek-Cypriot village where Turkish Cypriots were resettled after 1974:

> When we went to visit Denktaş it was during the fasting days of Ramadan. Denktaş welcomed us at the door of his office and showed us where to sit. He later sat beside us and asked us whether we like coffee or tea. Without thinking much, we all said yes for the coffee. Following our affirmation, Denktaş started laughing very loudly and asked us what kind of mosque committee we were that doesn't fast on Ramadan. He was right, none of us was religious but the reason for asking a mosque to be built was because the mosque was going to make our village look more Turkish and we, as refugees, would feel more rooted.

However, he also added that it took them years after this visit and many other visits to other politicians and the Turkish Embassy to get the above-mentioned mosque built in their village. Apart from Turkish aid money, they also used some funding from local businessmen.

Today one can see in north Cyprus numerous newly built mosques standing side by side with empty churches (Figure 4). When I went to interview the Turkish-Cypriot official in charge of the mosque constructions, I noticed a very nice picture hanging on the wall. In it stood a newly built mosque beside an old Greek-Orthodox church. When he realized I was carefully examining the picture, he asked, 'Isn't it nice to see a mosque and a church coexisting side by side?' When I did not reply, he sought my affirmation by asking further, 'It shows clearly how much tolerance we have towards the other faiths, doesn't it?'

Having come full circle, it seems that the preservation of churches in the north continues to be viewed in terms of multiculturalism and in tandem with the politics of exhibiting tolerance of otherness to international publics (governments as much as tourists) but with still little regard for the wishes of those others (Greek-Cypriot pilgrims) who might like a restoration of function as well as form. Such regard calls

Figure 4 Newly Built Mosque Standing Side by Side with Empty Church (in the Past for a Period Converted into a Mosque)
Source: Photo taken by Mete Hatay.

for a different type of politics, in which neither of the authorities seems at the moment willing to engage, or might do so reluctantly or symbolically. A similar disregard of the other is exhibited in the use of cultural heritage imagery, and exemplified next through the case study of the Kyrenia ship.

'The Floating Ambassador of Cypriot Culture'

An artistic replica of the ancient 'Kyrenia ship' figures prominently inside the cover page of the new biometric passports of the Republic of Cyprus, which my two children recently got (Figure 5). Based on a 4th-century BCE shipwreck, discovered off the coast of the city of Kyrenia in 1965, it is an image that is immediately recognizable to Cypriots. Its story of recovery and its archaeological significance are well documented in school texts, travel guides and scientific journals. It has been the cause for Cypriot poetry and literature as well as the logo for the promotion of maritime conferences, athletic events, pubs and restaurants, the Cyprus Stock Exchange, the Cypriot euro coinage and other high- or low-profile sites of Cypriotness. Wikipedia informs us that it is nothing less than 'the floating ambassador of Cypriot culture'.[13]

However, whose culture does it represent? How far does it constitute a common Cypriot heritage? And who gets to authorize its various and rival representations?

Issues of heritage identification and interpretation have been politicized and complicated in Cyprus due to the ethnic conflict and the forceful division of the island. The conflict has fuelled contestation and encouraged the ethnicization of innumerable cultural artefacts and products, from archaeological sites to village festivals to the origins of local cheese and coffee. With respect to the Kyrenia ship,

Figure 5 New Cypriot Passport

its legal as well as its symbolic ownership have been the cause for debate and acrimony. Under Turkish-Cypriot control, the original wreck is currently located and on permanent display in the medieval castle of Kyrenia in the north of Cyprus (Figure 6). Under Greek-Cypriot control, Kyrenia II is to be found on permanent display in the Thalassa Museum of Ayia Napa in the south-east of the island, 'a life size exact replica of the ancient ship of Kyrenia' (Figure 7). These two sites of 'national' heritage are intertwined with rival narratives and political claims on what the Kyrenia ship represents or ought to mean for the different communities of Cyprus.

A publication of the Republic of Cyprus's Ministry of Education and Culture, targeting Greek-Cypriot schools but also translated for foreign audiences, brands it ethnically with the following title: 'The Ancient Greek Sailing Ship of Kyrenia'.[14] In similar vein, though not in the title, the sign in the Thalassa museum refers to 'the most complete ancient Greek ship known to have survived to our day'. This is not an unreasonable claim, given that the ship is scientifically dated back to the time of Alexander the Great. In addition, the Cycladic-style amphorae on board connect it to the Aegean islands. Nonetheless, the Greek origin of the wreck is not scientific

Figure 6 Kyrenia Castle Original Shipwreck
Source: Photo taken by Costas Constantinou.

Figure 7 Thalassa Museum Replica of Kyrenia Ship
Source: Photo taken by Costas Constantinou.

certainty, and most scholarly publications stay away or carefully qualify the nationality issue of the wreck, though occasionally romanticization may creep in the narrative ('a small Greek merchantman', 'interpretation of the excavated material confirmed that both ship and cargo were Greek', etc.).[15]

On the Turkish-Cypriot side, the ethnicization of the shipwreck is not historically credible given how far back the ship goes. However, that does not mean it is not attempted through implicit association and selective referencing. Among the Turkish Cypriots, it has occasionally been referred to as 'the ship of Anatolia'[16]—and where Anatolia is, is currently Turkey. In the Kyrenia castle museum, its speculative sailing route along the coast of Anatolia is confidently depicted on a huge map at the entrance. Websites make spurious assumptions that 'it sailed southwards along the coast of Anatolia' and emphasize that the 'wooden hull [was] built mostly of Aleppo pine' or 'Jerusalem pine' (a point rarely, if ever, seen in Greek publications).[17] We are also informed that 'the majority of the restoration was completed after the Turkish Peace Operation',[18] thus seeking to underscore the scientific and cultural contribution of the seceding Turkish-Cypriot community, its commitment to heritage preservation, at the same time as the contribution of the Greek-Cypriot archaeologists before the 1974 war remains unacknowledged. Given the ethnicization uses of this specific heritage by the Greek-Cypriot side, the Turkish-Cypriot side is primarily concerned with its de-ethnicization, generally linking it to Cypriot or north Cypriot heritage, or to an anachronistic 'Turkish national space'.

On the basis of such ethnicization/de-ethnicization contest, Cypriot heritage communities have produced and inherited a range of discourses concerning the ship's social value, which cannot be disentangled from the Cyprus conflict. The Greek-Cypriot side commonly builds a narrative of trans-historical Hellenic presence and perseverance, whereas the Turkish-Cypriot side is mostly concerned with deflating the rhetorical exclusivity claims of this narrative. Typically, the Greek-Cypriot side often describes the Kyrenia ship as being 'captive' and under foreign occupation.[19] There has been unofficial cooperation through the assistance of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (specifically just after the 1974 war when the delivery of necessary machinery for wood preservation from the Greek to the Turkish side took place). However, this is not done in a way that will acknowledge political authority and legitimacy over an unrecognized state that cannot have any national or international legal standing concerning the protection of cultural heritage.

What has been especially important and politically utilizable for Greek Cypriots is the ancient Greek connection. The discovery of the 'ancient Greek ship' further boosted the claims of a perennial link between Hellenism and the island of Cyprus. This was significant in the 1960s and early 1970s when the dream of *enosis* (union with Greece) was still alive despite independence in 1960. However, it also became a symbol of resistance to the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by the Turkish army in 1974. It is worth recalling that in the minds of many Greek Cypriots, not only from Kyrenia, the ship is not just Greek heritage effortlessly and passively bequeathed by distant ancestors but something discovered under rough sea by a legendary Greek-Cypriot diver, Andreas Kariolou, a story celebrated in writings and documentaries.[20]

In public discourse, this gives the Greek side additional rights with respect to 'ownership'.

Interesting, in this regard, have been the uses of the Kyrenia ship beyond the tangible site and specifically the reconstruction of the intangible maritime heritage surrounding it. The Greek Cypriots decided to create a replica in 1982—the Kyrenia II—which was ready by spring 1985, sailing in New York, Seville, Hamburg and Fukuoka as a way of branding small Cyprus and publicizing its problem to the world (Figure 8). A third replica, Kyrenia Liberty was built in 2002 and sailed to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens to symbolically carry Cypriot copper (the mineral for which 'Cyprus' was famous in ancient times and thought to have acquired its name from) for the medals. Both replica ships, and especially the latter, have been linked to the liberation of the city of Kyrenia as well as efforts to enhance the cultural–political links between Cyprus and Greece. Kyrenia Liberty sailed from the ancient port of Amathus, following ancient Greek ceremonies with appropriate attire and received official welcome in ports of call across the Aegean before it reached Piraeus.[21]

As the Greek-Cypriot Mayor of Kyrenia (elected in the south but not in control of the city in the north) said at the time:

> both Kyrenia II and Kyrenia Liberty with their international cultural and information campaigns from 1984 to 2004 … proved to the civilized humanity the Greekness of Kyrenia and of Cyprus and the unbreakable bonds between Cyprus and continental Greece from antiquity till today.[22]

The link of the Kyrenia ship to the national struggle of Greek Cypriots is thus explicit both in this and other speeches that politicians have periodically made, including

Figure 8 Commemorative Stamp of Kyrenia II in New York

former Presidents and Ministers of Education.[23] Note, however, that there have also been interesting attempts after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003, to make the Kyrenia ship project bicommunal, to re-nationalize and re-brand it in civic rather than ethnic terms. However, this does not seem to have got off the ground. Though a Turkish Cypriot became a member of the crew-team,[24] as things stand at the moment it is difficult to see how such inclusion could function in anything other than tokenism.

In sum, the Kyrenia ship as reproduced on the new Cypriot passport is common heritage to all Cypriots but also highly symbolic for one ethnic community, potentially unifying but also dissonant.[25] This heritage appears on the passport of a consociational state established in 1960 to moderate the rival ethnic claims and problems, and construct a new civic identity for all Cypriots irrespective of ethno-cultural allegiance. On the face of it, this is what the Kyrenia ship passport image seeks to achieve: the ancient ship is accompanied by the official logo of the Republic of Cyprus, a flying dove bearing an olive branch, under the three official languages of the Republic. 'Unity in diversity' seems to be the message. Yet, it is a façade to present it as an unproblematic, univocal heritage that speaks with a single narrative or to a single heritage community. However, it ironically unites Cypriots at another level. For the Kyrenia ship is just another example of the conflicted heritage Cypriots share and fight over on the island of Cyprus—being the dissonant ambassador of the Cypriot culture as it is of the claimed univocity of what constitutes the Cyprus Problem.

This conflict, omnipresent but unacknowledged on the everyday of state life, is implicated not only in the branding and re-articulation of heritage already in existence as we have seen above, but also in the making of heritage anew. This is nowhere more so the case than in the process of rendering heritage sites that have been ruined by the conflict and which have bore testament to this conflictual political aspect of Cypriot identity in a way that has marked them above and beyond any 'inherent' historical or cultural value. Modern buildings within the UNFICYP-controlled Buffer Zone separating the Greek-Cypriot-controlled from the Turkish-Cypriot-controlled sides are an example of this, and the Nicosia International Airport, to which the next section turns, a particular case.

The Modern Gap

Some years ago I hosted a friend from England on her first visit to Cyprus. Her father had been a diplomat in Nicosia long ago and on her 'to do' list was finding the family's former home, where her older brother had been born. I still remember her mother providing directions on the phone, first with the exact address, then to the neighbourhood and finally instructing me to take a left turn from 'the road to the airport'. It was a phrase that threw my spatial conception of Nicosia into momentary disarray. How did this north-east suburb of Nicosia connect to the Limassol highway (from where the Larnaca airport road branches off) in the southern exit of the city? I then immediately remembered that 'the airport' of her Cypriot experience was a different one to that which I had known all my life (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Older (Underneath) and Newer (on Top) Maps of Wider Nicosia Area with Close-ups of Old Airport Road (Left) and New Airport Highway (Right)

Nicosia International Airport (NIC) has not been listed on flight schedules since 1974, when the bombing by Turkish planes attacking Nicosia and since controlling the northern part of both the city and the whole island, closed it down. The entrance to the wider complex around the airport is blocked by a UN checkpoint, which now controls the airport and uses the wider area to headquarter both UNFICYP and the mission of political advisers that mediates between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships (the 'Good Offices Mission'). Part of the area is under British UN command as it is formally a UK 'retained site' under the 1960 Constitution drawn up at the end of the British period, that is, a space within the Republic of Cyprus, which the UK could use at will and take control of in the event of war.[26] As a British UNFICYP officer put it, the UK has assigned this site for the use of the UN with a view to ceding it to the Cypriot state after an eventual settlement (in interview, UNPA, 13 July 2011). These are arrangements of sovereignty that like the airport, remain outside the purview of daily experience, which is instead strongly punctuated by the Graeco-Turkish dispute.

Therefore, the road that would otherwise have led from my friend's mother's doorway to the terminal now swerves abruptly to the left and leads to the northern outskirts of the southern part of the city. Like most inhabitants of the capital today, that swerve has become part of my habitus of driving in Nicosia, the reason for it known but not consciously addressed every time I find myself in that specific location.[27] The roundabout that regulates the fast flow of traffic there is seldom referred to as 'the airport roundabout', but rather signified by the private university nearby ('the Intercollege roundabout'), or more formally by the name of the Greek-Cypriot military camp located on its north side ('the Colocasides roundabout').[28] Notably, the camp entrance is distinguished by the prominent writing on its perimeter wall reminding passing drivers that 'our borders are not here—our borders are in Kyrenia'. This marks the space as an ambiguous 'border' while also laying claim

to what lies beyond as (Greek) Cypriot space, which makes the 'forgetting' of the airport even more paradoxical (Figure 10).

Had a school or a church been the structure enclosed in that part of the UN Buffer Zone (as is the case for the area of the border near where I live), the wider neighbourhood might have still kept the name in the collective orientation of Nicosians.[29] However, the 'airport area' reference has slowly been eroding over the decades to a mere anachronism that surprises a follower of directions. At best, it is used as a formal reference ('the area around the Nicosia airport') in the language of bureaucratic urban planning. The question is why.

The thesis that nationalism is a modern phenomenon has often relied on moments of conflict to exemplify the emergence of national ideology.[30] The relationship between (ethno-) national conflict and modernity is therefore one in which the latter defines the former. The ways in which a society experiences modernity determine, in other words, the ways in which conflict unfolds.

Heritage is intimately tied to this process by providing the structure on which to construct discourses on the past, those 'invented traditions' that are used in modernity to erect categories of identity and exclusion. However, what of 'modern' heritage? What about the structures that do not symbolize a past ethnic purity, a continuity with antiquity, that are not the icons of cultural traits (religion, language) spelling the 'civilization' of the 'we' and the difference of the 'they'? How are these appropriated or accommodated within ethnicized traditions of heritage?

The integration of Nicosia Airport into the spatial fabric of the city in a way that would fold its heritage value into narratives of the conflict has, until recently,

Figure 10 View of the Roundabout near the Nicosia Airport, January 2012 (Note Slogan on the Wall of Military Post)
Source: Photo taken by Olga Demetriou.

seemed difficult. The airport's modern character seems to account at least for part of this difficulty. In 1968 the 'new' terminal was inaugurated on the former site of an RAF airport (established in Cyprus since 1930), which had turned over to civilian use in 1948. Civilian and military uses had in fact coexisted on the site since 1939 (when the current landing strip was built) but the former was interrupted during the Second World War while the latter was discontinued in 1966.[31] In these terms, the airport seems to have developed in tandem with military processes that have defined European modernity (colonialism, Second World War).

With the inauguration of its new terminal in 1968, Nicosia International Airport entered aviatory modernity by thoroughly becoming a 'non-place'.[32] Designed by a German company with experience in airports, boasting high-end mass catering in its restaurants and cafeterias, and furnished with rows of leather seating, it was an ideal transitory space for the emerging masses of travellers and curious passers-by on Sunday ice-cream excursions, who came specifically to marvel at this Cypriot feat. It could have been anywhere: in Europe where design features are still to be seen in Copenhagen and Stockholm, in the Middle East where the same company undertook other airport projects, and anywhere where the passing traveller's gaze was invited to marvel the technological advances of an internationalized era, away from localized specificities of time and space.[33]

Not any more. The gutted traffic control room, the carpeting of bird droppings, the shattered glass around bulleted window panes, the ripped advertisement screens in the former check-in area, the flaking signs on random pillars and the bombed aircraft hull on the side of the runway, are all signatures of Nicosia International Airport in its

Figure 11 Collection of Photos from NIC Visit in 2011
Source: Photo taken by Olga Demetriou.

very specific singularity (Figure 11). They mark the shift from the transitoriness of travelling to the permanence of abandonment, from the globalization of design to the localization of ruination, from inclusion in the international space of sovereign independence to the exclusion of ceasefire buffer zones.

A violent 'emplacement' of 'non-place' seems to have taken shape in Nicosia Airport, which, in throwing it outside the city's spatial habitus, has rendered it 'difficult heritage'. However, this is not the difficulty of multiple claims on it, even though in its heyday it may have carried the imprint of the Greek-Cypriot community's domination over the Turkish Cypriots. Old pictures of the inauguration feature President Makarios without his Turkish-Cypriot Vice-President; and in a nostalgic web-post, a Turkish-Cypriot pilot reminisces that 'many Turkish Cypriots in those days used to venture out to the airport just to have a look at an aeroplane from Turkey and to boost their morale'.[34] It is neither the difficulty of embattled heritage, even though it has been the space of fierce battles by the Greek-Cypriot National Guard against the Turkish forces in 1974, as well as the site of an erroneous attack against Greek military planes carrying troops to boost the capacity of the Greek-Cypriot forces.[35] Both of these stories are often retold on camera, in newspaper editions of the August commemoration of the war and on the Internet, without staking claims on the actual space. Equally, the genealogies of the four Trident airplanes to have been damaged during the war are shared between cyber plane-spotters, with one of them gracing the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, while the other sits gutted on the Nicosia tarmac.[36] The violence may be gorily recounted and gazed upon, but it does not seem to have sacralized the space.

The difficulty of this heritage is rather that of emplacing the airport within a primordial idyllic past onto which the conflicts of domination and ethnic violence can find some justification (as is the case with the Kyrenia ship) or against which the lack of care and preservation can propel such conflicts onto the level of political rhetoric (as is the case with churches and mosques). The lack of institutional claims on it, owing also to the fact that it has been a British retained site since 1960, under UN supervision since 1963 and closed to public access since 1974, are entangled in this difficulty and augment it.

In this gap between heritage and modernity that conflicts over ownership and preservation fall through, a different discourse, drawing on the vocabulary of peace, reconciliation and cooperation has begun to form. A public access music concert organized by UNFICYP put Nicosia Airport on the news in September 2009, and in the last few years, there have been bicommunal art projects focusing on the shared meanings and common future possibilities of restoration of the building and its surrounding area, while research interest is also notable.[37]

This is not to say that reconciliation is inherent in any such project. It is simply to point out that the rendering of the terminal building as heritage has the potential to generate peace-focused heretigization processes in a place where conflict has characterized most of these processes so far. At the same time, as these efforts remain on the plane of the virtual (photos posted on the web, studies filed in libraries and drawers, presentations published in journals), the marginalization of this kind of heritage over more thoroughly 'conflicted' alternatives (e.g., churches, ancient

monuments, mosques, traditional artefacts) is underscored. As to whether these efforts will 'take off', politics (more than time) will tell.

Conclusion

This paper has taken three sites that are important in understanding the articulation of heritage politics in Cyprus: religious heritage, antiquarian heritage and modern heritage. On these three sites, we have tried to analyse the ways in which perceptions of cultural difference and commonalities across the border (e.g. civic citizenship) are intertwined with the Cyprus conflict. In some cases, they become the ground of and propel the ethnic conflict on new planes (e.g. religious piety as a difference between Turkish Cypriots and Turks). In other cases, they link primordial identities to current-day ones in a way that fortifies ethnic inclusion/exclusion (e.g. of Greek Cypriots vis-à-vis Turkish Cypriots with respect to Cypriot antiquity). And still in others, they give rise to possibilities of new, reconciliatory approaches to heritage, when this heritage (e.g. of colonialism and modernity) has been devalued and forgotten.

All these possibilities exemplify the fact that the contests that make heritage difficult in Cyprus might stem from a singular source (e.g. ethnic claims) but unfold through multiple processes and often in surprising ways. The unfolding of these processes and ways render Cypriot heritage dissonant, as the interpretation of the past and the negotiation of the future can easily become a source of new claims, anxieties and conflicts. To that extent, the valorization of heritage protection, destruction and reconstruction shifts depending on how the 'Cyprus Problem' is reconstituted in time and space, changes both discursively and materially, within and across ethnic communities. Yet it poses difficult questions: Who deserves heritage justice, by whom and how soon? Should recognition of heritage injustice be conditional on other recognitions and to what extent? What local, national and supranational authorities should be involved in heritage protection and reconstruction and to what extent? The answers to these questions are not easy, even though the vast majority of politicians and activists on the island imagine that they are, typically when it comes to the issue that is of special concern to them. Developing a sensibility to the various uses and nuances of Cypriot heritage practice should help us to understand that the heritage problematic on the island is not simply and monolithically produced by ethnic conflict (e.g. stories of destruction and difficulties of restoration, important as these may be and should be told). Heritage discourse and practice have themselves become part of the current Cyprus conflict—a complex conflict that is no longer (if it ever was) just inter-ethnic, but also intra- and trans-ethnic. In addressing conflicts of heritage in Cyprus, one must acknowledge and address the various political stakes as they are raised or remain hidden at different levels.

Notes

[1]   See C. M. Constantinou and M. Hatay, 'Cyprus, ethnic conflict and conflicted heritage', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(9), 2010, pp. 1600–1619 and O. Demetriou 'The militarization of opulence: engendering conflict heritage', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 14(1), 2012,

pp. 56–77. See also Brian Bielenberg and Costas M. Constantinou (eds), *Empowerment through Language Revival: Current Efforts and Recommendations for Cypriot Maronite Arabic*, PRIO Cyprus Centre, Nicosia, 2010 and the documentary of Costas M. Constantinou and Giorgos K. Skordis, *The Third Motherland*, Cyprus, 2011. Further relevant work can also be found on the CRIC project website < http://www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk/index.php>, which documents the work carried out for the EU-funded project 'CRIC—Identity and Conflict: Cultural Heritage and the Reconstruction of Identities after Conflict', out of which the conference in which the papers collected here were presented sprang.

[2] No one really knows why Turkish Cypriots opened the checkpoints. However, the former Prime Minister of Greece, Costas Simitis speculated that, this was the result of their 'two-pronged plan of securing Cyprus' entry into the European Union and securing acceptance of Turkey's candidacy to participate in the EU', < http://www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=2&folder = 342&article = 11414 > . Apart from external pressure coming via the EU, there was also increasing domestic opposition in this same period, as a growing number of Turkish Cypriots began to oppose what they saw as their leadership's intransigence in negotiations that would have led to a federal state within the EU. Additionally, in the 1990s, Greek-Cypriot refugees had begun bringing cases against Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) demanding access to their properties in the island's north, and the fact that these cases were piling up might have played a role as well. Following the opening, the Turkish side established a commission to deal with all the affected properties in the north by creating a local remedy that was not there before. Before the establishment of the latter local commission, Greek Cypriots had direct access to the ECHR without going through any local courts.

[3] Official publications reflect this concern at the destruction of heritage, which becomes defined in an exclusivist ethno-communal sense, and documented in a rather propagandist way: see, for example, < http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/DA/DA.nsf/All/5C63072411078AB9C 22572750055D67D > for Greek-Cypriot heritage in the north and for the Turkish-Cypriot heritage in the south see: Presidency Office of TRNC, *Destroyed Turkish Cypriot Villages in South Cyprus*, Lefkoşa, 2009.

[4] Rebecca Bryant, *Past in Pieces: Belonging in New Cyprus*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2010; E. Copeaux and C. Mauss-Copeaux, *Taksim: Bölünmüş Kıbrıs, 1964–2005* [*Taksim: Divided Cyprus, 1964–2005*], İletişim, İstanbul, 2009.

[5] For further reading of the return of Greek-Cypriot refugees, see Rebecca Bryant, op. cit.; and Lisa Dikomitis, *Cyprus and its Places of Desire: Cultures of Displacement among Greek and Turkish Cypriot Refugees*, I. B. Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2012.

[6] Ali Dayıoğlu and Mete Hatay, 'Cyprus', in Jorgen S. Nielsen, Samim Akgönül and Ahmet Alibasic (eds), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Brill, Leiden, 2009, pp. 75–88.

[7] For more on the Atatürk images, their prevalence and use in Turkey: Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2006; Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC and London, 2006. For the Atatürk cult in Cyprus, see: Mehmet Adil, 'Visibility 600 metres: reflections on the national monuments of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', DCA thesis, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 2007, < http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/78>.

[8] Most of the churches were looted during and after the war. Although some of the icons were recovered from looters and put in 'icon museums' that were established by Turkish-Cypriot authorities, many also made their way to Europe and were sold in illegal antiquities markets. For more on this illicit trade, see Michael Jansen, *War and Cultural Heritage*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 2005.

[9] Rebecca Bryant, op. cit.; Lisa Dikomitis, op. cit.

[10] See, for example: EP (European Parliament), *Declaration of the European Parliament on the Protection and Preservation of the Religious Heritage in the Northern Part of Cyprus*, European

Parliament, Strasbourg, 2006, < http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef= -//EP//TEXT + TA + P6-TA-2006-0335 + 0 + DOC + XML + V0//EN > .

[11] Ergül Ernur, '16 Yeni Cami için 13 Trilyon' [13 trillions for new mosques], *Kıbrıs*, 7 May 2009.

[12] Of 16 mosques that have been built since 2008, only 4 of them were built in villages that were inhabited by Turkish settlers. Two others were built in mixed villages, while the rest were built in villages that are solely inhabited by Turkish Cypriots (Ibid.).

[13]   < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrenia_ship> (accessed 11 October 2011).

[14] A. K. Phylactou *et al.* (eds), *The Ancient Greek Sailing Ship of Kyrenia*, Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, Nicosia, 1994.

[15] J. R. Steffy, 'The Kyrenia ship: an interim report on its hull construction', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 89(1), 1985, pp. 71–101; pp. 71–72.

[16] As suggested in the *Major Cypriot Encyclopedia* [Μεγάλη Κυπριακή Εγκυκλοπαίδεια], Vol. 7, Philokypros, Nicosia, 1987, pp. 68–70.

[17] See, for example, < http://www.cypnet.co.uk/ncyprus/city/kyrenia/castle/shipwreck/index. html > and < http://EzineArticles.com/2612146> (accessed 11 October 2011).

[18] Ibid.

[19] For example, Phylactou, op. cit., p. 35.

[20] See, for example, the story of its discovery and recovery in the documentary *With Captain Three Sailors: The Ancient Ship of Kyrenia*, < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 5BDsQBJ7qc8 > . In the last municipal elections for mayor of Kyrenia (this is for the Greek-Cypriot municipal authority that does not have control of the city but currently resides in the south), the son of legendary Andreas Kariolou, Glafkos Kariolou, won by a landslide over all other candidates, including the candidate supported by all major political parties representing more than 95 per cent of the electorate—explained as a recognition of his background as well as his involvement in the Kyrenia commons and sailing of the replica Kyrenia ship.

[21] See *Enalia Odos* [Εναλία Οδός], Kerynia Chrysocava Cultural Foundation, Nicosia, 2006, and various video clips of these events on youtube.com

[22] Ibid., pp. 11–12.

[23] Phylactou, op. cit., pp. 107–109.

[24]   < http://www.kyreniaship.org> (accessed 11 October 2011).

[25] J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Wiley, Chichester, 1996.

[26] See C. M. Constantinou and O. P. Richmond, 'The long mile of empire: power, legitimation and the UK bases in Cyprus', *Mediterranean Politics*, 10(1), 2005, pp. 65–84.

[27] I am employing here Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (1977), which privileges positioning in the embodiment of experience—see P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977.

[28] Given the pre-existence of a car showroom in the area owned by the Colocasides family, the camp's name appears to reflect this industrial space designation.

[29] This interpretation draws on insights from earlier work in Greece, which explored the implications of changing national narratives in the experience of place—see O. Demetriou, 'Streets not named: discursive dead-ends and the politics of orientation in Thrace', *Cultural Anthropology*, 21(2), 2006, pp. 295–321.

[30] I am thinking of Gellner's proposition that nationalism pacifies class conflict, Hobsbawm's examples of national traditions like those of the USA and Germany oriented towards unification against enemies, Anderson's core image of dying for the homeland as the foundation of nationalism, and Billig's use of the Gulf War to exemplify 'banal nationalism'. See E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1991 [1983]. M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage, London, 1995.

[31] See < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicosia_International_Airport > and < http://military-genealogy.forcesreunited.org.uk/history/unit.asp?unitID=4103 > .

[32] I use Augé's notion here, developed in tandem with a view of space-time relations becoming homogenized on an international scale. See M. Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 1995. M. Augé, *A Sense for the Other: The Timeliness and Relevance of Anthropology*, Mestizo Spaces/Espaces Métissés, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998.

[33] I am grateful to Emily Shiantou for pointing out the connections with international airport architecture, which she further explores in E. Shiantou, 'Nicosia International Airport: entrapped modernity', MA thesis, Faculty of Engineering, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2011.

[34] < http://taxidiaris.blogspot.com/2008/01/nicosia-international-airport.html> .

[35] It should be mentioned that at that point the site was already under the control of Canadian UN troops who re-assumed control after the Turkish attack was thwarted.

[36] The four Tridents were flown by Cyprus Airways and were attacked by Turkish bombers on 22 July 1974. One was completely destroyed, another damaged beyond repair (the one still sitting on the side of the runway), a third damaged but repaired and re-operated by British Airways from 1977 to 1982 (the one exhibited in Duxford), and the fourth suffered minor damaged and joined the BA fleet until scrapping in 1980. See < http://www.airliners.net/photo/Cyprus-Airways/Hawker-Siddeley-HS-121/0153792/ > and < http://aviation.elettra.co.uk/flightline/profile.php?aircraft=trident2 > .

[37] See, for example, < http://www.uncovered-cyprus.com/>, but also a critical perspective on cultural 'branding' of the site at < http://hblack.net/hblack/index.php?id=87 > . Other projects have included the exhibition of Cypriot artists' work in the room where the leaders of the two communities negotiate, which is housed in the renovated old terminal building. See also Shiantou (op. cit.) for a fuller study of such examples.

Costas M. Constantinou is Professor of Political Science at the University of Cyprus. His research interests include mediation and diplomacy, international political theory and the politics of the Cyprus conflict. He has published articles and books in these areas, including more recently the co-edited *Cultures and Politics of Global Communication* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and *Sustainable Diplomacies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Address for correspondence: University of Cyprus, PO Box 20537, 1678 Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: constantinou.m.costas@ucy.ac.cy

Olga Demetriou holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from the LSE (2002). She has held postdoctoral fellowships in Cambridge and Oxford universities and has been a Senior Research Consultant at the PRIO Cyprus Centre since 2006. She has worked on issues of refugeehood, minority subjectivities, human rights, gender, cultural heritage, and migration in Greece and Cyprus and has published in journals including the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.

Address for correspondence: PRIO Cyprus Centre, Sophoullis 3, 1096 Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: olga.demetriou@yahoo.co.uk

Mete Hatay is Senior Research Consultant of the Peace Research Institute Oslo Cyprus Centre and has been a member of staff since its establishment in 2005. He has written widely on minorities and religion in Cyprus, as well as on the politics of demography, Turkish-Cypriot politics, and the ambivalent relationship between Turkish Cypriots and Turkey. In addition, he is working on two PRIO research and information projects, one on property and displacement and the second on conflict and cultural heritage. His own current research concerns social and political life during the 1963–74 Turkish-Cypriot enclave period, particularly the siege period between 1963 and 1968.

Address for correspondence: PRIO Cyprus Centre, Sophoullis 3, 1096 Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: prio.mete@cytanet.com.cy