Sea, salt and palm trees

In the footsteps of travellers to Larnaca throughout the centuries

9 - 30 September 2022

Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

The city of Larnaca was chosen as the focal point of the exhibition, as well as the digital game that is based on the project’s results - considering the high frequency, range and wealth of information available in the researched material. 

Alykes (Larnaca’s port) was Cyprus’ most important naval and commercial centre between the 15th and 19th centuries. The position of the port of Larnaca and the facilities supplied to the boats, mainly when unfavourable weather conditions prevailed, explained why foreign merchants preferred Larnaca than the other cities of the island. The presence of European merchants in Larnaca contributed to forming a European community, consisting of consuls, consular personnel, European merchants, and Greek merchants. This role would endure the duration of Ottoman rule. Despite the fact that the city has partly lost its prestige during the 20th and 21st centuries and new resorts were created in the non-occupied districts of Famagusta, Paphos, and Limassol, still it attracts travellers who want to take a tour of the historic old city of Larnaca.

The exhibition presents in 10 roll-up banners an array of male and female travellers visiting Cyprus from the 15th to the 21st century, in an attempt to:

• show the variety of places which served as their departure points

• communicate not widely known details from their texts

• present the loci of their attention as far as the city is concerned
The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and Research

Since its establishment in 1984, the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation has developed a wealth of activities mostly of Cyprological interest, in keeping with the objectives originally delineated by the Bank of Cyprus. The aims of the Cultural Foundation are met by placing particular importance on the research of primary and other sources in the fields of Archaeology, History, Art and Literature - as well as preserving and disseminating the cultural and natural heritage of Cyprus, with a particular emphasis on the international promotion of the island’s centuries-long Greek civilisation. The Collections of the Cultural Foundation provide the basic source for the development of such programmes which are eventually run by the Cultural Foundation.

BOCCF’s aim has always been to bring its resources, through the scientists’ work, closer to the wider public. In 2018 the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation inaugurated new research activity. It secured funding following a call for tenders in the “Didaktor” (Post-Doctoral Researchers) programme - part of the “RESTART 2016-2020” programmes of the Research and Innovation Foundation, Cyprus - and became a host organization for two research programmes: “Aspects of multiconfessionalism and human geography in early modern Cyprus from the Venetians to the Ottomans” (CyChrist POST-DOC/0916/0060 and “The business elite of modern Cyprus, 1878-1959: social origins and entrepreneurial characteristics in a historical perspective” - BEMC POST-DOC/0916/0231.

In this context, the BoCCF launched the ReTraPath project. The project secured funding after a call for tenders as part of the “Excellence Hubs” programme of the “RESTART 2016-2020” programme of the Research and Innovation Foundation. Moreover, ReInHerit (“Redefining the Future of Culture Heritage: Creating an Innovative Model for Sustainability”) funding was secured in the framework of the Horizon 2020 CSA Programme, on the theme Culture beyond borders – Facilitating innovation and research cooperation between European museums and heritage (H2020 No 101004545). BoCCF also promotes research by participating as a partner in many other funded research projects (Erasmus+ and Creative Europe).

Research and Innovation Foundation, Cyprus

The Research and Innovation Foundation (www.research.org.cy) is the national authority in charge of supporting and promoting research, technological development and innovation in Cyprus. The RIF’s mission is pursued through the design and monitoring of funding programmes for research and innovation actions, in combination with the support of the integration of researchers in Cyprus in research and innovation activities at a European and international level.

ReTraPath - Short description and project objectives

Travel literature is a rich and popular genre and a valuable source of information for various disciplines. Using Cyprus as a case study, this project examined travel literature on the island covering the period from the 15th century (invention of printing) to the 21st century. The rare books researched belong to the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation Collection of Manuscripts and Rare Books, the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation Collection and the Costas and Rita Severis Foundation Collection. The project titled “Re-inventing age-old Travelling Paths of the Levant in the Digital Era: the example of Cyprus” (ReTraPath EXCELLENCE/0918/0190) was completed by postdoctoral researcher, Dr Margarita Ioannou (BoCCF), and Dr Katerina Gotsi (KEDE), under the supervision of Dr Ioanna Hadjicosti, Director of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. It was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus through the Research and Innovation Foundation.

The technological objectives of the project have been: 1) the digitization of a specific number of old travel books which had not been digitized before, as a substantial contribution to the preservation of the cultural wealth of travel literature - further enriching INSPIRAL, the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation online portal for travel literature initiated under the scientific supervision of Professor Julia Chatzipanagioti-Sangmeister; 2) The dissemination of the outcomes through the development of smart tools. With the use of technology, the collected information from the archival material has been employed for the development of a) a game (educational application) designed for students aged 9-12 years old and b) two 3-dimensional interactive maps of Cyprus for the wider public, with areas of tourist and cultural interest.

Innovation

The innovation of the suggested project lies in a) its interdisciplinary consortium, b) its novel scientific approach to texts that cover a specific topic (travel) and geographical area (Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus as a case study) and which span a period of seven centuries, c) the use of information technology in the dissemination of findings, and d) the means of dissemination and utilization of the results targeting both international audiences and local society.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Host Organization

Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation:
A non-governmental organization active in organizing cultural activities and involvement possibilities with local communities, Nicosia - Cyprus.

Partners

Sylvia Ioannou Charitable Foundation:
The Foundation’s mission is to preserve and disseminate the historical and cultural heritage of Cyprus through research programmes based on items in its Collection, publications, conferences and scholarships related to the island of Cyprus (Liechtenstein).

The University of Piraeus Research Center (UPRC):
A research, non-profit organization affiliated with and supporting the research activities of the University of Piraeus, Greece.