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Abstract:

Greek Cypriot officials have estimated that, since 1974, ‘several dozen’ wall paintings and mosaics and ‘15,000-20,000 icons’ (Georgiou-Hadjitofi 2000: 225), and possibly ‘more than 60,000 ancient artefacts’ (Hadjisavvas 2001: 136), were stolen from northern Cyprus. The structures of the illicit antiquities trade were created before the 1974 coup and invasion. Here, I look at how the destruction of cultural heritage and the illicit antiquities trade developed together between 1963 and 1974. I conclude by showing how Turkish nationalist criminal networks consolidated the illicit antiquities trade after 1974, and how Greek Cypriot archaeological policy contributed to those networks’ trade.

Paper:

Since the Greek-backed EOKA-B coup and the TMT-supported Turkish invasion of 1974, Greek Cypriot officials have estimated the theft of ‘several dozen’ wall paintings and mosaics and ‘15,000-20,000 icons’ (Georgiou-Hadjitofi 2000: 225), and possibly ‘more than 60,000 ancient artefacts’ (Hadjisavvas 2001: 136), from northern Cyprus. Yet the structure of the illicit antiquities trade after 1974 was created before then, critically during the period under discussion here, between 1963 and 1974. I will show how the intercommunal conflict, the destruction of cultural heritage, and the trade in illicit antiquities evolved together. I will conclude by demonstrating how Greek Cypriot archaeological policy has incidentally contributed to Turkish nationalist criminal networks’ domination of the northern Cypriot illicit antiquities trade since 1974.

The early history of the illicit antiquities trade

The digging up and collecting of Cypriot antiquities has a much longer history, however. An ‘alarmingly lively’ antiquities trade developed in Cyprus under late Ottoman rule, driven by foreign officials collecting antiquities, and driving local patriots like Demetrios Pierides to try to collect and keep antiquities on the island (Leriu 2008: 3). Ironically, British consul Pierides introduced antiquarianism to his

vice-consul, Robert Hamilton Lang (Goring 1988: 8), who then excavated without permission and collected thousands of antiquities. Worse, Lang introduced antiquities collecting to the notorious American consul, Luigi Palma di Cesnola, who then dug up or bought tens of thousands of illicit antiquities, smuggling and selling thousands of artefacts to the Metropolitan Museum, the British Museum, the Louvre, and even the Ottoman Museum of Constantinople (Myres 1974 [1914]: xvii), the museum of the very state from which he had taken the artefacts.

These problems continued during the British administration of the Ottoman territory. For example, underfunded British Museum and Cyprus Museum archaeologist Max Öhnefalsch-Richter funded himself by selling his own excavated artefacts and others' looted antiquities (Brönnner 2001: 198; Fivel 1996: 29). Also, during the same period, two accidentally found silver hoards, later named the first and second Lambousa treasures, were semi-legally or wholly illegally traded by Greek Cypriot antiquities dealers, and illegally smuggled off the island by foreign antiquities collectors. The British Museum 'turned a blind eye to the manifest impropriety' and bought part of the first Lambousa Treasure (Merrillees 2009: 13), while the Metropolitan Museum of Art accepted part of the second Lambousa Treasure as a donation from an American antiquities collector (Merrillees 2009: 3-4).

By the early Twentieth Century, the illicit antiquities trade had become a 'widespread evil' (M. Markides 1914: 3); but before the outbreak of violence in 1955, the British colonial administration had established the Department of Antiquities, thus ending the 'treasure-hunting' of the Cyprus Museum Committee (Wilfrid Jerome Farrell, cited in Merrillees 2005: 197), and Cypriot society had become 'increasingly favourable to the protection' of its cultural heritage (Megaw 1951: 3). Indeed, after the outbreak of violence, (employment and) the increased security activity actually nearly stopped illicit excavation (Megaw, 1955: 4). Nevertheless, within a decade, intercommunal violence, destruction of community places and looting of archaeological sites exploded together.

Greek Cypriot para-state, Turkish Cypriot deep state

Thus, it is necessary to understand what happened in that decade, to understand how that promising situation became a cultural disaster. Between 1955 and 1959, Greek Cypriot (Greek Army) Colonel Georgios Grivas's nationalist paramilitary EOKA had fought for union of Cyprus with Greece, *enosis*. It had been supported by Greek Chief of General Staff General Georgios Kosmas, Greek Prime Minister Field Marshal Alexandros Papagos and Greek Cypriot Ethnarch Archbishop Makarios III, amongst others (Kyle 1984: 6; O'Malley and Craig 1999: 10), but primarily funded by Archbishop Makarios III and the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, Spyridon (O'Malley and Craig 1999: 14-15; Xydis 1966: 7).

During the same period, Turkish Cypriot colonial representative Dr. Fazıl Küçük's nationalist paramilitary Volkan had struggled for partition of the island, *taksim* (Atai ve Uludağ 2006). It was run by a NATO paramilitary, the Turkish Special Warfare Department, which later reformed Volkan as TMT and made its local leader the ultranationalist Rauf Denktaş, but directed it from Turkey and financed it from a secret government fund (Hiçyılmaz 2001a; 2001b; Kılıç 2007: 55).

Britain gave Cyprus independence in 1960. The Greek Cypriot leadership in the partnership Cypriot state immediately allied itself with the underground Sacred Bond of Greek Officers (IDEA), and elements of the Greek Central Intelligence Service (KYP) and the Greek Corps of Cyprus (ELDYK). Greek Cypriot paramilitaries were

run by ex-EOKA government ministers and staffed by ex-EOKA fighters and they had control of the police (Drousiotis 2005; 2006). The state of the Republic of Cyprus was usurped by a Greek Cypriot para-state, or deep state, still intent upon *enosis*. The Turkish Cypriot leadership and the Turkish Special Warfare Department's local organisation, TMT, constituted a similar, Turkish Cypriot deep state, still intent upon *taksim*.

In December 1963, the Greek Cypriot para-state organised clashes between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to create a crisis in which the Greek Cypriots would be able, in (later dictator) Greek Brigadier Demetrios Ioannides' words, to 'get them out of the way once and for all [Θα τους βγάλουμε μια για πάντα]' (Drousiotis 2006).

During that crisis, a few hundred Greek Cypriots were permanently displaced from six mixed villages, as were all of the Armenian Cypriots from the Turkish Cypriot enclave in Nicosia. Yet about 25,000 Turkish Cypriots were made refugees: 23 or 24 Turkish Cypriot villages and 72 mixed villages were completely evacuated and seven or eight mixed villages were partly evacuated (Patrick 1976: 75).

Destruction, impoverishment, and looting between 1963 and 1974

Greek Cypriot extremists' destruction of mosques both demonstrated they shared the nationalist logic for Turkish Cypriot extremists' later destruction of churches, and established religious desecration as part of the practice of ethnic cleansing on Cyprus. Moreover, the demolition of Turkish Cypriot neighbourhoods and villages was not only the obliteration of historically Turkish Cypriot community places from the Cypriot landscape, but also a cause of the impoverishment of the Turkish Cypriot community, and thus a cause of the poverty that drove the explosion of looting of archaeological sites. There are striking examples of the destruction during the 1963-1964 fighting.

According to a Greek Cypriot refugee (2008), the Turkish Cypriot village of Kourtaka/Kurtağa was 'destroyed.... in the war, in 1963, 1964, when the Turk[ish Cypriot]s fled from the village [κατεδάφισαν [κατεδαφίστηκε].... στον πόλεμο, σε 1963, 1964, όταν φύγανε απ'το χωριό οι Τούρκοι]'. The only things left were the one concrete building in the village, because it was too strong to smash, and a single stone arch.

According to Jack Goodwin (1978: 459), there were still some homes in Pano Koutraphas/Yukarı Kutrafā in 1974; but the mosque was destroyed (c.f. CCEAA and CCTA, 2007), and some of the homes were destroyed, between 1963 and 1964. The only things left now are the concrete fountain and the foundations of the homes (figs 1 and 2).

A local Greek Cypriot (2008) identified the remains in Arediou/Aredyu. The village's mosque and some of its homes had been razed to the ground (figs 3 and 4, respectively), and other homes destroyed, after the Turkish Cypriots left in 1964.

On the 27th of March 1964, the United Nations activated its Force In Cyprus (UNFICYP), but fighting continued. According to Swedish United Nations peacekeepers, Makarios had already 'promised to annihilate Kokkina and Mansoura' (Welin and Ekelund 2004: 34), and on the 6th of August, Greek Cypriot National Guard Commander Colonel Georgios Grivas tried to do just that. When the Greek and Greek Cypriot military attacked Kokkina-Mansoura Enclave, the Turkish Armed Forces bombed them back, and at the same time bombed Greek Cypriot villages around the enclave (O'Malley and Craig 1999: 116): Pachyammos, Pigenia, Polis, Pomos and Kato Pyrgos. The Turkish Armed Forces attacked military positions (der

Spiegel 1964: 55), but their bombing also destroyed a school and a church in the Greek Cypriot village of Pachyammos (*Ocala Star-Banner* 1964: 1; *Rome News-Tribune* 1964: 1). By the 9th of August, all sides found it convenient to answer the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC 1964: 6) call for a ceasefire.

Kokkina/Koççina is still a Turkish Cypriot exclave now, but Vassos Lyssarides and Nikos Sampson's paramilitaries did clear Sellain t'Api, Ayios Theodoros, Alevga and Mansoura (Borowiec 2000: 62-63; der Spiegel 1964: 55). Local Greek Cypriots confirmed my finding of the ruins of Alevga/Alevka, now used as a farm (fig. 5), while UNFICYP troops confirmed my finding of the ruins of Mansoura/Mansura (fig. 6), also used as a farm.



Figure 1: the fountain in Pano Koutraphas/Yukarı Kutrafa (author, 2006)



Figure 2: the foundations of a building in Pano Koutraphas/Yukarı Kutrafa (author, 2006)



Figure 3: the cropmark of the mosque in Arediou/Aredyu (author, 2008)



Figure 4: the cropmark of a home in Arediou/Aredyu (author, 2008)

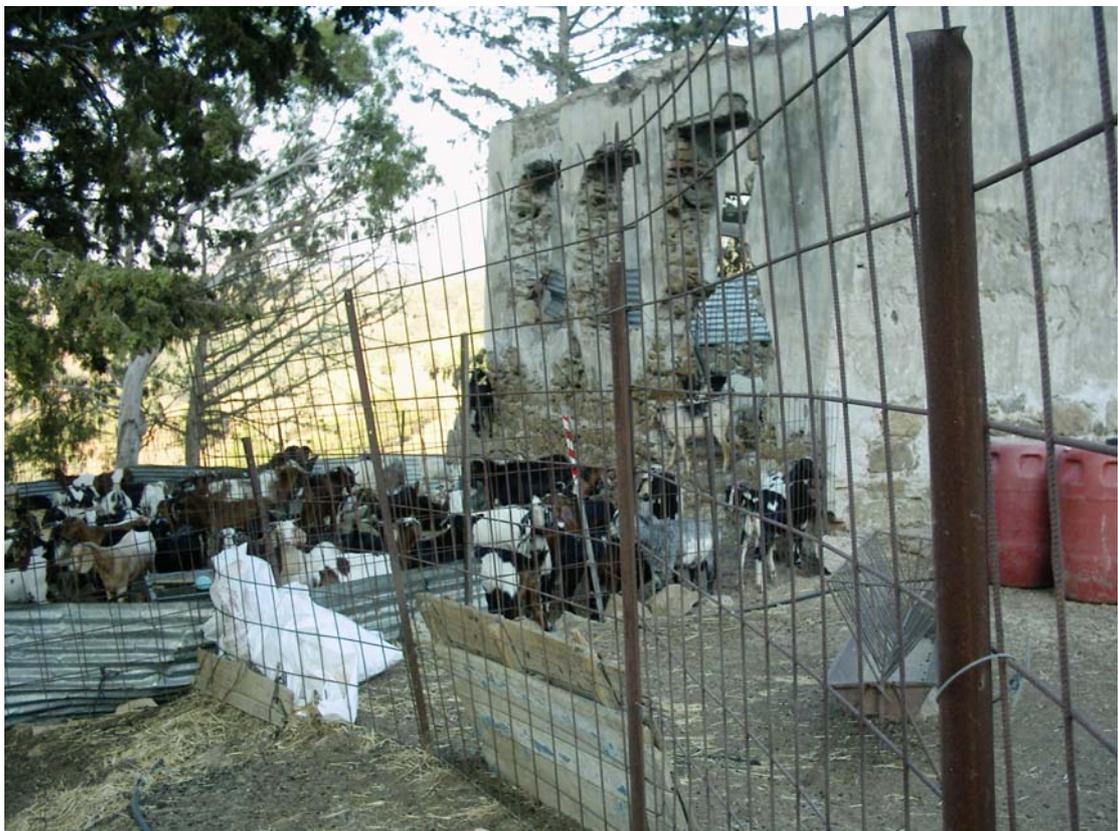


Figure 5: the remains of Alevga/Alevka reused as a farm (author, 2006)



Figure 6: the remains of Mansoura/Mansura reused as a farm (author, 2006)

Indeed, former United Nations peacekeeper and political geographer Richard Patrick (1976: 78) observed that '[m]ost of the abandoned villages and quarters were ransacked and even burned by Greek-Cypriots':

by August 1964, the abandoned homes were looted and often burned-out ruins. Neither community had the resources to rebuild the houses, to purchase new farming equipment or to provide resettlement grants. The side that undertook such indemnities would also be tacitly admitting to a degree of responsibility in the creation of the refugee problem, and that neither community was prepared to do (Patrick 1976: 79).

So, neither side did, and the Turkish Cypriot community languished in ever greater poverty. Development specialist Prodromos Panayiotopoulos (1995: 23) stated that:

By 1965 nearly half of all Turkish Cypriots were crammed in Gaza-Strip fashion, into a minuscule 1.6 per cent of the island's land-mass (Attalides 1979: 90). Many were living in overcrowded and squalid conditions in the ghettos of old Nicosia and were dependent on mainland Turkish aid as their only means of economic survival.

The enclaved Turkish Cypriots were trapped, both by the Turkish Special Warfare Department-backed Turkish (Cypriot) Resistance Organisation, TMT, that controlled those enclaves, and by the Greek Cypriot administration and paramilitaries that controlled everywhere outside, and sometimes blockaded the enclaves themselves.

Because there was a market for it, one of the enclaved Turkish Cypriots' means of subsistence was selling antiquities. And because they controlled the enclaved Turkish Cypriots' access to the market, and the market's access to the looted antiquities, one of TMT's funding sources was the illicit antiquities trade.

Enclaved Turkish Cypriots were looting and selling antiquities to be able to subsist, but TMT were trading and smuggling antiquities to be able to fight; and according to then antiquities director Vassos Karageorghis (2007: 102), the looted antiquities 'were bought mainly by Greek Cypriots and by diplomats'.

Karageorghis (1964: 4) acknowledged that the 'anomalous conditions in the island did not make it possible to achieve' the elimination of the illicit excavation of and trade in antiquities. In fact, those conditions made it possible to industrialise the illicit antiquities trade. Sites and museums within the enclaves were inaccessible to the Department of Antiquities (Karageorghis 1964: 3). Journalist Michael Jansen (2005: 19) recorded 'widespread' looting, theft, smuggling and dealing in and around the enclaves. Journalist Peter Hopkirk (1971: 4) said that thousands of tombs had been looted.

Antiquities, heroin, and terrorism

It is not clear whether, before 1974, TMT fighters were smuggling and dealing themselves, or whether they were taxing or taking *bakışış* (bribes) from smugglers and dealers. (Certainly, members of the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation, MİT, were looting and trading antiquities (Jansen 2005: 20; 23; see also Aşkın 2006).) Either way, by buying artefacts from the enclaves, antiquities dealers and collectors outside – notably, *Greek Cypriot* antiquities dealers and collectors – were incidentally funding Turkish Cypriot TMT's terrorism against both the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities, managing to make a terrible situation even worse.

Antiquities smuggler and dealer Michel van Rijn (1993: 25) stated that Greek Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios III collected 'icons.... which must have been looted from churches'. He should know: Makarios did not prosecute one of van Rijn's icon restorers for theft of icons, but instead employed him as his own icon restorer, and van Rijn's dealing and smuggling operation was, in his words, 'allowed to continue' (1993: 26). Whether protection was given by the upper levels of the state, for whom some of van Rijn's gang worked, as van Rijn (1993: 26; 2003) claimed, or whether protection was given by the lower levels of the state, who knew that some of van Rijn's gang worked for their superiors, the result was the same: his international operation continued for another two decades (van Rijn 2003).

One of Michel van Rijn's suppliers was Aydın Dikmen, a Turkish smuggler of both antiquities and drugs (Jansen, 2005: 21). Since the Turkish heroin trade is largely controlled by elements within the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation (MİT) (Nezan 1998: 13), and the greatest smuggler of Cypriot antiquities, Dikmen, was also a smuggler of heroin, it is reasonable to assume that the Turkish antiquities trade was and is also largely controlled by elements within MİT. Indeed, Dikmen's Turkish Cypriot dealer and smuggler, "Tremeşeli" Mehmet Ali İlkman, was first a TMT fighter and then a MİT officer (Jansen 2005: 20; 23; see also Aşkın 2006). Thus, there was and still is a dual heroin-and-antiquities trade in Cyprus, controlled by the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot deep state(s).

A silent accord with greedy collectors

Later antiquities director Sophocles Hadjisavvas (2001: 135) said that the illicit antiquities trade was ‘so intense that there was even close collaboration between Turkish [Cypriot] looters and Greek [Cypriot] mediators and collectors’. Remarkably, given the structure of the Turkish Cypriot part of the trade, the collaboration of Greek Cypriot collectors was the policy of the Department of Antiquities and the rest of the Greek Cypriot administration. Karageorghis (1999: 17) revealed that, with the Ministry of Communication and Works’ ‘agreement’, the Department of Antiquities established a “‘silent accord”, allowing [Greek] Cypriots who had access to the Turkish [Cypriot] enclaves to buy’ looted antiquities (see also Karageorghis 2007: 102). In fact, the Department of Antiquities itself collaborated.

In his memoirs, Karageorghis (2007: 102-103) explained that:

During the period from 1970 to 1974, under the pretext of supervising the work of the UNESCO experts at St. Sophia, I would often cross the “border” in the car of [UNESCO conservator Dr.] Carlo Musso.... I bought for the Cyprus Museum a good number of important objects [‘illegal antiquities’].... I did not pay cash... I would bring them a government cheque from the Central Bank.

Not only were Greek Cypriot collectors and dealers incidentally funding TMT’s terrorism, but also the Greek Cypriot *administration* was doing so, and the Department of Antiquities was underwriting the looting of archaeological sites. Disastrously, in yet another attempt to reduce the illicit antiquities trade, in the second half of 1973, the Department of Antiquities declared an amnesty on antiquities collections (Karageorghis 1973: 4), such that collectors could not only declare their antiquities to the state without being prosecuted for acquiring them, but they could even keep them.

After the amnesty, the Department of Antiquities put on record ‘the prompt collaboration of the collectors’ (Karageorghis 1974: 5). It was unsurprising. During the amnesty, antiquities looting and trading had increased. According to Hadjisavvas (2001: 135), ‘greedy’ antiquities collectors had used the amnesty to expand their collections, and more than a thousand greedy people had taken the opportunity to begin collections, too. Karageorghis (1999: 17) had noted that the ‘most important’ collections formed under the “‘silent accord” and registered during the amnesty were the Severis Collection in Nicosia, the Pierides Collection in Larnaca, and the Hadjiprodomou Collection in Famagusta.

Hadjisavvas (2001: 135) did not say which ‘well-known collector in the Famagusta District’ had hired looters ‘to obtain rare antiquities of a specified date’. Ownership of looted artefacts had been temporarily legalised, but looting of artefacts had not, and any collection formed by looting would, thus, still be illegal; but nothing happened to that unidentified collector. Indeed, after the Turkish invasion, the Department of Antiquities complained that ‘a number of important registered collections of Antiquities’ had been looted (Karageorghis 1975: 3). In some cases, it was complaining that thieves had been robbed of their stolen goods.

The consolidation of the cultural disaster

The political violence across the island before the invasion consolidated the cultural disaster in northern Cyprus afterwards. After a group of CIA-backed Greek colonels staged a coup and established a military dictatorship in Greece in 1967, President Archbishop Makarios III accepted Cypriot independence as a possible solution to the Cyprus Problem (though he still believed *enosis* was the ideal). Then EOKA was reformed as EOKA-B under General Grivas: the spurned Greek Junta and the Greek Cypriot para-state worked to overthrow the Greek Cypriot leadership and unite Greece and Cyprus (Drousiotis 2006). While the Greek Cypriot state and para-state wrestled each other for power, the Turkish Cypriot deep state ‘subdued’ the moderates and consolidated its control of the community (K. Markides 1977: 34).

In 1974, backed by the CIA, the second Greek Junta’s Brigadier Demetrios Ioannides ordered a coup against President Archbishop Makarios with the help of reformed enosist paramilitary EOKA-B (O’Malley and Craig 1999: 152-155). Consequently, the day after President Archbishop Makarios III (1974: 6) had appealed to the United Nations Security Council to ‘put an end’ to the ‘Greek Junta[’s]... invasion’, the Turkish Special Warfare Department directed its own invasion of the island and its occupation of northern Cyprus with the help of TMT (Çelik 1994); that invasion was also backed by the CIA.

Obviously, the U.S. did nothing; worried that it would embarrass itself by failing on its own, or even by being challenged by the U.S., the U.K. did nothing either (O’Malley and Craig 1999: 184-186). The Greek Cypriot coup regime and the Greek Junta both collapsed, but the Turkish Army remained, expanded the territory under its control, and established a military occupation.

When it did, the Turkish Cypriot deep state survived and was institutionalised: before 1974 president of the Turkish Cypriot Communal Chamber and vice-president of the Republic of Cyprus, after 1974 TMT leader Rauf Denktaş became president of the autonomous Turkish Cypriot administration, then of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (and later of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus); TMT itself was reformed as the Turkish Armed Forces’ (TSK) local auxiliaries, the Turkish Cypriot Security Forces Command (GKK); and they had their own auxiliaries in the Civil Defence Organisation (SST) (Akıncı and Düzel 2007; Irkad 2000; Kanlı 2007).

Greek Cypriot government policy and Turkish Cypriot organised crime since 1974

Antiquities looting and trading continued after 1974 as well. Since the only economy was the black market and the export trade, inactive archaeological sites were looted across the North (Pollis 1979: 98; Mehmet Yaşın, 26th April-17th May 1982, cited in ROCPIO 1997: 37; 62; 70; 71). Again, most of the Turkish Cypriots who looted did so because they were poor, but the trade was still controlled by the Turkish/Turkish Cypriot deep state. Instead of funding TMT’s fight against Akritas or EOKA-B, however, the illicit antiquities trade funded the repression of everyone in the North. Moreover, despite the apparent challenges, the bicomunal nature of the northern Cypriot illicit antiquities trade survived the partition of the island (van der Werff 1989: 7; van Rijn 1993: 27).

According to official Greek Cypriot estimates, ‘several dozen’ wall paintings and mosaics and ‘15,000-20,000 icons’ have been stolen (Georgiou-Hadjitofi 2000: 225), and between ‘several thousand’ (Georgiou-Hadjitofi 2000: 225) and ‘more than 60,000’ (Hadjisavvas 2001: 136) artefacts have been looted from northern Cyprus.

As Hadjisavvas (2001: 136) observed, there are a ‘large number’ of Cypriot antiquities in international auctions, some of ‘obviously illegal provenance’; and as

Watson (2006: 94) explained, publicly auctioned antiquities are only ‘a fraction’ of the market, primarily used to ‘set prices’ for the larger underground market, and by some dealers to “launder” illicit objects’. It is that antiquities market that drives and funds the looting of the cultural heritage of Cyprus.

Furthermore, 25 churches have been ‘[c]ompletely demolished’ (ROCPIO 2007: 3) and, strikingly, there is evidence that the Turkish Deep State has used money from its heroin-and-antiquities trade to pay for “contracts” to destroy cultural heritage sites (e.g. Armenian Genocide memorials in France, c.f. Nezan 1998: 13). Moreover, they have looted well-known artefacts, which they knew they couldn’t sell elsewhere, with the ‘*expect[ation]* that the Cyprus government’ – or a proxy – ‘would buy [them] back’ (Herscher 2001: 148 – original emphasis; see also Van der Werff 1989: 11).

Both the Greek Cypriot antiquities department and cooperative Greek Cypriot individuals (and later Greek Cypriot foundations), like A. G. Leventis (and his Foundation), have bought back looted antiquities from dealers (Karageorghis 1990: 6; 1998: 15; 2000: 217). Indeed, there is evidence that Greek Cypriot ‘officials had already had dealings with Dikmen’ (Hofstadter 1994: 62), long before they used the German police to catch him.

Since 1974, there have also been clandestine activities, the Greek Cypriot secret service employed to “rescue” artefacts and smuggle them from the areas under Turkish Cypriot administration to the areas under Greek Cypriot administration. This became public knowledge when agent Stephanos Stephanou was caught by Turkish Cypriot police, during their raid on Turkish Cypriot antiquities smugglers (Christou 2007a; 2007b); Stephanou had been ‘retrieving’ icons and artefacts for Church and State (Christou 2007c; 2007d).

The way these clandestine activities came to light undermines the claim that if the Greek Cypriot administration didn’t ‘salvage’ artefacts, they would be lost (Karageorghis 2000: 217). In addition, this evidence undermines not only the Hellenist assertion that ‘an official state, Turkey, plunders and detains the cultural treasures of another state, Cyprus’ (Anagnostopoulou 2000: 37; see also Leventis 2000: 146), but also the alternative perception of an ‘ordinary non-ideological criminal ring’ plundering the island (Hofstadter 1994: 227).

Neither the Turkish Cypriot administration, nor the Turkish state, nor even the Turkish army, *per se*, “plunders” northern Cyprus; the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot nationalist gangs that do, however, are incredibly powerful and constitute a “deep state”, similar to the Greek and Greek Cypriot nationalist deep state that operated throughout the island between 1960 and 1974. Thus, when Turkish Cypriot journalist Kutlu Adalı reported the Civil Defence Organisation’s ‘illegal raid’ of St. Barnabas’s Monastery, the Turkish deep state assassinated him, and no-one was held responsible (Irkad 2000).

Conclusion

This research has shown how the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot paramilitaries’ conflict caused the explosion of looting on the island, and enabled the Turkish/Turkish Cypriot deep state’s use of the illicit antiquities trade once it had exploded. It has also shown how the Greek Cypriot administration, Greek Cypriot archaeologists and Greek Cypriot private antiquities collectors’ collaborative “rescue” of looted artefacts actually funded the looting between 1963 and 1974 (as well as more generally funding the fighting).

Moreover, the evidence has demonstrated that the structure of the trade has remained fundamentally the same since 1974. The Church-and-State, collector-and-archaeologist collaboration has ultimately funded those Turkish nationalist extremist organisations destroying Greek Cypriot homes and churches, and repressing Turkish Cypriot resistance.

More evidence needs to be gathered to understand the communities' roles in the trade, and to expose clandestine antiquities acquisition and its human cost; but the most important response to the available evidence is for archaeologists and collectors to stop funding looting and destruction by "rescuing" looted artefacts.

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