

BYZANTINE NICOSIA
650-1191



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CHAPTER II

BYZANTINE NICOSIA
650-1191**Introduction**

In early 1091, or shortly before this date, a revolt by the troops stationed on Cyprus, and led by Rhapsomates, erupted against the Byzantine government. The description by Anna Komnene in her *Alexiad* of the ensuing military campaign to oust the rebel and recover the island for the Empire leaves no doubt that by this date Nicosia was the base of the provincial administration.¹ When the Lusignan kingdom was established on Cyprus in the late 12th century, Nicosia was again chosen to be the seat of royal power and the Latin Church hierarchy. This decision is very telling as far as the state of Cypriot towns towards the end of Byzantine rule is concerned. On the one hand it shows that the more obvious choice, namely Famagusta, with its harbour on the east coast facing the Crusader States where the Lusignans maintained substantial interests, was not sufficiently developed yet.² More importantly, however, it suggests that Nicosia was already provided with the infrastructure of a capital city in terms of both buildings and economic and other functions, leaving no other option to the new regime but to establish itself there. The period that preceded these events is therefore crucial to the history of the city.

Cyprus was still a reasonably prosperous province of the Late Roman Empire in the mid-7th century when it fell victim to the Arabs' first naval expeditions after their swift conquest of Palestine and Syria. A short period of Arab rule was followed in 688 by the establishment of a curious status (usually referred to as the 'condominium') whereby the island's taxes were to be shared between the Caliphate and the Empire.

This obscure period of neutrality lasted until 965 when Byzantine troops re-established imperial rule. After more than two centuries under Constantinople, and following the seven-year rule of the island's self-proclaimed Emperor Isaac Komnenos (1184-1191), Cyprus was rather accidentally but irrevocably lost to the Empire in May 1191, when captured by Richard Lionheart during the Third Crusade.

The history of Nicosia during this long period has not attracted much attention.³ This is largely due to the dearth of evidence, both archaeological and textual, affording minimal insights into the evolution and topography of the Byzantine settlement. The lack of archaeological material is not difficult to explain: Nicosia was greatly developed under the Lusignans, obliterating much of the earlier fabric, while later on the construction of a new fortification wall by the Venetians in the 16th century required the destruction of large parts of the town's southern sector that may have included buildings of the Byzantine period. It is also related to the continuous occupation of the site through to our days, a factor that has hindered the undertaking of major archaeological investigations.⁴

The paucity of source evidence is not limited to Nicosia; it concerns the whole of Cyprus for the early Medieval period and is also characteristic of most Byzantine provinces. The bulk of the surviving documentation on Medieval Byzantium emanates from Constantinople whose chroniclers and historians expressed little, if any interest at all in the affairs of the provinces, unless an exceptional event, such as a threat to imperial power or the state's stability, was deemed important enough to be recorded. As we saw above, it is in the context of such an incident that we first hear of Nicosia as the administrative capital of Cyprus in the late 11th century. This state of affairs does not allow the

1. *Topographical map of Byzantine Nicosia*

1. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001, 261-63 and Leib 1967, vol. 2, 162-63; for the dates of the rebellion and its suppression, see Cheynet 1990, 97-98 and, for a revised chronology, Frankopan 2004.

2. Although Famagusta is mentioned in the 7th-century story of Philentolos (Halkin 1945, 63), it is not recorded again until the 11th century, in an Arabic cosmographical treatise (*Book of Curiosities*, Bodleian Library, Department of Oriental Collections, MS *Arab. c.* 90, fol. 36b); it appears shortly thereafter, in the Crusader period, in an anonymous pilgrim's account (12th century?) advising prospective travellers that "the shortest way to the Holy Land is from Famagusta" (Stewart 1894, 17) and in accounts of the events of 1191 (Paris 1897, 356; Stubbs 1864, 199). It is also mentioned as a city ("Famagosta ciuitas") in an early 13th-century navigation manual (Gautier Dalché 1995, 129, 171; on the date, see Jacoby 2007, 685-86). According to Wilbrand von

Oldenburg (1211) it had a good harbour but was only slightly fortified ("non multum munita") (Laurent 1864, 182; Cobham 1908, 14).

3. George Jeffery has nothing to say about Byzantine Nicosia in no fewer than 80 pages devoted to the history of the city and its monuments (Jeffery 1918, 18-100), while Rupert Gunnis does not fare much better (Gunnis 1936, 26-78). Maratheftis, in his monograph on the urban development of Nicosia, concentrates mainly on the events of 1191/92 as far as this period is concerned (Maratheftis 1977, 35-45). The best available introduction to the subject can be found in the *Μεγάλη Κυπριακή Εγκυκλοπαίδεια* vol. 9, 93-94. For the city's emergence and the wider historical context, see now Metcalf 2009, 511-16.

4. As we shall see below, however, some recent rescue excavations are yielding promising material that leads one to hope that such work will be carried out with more frequency in the future.

2. Late Antique mansion known as "Thuilerie", Salamis/Constantia: plans of the complex in the 5th century and in the Medieval period

reconstruction of a narrative relating the city's history. What will be attempted below is an assessment and interpretation of the limited and mostly circumstantial evidence, the ultimate aim being to provide answers to two main questions that need to be posed concerning pre-Lusignan Nicosia: first, when, and most importantly, why was the Byzantine provincial administration established there? And second, how important was the town by the time of the Third Crusade and what functions did it fulfil within the island's economy and society?

The capital cities of Cyprus in Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique times had been coastal settlements with as good a harbour as nature provided the island with. The choice of capital seems to have been dictated not so much by the settlement's position within Cyprus itself, but more by considerations related to the economic or political links of the island with the surrounding mainland. Thus, Paphos, nearer to Alexandria than any other Cypriot port, became the base of Ptolemaic rule despite its relative isolation from the rest of Cyprus. It maintained its administrative role throughout most of the Roman period until the mid-4th century when it was superseded by Salamis/Constantia, on the island's east coast, facing Syria-Palestine.⁵ The latter was also the

island's metropolitan see, a function that, as we shall see below, Nicosia was to inherit in due course.

Salamis/Constantia

The rise of Nicosia as administrative and ecclesiastical centre is directly related to the fate of Salamis/Constantia after Late Antiquity. The mid-7th century Arab raids, which have been somewhat unfairly blamed for the demise of urban civilisation on Cyprus, affected Constantia too. The city was sacked and its main shrine, the cathedral of Saint Epiphianos, was probably damaged.⁶ There is, however, both archaeological and written evidence showing that, although no longer a provincial capital since the withdrawal of the Byzantine administration, Constantia was not abandoned until some time after the 8th century: in the 720s the English pilgrim Willibald spent several weeks there on his way to the Holy Land; a few decades later, the archbishop of Cyprus related to the prelates gathered at Nicaea for the Ecumenical Council of 787 a recent miracle that had occurred in a church dedicated to the Virgin in Constantia, apparently still an inhabited settlement.⁷ Contemporary archaeological evidence corroborates the source information: the excavation of the so-called "Huilerie" complex has shown that, although the opulent Late Antique mansion lay in ruins, people



5. Kyrris 1984, 21-22 discusses the possibility that Salamis may have served as capital for short periods in Roman times too; see also Mitford 1980a, 1309-12. On the Hellenistic and Roman capital of Cyprus, see Michaelides and Pilides p. 34 above.

6. The sacking is reported by Theophanes the Confessor in his early 9th century chronicle (Boor 1883-1885, vol. 1, 343-44) and in later Syriac

sources (Palmer 1993, 174-75), while the destruction of St Epiphianos is mentioned in a much later but usually reliable source, namely the 13th-century Armenian version of Michael the Syrian's chronicle (Oberhummer 1903, 34).

7. Wilkinson 1977, 126; Mansi 1901-1927, vol. XIII. 78-80; also Dikigoropoulos 1965/66, 268.



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were still living on the site which they developed with the construction of dwellings and an olive press, occupied at least until the mid-8th century (Fig. 2).⁸ A lamp found at the city's Gymnasium perhaps suggests some activity or at least occupation of the site in the same period, while a 9th-century lead seal discovered during the excavation of the basilica of Saint Epiphanius in 1959 and belonging to an imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of the Kibyrrhaiotai (the Byzantine *theme* on the south coast of Asia Minor) may suggest that Constantia was at that time still a settlement of some importance, maintaining contacts with Byzantine officials outside the island.⁹

This was definitely no longer the case by the 12th century, however, when the aqueduct supplying Constantia with water from the springs of Chytroi/Kythrea had ceased functioning: by that date one of the 7th-century inscriptions, put up to commemorate the completion of parts of the work, had been taken away presumably together with other stone blocks from the ruined aqueduct and was used in the construction of the church of the Theotokos at

nearby Trikomo (Fig. 3).¹⁰ During the same period architectural elements were being removed from the abandoned Campanopetra basilica to decorate the monastery of Saint John Chrysostom at Koutsovendis and were even exported beyond the island's shores.¹¹ The German pilgrim Wilbrand von Oldenburg's account of his visit to Cyprus in 1211 confirms that the city lay in ruins ("civitas destructa"),¹² although the pilgrimage shrines of both Saint Barnabas outside the city and Saint Epiphanius in its centre were being rebuilt and maintained throughout the Medieval period, the latter admittedly on a much reduced scale compared to its large late 4th-century predecessor.¹³

Early Medieval Nicosia

According to Constantine Porphyrogenetos' *De Thematibus*, Cyprus came briefly under direct Constantinopolitan rule during the reign of Basil I (867-886) and became a *theme* for at least seven years under a *strategos*.¹⁴ Leaving aside the issue of the precise date of this interlude, which remains difficult to establish, it also remains unclear where the short-lived Byzantine administration was based. Could Nicosia have fulfilled such a role at this early date? Notwithstanding the general demographic decline all over the Byzantine Empire after the 7th century, the settlement perhaps grew somewhat during the early Medieval period with populations abandoning the insecure coastal cities.¹⁵ If a protected inland base was required for the administration of the island *theme* in the 9th century, then perhaps Nicosia was by this time sufficiently important to be selected among the settlements of the central plain.

In the past the growth of settlements away from the coastal regions of Cyprus had been prompted by the availability on or very near their site of natural resources whose exploitation supported the local economy: Tamasos was situated in a mining area, while Chytroi/Kythrea grew around the most important water springs on the island. The lack of important natural resources in the area of Nicosia, on

3. Church of the Panagia, Trikomo: east wall with the 7th-century inscription from the Salamis aqueduct

8. Or perhaps even later, according to Argoud, Callot and Helly 1980, 50-53.

9. Dikigoropoulos 1961, Appendix II no. 58 and Metcalf 2004, 286 no. 271; see also Megaw 1986, 508-509 and Metcalf 2009, 418-22.

10. Sodini 1998, 628; the inscription is built into the masonry of the east wall, to the south of the apse.

11. Papacostas 2007, 112.

12. Laurent 1864, 182; Cobham 1908, 14.

13. Papacostas 1999a, vol. 2, 19-20, 27-28, Papageorgiou 2008, 47-50. The wider region of Constantia did not lay abandoned either, for in 1197 its revenues were disputed between the Latin archbishop of Nicosia and his

suffragan of Famagusta (Hiestand 1985, 363; see also Coureas 1997, 85). Although the ancient harbour is thought to have silted by Medieval times, an anchorage and, intriguingly, a fortress are nevertheless mentioned in the 11th-century *Book of Curiosities* (Bodleian Library, Department of Oriental Collections, MS *Arab. c.* 90, fol. 36b), while as late as 1425 the Mamelukes managed to disembark "at Constantia" (Darrouzès 1958, 240).

14. Pertusi 1952, 81; for brief discussions of the issue, see Bryer 1970, 22-23, Guillou 1998, 22, and Asdracha 2005, 201-202.

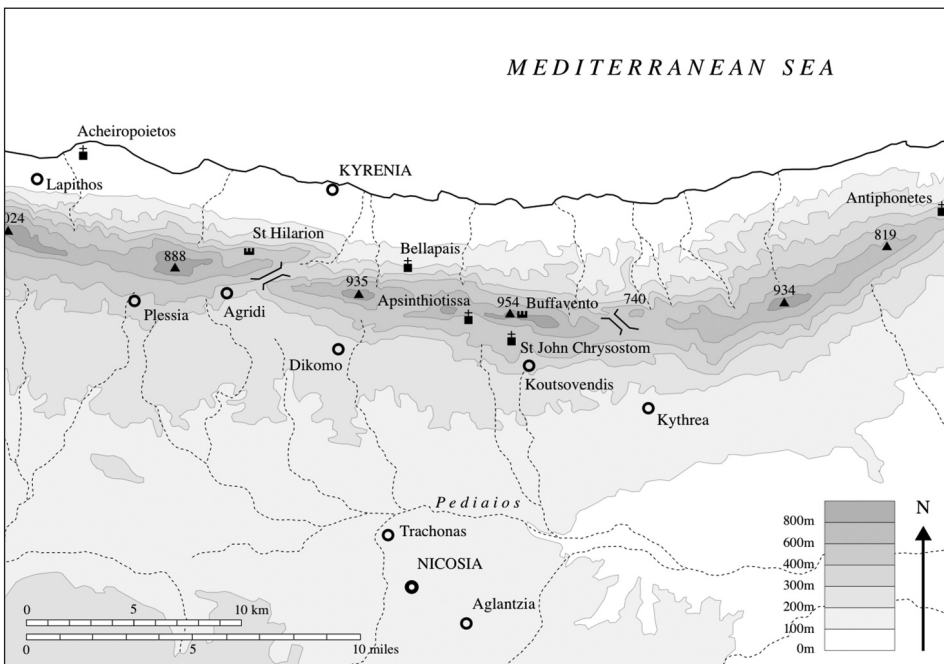
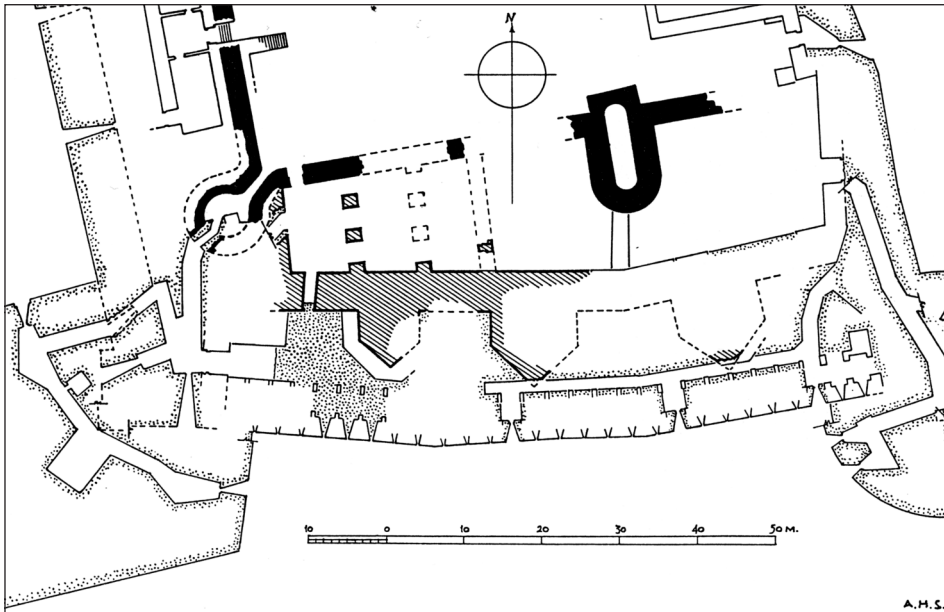
15. As already suggested in Maratheftis 1977, 40-42.

4. Kyrenia castle: plan of the southern sector with pentagonal towers
5. Map of the region of Nicosia

the other hand, and the chronology of its development, point towards a different reason, clearly related to the gradual decline of the coastal settlements and a shift towards an inward-looking economy in the early Medieval period. Indeed, the growth of a settlement on a site such as Nicosia's is surely indicative of the degree to which the nature of the island's economy changed after Late Antiquity.

The nearest harbour to landlocked Nicosia is Kyrenia on the north coast (22 km away), guarded by a fortress whose surviving buildings date largely from the Lusignan and Venetian eras. Excavations along the south part of the castle, however, have revealed an earlier defensive wall with three pentagonal towers at close intervals (10-12 m). Although the interruption of the excavation in the mid-1950s did not allow the investigation to reach the foundations, where conclusive dating evidence might be found, it would seem that the structure dates from the early Medieval period and could very well be a 9th-century addition to an already existing earlier fort (Fig. 4).¹⁶ The closest parallel to Kyrenia's defences is provided by the inner circuit at Ankara: here, a multitude of pentagonal towers at equally short intervals (8-11 m) dot the walls of the citadel, dated on historical grounds to the reign of Constans II (641-668) and, according to several surviving inscriptions, rebuilt under Michael III (842-867) in 859.¹⁷

Kyrenia, although cut off from the rest of Cyprus by the wall-like Pentadaktylos mountains that run along the island's north coast, is accessible from Nicosia without much difficulty through a low (381 m a.s.l.) but narrow mountain pass that was to play a leading role during many a military campaign in later centuries (Figs 5, 6). Kyrenia was also easily accessible from those territories still under Byzantine control, and in particular from the south coast of Asia Minor and its most important city and naval base, Attaleia, from where communications with Cyprus are well documented during this period.¹⁸ Although clearly not a major commercial port (Limassol and Paphos were far more important, at least in the 12th century), Kyrenia was important for contacts related to the administration and military affairs of Byzantine Cyprus. In view of its proximity to Nicosia and its primary role as the entry point to the island from southern Asia Minor, it is conceivable that the strengthening of its fortifications may be related to the undocumented rise of Nicosia during the early Middle Ages and especially at the time of the *theme*, and therefore well before the reintegration of Cyprus within the Empire in the 10th century.

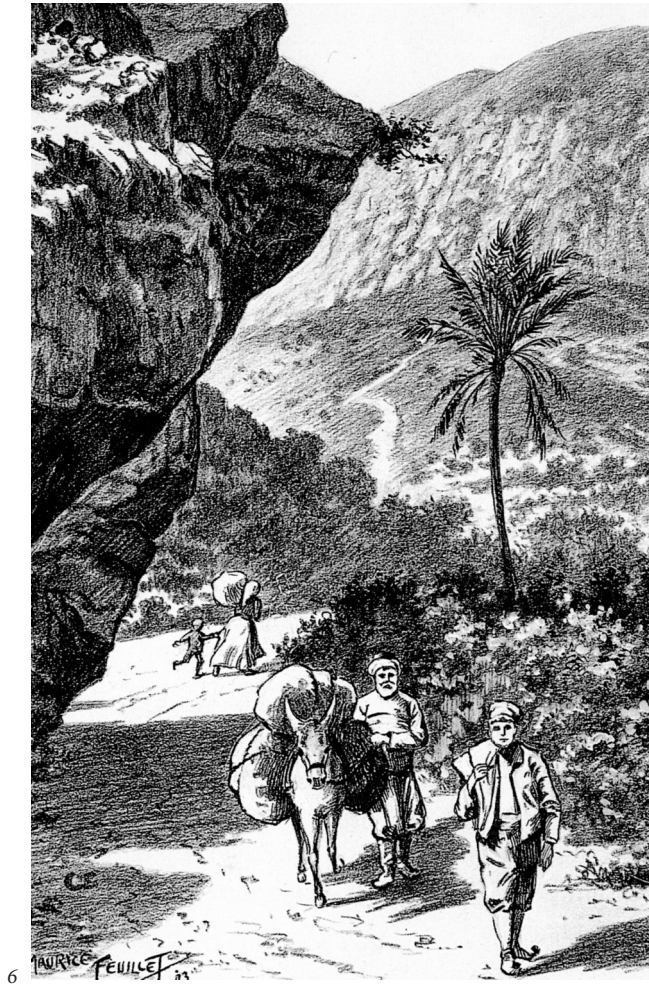


16. Megaw 1985, 210-14; a date after 965, based on historical grounds, has also been suggested (Laurence 1983, 215); the prow-shaped pentagonal tower was extensively used in Byzantine military architecture and became its hallmark, especially during the 7th to 10th century period.

17. Foss and Winfield 1986, 30-31, 133-36, 143-44, with earlier bibliography.

18. Galatariotou 1991, 48-49 and Malamut 1988, vol. 2, 545-47; also Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 68-69.

6. Kyrenia pass, by
Maurice Feuillet, 1903



Topography - Location

There should be little doubt that after 965 the newly arrived administration was established at Nicosia. It is fairly certain that by this time Constantia, at best an agricultural settlement over the ruins of the once flourishing city, was not in a state to recover its earlier role and clearly no attempt was ever made to revive the old capital. Nor was a purpose-built new capital created, although the foundation of new settlements serving either administrative or military purposes is adequately documented in Medieval Byzantium: after the destructive siege of Crete's capital Chandax, during the island's reconquest in 961, a new inland capital was built on top of a nearby hill, to the south. The new town, Temenos, never succeeded in superseding the old capital, however, which was eventually rebuilt and regained its previous status.¹⁹ In 11th-century Apulia several new fortified cities

(*kastra*) were founded in order to defend the border against the Lombards, the best-documented example being Troia, populated with settlers from nearby areas who were given incentives to move in, and where an episcopal see was also established.²⁰ In Cyprus there is no documented case of such new foundations, presumably because there was no need for them. Nicosia, an already existing settlement, was taken over and developed accordingly.

The reintegration of Cyprus in the Empire is treated very summarily in Byzantine sources.²¹ In view of the absence of documentary evidence, we are reduced to mere speculation concerning the reasons that prompted the choice of Nicosia as the new administrative capital. These must be the same as those that had led to the occupation of the site in the first place, and to the subsequent growth of the settlement. They are of course related not only to economic developments, as mentioned above, but also to the topography of the site. The easily tapped water table of the region and a combination of springs outside the town and wells within assured Nicosia's water supply. The springs of Kythrea, which in the past had supplied Salamis/Constantia, are not known to have been diverted to Nicosia, only a short distance (15 km) away. The city was obviously self-sufficient in water resources and this must have surely played a key role in its development.

For the first time the island's chief settlement was far from the coast. This is perhaps a unique case in the history of the islands of the Mediterranean basin. Nicosia lies on a low plateau (c. 140 m a.s.l.), to the east of the watershed separating the two halves of the Mesaoria, the island's central plain. Its distance from the east and west coasts (gulfs of Famagusta and Morphou, respectively) provided some immunity from seaborne attacks, while the Pentadaktylos range protected it from the not-so-distant north coast. Indeed, so secure did its inland position seem that no effort was made to fortify it until after the end of Byzantine rule. Wilbrand von Oldenburg's testimony suggests that in 1211 Nicosia was still not walled.²² This is also borne out by the events of May 1191, in which the island's capital played no significant role:

19. Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 193-96, 208; Tsougarakis 1988, 65-72.

20. Falkenhausen 1967, 135-36; Martin 1984, 94-95.

21. For the meagre information on the immediate post-965 period, see Papacostas 2002, 42-45.

22. "nullam habens munitionem" (Laurent 1864, 181; Cobham 1908, 14);

Malamut's claim (on which Cheynet 1995, 72 relies) that Nicosia was fortified after Rhapsomates' revolt is not based on any textual or archaeological evidence whatsoever (Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 252). On the claim (but lack of evidence) for the existence of earlier walls around Nicosia, see Michaelides and Pilides p. 53 above.

7. Saint Hilarion castle, looking east

Isaac Komnenos had preferred to send his daughter and treasury to the fortress of Kyrenia instead, deemed much more secure than Nicosia, which was simply handed over to Richard by the Cypriot magnates. The fort which stood in the city (it is attested one year later, in April 1192, when the Templar garrison barricaded itself in it and was besieged by an angry mob²³) was clearly not strong enough. It is possible that what Wilbrand von Oldenburg described some twenty years later as a recently built castle (“castrum”) is this Byzantine fort, perhaps strengthened after 1192.²⁴

The Byzantine expansion into Cilicia and Syria at the same time as the uneventful return of Cyprus into the fold of the Empire made the island secure and is surely the reason why its main urban centres remained only slightly fortified.²⁵ Thus, Cyprus does not appear to have benefitted from state investment in building projects such as the forts erected in neighbouring frontier provinces in the later 10th century.²⁶ The island’s strategic importance did not become obvious until the later 11th century, as a result of the Seljuk advance into Asia Minor and the region of Antioch, and the arrival of the Crusaders in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is also reflected in the increased interest shown by the imperial government in its protection from enemy attack during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118).

The lack of fortifications around Nicosia meant that its defence depended entirely on that of the most likely invasion route. When in c. 1095 Rhapsomates heard that the imperial troops sent to quell his revolt had already landed at Kyrenia, he chose to face them not in or anywhere near Nicosia, but on higher ground, almost certainly near the mountain pass through the Pentadaktylos.²⁷ The approaches to this

defile are still guarded by the castle of Saint Hilarion, built in the late 11th or early 12th century on a steep rocky outcrop to its west (725m a.s.l.) (Fig. 7).²⁸ The garrison at Saint Hilarion, together with that stationed at Buffavento on one of the peaks directly to the north of Nicosia (Fig. 8), kept an eye on the Kyrenia coast as well and could inform the military leadership in the provincial capital as soon as enemy ships appeared on the horizon. A further slight deterrent against attack from the north was the position of Nicosia on the east/south bank of the Pediaios, interposing an additional, albeit easily overcome, natural barrier between the town and the Kyrenia coast. Although turning its back to the sea by virtue of its inland location, the position of Nicosia on the Pediaios at the point where this comes closer to the mountain pass across the Pentadaktylos mountains and the harbour of Kyrenia below, shows that access to the sea was still of paramount importance (Fig. 5).²⁹

The rural settlements known to have existed along or near the Pentadaktylos pass attest to the importance of the road linking Nicosia to Kyrenia. Dikomo to the east is first recorded by Neophytos the Recluse in his description of the raid carried out by Renaud de Châtillon in 1155/56: after some initial success the Byzantine troops stationed on Cyprus were annihilated at a place called Choletrio, near Dikomo, by the invading force that presumably landed somewhere along the north coast before advancing through the pass towards Nicosia.³⁰ Agridi, at the southern entrance to the defile, and the now abandoned village of “Plaissié” (Plessia) near Pileri, further to the west, are both mentioned within the context of the civil war of the early 1230s whose decisive battle was fought near Agridi, betraying once more the military significance of the road.³¹ Another village near Pileri is mentioned somewhat earlier, in

23. In this context the castle is described as “feible” and “povre”; it must have contained a chapel, where the Templars attended mass before their sortie (*Recueil des Historiens des Croisades*, *Historiens Occidentaux* vol. II, 190).

24. Edbury 1991, 13; Galatariotou 1991, 50. Note, however, that Nicosia is described in the *Itinerarium*, perhaps anachronistically (the relevant section was probably written some time after the Third Crusade) as a very strong castle (“castellum quoddam firmissimum”: Stubbs 1864, 194); see the discussion of the problems concerning the date and authorship of this source in the introduction to the translated text by Helen Nicholson (1997, 1-21). On the Castrum of Nicosia, see Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel pp 137-38 below.

25. The evidence for fortifications in middle Byzantine Cyprus is summarised in Galatariotou 1991, 48-51.

26. On the conversion of the Late Antique shrine of Symeon the Elder Stylite at Qal’at Sem’an into a fort and the construction of other defensive

works in northern Syria, see Tchalenko 1953-1958, vol. 1, 242-47 and Sanders 1983.

27. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001, 262 and Leib 1967, vol. 2, 162; on the date, see Frankopan 2004.

28. Discussion of the date and the reasons which may have prompted the construction of St Hilarion and the other Pentadaktylos castles in Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 44-49.

29. The course of the branch of the river which used to cross the city centre was diverted in the 16th century: see Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel pp 116-17, 206 below.

30. Galatariotou 1991, 51-52, 187-88. Choletrio no longer survives as a toponym; it is, however, recorded in mid-16th century sources and is also marked as ‘Coletra’ on a map of c. 1570, to the south-west of Dikomo (Grivaud 1998, 175, 465).

31. Melani 1994, 184, 192; Raynaud 1887, 100, 101, 103, 106.





8. *Pentadaktylos* from Buffavento castle looking west towards Saint Hilarion: the Kyrenia coast is to the right, Nicosia on the left

the late 11th/12th-century inventory of the properties belonging to the monastery of the Theotokos of Krinia near Lapethos: “Kalaphates” has been identified by Gilles Grivaud with Kalapakki, on the south-west slope of the peak where the castle of Saint Hilarion stands.³²

The new Kyrenia-Nicosia axis marks a shift in the Medieval period towards the north-west, in the direction of Byzantium, in the same way that the transfer of the capital from Paphos to Salamis earlier had marked a reorientation from Egypt towards Syria-Palestine. But a road also linked Nicosia to the south coast: Rhapsomates, pursued by Manuel Boutoumites, took it in his failed attempt to reach Limassol in order to board a ship and flee to Syria.³³ Unlike Kyrenia, whose harbour was important mainly for administrative and military purposes, Limassol was the island’s most important commercial port during the last century of Byzantine rule, and it is only natural that it would have been linked to the capital.³⁴

The development of Nicosia surely reflects the economic importance of the Mesaoria, the island’s breadbasket and foremost agricultural region. By the 12th century the plain, and in particular its eastern part, was heavily settled and boasted a dense network of rural settlements.³⁵ The exploitation of Mesaoria’s resources, which the existence of these settlements testifies to, betrays the parallel growth of Nicosia, undoubtedly their principal outlet.

Toponym

One of the most fascinating sources for the history of Medieval Cyprus, Etienne de Lusignan’s expanded French version of his earlier Italian *Chorograffia*, published in 1580, claims that a mosque had been built in Nicosia at the time of Charlemagne (768-

814).³⁶ This unconfirmed report, by an author writing several centuries after the event he describes, has prompted the suggestion that Nicosia may have been founded by the Arabs in order to house the garrison left to secure the island for the Caliphate during its brief period of rule in the second half of the 7th century.³⁷ Archaeological finds at Paphos, however, suggest that the Arab garrison was most probably established there: several (mostly unpublished) Kufic inscriptions have been excavated at the sites of the Chrysopolitissa and the Limeniotissa basilicas.³⁸ What is more, the toponymic development of Nicosia does not betray any Arab involvement whatsoever.

Nicosia could not have been an altogether new foundation of the early Medieval period anyway, for there is ample archaeological and textual evidence demonstrating that its site had been occupied in early Christian times too. It is presumably of this early settlement, the successor to ancient Ledra whose name it maintained, that Triphyllios, mentioned in several Late Antique sources, became bishop in the 4th century.³⁹ It is also in these same sources that variations of the city’s later name, Leukosia, appear for the first time, inaugurating, as George Hill put it, a toponymic puzzle.⁴⁰ Triphyllios’ near-contemporary Jerome calls him “Cypri Ledrensis sive Leucontheon episcopus”, while the 7th-century *Life of Saint Spyridon*, also a contemporary of Triphyllios, refers to him as bishop “τῆς τῶν Καλλινικησέων πόλεως ἦτοι Λευκῶν Θεῶν”.⁴¹

The vast majority of middle Byzantine authors, including Anna Komnene and John Kinnamos, call the city Λευκουσία,⁴² most probably deriving from λευκή οὐσία (white property/estate) as suggested by Terence Bruce Mitford.⁴³ This variant of the toponym first appears in some versions of the 6th-century

32. Grivaud 1998, 170, 175-76; on the date of the inventory, with further bibliography, see Papacostas 1999b, 480.

33. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001, 262 and Leib 1967, vol. 2, 163.

34. Papacostas 1999b, 497-500.

35. These are first recorded in a papal document of 1196, enumerating the properties of the newly established Latin cathedral of Nicosia, and in a later land grant (1234): Milea, Peristeronopyi, Maratha, ‘Auramique’ near the latter; Sandalaris, Styllos, Sivouri and Sinda to the east; a place called ‘Briem’ presumably in the same area; and further west, closer to Nicosia, Asha, Aphanis and Ornithi (Coureas and Schabel 1997, 86, 165). In addition, a few other settlements - Mora, Paradisi - are recorded in other sources of the period (list with bibliography in Papacostas 1999a, vol. 2, 137-58).

36. “Ancienement y auoit vn Temple de Mahomet, edifié du temps que les Sarrasins occuperent ceste Isle, par l’espace de quinze ans, viuant

l’Empereur Charlemagne” (Lusignan 1580, 31v).

37. Mango 1976, 12 n. 45; Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 252; the Arabic sources mentioning the building of a new city for this purpose are discussed in Oikonomakes 1984, 271ff.

38. Megaw 1986, 513-15, and 1988, 145-47; Christides 2006, 53-58, 113-22.

39. Halkin 1948, 11-12. On St Triphyllios, see also Triantaphyllopoulos and Christodoulou 2007, and Michaelides and Pilides pp 54-55 above.

40. Hill 1938/39, 379-81; source references also in Oberhummer 1925.

41. Van den Ven 1953, 44*-45*, 63, 77, 162.

42. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001, 262 and Leib 1967, vol. 2, 162ff.; Meineke 1836, 178-79; mentions also in a manuscript colophon of 1193 (Constantinides and Browning 1993, 95) and in the early 13th-century *typikon* of the monastery of Makhairas (Tsiknopoullos 1969, 16).

43. Mitford 1980b, 35 n. 9.

geographical list of cities in the Eastern Empire known as the *Synekdemos of Hierokles*.⁴⁴ The earliest surviving manuscripts of this work, however, date from the 12th century only, strengthening the suspicion that the inclusion of “Leukousia” (together with Tremithus), may be nothing but a Medieval interpolation. “Leukousia” appears again in another geographical work partly derived from Hierokles, namely the 10th-century *De Thematibus* of Constantine Porphyrogenetos;⁴⁵ it also occurs in the problematic *notitia* 3, a list of ecclesiastical dioceses probably compiled in the 9th century, perhaps indicating that there may have been a bishop still based there at that time, despite the total lack of information on individual local prelates after Triphyllios.⁴⁶ Other Medieval authors echo earlier sources by employing names presumably no longer widely used: Neophytos the Recluse in his encomium of Saint Diomedes (written in c. 1176) uses the variant Λευκούπολις, while the late 13th-century patriarch of Constantinople Gregory II of Cyprus chooses to call the town, which he had left for a better education and a career abroad, Καλλινίκησις, the name used in the *Life of Saint Spyridon*.⁴⁷

The earliest Arab author to mention the city is the 12th-century geographer al-Idrisi, who calls it “Lifquṣīya”,⁴⁸ while in western sources the toponym first appears slightly later as “Nicosia”, initially in accounts of the conquest by Richard the Lionheart but also in early 13th-century texts, with countless variant spellings (Nicosia, Nichosia, Leccosum, Cossia etc.)⁴⁹ clearly derived from a corruption of the Greek name.⁵⁰ Although the evolution of the toponym does not shed much light on the historical development of the settlement, the increasing frequency with which it

appears in sources clearly betrays the importance acquired by Nicosia in the middle Byzantine period as opposed to its obscurity in Late Antiquity, illuminated only very dimly by the figure of Triphyllios.

The Metropolitan See

The development of the cult of Nicosia’s only known early Christian bishop in the Medieval period may reflect the slow rise of the settlement itself. Triphyllios starts appearing in monumental decorations, among better known Cypriot prelates, in the 12th century, first at Asinou and later at Lagoudera (Fig. 9) and Antiphonetes.⁵¹ The 12th-century *synodikon* (episcopal list) of the Church of Cyprus also includes the saintly bishop. A 14th-century *synaxarion* (church calendar of saints’ feasts) contains his only surviving *vita*, first composed in the 12th or perhaps the 13th century. François Halkin bases his dating of this text on the terms used to describe Nicosia as not only the greatest city of Cyprus, but also its metropolitan see. This highlights an important issue that needs to be elucidated, namely the transfer of the seat of the primates of the Church of Cyprus from Salamis/Constantia to Nicosia. I shall argue below that this happened much earlier than usually assumed, and at any rate before the 12th century.⁵³ Most modern literature maintains that the archbishops of Cyprus moved to Nicosia only in the early Lusignan period, either from Salamis/Constantia or from Famagusta, where they had allegedly transferred their base after the demise of the former.⁵⁴ The basis for this assertion is Etienne de Lusignan’s statement that in c. 1212 or 1216 Queen Alice requested that the pope transfer the Archbishopric from Famagusta, where it had been moved because of the destruction of Salamis, to

44. Honigmann 1939, 38.

45. Pertusi 1952, 80.

46. Darrouzès 1981, 234, 338.

47. Delehayé 1907, 212; Yiangou 1999, 335; Galatariotou 1991, 35-36; Lameere 1937, 177.

48. Idrisi, vol. 5, 643-44.

49. See for example Morgan 1982, 118ff.; Mas Latrie 1871, 272, 285, 303; Paris 1897, 48ff.; Stubbs 1864, 192ff., and 1868-1871, vol. 3, 110; Laurent 1864, 181; Horoy 1879-1880, vol. 2, 610.

50. Nicosia clearly has nothing to do with the town of the same name in central Sicily, which al-Idrisi describes briefly as a populous fortified place; late 11th-century Greek documents from Sicily already attest to the existence of a river “τῶν νικοσαίων/νικοσέων” while 12th-century Arabic sources also contain references to the “Nahr’an Niqū’sīn” (Amari 1880/81, 110; Cusa 1868-1882, 290, 318; see also Hill 1938/39, 380).

51. Mouriki 1993, 242-43. A church dedicated to St Triphyllios in Nicosia is attested in a manuscript note of 1396 concerning the ordination of a deacon (Ambros. gr. 399), and is also mentioned by Florio Bustron in the 16th century (Darrouzès 1956, 40; Mas Latrie 1886,

26). The saint’s relic, however, was kept at the Hodegetria according to Leontios Makhairas (Dawkins 1932, vol. 1, 34). See Michaelides and Pilides pp 54-55 above.

52. Halkin 1948, 20, 24-25; Halkin’s assertion that the Russian monk Daniil (who visited Cyprus during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in c. 1106-1108) lists among the relics venerated on the island those of Triphyllios “who was baptised by the apostle Paul” is based on Khitrowo’s French translation of Daniil’s account (Khitrowo 1889, 9; also in Oberhammer 1903, 68). Although this is indeed what the vast majority of the surviving manuscripts tell us (none earlier than the 15th century), other versions of Daniil’s text correctly have Philagrios, a disciple of St Peter, instead of the 4th century Triphyllios (see the translated text in Wilkinson 1988, 125-26 and Garzaniti 1991, 79-80).

53. As already implied in Englezakis 1996, 103.

54. Louis de Mas Latrie (1847, 855) appears to be the first to have expressed this view; he was then followed by several later authors (Hackett and Papaioannou 1923-1932, vol. 2, 18; Kirmitses 1940, 91-96, and 1983, 7; Hill 1940-1952, vol. 1, 286; Maratheftis 1977, 41; Kyrris 1967, 5; and more recently Papadopoulos 1995, 600).

9. Fresco of Saint Triphyllios, church of Panagia of Arakas, Lagoudera, 1192



Nicosia, and to hand it over to the Latins.⁵⁵ The same observation that was made above, concerning the alleged construction of a mosque in Nicosia in early Medieval times, also applies to this piece of information: our author lived several centuries later, and no earlier source confirms his statement. The evidence presented below will hopefully prove beyond doubt that Nicosia served as archiepiscopal residence at least since the 12th century.

Let us first start with some evidence from which one might surmise that the island's metropolitans in the middle Byzantine period were still based at Salamis/Constantia. The *notitiae* (lists of ecclesiastical dioceses) of this period maintain the set-up of their earlier versions, listing Constantia as the island's metropolitan see; their conservative character is well known, however, and does not necessarily reflect contemporary reality.⁵⁷ Similarly, the list included in

the treatise on the patriarchates by the 12th-century canonist Neilos Doxopatres is hardly more reliable, for it clearly copies that of the 7th-century geographer George of Cyprus, with Constantia maintaining her primacy.⁵⁸

There is also further circumstantial evidence. In the *vita* of Bishop Demetrianos of Chytroi/Kythrea, composed shortly after the saint's death in the early 10th century, we still hear of "the archbishop of the metropolis of the Salaminians".⁵⁹ The mid-11th-century Georgian *vita* of John and Euthymios, founders of the monastery of Iveron on Mount Athos, refers to the metropolitan see of Cyprus as the "see of Saint Epiphanius", which was offered by Basil II to Euthymios in c. 1019-1025 after its occupant had died.⁶⁰ And it is the Salaminian Epiphanius and not Triphyllios of Nicosia who is depicted on two out of five known 11th and 12th century lead seals belonging

55. The date differs in the Italian and French editions of the text (Lusignan 1573, 31r., and 1580, 85r.-v.). Kyprianos, who summarizes the same information, gives yet another, much later date (1255: Kyprianos 1788, 31-32).

56. The reliability of Lusignan's account of these events is discussed by Schabel 2002/2003, 345-46, and 2006, 262-64.

57. Darrouzès 1981, 338; Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 361-62.

58. Parthey 1967, 285.

59. Grégoire 1907, 228; on the date, see also Rydén 1993, 200.

60. Martin-Hisard 1991, 112; also Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 114-15 and Papacostas 2002, 58-59.

10. Church of Saint Barnabas, Salamis/Constantia: view from the west



10

to archbishops of Cyprus – the remaining seals bear figures of Saint Stephen and the Virgin.⁶¹ What the above evidence shows is of course nothing more than the attachment of the metropolitan see, regardless of where the archbishop resided, to its glorious early history with Epiphanius of Salamis at the helm of the island's Church. We have seen that archaeology provides unambiguous evidence that the old provincial capital and archiepiscopal seat was already in ruins by this period. Although this does not exclude the possibility that its two surviving pilgrimage shrines (Saint Epiphanius, Saint Barnabas, Fig. 10) may have housed the metropolitan in early Medieval times,⁶² as we shall see below this cannot have been the case in the 11th/12th-century period. For positive evidence concerning the archiepiscopal seat in the Comnenian period we have to turn to the earliest version of the *synodikon* of the Church of Cyprus. This is ascribed to the 12th century and survives in a manuscript copied in the following century, where the list of episcopal sees is headed by Nicosia.⁶³ More evidence comes from one

of the manuscripts of the French continuation to William of Tyre's chronicle: relating the events of 1191, when Isaac Komnenos was being pursued by Richard the Lionheart, this source describes Nicosia as an Archbishopric and the island's main city.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it has to be noted that this source is considerably later than the events it describes and therefore the reference to Nicosia in these terms may very well be an anachronism prompted by its later status as a Latin archiepiscopal see and capital of the Lusignan kingdom.

A more compelling argument concerns the archbishops of Cyprus themselves and their involvement with events on the island. Although our episcopal lists (p. 104, Appendix 1) are far from complete, they clearly show that the administration of the Cypriot Church was not a purely local affair.⁶⁵ Metropolitans often came from beyond the island's shores,⁶⁶ appointed by the emperor. The case of the Georgian Euthymios of Iveron, who declined Basil II's offer of

61. Metcalf 2004, 372-74.

62. As suggested in Megaw 1974, 78.

63. Gouillard 1967, 112.

64. "arcevesché et ... la maistre cité de Chypre" (*Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux* vol. II, 167).

65. Lists in Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 371; Papageorgiou 1995, xxiv-xxv; and

Guillou 1998, 28; see also Englezakis 1996, 90-93.

66. This is also true of some provincial bishops: known 12th century examples include Basil Kinnamos of Paphos, the Cretan Barnabas of Lapethos, and possibly Niketas Hagiostephanites of Tamasos (Mango 1976, 7-8; Tsougarakis 1993, 126).

the vacant see, was mentioned above. When, having declined the metropolitan see of Kiev, Hegumen Leontios of Saint John the Theologian on Patmos was offered that of Cyprus by Manuel I (1143-1180), he also turned it down, to become patriarch of Jerusalem instead.⁶⁷ Other equally renowned prelates though took up the challenge, and one is known to have subsequently given up his post: the case of Nicholas Mouzalon, whose accession to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in 1147 was successfully challenged because he had earlier abdicated from the metropolitan see of Cyprus (c. 1110), is well known. Later in the century the Cypriot see was again occupied by a prelate of non-Cypriot origin, John the Cretan.⁶⁸

It is hard to imagine that prelates from outside the island, sometimes belonging to prominent families of the Empire, would reside and direct the affairs of the Cypriot Church from either the ruins of Salamis/Constantia, or from the still insignificant settlement at Famagusta; they had to be present at the very centre of power, the seat of the provincial administration, also entrusted to members of distinguished families (p. 104, Appendix 2).⁶⁹ Mouzalon's invective against the governor of Cyprus Eumathios Philokales suggests that the two strong-minded men were in frequent contact, something that would not have been easy unless the archbishop resided in Nicosia too.⁷⁰ On his way to the Holy Land and his Latin-held see, the aforementioned Leontios of Jerusalem spent the winter of 1176/77 in Cyprus in order to inspect the properties of the Holy Sepulchre on the island. During his stay he was invited by Archbishop Barnabas II to celebrate mass together with other prelates (Theophylact of Tremithus and Barnabas of Lapethos). Barely a decade later Isaac Komnenos was crowned emperor by the patriarch, elected at his orders by the bishops of the Cypriot synod for this very purpose.⁷¹ Our sources fail to give any details on the venue for these two events, but we can be fairly sure that both the patriarchal mass and the coronation cannot have taken place anywhere else but in the island's provincial capital, where the

archbishops must have had their seat and cathedral. Finally, a marginal note dated to 1135/36 in an 11th-century manuscript of homilies by John Chrysostom contains the most unambiguous evidence of all (Par. Gr. 625 fol. 282v.). It is worth translating here in its entirety:

“This volume, that is the *Hexaemeros*, was bought by the most saintly hegumen of the monastery of Kykkos the monk *kyr* David, from the monk Luke Ablepes, residing at the archbishopric, before the most pious priest Panagiotes and the calligrapher and custodian of Saint Sophia *kyr* Leon Aigaiopelagites who procured this volume too to the above-mentioned hegumen in three-headed *nomismata* of the appropriate cut of our mighty emperor, that is eight *hagiogeorgata*, in the reign of *kyr* John Komnenos the *porphyrogenetos* and [when] Constantine [was] *doux* of Cyprus in [the year] 6644 [A.D. 1135/36]”.

This note was published twice, first by Vitalien Laurent who was mostly concerned with the numismatic information contained therein, and more recently by Costas Chatzipsaltes, who picked up the various details concerning the otherwise unattested hegumen David and the *doux* Constantine.⁷² Neither author, however, commented on what is the most significant contribution of this short text as far as the history of Cyprus is concerned. The place where the transaction took place is not named, although this was obviously on the island. But the mention of Saint Sophia, whose custodian (*prosmonarios*) was one of the witnesses,⁷³ leaves no doubt that this was Nicosia, for nowhere else on the island is a church with this dedication attested in Medieval times. The unusual dedication of Nicosia's Latin cathedral to Saint Sophia was long suspected to have been inherited from an earlier Greek shrine. Our manuscript note contains the only mention of the latter in a source of the Byzantine period and confirms this assumption.

Even more importantly, however, the mention of the Archbishopric, whose bureaucracy the monk Luke

67. Tsougarakis 1993, 2-6.

68. Malamut 1988, vol. 2, 511-12 with bibliography; see also Chatzipsaltes 1988, 349-51 on John the Cretan.

69. Mango 1976, 7; Cheynet 1995, 73; also Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 202.

70. Mango and Hawkins 1964, 339; Papacostas 2007, 73-74.

71. Tsougarakis 1993, 124-26; Hill 1940-1952, vol. 1, 313 n. 1; also Englezakis 1996, 646-47.

72. Laurent 1951, 97-98; Chatzipsaltes 1988, 347; on the *doux*

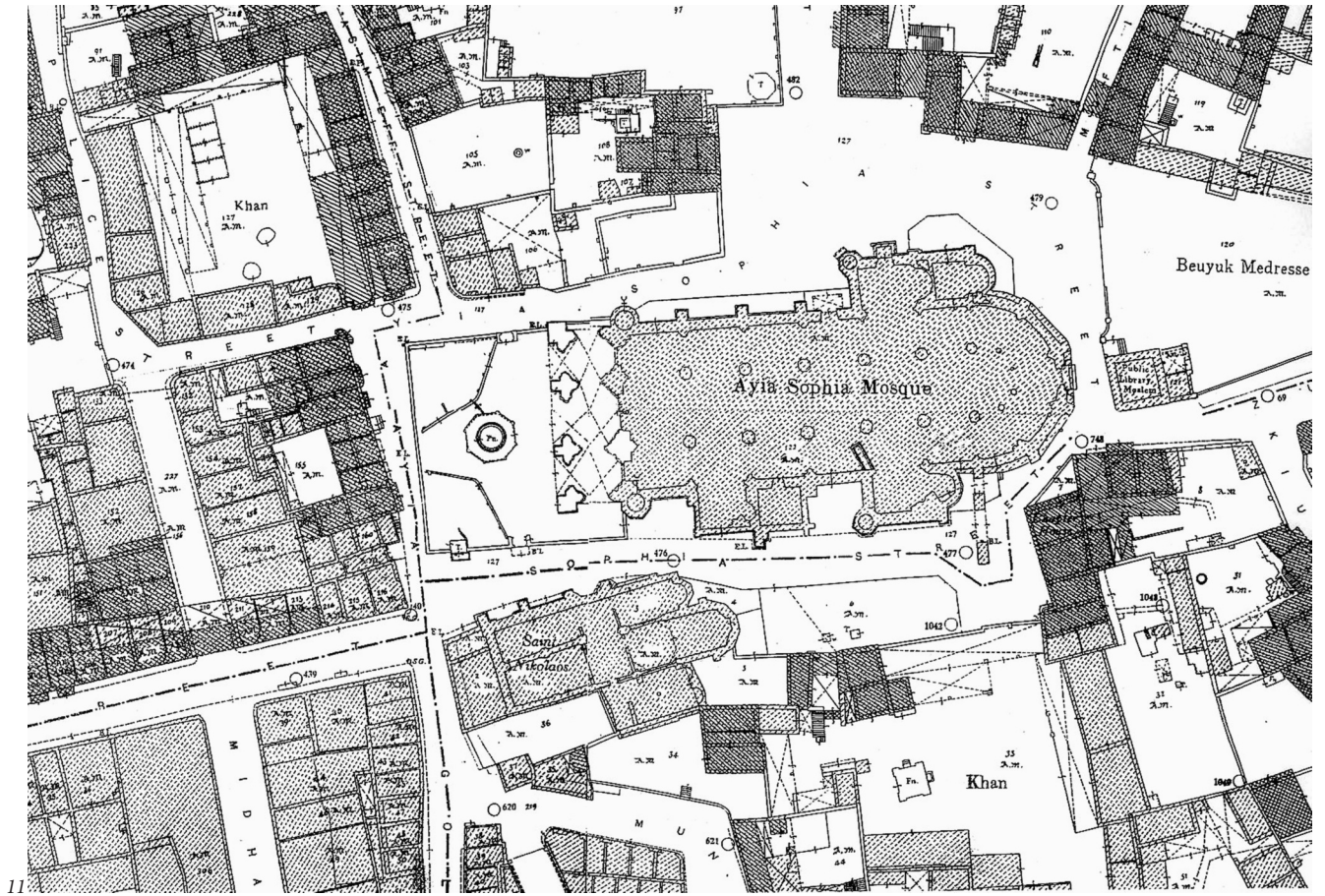
Constantine, see Cheynet 1995, 76 n. 47.

73. According to Laurent's interpretation of the text, there was only one witness, namely Leon Aigaiopelagites, who was a priest of the church of All Saints, a calligrapher and custodian of St Sophia; “Παναγιώτη“ however, which Laurent transcribes with a lower-case π as an epithet (“of All Saints”), is more likely to be a Christian name. For the office of *prosmonarios*, see Mango 1991, 299.

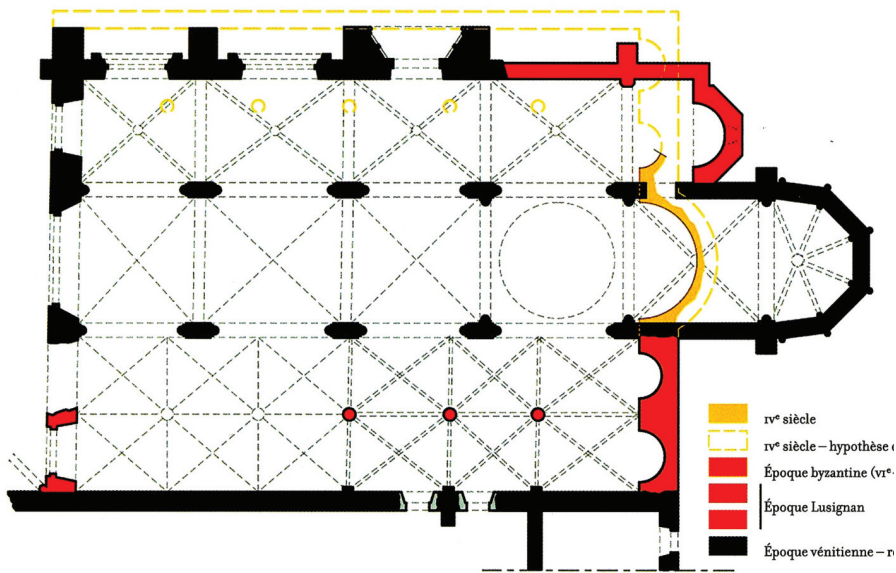
11. Plan of the cathedral complex showing Saint Sophia and the Bedesten/Hodegetria (marked Saint Nikolaos)

12. Bedesten/Hodegetria: plan of the church showing building phases

13. Bedesten/Hodegetria: view of the main apse with the porch of Saint Sophia in the background



12



13

14. *Saint Sophia: view from the north-east*

presumably served, implies that Nicosia was by this date the seat of the metropolitans of Cyprus. Thus, the above note provides a secure *terminus ante quem* in 1135/36 for the presence of the Archbishopric in Nicosia. The island's most ancient and revered institution undoubtedly followed the secular administration when this was established there. When exactly the move took place, however, is impossible to determine.⁷⁴ The fortunes of the Church of Cyprus between its return from the ill-fated adventure on the shores of the Sea of Marmara in c. 700 and the 10th century remain little known, despite the patchy evidence for continuous activity throughout these centuries.⁷⁵

Churches, Monasteries and Properties

The manuscript note examined above implies that the Byzantine cathedral of Nicosia was dedicated to Saint Sophia. I have suggested elsewhere that the long lost building must have stood on the site of the ruinous late Medieval church known today as the Bedesten, right next to the Gothic Saint Sophia (Figs 11-13). The Byzantine cathedral was probably a domed (perhaps cross-in-square?) structure with a belfry, incorporating parts of an earlier, Late Antique basilica. Following the establishment of the Lusignan kingdom and of a Latin Church on the island in the 1190s it was taken over by the Latin clergy and used as their cathedral until perhaps the middle of the 13th century, when work on the Gothic Saint Sophia was sufficiently advanced to allow the consecration of the new building. In the meantime the Greek prelates were driven out of their urban seat, although in 1260 they were granted use of a church within Nicosia dedicated to Saint Barnabas, which the popes recognized as a cathedral. The latter is still recorded as a Greek cathedral in 1305.⁷⁶ The following decades witnessed the rise of the Orthodox Church and it is during this period that the Greek prelates surely consolidated their presence in the city, for by the 1340s they had reclaimed the Byzantine building on

the site of the Bedesten. The Byzantine Saint Sophia became once more their cathedral church, now dedicated to the Hodegetria according to the sources of the period.⁷⁷ It subsequently witnessed successive building campaigns lasting through the Venetian era and was converted into a market after the Ottoman conquest, before its final abandonment and collapse (Fig. 13).⁷⁸ This tentative reconstruction of the events surrounding the original location, takeover and subsequent fate of the Byzantine cathedral can only be tested of course if the site of the Bedesten is properly investigated.⁷⁹ It also raises the question of the neighbouring large site occupied by the Gothic Saint Sophia (Fig. 14). This presumably belonged to the Orthodox Church too, and must have changed hands at the same time as the Byzantine cathedral. Its use before 1191, however, remains unknown.

The dedication of Nicosia's Byzantine cathedral to Saint Sophia is not surprising. Many a provincial Byzantine city in both Late Antiquity and the Medieval period adopted it for their main shrine, following of course the example of Constantinople.⁸⁰



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74. A comparable problem exists concerning the transfer of the metropolitan see of Crete from Gortyna to Chandax in the middle Byzantine period (Tsougarakis 1988, 234-36; Malamut 1988, vol. 1, 350-52). In the case of Pamphylia, the old metropolitan see was transferred from Perge to Syllaion by the 9th century, before moving in 1084 to Attaleia, the region's most important city, a major naval base and capital of the Kibyrrhaiotai *theme* (Foss 1996, 20).

75. Dikigoropoulos 1965/66, on this period in general. On the Sea of Marmara incident, see Englezakis 1996, 105-34. It has been argued, without any supporting evidence, that Famagusta may have served as archiepiscopal seat right after the return from Cyzicus in 699 (Kyrris 1967, 5).

76. Papacostas 2005, 14-15, Leventis 2005, 355. Nothing is known about the location, architecture and date of this church.

77. The dedication to the Hodegetria for the Greek archbishop's church is first recorded in 1343 (*Acta Clementis VI*, 40).

78. For a detailed discussion of the evidence, see Papacostas 2005; most of the source references to the Hodegetria are collected in Leventis 2005, 364-65.

79. This looks increasingly unlikely in view of the recent (2007-2008) ill-advised and irreversible interventions to the fabric of the structure, carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme with EU funding.

80. Papacostas 2005, 11, with further bibliography.

In addition to Saint Sophia, however, Nicosia boasted a number of other landmarks that recalled the Byzantine capital.⁸¹ As far as one can tell, their occurrence was the result of unrelated developments and not of a conscious choice at a particular point in time. Thus, the town's main thoroughfare in late Medieval times was called Mese (like the main street of Constantinople), first attested in 15th-century sources that may repeat a nomenclature inherited from the Byzantine period.⁸² There was a monastery of Saint George of Mangana too, discussed below. The church of the Virgin Hodegetria has also been mentioned in this context. As we just saw, however, its dedication is not recorded until the 1340s and there is no indication that it goes back to the pre-Lusignan era; indeed, if the scenario proposed above for the structures on the Bedesten site is accepted, then the Hodegetria dedication is clearly a 14th-century development.⁸³ A recurrent feature of our evidence for the churches and monasteries of Byzantine Nicosia is that they are very often recorded only in later sources. This is, of course, a result of the relatively abundant source material preserved from the Lusignan period, compared to what has survived from the Byzantine centuries. Below we shall be concerned with foundations attested until the middle of the 13th century only. The relevant texts unfortunately provide no information whatsoever on their early history; the decision to ascribe them to the Byzantine period is therefore based mainly on how soon after the change of rule they are attested, and sometimes on their dedication.⁸⁴

A good example of both is the monastery of Saint George of Mangana. It first appears in the *diegesis* of the Kantara monks, martyred in 1231, and is frequently mentioned in various later documents.⁸⁵ It is rightly assumed that it was a *metochion* (dependency) of the monastery of the same name, founded at great expense by Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) in Constantinople,

although Cyprus is not mentioned among the places where the latter is known to have owned estates (near Ephesos, on Chios, in the region of Thebes, and possibly near Halmyros in central Greece). The Constantinopolitan monastery having been occupied by Latin monks after 1204, its Cypriot dependency must have been founded before this date and presumably before the change of rule on the island itself in 1191.⁸⁶

The extensive demolitions necessitated by the construction of the new fortifications of Nicosia in the 1560s wiped out all traces of the monastery, whose location remains uncertain.⁸⁷ According to 14th-century sources it stood outside the Lusignan walls and therefore at some distance from the core of the Byzantine settlement. Accounts of the siege in 1570 relate how the Ottoman artillery used the low hills to the south of Nicosia, including the hill of the Mangana monastery, in order to attack the town⁸⁸ and it is probably to be identified with the (monastic) complex of buildings shown to the south of Nicosia between "Strovilo" and "Aglangia" and marked with the initials S. Z. (San Zorzi) on the 1542 map of Cyprus by Leonida Attar (Fig. 15).⁸⁹ The excavation which started in 1999 at the proposed site of the new parliament building on PASYDY hill, to the southwest of the Venetian walls, has revealed three successive Medieval churches over a Late Antique basilica (?) and, pending the study and publication of the finds, may provide evidence for the identification of these structures with Mangana.⁹⁰ In spite of the uncertainty surrounding the identity of this site, its excavation is a most welcome development. Its prime importance for Medieval archaeology lies in the fact that not only is there a strong possibility that it may be identified with a relatively well-documented religious establishment with a Constantinopolitan connection, but, moreover, it is one of only a handful of major recent excavations in a Medieval urban context on the whole of Cyprus.

81. Megaw 1974, 80; Galatariotou 1991, 50.

82. Richard 1962, 126 and n. 4.

83. Papacostas 2005, 17.

84. It has been suggested that the 13th-century Cistercian nunnery of St Theodore may have taken over the site of an earlier Greek shrine (Edbury 1999, 6 n.17); apart from the evidence of the dedication, however, there is no other indication that this was the case. The location of the nunnery was established in 2004 after the discovery of a funerary slab belonging to an abbot of St Theodore on the site of the new buildings of the Supreme Court (see Flourentzos 2006b, and Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel p. 175 below)

85. Papadopoulos 1975, 327-28; Schabel 2001, 333-39, 340, 351-58, 360, 370; Coureas 1994. Source references collected in Leventis 2005, 368-69.

86. On the Constantinopolitan Mangana, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. 2, 1283-84 with bibliography; on its properties, Papacostas 1999a, vol. 2, 93-94.

87. The demolition is reported in Lusignan (1580, 32v.), although B. Nogiero's letter of 1567 that lists some forty destroyed churches does not include the monastery (Grivaud 1992, 290).

88. Lusignan 1580, 250r.; Cobham 1908, 82 and 133; Jeffery 1918, 28; Hill 1940-1952, vol. 3, 969; Grivaud and Patapiou 1996, 50.

89. Cavazzana Romanelli and Grivaud 2006, 94 fig. 28.

90. Preliminary reports in Pilides 2000, 686-87 and Flourentzos 2004-2005, 1678-79; for a plan, Pilides *et al.* 2003, fig. 1. See also the short account by D. Pilides in Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel pp 212-14 below.

15. Map of Cyprus by Leonida Attar, 1542 (Civico Museo Correr, Venice): detail showing the region of Nicosia



15

Indeed, the record of Medieval archaeology on the island is disappointingly poor: the few investigations undertaken in urban settlements in the past have either not been fully published yet (Chrysopolitissa and Saranda Kolones excavations at Paphos), or were merely the result of limited excavations that revealed only a small part of the structures discovered (Limassol mosque, Kyrenia castle). It is therefore a most welcome development that another extensive archaeological investigation, crucial for the history of Byzantine Nicosia, has been taking place since 2002 at the proposed site of the new Town Hall in the very heart of the city.⁹¹ This site has revealed (among buildings of various periods) two ecclesiastical structures with more than one building phase: Church A consists of a single-aisle *naos*, perhaps of middle Byzantine date, to which a south chapel was subsequently attached (after the middle of the 12th century). Church B was initially erected perhaps as a cross-in-square structure, probably in the middle

Byzantine period too, and was later rebuilt (in Lusignan times?) as a single-aisled church. Although it has not been possible so far to identify these churches with shrines attested in the written record, they do add valuable anchor points on the patchy archaeological map of the Byzantine city.

Together the two excavated sites provide a unique opportunity to study properly the finds and successive structural phases of several buildings that will surely shed new light and may allow novel insights into the development of Byzantine and Lusignan Nicosia. Despite their invaluable contribution, however, the city's Medieval history still suffers from a distinct lack of archaeological evidence, although there is no shortage of potentially very important sites that could be investigated. There is no better illustration of this frustrating state of affairs than the churches and monasteries mentioned below, which are known exclusively from the written sources.

91. For a preliminary report, see Violaris 2004 and Flourentzos 2004-2005, 1681-85, and 2006a, 2007a, 2007b. I wish to thank wholeheartedly the archaeologists in charge of both excavations for kindly showing me

around their sites (Despo Pilides in October 1999 and Yiannis Violaris in September 2005).

Besides the Constantinopolitan Mangana, other overseas establishments also owned properties on Cyprus and in Nicosia. The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is known to have possessed estates and a *metochion* on the island, although their location is not given in our source, which is none other than the *vita* of Patriarch Leontios, mentioned earlier. A dispute with the young bishop of Amathous over his appropriation of some properties in the mid-12th century, however, suggests that at least some of these were in the region of Limassol, although the patriarchate must have owned a property in Nicosia too, where Leontios stayed during his visit and where his colourful encounters with local tax officials surely took place.⁹²

The *diegesis* of the Kantara monks contains two more references to monasteries in Nicosia which we may safely assume are foundations of the Byzantine period.⁹³ The nunnery dedicated to the Theotokos and called “Μεγάλη Μονή” (Great Monastery) is not recorded in any other Medieval source and its location within the town remains totally unknown.⁹⁴ That of the Theotokos Pallouriotissa on the other hand, whose priest and *prosmonarios* was one of the Kantara monks, is mentioned in later sources too, which specify that it was also a nunnery. Like Saint George of Mangana, it was demolished in 1567 and, according to Bartholomeo Nogiero’s letter of that year, it stood in the area of the Davila Bastion (modern Municipality bastion).⁹⁵ The monastery referred to in the sources as “tou Petomeno”, on the other hand, was situated in the very heart of Nicosia. All we know about this establishment is that it had already ceased functioning by 1245, when the Latin archbishop granted houses which stood on its site to the children of Nicholas tou Petomeno, apparently descendants of the monastery’s founder.⁹⁶ The archbishop’s

jurisdiction over the site may suggest that this came to the possession of the Latin Church. Such a hypothesis is further enhanced by a later source, according to which the church called “Nostra Dona de Petomeny”, presumably a relic of the old monastery, was situated near the (Latin) Archbishopric,⁹⁷ next to Saint Sophia.

As far as parish churches are concerned, we have again to wait for the post-1191 period in order to find some limited information in the sources which usually fail to provide any clues concerning the location of these shrines.⁹⁸ During the rebellion against Templar rule in 1192 the insurgents are reported to have sought refuge in a church of Our Lady (“iglize de Nostre Dame”).⁹⁹ This may or may not be identical to a chapel dedicated to the Virgin (“capella Beate Marie”) and situated within a courtyard, recorded in a document of 1195 when it was granted by Amaury de Lusignan to the Temple.¹⁰⁰ The latter is surely distinct from the Greek church of the Theotokos where a certain Manuel was buried in 1235, according to his epitaph surviving in a letter of archbishop Neophytos I.¹⁰¹

The inventory of estates preserved in a papal document of 1216 and belonging to the monastery of Saint Theodosios in the Judean desert lists among its extensive Cypriot possessions (mainly in the southwest of the island) a church of Saint Nicholas in Nicosia. This was surely destined to cater for the needs of visiting monks from Saint Theodosios’ *metochion* and its numerous estates in the region of Paphos; it may very well have also functioned as a parish church. The Palestinian establishment owned other properties in town, presumably acquired before 1191. These included an orchard, some land and a hospital, probably for visiting monks too.¹⁰² Saint Theodosios would have required a base in Nicosia in

92. Tsougarakis 1993, 112-26; Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 137-38, vol. 2, 39.

93. Papadopoullos 1975, 321, 323.

94. It is clearly distinct from the homonymous male monastery in the diocese of Amathous mentioned in 1287 (Constantinides and Browning 1993, 157, with bibliography).

95. Lusignan 1580, 32v. (where Pallouriotissa is presumably one of the two demolished nunneries, mentioned on 31v. and 85r.); Richard 1962, 28; Grivaud 1992, 286, 305; also Papacostas 1999a, vol. 2, 114-15, and Leventis 2005, 372, for the source references. Nogiero was the chaplain of the Venetian governor of Cyprus and an eye-witness to the demolitions.

96. Coureas and Schabel 1997, 163; also Coureas 1997, 289. The patronymic is attested outside Cyprus too during the middle Byzantine period, for example in 11th-century Calabria (Guillou 1974, 174), although the origin of the Nicosia family should be sought within the island itself, perhaps in the region of Lapethos where a village called

Petomeni is recorded in the 15th/16th century (Grivaud 1998, 171, 466), or on the southern foothills of the Pentadakylos where the toponym is attested in modern times (near Sykhari and Dikomo: Christodoulou and Konstantinidis 1987, 989).

97. Richard 1962, 125, and 1986, 70 n. 31; see also Leventis 2005, 21.

98. It is not known in which Nicosia church took place the incident described by Constantine Manasses in his *Hodoiporikon* (1161/62), during which the Constantinopolitan emissary was compelled to strike a foul-smelling member of the congregation who refused to move away (Galatariotou 1991, 222-24, with further bibliography).

99. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades*, Historiens Occidentaux vol. II, 190-91.

100. Coureas and Schabel 1997, 141-42.

101. Darrouzès 1979, 30-31.

102. “apud Leccosum ecclesiam sancti Nicolai cum hospitali, pomeriis, terris et pertinentiis suis” (Horoy 1879-1880, vol. 2, 608-11; Richard 1986, 63).



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16. Church of the Chrysaliniotissa

17. Church of the Chrysaliniotissa: main apse

order to conduct its affairs with the provincial administration. Cyprus was after all the Byzantine province nearest to Palestine. Indeed, the presence of a Judean monastery in Nicosia may indicate that the Byzantine authorities maintained some involvement in the religious affairs of the mainland through their local representatives on Cyprus.

A different church of Saint Nicholas in Nicosia is recorded in the report of Marsilio Zorzi (Venetian *bailo* in the Crusader states), a document compiled in c. 1242-1244 and listing Venetian properties on Cyprus confiscated by the new regime shortly after 1192.¹⁰³ It is unclear whether this church was an older building granted to the Venetians, or if, as in the case of San Marco of Limassol, it was newly constructed for the use of their community. What seems certain is that the expropriations took place very soon after the establishment of Lusignan rule and that the Venetian landowners and merchants mentioned in the report had acquired their Cypriot properties, including the Nicosia church, during the second half of the 12th century, before the change of rule.¹⁰⁴ Not surprisingly, the location of both the Theodosian and the Venetian Saint Nicholas eludes us. It is unclear if either of the two can be identified with shrines having the same dedication and attested later.

103. Papadopoulou 1983, 314; Berggötz 1991, 190.

104. Papacostas 1999b, 487ff.

105. Coureas 1997, 242.

106. The often repeated claim that the Bedesten may have been dedicated to St Nicholas is unfounded; see Papacostas 2005, 16, and Leventis 2005, 285.

The Augustinian canonesses are known to have possessed a convent with a church of Saint Nicholas as early as 1237.¹⁰⁵ This may possibly be the Venetian church, confiscated and then granted to them, although Marsilio Zorzi's report, which usually gives the name of the new owner for each property, fails to do so in this case. The tentative identification of this church with another Saint Nicholas, that of the Order of Saint Thomas mentioned in the 14th century, and with the Bedesten,¹⁰⁶ remains uncertain to say the least. Equally uncertain is the relationship with other homonymous churches recorded in the 15th century, and with "Santo Nicolo" near the D'Avila Bastion (Municipality bastion), demolished in 1567.¹⁰⁷

Among the churches standing today in Nicosia only one seems to preserve parts of a building which may date from the middle Byzantine period. The Chrysaliniotissa stands on what was the north bank of the branch of the Pediaios which used to cross Nicosia, some 500 m to the east of Saint Sophia (Fig. 16). The building has undergone various alterations and extensions through the centuries, making its structural history difficult to disentangle. Its core is surely the earliest part. The main, polygonal apse rests on an earlier, round apse, next to which the lower courses of the earlier building's north-east corner are visible (Fig. 17), indicating that the latter was presumably a single-aisled barrel-vaulted or domed church.¹⁰⁸ As in the case of Saint Sophia, only



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107. Grivaud 1992, 293; source references to the various shrines of St Nicholas in Leventis 2005, 371-72.

108. On the restricted bibliography concerning the Chrysaliniotissa, see Papacostas 1999a, vol. 2, 22; for the later phases, see Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel p. 162 below.

excavation may shed more light by providing much needed evidence.

Despite its growth, 12th-century Nicosia, described as one of the three cities of Cyprus by al-Idrisi,¹⁰⁹ was probably not very densely populated. Surely the highest density of occupation occurred in its core, around the cathedral complex. The lack of a wall circuit allowed the settlement to spread among gardens and orchards, such as those belonging to Saint Theodosios of Judea and to the Crown domains, and perhaps to extend as far to the south as the PASYDY (Mangana?) hill, about one mile from Saint Sophia.¹¹⁰ Obviously there is no demographic data for this period, nor do we know anything about the island's total population.¹¹¹ Although the largest cities of the eastern Mediterranean during the Crusader period (Constantinople, Antioch) had populations considered large by Medieval standards and reaching tens of thousands, the average middle Byzantine town is thought to have been much smaller.¹¹² In the Venetian period Nicosia's population ranged from c. 15,000 in the early 16th century to 20,000-25,000 on the eve of the Ottoman conquest, following decades of sustained demographic growth.¹¹³ The number of inhabitants in the 12th century was almost certainly smaller, although it is impossible to tell by how much. As the island's administrative and religious centre, Nicosia attracted foreign residents. Those about whom we have most information are of course the Venetians, courtesy of Marsilio Zorzi's report.¹¹⁴ We have seen that the Venetian merchants of Nicosia owned a church dedicated to Saint Nicholas, together with its dependencies. Various individuals possessed houses in the city. They include Nicolaus Felus and

two members of the Sabatini family that also owned properties in the Troodos. The house belonging to Leonardus Sabatinus must have been rather sumptuous, for it was later used as a royal residence, while one of Johannes Sabatinus' houses is referred to as a "palacium".¹¹⁵ Wilbrand von Oldenburg described the dwellings of Nicosia in 1211 as being similar to those of Antioch in their interior decoration and paintings. This implies some degree of opulence, for according to the German pilgrim although the exterior of the latter was dirty, their interior was glistening with gold.¹¹⁶

Suburbs

Marsilio Zorzi's report does not provide any additional information on the buildings of Nicosia, in stark contrast to Limassol where the existence of a separate Venetian quarter and numerous buildings belonging to the Venetian community is recorded.¹¹⁷ It does nevertheless contain information on Venetian properties around Nicosia. Leonardus Sabatinus and Johannes Michaelis, the latter belonging to a family with extensive interests on Cyprus (at Limassol and in the southern Troodos), owned agricultural estates at "Misechilesi" (Kaimakli-Omorphita area) and Aglantzia, respectively.¹¹⁸ The growth of Nicosia's suburbs testifies to the rise of the town itself, and once more it is attested in the written rather than the archaeological record. The earliest reference to a settlement near Nicosia, namely Yeri to its south, occurs in a manuscript note: in October 1091, after Rhapsomates had already rebelled against the central government, the *magistros* Epiphanius Paschales donated an uncial gospel lectionary to the monastery of the Virgin Alypos "of Yeri", which he had founded

109. The other two being Limassol and Kyrenia (Idrisi, vol. 5, 634-44).

110. The crown domains are attested in the late 12th century when Isaac II (1185-1195) granted a garden to the monastery of Makhairas (Tsiknopoullos 1969, 16). On the evidence for Crown estates on Cyprus, see Papacostas 1999b, 481-82. There is no other information on the estates of Cypriot monasteries in Nicosia during this period, although the presence of the hegumen of Kykkos in town in 1135/36, when he bought the manuscript mentioned above, may indicate that the monastery owned property there; it is not known when the monastery of Hiereon/Hagia Mone in the mountains of Paphos acquired its Nicosia *metochion*, not attested until 1308 (Darrouzès 1951, 31).

111. For a discussion of demographic trends in middle Byzantine Cyprus with the stress on decline, see Grivaud 1998, 269-71 and, for a different assessment, Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 23-25; see also Coureas, Grivaud and Schabel pp 118-19 below.

112. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. 1, 607-608; Antioch is believed to have had as many as c. 40,000 and Constantinople c. 100,000 inhabitants (Russell 1985, 303-306).

113. Arbel 1984, 196-98.

114. The presence in Cyprus of other Westerners (Normans, Genoese),

as well as Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Maronites and Muslims is recorded in the sources, although not specifically in Nicosia (Papacostas 1999a, vol. 1, 114-17, 173-75, and 1999b, 482-84).

115. Papadopoulou 1983, 314-15, Berggötz 1991, 190; Papacostas 1999b, 495. A number of properties whose location is not specified in the report (an agricultural estate and mills owned by Nicolaus Zirinus, houses belonging to Marcus Matus and Martinus Pillizarius) may have also been located in Nicosia.

116. Laurent 1864, 172, 181; Cobham 1908, 14.

117. A public bath, a hospice, two churches, a baptistery, workshops, dozens of shops and houses, some of them concentrated around a square by the sea (Papadopoulou 1983, 309-12; Berggötz 1991, 184-88; see also Papacostas 1999b).

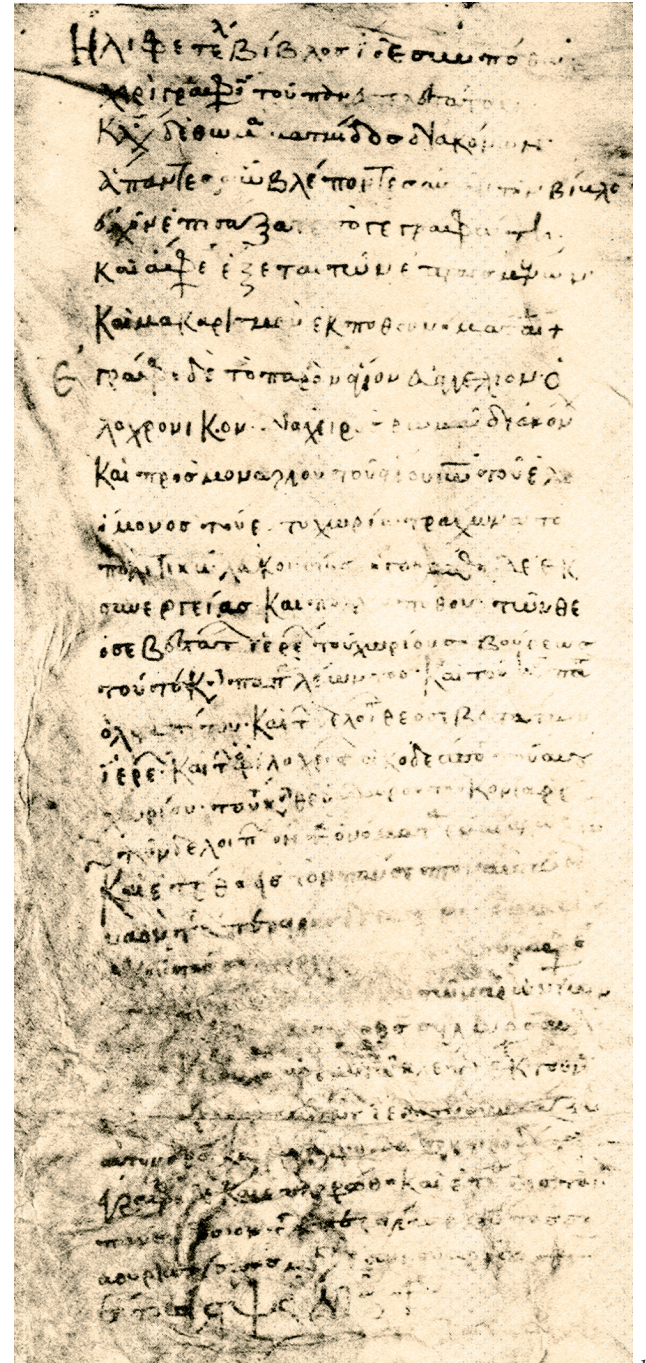
118. Papadopoulou 1983, 315, Berggötz 1991, 191. On the Michaelis, see Papacostas 1999b, 493-94. On the location of "Misechilesi", recorded in 16th-century documents, see Grivaud 1998, 186, 194, 461; it also appears in the mid-14th century as "Methokelepsi" in the accounts of Gautier IV, count of Brienne, who owned a property there (Poncelet 1934, 6, 17).

18. Subscription written by the deacon Thomas of Trachonas (1193): Berlin Staatsbibliothek MS 287 Fol. 51 (f. 272v)

presumably shortly before this date.¹¹⁹ Loukkomatis (in the territory of modern Aglantzia) is mentioned by Neophytos the Recluse as the village near which the pilgrimage shrine of Saint Diomedes stood. It was the priest of this church who had asked Neophytos to compose an encomium, telling him of the recent miracles performed by the saint.¹²⁰ Trachonas and its church dedicated to Saint John the Almsgiver (the 7th-century Cypriot patriarch of Alexandria) are mentioned in yet another manuscript (Fig. 18). This was copied by the deacon and *prosmonarios* of the village church shortly before January 1193, only a few months after the revolt against Templar rule (April 1192) and the establishment of Guy de Lusignan in Nicosia.¹²¹ More settlements in the periphery of the city are mentioned in sources of the early 13th century.¹²² The agricultural estate of “Pallorum” appears among the properties of the Latin cathedral in a papal letter of 1206, and is almost certainly modern Pallouriotissa to the east of Nicosia.¹²³ A place called “Crionerou” is recorded in 1210 in a document concerning a land grant to the Hospitallers. According to later sources it was located near Loukkomates.¹²⁴ Omorphita, or “Morfites” according to Medieval sources, is mentioned in 1239 as a village whose revenues were granted to the Latin Church.¹²⁵ The network of rural settlements that formed Nicosia’s immediate hinterland grew to the north, east and south-east of the town, within the curve of the main branch of the Pediaios. The river clearly formed a natural barrier which shaped the pattern of settlement around Nicosia.

Economic Function

The town must have functioned as an outlet for the agricultural produce of the central, and presumably the eastern Mesaoria as well. The economic role of



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119. Darrouzès 1956, 44. Although the manuscript note mentions Yeri merely as a toponym, it is very likely that the village of that name, first attested in the mid-15th century (Richard 1981, 105), was already in existence in the Byzantine period.
 120. “κώμη Λευκομιάδος/Λευκομιάδου” (Delehay 1907, 212-20, Yiangou 1999, 335-46; see also Grivaud 1998, 181, 462, and Michaelides and Pilides p. 96 n. 165, 99 above).
 121. Constantinides and Browning 1993, 95. Trachonas is mentioned again in 1232 as “une place & j. leu qui a nom le Trahona, où il y avoit jardins d’une part & une petite fosse” (Melani 1994, 182; Raynaud 1887, 100).
 122. The location of the agricultural estate of Timios Stavros, bought in 1233 by the Latin archbishop of Nicosia Eustorge de Montaigu, is unknown (Coureas and Schabel 1997, 154); it is very likely that it also lay near Nicosia.
 123. Coureas and Schabel 1997, 101. Note, however, that the monastery dedicated to the Virgin Pallouriotissa stood in the area of the Davila

Bastion, further to the south-west.
 124. Edbury 1978, 175. Kryonero is recorded again in the 15th and 16th century as a village (Richard 1962, 146; Grivaud 1998, 180, 190, 462).
 125. Coureas and Schabel 1997, 155. For mentions in 14th/15th century sources, see Poncelet 1934, 6; Richard 1962, 146, and 1981, 113, 119. The name of the village (“Morfites/Li omorfiti”) may suggest that its original settlers had come from Morphou as suggested in Menardos 1970, 61, perhaps during the period of Nicosia’s growth in middle Byzantine times. The evidence for Morphou’s occupation before the Lusignan period (when it is securely attested as a village: Richard 1983, 36) is limited to the Late Antique and early Medieval building phases of the church of St Mamas, identified during a brief excavation in 1958 (Dikigoropoulos 1961, 185) when a 12th-century coin hoard was also found nearby (Metcalf 1991, 238-39), and to the mention of the toponym “Theomorpo(u)” in a Greek colophon of 970/71 (Chatzipsaltes 1993, 245, 249-51) and in a Georgian manuscript of 977 (Garitte 1966, 401 n. 1).

19. and 20. *Catena on Job* written by the priest John Tarsites (c. 1107-1118): *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Gr. 1231 (f. 214r; ff. 456v and 457r)*

middle Byzantine Nicosia can be gauged from a number of additional elements. One such is the information concerning Venetian merchants in the second half of the 12th century. Landlocked Nicosia was clearly not as important to their mercantile activities as Limassol, with its harbour and hilly hinterland where Venetian families owned extensive agricultural estates. Their establishment in Nicosia, just like that of representatives of overseas ecclesiastical institutions, is probably related to the presence of the provincial administration there.

The distribution of stray finds and coin hoards of the second half of the 12th century found in and around Nicosia betray, according to Michael Metcalf, a new emphasis on its region with increased government expenditure, more money circulating, and consequently “a period of development and prosperity” for the town.¹²⁶ But the 12th century was also marked by a series of violent events which may have affected the island’s capital. A revolt during which the governor was assassinated erupted in 1123. In the 1150s/60s there were three successive raids by Renaud de Châtillon (1155/56), the Egyptian fleet (1158) and Raymond III of Antioch (1161). Then followed Isaac’s accession to power in 1184. The Byzantine expedition to recover the island for the Empire failed miserably when the Norman fleet hastened to Isaac’s aid. His unpopular rule was terminated by Richard’s conquest which was followed by revolts against English and Templar rule in 1191 and 1192.¹²⁷ Thus, the concealment of the hoards also shows the degree of insecurity in unfortified Nicosia during a period of important upheavals.

The presence of the provincial administration, the island’s magnates, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and several monasteries in Nicosia automatically created a demand, however limited, for luxury items. The town’s markets must have included workshops involved with the production of metalware. Despite the lack of surviving objects specifically linked with Nicosia, this is suggested by the reference to Isaac

Komnenos putting up gold and silver “statues” of himself in churches, certainly produced locally.¹²⁸ Isaac was able to set up a mint in Nicosia after all, indicating that the necessary know-how was available in town.¹²⁹ More tangible evidence for locally manufactured objects comes from the aforementioned excavation on the site of the proposed new Town Hall. Finds including a mould, an unfinished cross and picrolite fragments appear to indicate the operation in the course of the 12th century of a workshop next to one of the excavated structures (church B), producing small carved objects.¹³⁰

More evidence for the production of luxury items comes from manuscripts. Sometime between 1107 and 1118 the priest John Tarsites copied a *Job catena* for the *doux* of Cyprus, Leon Nikerites (Figs 19, 20). In July 1156 another priest, Manuel Boukellaros Hagiostephanites, completed a volume of gospels for Archbishop John the Cretan (Fig. 21); the same scribe had produced another gospel volume a few years earlier (1153) (Figs 22, 23). In 1193, Thomas, the deacon of Saint John the Almsgiver of Trachonas, copied a gospel lectionary for the priests and villagers of Sivouri in the eastern Mesaoria.¹³¹ Although only in the last case is the place where the scribe worked certain, it is very likely that the other manuscripts were also written in or near Nicosia. That manuscripts were indeed circulating in the town is shown by the example of the volume bought by the hegumen of Kykkos in 1135/36, mentioned above in relation to the metropolitan see.

Conclusion

Coming back to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, their tentative answers may be summarised as follows: The small Late Antique settlement on the banks of the Pediaios acquired some importance in the course of the early Medieval period. This was a result of a combination of factors: the decline of the island’s coastal cities after the 7th century coupled with the general conditions prevailing in the wider region after the appearance of

126. Metcalf 1991, 250; see also Metcalf 2009, 515-16.

127. Galatariotou 1991, 51-52 and Grivaud 1998, 270 with bibliography. On the revolts, see Richard 1997.

128. “...et, quod majoris dementiae erat, statuas ad imaginem et similitudinem suam de auro et argento fecit fabricari, et in singulis ecclesiis terrae suae eas adorari fecit” (Stubbs 1867, vol. 1, 261-62; see also Hill 1940-1952, vol. 1, 313 n. 1). In view of the undisputed decline of sculpture in the round after the early Byzantine period, these may

have been mere images of the new ruler, put up in order to be acclaimed (as suggested by Rudt de Collenberg 1968, 137 n. 1).

129. Henty 1969, 136-42.

130. Flourentzos 2004-2005, 1684.

131. Constantinides and Browning 1993, 68, 81-85, 95. See, however, the doubts expressed over the Cypriot origin of some of these manuscripts in Gamillscheg 1997, 241.

+ Ο τίχοι εἰς πλῆρω τον πῆτραυαι
 οἱ οἱ πῆ κῆ προνομή ποιμενικῶ δδύπο
 μακρῶ αἰσῆ δὲ χεπίσκοποη.
 οἱ πο/μῆρχοῖ κῆ πῆ αἰσῆ.
 οἱ πῆ αἰσῆ γῆ βῆ εἰμῆ δῆ πῆ βῆ μῆ.
 γῆ φδῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ φλῆ μῆ.
 οἱ κῆ πῆ αἰσῆ δῆ πῆ μῆ πῆ σῆ φ.
 εἰ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
 οἱ κῆ πῆ φῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
 οἱ πῆ πῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
 εἰ πῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
 οἱ χῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
 κῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ μῆ.
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21

και σκληροκαρδια. οτι τοις θεασμα
 μοις αυτομεγεταμομου κε επιτευσα.
 και ειπν αυτοις. πορευθεντες εις
 τον κοσμον παντα κηρυξατε το ευα
 γελιον πανσθηκτισει. οτι οτι γε υσασα
 βαπτισθεις σωθησεται. ο δε απιστη
 σας κατακριθησεται. σημειον δε της
 Π ιαυσασι ταυτα παρακολουθησει. εη
 τω ομοματι μδαιμονια εκκαλοισι.
 γλωσσαι σαλησουσι και μωσ οφεις
 αφησι. και θαυμασμοι τιπιασιν. ε
 μη αντου σφαιη. επι αφρωστω χει
 ρασ θηθησουσι. και καλωσθου
 σιν. ομωσικσ μη απολαλησαι αυ
 τοις. αμελιφθεις τον ομωσ. και ε
 και οσμεκ δδξιασ του αυ. εκει μοι
 δε δδξελθοντες. εκηρυξαμ παντα
 χου. του χυσμε ερωωποσ. και το
 λογον βεβαιωω
 ησ. διατωε
 παρακολουθω
 + τεχσνη τωσ σημειω. θω και τον
 καταμαρκι αμελω. - ατιονεταγε +

22

21. Subscription written by Manuel Boukellaros Hagiostephanites (1153): *New York, H.P. Kraus Four Gospels* (f. 341r)

22. *Four Gospels* written by Manuel Boukellaros Hagiostephanites (1153): *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barberinianus Gr. 449* (f. 118v)

23. Headpiece of the Gospel of Saint Luke; *Four Gospels* written by Manuel Boukellaros Hagiostephanites (1153): *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barberinianus Gr. 449* (f. 119r)

the Arabs on the Mediterranean scene, prompted a shift in the island's economy which became much more inward-looking. Only under such conditions could inland settlements, whose economy was based more on their role as markets for the agricultural produce of their immediate hinterland rather than on the manufacture and export of commodities, witness some growth. Nicosia's site enjoyed, moreover, the advantage of good water resources and a relatively protected location. It is the latter which may have encouraged the movement of populations from less secure coastal sites. By the 10th century the town was sufficiently developed to be selected by the Byzantine administration as its base. This decision bolstered considerable growth, especially during the Comnenian era.

What Richard found in May 1191 when he arrived in Nicosia was an unfortified town, seat of the secular administration (and for the last couple of years of a self-proclaimed emperor), fully integrated within the

island's settlement pattern and road system, with an agricultural hinterland dotted with rural settlements and access to the harbour of Kyrenia via a mountain pass protected by an impregnable castle. It was also the seat of the island's Church and boasted a cathedral dedicated to Saint Sophia, in addition to numerous other churches, monasteries and properties belonging to both overseas establishments and foreign merchants that testify to its development.

It consequently fulfilled a key role within the island's economy that is strongly suggested by the numismatic evidence. Guy de Lusignan and his successors had clearly no other option but to make it their capital.

Tassos Papacostas



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF METROPOLITANS OF CYPRUS,
8th-12th CENTURY

(according to Papageorgiou 1995 with emendations*)

Theodore I	8 th century
John I	8 th century
Damianos	8 th century
Sophronios I	8 th century
Theodore II	8 th century
Thomas	8 th century
Constantine II	c. 783-87
Christopher	8 th -9 th century
Theophanes	9 th century
Alexios	9 th century
Epiphaios III	c. 870
Eustathios	c. 890
Basil	late 10 th -early 11 th century
Nicholas Mouzalon	c. 1110
John II the Cretan	c. 1152-1174
Barnabas II	c. 1175
Sophronios II	c. 1191

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF GOVERNORS OF CYPRUS, 965-1191
(based on Cheynet 1995 with emendations**)

Theodotos Diogenes (strategos)	late 10 th -early 11 th century
Theophilos Erotikos (strategos)	c. 1042/43
Constantine (katepano)	11 th -12 th century
Michael (katepano)	mid-11 th century
Nikephoros Melissenos? (katepano)	mid-11 th century
[Nikephoros Botaneiates?	c. 1060]
Michael (katepano)	c. 1060-80
Leon Pleures? (doux)	c. 1075-80
Elpidios Brachamios (doux)	c. 1080-85
[Manuel Boutoumites? (doux?)	late 11 th century]
[George? (doux?)	late 11 th century]
Constantine Katakalon Euphorbenos (doux)	c. 1085-90
[Rhapsomates?	c. 1090-95]
Eumathios Philokales (doux)	c. 1095-1102/3
Constantine Katakalon Euphorbenos (doux)	c. 1103
Leon Nikerites (doux)	early 12 th century
Kamytzes (doux)	before 1110?
Eumathios Philokales (doux)	c. 1111-12
Constantine (doux)	c. 1135/36
John Komnenos (doux)	c. 1155
Alexios Doukas Bryennios (doux)	c. 1160
Alexios Kassianos (doux)	between 1152-74?
Andronikos Synadenos (doux)	before 1172
Kyriakos (doux?)	c. 1176
(Isaac Komnenos	1184-91)

* Both this and the following list are tentative: the dates and chronological sequence of incumbents are both uncertain, especially in the numerous cases where the evidence is restricted to the sigillographic record. Particularly problematic or dubious cases appear in square brackets [].

** The same uncertainties exist here as for the metropolitans of middle Byzantine Cyprus.

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