

THE VARYING GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS, RECORDED BY THE TRAVELLERS SINCE 23 B.C.

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Abstract

Island of Cyprus could be well claimed to be the most visited place and best cartographically documented island in the world due to its location on the main maritime passage way from Europe to Holy Land and end of Silk Road to Europe. The island's strategic importance through its situation at the cross-roads of Europe, Asia and Africa explains Cyprus's turbulent history and the importance of its ports and cities.

A German archaeologist wrote in 1880, "He who would become and remain a great power in the East must hold Cyprus in his hand. That this is true, is proved by the history of the world during the last three-and-a-half millenia, from the time of Thutmes II of Egypt to the days of Queen Victoria."

This foresight or advise is still valid even in the 21st Century.

Since the Phoenicians (10th to 8th Century B.C.), Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Ptolemies, Romans, Byzantine, Arabs, English (Richard I the Lion Heart), Frankish (French), Genoese (partly), Venetian (Italian), Ottoman (Turkish) and English ruled the island. During these periods names of the cities, towns, villages, ports, mountains, hills, rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, lakes, capes and similar geographic places kept changing.

Introduction

Sometimes when reading a manuscript written down by a traveler dated back to medieval, it becomes very hard to understand what happened where because of the rapid change of the names due the different back grounds and languages of governing bodies and their forcibly change of names of the places on the island. In addition to this factor, the language-wise back ground of the traveling authors, which number to around one hundred different personalities and fifteen different languages also effected the differently pronunciation and recording of the geographic places on their notes.

Going through the existing manuscripts as from 23 B.C., maps of the island of Cyprus published since 16th Century and books written in medieval times, nearly 1000 different versions of the names of cities, towns and villages of Cyprus found due to the differently country-wise and language-wise originated travelers.

This research and compilation of these names will ease the problem of understanding the historical topics written in different languages during different ruling periods.

Maps

One of the first geographic manuscripts mentioning the name of Cyprus is Strabo's "Geographica" [1] dated back to 23 B.C. and Claudius Ptolemeus's "Geographice Hyphegesis" written in Greek dated 160 B.C. [2]. They both define the names of the cities and capes of Cyprus.

According to Herodotus, Aristogoras of Militus convinced Spartan King Cleomenes to assist the Ionians fighting against the Persians in ca 500 B.C. by pointing out to him the route to Susa on a map engraved on a copper plate [3]. This map is supposed to be the first map of island of Cyprus and the towns of Paphos, Soloae (Soloï), Lapheto (Lapithos), Cerinia (Keryneia), Citari (Kythrea), Salamina (Salamis), Cito (Kitium), Amathus (Amathus), Curio (Curion), Palephato (Palaepaphos), Tamiso (Kokkinotrimithia) ve Thremitus (Nicosia) are marked and the distances between them are indicated.

In Europe till the second half of 13.th century no outstanding progress was achieved in cartography. Especially in the western Europe, as of the other scientific studies, the cartography was also in the hands of clergy and they were drawn behind the walls of monasteries and bishoprics. These mappers, who were originally monks, abbots or monastic people, were collecting the necessary information mainly from the travelers or pilgrims and secondly from the mariners whenever they had the chance to meet them on the land.

The first map showing Cyprus alone is the map of Venetian mariner Bartolemmeo, dated 1480 AD. After the rumors of Ottoman preparations for an attack to Cyprus were widely spread, the maps showing the island of Cyprus with details and very close to real shape started to circulate.

Publications and Manuscripts of the Travellers

Cyprus as mentioned previously, were under the effect and pressure of the civilizations around the Mediterranean since early ages due to its very important location, being in the middle of the trade road between East and West, being on the roads to Holy Land and due to reasons originated from its unique geography.

When the "List of the names" attached to this paper is studied, it can be seen very clearly and amazingly that the name of the island of Cyprus has lots of different variations since the early ages.

These different and varied names are "Acamantis", "Acamas", "Acantida", "Achaman-tide", "Achametide", "Aerosa", "Amathus", "Amatusa", "Amathusia", "Aphrodite Cypris", "Aspelia", "Aspellia", "Astimono", "Carastis", "Carastoni", "Cerasi", "Cerastin", "Cerastis", "Ceraunia", "Cethim", "Cethin", "Cethina", "Chetim", "Chetima", "Chitim", "Cipir", "Cypre", "Colinia", "Collinia", "Colonia", "Copper", "Cripton", "Cytherea", "Crytono",

“Cypiria”, “Cypris”, “Cypros”, “Crypta”, “Crypton”, “Cryptus”, “Kerastia”, “Macaria”, “Machara”, “Macharia”, “Marchara”, “Maxalia”, “Minois”, “Paphia”, “Qibris Adasy”, “Salamina”, “Salaminia”, “Spelia”, “Spekeia”.

The number of sovereigns ruled and accordingly the different languages spoken in the island of Cyprus in the history is 13. This two digit number which is even greater than a dozen, of the different sovereigns ruled this island is one of the main cause of the change of the names of the towns, locations, rivers, points, capes, bays, mountains, hills, planes etc. in the island.

The second main reason is the travelers, who visited this island on their way to Holy Land for a pilgrimage since the flourishing of the Christianity.

As known very clearly that the pilgrims of the Europe willing to visit “Terra Sancta” the Holy Land, had no other choice but traveling by sea. The vessels departing from the port of Venice, propelled by the wind only, had to stop in the islands of Crete, Rhodes and Cyprus for a supply of victuals, water, salt for consumption and wood for cooking. The stay in these ports were of a minimum 4 days stretching up to 7 days or over.

The literate pilgrims who took this break as a chance to travel around and note down their souvenirs and perceptions, collected, edited and printed this information as a paper or in a book form on their arrival back to their home country. The number of such travelers are as much as one hundred and sixty seven [4] and they are from thirteen different countries. This variation caused the afore mentioned publications to be printed on thirteen different languages and accordingly each different language had its own unique pronunciation, spelling and writing of the islands geographic names.

The names of the geographic places they noted down were under the effect of heir native languages in pronunciation, spelling and writing wise. When these notes, books or papers were examined thoroughly, it is clearly seen that the geographic names they mentioned were altered under the pressure of their native tongues with out any intentions.

Effect of travelers on the geographic names

The cartographer Iacomo Franco and the other followers printed maps of the island of Cyprus since 1570 in at least 4-5 languages like Latin, Italian, French, Dutch, Flemish and German using totally different names for the same place based on the language they are using. Franco marked for the first time in the cartography total of 564 locations in his map of Cyprus while the total of the actual locations were 813 on the island.

A. & J. Stylianou [5] made a comparison study on Matheo Pagano 1538 map, Giovanni Francesco Camocio, 1566 map and Abraham Ortelius, 1570 map, to compare the exactness of locations in these maps of Cyprus with Kitchener’s 1885 Cyprus map [6] and published the

results in their famous book titled “The History of the cartography of Cyprus”. This study also revealed some of the different names of the same locations used on these maps.

The traveling notes written down by 82 travelers compiled by C. D. Cobham under the title “Excerpta Cypria” and 85 travelers compiled by T. A. H. Mogabgab [6] under the title “Excerpts on Cyprus” contains total of 891 varied names of locations in the island of Cyprus including A. & J. Stylianou’s findings. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, 53 of these different names means or indicates the island of “Cyprus”.

Conclusion

The varying names of same locations based on the information given by the travelers or mentioned in their publications, were used very widely by the cartographers in their maps and by the time these numerous variations lead to serious complications on understanding clearly “what happened where”.

The people who are interested in the “History of Cyprus” when reading the manuscripts, books, traveling notes, itineraries, narratives, chronicles, peregrinations, maps and etc. end up with fogginess or mess up due to the unconformable location names mentioned. The subject studied on, becomes more and more complicated and most of the time end up with wrong results due to lack of a scientific reference as this research.

This paper will ease these problems and open up new horizons to the researchers of the “**History of Cyprus**” by giving birth to 891 previously unknown location names used in the island of Cyprus since antique age.

Acknowledgmenets

This study refers also to the results of the research and the resulting book published afterwards titled “Names of the locations of Cyprus lost in the depths of 2500 years of History”, 122 pages plus a bilingual map in Turkish and Greek (Roman Script) , Nicosia, North Cyprus, 2004

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