

## The heritage of Cyprus - Armenian-Cypriots

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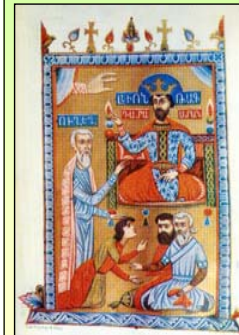
Կիպրոսի ժառանգությունը -  
Կիպրահայեր

Ալեքսանդր-Միքայել  
Հաճիլիրաս

Նիկոսիա, 24 Նոյեմբեր 2010



## The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia



## A continuous and important presence since 578 AD



## The old church complex in Turkish-occupied Nicosia



Originally a Benedictine Abbey, where many Armenian-Catholic nuns served, it came to the hands of the Armenian Orthodox Church before 1504 and until the 1963-1964 inter-communal troubles it had been the centre of the community: church, Prelature, school, Genocide monument, scouts.



### The monastery of Saint Makarios in Turkish-occupied Pentadhaktylos



Originally a Coptic monastery, it came to the hands of the Armenian Orthodox church before 1425 and had been a popular pilgrimage site for all Cypriots, as well as travellers. Until the 1974 Turkish invasion, Armenian-Cypriot families would spend their weekends and holidays here.



**During the massacres, deportations and the Armenian Genocide (1894-1923), nearly 10.000 refugees fled to Cyprus, of which about 1.500 decided to stay, making it their new homeland.**

### The Ganchvor church in Turkish-occupied Famagusta



Built in 1346 by Armenian refugees who fled the Muslim attacks on Cilicia, this mediaeval church is located in the north-western part of the walled city of Famagusta. Unused since 1570, it was given to the community in 1936 and was used until 1957, when extremist Turkish-Cypriots burnt it down.

### The refugees brought new life into the old community...





and they also contributed to Cyprus as a whole.



## The Melkonian Educational Institute (1926-2005)



Built after the generous and benevolent donation of brothers Krikor and Garabed Melkonian, MEI gradually became a renowned secondary school with a boarding section. It offered shelter and quality education not only to orphans of the Genocide, but also to thousands of Armenians from all over the world, thus becoming an ambassador of Cyprus around the world. It was also famous for its various functions (theatre, dance and choir performances, sports activities and a scouts' group)

## Important buildings established by/for the refugees



Saint Stephen church and school (Larnaca, 1909/1923)

Melikian & Ouzounian schools (Nicosia, 1921/1938)

Melkonian Educational Institute (Nicosia, 1926)



Genocide monument (Nicosia, 1932)

Holy Resurrection chapel (2<sup>nd</sup> Nicosia cemetery, 1938)

Saint George church and school (Limassol, 1939/1951)

## The last 50 years (1960-2010)



With the 1960 Independence, our Constitution recognised Armenians, Maronites and Latins as "*religious groups*" (**Article 2 § 3**), who opted to belong to the Greek-Cypriot community with a referendum (13/11/1960). According to **Article 109**, they were given political representation, with each electing a Representative, who until 1965 was a full member of the Greek Communal Chamber and since then a non-voting member of the House of Representatives.

During the 1963-1964 inter-communal troubles, the Armenian-Cypriots were uprooted from their ancient quarter in Nicosia and also lost their church in Famagusta, leading many to emigrate abroad. Another blow was the 1974 Turkish invasion, in which the Magaravank was occupied and families living in Famagusta, Nicosia and Kyrenia became refugees.



With the help of the government, the community has managed to recover its losses, with a whole new complex in Nicosia and new school buildings in Larnaca and Limassol. Over the last 30-35 years it has been enriched with economic and political immigrants from the Middle East and Armenia, while at the same time retaining its rich language and culture.



## Clubs/Associations/Organisations



AYMA (Armenian Young Men's Association, Nicosia 1934) & football team (1935)  
Armenian Club (Larnaca, 1931)  
LHEM (Limassolian Armenian Young Men's Association, Limassol, 1996)



Armenian National Committee of Cyprus (1965)



GEM Armenian Youth Federation of Cyprus (1977)

"Koyamard" Youth group and "Artsakh" teenagers' group (both in 1977).  
Azadamard Armenian Youth Centre (1985)



HOM Armenian Relief Society of Cyprus (1988).



Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Association of Cyprus (1999)  
"Sipan" dance ensemble and "Timag" theatrical group (both in 2000).



AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) [Nicosia (1913), Larnaca (1911),  
Limassol (1936)] & futsal team (AGBU-Ararat, 1999)



"Stepan Shahoumian" Progressive Movement (Nicosia, 1994)



"Nor Serount" Cultural Association (Nicosia, 2006) & futsal team (Homenmen, 2006)



"Kalaydjian" Foundation  
(1984)



"Pharos" Arts Foundation  
(1998)



"Arev" Benevolent  
Foundation (2008)



Thank you for your attention  
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## Printed and electronic media

### • Mass information media:

- Artsakank newspaper - monthly (1981/1995)
- Azad Tsayn newspaper - monthly (2003)
- Keghart newsletter - monthly (1997)
- Lradou newsletter - quarterly (2006)
- gibrahayer.com e-magazine - weekly (1999)
- CyBC radio programme - daily (1953)



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### • Web pages:

- Official web page: [www.cyprusarmenians.com](http://www.cyprusarmenians.com)
- Under construction: [www.armenianchurch.org.cy](http://www.armenianchurch.org.cy)
- [www.schools.ac.cy/gym-narek-nic](http://www.schools.ac.cy/gym-narek-nic)
- [www.artsakank.com.cy](http://www.artsakank.com.cy)
- [www.gibrahayer.com](http://www.gibrahayer.com)
- [www.anc.com.cy](http://www.anc.com.cy)
- [www.hayem.org](http://www.hayem.org)
- [www.kalaydjianfoundation.org](http://www.kalaydjianfoundation.org)
- [www.arevbf.org](http://www.arevbf.org)
- [www.araratfutsal.com](http://www.araratfutsal.com)
- [www.homenmencyprus.org](http://www.homenmencyprus.org)
- [www.sourpstepanos.com](http://www.sourpstepanos.com)
- [www.thepharosartsfoundation.org](http://www.thepharosartsfoundation.org)

