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Director
of the Historical Archives of Crete

GEORGIROUPOLIS

Glances at its history

*A publication
of the Beneficial Foundation "AGIA SOPHIA"
With the contribution
of the Community of Georgioupolis*

APOCORONAS 1997

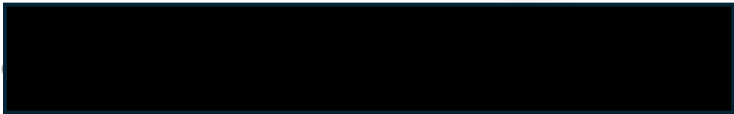
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PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION

"THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF GEORGIROUPOLIS - A MODEL ASSOCIATION IN 1906" was the title of a lecture given by the author of the book, Mrs. Zacharenia Simandiraki, organized by the FOUNDATION "AGIA SOPHIA" on January 31st 1993, at GEORGIROUPOLIS, Apocoronas, in collaboration with the local Community.

This lecture, which was the creative reason for the present publication, was within the frame of the cultural events, established by the Foundation, on several topics like history, local civilization, education, monuments, etc.

It is well known that one of the pursuits of the FOUNDATION "AGIA SOPHIA" is the promotion of the historiographic production in the province of Apocoronas.

For the realization of this pursuit, the gathering of all those elements which compose the history and the civilization of Apocoronas has already started, further aiming to the writing of the history of our villages and our province in general.

These purposes are certainly served by this book, the publication of which, we believe, is a valuable contribution to the area's history.

This publication was supervised by the historian and Director of the Historical Archives of Crete Mrs. ZACHARENIA SIMANDIRAKI, while the Community of GEORGIROUPOLIS undertook the publishing cost.

From this position we thank them both for the collaboration.

We consider the publication of the book "GEORGIROUPOLIS - GLANCES AT ITS HISTORY" as a special point in the course of writing our provincial history, since it creates new perspectives for its more systematic and scientific approach.

The province of Apocoronas has considerable scientific and spiritual powers, which, we are certain, will support the effort of our Foundation in writing the history of Apocoronas.

Finally, we wish to emphasize on the fact of the new collaboration that we have started in the publishing area, along with the Local Administration of our province, starting with the Communities of Georgiroupolis and Pemonia.

We believe that we will soon be able to also proceed to other publications serving the same purpose, in collaboration with the Local Communities.

Apocoronas, July 1997

**THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE BENEFICIAL FOUNDATION
"AGIA SOPHIA"**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Several years ago, during a research on the Collective Co-operations of Crete (Associations, Societies, Unions, Brotherhoods, Corporations, Syndicates etc.) from 1878 (the year that the free foundation of such forms was permitted by the Turks according to the Halepa Convention) until 1913 (the year that Crete was officially united with Greece), I ran into enough information about the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis. Impressed by the activities of the Society, developed in the first years of our century (1906) and the following years, I continued the research, seeking for the rest of the information which would compose a historic flow of events and evolution at this much afflicted part of Apocoronas. And, although the research was quite difficult, since many archive collections of the Historical Archives of Crete and other publications had to be researched, the result was quite satisfying.

I was even more impressed by the activity, the will, the perseverance and the vision of this lonely old man I discovered looking at me thoughtfully through a small picture - that of Miltiades Papadogiannakis. And as I proceeded to the research, even more evidence proved true the enormous strength that he must have had, he, who, even though coming from the village of Calamitsi, had settled down almost all by himself at Paleocastella, from where he started knocking at the doors of the powerful people and officials of his time, asking for help for the sanitation of the region, the development, the cultivation of the land and the improvement of the living standards of the inhabitants of the surrounding area, struggling for many years against bandits, malaria, rumours and hardships. Nevertheless,

with his strong will and heart, he cast the first seed in the swamps but he didn't let it lose. He was fortunate enough to see - Almyroupolis at first and later - Georgioupolis to be founded and move forward little by little, step by step through time, fulfilling his dream. He didn't, of course, have the pleasure of enjoying its full development - he left for the distant journey in 1934. But his work didn't fade away, the thousands of eucalyptuses that he had planted didn't wither and information regarding Georgioupolis always points out his name. Even his last wish to be buried at the little island of St. Nicolas, opposite to the small town he had created, shows how much he loved that place. For this, as also mentioned at the book's epilogue, I couldn't but dedicate this book to the pioneer of Georgioupolis, who was maybe one of the few people, then, during the last years of the 19th century, who believed in his vision and who, trying to convince other people too, managed to make it real. Georgioupolis, over 100 years old today, owes him a great deal, as well as Apocoronas in general.

Closing, I would like to thank the Foundation "AGIA SOPHIA" and the Community of Georgioupolis, first for honouring me by inviting me to give a lecture on the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis, as well as for their proposal to write down the history of the town - a proposal that I have accepted with great pleasure. Let's hope that there will be more researchers - coming from Apocoronas or not - who will continue research in the fields of history, evolution, development and tradition of the open country, of the villages, but also of our towns. It is something we owe to ourselves, as much to our children too, who should learn about their country and should be taught of the grandeur and the timeless values that Crete alone developed and maintains.

Zacharenia Simandiraki

Apocoronas - Almyros - Paleocastella

Apocoronas *"a beautiful province, fertile in olive oil and cereals"* according to Hourmousis Vyzantios, lies, according to the traveler Gulliaume Antoine Olivier (1792) three leagues far from the city of Chania and *"it spreads to the East until Almyros and to the South down to the mountains of Sfakia. It has no special cultivation, it is mountainous and produces a lot of olive oil, a quantity of barley and wheat and very little wine. The area around Almyros coast is covered with vineyards. To the southern side one can see on the hills a forest of oak-trees, holm-oaks, maple-trees, carob-bean trees: here the inhabitants of Rethymnon come and cut the wood they need.... Almyros coast has nice springs. One of them has salty water and the other, the most important one - has sweet water. Further away, the forest of Almyros lies, planted by the Venetians in order to defend the ravine and hold back the pirates and the enemies from attacking the coast in order to penetrate from there into the inland..."*.

"The road to this peasant valley" noted the German Zibber (1817) *"led above Almyros, a river that flows out near Drapano. Wonderful olive groves have replaced the rich forests which lied at the road line.... when the forests were thick, the robberies were easier and the passages really dangerous...."*

According to the doctor Joseph Hatzidakis (1881), the province of Apocoronas or Ippocorion *"is one of the richest in Crete, lying between the cities of Rethymnon and Chania. As far as church matters are concerned, it is a subject to the same bishop like the province of Kydonia. Lying before the main road leading from Chania to Sfakia, it suffered a lot during every revolution. This, tough by no means, hasn't stopped its brave people from revolting among the first ones each time. A little further, one can meet the springs, with lots of water flowing out to Almyros river, called Amfimalla in*

ancient times. Two bridges were built there in 1869 by Savva Pasha, Governor of the Department of Sfakia. This site is called by the local people "Vrysses", that is "springs", to which the inhabitants of the area villages come to water their animals and wash their clothes. Around it, lethal battles have taken place in different times, but is there any stone, any tree, any ravine in Crete that hasn't become wet with blood so many times?

The road from Armeni to Chania passes through the thickly wooded homonymous valley, it climbs up over hills, most of them stony, then turns to the north and reaches the meridian shore of the Amfimallian gulf, commonly called "gulf of Souda", it follows that shore, turning again to the west, until it reaches Chania. Right after you have reached the shore of the Amfimallian gulf, you can see to the left of its entrance a fortification made of red earth, a tower over that on a high hill, for strengthening the fortification; to the right of the gulf's entrance there is a small island which has been transformed



Apokoronas - A sketch by Boschini (1651)

into a fortified fortress for the protection of the port of Souda; not far from that, lies the little village Kalyves; nearby lied the ancient city of Aptera...."

○ E. Vyvilakis in his book *"Pilot for the navigators in Crete or the exact description of its maritime ports and bays"* (Athens 1869) described the gulf of Almyros:

"The reddish and very steep side to the East of this plateau, forms the west shore of the gulf of Almyros, where also its harbour lies; the sandy and rocky depths of Almyros, less than one metre deep, make it impossible for ships today to find shelter behind the rocks that form the harbour, unless they are very small, according to the opinion of the latest hydrographer of Crete, the British C. T. Spratt. According to the French Raulin though, two or three big ships can come to the gulf's mid-west embrace, to the mouth of the Almyros rill (the ancient Amfimatrion) where a little island lies, forming a hook-shaped embrace. (This opinion is refuted, as already seen above, by the British hydrographer of the shores of Crete C. T. Spratt, by presenting Almyros harbour as a completely shallow one, quite unsuitable for any ship whatsoever to anchor, which is considered to be an exaggeration as far as small ships are concerned. In November 1866 a small boat took shelter in that spot and was protected from an Ottoman brigade coming out of Souda, passing nearby, without being noticed, although the boat was away enough from the coast when she saw her. If she weren't a fishing boat she would have gulped her, since it would have been impossible for her to hide. This gulf is surrounded to the M. first by a sandy shore in front of clay hills, between the rivers Voutakas (alias Mousselas) and Petres, then by slopes of average height until the plain of Rethymnon, and also by short hills progressively extending to the sea. From Agiasmatsi to the cape Hondron, the side that extends to the north-east is formed by slopes, most of them being abrupt until the top of Mount

Couloucounas; from this site, one can see the foot of the White Mountains, Mount Cryoneritis, Mount Vryssinas, Mount Kentron and the sides of Psiloritis, lying to the west".

Nicostratos Calomenopoulos mentioned about the basin of Apocoronas: *"To the west of the wave-shaped land of Delfinas and Cavros, stretches the great basin of Apocoronas. This basin is closed to the East by a high mountain top (Dafnomadara or Clima), which comes down to the shore (South-West of the gulf of Almyros) from the plateau of Callikratis and forms the straits of Almyros: to the South, it is closed by the arctic slopes of the mass of the White Mountains, to the West it's closed by a long ridge, which starts from the mountain top Mavri at the White Mountains, goes to the North and then to the N-E and ends at the heights of Keramia, at the steep mountain of Malaxa, which rises abruptly over the shore of the great gulf of Souda and ends at the high cape of Calami on which the fort Calami or Itzedin is built, dominating the entrance of the harbour. Malaxa and Calami, the mountains that dominate the roads from Chania to Apocoronas, compose the western key of this great basin, while the straits of Almyros compose the eastern key.... It is connected to the east with the arctic slopes of the rough land of Rethymnon (the wave-shaped land of Delfinas and Cavros etc.) through the straits of Almyros..."*

On the clay hill, named "Kefala of Venos", it is said that the ancient city Amfimallion or Amfimalla, the sea-port of Lappa, Hydramia and Coryssia was built. *"...at the bay of the Almyros gulf, the ancient city of Amfimalla lied. That is why the gulf of Almyros was called Amfimallian"*, noted Io. Landrakis in his Geography (1900), as well as Emm. Generalis too.

The traveler Mich. Defner referred extensively to Amfimalla: *"About a thousand two hundred metres before we arrived at Georgioupolis, the size of which amazed me from a distance, a small*

SPIAGGIA DELL' ARMIRO. DI RETTIMO.



The gulf of Almyros - A sketch by Boschini (1651)

hill of great extent, flat on top and with low stone walls, rose between high mountains. Immediately I got the idea that only on that place the ancient city Amfimalla could have been built and not further down, in the swamps close to the present gulf of Almyros, in the ancient gulf Amfimali. I asked a peasant how this great piece of flat land, that one could distinguish from the plain, was called and he replied : "the Kefala of Venos". Cretan people call "kefala" a low wide hill. Looking at this kefala, I got the idea that the ancient Amfimalla should have lied there, so the next morning I decided to examine thoroughly that place. I will immediately express my opinion about the importance of the word Amfimalla. The great mountain that separates Tsaconia from Arcadia and Lacedemonia, is called Malevos and the cape to which this mountain range ends is cavo Maleas (the cape around Maleas). The Malians were the people from Thessaly who used to live on the mountains around the Malian gulf. There is also a Mount Cacaomalis in Cyprus. At the peninsula of Methoni, where I had traveled during the summer of 1908 and spring of 1909 and of which I had made a map, I saw several mountains called Mali: Mali Bardi, Mali egliat, Mali vikietit, etc. Finally in Isyhios' papers, the word Mala is found; mountain people, Malians, highlanders. The root "Mal", quite common to all these names, means "mountain". Consequently, the Cretan "Amfimalla" means the mountains around. Indeed the site where I place this ancient city justifies completely its name. The city was surrounded by mountains which form the straits of Almyros. Later I went to Kefala of Venos and I wandered around all of its surface, its slopes and its different stone walls, for more than one hour. Everywhere I saw pieces of ancient pots and ancient tiles: In several places I also saw carved ancient stones but I didn't see on the surface any ruins of an ancient building. The reason is that both Venetians and Turks, building their castles, had used all the ancient material they could find; also the inhabitants of Almyros and of the

areas around, took from there all the carved stones they could find. The peasants told me that, lots of times, ancient coins were found in Kefala...".

Historically the basin of Apocoronas played a significant role in several occasions because of its strategic position. It is the only passage to Rethymnon and Sfakia and is surrounded by mountains, having only a few gates. The basin of Apocoronas became a place of battles and conflicts for many times. The Venetians, taking into consideration the strategic importance of the Straits of Almyros, build up a fortress, which was seized by a Greek called Stegos, with the help of other Cretan rebels, during the reign of Duke Nikolo Navigayioso. The castle of Almyros, later overtaken by the Turks, was besieged in spring 1647 by Greeks, who were incited by the Venetians against the Turks. The leaders of the besiegers were Callergis, Maheriotis and Paskis, but they were pushed back and forced to seek shelter at Souda, which was still under Venetian occupation. The castle was finally seized by the Greeks in 1660. During the revolution of 1821 - specifically on June 18th 1821, Ali Softas, along with many Turkish troops, conquered Calyves and marched forward to the region's inland in order to cause a diversion to the rebels who were besieging the castle of Alidakis in Embrosneros. But he faced the Cretans at Tsivaras, who's leaders were A. Protopapadakis, Dascalakis and Sifakas and was pushed back towards Chania. Right afterwards, Protopapadakis took over the castle of Almyros and since he couldn't keep it, he demolished it. In August 1821 about 15.000 Turks, under the command of Serit and Osman pashas, came from Rethymnon and arrived at the east of the Straits of Almyros. Two thousand Cretans, led by A. Protopapadakis, R. Vourdoubas, G. Tsouderos, P. Manouselis, G. Deliyannakis, A. Melidonis, Cafcalosifis, I. Halis, Pologeorgakis and others, tried to push them back, but instead of being entrenched at

the straits of Almyros, they became exhausted by the open ground conflicts, which resulted the sudden seizure of the straits by the Turkish cavalry marching forward, the destruction of everything in the basin and the abandonment of the positions held by the defenders of Malaxa. During the 1866 revolution, in late October, Moustafa pasha gathered his forces, divided them in two divisions and taking one with him, he marched to Rethymnon through the Straits of Almyros, while the other division stayed under the command of Mehmet pasha in Apocoronas.

During the Turkish occupation, the Turks built fortified castles in several dominant spots, so that conflicts would take place between the troops of the castles and Cretans. The military pasha who conquered Rethymnon, carried over stones from the ruins of the Venetian fort to Almyros springs and built a Turkish castle at the top of the neighbouring hill range called "Listis". But the strait of Almyros called "Kissos" (alias "Youmourouk"), was used as a hiding place by thieves and criminals; there, according to the tradition, an ottoman golden pound was converted into two hundred grossus, in mockery



Apocoronas

of the Authorities. It is said that between the strait of Almyros and the Turkish fort, during the revolution, forty plenipotentiaries and other armed men from Rethymnon, heading to Chania to take part to the Revolutionary Assembly, were disarmed and stripped.

After the destruction of both the Venetian and the Turkish castles, these two destroyed fortresses and the surrounding area were called "Castellakia" or "Paleocastella" and belonged administratively to the Municipality of Mathes. The name "Almyros" was given after the Almyros river. Almyros river had brackish water and its springs bubbled up from an area of about one acre, approximately fifteen metres above the sea level, at a distance of 1.200 metres. The river was one or two metres deep, according to its flow and it was ten to twenty metres wide. The area of Almyros extended from the Almyros strait until the Mousselas river, which is the last limit of the province of Apocoronas. This area has an extent of more than 10 km. long and almost 4 km. wide, the lake of Cournas, and Mousselas, Almyros, Vlyhadas, Perasticos, Delfinas Cavros rivers and the river of Vrysses included. This last river springs from Boutakas, near Embrosneros village and flows the rain waters coming from the White Mountains, passing under the historic stone bridge called "Elliniki Camara". The traveler Mich. Defner mentioned about this "Camara" (arch, arcade) that it was a bridge with one arch, built during the Greek Roman times with monoliths (large stones) without any mud. To the right and to the left of this ancient bridge, two bases of the arch remained, at a height of 3 m. in 7 or 8 horizontal lines. The upper part of this bridge, being swept away by the river, was rebuilt later, using old materials, mud from the river's sand and quick-lime.

The river of Vrysses joined Almyros river at a distance of four hundred metres from the mouths of the rivers, and formed the navigable river of Georgioupolis. *"A little further over the bridge, the river of Almyros and the river of Vrysses join and form a navigable*



Vrysses - The bridge

river" mentioned Defner. As far as the eye can see, many trees lie, high evergreen bushes but also enormous rushes and thousands of frogs, which are the public criers of malaria".

The navigable river was twenty metres wide and two or three metres deep, so small sailboats could anchor even five hundred metres inside the river. There was a bay to the north, where small sailboats and steamboats anchored, protected by the hill range of Saint Kyriaki and the little rocky island to the east, on top of which lied the chapel of Saint Nicolas, built about 850 years ago by a seaman. Between this little island and the hill range of Saint Kyriaki there was a reef called "Psari Plaka", where, during the 1878 revolution, the rebels' steamboat "Panellinion" ran ashore with a cargo of ammunition and food. The cargo was taken ashore and thanks to the brave efforts of Captain Sourmelis, the ship sailed off before sunrise, managing not to be arrested by the Turkish war ships, patrolling around the coast of Souda.

To the south, at a distance of about one kilometre, there was the high hill "Trouli" where also the little church of Saint Elias lied, where, during the 1866 revolution, the Turks had built a war castle. Behind it, on the hill range "Gavaliani", a big ditch was made by the chieftain Andreas Fassoulis, according to a decision of the

Revolutionary Government in 1821; two canons from the Turkish castle of Almyros were placed there, as well as baskets with bees (beehives), which were supposed to open while the Turkish troops were passing through, so that they would be obstructed during the persecution of the Christian rebels of the provinces of Apocoronas and Sfakia.

The ruins of the castle of the "genitsaros" (a Greek converted by force to Islam at an early age) Deli Provias were at the west of today's Georgioupolis. Deli had asked a girl from Rethymnon to marriage. But instead of giving her to him, a term had been put to him: to build a tower at a central place of Almyros, a tower which could be seen even from Rethymnon. And that indeed was what happened. Later on, Deli Provias planted fruit-trees and olive trees in his fields. Among other things, when he had cultivated the field, he built walls around it and ordered his Christian worker to put his animals inside. But the poor worker was doubtful and afraid of Deli, so he asked for the advice of Deli's Turkish lady. The latter told him to put the animals in the fields and go away. When the "genitsaros" saw the animals being in the cultivated field, fully armed, left, intending to kill the worker, but since he was gone, he killed his oxen. It was more an act of intimidation for the Christians, so that their animals would keep off Deli's fields and wouldn't cause him any damage. Some other time, while the "genitsaros" was cultivating his fields, an Ottoman coming from Heraclion, on his way to Chania for medical treatment, stopped at Provias's tower and there he died. He was buried there and later his mother sent Deli Provias some money to construct clay pipes so that water could be transferred to her child's grave, where a fountain was to be built, always pouring water, so that travelers would drink and forgive him. Deli Provias started the work and when there were about five hundred metres left for the water to reach the fountain, he saw from afar a handkerchief to be

waved. He turned to the workers and told them that he was in danger and ran to his castle for shelter but he was shot and dropped dead. His wife took his bloodstained clothes, went to Constantinople and presented herself to the Sultan to whom she denounced that another "genitsaros" from Nio Horio, Apocoronas, along with nine armed Christians had murdered her husband. A little later, Osman pasha, who came to Crete, proclaimed the arrest of the murderer "genitsaros" of Deli Provias. When the "genitsaros" heard it, he went to Chania voluntarily, but also taking precautions and managed to present himself to Osman pasha. The latter, after examining him for three times and being certain that he really was the murderer, hanged him the following day.

Between the Turkish fort and the castle of Deli Provias lied an enormous plane-tree; there, another frightful "genitsaros" ambushed and stroke mercilessly the Christians passing by.

During the time of the Turkish occupation, twice, that is in 1880 and 1885, the General Governors of Crete Adossidis and Anthopoulos pashas visited Paleocastella, intending to proceed not only to the land's sanitation and cultivation but also to the securing of public safety and deliverance of the inhabitants in the surrounding area from the criminals. Unfortunately the anticipated cost was quite prohibiting and all works related to those plans were called off.

Because of the constant revolutions and, later, the criminal activities taking place there, these areas were not cultivated, the rivers, the big rills and ditches flooded and swamps were formed to the eastern bank of the Almyros river, which resulted the spreading of malaria which infected the 90% of the population.

Miltiades Papadogiannakis and Almyroupolis

In 1880 Miltiades Papadogiannakis came from Athens, and from his home-village Calamitsi, often visited the area of Almyros and the areas around. He started thinking about the ways of improving the land and, in spite of his friends' and relatives' advises, he started his efforts for the sanitation and the public safety, although he didn't have any money; he had nothing but persistence and patience. He advised the inhabitants on the reduction of the offenses taking place in the area, he urged them not to whiten the flax in the swamps or fish the river fish and eels using mullein; instead, he urged them to canalize the stagnant waters to their fields.

Papadogiannakis went to Fylaki village, where the seat of the Administration of Apocoronas and Sfakia was, and in 1883, he presented himself to Leonidas Varouchas, who then was Governor, and informed him about what he was doing. Varouchas promised that he would help him in his efforts and that he would see that the seat of the Administration was transferred to Paleocastella. Papadogiannakis also sent letters to the officials of the provinces of Ag. Vasilios, Sfakia, Rethymnon and Apocoronas, asking them to help him, for the success of everything he pursued.

In September 1884, by the n. 2.185 contract, made by the Notary Public of Vamos G. I. Papadakis, he bought the first grounds in the ruins of the Venetian castle and built up a small house for him to settle down. Because of the disorder, due to the revolution, he postponed his initiatives, which he was able to repeat in 1890, continuing his correspondence with the Mayors and the officials of the provinces of Sfakia, Apocoronas and Ag. Vasilios, who kept on promising him that they would assist his efforts.

In 1892 he settled again to the still deserted land, which - as mentioned above - had become a prey to the criminals, his only

company being - as he himself mentioned - *"the pleasure of the vocal chorus of the frogs during the night, that sounded like an Italian operetta"*, having also to face the frightful malaria.

Papadogiannakis met the Governor of the Prefecture of Sfakia Mr. Papadogiannis and asked him to transfer the seat of the Municipality of Mathes, as well as the Gendarmery Station at Paleocastella.

During the summer of the same year, an unbearable smell was brought forward at the stagnant beach, so he decided, at his expenses, not only to canalize the stagnant waters by ditches to the sea, but also drain the most dangerous grounds. At this area, there were about sixty springs, called "eliges". Twenty of them were more than 3 m. deep and 2 m. wide at their opening and 3 m. wide at their surface below, in a circle. From each spring plenty of water bubbled up, which spread and covered an area of about one thousand metres long and fifty metres wide at some points and one hundred metres wide at some others, while there were aquatic plants around.

Many animals, pasturing in the area, had fallen into the "eliges", a fact revealed when clearing the place up, in order to measure the depth of the rotten weeds at the springs (it was one and a half metre long), when the bones of the animals were found there. Another strange phenomenon was that, during the canalization of the stagnant waters, innumerable eels showed up, many of them caught by the people attending, while most of them were carried away, by the waters, to the sea.

Papadogiannakis kept on his correspondence, which a gendarme from Mouri, Apocoronas, named Stylianos Gryllakis, carried over. But a rumour spread, that his correspondence had revolutionary aims, so Gryllakis, being afraid, stopped receiving it. The rumours reached Crete's General Governor, Mahmout Gelaledin Pasha, who asked for copies of the letters to be submitted to him. But the chief of the Gendarmery, Emin pasha, intervened and after many

interrogations, the rumours proved to be groundless, and Papadogiannakis kept on his correspondence.

In October 2nd of the same year, Papadogiannakis being at Episcopi, some delinquents broke into his house and stole everything in it.

In spite of all difficulties, the official inauguration of the new town was set for March 30th 1893 and the Governor of Sfakia, the Judges, the Gendarmery officers, the Director of the Beneficial Fund of Crete, the Bishop of Rethymnon and the inhabitants of the area villages were invited to attend. The following announcement was published in the newspaper "Mesogios" (Mediterranean):

"The 7th day of next March, Sunday, has been decided to be the day for gathering of the agricultural classes of the southern parts of our province at Paleocastella of Almyros; there, many are going to assemble, as proclaimed by the relative invitations of those, very praiseworthy ones, who took the initiative, and, all together, are going to think of how to find the means to drain and clean up the swampy places of Almyros; in short, they are going to think of how to clear up this plain; this achieved, the plain will become a source of wealth and prosperity for the inhabitants. This is something really laudable and there is no doubt it is going to be also supported by the Respected Government to which, as we have heard, the interested parties are going to appeal in due time".

About three thousand people attended the ceremony, as well as the Giousbassis (captain) of the Turkish Army, who came with 160 of his men; they did the proper honours at the arrival of the Governor Papadakis and the other political and military Authorities. At 11 a.m. seven priests performed the blessing of the holy water and Papadogiannakis gave a speech, naming the new town "Almyroupolis".

It should be noted that the General Administration had properly indicated that the Sultan's name should be preferred, further aiming

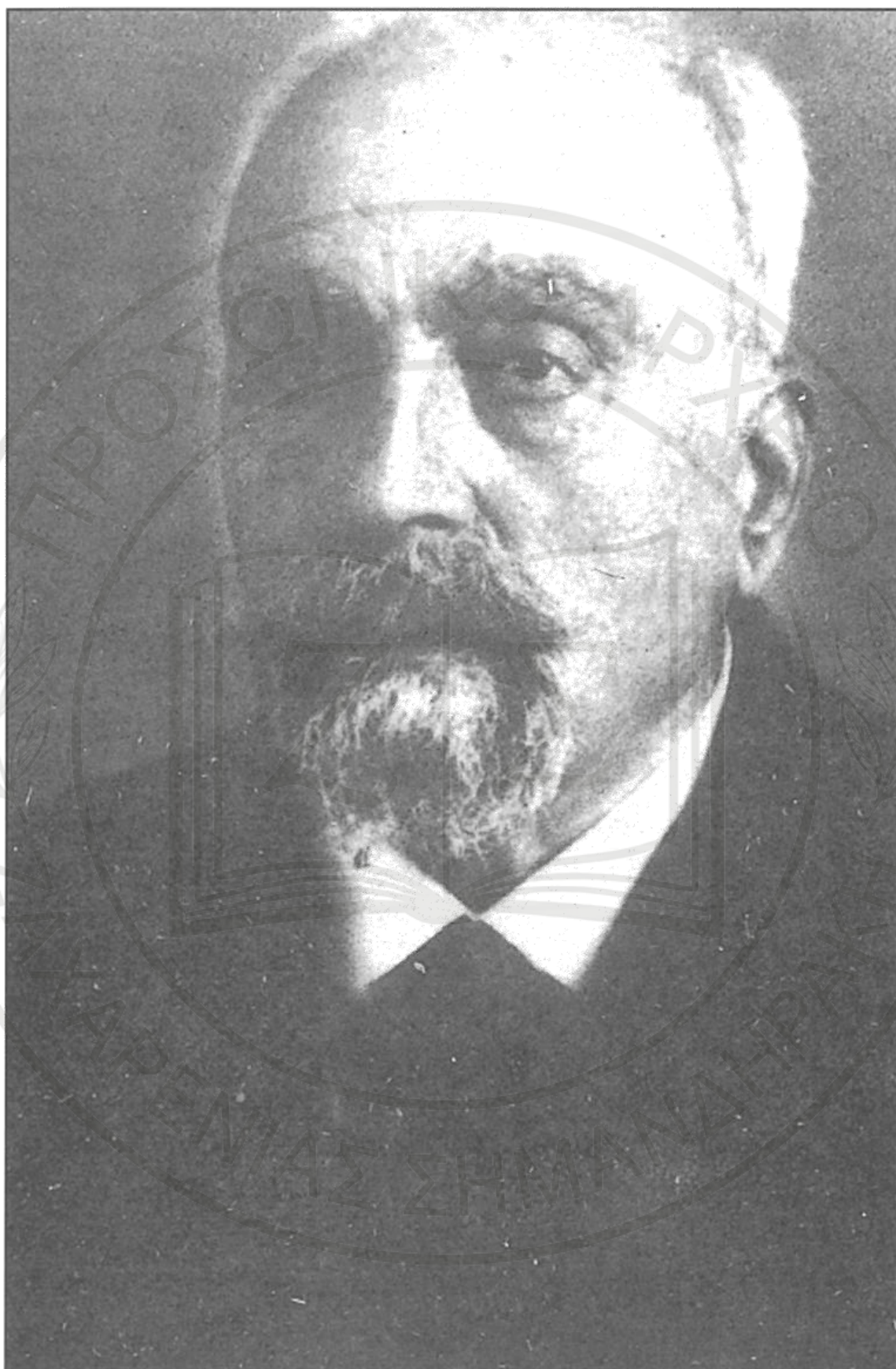
to his interest and support for the area. Several others preferred a Greek name to be given, which could have been an opportunity for commercial development, but it was considered that the General Administration wasn't going to provide the necessary support as far as safety was concerned. That's why the name "Almyroupolis" was chosen, after Almyros river.

The journalistic correspondence about the ceremony and Papadogiannakis's speech in the "Mediterranean" newspaper was as follows:

" FROM VAMOS

By the mouths of the Almyros river, lies the little town of Paleocastella, called Amfimallion in older times and, today, Almyroupolis; the view of the landscape around it, happens to be really enchanting and very pleasant; Nature has gifted it with rare advantages; close to it, to the west, Almyros river passes by, flowing into the open sea like a serpent. To the south, the magnificent, wide and greenish, by its summer garment, plain lies, to which the observer pleasantly gazes, his look penetrating up to its utmost spots; to the east, the wavy sea stretches, presenting a brilliant spectacle, the sun rays thrown in it, by which the beauties of the places around reflect with incomparable grace. This, in a few words, is the site of Almyroupolis, that is about to be born, but destined by nature to prosper in time, where last Sunday the farmers' assembly, which has been announced to the readers of the "Mediterranean", took place, intending to find the means to clear up this really fertile plain, to drain it and purge its swampy places and its quarter, to make the above mentioned town progress; and since this town is very gifted with many natural beauties, it will, before long, become a commercial and agricultural centre.

Early in the morning, a big crowd of officials, as well as other inhabitants coming from several villages of the province of Apocoronas and from Argyroupolis (province of Rethymnon)



Miltiades Papadogiannakis
The founder of Georgioupolis

assembled in the surrounding area of the aforesaid town. His Excellency the Governor of Sfakia Mr. Mich. Papadakis, who was invited by the municipal Authorities of Mathes, honoured this rural assembly by his presence, accompanied by many officials; at about 4 ½ morning hour (Turkish time), a military detachment of the Imperial Army, seated in Episcopi, Rethymnon, who had come there for this occasion, did the usual honours; after that it was taken to the Town Hall and, after a short rest, presented arms at the front yard, where the priests performed the holy ceremony; when that ended, Miltiades Papadogiannakis, the person who played a leading role in organizing the meeting, explained to the crowd, on behalf of the Mayor of Mathes Mr P. Anagnostakis, the purpose of the assembly, as follows:

My friends, fellow-country men

Everyone realizes the purpose of our conference here, since we have explained many times before to the most of us the necessity to help this fertile land, to the benefit of us all.

Two years ago, we tried our best to improve and promote this land where we assembled today, which, due to its very valuable natural advantages, can offer us great benefits and goods, by its commercial and agricultural development; because of its central and very important position, it can facilitate a lot the whole island's transportation, delivering us all from so many torments of that kind we suffer every day, going to the cities in order to buy food and other necessary things, by drowning in the rivers, by being exposed to cold and to burning heat and by being in danger in a thousand ways every day.

Having succeeded, to our great pleasure and joy, in establishing here the Town Hall, the Gendarmery Station and founding - so to speak - Commerce and Agriculture, we now appeal with courage and hope to all of you, our sincere compatriots, being fond of progress and civilization, asking you to work with us, to make every good-will effort, for the development of this land, since it is so disappointing to

see smaller places around us to progress, while we hold in contempt and abandon places like this, like Almyros, which has a rare site and natural advantages and we stand still, inactive, doing against our interests and happiness.

Further more, it is a duty for all of us to work with our soul and heart for the benefit of this land, so that we will achieve, except for the material profits, also to cause the greatest moral benefit to this place, which will be the greatest and highest good for this place, deserted and abandoned up to now, a centre of theft and robbery, the refuge of the persons committing these crimes. Developing this land, we shall offer work to those tormented by poverty and misery, who, because of the lack of bread, incline to theft and other crimes; the widows and orphans will find here too a great comfort and convenience.

Thanking you from our heart, friends, fellow country-men, for the zeal and your good will, coming here to support our work, which will grant honour and priceless benefits to our Homeland, we would like to let you know that not only we alone will work for its success but also the Respected Government, of which his Excellency the Governor of Vamos Mr. Mich. Papadakis, who honoured our first meeting by his presence today, is an honourable member and is willing to grant us every possible aid; we would also like to inform you that a committee has been formed which will assemble here at certain dates and will work for this land's benefits.

The above mentioned committee will submit the appropriate report to his Excellency, the General Governor, asking him for help, so that this land will be soon and safely restored, announcing, at the same time, the primary basis of our enterprise.

Closing this short speech, dear fellow country-men, we wish that the Saviour of everything good will make us worthy in bringing to a happy end, in sincere brotherly and peaceful collaboration, this great, beneficial to the public, task.

His Excellency the Governor of Sfakia answered properly, exalting the importance of the enterprise and praising this decision of the inhabitants, who by, their good will and self-sacrifice, supply themselves and their descendants with a lot of goods and benefits, adding that the Government, paternally taking care of everything, was going to be present in fulfilling the expectations and offer all the moral support needed, for the success of the enterprise already been started.

Then a journal of proceedings was signed, which was given by the Mayor of Mathes to the Governor and by which the decisions taken were stated; in brief:

- 1) They asked the Respected Gen. Administration of Crete to send a skilled engineer to sketch the plan of the town to be built and also guide them as far as the draining of the swampy places was concerned.*
- 2) They established an open Market (bazaar) twice a month, on Sundays of early and mid month, where any kind of products would be carried over and sold.*
- 3) They asked for the name of the town "Paleocastella" to be changed by the proper Authorities to "Almyroupolis".*
- 4) They set Ascension Day to be an anniversary celebration day.*
- 5) They called upon the people's of the land and the trade unions' support.*
- 6) They applied for the moral and financial help of the Respected Government, to the sooner and most useful realization of the purpose pursued;*

then, the crowd scattered in a brotherly order, each one went away to where he was before, assigning any further tasks to the Mayor of Mathes and the Committee.

As beneficial to the public, the realization of the present laudable enterprise may be, it seems to be quite hard, since it is believed that nothing can be done without a lot of money; this maybe true, but

aren't there any land owners in the villages around, who could dispose large sums for that purpose? From now on, many of them prepare themselves and some of them have already proceeded in buying land, in order occupy themselves in commerce and other business. By fast inhabiting of this place and the Respected Administration's support, as well as the inhabitants' help for the purpose pursued, it will be achieved very easily. It only takes a lot of zeal and persistence by the persons who have taken over the initiative and let them be certain that they will win over the obstacles and propound poverty which seemed to be insuperable".

That very day, an executive committee was elected, to which further tasks were entrusted, including making a report, given to the Governor of Apocoronas and Sfakia, to be submitted to the General Governor of Crete Mahmout Gelaledin Pasha. As it has already been mentioned in Papagiannakis's speech, it was asked for an engineer to design the tracing of the streets of the new town, to plan the draining of the swamps, the construction of a bridge at the navigable Almyros river, for making easier the transportation by land and the carrying over of the products, as well as a loan to be given by the Beneficial Fund of Crete. At the same time the official change of the name Paleocastella to Almyroupolis was asked, the Ascension to be set as an anniversary celebration day and that twice a month an open market (bazaar) of animals and products would take place. The decision of the notables was the following:

" In Almyros of Apocoronas today, Tuesday, the 30th of March 1893, we, the undersigned, that is the majority of the committee for the inhabiting of this area - after having assembled - elected an executive committee which consists of the following: Miltiades Papadogiannakis as President, Anagnostis Cavros, Pavlos Anagnostakis, Georgios Voloudakis as Treasurer, Dimitrios Gerassimides as Secretary, Antonios Botonakis as Deputy Secretary, Nicolaos Strapatsakis, Georgios Morakis, Nicolaos Alexakis, Fillipos

Papadakis, Anagnostis Ieronymakis, Ioannis Alifierakis, Anagnostis Tsabanakis, Nicolaos Mygiakis, Ioannis Vourdoubakis, Ioannnis Hatzidakis and Hatzi Georg. Macrydakis as members, to whom we entrust the following: 1) the draining of the swamps 2) the discovery of drinkable water 3) the drawing up of the street plan 4) the arrangement of the bazaars and setting the dates for the bazaars to be held 5) the protection of the foreigners coming here 6) the support of the craftsmen and merchants of this land 7) the planting of eucalyptuses, aiming to sanitation and health 8) the facilitation of the enterprises 9) the establishment of a Customs Office 10) the installation of a Notary Public 11) the building of a Town Hall 12) the actions required so that the Beneficial Fund of Crete will lend money to the ones asking for it, in order to build houses here, to cultivate the lands around this place and to occupy themselves in commerce in this area 13) the increase of the Gendarmery staff which encamps here 14) the construction of a wooden bridge over the Almyros river, at the site "Cargadoron", so that transportation by land would be easier 15) making proper regulations and rules..

(20 signatures of honourable notables follow)

It is confirmed that the above signatures are genuine

In Almyros, Apocoronas the 30th of March 1893

The Mayor of Mathes

(seal) Pavlos Anagnostakis

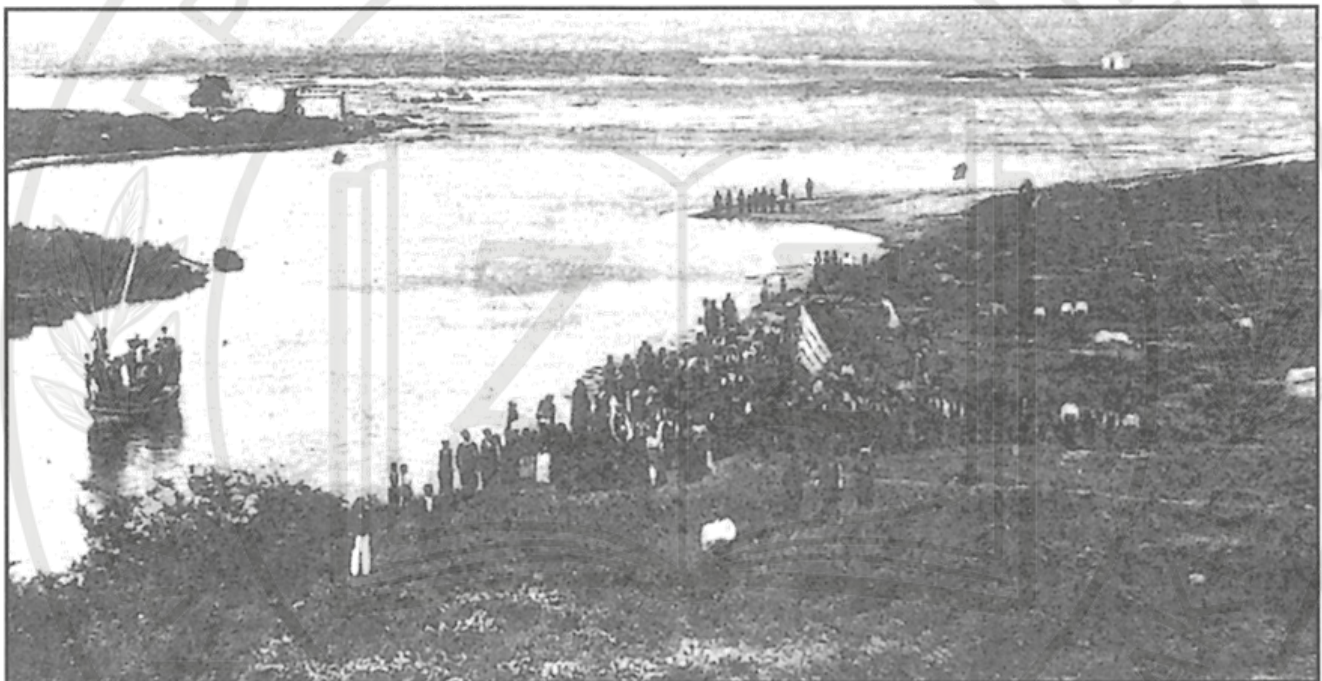
The joy and enthusiasm of the people was great and the order during the ceremony and also during their going away was exemplary.

In May of the same year, Papadogiannakis established a Workers' Brotherhood, intending to contribute to the land's fastest cultivation. It was decided that the coins would circulate having the same value both in Almyroupolis and in Rethymnon and that the bazaar would take place every Sunday. In June, some reports were sent to the

General Governor Mahmout Gelaledin and to his assistant G. Verovic, aiming to help and develop the land. They also applied to the military Administrator Tahsin Pasha, for the installation of a military station, ensuring public security.

During that very month many businessmen came, looking for land in the area, to buy.

The anniversary was celebrated on the Ascension Day. Early in the morning, crowds of inhabitants filled the area, and the Governor of Apocoronas and Sfakia M. Papadakis, as well as many officials, came too. It was mentioned in the news:



The small port of Almyroupolis and the islet with the chapel of St. Nicolas

" A report from Almyroupolis, Apocoronas:

It is well known that the Saviour's Ascension day was decided by the founders of Almyroupolis to be the celebration day for the anniversary of the creation of the town. At the celebration, the gathering of the farmers was expected to be dense; indeed, since early in the morning, lots of farmers crowded the recently created town. The progressive Governor of our Department Mr. Mich. Papadakis honoured the celebration by his presence along with many high officials who were invited by Mr. Miltiades Papadogiannakis,

President of the Farmers' Brotherhood, which has been created here for the inhabiting and progress of this area. After a short address to the crowds by Mr. President, the Farmers' Brotherhood voted for its regulation, which was submitted to the Respected General Administration, and after that, entertainment and dancing lasted until the afternoon, when each one left for his home, full of pleasant memories of this, joyful in every way, day.

Judging from the facts until now, one could say that the indeed very laudable initiative, undertaken by the Farmers' Brotherhood, putting aside fatigue and sacrifices, will be a success in every way; some buildings have already started to be built and many purchases are going to take place by people from Rethymnon and other wealthy ones, who were hesitant until today because of the delay in submitting the plan of Almyroupolis by Mich. Savvakis, the famous engineer of the General Administration. In one word, if we take into consideration the conveniences granted by the Respected Government and the local Authorities to the energetically working Brotherhood of Farmers, there is no doubt that the work that has started will be brought to a successful end and that Almyroupolis will become one of the most commercial harbours of Crete, to the benefit of the merchants and the farmers of our region. Especially the installation here of the detachment of the Imperial Army will contribute a great deal to the purpose pursued and we have no doubt that his Excellency Mahmout pasha, who cares for everything beneficiary to the public, as well as his Eminence Tahsin pasha, who skillfully commands the military Authorities of the Island, to whom the committee applied to, will listen to that favourably, so that they will obtain the people's blessing and gratitude."

After many efforts, Papadogiannakis went to Chania, presented himself to Mahmout pasha and managed so that Mich. Savvakis, the General Administration's engineer, was sent to Almyroupolis in order to draw up the tracing of the street-plan of the region. In the

newspaper "Mediterranean", at the column "Life in Apocoronas" the following extract was entered:

" The famous engineer of the General Administration, Mr. Mich. Savvakis, who had come out here after the formation of the necessary plan and estimated cost for the prisons with the stables to be built, went over to the newly established Almyroupolis, where he drew its plan and gave the proper instructions to the ones in charge of the town's inhabiting and promotion, about the plan to be followed and the way of draining the swampy places; a real praise is owed to the established committee, which, as we hear, works with a great zeal for the success of the purpose pursuing the benefit of all the inhabitants. The 6th of May, the Saviour's Ascension Day, has been decided to be an anniversary celebration day for the enterprise and the gathering of the farmers' classes is expected to be extraordinary. The above mentioned engineer specified the spots and small bridges to be repaired on the public road of Almyros, estimating the cost; after that, the work is going to start, to the people's greatest interest, since this road, as it is well known, connects the rest of Crete with our part and with that of Chania".

Savvakis himself had also sent to newspaper a report on Almyroupolis and its possibilities for development:

"Mr. Editor,

When I went to examine the place where the new city "Almyroupolis" in the province of Apocoronas would be founded and lay out the necessary town plan, I noticed the following: The site where the new town is going to be founded lies next to the Amfimallian gulf and is crossed by a navigable river called Almyros. As it is well known, the site, up to now, had been used as a refuge for thieves, since this place was uninhabited. The only Provincial Road which leads from the Department of Chania to Rethymnon, passes through there. On the East of the above mentioned river, in a two hour distance, vast lands lie, with an extension of more than 50.000

acres, most of them remaining uncultivated because of their unsafe position, as well as the great distance between them and the neighbouring villages; the place, where this town will be founded, has the following advantages. Firstly the passage of the ones passing by that place will be safe, since, once the town is founded, it is certain that a military force will be installed there, and secondly, since this place is secured the owners of the very productive lands will occupy themselves in clearing and cultivating those lands, of which they will gain a lot of profit. Even the belief that those places are swampy is false, since the water, springing in different spots, instead of stagnating, flows to the sea, and once the lands are cultivated, it can be used for their watering. The town about to be founded, can become a commercial one in the future, since there is an anchorage there and steamboats can safely come in; this way the inhabitants of the neighbouring Provinces are going to be greatly helped, since they will be delivered from the great pains and expenses to which they are already placed under, in order to get what they need from the existing towns, spending two or sometimes three whole days to come to Chania or to Rethymnon and supply themselves with all the necessary goods. This, unfortunately, happens to all the distant Provinces, the inhabitants of which suffer a lot, due to the lack of shopping centres in close places. Therefore, there is a need to support the foundation of the new town for the above mentioned reasons, which, in time, will become a great commercial centre, while the natural harbour that exists there, will play an important role and can, at a small cost, reach perfection in the future, meeting the needs to come up."

The construction, the cultivation, the tree-planting, the purchases of land, the settlement of craftsmen, the free passing by and the transportation of products and merchandises by sail boats to other towns of Crete, started immediately.

In spite of his tireless efforts to promote the matters of

Almyroupolis, Papadogiannakis faced obstacles caused by rivalry and envy. But he continued and in November he occupied the church of Prophet Elias, which was turned by the Turks into a military tower in 1866, he destroyed the fortifying walls around and the roof and repaired it. He did the same for the chapel of St. Nicolas on the little rocky island in the gulf of Almyros. He proceeded in digging new ditches so that the swampy coastal area would be totally drained and eucalyptuses were to be planted. He bought a European plough to set an example for the faster cultivation of the land, as well as sharp tools to mow the aquatic plants floating on the river's water surface. Since no farmer in that region knew how to use a European plough, Papadogiannakis went to Chania and asked the military Commandant Tahsin Pasha to send two "nisamis" (policemen) from Smyrna to teach the use of the plough. The pasha gave his consent but the two "nisamis" didn't finally go to Almyroupolis.

The correspondence of Papadogiannakis with the notables of the provinces of Ag. Vassilios, Apocoronas and Sfakia continued, reports asking for the support of the area were sent to the villages around to be signed and were forwarded to the General Governor Mahmout Gelaledin Pasha. The Press of Crete helped in this effort and many relative articles were entered in the newspapers "Mediterranean" and "Heraclion". But also another opinion was expressed : that the strait of Almyros shouldn't be inhabited since there was the possibility of the Turks building fortresses there and it would be almost impossible to drive them out later.

In 1895 a report was sent to Alexandros Caratheodoris Pasha, the new General Governor of Crete, signed by 800 notables, asking for the increase of the men of the Gendarmery Station, the establishment of a Customs Office, a salt warehouse and the construction of a bridge over Almyros river.

In 1896, Ottoman troops came from Vamos to Vrysses for the persecution of the Revolutionary Committee for Political Reform and in

the morning a lot of gunshots were heard, while some fishermen were in the navigable river. Four ottoman gendarmes in the Gendarmery Station notified them that they were in danger. The fishermen sailed off, heading for Rethymnon; had they stayed, they would have been hurt but they might also have been held responsible for the shooting: when the Gendarmery Station was about to be installed in Almyroupolis, it was promised to the General Governor that none of the neighbouring villages would maltreat the gendarmes, since everybody desired the area's peace and progress. During the siege of Vamos, there was a rumour that the troops sent from Chania were ordered to persecute also the inhabitants of the villages around Vamos, so - urged by those very rumours - they left, frightened, to the opposite highland villages for safety; they followed the road to Exopolis and arrived at a passage of the river of Vrysses, which, at that time, was more than 80 cm. deep, something which made their passing through quite difficult, at least for those who didn't have any animals to take across.

All these incidents made the criminals at the area reappear, which had certain consequences for the inhabitants of Almyroupolis: They robbed the stores of Manoussakis and Tsoutsidakis, but also the flour mill lying at the springs of Almyros. Not only they took all the flour, but they also broke all the empty beer bottles, throwing the broken pieces inside the mill, so that they would be grounded along with the wheat.

This situation forced many of the merchants to reduce their enterprises, while the efforts to impose order and to secure public safety lasted for quite a long period of time so that the merchants were able again to repeat their businesses. In order to achieve that, Papadogiannakis with his loyal friend C. Metaxotos, went to the villages around and read to the inhabitants letters of the notables from distant villages, who claimed that, because of the cities' blockade, they didn't have any food and that it would be good if the purchase of products and merchandises in Almyroupolis went on, so

that they were able to supply themselves with food. It was also asked of the inhabitants of each village to form a guard of their own, that would keep under control the area between their village and Almyroupolis and which would secure peace and order. But although Almyroupolis was the first to realize this plan and its guard was maintained for about a month, the whole plan didn't make any further progress because of the delay or the refusal of some merchants to dispose the necessary sum of money to maintain a similar guard. This had as a result a lot of sheep from the villages to be stolen again. Some of the inhabitants of Kefalas went, armed, to the highland hiding places of the thieves, where they discovered the stolen sheep. But the thieves had already been notified and occupied the ruins of the Ottoman fortress and the Tower of Deli Provias. A conflict followed and the incidents become greater, while Papadogiannakis tried to smoothen things up. Meanwhile there was a rumour that the merchandises of the Papadogiannakis brothers would be snatched away. At a loyal Papadogiannakis's friend, Mich. Lourentzos's incitement, they started preparing barriers of flour sacks and pulse, closing firmly the windows and doors. The attack didn't finally take place at Papadogiannakis's stores but at the house of Nic. Tsourdos from which both furniture and food were carried away.

After all these incidents, the inhabitants of the villages Fones, Maza, Habatha and Filippou had a dispute with the inhabitants of the villages Calamitsi Alexandrou, Calamitsi Amygdali and Exopolis, which led to a stop of all business activities and the big sailboats from Piraeus could not unload merchandises to Almyroupolis - the big sailboat of N. Malandrakis being among them, which carried flour on account of the Athenian flour merchant Penessis. In order to facilitate and secure the rebels, moving from the eastern provinces to the western ones, Papadogiannakis brothers consented so that their houses with all their furniture inside, would be used by the rebels of 1897, as a station and a place to spend the night.

During the same year Captain Tritakis with 120 volunteers came, who stayed for about 10 days, as well as Kyriakoulis Pierakos Mavromihalis with ten officers, who were going to Arhanes carrying money for the camp. The latter were escorted by Metaxotos - for the money's security - up to Dramia village. Mavromihalis arrived at Roustica, to spend the night at Prophet Elias monastery. He met with the Italian prince Alexandro Condo along with a socialist Member of the Parliament and some other doctors and journalists who were about to go to Alikianos. Mavromihalis informed Papadogiannakis that Condo was going to pass through Almyroupolis, so that he would offer him hospitality; so preparations were made, notables from the villages around came and all together welcomed Condo with cheers and gun-shooting, while the guests were addressed in Italian by the doctor of Almyroupolis D. Gerassimides, Papadogiannakis's brother-in-law. At noon they came to the square where a meal for about 60 persons had been prepared; during lunch, toasts, both in Greek and Italian, had been exchanged, Cretan dances were danced and Cretan songs were sang, and a shooting practice took place — the birds at the river's mouth being the targets. The journalists copied the revolutionary articles of Anna Gerassimides (Papadogiannakis's sister) and also the appeal to "all the ladies, wherever they are in the civilized world, for the Cretan struggle" but also the lamentation songs regarding some fighter from Fylaki village who had died of his wounds; all these were later on published in European newspapers. After lunch, Tritakis proposed that his voluntary army corps joined the corps of the Italian prince but his proposal was not accepted. They departed in warm cheers for Italy and Crete and gun-shooting.

During the same year, "Hydra", the first Greek battleship, arrived at Almyroupolis. Admiral Raynek asked the inhabitants whether there was drinkable water, since the admirals of the European fleets didn't permit the Greek fleet to get water from Chania. They only permitted watering from Rethymnon, avoiding water from Chania in fear of



Almyroupolis as a naval and military station

poisoning. Papadogiannakis, leading a group of persons (he, himself called it "Initiative"), went by boat to the battleship and told the admiral that they could take water from the river of Vrysses, its springs being on the White Mountains and its water being appropriate to be supplied with. The water proved indeed to be appropriate and the Greek fleet was notified that water could be taken from Almyroupolis - the ships anchored at the coasts of the little island of St. Nicolas. So Almyroupolis had become temporarily a naval and military station. Steamboats circulated in the navigable Almyros river and went up the river of Vrysses to take water.

An Italian battleship arrived at the coast of Almyroupolis, anchored to the right of the little island of St. Nicolas and an officer with an interpreter went ashore by boat and distributed to the armed men several printed leaflets where it was mentioned that some privileges were granted to the Cretan people. Papadogiannakis read to the attending, about four thousand, people the proclamation and the crowd responded with the outcry: "Long live the Union". The foreign battleship sailed off, at the rebels protests and gun-shooting.

The crews of the Greek ships, hearing the shouts, thought for a moment that Cretans had accepted the privileges but when they found out what had happened, admiral Raynek and his officers came out of the ships and were received in a frenzy of enthusiasm.

The "Initiative" provided for the foundation of a school and invited the teacher Ioannis Marinakis from Calamitsi; he was promised a house, a nine months' alimentation and a building appropriate to be used as a school. The agreement was signed, and the registration of the pupils started. In the first three months eight pupils came from Mathes village, in the following three months twelve and after another three months a total of 95 pupils from Mathes and other villages attended lessons. In 1898, a day of a religious praise for the emperor of Russia Nicolaos was set by the inhabitants of Almyroupolis. The very day, about two thousand people attended the ceremony, the usual gun-shooting took place and a document was signed by the people there, which was sent by the Russian Consulate of Rethymnon to the Tzar. A petition was also signed, in order to be handed over by a committee to admiral Scrydlov, asking for the area from the strait of Almyros and beyond to become a part of the Russian Sector, hoping that the Russians would take care not only of the area's sanitation but also of the inhabitants' safety. But due to the conflicts



Foreign sailors at the river's mouth

and the personal beliefs, the plan was canceled and the area remained as a part of the Italian Sector.

By Papadogiannakis's invitation, the archimandrites coming from Apocoronas, Callivretakis and Germanos Apostolakis, professor of Theology, came from the monastery of Ag. Triada in Akrotiri and performed services in memory of those who had fallen in battle, at the church of Prophet Elias at the site " Troulli", where a big cenotaph had been built, decorated with myrtle-shrubs and laurels.

Another report was sent to the President of the Revolutionary Assembly I. Sfakianakis, signed by about one thousand persons, asking for the seat of the Prefecture of Apocoronas - Sfakia to be installed in Almyroupolis. In order to achieve this purpose, the "Initiative" went to Chania to meet Sfakianakis, along with other members of the Revolutionary Assembly, but while approaching Venizelos's house at Halepa, where the members of the presidency of the Revolutionary Assembly were housed, they were informed of the slaughters of Christians by the Turks in Heraclion.

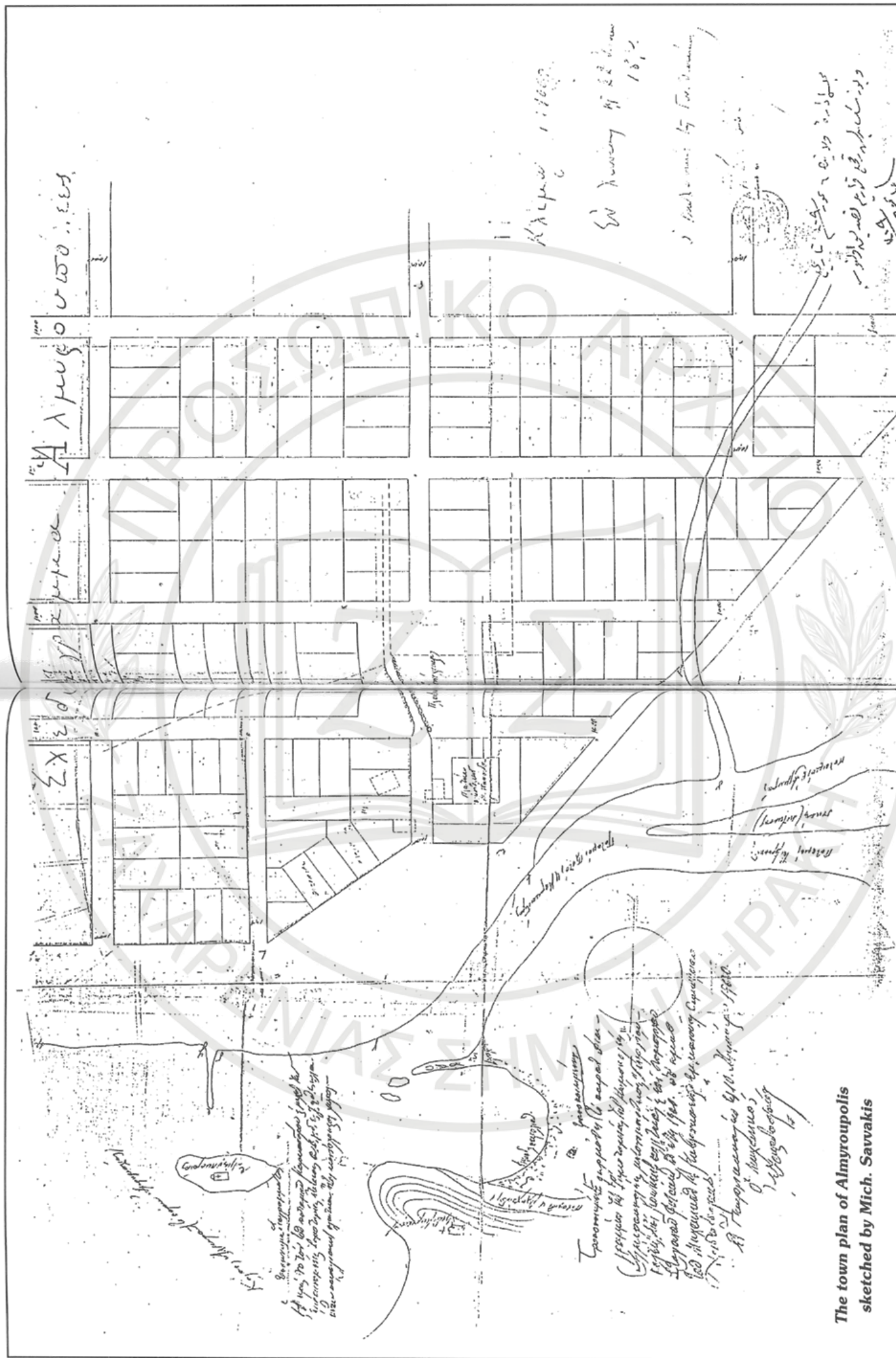
The efforts in promoting the issues of Almyroupolis, drew also the attention of the Press, that's why the newspaper "Heraclion" published a correspondence about the town's progress.

The Cretan State - Georgioupolis

In 1898, Crete became self-governed and Prince George arrived, appointed to be the first High Commissioner of the Cretan State. In 1899 the "Initiative" visited Chania and handed over the Commissioner a report, asking for the seat of the Prefecture to be installed in Almyroupolis. Similar actions resulted a decision of the Municipality of Mathes, coming out on May 8th 1899 which *"...voted that, in memory of the deliverance of our homeland, the name of Almyroupolis is to be changed to Georgioupolis, so that Prince George is honoured and in memory of those magnificent events of the Cretan history..."*. Georgios Berbirakis, the municipal adjunct, acting temporarily as a Mayor and the notables Miltiades Papadogiannakis and the priest Ioannis Moussourakis Sacellariou were assigned to go and hand over the Commissioner the enactment, also signed by A. Tsobanakis, A. Goniotakis, N. Giannakis, N. Markakis, M. Logiakis and C. Moussourakis.

When Styl. Fotakis, who came from Lambi, was appointed as the Prefect of the Prefecture of Sfakia, the "Initiative" recommended to the village's teacher to teach the pupils the hymn of the Saint Martyrs of Ag. Vassilios province; and indeed it was sung by the 105 pupils of Georgioupolis, when, on June 12th 1899, the Prefect came to his seat. At that time, there were about forty families from Caucasus in Chania, and they were informed by the "Initiative" that building grounds were to be granted to them, and also assured them that they would be given fields to cultivate.

In 1899, a public auction was proclaimed: 13 ditches were to be constructed and 2.500 cubic metres of earth were to be removed in Georgioupolis, so that the swamps would be drained. A supplementary auction was set for January 9th 1900 at the town - the contractor would be paid according to the work's progress. The same



***The town plan of Almyroupolis
sketched by Mich. Savvakis***

year another auction was also proclaimed for the construction of the bridge of Vrysses, according to the engineer Michael Savvakis's plan. The work's budget was 2.682 drachmas and the auction was set to take place at Georgioupolis on Sunday, September 29th 1899.



The bridge of Vrysses

The first Government of the Cretan State granted a sum of 6.000 dr. for the area's sanitation and especially for ditch-digging "to the muddy area, at the east of the town". When the engineer came to make his plans and set the ditches' depth and width, it was pointed out to him that the ditches should have a vertical direction to the sea so that the water's flow would be facilitated and that their depth should be set at one and a half metre, their width at one, while their surface should be at about 50 cm from the earth's surface. But finally the plans came out differently, some ditches were dug not vertically to the sea, later on aquatic plants sprang out into them and prevented the water from flowing freely, so gradually those ditches became useless.

But certain rumours spread and defamed the area: It was said that it was an unhealthy place with dangerous and contagious diseases, that the river's water, flowing underground, was coming from Cournas lake and that its continuous flow would prevent the area's sanitation. Because of those rumours, it was necessary that the lake's water was canalized elsewhere in order to achieve the drainage of the swamps of Georgioupolis, which was quite impossible since a sum of thousands of pounds was required for the canalization of the water. The spreading of those defaming rumours caused the reduction of circulation to Georgioupolis, the people being afraid to drink water from there, believing that they would start suffering from fever.

After an order issued by the Counselor of the Cretan State Home Office, Aristides Mouratoglou, director of the Agricultural Station of Attica, came to examine the agricultural issues of Crete. Mouratoglou examined the issue of the sanitation of Georgioupolis, made a report mentioning that the swamps were the result of the bad flow of the water of the four rivers, referring extensively to their width and length. As far as the watering and the general use of water were concerned, he believed that the whole plain of Georgioupolis, estimated to be about 25 thousand acres, could be watered with the appropriate machines; on the other hand, this plain, although very fertile, wasn't cultivated in the right way, resulting the natural flow of the water to be obstructed and the swamps formed. According to Mouratoglou, the arrangement of the water for the rivers Almyros, Vlyhadas, Perasticos, the river of Vrysses and Delfinas was easy and could be done at a low cost and the immediate drainage of the swamps was necessary, not only for the sanitation of the area, but also for a bigger area to cultivate, which was fertile but uncultivated until then.

Summing up, Mouratoglou indicated that it was necessary to pursue, by the necessary works, the most correct and dense

cultivation and tree planting in order to drain the swamps. The development of Georgioupolis harbour should also be supported so that the farmers from the area around could trade products without one day's work losses, but under quite good terms. Finally it was proved that the Cournas lake had very little to do with the health conditions of the area and that, if its water was used for irrigation, it would have been very useful, although, given the facts of that time, it was quite difficult to proceed to the relative works, and not for financial reasons only.

In 1900, an excursion of the Gendarmery from Chania to Rethymnon took place. The inhabitants of Georgioupolis provided food and lodgings for the officers to spend the night. They welcomed them and they all gathered at Georgioupolis, where a religious praise was held in the open and at night dinner was offered by the Prefect to the officers and by the inhabitants to the gendarmes.

The efforts in building a church were repeated, but obstacles appeared again. Other efforts were made by the Prefect of Sfakia and the Mayor of Georgioupolis to get a loan so that a proper building to be built for the Court of the First Instance of Sfakia. And indeed the loan was granted and the building was constructed but, by the n. 58 decree of the High Commissioner, the temporary transfer of the seat of the Court of the First Instance of Sfakia from Georgioupolis to Vamos was extended for nine months. By the n. 83 Royal Decree, the transfer of the seat of the Court of the First Instance of Sfakia was extended later indefinitely and the previous n. 58 decree was revoked.

In 1901 the mineralogist Ioannis Doannides came to Georgioupolis and at Papadogiannakis's request, went to the lake of Cournas and made a report on the water and the site of its outlet, which was submitted to the Government of the Cretan State. Doannides specifically mentioned about Georgioupolis:

"As I traveled over the province of Apocoronas lately, I had the opportunity to realize the misfortune that torments Georgioupolis and its suburbs, which is due to all the water stagnating there and to the fever caused by it. In spite of this, the land is in many ways favoured by nature and lies at a coastal part of the island, being a centre of transportation, also having a fertile soil, appropriate for cultivation, which can, by draining the swamps, become even more fertile."



The Almyros springs - Photo by Mich. Defner

The doctors Ioannis Soumaripas, Georgios Cambanis and Georgios Tsepetakakis came to Georgioupolis, following orders of the Counselor of the Home Office, to examine the conditions, *"from the health's point of view"* and *"as far as health was concerned"*. After an examination of the site, they mentioned in their report that: *"the place where Georgioupolis lies and all its plain in general fulfill all those conditions which make a place swampy and therefore full of pyrite; there is no doubt, swamps are formed from here and along the coast in an area far from it, the water bubbling up from the earth. But even if this place*

is swampy, it doesn't mean that one should condemn it and consider it as an uninhabitable one, since it is well known that the fevers caused of the swamps are endemical at the swampy places, they appear like epidemic diseases at a certain time of the year, during which several meteorological conditions, as well as of the earth, help the progress of the contamination of the swamps. Any case, at the time, is a simple reappearance of the infection, appearing to persons who already carry it, because of a previous contamination and for that the person already infected can be repelled, although that doesn't mean that those places can be inhabited during this period without any danger for the health of the inhabitants. Since those conditions appear during May, June, July, August, September and October, during which the epidemic of the swamps fevers develop, the result is that during the rest of the year (November, December, January, February, March and April) those fevers don't develop, except for the infections during the months of the previous period and, even then, it is only a reappearance, as already been mentioned. Consequently, during those months, the employees can stay at the place in question. Although we today consider Georgioupolis as an inhabitable place during these months, in time, when the sanitary works of the earth clearance, already having been started, will successfully proceed, it can gradually be completely sanitary and become permanently and constantly inhabitable, since all the swamps that lie in this plain can extinct by draining and clearing the earth, by cultivation and by planting all kinds of trees, especially eucalyptus and pine trees".

The Municipality of Mathes changed its name to Municipality of Georgioupolis, the villages Calamitsi and Exopolis were annexed to it, the number of the inhabitants was completed (they were over 5000) and, by the n. 23 decree of March 7th 1902, the Municipality of Georgioupolis was classified from a B' Class Municipality to A' Class one.



Georgioupolis - View from the sea

In April 1902 by the n. 66 Royal Decree, Georgioupolis was set as the capital of the Prefecture of Sfakia for the period from November until April of every year, while the rest of the months, Vamos was set as the capital. In November 1902, by the n. 231 Decree, the previous decree was revoked and Vamos was temporarily set as the capital *"until the actual sanitation works in Georgioupolis were finished"*.

The "Initiative", led by Papadogiannakis, moves on to cultivating and creating a garden at the quay, removing the aquatic plants and planting small trees, flowers and green grass, so that a year later the ex-stagnant area had turned into a flower-bed .

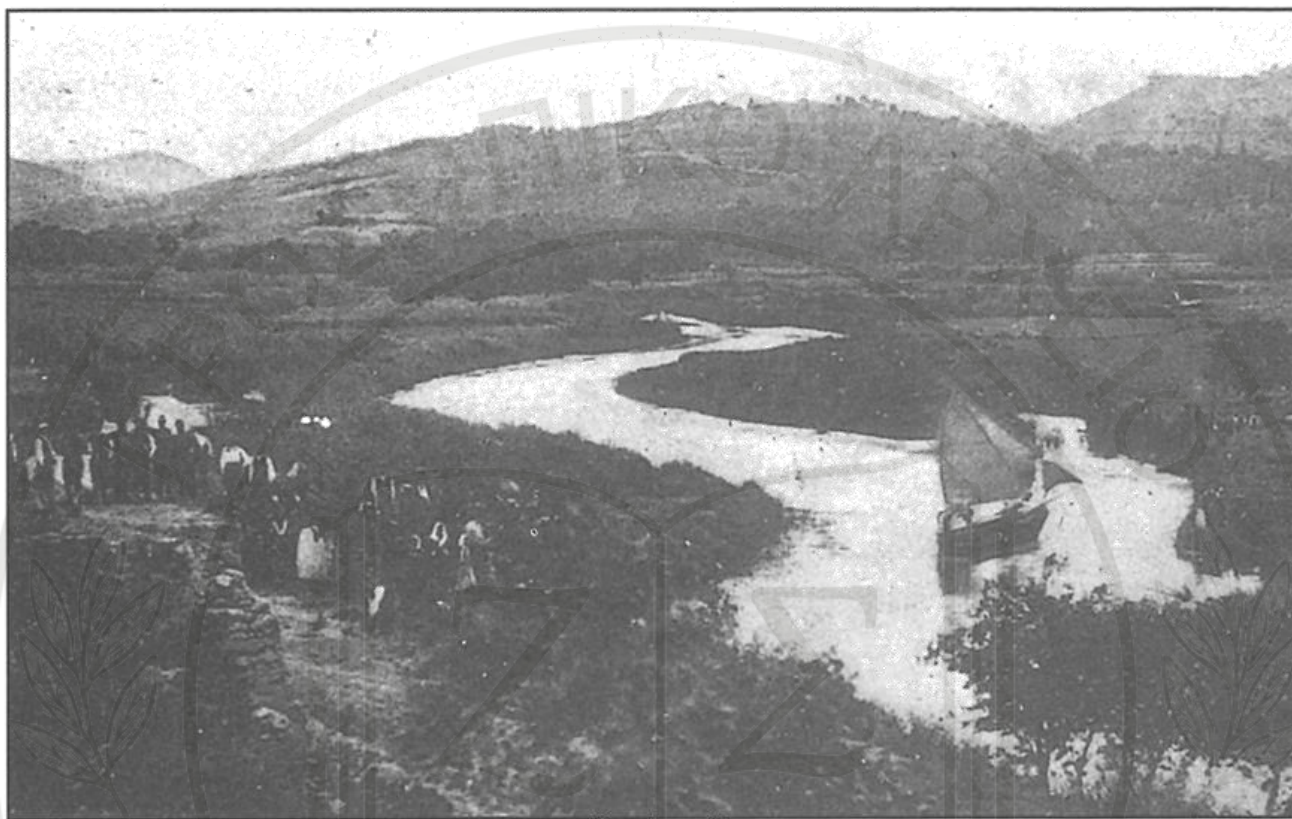
In May 1902, Constantinos Manos had sent the following answer to a relative letter of Papadogiannakis: *"In reply to your letter, dated May 7th, I inform you that Cyr. Protopapadakis, who works for me as a hydraulic engineer, departs now, having finished his work; therefore it is not possible for him to come and execute the projects you mentioned. But Mr. Andaillon, professor of the University of Lille, France, and member of the geographic team to Crete, is already here, who will come to your area too, on his mission. I will*

ask him to study the hydraulic problems of Georgioupolis and hope that he will not refuse to carry out my request, so you will be as happy as to have a study of an acknowledged authority...". Indeed the members of the French team came from the eastern provinces, Andaillon among them too, who, after being informed about the previous unhealthy conditions, toured the whole ex-stagnant area, from the beach till the banks of the four rivers, at Papadogiannakis's request. Andaillon's opinion was that no mosquitoes developed in the brackish water, while he emphasized on the need of cutting off the aquatic plants in the rivers and the "vromoxylies" too, that is the small trees at the rivers' banks. He also suggested the removal of the useless trees, planting eucalyptuses and he turned down the allegations of the three doctors Soumaripas, Cambanis and Tsepetakis. *"I have been to many places", mentioned Andaillon "which, as far as health is concerned, were more swampy than your place. We now come from the village "Perama" in Mylopotamos which is much more swampy and unhealthy. Nevertheless, the Authorities are established there."* Andaillon's advice was that the inhabitants should clear up the place, the Government should organize fish-ponds in the rivers and in the lake of Cournas and he promised that he would send a special report, being sure that when the sanitary works, being already done, and the planting of eucalyptuses would come to an end, Georgioupolis would have assured healthy living conditions for its inhabitants.

On March 4th 1903, the High Commissioner, Prince George, visited his "namesake" town, as he called it, where he was warmly received and informed of the area's history, as well as of the important subject of the sanitation of Georgioupolis.

On April 29th 1903, the Municipal Council of Georgioupolis, asked the Cretan Parliament for the establishment of an Agricultural Station at their town, the building of a salt-warehouse, the

construction of a public road and a sum of money to be granted so that the navigable Almyros river was deepened, in a way that the sailboats would enter into the port and faster transportation of products and merchandises would be facilitated.



Navigable river of Georgioupolis

But the Royal Council, after the n. 3538 letter of the Prefecture of Sfakia and the report of the three doctors on whether the seat of the Prefecture of Sfakia should be transferred, decided unanimously to push forward a Royal Decree proclaiming that as long as the present unhealthy conditions in Georgioupolis continued existing, the seat of the Prefecture of Sfakia - like all the rest of the Authorities - would remain in Vamos all year long. At the time Georgioupolis had an Elementary School, a Post Office and a Customs Office, dependent to the Sub-customs Office in Calyves. There, small importing and exporting trade was maintained with sailboats from the Gulf of Almyros. The products produced in the area were cereals, olive oil, wine, cotton, silk linen, a lot of fruit, carob-beans and cattle.

In 1904 the Municipal Councils of Fres, Georgioupolis and Lappa by a referendum to the Commissioner, asked for his help for the town's progress and Councilor Aristides Criaris granted the sum of 150 drachmas for the deepening of Almyros river. But Georgioupolis suffered not only because of the swamps and political hazards, like the Movement at Therisso in 1905, but also because of bad rumours which made it look as an unhealthy and dangerous place and, as a result, new inhabitants not only didn't settle down, but also the ones being already there deserted the place going away, as well as avoiding even passing through, going to the island's eastern or western provinces.

The Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis

In 1906 the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis was founded by M. Papadogiannakis, who had offered so much to the foundation and development of Georgioupolis. Specifically, on February 5th 1906, an official journal of proceedings was written down, to which a list of the founders and members of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis was annexed. It mentioned the following:

"We, the following undersigned, assembled today, Sunday, February 5th, in Georgioupolis to found an Agricultural Society, the purpose of which will be the fast development and progress of Agriculture over the Island, the sanitation of the unhealthy places and the foundation of a department for fishing, the organization of fish-ponds and the protection of birds and animals; we proceeded to the drawing up and approbation of the Society's Statute which consists of 28 articles, we then decided, according to an agreement, to elect a thirty-member Council to deal with the Society's issues, which will be enforced when the Society's Statute will be approved by the Government. Members of the Council are the following gentlemen:

Miltiades Papadogiannakis, merchant, President, Ioannis Moussourakis Sacelariou, Vice president, Emmanuel Valadakis, teacher, Secretary, Vardis Cavroudakis, merchant, Treasurer, Kyriakos Alygizakis, teacher, George Galanis, Prefect of Sfakia, Joseph Manoussomanolakis, Mayor of Ascyfou, Emmanouel Manousselis, Mayor of Callicratis, Efstathios Papadakis, Mayor of Lappa, Efstathios Peroulis, Mayor of Vamos, Michael Digenis, Mayor of Fres, Iraclis Mandadakis, acting as a Mayor of Georgioupolis, Pavlos Anagnostakis, landowner, Christos Voloudakis, landowner, Andreas Hatzivourdoubakis, chief, Emmanouel Theodorakis, doctor, Manoussos Papadogiannis, student, Pavlos Zolindakis, High-school Headmaster, Haralambos Pologeorgis, lawyer, George Fragiadakis,

39

Διάταγμα

Περί ἐγκρίσεως καταστατικοῦ τῆς ἐν Γεωργιουπόλει
Γεωργικῆς Εἰσπρατικῆς

Ἡμεῖς
Γεώργιος Γεώργιος τῆς Ἑλλάδος
Ἰσχυρὸς
Ἐκτελεστικῆς ἐν Κρίσει

Ἐχόντες ἐν ᾧ τὸ ἄρθρ. 26 τοῦ Συντάγμα-
τος, ἀρτεῖται τοῦ Ἡμετέρου ἐν τῶν ἑσωτερικῶν
ἐγκυβουβίων

Ἐκδομὴν ἰσομετρικῆς Διατάξεως

Ἄρθρ. 1^{ον} Ἐγκρίσεται τὸ καταστατικὸν τῆς
ἐν Γεωργιουπόλει Γεωργικῆς Εἰσπρατικῆς
ἐπιμετελλομένης τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ἑσω-
τερικῷ τοῦτον ὀρίσμενον ἔργον.

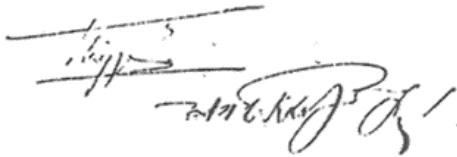
Ἄρθρ. 2^{ον} Ἡ Εἰσπρατικὴ ὀρεῖται καὶ ἐπὶ ἐξου-
σίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἑσωτερικῷ τῶν ἐσωτερικῶν
Ἀνωτέρων Διευθυντῶν αὐτῶν ἑσωτερικῶν.

Ἄρθρ. 3^{ον} Πᾶσα προτεσίον τῶν κατα-
στατικῶν δέον καὶ ἐπὶ ἐξουσίᾳ αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν
ἐν τῇ Ἀρχιεπισκοπῇ Ἀνωτέρων Διευθυντῶν.

Ἄρθρ. 4^{ον} Ἡ παρούσα ἐγκρίσις δύναται
τὴν ἀναμνηστικὴν ἐν τῇ ἐπιμετελλομένης διατάξεως
ἔχειν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐγκυβουβίου καταστατικοῦ
ἢ τοῦ παρόντος Διατάγματος.

Εἰς τὸν Ἡμετέρου ἐν τῶν ἑσωτερικῶν ἐν-
κυβουβίων ἀναμνηστικῇ δημοσίευσιν καὶ ἐν τῇ
ἑσωτερικῇ διατάξει Διατάγματος.

Ἐν Ἀθήναις τῇ 7 Μαρτίου 1906.



The approving Decree of the Agricultural Society's Statute

chieftain, Grigorios A.Morakis, Greek teacher, Manoussos Hatzigrigorakis, landowner, Stamatios Mylonogiannakis, chief, George Panigyrakis, lawyer, Ioannis Papadakis, lawyer, Andreas Polentas, employee, Ioannis G.Papadakis, journalist, Eleftherios Cagiadakis, landowner, Georgios Dascalogiannis, lawyer, Constantinos Fournis, lawyer,

To whom we assign the realization of the Society's Statute, according to what is set by its articles.

In Georgioupolis, February 5th 1906".

The names and professions of the Society's first Board of Directors were cited above, so that one could understand that the members participating were people of different professions and posts and not only people who occupied themselves exclusively in agriculture.

That very day, the Board submitted the Statute to the Home Office of the Cretan State. The High Commissioner Prince George, by the n. 39 decree of March 9th 1906, legalized the Statute of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis, indicating that the Society should, each year, submit its balancing of accounts to the Home Office. Every alteration had to be submitted for approval and the Decree was to be revoked in case of a violation of the terms set by the Statute or the approving Decree.

The Commissioner's Decree and the Society's Statute were entered the Official Government Gazette, also published by the Society in a booklet and put into circulation with the Society's seal on the cover. The Statute was as follows:

"STATUTE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

CHAPTER A'

Society's work and purpose

Article 1. An Agricultural Society is founded in Georgioupolis aiming to the progress of Agriculture and the sanitation of the unhealthy places.

Article 2. It's purposes will be achieved by the following actions:

A') By supplying and sending all over the island

*1) The appropriate ploughs, machinery and tools.
2) Pure sulphur, sulphurous copper and every other drug, useful in preventing or curing vegetable diseases.*

3) Plants used for animals' food, tobacco, cotton, seeds of new cereals, of dry legumes etc. especially those certain to grow under good financial terms on the island.

4) Selected fruit trees or their vaccines, the cultivation of which can be profitable and especially those of which fruit can be sold as consuming goods, especially abroad.

5) Seeds of silkworm in order to spread sericulture widely, so that it will become a home and national handicraft.

6) Chemical fertilizers.

B') By creating (at the Society's seat or elsewhere) or by maintaining at its expenses:

1) Nursery of mulberry-trees, planting mulberry-trees and other fruit and sanitary trees.

CHAPTER B'

About the Society's members

Article 3. Everyone can enter the Society. The members are : a) regular b) honorary and c) corresponding ones

a) Landowners, farmers stock-breeders and the people occupying themselves in any kind of agricultural handicraft, but also those wishing to contribute to the success of the Society's purpose, can be elected as regular members upon a proposal of a Board member.

b) Men who offer or can offer great services to the Society (the purpose of which is the land's agricultural progress) by donations or other means, can be elected as honorary members by the Board upon a proposal of three of its members.

c) Any person who can contribute to the Society's purpose can be elected, as a corresponding member.

Article 4. Society members are not to be involved in political matters, as far the Society's activities are concerned.

Article 5. Regular members pay a subscription of 5 drachmas per annum, while honorary and corresponding members are not subject to any subscription.

Article 6. 1) Society members paying a sum of 50 drachmas, are registered as founders. 2) Those who pay at least a sum of 100 drachmas, are registered as donors. 3) Those who pay over 200 drachmas are registered as benefactors.

The names of all the above persons appear on a board, hanging up in the Assembly room of the Board of Directors.

CHAPTER C'

Article 7. The Society's funds are:

a) the subscriptions of the regular members b) the offers made

by the honorary and corresponding members c) the donations of the civilians who are fond of Agriculture d) the grants by the State, the Municipalities and the Holy Monasteries and e) the income from any other enterprise, which the Board of Directors decides to be done.

Article 8. The Society's capitals will be deposited annually in its name and in an open account in a Bank chosen by the Board of the first period; its real estate will be transcribed in its name and its tools and other kind of things will be kept by the Society's Treasurer.

CHAPTER D'

Article 9. The Society's administration is a thirty-member Board, the members elected by the General Assembly, by a secret vote, by the majority of the regular members.

Article 10. The full term of service for the members of the Board of Directors is a four year one.

Article 11. The Board of Directors elects, from its members, by a secret vote, every three years, a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary.

Article 12. The Vice President replaces the President when having difficulties in performing his duties.

Article 13. The Board is in charge of the Society's matters, taking every step which would contribute to the success of its purpose, it approves any expenses made and is obliged to report in detail to the Society members' General Assembly about all its actions during its financial management.

Article 14. The Board's decisions are made by the majority of the directors present at the meeting and in case of a tie, the vote of the person presiding prevails. Decisions are made by a secret vote only in

case of personal issues, and in case of a tie, the prevailing vote is the one of the person presiding.

Article 15. In order to form a quorum at the Board's meetings, the presence of at least 10 of its members is required.

Article 16. The Board meets regularly once every three months, and in special cases, once the President or three of its members consider meeting is necessary.

The President summons by personal invitations all the directors, those living at the Society's seat, three days before the meeting and those coming from Municipalities or provinces, eight days before the meeting. He declares the Board meetings' commencement and ending, he represents the Society in any occasion and in all its relations in front of every Authority and every Court. He signs all the documents and orders, the expenses approved by the Board to be paid, signing therefore the orders for payment, he supervises the Treasurer and he announces the results to the Board of Directors.

Article 17. The Secretary writes down in a book a precise summary of what was decided during each meeting. He draws up and signs, along with the President, all the documents coming out from the Board's Office, he keeps the necessary accounting books; in case of absence or illness he is replaced by a Board member to the President's decision.

Article 18. The Treasurer pays no money unless he is given an order for payment properly issued, and submits once a year a detailed account presenting the Society's fortune.

Article 19. The General Assembly assembles regularly once a year, and in special cases, when the Board decides it's necessary.

Article 20. The quorum of the General Assembly is always formed, no matter the number of the members present.

CHAPTER E'

Article 21. To the Agricultural Society, a department for fishing, for fish-ponds, and animal and bird protection is also founded, the purpose of which will be:

Article 22. The promotion of fishery, the strict persecution of the fishing means using dynamite and a creation of a fish-pond.

Article 23. The promotion of sponge-fishing by maintaining the law forbidding diving-suits, shark-hunting and other measures.

Article 24. The legal punishment of cart drivers, donkey drivers, horsemen and all those merciless to animals, either wild or pack ones, who torture them either by loads heavier than the ones they can carry, or beat or load them while they are hurt.

The tender care and treatment of any kind of animal suffering of epidemic or other diseases, by the most useful and appropriate means.

Article 25. The Agricultural Society has its own seal with Demeter (the goddess) in the middle and the words "Agricultural Society - Georgioupolis", around it.

Article 26. Ascension Day is set to be the Society's celebration day.

Article 27. If, for any reason the Society would be dissolved, its property either real estate or moveable one, will come to the Government, provided all debts to any third party are settled and a committee consisting of three Society members elected by it, the Prefect and the Director of the Agricultural Station, if there is one, will be in charge of the procedure.

Article 28. This Statute, signed by the Society's founders, is submitted to the Government to be legalized; it can only be altered by a regular assembly upon a proposal of at least 50 Society members or 18 members of the Board of Directors.

ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΝ

ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥΠΟΛΕΙ

ΓΕΩΡΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ



ΕΝ ΧΑΝΙΟΙΣ

1906

*The cover of the Statute and the seal
of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis*

It was voted in Georgioupolis on February 5th 1906 and is put in force ever since, submitted at the same time to the Respected Government for approval."

(the signatures of the Society members follow)

The foundation of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis made quite an impression since it was a pioneer of its kind. No other similar Society had been founded, only later on, in 1908, the Agricultural Association of Heraclion was founded, the Agricultural Society being its model. It should also be mentioned that long ago, there were Agricultural Stations maintained by the State, which were parts of the administrative system of the Cretan State. The foreign diplomats, at Chania at that time, excited and impressed, promised to help the newly founded Agricultural Society. So the British Consul promised to supply the Society with different seeds from the colonies, for growing young trees. The Consul of Italy was to be a go-between person for the Society and the Italian Ministry for Agriculture and send the agricultural magazines being published. And the Consul of Germany supplied the Society with different seeds and catalogues of tools.

By constant articles in the newspapers, as well as distributing relative leaflets, from 1906 until 1912, the Society appealed for help to every person fond of progress, for the success of its beneficial purposes and asked so that it was sent seeds, plants, agricultural tools, magazines, books, essays on Agriculture, on fishery, on fish-ponds and the cure of malaria; the Society was willing to establish connections with other agricultural Societies too.

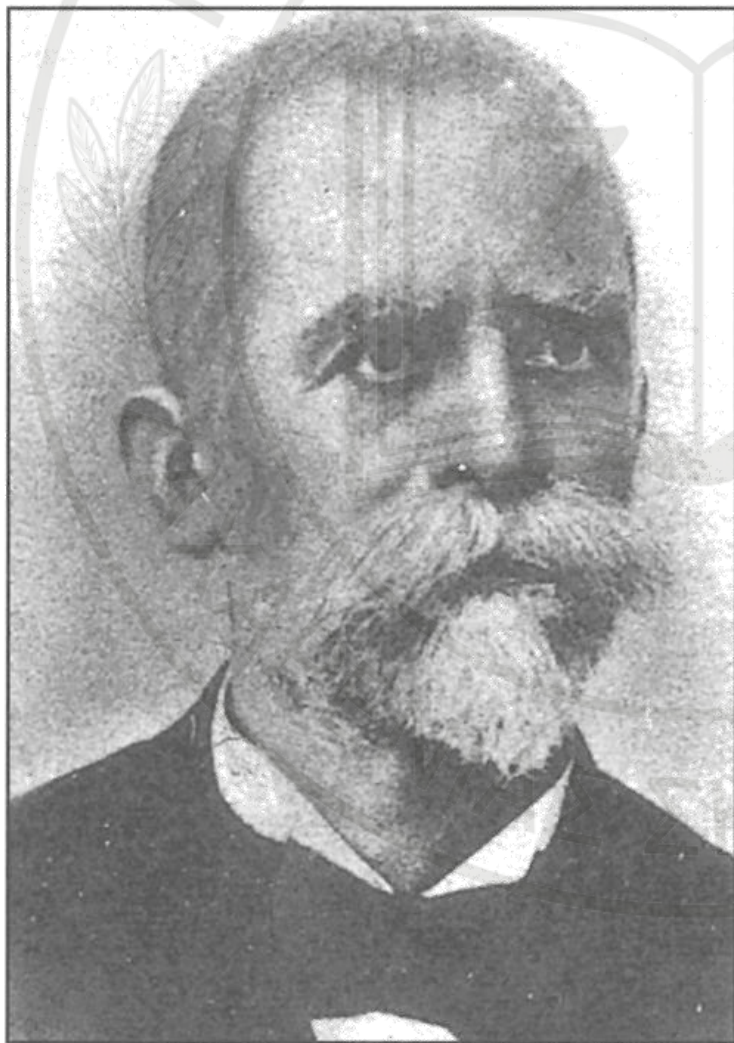
During its first year of work, the Society received boxes with plants of citron-trees and distributed them gratis for planting, supplied itself with sulphur from France and started cultivating the little islands

"Calamionas" and "Mytissos", where it planted gardens. The young trees grown there (especially the azure acacia trees at Halepa's Street) were sent, free of charge, by coasters to all the island's coasts. The Society planted 2.000 eucalyptuses according to the Town Plan of Georgioupolis, mowed the aquatic plants at Almyros river and the river of Vrysses, filled up rills and pits with earth, dug ditches to facilitate the free flow of the stagnant water to the sea and drained the rotten herbs at the coastal areas.

In 1907 the agricultor G. H. Eleftheriades sent the Society the "Agricultural Bouquet" magazine, being its publisher, while professor Flegel, famous for his essays on sponge-fishery published in the

above mentioned magazine many articles on the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis.

Four reports were sent by the inhabitants of the neighbouring Municipalities to the President of the Cretan Parliament, Antonios Michelidakis, asking, among other things, for a special agriculturist to be sent and teach the use of the European plough. One of the requests was for the support of the Society, which, in 1907, planted 2.300 eucalyptuses at the streets and squares, at the



Antonios Michelidakis

quay and stagnant areas and had distributed young trees, always free of charge. But the Chief of the Council for Hygiene, according to

Λογισμὸς Γεωργικῆς Εταιρείας

Ἀπὸ 5 Φεβρουαρίου 1906 μέχρι 30 Μαρτίου 1907	Ἔσοδα	Ἔξοδα
Ἔσοδα		
Ἐσπραχθῆναι ἐν συνδρομητῶν	227 40	
Καδυσσερούμενα " "	34	
Ἐσπραχθῆναι ἐν Γερνητῶν	200	
Καδυσσερούμενα " "	100	
Ἔξοδα		
Γραμματὴ ὕλη, βιβλία, ἰσχυράματα, ἀποδείξεις		80 90
Γραμματόσημα καὶ χαρτόσημα		31 66
Λογαρίσματα καὶ μισθίων		13
Προμήθεια καὶ πώλησι δένδρων		33 60
" " " " ἰσχυρῶν		4 80
Γεωργικὰ ἔργα καὶ σύρματα		31
Ἡμερομίσθια		128 70
Καδυσσερούμενα		134
Μισθολογία ἐν ταμίῳ		103 74
	561, 40	561, 40

Ἐν Γεωργιουπόλει τῇ 10 Ἀπριλίῳ 1907



Ὁ Πρόεδρος

Μητριάκης Παναγιώτης

Ὁ Γραμματεὺς
Ἰωάννης

Papadogiannakis, stated at the annual statistic boards, based on groundless information, that the percentages of the people suffering from malarial fever were 85 - 90% at Georgioupolis, 55% at Calamitsi and Exopolis, 62% at Fones, 65% at Habatha, Maza, Filippi, 60% at Cournas and Patima and 75% at Fylaki.

On April 10th 1907, the Agricultural Society, through its President and Secretary, submitted to the Home Office its first balancing of accounts from February 5th 1906 until March 30th 1907. In the balancing, subscriptions, donations and unpaid debts were registered as revenue. Payments for stationery, certificates, receipts, stamps, seal, purchase and transportation fees for trees and manure, agricultural tools and wire, daily wages and unpaid wages were enlisted as expenses.

Meanwhile, the evolution in the fields of science and technology was fast. Old methods were still being used in Crete, but the newspaper "Agon" mentioned that *"while we consider self-moving machines to be strange animals, the always practical British are already using them in Agriculture"*. They had already made the first attempts to mow using a self-moving machine, which, in a course of 3 hours and 35 minutes had mowed 15 acres of field, even in the light of acetylene search lights, so that they proved the machine could work night and day. It was also noted that not only the mowing procedure would be briefer but also the field's tillage, since self-moving machines and ploughs had already started being used. But technology eventually arrived to Crete, too, as one can find out by the relative publicity in the newspapers of that time, concerning different agricultural machines sold in the stores of Chania but also in the stores of the province.

In May 1908 the Society invited in writing, Charalambos Pologeorgis, the Counselor of the Home Office, to attend its anniversary celebration, Ascension day; with an article published to



Charalambos Pologeorgis

the Press, it also called upon all *"those who wish to come and honour this magnificent celebration"*, so that they would celebrate along with the Society *"in a more solemn way and discuss a lot of subjects concerning its purposes"*. In an article of the newspaper "Agon", titled "In Georgioupolis", it was mentioned that it would be nice if as many people as possible could come not only for their amusement but also because such celebrations

brought different social classes together and serve as an opportunity for the strengthening of the bonds between them. At this second anniversary of the Society's foundation, during which - after the mass - Papadogiannakis gave a speech, more than 2.000 people from the neighbouring Municipalities attended and the celebration was a great success.

Although in 1908 the Society didn't receive proper support, it had though, according to its Statute, ideas and programs, properly forwarded to the Authorities. In its following letter to Charalambos Pologeorgis, Counselor of the Home Office, the creation of fish-ponds at the lake of Cournas and at the rives of Georgioupolis was proposed, including also very useful information about them:

"AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
IN GEORGIROUPOLIS, CRETE
NUM. 1704

In Georgioupolis, June 24th 1908

TO

His Excellency
Charalambos Pologeorgis
Counselor of the Home Office

Excellency,

We have the honour to ask of your Excellency to be so kind and declare that the rivers of Georgioupolis and the lake of Cournas are very appropriate for the creation of fish-ponds.

We inform Your Excellency that many years ago, before dynamite was used for fishing at the Almyros, Vrysses and Vlyhadas rivers, many fish were fed in them, and that, even today, many fish come in the rivers from the sea every day and that from the gulf of Almyros many fish come to the coast of Georgioupolis, finding food at the flowing water of the rivers and that it is easy to construct artificial fish-ponds at the coast.

We quote the following information for you:

Almyros river has an extent of 1.500 m.; it is 2m. deep at a distance from its springs and half its length while at the point where it joins with the river of Vrysses is 3 m. deep.

The river of Vrysses is a torrent until the tower of Deli Provias, under which, springs, 2.000 m. long, begin; the river is 4 m. deep from the Diaconiaris widow's vineyard, up to where it joins with Almyros river; from this point on, until the outlet, it's 3 and 4 m. deep except for the point where the waters spread to one or more metres of depth.

If our rivers and even the lake of Cournas are turned into fish-ponds, our land will benefit enormously as far as health is concerned,

since all the harmful plants in them will disappear and, given the great speed of the water's flow, the rivers will be cleaned and therefore contribute to land's sanitation.

Your Excellency, please accept the affirmation of our great esteem for You.

*The President
Miltiades Papadogiannakis"*

In May 1908, the Society submitted again its balancing of accounts to the Home Office, which was also published by the Press. Its revenues came from benefactors, donors, subscribers and Municipalities, while it had paid - among other things - different sums of money for fares and buying trees and manure, for cultivation and fencing, seeds, tools, wages in general, wages of an assistant secretary and for subscriptions to agricultural magazines and books.

The following announcement of the Agricultural Society entered the Press:

" AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Agricultural Society in Georgioupolis (Crete), calls upon every progressive person to contribute to the success of its beneficial purposes.

By the following means:

By sending seeds, plants, agricultural implements, magazines, books and essays relative to Agriculture, fishery, fish-ponds and the medical treatment of malaria, according to its Statute which has been legalized by a Decree and published in the Official Gazette of the Cretan State.

Any help is accepted, to the Society's gratitude.

The Society gladly accepts the establishment of relationships with other Agricultural Societies."

ΓΕΩΡΓΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ

Ἡ ἐν Γεωργιουπόλει (Κρήτης) Γεωργικὴ Ἑταιρία ἐπικαλεῖται τὴν συνδρομὴν παντὸς φιλοπροόδου πρὸς ἐνδωσὶν τῶν κοινωφελῶν σκοπῶν αὐτῆς.

Διὰ τῶν ἐξῆς μέσων :

Διὰ τῆς ἀποστολῆς σπόρων, φυτῶν, γεωργικῶν ἐργαλείων, περιοδικῶν, συγγραμμάτων, καὶ μελετῶν σχετικῶν τῇ γεωργίᾳ, ἀλί-
εσι, ἰχθυοτροφίᾳ καὶ τῇ καταπολεμῇ τῆς
ἐλωνοσίας σιμφώνως τοῦ καταστατικοῦ αὐ-
τῆς ἐγκριθέντος διὰ Διατάγματος καὶ δη-
μοσιευθέντος εἰς τὴν ἐφημερίδα τῆς Κρητι-
κῆς Πολιτείας.

Πᾶσα καὶ ἡ ἐλάχιστη προσφορά γίνεται δε-
κτὴ ἐκ τῆς Ἑταιρίας μετὰ βαθείας εὐγνωμο-
σύνης.

Ἡ Ἑταιρία δέχεται τὴν σύναψιν σχέσεων
μετ' ἄλλων Γεωργικῶν Ἑταιριῶν.

The above mentioned announcement of the Society

It should be mentioned that during its three years of life, the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis had presented a remarkable work, even with poor means, therefore it asked the State for its financial aid. At the time the Society was maintaining three farms with thousands of young trees, which would be distributed again free of charge, to the area's inhabitants, so that fruit-trees would be used as a means for living and the eucalyptuses, to be planted in rows, would serve for the sanitation of the swamps. The Society had distributed to the villagers of the area around, always free of charge, not only shrubs, but also cotton-seed, sulphur, several fertilizers and medication.

The news for the existence of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis, its activities and its way of dealing with agricultural

matters, traveled off the Island as well. So, the Greek Agricultural Society, seated in Athens and being under the King's presidency, asked, in February 1909, by a letter to the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis, signed by its Director General Pileas Papageorgiou, for scholars to attend the three-month courses of the School for Apiculture at Halandri, Athens, and the courses for sericulture at the silkworm nursery too, and occupy themselves in agriculture in its farm - the Greek Agricultural Society, even willing to accept the two scholars without any advance payment of the fixed tuition fees; once the education of these scholars would have been completed, they would have been able to teach in Crete *"these two very important fields of agricultural production"*.

The Agricultural Society, trying to help at the fight against malarial fever, took the responsibility of buying quinine from the Greek Government and distribute it to the peasants suffering from the fever. And indeed the Greek Government sent quinine without debiting its cost or postage expenses. But the Cretan Government didn't do the same - it hadn't responded to the Society's relative request, even though 30 drachmas were sent by a "reliable person" in order to buy and send the adequate quinine. This was mentioned in a letter of the Vice President of the Society, the priest Ioannis Sacellariou, in July 1909, by which it was asked, apart from sending the quinine, the approving of 500 drachmas for the Society, in order to proceed to its beneficial purposes and satisfy the area's needs in general. It seems that there was no immediate response by the State, at least as far as money matters were concerned. Therefore, in late August 1909, the Society asked again of the Deputy for Finance, to be financially supported, since *"the purpose was so sacred, and it shouldn't fade in time and so many pains and expenses wouldn't have been suffered in vain; this would be a terrible misfortune for the area"*...

Trying to raise funds, the Society asked, in September 1909, of the

Executive Committee, for at least a sum of 2.000 drachmas to be granted to it, from the capital of the Charitable Shelter which had been abolished, so that it could buy and distribute to the farmers small fruit-trees, seeds, fertilizers and create garden patches and eucalyptus plantations all over the district.



*The Bishop of Kydonia
and Apocoronas Nikiforos*

Nikiforos, the Bishop of Kydonia and Apocoronas, was, by a relative letter of his to the Executive Committee, a helper at the Society's efforts to raise funds, getting money from the remaining sums the Charitable Shelter: Those efforts had an - at least partially - satisfactory result. By the n. 145/12-9-1909 Decree, the Executive Committee, according to the Parliament's enactment and a proposal made by the Deputy for Finance, granted 500 drachmas for the Agricultural Society from the abolished

Charitable Shelter's money, not having been spent yet.

The sum of money given, was very small, compared to the Society's enormous work; judging from its balancing of accounts of that year, covering the period since its foundation up to then, the Society was seriously short in money. This didn't stop the Society's members from continuing, with boldness and great zeal, their work;

during that year they had planted 800 eucalyptuses. A letter of the Agricultural Society to the Executive Committee, on May 14th 1909, shows that the Society had removed the harmful plants from the small Calamionas and Mytissos islands and had mowed the aquatic plants in the rivers. It had canalized the stagnant water at the beach, it had cleaned up the banks of Almyros river, filled with earth many pits of stagnant water and cleaned up and filled with earth the big rill from the bridge until the river. It had also planted several sanitary plants and maintained four farms with 340 garden-plots. Since it was necessary for the aquatic plants of the Almyros, Vlyhadas, Perastikos rivers and the river of Vrysses, to cut off, so that more sanitary works would be done there, but also the already proceeding works to preserve, the State's aid was asked for, so that the Society could continue its beneficial to the public works.

In 1910 it distributed again shrubs, not only to the inhabitants around Georgioupolis, but also to other provinces, where they were sent by the Cretan Coasting Navigation Company; the Society also leveled the steep hillock behind the Gendarmery Station and planted flowers and green grass opposite to the point where the rivers meet, along the river's banks.

In April 1910, C. Foumis, Counselor for Finance and Foreign Affairs, A. Papahatzakis, Counselor of the Home Office and Public Security, Louis Figgari, Director of Public Works, M. Foumis, Director of Agriculture and Mich. Sgouros, Prefect of Apocoronas and Sfakia visited Georgioupolis and after, their tour, they made a report on its sanitation; Miltiades Papadogiannakis, President of the Agricultural Society, was also greatly commended in the report, for both his and the Society's interest for the area. Particularly Louis Figgari, by the end of the visit, made a special report dated 25-5-1910, under the title "About the sanitary works of Georgioupolis", which he submitted to the Home Office, mentioning that he, along

with Deputy Lecanides, the Prefect, and the President of the Agricultural Society, had visited the valley of Georgioupolis, the navigable river's mouth, Cournas lake and the Public Agricultural Station and explained in detail the works to be done for the area's sanitation, but also all the other necessary works : the construction of a jetty and a bridge, moveable by an iron beam, the necessity for a dredge to be bought, etc. At the extract from Figgari's report (who, after Georgioupolis, visited the prefectures of Rethymnon and Heraclion) it was mentioned:

"KINGDOM OF GREECE
HOME OFFICE
(PUBLIC WORKS)

Num. 2003 In Chania May 25th 1910

Subject:

About the sanitary works at Georgioupolis

TO
The HOME OFFICE

Mister Commissary,

I have the honour to submit to you a report made after my last trip on the 3rd of April, when I went, along with the former Commissaries of the Home Office and Finance, the Director of Agriculture, the Deputy Lecanides, the Prefect and the President of the Agricultural Society, to Georgioupolis, where, the next day, we visited the mouth of Almyros river, the lake of Cournas, and the Public Agricultural Station. In many places of the above mentioned valley, one can observe stagnant waters, which mainly cause the malarial fevers, prevailing there during summer. It is necessary the sanitary works of this fertile place, once having been started, to continue; for the time

being, filling with earth the stagnant waters near the houses seems to be enough, which will approximately cost one thousand drachmas.

But for the complete sanitation of the village of Georgioupolis, it is necessary to arrange the river's water flow, some sewers to be constructed too and the earth to be cleared away, according to the well studied plan. It is possible to approximately estimate the cost for those works: assuming that the area there is about 500.000 square metres and estimating an average of ten centimes for every square metre, we will have a cost of 50.000 drachmas.

The topographical construction of the river's mouth, the quantity of the river's water and the island protecting the mouth by preventing the formation of big piles of sand, will help the construction of a small natural harbour which is very necessary for fishery and coasting.

Nevertheless, sometimes, after a storm due to east winds, the navigation in this torrent could be either difficult or stopped for some days.

The best and most inexpensive solution, in this situation, is buying a dredge, something the Executive Committee had decided years ago to do; it would have already been bought, to the great benefit of the Service, if it weren't for some newspaper, which, by its treatises against it, made the Direction of Public Works propose to the Executive Committee to wait for the opinion of the distinguished specialist on the matters of harbour works Luigi Luigi, Inspector of civil engineers and Professor of harbour works at the Polytechnic School in Rome.

We hope that, given the opinion of the above mentioned engineer, there will be no other obstacle in buying the dredge, which is necessary as much as for the natural harbour of Georgioupolis, but for the other harbours of the Island as well.

To complete the work, a jetty should be constructed from the spot

where piles of sand have already been formed towards the island, but we should, unless it is absolutely necessary, avoid the construction of technical works in the sea, since they have to be constantly repaired.

A bridge over the river.

Close to the river's mouth, a bridge for pedestrians or only for mules should be constructed. This bridge should be constructed with a moveable iron beam, so that it would allow the sailboats pass. The river is 20 m. wide and a small bridge ,50 m. wide with iron or concrete cement poles may cost up to 3.000 drachmas.

At a distance of about 5 km from the village of Georgioupolis, lies the Lake of Cournas, which is about 45 m. above the sea level. According to the peasants' information, it is more than 45 m. deep, while its surface is about 400.000 sq. m., once the lake is filled up with water.

One can observe at first sight that this lake's water is by no means dangerous to public health, since it constantly moves and doesn't stagnate in one place.

Regarding the use of the lake as a motion power, we think that the benefit to come of this expense will be small and within question. Actually no big river flows in the lake; in that case none can rely but on the lake's capacity - it can be filled up twice a year. Consequently, the water quantity and its falling off are small, so, at this point, such a use is not recommended.

Wandering through the lake's surroundings, we can see, to the North and at a distance of about 300 m., the remains of an old canal, now filled up with earth, lying 10 m. below the lake level, from which one can assume, that the lake was used for watering the land.

At a small cost of 5.000 drachmas the clearing up of the earth at the above mentioned canal can be done, so that the water can be used like before.

Agricultural Station.

Close to this building a well has been constructed for watering, but, its water being not enough, there is a need for another to be constructed close to it. For the water to lift up, noria system, moved by a windmill in the same way as used in Heraclion, is recommended...".

The following year, the Agricultural Society replaced all the eucalyptuses which were dead or destroyed. In addition to the other problems, the eucalyptuses developed hardly, also because, obviously unscrupulous, stock-breeders and farmers put their animals in the eucalyptuses plantations and the trees were eaten or destroyed. It was also asked by the newspapers for a relative police order to be issued, so that the eucalyptuses would be saved to the benefit of the town's sanitation. Protests were also made, since unscrupulous fishermen fished using dynamite or even torpedoes, in the navigable river. It should be noted that fishing with dynamite was forbidden - a relative order had been issued since 1899 and law-breakers were severely punished, according to penal law.

The newspaper "Eleftheron Vima" marked the State's promise to accomplish sanitary works in Georgioupolis *"for the sake of these miserable people's bad health"*, mentioning also the responsibilities taken towards the inhabitants of Georgioupolis and the area around, in the hope that, in spite of that year's budget cut down, some sum of money would be soon granted for those necessary works in the town.

The interest in Georgioupolis was renewed after an invitation to the journalist Emm. Frantzescakis and his visit there, who published a series of articles in his newspaper "Eleftheron Vima". A thirty-member committee also went to Chania and handed over the Cretan Assembly a petition by which sums of money were asked to be granted for sanitary works, among others, at Cournas lake. After a report by the Commissary for Finance, C. Fournis to the Home

Office, the Assembly granted a sum of 10.000 drachmas, 6.000 of which were to cover the cost of the construction of a bridge at Almyros river, 2.000 drachmas for the sanitation of Georgioupolis and 2.000 for the Cournas lake.



Konstantinos Foumis

We assume that in Georgioupolis there were not only the farms of the Agricultural Company but also at least one state farm which possibly belonged to the Agricultural Station. And that is because, in a letter of George Cafkalas to the newspaper "Eleftheron Vima" in June 1911, the importance of the farm of Georgioupolis and its great contribution against malaria, as well as in the land's sanitation, were pointed out. Unfortunately the farm's staff was reduced from five workers to only one, which resulted the farm to be brought down and not functioning the way it should. In a newspaper's note, at the lower part of the page, the Agricultural Department and the Government were reminded of their promise to preserve the farm at

Georgioupolis, by which thousands of shrubs, seeds and any type of vaccines were distributed:

"THE FARM OF GEORGIROUPOLIS

Honourable Director,

We hope that you will enter the following lines in Your newspaper, which echo the sorrow that we feel for the profound indifference of the proper Authorities, for this unfortunate part of the Island, after all the efforts made by the inhabitants and a part of the local Press, as well as lots of articles published by progressive people, about taking steps for the sanitation of this fertile land.

It is not only the fail of accomplishing some necessary works, by an approved sum of money - works that would have played an important role in draining many fields, in avoiding the formation of obstacles in the free flowing of the river's water and so many other small works which would have greatly contributed to the improvement of this place's health conditions and which would have been a great step to the future efforts on this purpose, but any other factor contributing to that work is also put aside. An example set is the farm, which, by the tree growing and protection, the clearing of the lands, the cleaning of the ditches, not only widely distributes every type of fruit trees, but also plays a great role in the area's development. But it seems that, considering these efforts, the staff was reduced from 5 workers to "one and only", who is definitely not enough to look after the animals in the farm, kept there for breeding with the local animals. This happened for economical reasons, much to our surprise, since good economy does not require putting off every progress to the expense and loss of the poor peasants' and Public's health. By reducing staff to one worker, we most certainly assure you that, in a short time, we are to lose the farm at

Georgioupolis, which is considered to be necessary there more than anywhere else, for the sake, at least, of the thousands of eucalyptuses which the farm, each year, distributes and takes care of.

I state the above, honorable Director, for the sake of truth and justice, urged by pure interest and without any intention of speaking against anyone.

In Georgioupolis, June 18th 1911

With my great esteem

George Cafkalas

Newspaper's note: On former occasions we suggested and now we repeat our suggestions to the Government, to see to the good preservation of the farm of Georgioupolis, which is the first sanitary factor for this place. The people of that place are provided with thousands of shrubs, seeds and every type of vaccines, and the fields are densely planted; thanks to this farm, the tree plantations are further amazingly multiplied day by day in Georgioupolis. We believe that both the Agricultural Department and the Government will settle things and will undo this injustice, saving this splendid farm of Georgioupolis from decaying".

No matter how things were, the work being done there was very remarkable, spreading in many fields - a fact which filled with enthusiasm the Consul of Russia, when he visited Georgioupolis.

In May 1912, the Revolutionary Administrative Committee, also granted a sum of 1.200.000 drachmas, so that the already existing roads to be completed and some new ones to be constructed. From the sum, granted for public works, 70.000 drachmas were to be spent for the road from Vrysses to Georgioupolis and 6.000 drachmas for the ditch at Georgioupolis.

In 1912, a matter which worried the inhabitants of Georgioupolis

and the ones of the villages of Mathes, Calamitsi, Exopolis and the area around, was the construction of a bridge over the river Almyros or Gargadoros - as it was called at the time. By a petition to the Home Office, they asked for the bridge plans to be altered, emphasizing on the weak points of the plans and on the fact that this bridge would not be of any service; instead, it would cause problems, eventually to come up, due to the plans' defect:

"BUREAU OF ADMINSTRATIVE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE
NUM. 268

RECEIVED: 20-6-1912

To
The Respected Home Office of the Cretan State

Mister Commissary,

We, the undersigned inhabitants, respectfully suggest to You and, by You, to the Respected Executive Committee in Crete, that the bridge to be constructed over the mouth of the river Almyros (Gargadoros) in Georgioupolis, apart of being unsuitable according to the plans and disadvantageous to everybody, both the Greek Public and the people, since it won't help the transportation but only the pedestrians, is also going to be swept away on first winter flood by the overflowing river and by the several uprooted trees - as we all know - since it will be, according to the design, less than two metres high over its present water surface, while the pillars in the river will be unconnected and on unsteady bases; You must also have in mind that a bridge constructed, according to the first design, over the Petres river, was swept away on first storm and that the public sustained an enormous economical loss, in addition to the fact that it had to be reconstructed according to a better design.

Since, in order to complete the bridge at Georgioupolis to be constructed over the Gargadoros river, according to the present design, very little money is to be spent from the sum issued for this purpose, since, the bridge to be constructed, will be of great service to the area's sea and land transportation, only if it's constructed according to a better design and at an appropriate height, so that small boats will easily pass through to the upper part of the river, since, there is a sum of money approved by the previous Government, for the area, and especially for the construction of a dock, which, once the bridge elevated, will become wider, and therefore less money will be spent,

We ask

Of the Respected Government of the Island, after having considered what is fair, right and for the benefit of the public, to see that the Gargadoros bridge designs are completed, before the construction begins according to the first plan, spending a small sum of money from the one approved, or using any other way to the interest of the society and the Greek Public in Crete.

In Georgioupolis June 18th 1912

The persons asking (signatures follow)

But the iron bridge was placed, after all, where the two rivers joined. That way, the passage of steamboats into the gulf - small harbour became impossible and the subject reached the Press, where relative articles were published.

Georgioupolis, with all the assistance, help and hard work, given by the Agricultural Society, developed into an important centre for the area. A proof of that is, among others, the number of

advertisements for various products, published in the newspapers of the time; among them, the advertisement for "SINGER" sewing machines, sold in several places and "in Georgioupolis by G. Cafkalas and Co".

Unfortunately in 1912, because of the war in the Balkans, the Agricultural Society had to seize its activities, since, among other things, it was deprived of the subscription money of some of its members. But it left a very important work, which was admired by the Consuls of France, Germany and Italy, who visited Georgioupolis the following year. The Society had worked for six years in a row, planting many trees in the town of Georgioupolis, so that the rows of trees would be completed. It distributed thousands of young trees and seeds, it dug ditches and canalized the stagnant waters, it proceeded to earth removals and the embankment of pits and rills, it provided itself with sulphur from France and ploughs for the improvement of agriculture, while its contribution to the cure of the people suffering from malarial fevers, by distributing quinine free of charge, was quite life-saving. It should be mentioned that the Society, ever since its foundation in 1906 until 1912, when it seized working, collected a total of 3.459 drachmas and spent 3.798 drachmas, not only on purchase expenses, transportation and distribution of shrubs, seeds and fertilizers, but also in comforting the needy families of the area.

The Agricultural Society is considered to be a significant part of the history of Georgioupolis, or vice versa, Georgioupolis's development is a significant part of the work done by the Agricultural Society. Moreover, it was founded only 13 years after the official inauguration of the town, it worked hard and creatively during the six years of its life, accomplished an enormous priceless and unique, in many aspects, work, and offered the guarantees and the motivation for Georgioupolis's further evolution and progress, since, all the

efforts towards its development, were inspired and urged by the pioneer Papadogiannakis. Papadogiannakis himself, in an a detailed article of his in the newspaper "Echo of Crete", mentioned that "*Georgioupolis owes its complete sanitation to that Society*" and hadn't it seized its activities "*it would have made Georgioupolis, due to its great natural advantages, a centre of great benefits*".

What is worth-noticing for the Society itself is that its balancing of accounts, submitted in 1910, bears the number 3.692. Considering that the Society worked for two more years, there must have been a very big number of corresponding letters, sent to or by the Society, which means that it was in a constant contact and collaboration with both Public Authorities and individuals. This also proves that the Society was widely accepted as a factor of evolution, sanitation, progress and development of the area. And it is certain, as it has already been stated, that hadn't it seized its activities, it would have had a lot to offer to the area, which the real patriot, its founder and President Miltiades Papadogiannakis, loved so much and dedicated himself to.

The following years - Cournas lake

In 1912, the year that the Agricultural Society seized working, Papadogiannakis was the leader of another effort : the construction of the church of the Saviour's Ascension, in Georgioupolis. Among others, the committee appealed to wealthy citizens by a special letter, asking them to contribute to the effort and offer money for the construction of the church, giving, at the same time, useful information on the town and the area.

"THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR'S ASCENSION

Honourable Sir,

At the mouths of the navigable Almyros river, at a gulf by the same name, the town Amfimalla lied in ancient times, where, during the Turkish occupation, the demolished historic castle of Deli Provias and the Turkish castle lied intimidating people, where, many years ago, the bandits and villains had their hiding places, where, due to the stagnant waters, malarial fevers were frequent and drove away all those who wanted to cultivate the pure and very fertile lands of the plain of Georgioupolis, lying to the east of the navigable river, there, the passing-by people meet today a small town by the name of "Georgioupolis", consisting of about sixty buildings, using the navigable river as a harbour, and having a Town Hall, a Customs Office, an Agricultural Station and an Agricultural Society which offers great services to agriculture ever since its foundation in 1906.

The colonization of this formerly infertile, bare and dangerous place, started about twenty years ago with great hardships, now it progresses day by day, due to the Government's support and the initiative of those who appreciate its fruitful advantages; the

sanitation of the stagnant waters was achieved in time, while the planting of eucalyptuses to the widest part of it, turned the formerly unhealthy place into an inhabitable one; its small harbour, has created a route to commerce; so, it is widely believed that, in a short time, the development of the town can be expected, Georgioupolis already being marked on the map as a new commercial and agricultural coastal town, according to the Island's Geography too.

There is a great need for a church to be built at the spot where Georgioupolis lies, where the Christian population, increasing day by day, can go to mass.

But our small community, although understanding to this need, unfortunately can very little contribute, for financial reasons, to the success of this holy enterprise; therefore we appeal to every Christian for help, by a financial contribution, to the construction of the church of the Saviour's Ascension in this new town.

Being certain that you are willing to include yourself to the list of contributors for the church to be constructed, helping a work of civilization and faith to be done, we have the honour of asking for your contribution, praying you will be so kind as to send it to the Treasurer of the Committee for the construction of the church of the Ascension, Mr. Pavlos Pavlidakis in Georgioupolis, Crete.

Please, accept in advance the gratitude of our community and our great esteem.

In Georgioupolis February 1st 1912.

THE PRESIDENT

Miltiades Papadogiannakis

THE MEMBERS

Georgios Cafkalakis, Pavlos Pavlidakis,
Stavros Koukakis, Andreas Polendas,
Antonios Cavroudakis, Stylianos Polakis"

In 1913, the General Governor Dragoumis was asked to give instructions so that the carriage-road to pass through Georgioupolis, and transportation of products to the town's harbour to be facilitated. At the same time it was asked for a Post Office to be established in Georgioupolis, which had become a commercial centre of the area, as well as to be connected by telephone. The following year, the request for the road was brought up again, and although Governor Dragoumis ordered the work to stop before and after Georgioupolis, so that a new plan would be made, the engineer in charge proceeded to the work, not obeying the order.

In 1915 the inhabitants of the villages around sent a report to the General Governor Roufos, mentioning the area's two greatest problems - rural damages and animal-stealing - also asking for his help in the fight against them and for a sum of money, necessary for sanitary works. The construction of a jetty was also asked for, as well as the extension of the plan of Georgioupolis, planting eucalyptuses, establishing post and phone communication nets and finally the merging of the Agricultural Society of Georgioupolis with the Greek Agricultural Society in Athens. Although the Greek Parliament had approved a sum of 50.000 drachmas for sanitary works, the decision remained only in the papers. The phone connection didn't take place either and there were problems with the coasting service between the region's harbours, the rural areas and the central harbours of the big cities, in carrying over of merchandises and products (Georgioupolis exported laurel-leaves, origan, sage and pennyroyal - Papadogiannakis was actually a merchant of those herbs).

After an order issued by the Home Office in 1916, the seat of the Gendarmery Station was moved from Georgioupolis to Cournas, its unhealthy climate being used as a reason for this removal; that climate, was indicated, had, until then, caused the death of ten men of the Gendarmery - a fact questioned though, by relative articles.

The following year Vassilakakis, the Prefect of Chania, ordered the village of Vrysses to be the place for the bazaar to be held, instead of Georgioupolis where it had been held ever since the end of the 19th century. On March 18th 1918, a telegram asking for the support of Georgioupolis, was sent to Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and the Representatives of Chania, signed by 26 Mayors of the area, specifically by the Mayors of Georgioupolis, Cournas, Castellos, Assi Gonia, Maza, Embrosneros, Vafes, Tzitzifes, Fres, Nippos, Kaina, Exopolis, Calamitsi, Kefalas, Vamos, Xirosterni, Sellia, Vatoudiana, Ascyfou, Callikratis, Argyroupolis, Arcoudena, Episcopi, Myriokefala, Arolithio and Coufi.

Papadogiannakis kept on sending letters and reports to officials, hoping that the area would be helped and develop. So, in 1920, he sent to Papanastassiou, Minister for Transportation, the following letter: *"I have the honour of reminding Your Excellency that when you visited Crete last year I handed over Your Excellency a report on Georgioupolis. On the occasion of the Ministers' meeting on the country's water power, held today under the Presidency of Mister Prime Minister, You are respectfully asked to be so kind as to submit the study on the water fall of the Almyros river, as well as the study on how the rest of the rivers and the lake could be used as fish-ponds and finally for an ichthyologist and a hydraulic engineer to come, who will later on, submit their studies on how the above mentioned water will be used".*

But Papadogiannakis also sent another report, in 1921, to the Chief of the Agrarian Police, about the animals walking free in the area, causing great damages and for that reason, the farmers being quite unwilling to cultivate the land.

A year later, the work of constructing sanitary ditches was put to adjudication to the lowest bidder, having an expense budget of 6.800 drachmas and in 1923 the Deputy General Governor Emm. Lydakis

approved the covering with concrete cement of a 200 m. road, up the quay of Georgioupolis, so that transportation of the exported and imported goods would be easier; but the work was not done after all. In 1925, the Post Office was shut down, while the telephone-set was finally placed in a grocery.

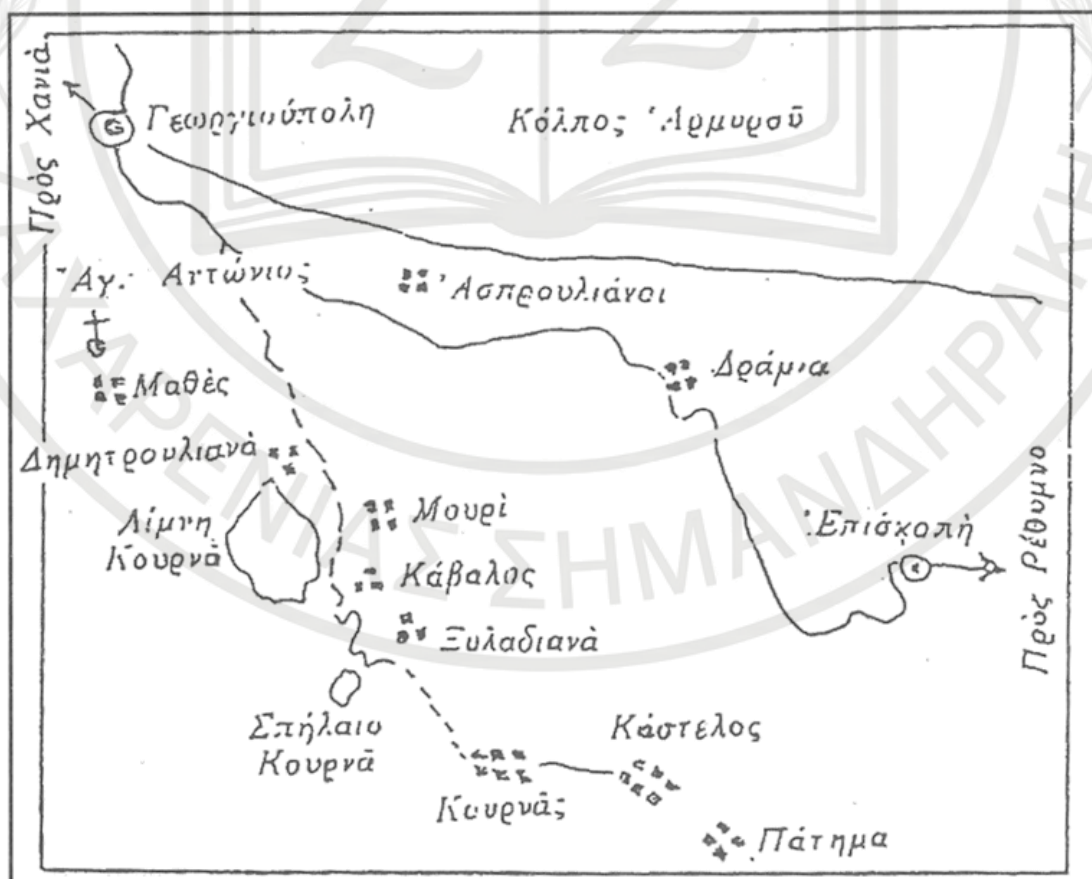
A contract was signed between the Greek Government and the coasting Company and it was decided that the Company's steamboat would strand in 17 ports of Crete - Geogrioupolis, though, not being one of them - so it was necessary for the products to be taken to the other exporting ports, by land again, and the producers to be charged with transportation expenses.

Several sums were occasionally spent for Georgioupolis's sanitation and especially for ditch-digging and canalization of stagnant waters. In 1892, 40 twentyfrancs were spent by the members of the "Initiative", led by Papadogiannakis, in 1893, 19 twentyfrancs were granted by the Governor Mahmout Gelaledin for the construction of the town streets and, in 1899, 6.000 drachmas were granted by the Cretan State for ditch-digging. In 1910, 10.000 drachmas were given by the Cretan Assembly, of which, 6.000 were spent for the iron bridge over the Almyros river, 2.000 drachmas for the area of the village of Mouri and 2.000 drachmas for sanitary works in Georgioupolis. The Agricultural Society spent, as it has already been mentioned, 3.798 drachmas for works, planting trees etc. while, in 1922, 6.800 drachmas were granted for ditch-digging. The Municipality of Georgioupolis spent 2.635 drachmas removing aquatic plants and cleaning up ditches and rivers. From a total of 22.635 drachmas finally spent, a sum of 14.800 drachmas was granted by the State.

Ever since 1892, when Papadogiannakis had first settled at Paleocastella, 138 reports, referendums, people's enactments, petitions and telegrams had been sent to Ottoman and Christian

General Governors, Commissioners, Ministers and Prime Ministers, aiming to the area's progress and development, while 22 Decrees and 285 articles concerning Georgioupolis were published in various local and foreign gazettes, newspapers and magazines.

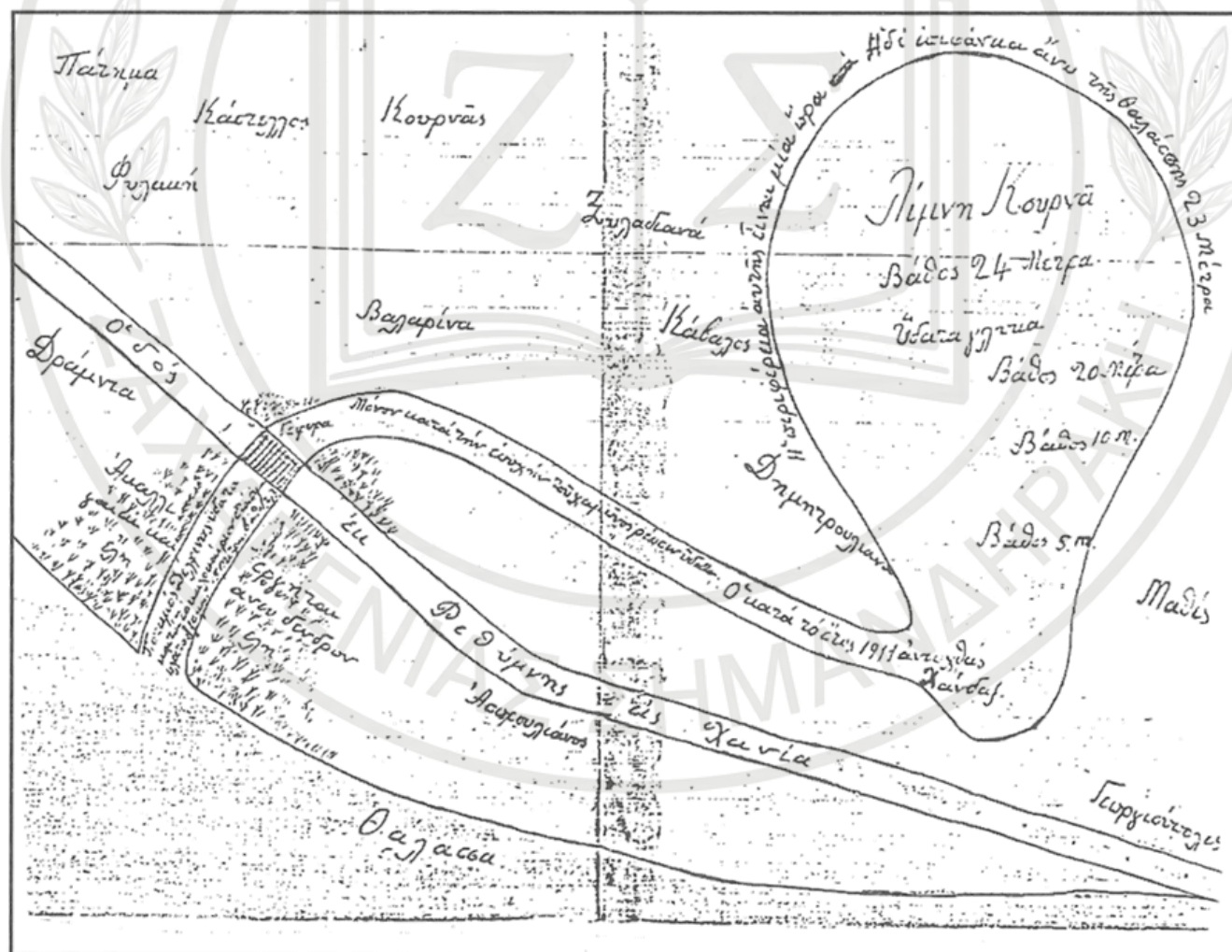
All the efforts made by Papadogiannakis and the other members of the "Initiative" at first, and by all the rest later on, aimed to the sanitation of the area of Georgioupolis, the clearing of stagnant waters, swamps and malaria and the area's deliverance of bad rumours, so that more people would be attracted to inhabiting, work and develop that place, since it was believed that the swamps' draining and the area's sanitation was impossible, that Cournas lake's water, canalized underground, reached and created the swamps, the lake's draining being impossible because of the great cost. Aristides Mouratoglou, after his visit to Georgioupolis and Cournas, specifically noted about the lake in his report :



A sketch of the area and the Cournas lake

"The lake lies at a distance of about 4 km from the sea and at a height of twenty four metres above its surface. It is the biggest one on the island of Crete. It is a wide and deep funnel, surrounded to the West by abrupt steep rocks and to the East by a hillock covered with plants. The waters of Cournas lake are sweet and very deep. According to the inhabitants of the area around and some writers, it is considered to be the place and source of the unhealthy climate of that part of Apocoronas's province. But we consider this opinion to be wrong for the following reasons: A) Its surface, drained during summer, is never more than five thousand square metres. B) The lake's bottom is both sandy and stony, the quantity of organic substance at the parts drained is not worth mentioning, the decay of which causes the infections. C) The lake is very deep and there are no plants, fish etc. in it. D) The winds are northern; if there were infections caused by the lake, they would have been blown to the South. Consequently, the villages to that direction of the lake would suffer, while today exactly the opposite happens, that is the suffering villages lie to the North or to the lake's North-East. For these reasons we believe that Cournas lake doesn't or very little contributes to the bad health conditions of the plain of Georgioupolis which lies in a close distance. Cournas lake has a surface of an average of one million square metres, a depth of about twenty four metres and it contains twelve millions cubic metres of water, without taking into consideration the water from the springs, added every day. For these reasons, the lake which lies at a height of twenty four metres above the sea level, can be used for watering. Given these two facts, we can positively say that ten thousand acres of land can be watered using Cournas lake water. What is today considered to be this land's capacity, can soon turn the plain of Georgioupolis into another Egypt, since the water's contribution to the Agriculture of the meridian lands is well known..."

Papadogiannakis, in a note of his about the Cournas lake, mentioned that in 1911, after a lot of suggestions and actions, it was decided that a ditch was to be dug, from the lake up to Asproulianos's bridge, to canalize the rain waters, flowing in the lake during winter. But the work stopped just one km far from the lake and the waters were canalized through a natural ditch to Delfinas river. Sea fishes reached the lake, through the river's water - a fact quite remarkable, since there was nothing in the lake but eels. Because of the fishes reaching the lake, but also because of the many eels, the creation of a fish-pond had been suggested, almost ever since Georgiupolis was founded, and it had been asked for an ichthyologist to come and indicate the way of fishing in the lake and how to import fish from other lakes, as well as the way for their reproduction.



*A sketch of the area and the Cournas lake,
made by Miltiades Papadogiannakis*

But Cournas lake, only in 1923, was put by the State to a bidding auction and was leased for 15 years, for a sum of 43.000 drachmas. The lessees of the lake signed a contract with fishers at the lake of Ioannina, who tried various technical works, placing pillars and poles in order to set boundaries in the lake's area for eel-fishing. But in November, due to heavy rain, the pillars and poles were swept away by the flowing waters, all the plans were abandoned, and the lessees had to pay off the rent, to their great loss. Of course, the rest of the ditch was not also dug, for Delfinas river to join with the lake and only in 1926 the General Governor of Crete granted a sum of 10.000 drachmas, which again didn't cover the expenses - there was a shortage of 3.000 drachmas - and the work stopped about 100 metres before its end.

Cournas lake - today administratively belonging to the region of Georgioupolis - didn't transform to a fish-pond, although reaching all standards; it was just a matter of the State's will, interest and - most important - granting the money required for it. At least it has maintained its beauty up to now, it's still the only lake in Crete and a water land of a great beauty: its water changes its colour from light green to dark blue, it is surrounded by a narrow stripe of sand and thick vegetation, especially at its northwest side. Stergios Spanakis, in his Guide, mentioned about Cournas lake (v. N. W. Crete):

"At the village's northwest, at a distance of 2,5 km lies the only lake of Crete. Its perimeter is 3,5 km. and its extent 1,2 or 1,4 sq. km. Its surface is 23 - 25 m. above the sea level. The water of the mountains around comes to the lake, along with the water of two springs. At the south east shore, under a wild fig-tree, there is a spring, visible only in autumn, since, during winter, the water level goes up and covers it. There is also another big spring bubbling up, quite close, which is called "Mati" by the peasants. The water of both springs comes from an underground well from Dafnomadara. Defner

had sketched that well. Its depth is 35 fathoms and its bottom is 25 m. below the sea level. There is another well, through which the water goes away and reappears in a 4 km distance, creating the springs of Almyros. That is why the lake doesn't overflow. Spratt (*Travels etc.* vol. II, 126) though, mentioned, that, due to many rains, it overflowed once on the northern side, sweeping away big eels which spread into the plain.

According to Pashley, the lake was named after the village but it is possible that the village was named after the lake. The lake's ancient name was Corissia and there was a sanctuary of the Corissian Athena, according to Stef. Vyzantios. Corion was a place in Crete (from the word κόρη - daughter in Greek), and there was lake Corissia and a sanctuary of Athena Corissia. It seems that close to the lake, there was, in ancient times, a sanctuary dedicated to Ippon and Corion (Ippocorion or Ippocoronion) after which both the lake and the town were named "Ippocoronion". Others believe that the name of the place comes from the Arabic word "courna" which means a bath-tub, a lake.

Wicker and myrtle-shrubs form a green garland at its shores. The mountains around reflect in its emerald and transparent waters, as Spratt also describes (the water is as clear, as crystal and fresh), touched gently by the sea breeze in summer. It is a magical landscape, unique in Crete, "a romantic place, wild and delicate at the same time", certainly worth developing. The most beautiful places of northern Italy, attracting thousands of tourists, lie exactly around the famous lakes Garda, Como and Lago Maggiore.

There are no fish in the lake, only eels.... "non magnus sed profundus est lacus quod ingentes nutrit anguillas", said Buondelmonti. It should, though, be enriched by several sorts of sweet water fish, which will become an important attraction for its touristic development."



The Cournas lake - Photo by Michael Detner

But Michael Defner's very interesting opinion on the Cournas lake is also entered in his "Traveling Impressions":

"When we had a little rest after walking, talking all the time about those places, a hospitable peasant guided us to the lake's shore, the crystal surface of which, lighted by the sun of the first afternoon hours, reflected the steep mountains of Dafnomadara, opposite to us.

The lake has a perimeter of approximately 4.500 steps, that is 3 ½ km. It takes about three quarters to one hour to go around it, depending on how fast you walk and on the bushes and stones in your way.

Mr. Aristides Mouratoglou, who, on a Government's order, visited Georgioupolis and Cournas lake (lake Corissia) in August, estimated in his report the surface to be 1.200.000 - 1.400.000 sq. metres. He seems to exaggerate. There is another thing I would like to point out: Mr. Aristides Mouratoglou talked about the water added to the lake daily, but he didn't perceive that in the lake's bottom there is a well, an underground funnel, from which, approximately the same quantity of water goes away daily too. If it wasn't for this funnel, the lake would overflow not only every 15 or 20 years, once an unexpected event happens, but a river would have been formed thousands of years ago at the lowest part of the lake's shore to the sea, by which the water, daily coming into the lake, would go away. The fact that there is no outflow on the surface, proves that there is one from the

bottom. This seems to be a reasonable explanation. Further below I am going to say where the deep hidden water goes and where it comes up from, to the surface. This is what I say for now; you shouldn't think that what I write is not important, just because I express it in a simple way.

It is a pity that there is no boat, for someone to measure the size and the lake's various depths. There used to be one, but it was left to rot long ago. It was brought, I was told, by the contractor, who had been in charge of digging the first part of the ditch from the lake to the sea. I was told that he later leased the lake and built a fence at the beginning of the ditch for fishing eels, which, once the water elevated, would come into the ditch. But it seems that this enterprise was a complete failure, because of the defective construction of the ditch.

This is what I am going to speak about now.

In order to prevent any future floods from the area around the lake, it was decided, years ago, a big ditch to be dug to the direction of the sea, from its northern and lowest shore, which would end up at the bed of Delfinas river, close to the bridge, on the public road, between Georgioupolis and Dramia (ancient Hydramia). 1.300 m. of this ditch, of a total length of 2.120 m. were constructed; for the construction of the rest 820 m., an auction to the lowest bidder was proclaimed, by the time I was in Chania. The bed of Delfinas river, which was also to be arranged from the bridge up to the sea, is about 1.000 m.

According to common sense, it would have been correct for the ditch-digging to start from below, that is from the meeting point of the ditch and the bed of Delfinas river and move up to the lake. Any wise man would have done that, even if he hadn't been a hydraulic engineer. But the people from Avdira are not all dead yet. So the ditch-digging started from the lake, but it wasn't wide enough and its

sides were not as sloping as they should, like the ones of Corinth's Canal. Consequently, by the first elevation of the lake water, the fields around the ditch flooded, the earth fell off the abrupt steep sides into the ditch and, that way, quite a lot of big pits were formed, where the water remains and malarial fevers torture the inhabitants more than before.

At the lake's southeast shore, under a huge wild fig-tree, there is a spring in the rock, visible though only in autumn, when the lake's surface goes down; it is then that, under the wild fig-tree's shadow, the shepherds water their sheep and goats. During winter and spring the lake water covers the spring. Close to it, but still in the really deep water of the lake, lies a big spring, that is from the rocky bottom of the lake a big spring bubbles up. There, the bottom is like a deep funnel, where the water comes up from. This funnel must have a diameter of about 30 m. The peasants of the area say that there lies the lake's eye (mati). By the word "eye" they mean a spring.

But this isn't the lake's deepest part. This lies more or less in the middle of the lake, where it is 35 fathoms deep, according to the calculations of that contractor. Moreover, one can realize how deep both parts are by the dark colour of those transparent waters.

My opinion is that the water is canalized from the first funnel, the one closer to the eastern shore, while from the other funnel, lying in the middle of the lake, the water overflows...

....It is beyond any doubt that Cournas lake gets water not only from rain falling onto it, but also by a sink lying high up to some valley of Dafnomadara. The two springs that bubble up at the base of the steep mountain prove it, the smaller one lying at the lake's surface level and the big one bubbling up from its bottom, the same way that those ones at Argolic Gulf gush from the sea.

This is the scientific explanation for the creation of the lake. But how does the people of Apocoronas explain it? According to a tale,

which I heard by the dearest Mr. Spyros Vardakis, the cause for the creation of the lake is different.

Once upon a time, there was a village at the place where today Cournas lake lies. A peasant from that village had a very beautiful daughter.

One Saturday, very early in the morning, at dawn, the peasant and his daughter left in order to go to their fields. On the way over there, the daughter told him:

- Father I am going to sit for a while, here on the rock, to have a rest and comb my hair because it isn't in order.

- Sit, my child. Answered the father.

His daughter sat and started combing her beautiful blond hair, all her beauty ravishing through her simplicity and grace, while combing her hair, sitting on the rock. It was as if she was saying to the sun: "shine for me, so I will shine for you".

Her father was proud for her, his heart filled with joy for his daughter's beauty. But little by little this pride stopped from being pure. Suddenly, in his soul, a brutal and evil desire was born; he desired her in a way that he himself couldn't explain....

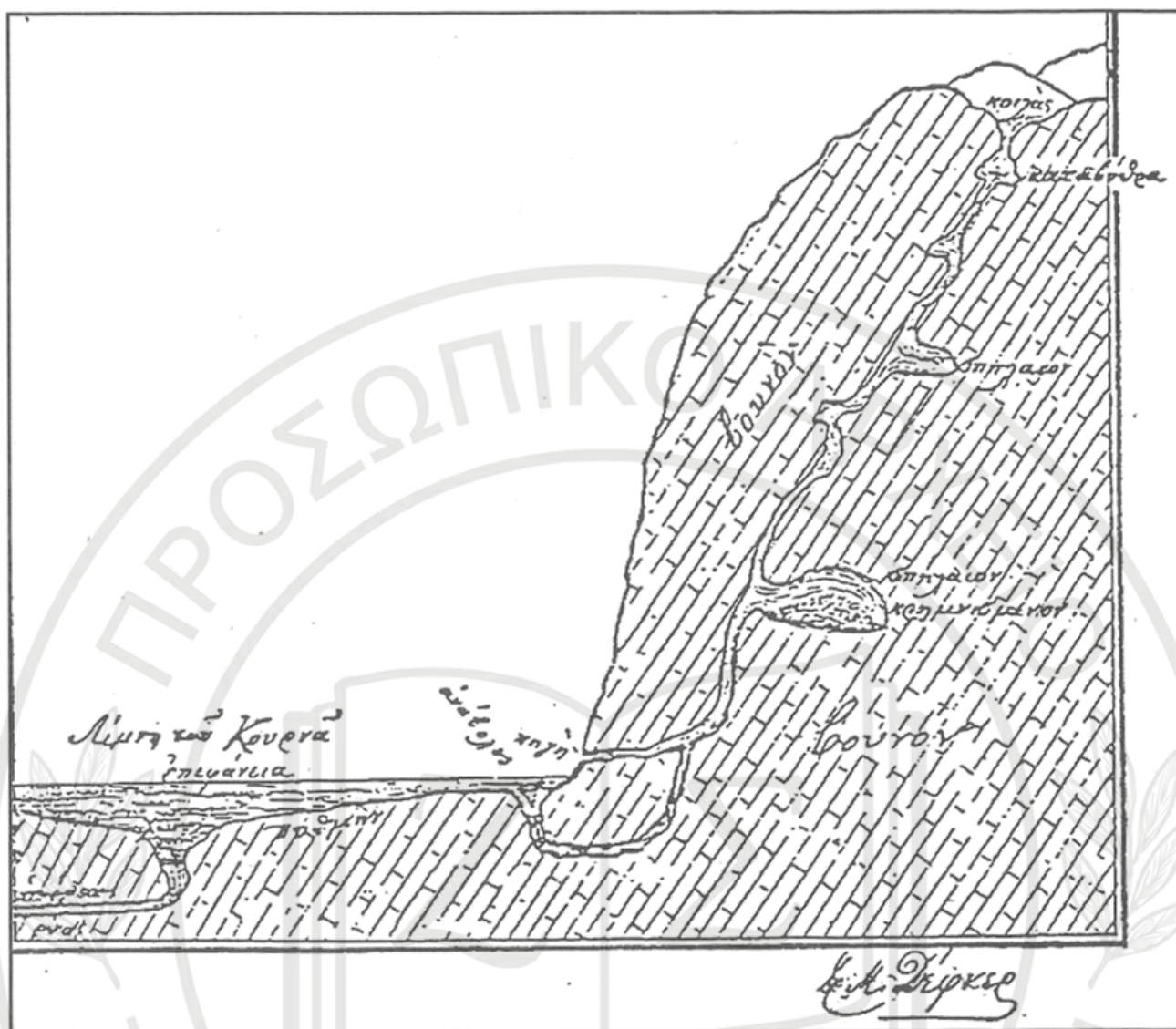
The daughter felt as if the sky had fallen on her head and she said to her father with all the pain of her soul:

"Father, let me speak first, even if it's only for three words." And without waiting for him to answer she said: "Voula and Voulolimna (sunk lake). And I, a ghost in the lake".

She hadn't even finished her last word when the place where she and her father stood, suddenly sank and became a lake.

The villagers of the area around believe that those who have a "light aura", that is those who are able to see ghosts, can see, in the middle of the lake, sitting on rock, a girl, combing her gold blond hair.

I have now to answer the question: Where does the water go,



A sketch of the Cournas lake, made by Mich. Defner

going away underground, from the lake? And where does it come from, to the surface?

I am not a hydraulic engineer and therefore I can't express a "well grounded" opinion on such an important subject. Anyway, by the courage or boldness, common to all half-educated and amateurs, I am saying that the water going away underground from Cournas lake, comes to the surface 4 km far away, forming the springs of Almyros river of Georgioupolis, or, commonly called, the Almyros of Apocoronas. It's a first class impertinence for someone to claim that from a lake with sweet water, a brackish river comes up and, further more, expect others to believe it.

I'll try to present as much evidence as possible. Buondelmonti occupied himself exactly five centuries ago (1422) with the issue of the brackish springs of another Almyros, the Almyros in Heraclion, commonly known as the Almyros of Malevizi. He accepts that "the Almyros of Heraclion is formed by the water sunk into a sink lying to the east of the monastery of St. George Camariotis in Mylopotamos".

Boschini, in mid 17th century, considered both Almyros rivers being formed by the sea, which, by underground canals, comes out a little higher above its surface.

Pashley said that the water of the Almyros of Malevizi comes from the water sunk in the above mentioned sink of Mylopotamos, which lies in a straight line of 22 km far from the lake of the Almyros of Malevizi.

Raulin took water from both Almyros rivers and analyzed it, along with the chemist Baudrimont in Paris and reached the conclusion that a) the lower temperature of the water of Almyros rivers proves that they both come from underground tanks, lying, the one of the Almyros of Apocoronas at a height of at least 600 m. and the other, of the Almyros of Heraclion, at a height of 400 m. b) because of the relatively small proportion of sulphuric salt and the lack of magnesium, these waters prove to be not sea waters c) the springs are salty, obviously because of the masses of mineral salt, found on the way by the water flowing underground and therefore it is possible that, some day, mineral salt is exploitable on the mountains of Crete.

Raulin, who scientifically examined and referred to the issue, was quite correct in reaching the conclusion for the waters of both the Almyros rivers not being sea waters, but was wrong in explaining their saltiness.

To answer the question referring to the source of the water of the

Almyros of Georgioupolis, the latter appearing through a layer of lime-stone like a real stream, in a distance of only 2 km. from the magnificent village, the following should be taken under consideration:

1) The temperature of the springs, in summer and winter, is 3 degrees lower than the temperature of the earth they outflow from, proving that the water comes from high places and underground.

2) The inhabitants are positive in claiming that the springs flow more and faster in winter and spring than in summer and autumn and that from May until November the water is quite brackish; yet, in winter and spring, the saltiness is reduced so that the water becomes drinkable. The water's saltiness though is never so great so as to prevent trees, bushes and useful plants there, from growing.

On the relation of Almyros water and the water of the Cournas lake, I state: a) The lake's surface lies about 23 - 25 m. above the sea and Almyros springs about 12 - 13 m. above it; therefore there is a height difference of 11 - 12 m. Since Cournas lake lies, on a straight line, just 4 km. away from the springs of Almyros, the 12 m. height difference shows that the flow has a declivity of 12 m. in 40 m. or about 3 ½ cm in every metre. This declivity is small, but it should be taken under consideration that the atmospheric pressure to the funnel of outflow in the lake's middle, where the lake is 35 fathoms deep, is about 6 atm.

b) In historical times, western Crete elevated from the sea while the eastern part went down. At Falasarna the elevation is 5,50 m. high. At Chora Sfakion, I counted 3, 20 m., at Almyros Straits and Cournas lake, the elevation must be about 2,50 m. Therefore, before western Crete elevated, the sea must have been entering far into the Gulf of Almyros, where, once withdrawn, left a lot of sand, and the Gulf was filled up with earth. Further more both the river of Vrysses and the torrents left a lot of sand too. So all this earth up to the

springs of Almyros, is soaked by the sea, which, through it, connects with the area around the springs, although some think it goes as far as that place. That's why the river of Vrysses becomes brackish at that point.

c) There is a way for someone to be certain once and for all of Almyros river being a source of sweet water: a well or a horizontal gallery should be dug, a few metres over the spring, that is at a height where no effect from the sea is possible. It is then that this problem will definitely be solved and the inhabitants will probably drink sweet water instead of salt water.

After all the above, you will say to me that I accept that Almyros is a source of sweet water coming from a high and distant place, but also that I haven't proved that it comes from Cournas lake.

d) There is a way to prove that too. In Austria, in about 1890, a strange trial took place, concerning the possession of the water of a river which was odd enough to sink and reappear elsewhere. So they made experiments with fluoresceine, in order to paint the river's water just before its sinking point. The great dictionary "Larousse" mentions the following for this substance, under the lemma Fluoresceine: "its colouring power is enormous, since one gram can colour 20 cubic metres of water. This remarkable quality is often used by hydrographers when studying rivers flowing partly underground. The colouring by fluoresceine of a river's sinking point can lead to the discovery of the emersion points.

Of course, I was not able to conduct such an experiment, since I lacked all the necessary means. Let the Government's engineers try it. They have enough time and it is something worth while. According to my opinion, even without this test, there is no doubt, that the water submerging in the middle of the lake, emerges, being the Almyros Springs. It seems to be no other emersion point for the water in the area around, either in the sea or on the land. The

distance between the two points is small and there are only low hills separating them and finally, the declivity required exists.

You believe in so many supernatural phenomenon never proved to be true. So, why is there a problem believing in the natural phenomenon of Almyros being the child of the fairy Corissia?

Educated people wrote about it and illiterate people say, that the lake is the source and the cause for malarial fevers tormenting those areas - which is wrong, since its bottom is stony and very clean; there is no mud, there are no plants or animals, but eels in it and people don't come in often to make it dirty. The water is constantly renewed and there are no vapours over the lake. So the cause must lie elsewhere but the lake. Some experts suggested the lake to be drained, so that the villages around would acquire great extents of land to cultivate. Apart from the fact that it is impossible for it to be completely drained, since its lowest shore is 23 - 25 m. above the sea level and its depth is 50 - 60 m. or more, nothing would come out of it, since the bottom close to the shores is stony, and rocks are not to cultivate.

The sweet water of the beautiful lake can only be used for watering the areas between the lake and the sea, by a net of appropriate ditches and dams.

It took us more than two hours to go around Cournas lake. Although it is small, quite small compared to the lakes of Bavaria and Switzerland, it enchants you by its transparent emerald and sunny water, by the tranquillity reigning above and around it, by the big and thick wicker, myrtle and sage shrubs and the rest of the splendid and colourful flora surrounding it...."

Epilogue

We will finish our trip through the historical periods of Georgioupolis and the area around it, letting again the traveler Mich. Defner speak, who, in a very graceful way, describes his visit to Georgioupolis, giving a quite impressive picture of the newly founded town of those days.

" From Vrysses we headed to Georgioupolis, which, in 1898, was named after Prince George, the First High Commissioner of Crete. If you think it is a city you are quite mistaken, the same way I was, since this grand name was given to a quarter, which, after 25 years and too many pains and sacrifices of its first inhabitant Mr. Militiades Papadogiannakis, a real Greek Robinson Crousoe, has now only one hundred five and a half inhabitants (!). During the Turkish occupation, that place was called Castellakia or Paleocastella, then Almyros, in 1893 its name was Almyroupolis and, five years later, Georgioupolis. After a 40 km. ride we arrived at about 17:30 at Georgioupolis. The coachman stopped at the first house of the village, the "Stavros Manolakis Hotel", put our suitcases down, got the tip, whipped in the air once or twice and headed further on, towards Dramia. I asked Mr. Stavros if there were two beds for us and in his affirmative response, we were led up a narrow and upright staircase and shown two small rooms, a bed and a chair in each one of them. The hotel had also a third small room for foreigners, but without any windows, next to the family's bedroom. I asked the manager what was there for dinner and he said he would cook for us some lamb and make us a soup, but we would have to wait patiently for two hours. He then took our suitcases up to our rooms and brought a basin and a pot of water, left them at the terrace's parapet, for us to wash and freshen up.

We went downstairs later, and since daylight hadn't faded yet

and, according to the almanac, there would have been a full moon, we decided to take a stroll along the beach.

We went by the village - it didn't take us more than 3 minutes - and we arrived at a bridge. The view from there is really beautiful. A little further up from the bridge, Almyros river joins with the one of Vrysses, forming a navigable river. As far as the eye can see, there are many trees and tall and evergreen bushes but also huge rushes, and thousands of frogs, the criers of malaria. Referring to this place, my fellow countryman, the Bavarian von Löher wrote in the "Kretische Gestade", p. 308: "Here, in a crystal clear turning, the rapid Amfimallis reaches the sea, a magnificent river, thickly overshadowed by very old plane-trees, by groves of high myrtle-shrubs and bushy laurel-roses; everywhere nightingales fly, in the stimulating morning dew. Nature has worked miracles here..."

That's what Löher wrote. Unfortunately foreign travelers, especially the ones talented in poetry, only see the still life, they become enthusiastic with the beautiful trees and the plenty of water, but they don't see the people living there, who can just crawl, being exhausted by the fevers...The swamps of the municipality of Georgioupolis alone have an extent of 1.495 acres....

Many books have been written, with instructions on how to protect oneself against malarial fevers along with statistic records on the swamps of Greece and Crete. But the books don't help drain the swamps, by books the Shivering or the Fever are not wiped out, being monsters worse than Deli Provias who had built a castle there at the spring of Almyros and intimidated the villages around. The Shivering and the Fever, a new Lernaia Hydra, but another Hercules hasn't been found yet, for them to eliminate. How many Herculesees would be enough for the 50 swamps of Crete and the 650 ones of the mainland of Greece!

From the bridge, except for the Almyros river and the one of

Vrysses, we saw two more rivers, reaching the sea : to the north of the village and close to the church of Saint Kyriaki, Vlyhada river, with some sort of purgative water, which one should drink in oles to have an effect, and Perasticos river, at a distance of about 300 m. to the east of the village.

So, four rivers, or rather rills, come out to the gulf of Almyros which is partly closed by the rocky little island of St. Nicolas, with a chapel of this Saint on it. That way a small bay is formed. In ancient times it was a good and deep harbour, for it is well known and further below I will produce geological evidence and my own observation data to prove that in historical times Western Crete elevated 3 - 5 m. (3 m. at Chora Sfakion and 5 m. at the western end, where Falassarna lies), while Eastern Crete went down for as many metres as the Western elevated. Furthermore, all the extent of the earth, from the houses of Georgioupolis until the springs of Almyros, is formed by the fillings up with earth of the four rivers, especially of the river of Vrysses.

In antiquity, Amfimalla was one of the two seaports of the ancient city of Lappa and that port greatly contributed to the city's bloom and wealth. Even today, it wouldn't take many millions to construct a good harbour, the best in Northern Crete, which would be of great service to many villages and big commercial interests, but unfortunately something necessary is missing.

This port would cut down commercial business in both Chania and Rethymnon, since the villagers of Apocoronas and Sfakia would take their products to Georgioupolis and ship them from there, instead of taking them over 10 or 12 hours away, to Chania and Rethymnon.

We finally went back to our hotel. Mr. Stavros seems to have built it lately. The ground floor had two oblong spaces. The one, without any floor, is used as the family's bedroom, dining room and kitchen. The front part of the other, the dining room for foreigners, has a floor

and two tables and 5 straw chairs, but its floor is so elastic that when the cat of the house walks around, the tables and the chairs dance. The back part of that room has no floor, it is the hotel's show room; there are two barrels of wine there and a table decorated with a dish of olives and a piece of cheese on an ornamented plate and a loaf of black bread on a round board.

The soup with pasta and egg and lemon sauce came at last and it was quite good; the boiled lamb was brought too but its meat was probably of an old goat and it was hard to chew. The wine was a little sour, but the cheese was superb and the black bread was very tasty. Besides, hunger is the best cook.

Since our hotel manager was short in coffee, we went to the coffee-house at the Square and sat outdoors, in the moonlight. It is not mainly a coffee-house, but more of a roofed warehouse with barrels, jars, fishing nets, harpoons and other fishing equipment in it, having to one side a small fire-place built of bricks, where coffee is prepared. The notables of the village were sitting at the next table: the President of the Community Mr. Miltiades Papadogiannakis, whom I mentioned earlier, the priest and the doctor. The doctor immediately invited us to sit at their table and



View of Georgioupolis

bought us coffee and tsikoudia. The doctor was very talkative. He said that 55% of the inhabitants of the villages suffer from malarial fevers and complained that he couldn't help it since he wasn't sent quinine or other medicines from Athens and that way people died. I had then to tell him to advise the peasants to collect leaves from the eucalyptuses that the area was full of and make a decoction for them to drink. This might help them more than the not quite clean quinine, shipped from Athens at a price of 3.000 dra. a kilo. When Miltiades Papadogiannakis, whom I met for the first time that night, heard the discussion being of the eucalyptuses, he took part too in our talk and it was then that I found out that all those many hundreds of eucalyptuses were planted by him, during a period of thirty years that he had been living in this romantic but man-killing place. It was him who had founded in Georgioupolis the first Agricultural Society in Crete, he had also printed some post-cards picturing Georgioupolis and Almyros river. Everywhere, wherever one meets some small progress, there exists individual initiative. I asked for and got a lot of information concerning the places around, their condition and what they produce, and I was also notified of the shortest way to Cournas lake. Crete has only a few lakes and very small ones. There is the only one somewhat big lake, the lake of Cournas, named after the Cournas village. In antiquity its name was Corissia Lake. Stefanos Vyzantios mentions it under the word Corion, a place in Crete.

One of the gentlemen suggested that we didn't take the shortcut to the lake, but prefer another way instead, which might have been a little longer but a quite nicer one, passing by a small church of St. Antonios, where we were about to witness the world's eighth wonder. Which was that? On the tiles of a small church, inside which there was enough space for only one priest and a candle-lighter to stand, a carob-bean tree lies, so big that even two men

can't embrace its trunk. Since this wonder was verified by all four of them, we decided to see it ourselves, the next day. I asked them then, if there was anyone in Georgioupolis that could escort us, for a fee of course, so that we didn't get lost on the mountains. We were told that there was a fisherman at the village, named Mihalís Constandarakis, who knew all the area of Cournopatimata, that is, of the eight villages around Cournas lake up to Episcopi and Polis (that is Argyroupolis, where the ancient city of Lappa lied). That fisherman had lost his right arm, while fishing with dynamite and now he was throwing dynamite with his left hand and he used to say that if his left arm would some day be cut off, he would throw the dynamite with his legs. The coffee-house keeper called upon that fisherman and we agreed that he would escort us in our two-day tour. Meanwhile it was already 9 o'clock in the evening, quite late for a village. We wished our new friends goodnight and we returned to the hotel. The hotel manager was sitting at the door, waiting for us. Using a lamp, he lighted our way upstairs the upright staircase and wished us goodnight. For a while I listened to the waves breaking on the rocks, as well as to the crying of the baby of Mr. Stavros' wife and then I fell asleep...

We washed outside on the terrace with some soap I had in my suitcase and we went downstairs, drank coffee and left the house. My son went a little further to take some pictures and I moved towards Almyros springs and Kefala of Venos.

Almyros of Apocoronas, that is this rill's name with the brackish water, so that it is not mistaken for the Almyros of Malevizi, bubbles up a quarter far away from the sea and the deep crevice of lime-stone from which it comes up is 13 m. above the sea level. At the spring the water's temperature is 15 - 16 degrees, 2 - 3 degrees lower than the temperature of the area around. After the rain season and when the snow has melted, that is in winter and spring, the spring flows rapidly

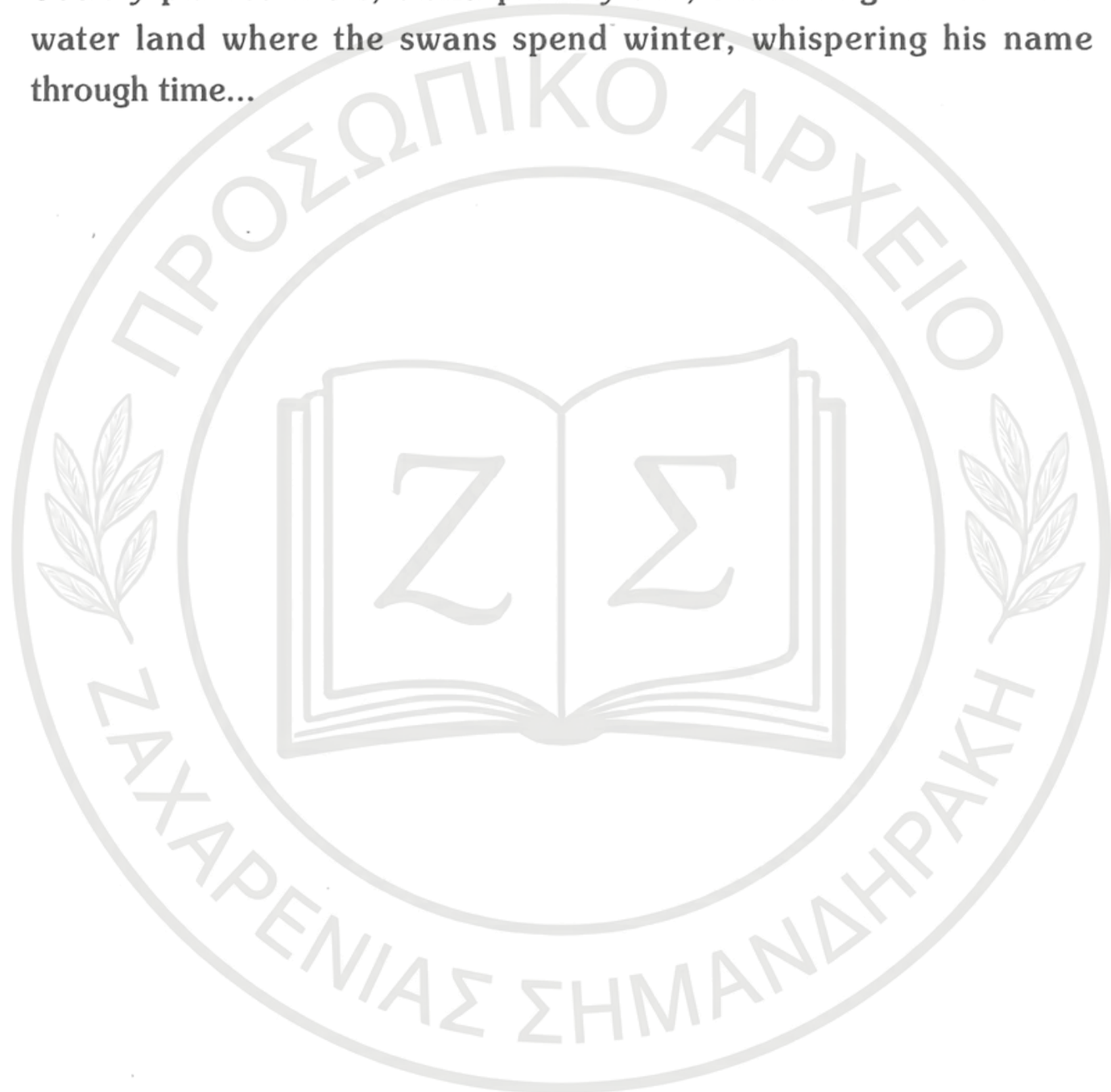
and the water is less brackish than in summer; generally though, it's not too salty, so any kind of fruit-trees, useful plants and flowers can grow there...".

If Michael Defner were alive today and visited Georgioupolis again, a big and wonderful country-town, a contemporary touristic resort and a very important junction almost at the borders of the Prefectures of Chania and Rethymnon, he would have found out that von Löher was probably right about the dense trees, *"the groves of high myrtle-shrubs and thick laurel-roses"*, as well as the nightingales flying *"in the stimulating morning dew"*. *Georgioupolis no longer has "105 and a half inhabitants"* but many more. Nor does *"Stavros Manolakis Hotel"* exist, with its two small rooms and the narrow upright staircase; modern luxurious hotels have been built here, where a great number of Europeans - and a lot of his countrymen among them - spend their vacations, enjoying the enchanting landscape and the crystal clear waters of Almyros.

This book couldn't but be dedicated to the late Miltiades Papadogiannakis and to his struggle, to his great love for this place deserted, at the beginning and so much changed today - in a way that he had dreamt of. To that man, who gave away a great deal of his fortune to the poor and who left, according to his will in 1934, an area of 3.000 sq. m. to the community of the town he had created, for the construction of the holy church of the Saviour's Ascension, a task he had for so many years struggled for. To that man who noted, at the last paragraph of his will: *"My desire is, if I die in Chania or elsewhere, to be buried at the little island of St Nicolas; in case of a storm which would prevent me from being taken there, I would like my body to be temporarily placed at the church of the Ascension, until the weather will permit my burial to be done at the island of St. Nicolas...."*

May the founder of Georgioupolis, the dreamer, the fighter, the

patriot, the worker of the land, rest in peace. Georgioupolis, 100 years and more since its foundation, continues its course. It evolves, it develops, even without fish-ponds, but also without malaria and the need to buy quinine. The eucalyptus trees that he himself and his Society planted there, stand proudly still, shadowing the beautiful water land where the swans spend winter, whispering his name through time...



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