Cypriot associations in Athens at the turn of the nineteenth century: visions and rivalries

Marianna D. Christopoulou
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University of Cyprus

Résumé. Cet article a un triple objectif. Il vise tout d’abord à présenter les activités des associations chypriotes à Athènes des années 1870 aux années 1900, à analyser les initiatives des plus importantes d’entre elles (Zenon, 1879 ; Zenon, 1890 ; Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon, 1898) et à donner un aperçu de leur influence. Deuxièmement, il enquête sur les rivalités qui existaient entre les plus populaires d’entre elles et enfin, il tente d’évaluer leur impact sur la politique interne de Chypre.

Abstract. The aim of this article is threefold. First it intends to present Cypriot associations’ activities in Athens from the 1870s to the 1900s, analyze the endeavors of the most important of them (Zenon, 1879; Zenon, 1890; Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon, 1898), and give an overview of their influence. Secondly, it investigates the rivalries that existed between the most popular ones and finally, it attempts to evaluate their impact on Cypriot national affairs.

Introduction

We overexcited Greeks quickly establish associations, only to let them die the very next day... After 24 hours our enthusiasm begins to fade away; after 48 we decide to no longer pay our contribution; after 68, if one asks us to summon a meeting, we answer: “Oh brother, who gives a hoot?” If he insists, we might dispatch him to hell – pardon my French – or accuse him of pilfering from the association's funds... This is the story of a majority of associations that are established with the best of intentions, but end up beating the wind...  

These thoughts were penned with vexation by the main ‘hero’ of this article, Georgios Frangoudes, president of the Cypriot association Syndesmos Kyprion in 1899 in response to scepticism.  

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1 This article is based on the research project “Expanding the public sphere, enhancing popular activism: Greek voluntary associations in Cyprus (1878-1931)”, funded by the Onisilos Funding Project for Postdoctoral Researchers of the University of Cyprus, conducted by Dr. Marianna Christopoulou and supervised by associate professor Petros Papapolyvou, whom I thank for his careful proofreading of this paper. I would also like to thank the revisors for their enlightening comments and suggestions.

2 Alithia, 25 February 1899 (note: the dates are given both in the Julian and Gregorian calendar only if the newspaper had printed both of them on its front page).
tics' opposition to his association. These thoughts triggered the writing of this article and, to a degree, dictated its three primary objectives. The first is to present Cypriot associations' activities in Athens from the 1870s to the 1900s, as the bibliography still lacks this systematic mapping. The second is to analyze the endeavors of the most important of these associations, to give an overview of their influence, and to investigate the rivalries that existed between them. Finally, it will attempt to evaluate Frangoudes' pessimistic account of their fate, and to assess their influence on Cypriot affairs.

**First attempts**

The establishment of an association based on the regional identity of its members (e.g. a Macedonian, Epirote, or Cypriot association) presupposes the existence of such a community in a receptive city, usually in a foreign country. Both the potential and the scope of these associations is determined by the number of members, their economic status, their continuous presence in the receptive city and involvement in its public affairs, and their ties with their place of origin.

In contrast to larger groups of unredeemed Greeks that resided in Athens in the late nineteenth century (such as those from Macedonia, Crete, and Epirus), Cypriots were relatively few: a handful of the offspring of fighters and fugitives who had fled from Cyprus during the Greek Revolution, a number of merchants, and university students (or students of the Athens military academy) who had been travelling to Greece for higher education since the 1850s. This was the nucleus of the Cypriot community in Athens which, in 1879, formed its first association named *Zenon*.

The founding of *Zenon* was born out of a popular associational trend that began in the 1860s in the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans and gradually assumed the proportions of a phenomenon, the so-called *syllogomania* (“passion for associations”). *Zenon*’s founding seems to have coincided with the organization of a conference in April 1879 by the Parnassos Literary Society, inviting the participation of all Greek associations within and outside the borders of the Greek Kingdom. From the conference records, *Zenon* appears to have been established in 1879, and in the minutes of Parnassos’ meetings we read that *Zenon* requested to enter into formal relations with the society in February, meaning that it was founded between January and February 1879.

Information on the life of this association is scarce. At the conference organized by Parnassos, three Cypriots represented *Zenon*, two permanently residing in Athens and a university student: Nikolaos I. Saripolos (1817-1887), a jurist and university professor; George Sivitanides (1840-1920), jurist and renowned journalist; and Ioannes D. Karemfilakes (1852-1905) from Larnaca, then a graduate of the School of Law. The main aim of *Zenon* must have been

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3 On the presence of Cypriot students at the University of Athens, see Papapolyviou 2009, pp. 247-274.
4 Conference of Greek associations 1879, p. ιε’.
5 *Parnassos*, v. 3. 1879, p. 171.
to promote education on the island as Karemfilakis presented the deplorable situation of primary education, particularly in rural regions, and went on to plead for financial support and donations of books to create libraries to fight against the “intellectual backwardness” of his compatriots. Zenon's concern for education was in tune with the continuing efforts particularly during the Tanzimat period of the higher clergy and local elites to organize an island wide system of community funded schools. The fruit of this effort were the eighty-three schools that the British administration found upon its arrival in Cyprus. Notwithstanding the significance of the initiative, much more was needed in light of the high rates of illiteracy, and the call for the wider intellectual and “moral” advancement of the locals. The Cypriot Brotherhood of Egypt, established in 1873, had already stated that it would support Archbishop Sophronios' efforts. It seems that Zenon in Athens followed suit.

This is probably the reason why the next trace of Zenon is found in 1882, when in cooperation with the Cypriot Brotherhood of Egypt tried to recruit teachers from Athens to work in Cyprus. The plan failed, however, due to the high salaries requested. At this point Zenon disappears from the sources, probably having disbanded, but the vitality of the Cypriot presence in Athens was preserved by the nationalistic fever and activity of its university students. For example, in October 1888, during the celebrations for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of King George I, Cypriots (primarily students) marched to the palace where they held a candlelight vigil, carrying a large flag with the phrase “Cyprus Under a Double Yoke” on one side and “Long Live Enosis” (that is, union with Greece) on the other. At the palace, university student Theophanes Theodotides (Theodotou) (1863-1942) asked to address the king.

Two months later in December 1888, Theodotou (later a leading figure in Cypriot politics) was one of the first to emphasize the need for a Cypriot association in Athens to promote the cause of enosis more widely throughout Greece and Europe. Along similar lines, in February 1889, Nikolaos Kl. Lanites (1872-1958), another university student and later significant politician, called on his compatriots to found such an association in Cyprus, with a branch in Athens.

Regardless of their political and organizational merits, the proposals of these two young men should not be seen as separate from the ongoing situation on the island. The first decade of British rule had ended in disappointment. Their arrival in 1878 was hailed by the Cypriots as the dawn of a new era of progress and the prelude for enosis with Greece. However, reality did not live up to such expectations. The demand for enosis was continually rebuffed, while important reforms concerning public and economic life were often aimed at facilitating tax levying and the administrative needs of the British rule.

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6 Conference of Greek associations 1879, pp. 238-239.
9 Alithia, 6 and 13 May 1882.
10 Salpinx, 22 October 1888 and Alithia, 17 November 1888.
11 Salpinx, 10 December 1888.
12 Salpinx, 11 March 1889.
The greatest impediment to Cyprus’ economic progress was the “Tribute,” a heavy tax levied on the Cypriots to provide annual British-contracted compensation to the Ottoman Empire for occupying and administering Cyprus. While draining the finances of the island, this money never reached the Sultan because his government had defaulted on servicing the 1855 Crimean War loan. It was instead siphoned off by the British for their own bondholders. Unsurprisingly, the Tribute became a thorn in the flesh, poisoning Cypriot-British relations.\textsuperscript{13}

The severe economic recession due to the droughts of 1886-1888, which kept the poorest regions of the island on the brink of famine, served only to aggravate the situation. Notwithstanding the severity of the problem, the government rejected most petitions for tax exemptions or postponement, offering only insufficient help for even the most pressing needs. This lamentable situation triggered resistance by the disenchanted Cypriots with demonstrations, gatherings and resolutions taking place all over the island. As the economic problems assumed political proportions, the demands for economic relief became closely linked to the desire for union with Greece.\textsuperscript{14}

Against this background stood the 1890 initiative of the university students Theodotou and Lanites, who called for a patriotic association which was eventually established in Athens in February, 1890. Again named Zenon, it was regarded as a reestablishment of the 1879 Zenon. At his inaugural speech before an audience of seventy, Theodotou, Zenon’s new secretary, passionately declared that the association would defend Cyprus against the “grotesque monster, the double-headed eagle [Turks and British] destined... to wolf down the vitals of our country” and would stand up “against the damned blight, against British despotism.”\textsuperscript{15} Its primary objective would be to support Cypriots who had left the motherland to come to Greece, and to prepare for future action by fundraising to assist Archbishop Sophronios III of Cyprus and the Cypriot Brotherhood of Egypt in their work for the educational development of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{16}

Theodotou’s speech was infused with the spirit of youth: passion, impetus, high expectations and grandiose goals, yet the association’s statutes were much more modest and introverted. Of the four aims, only one – promoting education – referred directly to Cyprus, while the other three focused on its own needy members, on local orphans of Cypriot origin, and on new Cypriots arriving or settling in Athens.\textsuperscript{17}

In the following years, the association limited its activity to supporting its needy members and Cypriots arriving in Greece, thus turning into a self-help society. A major impediment to any work was Article 18 of the association’s statutes stipulating that Zenon could begin funding its objectives only after having collected ten thousand drachmas. That ambitious goal was

\textsuperscript{13} For the history of the Tribute tax see Markides 2019, \textit{passim}; Markides 2016, pp. 83-96.

\textsuperscript{14} Demetriadou 1998, pp. 273-287.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Fonti tis Kyprou}, 16/28 March 1890.

\textsuperscript{16} The British administration allowed Cypriot Orthodox Church figures and local authorities a pivotal role in the organization and development of the island’s education from 1878 to 1919, mostly because of financial limitations: Heraclidou 2017, pp. 7-21.

\textsuperscript{17} The statutes were published as a series in the Cypriot newspaper \textit{Salpinx}: see \textit{Salpinx}, 25 May, 15 and 26 June 1891.
unreachable, and only five hundred drachmas were collected in the first year. The majority of members were relatively poor themselves, such as laborers and university students, for whom even the one drachma monthly membership fee (equal to a day’s salary) was too much to afford. Between the statute and the empty treasury, the Council’s hands were tied.  

The following table 1 of members of the 1890 administrative council mirrors this dilemma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Konstantinides, Anastasios</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frangos, Ioannes</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodotides, Theofanes</td>
<td>Law student</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savvas, Ioannes</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loukas, Zenon Ch.</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glykys, Evelthon</td>
<td>Medical student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetriou, Aristodemos (Foinieus)</td>
<td>Medical student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 — Members of Zenon Council, 1890.

The situation improved but did not change fundamentally after the association’s elections of 1891. The banker Pericles Ieropoulos was its new president while the rest of the administrative Council included more prestigious members than the previous year (table 2). Ieropoulos attempted to breathe new life into the association by moving it into the building of the Philharmonic Society of Athens (of which he was also a member) and personally furnished Zenon’s new offices. In addition, he gave a large financial donation and hired a lawyer to review the association’s statutes.  

Still, he failed to achieve Zenon’s economic goals, and the group remained focused on the needs of Athens’ Cypriots. The association’s annual celebration on September 8 (the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and feast day of the famous Kykkos Monastery in Cyprus) and its benevolent presence in the life of the Cypriot community strengthened the ties between its members. It was also famous for its hospitality and protection of Cypriot visitors to Athens.  

Research thus far has not revealed any involvement in the island’s affairs, except for some sporadic aid, such as financial support in 1894 for Limassol’s flood victims.

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18 The small number of workers on the council was soon noticed and this is probably the reason why the newspaper Salpinx called specifically for their involvement in the 1891 association elections: Salpinx, 2 February 1891.
19 Salpinx, 9 February 1891. Pericles Ieropoulos was a significant member of various musical societies in Athens: see Barbaki 2009, pp. 43-44, 417.
20 About Syndesmos’ support of Cypriots who visited Athens see Foni tis Kyprou, 25/27 December 1892; Ethnos, 10/22 December 1894.
21 For the decision in 1894 to dispatch money to Limassol’s flood victims see Foni tis Kyprou, 9/21 December 1894. For Ieropoulos’ request to the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs for the re-establishment of the vice-consulate in Limassol see Salpinx, 30 March 1891.
The establishment of Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon
(League of Cypriots in Athens)

In 1898, the notable lack of political activity in favor of Cyprus was mitigated by the establishment of the League of Cypriots in Athens (Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon; hereafter Syndesmos). Until then, young Cypriots in Athens had been actively involved in national politics by enrolling as members of the Ethniki Etairia (National Society). Established in 1894 by army officers, the Ethniki Etairia hoped to prepare for and ignite the liberation of Greeks living outside the borders of the Greek Kingdom. The nationalistic fervor of the time and the inability of the Greek government to control the group effectively rendered the Ethniki Etairia “a state within the State.” Its immense influence forced the Greek palace and government to pursue an aggressive and belligerent policy towards the Ottoman Empire, contributing to the outbreak of the unsuccessful war with Turkey in 1897.22

Several young Athenian Cypriots had supported the cause by corresponding with Cypriot compatriots to smooth the path for the establishment of the Ethniki Etairia’s branches there. Many volunteered to fight in the war of 1897, and several died on the battlefield. Although the war was lost, the leaven of zealotry remained.23

One of the supporters of the National Society was Cypriot George Frangoudes (1869-1939) who, in November 1898, had founded the aforementioned Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon. It is hard to give a resumé of Frangoudes’ personality and activities.24 He was an eloquent journalist and author, incendiary orator, cosmopolitan lawyer, independent politician with radical views, and a fiery patriot able to bring ideas to reality. Born in Limassol in 1869, he was also an avid hiker – although Frangoudes had spent most of his life abroad, he boasted that he knew the island like the back of his hand as he had tramped it from end to end before penning his impres-

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Table 2 — Members of Zenon Council, 1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ieropoulos, Pericles</td>
<td>Banker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattichas, G.</td>
<td>Manager of commercial shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loizos, Ch. S. (Sozos)</td>
<td>Law Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iasemides, Pericles</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michailides, M.</td>
<td>Manager of coffee production plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frangos, Ioannes</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikelides, Nikolaos</td>
<td>Medical student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 For Ethniki Etairia’s involvement in the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 see Giannopoulos 2003, pp. 33-179.
sions in his book, *Kypris*, published in 1890. Frangoudes had travelled extensively and lived in several parts of Europe before he returned to settle in Athens in 1897.

Although calling for more active politics on behalf of Greek Cypriots in favour of union with Greece, Frangoudes believed (as did the majority of Cyprus’ emerging middle-class), that national revival went hand in hand with moral and educational revitalization,\(^{25}\) as well as the abolition of the Tribute. Despite Frangoudes’ long absence from the island, his ideas show that he had kept abreast of developments there.

The advent of British administration had already resulted in the questioning and redefinition of older established forms of Cypriot authority. By the 1890s urbanization, the spread of literacy and primary education, gradual economic recovery, and an increase in population allowed the strengthening of the mercantile and industrial strata and the emergence of educated professionals such as doctors, teachers, and lawyers who now wanted a voice in the political arena.\(^{26}\) As graduates of the University of Athens, the latter bore liberal ideas and a lively nationalism. At the other end of the social spectrum were Cyprus’ mostly lower-class volunteers who had fought in the 1896 Cretan revolution and the unsuccessful war of 1897. Their involvement also strengthened the incipient nationalism of the island, which would soon become the driving force of public life, integrating social change and politics.\(^{27}\) The new educated middle class opted for a speedy and uncompromising solution to the national questions through active resistance towards the British.

Alternatively, traditionally predominant landowners, a large portion of the clergy,\(^{28}\) and some of the bourgeoisie (mainly older politicians who had grown up under the Ottoman regime, such as Paschales Constantinides [1840-1937] and Achilleas Liasides [1850-1924]), believed that propitiation and a law-abiding policy towards the British would eventually bring about enosis.\(^{29}\) These two tendencies were far from being rigid as supporters occasionally shifted camps, and until the 1920s they shared one common denominator: they did not intend to use violence.

Frangoudes belonged to the first camp that favoured a speedy solution, constituting, however, a more extreme version. He had long been flirting with the idea of a radical movement and fiercely opposed any moderate approach. His rationale and ideas underwent a detailed analysis in eighteen articles published as a series in 1898 in the newspaper *Alithia* (Truth).\(^{30}\) The texts, often caustic and sarcastic, were rich in ideology and functioned as a motivator for indo-

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\(^{25}\) Kapsalis 2018, pp. 67-77.

\(^{26}\) For the social, political and ideological implications brought about with the integration of Cyprus in the British administration in relation to the spread of education and literacy see Bryant 2004, pp. 35-47, 79-91; Katsiaounis 1996, pp. 65-92.

\(^{27}\) Protopapas 2012, pp. 127-138; Katsourides 2017, pp. 73-77.

\(^{28}\) For Archbishop’s Sophronios pro-British feelings see Varnavas 2013, pp. 124, 133-137. Until the second decade of the 20th century the Church of Cyprus and the British administration remained on good terms and cooperation. The demand for enosis, however, rendered their relation fragile with the World War I being the turning point in the adoption of a more hostile attitude towards each other: Yiannou 2020, pp. 137-153.

\(^{29}\) Georghalides 1979, pp. 81-84.

\(^{30}\) The context of these articles in presented in Christodoulou 2019, pp. 15-23.
lent citizens and disheartened patriots. The radicals of the Ionian islands (a favourite subject in Cypriot nationalistic rhetoric) were set as an example:

Young and fiery patriots, supporters of the noblest ideals, they [the radicals of the Ionian islands] did not establish societies to idle about in.... They founded committees and associations to awaken the people and rekindle patriotism.\textsuperscript{31}

Frangoudes’ dream was an association similar to those in the Ionian islands. It would be located in Athens with branches all over Cyprus that would serve the group’s single-minded ideal “simultaneously and undivided” under one leader. The association would have a pan-Cypriot fund to support its activity and would be in direct communication with representatives in London, Crete, and Greek communities abroad.\textsuperscript{32} Frangoudes was not alone in this. His vision was shared by two other fervent patriots, the Cypriot law school graduates, Evangelos Chatziioannou and Loues Loizos,\textsuperscript{33} who masterminded the idea and, in November 1898, presented the scheme to twenty young Cypriots in a small pub in Athens, receiving their unanimous approval.

The establishment of the association was announced in the press on November 28. Far from being accidental, the establishment month coincided with Crete gaining its autonomy after long and bloody struggles. In Cypriot imagination, Crete constituted a paradigm of revolutionary patriotism and the promising precedent of a successful call for \textit{enosis}.

The high-ranking composition of the first Council revealed both Frangoudes’ prestige and his influential network (he would run for local elections in Athens the following year). Among its members the Council numbered Epameinondas Gonatas (1836-1913), the former prefect of Larissa and Themistokles Philadelpheus (1838-1920), a scholar and jurist. Other significant Cypriots of Athens included Adones Kyrou (1872-1918), editor of the widely-read newspaper \textit{Estia}; Kimon Michailides (1864-1917), scholar and editor of the literary review \textit{Panathinaia}; Pericles Ieropoulos, banker and former president of the \textit{Zenon} association; Pericles Iasemides, high school teacher, and the merchants M. Michailides and M. Michalopoulos. Three university students were to support the secretary.\textsuperscript{34} Despite the high profile of the Council, the annual membership fee was similar to that of \textit{Zenon}.\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Syndesmos}’ prestige and apparent potential, however, managed to secure some initial donations.

Had it not been for its middle-aged leadership, \textit{Syndesmos} could well be regarded as a youth organization. Most of its membership was made up of feisty young university students. “It is a

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Alithia}, 22 September 1888.  
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Alithia}, 9 July 1898.  
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Salpinx}, 28 November 1898. As Cypriot students in Athens, Loizos and Chatziioannou were active members of the Students’ Legion that fought in Crete in 1897. On their return to Cyprus, they both became involved in politics. See Papapoliyiou 2001, pp. 336, 360.  
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Alithia}, 25 November 1898.  
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Syndesmos} 1899, p. 5. The enrollment fee was two francs, while the annual fee was twelve francs.
youth that doesn’t give hopes, it gives certainties,” bragged a middle-aged member in a letter to the press.36

*Syndesmos’* objectives as reflected in its statutes did not fall short of Frangoudes’ vision. Reform of the island’s educational and ecclesiastical matters,37 protection of its material interests (especially the abolition of the Tribute tax), and realization of union with Greece were its threefold aim. The means used to pursue it can be described as national and cultural propaganda: the use of the press within and outside the national borders; advancing the national ideal among the Cypriots themselves; and organizing celebrations, demonstrations and conferences.

*Syndesmos’* aims received reserved approval from the local Greek-Cypriot politicians, although the majority opposed the establishment of branches in Cyprus and abroad while others claimed that its headquarters should be located on the island. Such varied and emotional reactions reveal the complexity of Cypriot politics and the bitter personal relations, for Frangoudes was a devoted radical who had fiercely attacked the compromising moderates in the press.38

Therefore, the negative reaction on behalf of the moderates like Spyros Araouzos (1865-1924) came as no surprise. Yet, even the uncompromising nationalists such as Nikolaos Lanites, Filios Zannetos (1863-1933), George Mallikides (1842-1911), and Ioannes Kyriakides (1850-1955) expressed deep reservations about the branches. Their concern that setting up such nationalistic Cypriot branches would be a red flag for the British and create difficulties for Greek politicians in handling Cypriot affairs was not totally unfounded. For many, the role of the National Society in the unsuccessful war of 1897 still cast a heavy shadow over any associational activity with nationalistic objectives.39 Other voices, like the newspaper *Salpinx*, or the politician Araouzos, forcefully argued that *Syndesmos* branches in Cyprus would support those (especially local government officials) who questioned the ‘Greekness’ of Cypriots and spoke of “imported nationalism” or manipulation by Greek propaganda.40 High politics aside, the potentially close oversight of the branches by *Syndesmos’* headquarters in Athens, accompanied by Frangoudes’ tight control, seemed to degrade the role and value of the politicians on the island, some of whom complained of not being informed or invited from the beginning.41

The issue of leadership in the overall struggle for *enosis* with Greece came to the fore at this time.42 From November 1898 there were discussions, particularly between the island’s uncom-

36 *Salpinx*, 28 November 1898.
37 It is noteworthy that one of *Syndesmos’* first initiatives was to try to establish ties with the powerful educational society of Athens, SDEG (Syllogos pros Diadosi Ellinikon Grammaton). See *Patriotikos Syndesmos Kyprion* to the president of SDEG, 24 November 1898, no. 26, folder: Diafora Alla, SDEG Archive, Athens.
38 *Alithia*, 9 July 1898.
40 *Salpinx*, 19 December 1898; *Alithia*, 7 January 1899. For British views on Cypriot national consciousness during the first decades of British rule, see Demetriadou 1998, pp. 168-189.
41 *Alithia*, 25 February and 11 March 1899.
promising politicians, to establish a political committee (Politiki Organosis) with branches elected by Greek Cypriots throughout the island. The committee came into existence two months after Syndesmos, in January 1899,\(^43\) intending to take responsibility for the running of Greek Cypriot affairs and relations with the British. Local political cleavages, however, did not allow it to survive.\(^44\)

Probably due to this battle for dominance, Syndesmos stepped back, abandoning the idea of branches in Cyprus. Frangoudes continued to pursue his own aims, however, and was, as the newspaper Estia put it “irrepressible.” Even when Francis Stronge, the British minister in Athens, refused to pass on the resolutions submitted by Syndesmos for the British Foreign Office, Frangoudes bypassed him, sending them directly to the Foreign Office on his own.\(^45\)

Also fruitless was Frangoudes suggestion to create a branch in London. The highly esteemed former Greek diplomat there, Ioannes Gennadius, politely refused to organize and lead it. He stressed that his ties with the British government were too close to assume such a role,\(^46\) yet he promised to support the cause in any other possible way. He also urged Syndesmos to focus on the Cypriot population’s moral, educational and material progress, without which any other effort to save the island would fall to pieces.\(^47\)

The adverse reaction from Cyprus and especially the derailing of the branches project had serious repercussions on the makeup of the Syndesmos council. Three of its members, including the vice president and the general secretary, resigned.\(^48\) Meanwhile, Zenon, which was in decline, reorganized and accepted former members of Syndesmos. Frangoudes, highly irritated, commented bitterly in the press that “It is characteristic of the Greek (Romioi)... that if somebody opens a café at a corner, two more will open alongside simultaneously, so that all three go to the wall.”\(^49\) However, these difficulties and the vituperative attacks of some of Cyprus’ high-circulation newspapers only served to unite the twenty-two university student members of Syndesmos and made Frangoudes even more resolved to succeed.

The works of Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon

Syndesmos’ first public ‘appearance’ was impressive, and spoke clearly of its aims and potential. Syndesmos had commissioned a portrait of Archbishop Kyprianos, an 1821 martyr of the Greek Revolution, and donated it to the Ethnological Museum of Athens. There the

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\(^{43}\) *Alithia*, 14 January 1899.

\(^{44}\) Hill 2010, p. 507.

\(^{45}\) Hill 2010, p. 507, n. 2.

\(^{46}\) Syndesmos Kyprion to J. Gennadius, n. 88, 3 December 1898 & J. Gennadius to Syndesmos Kyprion, 2 January 1899, Gennadius Archive, folder 13.4, Gennadius Library.

\(^{47}\) Ibid. It is worth mentioning that Syndesmos told Gennadius that it would send him a pan-Cypriot request to take over the leadership of the branch. It also asked him to suggest people who could staff it (14 January 1899, no. 118, Gennadius Archive, folder 13.4, Gennadius Library).

\(^{48}\) *Alithia*, 8 April 1899. Vice President Th. Filadelpheus resigned, as well as E. Gonatas, a member of the council.

\(^{49}\) *Alithia*, 28 January 1900.
archbishop took his place among the pantheon of the other heroes of the revolution, and in this way “unredeemed Cyprus” memorialized its contribution to the national struggle for freedom.

More interesting, however, was the ceremony marking the donation. Following a service at the Athens Cathedral, an imposing procession headed from the offices of the association Hellenism to the Ethnological Museum near the Polytechneion. The Athens municipal band and the Syndesmos' banner preceded two university students carrying the portrait. They were followed by other Syndesmos members and varied participants. At the museum a memorial service was held for the revolution’s martyrs, after which Frangoudes delivered a panegyric and Aristides Zenon recited a poem about Archbishop Kyprianos. The Cypriot newspaper Alithia proudly commented that the activity of Syndesmos was “further proof of the national vitality of Cypriot youth.”

The portrait was merely a prelude to Frangoudes' ambitious plans, and the Council soon ordered a sculpted marble bust of Archbishop Kyprianos. More importantly, it also approved the organization of a large-scale Cypriot exhibition in Athens. Such an exhibition was unique and unprecedented since no other part of unredeemed Hellenism had done anything similar. It was also impressive in being the fruit of private initiative. While the task was ambitious and Syndesmos' finances relatively lacking, nothing deterred Frangoudes and his closest collaborators. He spent months visiting cities and villages in Cyprus where he organized exhibitions, bought artefacts, and fundraised not only in Cyprus but also in Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt. He successfully used his political influence to entice prestigious citizens to the exhibition's organizing committee, such as the governor of the National Bank of Greece, the mayors of Athens and Piraeus, the manager of the National Bank of Athens, the dean of the University of Athens, and presidents of significant societies (table 3).

Frangoudes' aim was to create something momentous, a celebration of Cyprus in the capital of Hellenism. His cause was supported by significant literary (e.g. Parnassos), cultural (e.g. Society for the Promotion of Ancient Theatre), athletic and women’s societies (e.g. Ergani Athina) of Athens, but to his great disappointment, the Greek government abstained from participating in order to avoid any diplomatic repercussions with Britain. It did, however, allow the mayor of Athens to hold the exhibition under his auspices.

| Stefanos Streit | Governor of the National Bank |
| Spyridon Merkoures | Mayor of Athens |
| Tr. Moutzopoulos | Mayor of Piraeus |

50 Alithia, 7 and 21 April 1900.
51 Alithia, 21 April 1900.
52 For the exhibition, see Frangoudes 1901 passim; Zannetos 1912, pp. 299-304; Mazarakis-Ainian 1999, pp. 31-47; Hill 2010, p. 507.
53 Frangoudes 1939, pp. 121-122.
54 Pleias 12 (1900), pp. 412-413.
On the sixth of April 1901, seven rooms of the Zappeion (the large classical building in the National Gardens, dedicated in 1888 to host the revival of the Olympic Games) opened to the public. Approximately twenty thousand visitors had the chance to see Cypriot everyday life, sceneries, and history illustrated by both art and craft displays, as well as costumes, photographs, books, newspapers and special exhibits on ancient Cyprus. Urban and rural households were also on display. Folk culture was ‘dramatized’ with women working on broadlooms and performers dancing to traditional songs that included repeating the lines back and forth to each other. Visitors could also taste and buy traditional products, including Cypriot koumandaria, zivania, halloumi cheese, Lefkara laces and even see the famous Cypriot mules. The exhibition revealed Cyprus to Athens, affirming their historical ties, while introducing Cypriot producers and merchants to the metropolis.

The exhibition was closely linked to the ideas of evolution and progress that had dominated European political and cultural thought since the 1850s. Progress was seen as an essential tool for assessing oneself and others, and at the world fairs in London, Paris, and Chicago, nations vied with each other to win awards for their intellectual and material achievements. For smaller countries, exhibitions were a place to prove their merits and be acknowledged as belonging to the ‘civilized world.’ They were also a means to tell their national story and to present their cultural self-perception.

Displaying the island’s overall progress was probably the underlying idea of the Cypriot exhibition, which included evidence of its material and intellectual development. For example, in the third room of the exhibition one could view an interesting array of Cypriot newspapers and books about Cyprus. In its description of the exhibition, the newspaper Neologos empha-

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Table 3 — The exhibition’s organizing committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neokles Kazazes</td>
<td>President of the society Hellenism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioannes Pesmazoglou</td>
<td>Manager of the National Bank of Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Skouzes</td>
<td>Banker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Papamichalopoulos</td>
<td>MP, former minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Argyropoulos</td>
<td>President of the literary society Parnassos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Mitsopoulos</td>
<td>Dean of the University of Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Kordellas</td>
<td>Vice president of Craft Business School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Kyparisses</td>
<td>General secretary of Craft Business School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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55 It is worth mentioning that, according to Zannetos, after the exhibition Lefkaritika (a type of lace embroidery) started being exported to the Greek market: Zannetos 1912, p. 304.
57 See, for example, the Romanian and Czechoslovak exhibitions that took place around that time: Filipová 2011, pp. 15-36; Kallestrup 2002, pp. 147-162.
sized that “The life of each nation has its own ‘poetry,’ which amounts to an unending struggle for its national rights, [:] yet it presupposes its social and economic revival.”

Indeed, the exhibition vouched for that vitality. The women’s newspaper *Efimeris Kyriion* was impressed by the exhibits of works of Cypriot women, describing them as “indicative of the ferment for action and improvement.” Frangoudes himself stressed that the exhibition demonstrated the liveliness and determination of the younger Greek generation to achieve great things, and to drag the country out from under the calamities of the past.

For Frangoudes, the exhibition not only attested to the progress of the people but to the ‘quality’ of their foreign governors. In his concluding speech, he took aim at British indifference for the island’s overall progress, declaring:

“This is why the Cypriot Exhibition gives no hint that the island has been governed for twenty years by the most industrious nation of all. No industry has been developed on the island by the English, and whatever progress can be seen rests on the progressive spirit of the Greeks.”

The exhibition not only endeavoured to display the Cypriot present but to substantiate its promising future, and to disperse through the back door any European doubts about the Hellenic identity of the island. Ten years earlier, in his book *Kypris*, Frangoudes had also commented on the European bibliography of the island, stressing the need to prove “its (Cyprus’) Hellenic nature and Hellenic dominance, as there are some who question it.” The Cypriot exhibits were solid evidence of that very ‘truth’ of the island’s Greekness. A journalist of the newspaper *Scrip* wrote: “The voiceless have a voice, the soulless have a soul, and they talk to us movingly with a patriotic Greek voice that I have not managed to hear in any patriotic speech or poem so far…”

While the archaeological collection demonstrated the ancient Greek roots of the island, the folk culture and customs display (the largest in the exhibition) proved its continuity. The costumes, the household scenes of everyday village life, and the folk dances were references to the clarity of the folk/national spirit – not only in its connection with the archaic past but also its ties to the modern folk culture of the Greek Kingdom. Cyprus’ aspiration for enosis could not be served better: progress, Greekness and potential were all proven by the exhibits. One of them, J. P. Foscolos’ photographic composition, titled “Cyprus and her dream”, illustrating a beautiful young woman gazing at Parthenon, depicted the desire in the most artistic way.

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58 Frangoudes 1901, pp. 16-17.
59 Frangoudes 1901, p. 33.
60 Frangoudes 1901, p. 72.
62 Skrip, 14 April 1901.
63 N. Katalanos mentioned the exhibition as “a new tangible proof of the unbreakable national unity of the island with Mother Greece” (Katalanos 1914, pp. 244-245).
64 For an analysis of the photograph see Kapsalis 2018, pp. 130-140.
Among the most significant of the festivities that took place during the opening of the exhibition were the semi-official Panhellenic athletic games, also masterminded by *Syndesmos*, but developed under the auspices of the Hellenic Athletics Federation (SEGAS). It took great effort on behalf of the organizing committee to present the games, as the ancient Panathenaic (Kallimarmaron) Stadium was undergoing renovations that had to be accelerated to meet the dates. They also had to cope with the fears of the Greek government that the national fervor of the Cypriots would provoke the British. Determination and the backing of *Syndesmos*’ supporters, some of whom were politicians at the highest echelons, finally prevailed. The Panhellenic games proved the unshakable attachment of modern Greeks to the athletic ideals of antiquity, and Frangoudes believed that, if developed, these games could create a “new Greek athletic spirit,” with Athens at the “core of eastern civilization.”

Along the same lines of thought lay *Syndesmos*’ decision to have a bust of Archbishop Kyprianos carved by the sculptor Bonanos and displayed in the peristylium, Zappeion’s colonnaded entrance to the exhibition. After the exhibition, it was transferred to Cyprus and placed in front of the Orthodox cathedral in Nicosia eight years later. The bust conclusively symbolized the binding of Cyprus with the adventures and fate of Hellenism. It was also a token of *Syndesmos*’ most vigorous period of creativity and influence, which soon began to wane. In 1907, the Cypriot newspaper *Eleftheria* would nostalgically note:

> Syndesmos has endowed us with this monument of Archbishop Kyprianos. One could say that this is the only enduring sign of its existence. I believe that this remaining tangible relic of Patriotikos Syndesmos is neither trifling nor unworthy of our attention.

### The radical potential and the clash with Zenon

*Syndesmos*’ extraordinary effort was opposed by some Cypriot newspapers and ended in weariness, misery, and accusations of mismanagement. From the beginning of the exhibition the association was racked with internal problems, and significant members such as jurist Nikolaos Saripolos, editor Dimitrios A. Sakellarios, and N. Oikonomides resigned and then proceeded to take over the leadership of *Zenon*. Frangoudes himself resigned at the end of April 1901, only to be reelected as president by an extraordinary meeting a few days later.

On the fifth of April, the *Estia* newspaper, belonging to *Syndesmos*’ former member Adones Kyrou, concluded: “The exhibition is not perfect. This kind of exhibition always faces enormous

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65 Five years previously the stadium had hosted the first modern Olympic Games, which were reestablished in 1896.
66 For *Syndesmos*’ promotion of Archbishop Kyprianos’ cause in Athens and Cyprus, see Papapolyviou 2012, pp. 284-290.
67 *Eleftheria*, 18/31 August 1907.
68 *Fonti tis Kyrou*, 23/6 July 1901.
69 Frangoudes 1901, p. 70.
difficulties that demand united organizers and much money. Still, it is an exhibition and not a mere craft market.”70 One can easily read between the lines that the lack of cohesion within the society was its Achilles heel.

Apart from the reaction of his political opponents in Cyprus and the tensions that arose in realizing such a large-scale scheme, Frangoudes’ constant overshadowing of the rest of the Council almost certainly caused jealousy. However, selfishness and hurt pride were probably only the tip of the iceberg, for his tendency to take initiative beyond the aims and limits of Syndesmos’ statutes had undoubtedly weakened allegiance to Frangoudes and to the cause itself.

When he visited Crete as the president of Syndesmos to gain support for the exhibition, Frangoudes spoke openly about the possibility of the unification of Cyprus and Crete under an autonomous regime while both waited for their final enosis with Greece.71 Such a political proposal was far beyond the society’s scope, particularly since Syndesmos was already dealing with the Greek government’s reluctance to endorse publicly the exhibition for fear of British response.

Three years later, we see the last ‘public’ appearance of Syndesmos. During the autumn of 1904, news for a probable settlement of European Jews in Cyprus with the British government’s consent triggered widespread resistance and an island-wide uproar.72 Cypriots in Athens united to demonstrate against the Jewish settlement, with Syndesmos the first to openly discuss the establishment of an anti-Jewish society in Cyprus and their intention to demonstrate fiercely against the settlements. It also agreed with Zenon to jointly issue a petition to the British authorities. At their meeting, Frangoudes dictated the following text:

If our petitions do not suffice to convince the British government to change its plans for the Jewish settlements in Cyprus... the Cypriots are determined to resort to violence to fight the danger that threatens their nation.73

In the past, Frangoudes had repeatedly stated that Syndesmos would fight for its cause with peaceful means and did not intend to insult the British authorities. Nevertheless, one has the impression that Syndesmos’ “works of peace” may have also prefaced actions that could well end in violence. This was the first and last instance of such an occasion.

The hostility of the petition was to some extent expected, for it reflected not only Frangoudes’ longstanding opposition to the settlements,74 but the agitated mood of Athens after the violent death of Pavlos Melas, an emblematic figure of the Macedonian Struggle. In the end, it was welcomed by neither the Greek nor the Cypriot press. Messager d’Athènes75 stated that the petition

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70 Estia, 5 April 1901.
72 Matthropoulou 2019, pp. 120-126.
73 Empros, 18 October 1904, republished in Foni tis Kyprou, 13/26 November 1904.
74 See Frangoudes 1896, p. 39.
75 Messager d’Athènes was a prominent and enduring newspaper published in French in Athens from 1875 to 1980.
lacked “moderation and modesty,”\textsuperscript{76} while \textit{Estia} blamed Frangoudes for his tactical weaknesses and irresponsible radicalism.\textsuperscript{77} The Limassol newspaper \textit{Mastix}, argued that \textit{Syndesmos} was on a downhill course with its insults and reckless provocation of the British administration.\textsuperscript{78}

The unity of the Cypriots in Athens was irrevocably breached. Members of \textit{Zenon} who were present at the joint meeting publicly declared their disagreement with the petition.\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Syndesmos’} accused \textit{Zenon} of false allegations and stressed that the context of the petition reflected both their view and that of their compatriots in Cyprus.\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Zenon} summoned its own meeting a few days later and issued a more “polished and kind” declaration against the settlements that was forwarded to the British Embassy at Athens.\textsuperscript{81}

After this, the two associations followed different paths. \textit{Zenon} remained a self-help association without any activity worth mentioning, and would soon disappear from the 1900s sources. Nor was \textit{Syndesmos} destined to continue for long. Soon, as professor and journalist N. Katalanos (1855-1934) aptly remarked: “Like a meteor, it shot across the sky to fall fast and dissolve.”\textsuperscript{82}

Did it, however, build castles in the sky, as Frangoudes had pessimistically observed about the Greek associations in 1899? The answer is probably no. Even as a shooting star, it managed to leave tangible tokens of its activity, and the exhibition it organized left its mark in Cyprus’ cultural and ideological history. It also established an associational legacy for Cypriot students in Athens, and in 1909 the press announced the establishment of \textit{Syndesmos Kyprion Spoudaston} (League of Cypriot University Students),\textsuperscript{83} whose intentions clearly resembled those of \textit{Syndesmos} although it was never as successful. \textit{Syndesmos} also inspired its student members: several became leading political figures, and the rest vigorously supported \textit{enosis} after their return to the island.

\textit{Syndesmos’} story also adds to our understanding of the history of Cyprus’ national movement. The uncompromising politicians had certainly called for a speedy solution of the Cypriot question, yet they do not seem to have nurtured the deep anti-British sentiments that would have led to a rapid escalation of violence between Cypriot Greeks and British authorities. Nevertheless, their movement included influential individuals such as Frangoudes and Katalanos\textsuperscript{84} who were willing to mobilize the population on an anti-British platform using

\textsuperscript{76} Republished article in the newspaper \textit{Foni tis Kyprou}, 26 November 1904.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Estia}, 18 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Mastix}, 3 November 1904.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Estia}, 21 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Empros}, 22 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Skrip}, 27 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{82} Katalanos 1914, p. 175. It should be mentioned, however, that \textit{Syndesmos} was reestablished in 1918 by Frangoudes, but was not as active as in the past (\textit{Syndesmos Kyprion} to N. Polites, Athens, 23 February 1918, n. 3, Folder 1918/A/5/7 Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Kypriakos Fylax}, 9 November 1909.
\textsuperscript{84} From the 1890s to the 1920s, Nikolaos Katalanos was one of the most outspoken (even vociferous) supporters of \textit{enosis} in Cyprus. Arriving on the island in 1893 as a Greek teacher of mathematics and physics, he was also an incendiary journalist and in 1897 assumed the leadership of \textit{I Agapi tou Laou}, which in the following two decades became Nicosia’s most influential association with branches in many neighborhoods and hundreds
modern mass-influencing methods; not just petitions, publications, and demonstrations, but polemic, anti-British rhetoric and perhaps even the threat of violence. Such tendencies were restrained either by their compatriots, as in Frangoudes’ case, or by the British administration, which in 1921 would expel Katalanos from Cyprus. Frangoudes remained faithful in his nationalistic ideals, passionately supporting Bishop Kyrillos of Kition during the archiepiscopal crisis of 1900-1910, a crisis that deepened the gap between Cyprus’ moderate and radical factions. However, the political developments of the 1920s and 1930s altered his perspective on Cyprus’ future. In 1929, now a staunch Venizelist, he urged his compatriots to concentrate on political reform rather than enosis, and in 1933 drew up a constitution for a self-governing Cyprus within the British Empire.85

Conclusion

The three Cypriot associations, Zenon (1879), Zenon (1890), and Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon (1898), established during the syllogomania phenomenon, were the products of their time, and their initiatives reveal their connection to the social and national developments of the island. The Zenon of 1878 reflected the concern of its elite spiritual and lay Greek-Cypriot members for the educational and moral backwardness of the islanders, thus setting education as its priority. Restricted by insufficient funds, the Zenon of 1890 focused on catering to the needs of Cypriots in Athens, consolidating a sense of belonging in Athens’ Cypriot community. Although headed by Cypriots who had lived in Athens long enough to have distanced themselves from the grievances and rivalries marking local Cypriot politics, its younger members (mostly university students) were increasingly attracted to nationalism.

Syndesmos Kyprion Athinon of 1898, led by the inspired nationalist Frangoudes, was mostly made up of an energetic group of young Cypriot university students who would assume leading political roles on their return to the island. Syndesmos’ ideals are reflected in works that aimed at cementing closer ties to the national center; proving the material and intellectual progress of the island; defending the Greekness of its inhabitants; and offering arguments in favor of enosis. However, Syndesmos would experience bitterness and disappointment on many fronts. The Greek government responded to the display of Greek-Cypriot nationalism in Athens with caution for fear of provoking the British. The islanders themselves did not abstain from criticism against Syndesmos’ (mainly Frangoudes’) all too-apparent desire for leadership in national politics. The antagonism between the located in Athens Syndesmos with the politicians on the island was perhaps the first instance of the tantalizing and everlasting debate over who would direct Cyprus’ national affairs “the Metropolis (Athens) or the island itself?”, apparently in a

of members. With Katalanos at the head, I Agapi tou Laou steadily gained political ground throughout Cyprus until 1921, when he was expelled from the island as persona non grata. See Koudounares 2018, vol. 1, pp. 297-298; Kapsalis 2018, pp. 111-118.

slightly different form as in our case Cypriots were in lead both in Athens and Cyprus. Finally, the radicalization of Cypriot nationalism through the daring threat of violence that Frangoudes intended in 1904, was too premature to be welcomed either by Cypriots or Greeks. Moderation prevailed.

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