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Mining Landscapes and Colonial Rule in Early-Twentieth-Century Cyprus

ABSTRACT

In the early 20th century the large-scale copper and asbestos mines of Cyprus were intimately associated with colonial rule, both in their ideologies and in their actual operations. For the Cypriot miners, this represented a major disruption of long-standing values and required a new negotiation of their relationship with their British colonizers. Attempts to control mining landscapes and communities interplayed with a range of actions from submission to everyday resistance to strikes and riots. These dynamics are most clearly seen by examining the entire landscape. Particularly revealing aspects include the naming of mining landscapes, the surveillance of miners, the complex relationship between mining and agriculture, the actual and symbolic manipulation of artifacts, the expression of control and resistance in miners' housing, and shifting concepts of community.

Introduction

On 26 April 1929, a motor lorry driver for the Cyprus Asbestos Company stopped in the village of Kato Amiandos, on his way up to the mine. A woman gave him a bundle of cloth and requested him to take it to her husband, Stylli Hadji Ktori, who worked in the mine. He agreed and continued on his way up the mountain road. At the entrance to the territory controlled by the mining company, he was stopped by a mine official, distinguished by the cloth badge on his arm:

He asked me if I had bread in my car. I said "no." He said that he would search my car. I said that he could search and when he searched he seized the bundle which was given to me by the wife of Stylli Hji Ktori saying that it contained 3 loaves of bread (Cyprus State Archives SA 1/909/1929, Red 14).

As Stylli Hadji Ktori knew very well, the Cyprus Asbestos Company refused to allow its employees to bring their own bread into the mine. Instead they had to buy the expen-

sive bread made on the premises using flour imported from abroad. As this story shows, the Amiandos asbestos mine (Figure 1) and the other mines of early-20th-century Cyprus formed autonomous territories with their own border points, regulations, and economies. When the British colonial government heard about the bread incident, they were concerned that the mine was becoming an "*imperium in imperio*," and began a series of investigations (SA1/909/1929, Red 4).

"An empire within an empire" is precisely what the mines were. With their carefully regulated and orchestrated activities where each mine worker had a precisely defined role, with their paternalistic institutions such as benevolent societies and model workers' housing and clubhouses, and with their absolute control over a landscape dedicated to their own profit, the mining companies were modeled on colonial rule. They even became "models for" colonial rule, expressing the ideal of a perfectly regulated but paternalistic state. As with major state building projects, where the antlike activity of thousands of workers symbolizes the state's control of society (Paynter and McGuire 1991:9), so here does the mining landscape with its highly controlled processes and social organization reflect the ideal of colonial rule.

The investigation focused on the intimate relationship between the organization of mining landscapes and the mechanics of colonial rule. The open cast and underground copper and asbestos mines of the 1920s and 1930s in Cyprus provide a wealth of material, documentary, and oral information, and the political conditions of the time brought the imperialist organization of the mines into public debate—as Hadji Ktori succeeded in doing following the confiscation of his bread.

Methodology

The main historical sources in this paper consist of government correspondence preserved in the Cyprus State Archives in Nicosia and oral history data from informants in the former mining village of Mitsero and elsewhere.



FIGURE 1. Pano Amiandos Mine from the northeast.

Archaeological data come from the examination of mines and mining structures in Amiandos and Mitsero and from the Sydney Cyprus Survey Project, a multiperiod interdisciplinary archaeological survey project working in the copper ore zone in the Northern Troodos Mountains (Given and Knapp 2003).

The approach to this material is mostly based on historical archaeology and landscape archaeology. Historical archaeology, as practiced in North America and Australia, is a very recent discipline in the Mediterranean context. It undertakes both detailed examination of historical data and a fully contextual analysis of material culture. The history of mining in Cyprus has been discussed from perspectives that are technical (Bear 1963), descriptive (Lavender 1962), or political (Georghallides 1985:327–328). Historical archaeology adds a perspective that does not rely on the rhetoric of government reports or political pamphlets, or on the impersonal statistics of colonial bureaucracies. In particular, the examination of the role of artifacts, structures, and landscapes in social relations throws light on modes of domination

and resistance not otherwise apparent (Paynter and McGuire 1991:13–19).

Landscape archaeology examines the organization of human activities in their full landscape context, rather than looking at particular activities or sites in isolation. An important refinement on this perspective is that different social groups have different perceptions of the landscape and different systems of organization within it. Particularly relevant for a study of 20th-century mining is the investigation not only of social and economic landscapes, such as settlement patterns and trade routes, but also of conceptual and ideational landscapes. This last includes communal or political associations that different groups may have with a landscape. With the mining landscapes of early-20th-century Cyprus, as has been recognized for prehistoric landscapes, it is impossible to separate the two categories (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:15). The social, economic, and ideational associations of the mining landscapes of early-20th-century Cyprus became so intense that they often verged on the ideological, carrying a much more explicit and unified set of associations (Knapp and Ashmore 1999:13).

Rather than describing and analyzing each mining operation one by one, the actual operation of control and resistance in a mining landscape is highlighted by discussing a series of mechanisms (here italicized). A mining landscape needed to be defined and *named* before it could operate as an entity. Once officially in existence, it had to be organized to allow proper *surveillance*. Because of the long rural tradition of Cyprus and the need to feed so many workers, there was a complex relationship with *agriculture*. Both domination and, more subtly, resistance were often expressed in the actual and symbolic manipulation of *artifacts*. The ideological imposition of control and order—and resistance to it—was often carried out by means of *architecture*. On a broader scale, this was done by means of shaping and manipulating the whole *community*.

Historical Background

Following the Congress of Berlin in 1878 the British took over the administration of Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire. Outright possession was not confirmed until 1914, when Britain formally annexed the island, and 1925, when it

was declared a Crown Colony. Until 1927 this anomalous position included the payment of a heavy “tribute” to the Ottoman Empire raised from local taxes, which left very little to invest in the development of the island (Georghallides 1985:41–52). The economy of Cyprus during this period was very much based on agriculture. At the beginning of British rule six out of seven Cypriots were village dwellers, almost all of them smallholders relying on small-scale agriculture to feed their families, pay taxes (much of which went to the Ottoman “tribute”), and escape the twin evils of drought and debt (Katsiaounis 1996:99–109).

Because of historical records, the existence of copper ore was known from the beginning of British rule, and there were various half-hearted attempts at exploitation during the 1880s, particularly in the northwest of the island (Wood 1887:52; Lavender 1962:50). In 1912 the prospector Godfrey Gunther arrived on the island. Within a year he had bought land at the ancient copper mines of Skouriotissa (Figure 2) and was drilling systematically. The Cyprus Mines Corporation was launched in New York in 1916. After a series of financial difficulties, Gunther committed himself in 1920

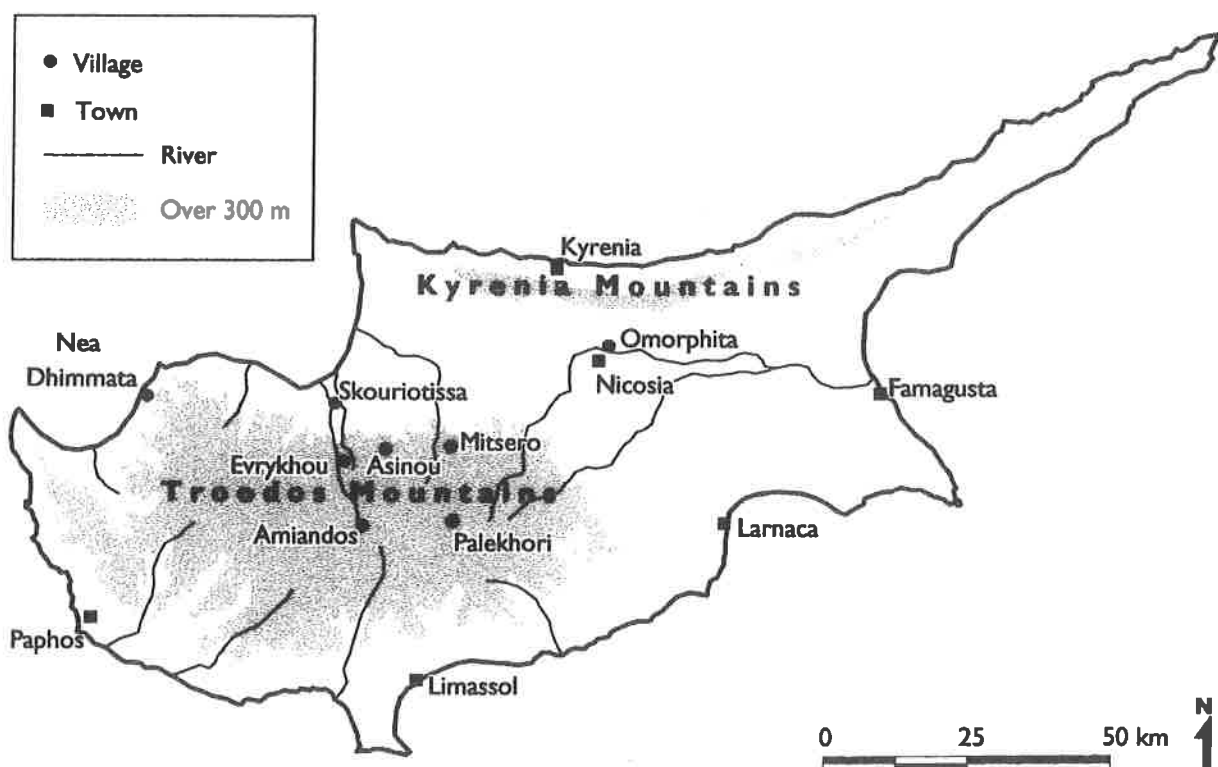


FIGURE 2. Map of Cyprus, with places mentioned in the text.

to producing 10,000 tons of pyrites in the first year of production (Lavender 1962:104,118). Other copper mines took longer to develop. At Mitsero and Agrokippia, for example, prospecting in 1936 was followed by the extraction of gold and silver, and after the foundation of the Hellenic Mining Company in 1948, large-scale pyrites extraction only took place in the 1950s (Bear 1963:30,67,70).

The development of asbestos mining began a little earlier than that of copper but followed essentially the same path. In 1904 a Limassol dentist-cum-entrepreneur named Cesar Trombetta extracted a sample from the deposits above the village of Amiandos, which itself means "asbestos" (SA1/3025/1904). In 1907 the government granted various concessions. In 1908 the Cyprus Mining Company founded an asbestos extraction, crushing, and cleaning establishment at Amiandos (SA1/1766/1907). Production and employment increased at a considerable rate, especially after World War I. In 1922 the company was bought up by the Cyprus Asbestos Company Ltd. By 1927 it owned eight separate crushing mills and 25 miles of light railway, with an aerial cable that took 2 hours 50 minutes to transfer the asbestos to the port at Limassol. The projected annual production for that year was 12,000 tons. In the winter 1,200 workers were employed and 6,000 in summer (SA1/1195/1927, Red 192).

The rise of the copper and asbestos mining industries in the 1910s, with their labor-intensive methods such as crushing ore by hand, coincided with the pressing need of poor or landless peasants to find alternative means of employment. Workforces increased dramatically during the 1920s, peaking in 1929, just before the industry was hit by the depression. This was also a period that saw a considerable increase in British attempts to control the population of Cyprus, using education and ideology as much as political or military means (Given 1997: 69–72; 1998:12–15). The mining landscapes of this critical period were just one component of the new ideological struggle for control over the Cypriot landscape and population.

Naming

By the 1920s Cypriot villages had a long historical tradition behind them. Even though

some had been abandoned, particularly in the 17th century, the sites and names of the surviving ones generally went back at least to the 16th century and often before, as can be seen from historical village lists (Grivaud 1998: 445–472) and from the results of archaeological survey (Given and Gregory 2003:292–293). The needs of Ottoman and British administration divided up the entire landscape into districts, subdistricts, and village territories: every part of the landscape was defined and named.

The onset of large-scale mining in the 1910s and 1920s saw a new type of exploitation of the landscape with new divisions and settlements that did not coincide with the old village territories. As with the European colonies of 19th-century Africa, new entities were carved out with boundaries that had no respect for local organization or segmentation. A mining landscape, then, was a colonial creation with its boundaries, name, and identity imposed by the colonizers of the land. In this respect it was a model *of* the colony, as it followed the same system, and also a model *for* the colony because it illustrated the principle clearly in a limited and manageable area.

As Gunther's copper mining landscape developed, with its hut settlements, overseers' houses, workshops, mines, and railway, the colonial government realized that in administrative terms it was an anomaly. In particular, the area of the mining operations fell within the territories of three different villages and a monastery. In 1929, therefore, a characteristically drawn-out process was begun to provide this landscape with a named identity and an official existence. The Commissioner of Nicosia, Charles Hart-Davis, drew attention to policing problems and stressed that it was important to police the entire landscape, not just the settlement:

The proposal to create a village here was intended primarily to meet police requirements. Disturbances, accidents, & incidents involving police action generally are far more likely to arise in the mines themselves and especially in the workshops than in the hutments. [Another reason was] to have one village authority, Moslem & Christian, responsible for the entire area so that there may be no uncertainty in what authority's area any disturbance, accident or other incident actually occurred (SA1/844/1929, Minute 35).

A further problem was the lack of a name, as Hart-Davis commented: "I am unable to

suggest any name by which the area referred to ... was commonly known. I don't think it had any common name" (SA1/844/1929, Minute 35). The first suggestion was to call it Gunther's Village, on the grounds that it was "a name in common use among the villagers, perpetuating the memory of the discoverer of the mine and the founder of the village" (SA1/844/1929, Red 5). When the government realized that it had to provide a name for the whole of the mining landscape, rather than just the settlement as had originally been suggested, they chose Skouriotissa, the name of the local disused monastery that had become the headquarters of the mining operation.

A map was produced with a red line defining the new territory, land was taken from the surrounding villages to give to the new entity, and on 24 February 1931, a proclamation declared Skouriotissa a full village, with three village authorities (SA1/844/1929, Red 16). The mining landscape had been named, defined, and inscribed into the ledgers of imperial control.

Surveillance

One way of interpreting a landscape as experienced by people is as a complex web of lines of sight. When there are relationships between the people in that landscape, especially relationships of unequal power or status, these lines of sight become a medium for the playing out of those relationships. Surveillance is the key to control. Attention is particularly focused at important entrances into the mining landscape, such as the checkpoint where Stylli Hadji Ktori's bread was confiscated. The cloth badge to distinguish the mines official and the systematic searching of private possessions emphasize to all employees that they are very much under surveillance. Watchtowers, peepholes, and security cameras—the means of surveillance—can be as intimidating as the highest of walls.

Surveillance can also be carried out by means of the positioning of structures and activity areas across the landscape. In the coffee plantations of early-19th-century Jamaica, for example, the overseers' houses were carefully located to have views over the slave village and the coffee drying areas. The houses were equipped with verandas and balconies to maximize the field of view (Delle 1999:151–153). A

more extreme example can be seen in Michel Foucault's famous analysis of Bentham's *panoptikon*, where each inmate of an institution is isolated in a cell but overlooked by a watchtower in the center of the ring-shaped building (Foucault 1977:200–204).

This system, albeit not so elaborate, was certainly favored by the colonial government of Cyprus. In the 1910s and 1920s, the government built a series of village police stations according to a standard plan. This plan showed a building that was unusually high in proportion to its ground plan, with an upper story and a prominent balcony. Characteristically these police stations were situated a little outside the village, controlling the main approaches and with a view from their balconies over the surrounding countryside and communications routes. In 1912, for example, the police chief decided that the police station at Evrykhon, 6 kilometers south of Skouriotissa, should be moved to the hillside outside the village, so it would command the main road coming from Nicosia (SA1/1756/1910).

The organization of mining landscapes in 20th-century Cyprus shows this emphasis on surveillance, mostly expressed through the medium of policing. At Amiandos it was decided in 1916 to build a large police station, positioned beside the road coming into the mining concession from Nicosia (SA1/955/1916). During the government's inquiry into the bread confiscation case, it turned out that the company had been privately paying a bonus to policemen based at the mines since 1908, in return for support of their regime, without any authority from the colonial government (SA1/909/1929, Red 22).

The Mitsero-Agrokipia mining landscape of the 1950s, controlled by the Hellenic Mining Company, combines this emphasis on surveillance with a more subtle expression of class and status. The concession was divided across the middle by a high ridge, which formed a natural border between the two villages of Mitsero and Agrokipia (Figure 3). The company, however, had two mines on the Mitsero side and one on the Agrokipia side, regarding the whole area as one unit. To symbolize the new and, to the villagers, artificial unity and to demonstrate their surveillance of each side, the company built its overseers' and foremen's housing on top of the ridge, exactly straddling the boundary between

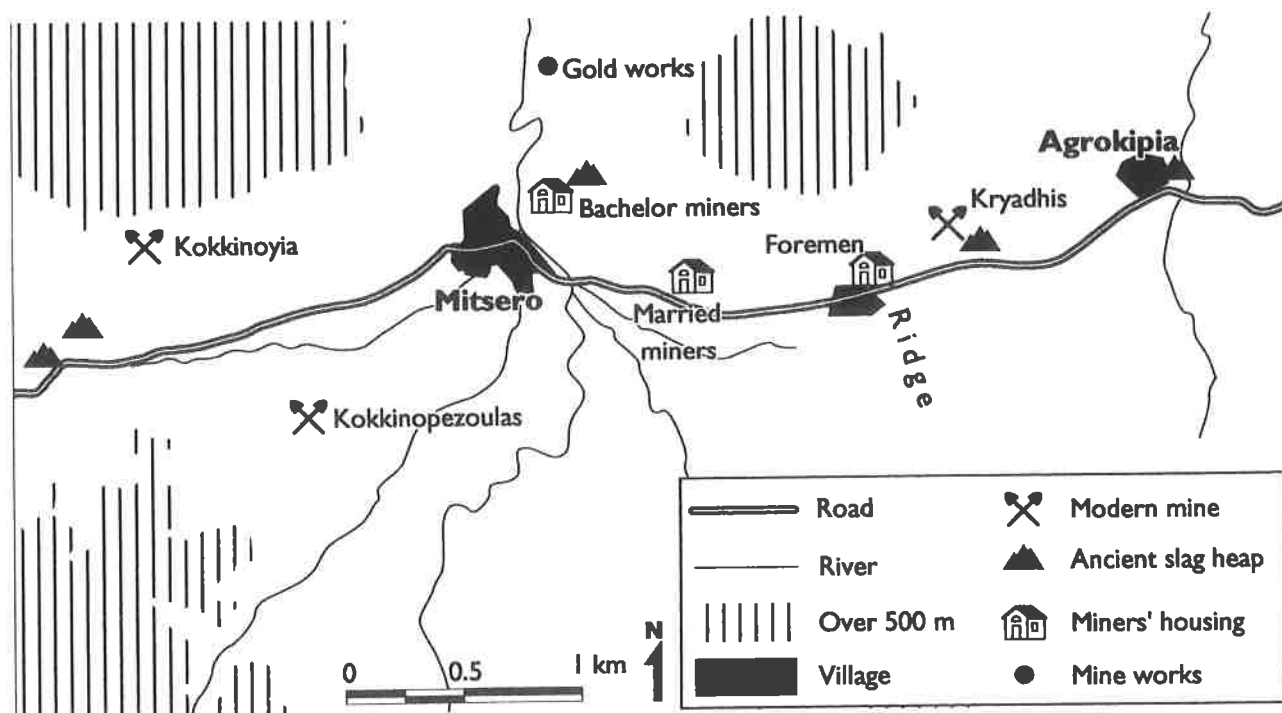


FIGURE 3. Map of the Mitsero-Agrokipia area.

the two village territories. Below them was a block of two-room housing for married miners, and at the bottom of the valley was Mitsero village itself with a large house with space for bachelor miners (Seretis and Diacopoulos 2003: 115–116).

A similar layout, with overseers' and staff houses topographically and symbolically above those of the workers, can be seen at Amiandos and Skouriotissa (Lavender 1962:229). These examples, however, hardly constitute a *panoptikon*. Even if the overseers had cared to venture out of their houses and look, they were too far to see precisely what individuals in the settlements were doing. The location of their houses was more to be seen than to see. They demonstrated visually that workers were part of a controlled and hierarchical mining landscape, rather than being members of different agricultural and kin-based village communities.

Agriculture

Full-time miners require others to produce a considerable agricultural surplus to maintain them. A system of "agricultural support settlements," for example, has been suggested for the copper miners and smelters of Late Bronze

Age Cyprus, based on archaeological survey (Knapp 1997:59). As William Douglass points out, however, there are many more possibilities than a simple increase in local agricultural production (Douglass 1998:105). In early-20th-century Cyprus, two specific factors complicate this relationship: the large number of poor agriculturalists requiring supplementary employment and the workings of colonial rule.

Because of successive droughts, insufficient investment in agriculture by the colonial government, and chronic rural indebtedness, there was a considerable body of poor or landless peasants who required some sort of extra employment for cash (Georghallides 1985:432; Katsiaounis 1996:34–35). The seasonal nature of most of the mining work, especially at the asbestos mine at Amiandos, was ideal. In 1927, for example, 6,000 workers were employed during the summer, of whom 4,800 were laid off for the winter (SA1/1195/1927). Even capital-intensive mining such as this can use seasonal and informal labor (Knapp 1998:4).

This balance between agricultural work and mining work is frequently commented on by elderly Cypriot villagers who once worked as miners—and farmers. In the village of Mitsero, Konstantinos Ttaouxis (interviewed 16

June 1998) described a typical summer day and night's work in the 1950s: he would walk in the evening with his donkey to his most distant fields 7 kilometers away, sleep a little, harvest all night on his own, then walk back to the pyrites washing plant, where he would leave his donkey and spend all day breaking up pyrites by hand with a hammer, return home in the afternoon, and in the evening walk back out to his fields. Other similar stories tell of men who married into the village and so owned no land and had to work at the mines. In the remote village of Asinou (now abandoned) the entire male population spent the summer at the asbestos mines of Amiandos, leaving the women and children to see to the crops and the goats.

Such stories and memories emphasize the part-time attitude towards mining, something never felt towards agriculture. Even while on the job, any spare time could be used for some useful task, even if there was no time to return to the fields. In the 1920s and 1930s, women were commonly employed at crushing ore, using hammers and flat stones as anvils, and on sieving, screening, and loading cars; "those not immediately engaged sat on the ground in sociable groups, feeding their babies and working on their beautiful Cypriot lace" (Lavender 1962:138,173).

In spite of such part-time arrangements, a workforce of 10,000 asbestos miners could not be expected to feed itself; a major system of food procurement was required. Rather than stimulating local production, however, which was desperately needed by many of the poorer mountain villages, the mining companies chose to import their food and sell it to their captive workforce. The Cyprus Asbestos Company set up a new company, Cyprus Hygienic Bakeries Limited, which was supposedly independent but in fact a subsidiary company, and forced its workers to buy their bread from it—hence the confiscation of the bread sent up to Hadji Ktori by his wife. Following Hadji Ktori's complaints, the government inquiry received the following justification from the bakery manager for his monopoly and high prices:

We use for our bread the first quantity [sic] Australian and American flour, the English yeast, which we receive every fortnight from England. ... Presently it is impossible to reduce the price of our bread. According to the sliding Scale of Prices, the price of a 2-lbs. loaf in

England is 4-1/2 d. [pence] or 135 Cyprus paras, but the cost of materials is higher here than in England: we pay £1.0.0 custom duty on each ton of flour and nearly double price for the fuel oil (SA1/909/1929, Red 6).

Adding to this a 9% markup on each loaf, the bakery made a handsome profit out of their workers (unless production was so low as to be uneconomical, which the manager claimed was often the case). It also supported farmers and wholesalers in Britain, America, and Australia—but not the poverty-stricken villagers just outside the mining concession.

Artifacts

Artifacts carry many more associations than the dates and functions generally attributed to them by archaeologists. In a colonial situation, thanks to historical archaeology, artifacts can convey important information about modes of domination and, more particularly, modes of resistance, including both implicit everyday resistance and open defiance (Paynter and McGuire 1991:12–13). This is often evident in conflicting traditions of foodways, which are archaeologically visible by means of the pottery used. Plantation slaves in 18th-century South Carolina, for example, used undifferentiated plain wares that emphasized local production and communal organization, in implicit opposition to the hierarchical and individualist ceramic styles used by their Euroamerican oppressors (Ferguson 1991:32).

One set of artifacts from the 20th-century asbestos mine of Amiandos clearly shows a similar conflict. Loaves of bread may not usually be archaeologically visible, but they are certainly artifacts and can take on considerable symbolic value. This particularly applied to the Greek Orthodox miners who were very much in the majority at the Amiandos mines. Each Sunday, loaves of village bread—the "bread of life"—were stamped with a cross and the letters "ΙΣ-NK" (Jesus Christ is victorious), and at the end of the Eucharist they were blessed and pieces were handed out to the congregation as they left.

This is why the Battle of the Bread at Amiandos became so significant. It was about more than economics or a personal preference for the taste of one's own village bread. The

continual smuggling of a few loaves of bread for personal use or distribution to friends was a part of the ongoing resistance to the uniform and alien culture imposed by the foreign company and its servants. It was not uncommon for 45 loaves to be confiscated from a single lorry (SA1/909/1929, Red 12). Ending the bread monopoly became one of the rallying cries of strikers, along with shorter hours and more pay (SA1/1065/1929, Red 11), and was eventually discussed in the island's Legislative Council, though to no effect (Georghallides 1985:327–328).

Police reports reveal another form of ongoing resistance based on artifacts. At the Amiandos mines there was continual pilfering of sacks, rafters, and tools, so much so that whenever a worker was issued a sack, he was given a permit so he could prove it was not stolen (SA1/909/1929, Red 11). More important was the theft of wood, as F. Kukulas, the manager of the mine, told the government inquiry:

During the course of a year we also experienced [sic] hundreds of conversions of Company's property most of which are cases of destroying quarry equipment for the purpose of using the wood for burning and for making furniture (SA1/909/1929, Red 20).

In isolation, this seems like petty theft, caused by impoverished villagers making use of whatever resources were available. When viewed in the light of the forestry policy of the colonial government, it becomes more significant in ideological terms. Right from the beginning of colonial rule, the government had imposed restrictions on the collection of fuel and timber from the forests. During the 1920s the government progressively banned goatherds based in mountain villages from pasturing their goats in the forests, as it inhibited regeneration of the pine trees. This caused intense resentment from villagers, whose livelihood depended on pastoralism, producing a series of arson attacks on the forests (Georghallides 1985:449). Stealing wood from the mines provided the necessary fuel for cooking and heating and the material for making furniture, while simultaneously constituting another part of the ongoing resistance to the colonial regime. Similarly, stories are still told in Mitsero of smart operators who managed to outwit the authorities and extract gold from old

workings. The point of the stories is as much the outwitting as the financial profit.

On 25 July 1929 the Battle of the Bread came to a peak, with a major riot and a strike at the Amiandos mine. The police accounts stress a series of recurrent material indicators of the protest and the intimidation of other workers: wagons were upturned, sticks were brandished, stones were thrown, tools were taken away (SA1/1065/1929, Red 11). These were clearly intended as very visible indicators, as the agitators worked their way round the mine, demanding to be allowed to bring in their own bread. There was another material object in action on that day, which became a symbol of the riot to the colonial authorities. It so happened that Reginald Nicholson, the officer administering the government (i.e., the acting governor), was visiting Amiandos and arrived in the middle of the riot:

The car came under fire & I stood up & signalled to the man on the terrace to stop. As I did so a stone *weighing half a pound came straight at my head from the terrace. I had no time to dodge & had to catch it, & got a cut & a nasty blow on the left hand. *weighed in Nicosia, & enclosed. RN (SA1/1065/1929, Red 8).

The miscreant stone, symbol of insurrection, was duly wrapped up and sent to the chief of police, along with Nicholson's account of what happened. This battle was fought with stones, loaves of bread, and conflicting perceptions of how the mining landscape should be organized.

Architecture

From the medieval period to the 1930s, Cypriot village houses had a very recognizable and familiar structure and layout. They were generally built in stone below and mud brick above, with a flat roof; all materials were local. An enclosed courtyard was entered from the street, and a variety of rooms round it were used for living, storage, and keeping animals (Ionas 1988:43–45). Each house formed a household for one nuclear family, according to the social structure of rural Cyprus and the system whereby parents gave a house as dowry for their daughter (Ionas 1988:11).

The mining companies needed to accommodate large numbers of men and women who were often separated from their families and only present for temporary periods of various lengths. They clearly required a very different solution. Initially these tended to be somewhat ad hoc. In the 1910s the workers' village at what was to be named Skouriotissa consisted of seven mud brick houses, plus a *khan* run by a man "said by local gossip to be a professional murderer" (Lavender 1962:100). A *khan* or *caravanserai* at this period in Cyprus was usually a large hollow square, lined with rooms facing inwards for travelers, merchants, and their animals. It was very much a symbol of impermanence. In 1922 Gunther built two barracks of mud brick tempered with seaweed, one for men and one for women. Additional space was provided by converting a large cave and an old sulphur and devil's mud store (Lavender 1962:168). All of this was not just a symbol of impermanence but was a negation of the strong kin-based values of rural Cypriot society.

The asbestos mines at Amiandos faced similar problems. One scheme of the early 1920s shows

the beginnings of the paternalistic colonial desire to create a model settlement, based on their own perceptions of order and sanitation, rather than making it appropriate to the local social structure. The Pano Amiandos mineworkers' housing consists of separate blocks of housing, each block containing six two-room units with their own internal fireplace (Figure 4). They were stone built, with roofs of asbestos sheeting (appropriately enough for workers' housing at an asbestos mine). A small inner courtyard (10 x 6.5 m) contained two latrines, a large central fountain, and an open drain. To the eyes of the British architect who designed it and the mining companies who approved it, this was model housing: clean, visibly well organized, and cheap. To a Cypriot family, however, it provided no private courtyard, and no place to keep animals or engage in the small-scale agricultural activities that defined rural life.

Another attempt in the early 1950s to design modular family housing was a failure before it had even finished. The married workers' housing at Mitsero, halfway between the overseers' houses on the ridgeline and the village in the



FIGURE 4. Worker's housing block at Pano Amiandos.

valley (Figure 3), was designed along the lines of a *khan*, with four wings of two-room units forming a 65-m square. Once again, there was no organic structure appropriate to a kin-based society and none of the private courtyard space that an agricultural or rural outlook requires. With improvements in roads and motor transport in the 1950s, it was decided to abandon the structure when only its foundations had been laid (though one wing was later completed). Daily or weekly commuting by lorry meant that the characteristically part-time miners could still live in their own villages and cultivate their fields and vines as well as work in the mines. This rejection of planned housing is another aspect of the everyday resistance against the uniformity imposed by the mining company.

Community

A mining community is usually regarded as a temporary community—or not as a community at all. This especially applies to the “gold rush” type of mining camps in North America and Australia, which “flared and faded” as individuals shifted from one promising spot to another (Knapp 1998:5). Even this impermanence can allow some sense of community, when miners’ shared aims and vocation bring them together in any number of different locations—not to mention friends and family coming out to join the pioneers (Douglass 1998:102,106). Excavation of 19th-century miners’ housing at Dolly’s Creek, west of Melbourne, shows that the material culture expresses this tension between the temporary and the permanent, the individual and the community. Tents were temporary and widely separated, but their arrangement in the landscape suggests a focused mining community, and the pipe-clayed fireplaces and a few finer possessions gave a sense of pride and belonging (Cheney 1992:39–40; cf. Behrens, this volume).

In the Cypriot context there was a major conflict between traditional perceptions of community and the regulations and organization imposed by the mining companies and the colonial government. The sense of community in a traditional rural village depended on more than the local materials, nuclear households, and agglomerated layout of its houses. Villages usually clustered round a central church

or mosque, with other institutions such as coffee houses, fountains, and annual fairs also playing an important role in community life (Ionas 1988:20–39; Given 2000:214–217). An agricultural lifestyle brought communal facilities such as olive presses and water mills as well as a seasonal cycle of labor shared by everyone in the community and a host of metaphors for the workings of everyday life. Conservatism in the architectural styles and icon painting of churches suggests a strong sense of continuity from the Byzantine and Medieval periods, which also appears in folk tales and songs.

The caves, barracks, and converted sulphur stores provided by Gunther at Skouriotissa could hardly be further from this ideal. In the mid 1920s he tried to improve conditions by providing communal facilities: a company hospital; communal bathhouses, with soap and wood for fuel available at cost price; and communal toilets and laundries (Lavender 1962:189). Yet such attempts, which were echoed at Amiandos, failed to address the actual workings of communal life in the rural villages of Cyprus. This failure was demonstrated graphically during the 1929 strike at Amiandos, which was led by miners from the mountain village of Palekhori. So important was this unit of identity that after the riot had been quelled, a rumor went round that the chief foreman would “dismiss all the Palekhori people from the work because they were the cause of the trouble in the morning” (SA1/1065/1929, Red 11). Miners from a specific village retained that identity, despite all the company’s attempts to foster a new sense of community.

The attempts of the mining companies to create new artificial communities foreshadowed the advent of town planning and model housing after the World War II, which saw a proliferation of such schemes in Cyprus. The colonial Public Works Department drew up designs for a “Subsidized Workers’ Housing Scheme” at Omorphita in 1946, referred to disparagingly by its inhabitants as “The Standard” (Schaar et al. 1995:88–90). In the same year the Forestry Department decided to move the villagers of Dhimmata, who lived in houses of “the usual squalid type,” to a new “model rural settlement,” in order to make them an “example of social uplift in village life”—and incidentally to keep their goats out of the forest (SA1/970/1944/1,

Reds 39,32,44). Whether it was the Public Works Department, the Forestry Department, or a mining company attempting to impose artificial systems of social organization, Cypriot villagers firmly resisted, and continued to evolve their own sense of community.

Conclusions

Ktori was no innocent victim of the Cyprus Asbestos Company's injustice and tyranny. He had worked for two years collecting fees from traders in the company's market place, until it was discovered that he was creaming off some of the payments for himself (SA1/909/1929, Red 20). Even with the bread incident, he knew exactly what he was doing. Three weeks later, he tried to increase the stakes:

On 14.5.29 I took 100 okes of bread to Amianto and sold to the laborers. I took purposely to see if any bread would be seized but nobody appeared, to remark to me. But Pte 4050 Hari [a policeman] was putting down the names of the laborers who were purchasing bread from me and I heard that all of the were taken before Mr. Kukulas who warned them if they buy again they would be sent away (SA1/909/1929, Red 13).

For all his determination, and in spite of the exhaustive government enquiry, no action was taken. The colonial secretary decided that "Government intervention would only be justified if evidence of harsh or unconscionable treatment were forthcoming," and the officer administering the government—the same one who had fielded the miner's stone—simply said, "I agree," and the matter was dropped (SA1/909/1929, Minutes 7,8).

The story of the confiscation of Ktori's bread, the ensuing strike, and his determined publicizing of the issue constitute much more than one single, aberrant episode. Because of the particular circumstances, including the persistence of one individual, it was investigated and recorded by the colonial government, and so is accessible to historians in the Cyprus State Archives. It was, however, just one critical point in the ongoing conflict between two differing interpretations of a mining landscape.

This conflict was played out using a variety of different weapons, both actual and symbolic. Surveillance, for example, could be countered by smuggling bread or pilfering firewood.

Often it was more a matter of maintaining an accustomed lifestyle, in the face of pressure to change. Throughout the whole period of large-scale mining in colonial Cyprus, there was a complex set of dynamics between mining company and colonial government, between overseer and miner, and between miners from different villages. These dynamics were negotiated not only by words but also by the manipulation of artifacts, structures, and landscapes.

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