

The origins and construction of the Santrapeia School of Castellorizo

By Nick Pappas, Sydney



It is arguable that there is no other building on Castellorizo that evokes more emotion for many of its former residents than the Santrapeia *Astiki Scholi* (or 'Santrape Town School'), the neo-classical boys' school erected in 1903. Emblematic of the urbanised community that Castellorizo's elders strove to create – even while the world around them changed rapidly – the Santrapeia School is today a sobering reminder of the last days of affluence on the island, when ambitious civic projects sought to fortify the island's unsteady status in a withering Ottoman Empire.

The predecessor of the Santrapeia was the so-called *Astiki Scholi* of which no images are known to survive. What we do know is that this was a far more modest structure catering for only a small number of students at one time, and with limited common areas. By the end of the 19th century, it was widely accepted that a new school was needed if the island was to keep its male youth, and the *Demogerontía*, or elected council of five, turned to Castellorizian cotton merchant and manufacturer, Loukas Santrapés, a resident of Cairo since the 1870s, for assistance with the required funding.

Santrapés was by this time among the wealthiest Greeks in Egypt with a payroll of over 3,000 employees. So successful had he become that popular memory suggests that his surname was actually a corruption of the French words '*sans drapeau*', meaning 'without flag', a reference to the privilege his private steamer enjoyed under the Ottomans.

Santrapés and his wife, Anastasia (nee Nikoliou), were wealthy but childless, and the next decade witnessed some extravagant benefactions from them beginning with the Santrapeia. Santrapés was to follow this act of generosity with bequests towards the construction of the new church of St George in the *Horáfiá* in 1907 (locally named *tou Louká* in his honour), and in 1909 he assumed one half of the expenditure for the construction of a small school in the *Mýlous* precinct for the island's Turkish minority.

The circumstances surrounding the construction of the Santrapeia have long been shrouded in mystery, but the recent discovery in Britain of a rare tract written in 1906 by the Santrapeia's inaugural headmaster, Achilleas Diamandaras, adds considerable light to the events leading up to its opening and its first academic year.

By mid-1902, Santrapés had confirmed his desire to fund the bulk of the lavish construction and Metropolitan Gerasimos Tantalides of *Pissideia*, into whose religious jurisdiction the island fell, was

petitioned to apply to the Ottoman authorities for the necessary *firman* to permit construction to commence. The task of designing the school, which Santrapés asked be in the neo-classical style then in favour, was assigned to local architect Nikolaos Panagiotou who based his work on a sketch drawn by Athenian architect, Konstandinos Vlamos.

While the approval was pending, Anastasia and her brother, Stamatios Nikolios (who had been asked by Santrapés to oversee the construction) journeyed to the island in November 1902 to inspect the area reserved for the development with the demolition earlier that year of the *Astiki Scholi*. However, unexpected delays with the issue of the Ottoman approval meant that it was not until June 1903 that construction could commence and Anastasia could return to the island for the laying of the foundation stone.

In the early evening of Sunday, 8 June 1903, in oppressive heat, Anastasia, accompanied by her mother H'Anna Nikoliou, her aunt Christina Yeorgiou Passari, and her brother-in-law Andreas Santrapés (Loukas' brother), ceremonially applied some cement with a specially-inscribed silver trowel to the rear of the marble foundation stone. It read:

In the reign in Turkey of Hamid II and of George I of the Hellenes,

Anastasia Louka Santrape

laid the foundation stone of this school.

In Castellorizo, 8 June 1903

*Councillors: Theodosios Simonides (priest), Nikolaos D Kondylis,
 Evangelos N Stamatiou, Konstandinos L Loukas, Ilias Th. Penglis,
 Antonios H'Yiannakis*

*Ephors: Agapitos I Haramis, Ilias Al. Ftiras, Nikolaos K Simeon,
 Stavros Y Miriklis, Yeorgios A Kiosoglou*

Headmaster: Achill. S Diamandaras

Architectural design: K. Vlamos

Under the direction of Stamatios Nikolios



The origins and construction of the Santrapeia School of Castellorizo (cont.)

To complete the formalities, speeches were made and, in a ritual from ancient times, a rooster was sacrificed by one of the workers, Prokopios Lilitzas. As a gesture of thanks, the *Demogérontes* then presented Anastasia with a life size portrait of her absent husband. Sadly, a camera that had been sent to the island to record this historic moment broke down owing to the heat.

Construction proceeded steadily in the months that followed and it was hoped to have the school ready for the new academic year that was to commence in September 1903. By the middle of that month, however, there was still a hive of activity in and around the school, with plasterers attending to their detailed stucco work on the building's façade, and carpenters completing the building's ornate timberwork and furnishings. The two niches set aside for twin statues of the muses were being rendered when word reached the islanders that Santrapés would be arriving within days to oversee the school's final stages of construction.

When Santrapés disembarked in the early hours of 23 September 1903, he was greeted by Anastasia, Diamandaras and a crowd of well-wishers around the harbour. But Santrapés had other familial priorities that he needed to attend to. On 8 August, his brother Andreas had lost a young daughter, Irini, and his first duty was to visit his grieving brother at his home. Accompanied by local officials, Santrapés made the slow walk to his brother's home before retiring to his home above the square of *Mesi tou Yialou*.

Over the next two months, with Santrapés close at hand, construction proceeded at a swifter pace and a date was set for its official opening: Sunday, 23 November 1903. On the Thursday prior, the Metropolitan arrived from Antalya and, escorted by Santrapés and Yeorgios Stavrianos, he was led to Santrapés' home where he resided for the duration of his stay. In a showing of community spirit, the proprietors of the island's cafés offered to donate all the food and refreshments for the event, while, on the Saturday, many of the island's womenfolk adorned the school's façade and the square of the *Horáfia* with flowers and *vasilikó*.

The historic moment had arrived for the islanders. At 7am, to the sound of the bells of the Cathedral of Sts Constantine & Helene, a crowd that some estimated to be the largest ever assembled on the island gathered in the *Horáfia* awaiting the arrival of the formal procession from Santrapés' home.

The order of events was characteristically formal and replete with pomp. After a divine liturgy in the island's Cathedral, the students were to sing a special song in honour of Loukas and Anastasia. Diamandaras, as inaugural head of the new school, was then to deliver his address, followed by an address on behalf of the teachers delivered by Manolis Melachrinides. After the singing of the Sultan's hymn (in Greek) by the students, an address was to be given by teacher Yeorgios Sideris on behalf of the students studying abroad. As a further tribute to the Sultan, the students were to sing his hymn again, this time in Turkish, and a representative of the Sultan, Mihail Toustzoglou from Antalya, invited to respond.

By 7.30am, the procession had reached the forecourt of the Cathedral. An emotion-laden liturgy followed, after which the

official party was joined by the island's Ottoman governor (*kaimakam*), Ismail Kemal, as they walked together the short distance to the steps of the new school where they took their seats on a specially-constructed dais. Before them stood the new school in all its splendour. On one side of its elegant portico a large portrait of the Sultan had been placed, complemented on the other side by an equally large portrait of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Ioakeim III.

A hush fell upon the assembled masses as the Metropolitan, standing at the top of the stairs, commenced the *ayiasmó* accompanied by the island's clergy. Diamandaras describes the scene:

His Eminence the Metropolitan called for the bells to be rung and for silence as he began the *ayiasmó* quietly and with great emotion. After the *ayiasmó*, the Metropolitan entered the school alone and blessed all the rooms with the holy water, while the students as one, sang most melodically, the hymn to our two great benefactors.



Loukas & Anastasia Santrapés with the Metropolitan of Pissideia, Gerasimos, in late 1904 on their first return visit to the Santrapeia after its official opening in 1903.

Speeches then followed, at the conclusion of which Diamandaras rose and handed the school's keys to Santrapés who, in turn, passed them to his wife. A life-size portrait (painted by local artist Stavros Sotiriou) of the nine muses offering *stéfana* to the two benefactors was then brought forward and presented to them to the enthusiastic applause of the assembled. Santrapés rose to speak:

The present moment, Your Eminence, honourable *Demogérontes* and Ephors, the present moment my dear fellow citizens, at which I offer by the grace of God this new school to my beloved *Patridha*, the present moment is the sweetest and most important of my entire life and of my wife Anastasia.

Santrapés' words were brief and laden with emotion. The Metropolitan responded by thanking the couple on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarch, and his wishes were seconded by the Ottoman governor who congratulated Santrapés for his great act of generosity to his community.



The origins and construction of the Santrapeia School of Castellorizo (cont.)

In the enthusiasm of the moment, one of the Ephors, Agapitos Haramis, rose unannounced and moved that the municipality pay for a marble statue of Santrapés to be placed at the entrance to the school as a lasting tribute to his great deeds for the island. The motion was carried unanimously by all present with cries of 'Axios!'.



The monument to Loukas & Anastasia outside the church of St George, the construction of which they also funded.

With the formalities done, Loukas and Anastasia, at the head of the official party, slowly made their way up the stairs of the school, unlocked the doors and entered the main hall of the school. There they stood for the next two hours as the joyous islanders offered their congratulations in single file.

With the school officially open, the Metropolitan returned to Antalya on 25 November, while Loukas and Anastasia remained on the island until 4 December, receiving guests and well-wishers in their home for much of that time. Lessons began in the school almost immediately and there was great excitement among the students as they took their seats in their new class rooms.

Not only were the rooms spacious and well-furnished, but within a short time they also included an ample library of the 'foremost texts of Classical Greece and Rome' and even a small museum to which the islanders were invited to donate pieces of natural history. Stamatios Nikolios donated an 'extraordinary sponge on a rock', Kyriakos Tattis gave 'two large and unusual snails from the Red Sea', Konstandinos Penglis offered a 'cylindrical stalactite' and Ilias Ftiras donated a seashell from the Red Sea and an unusual species of sponge plant.

Despite the emotion and fanfare surrounding its opening, it is a sad postscript to this story that the Santrapeia was never to reach the heights that Loukas & Anastasia had hoped for. Within a few short years, the Young Turk movement would grip the Ottoman Empire and deliver lasting and damaging change to Castellorizo. By 1912, the population of the island had halved and most of its menfolk had departed as conscription and taxes compelled them away to distant shores.



A group of French officers pictured on the steps of the School in 1918 after the School had been damaged by Turkish bombardment.

It is ironic that the school which was intended to serve as a lasting attraction to Castellorizo's male youth was never to reach full capacity. It is also sad that Santrapés himself was to fall victim to septicaemia in 1911 while his grand projects for the island were still only partially complete. And yet, not all was to be in vain. Today, some 110 years later, the school that Loukas Santrapés built still stands and functions for its island community, albeit not to the scale he would have dreamed that day in November 1903 as he walked up its steps to open its doors for the first time.



The wedding of Emmanuel Kouttoupes and Evdokia Spyridi in 1904 was one of the first to be photographed on the steps of the new School.



Re-discovering The 'Galettis' Sarcophagus

By Marika Kondilios (nee Calfas), Sydney

Stories associated with family history have always fascinated me. They demonstrate how times, places and people were different and how much things have changed. My interest in these historical happenings is often mixed with curiosity around which elements of the story are fact and what has been modified through time and translation.

My pappou, the late Vasilli (Basil) Galettis OAM, was a passionate family historian. Born in Kastellorizo in 1908, he studied commerce at a French School in Piraeus and following his return to Kastellorizo he held the position of Secretary of the Council. He enjoyed keeping records and amassed many scrapbooks on subjects of interest to him – particularly family history. He was keen to show his collection to anyone who enquired.

Pappou would tell the story of his grandfather, Vasilli Galettis, who had obtained a sarcophagus in Turkey and donated it to the Museum in Athens. In return for this donation the Greek government offered to educate two of his sons.

It was very exciting for me when in recent times this piece of family history came to life in a very real and tangible way, through visual and documented evidence.

The National Archaeological Museum of Athens has on display a marble ossuary, in the form of a sarcophagus, decorated with carvings on all four sides.

The Museum's register records this item as having been donated on 24 March 1877 by my great, great grandfather Vasilli Galettis. The ossuary is recorded as being from Karamania, the name given to the southeast coast of Asia Minor at the time, now Turkey. My great, great, grandfather was a sponge merchant and on one of his visits to Asia Minor he obtained the ossuary which according to my pappou was being used as a watering trough for animals at the time.

foundation teachers of the Santrapeia School when it opened in 1904. The youngest son Lazaros, died in Athens without completing his education.

And just to complete the story, Lazaros' bones were returned to Kastellorizo some years later by his brother, my great grandfather Tsicos Galettis (who was a Councillor and Mayor of Kastellorizo). He buried them in the former cemetery behind Ayios Yeorgios tou Louka.



A Centaur wrestling a bearded man.



The goat-footed Pan supporting a drunken Heracles



Depiction of the seizure of the Palladion by Diomedes and Odysseus on the left. At the right, Aphrodite and a hero flank a trophy.



A seated female figure, holding a scroll, and her bearded companion, who also holds a scroll (possibly depictions of the dead married couple). Beside them, Aphrodite inscribes a shield supported by Eros. At far right, Bellerophon holds the reins of Pegasus who has his head down in a drinking posture.

The pictures of the ossuary above, and access to the Museum's register, were obtained by my uncle Tsico Galettis. He first noticed the sarcophagus on a visit to Athens in 2005, as the information plaque identified it as having been found in Kastellorizo. This triggered his curiosity and on his return to Athens in 2008 he went in search of information to determine if this item could be related to the story his family would often recount. An archaeologist working in the museum searched the archives and found the original entry for the item. This confirmed that it was indeed the ossuary recounted in the family story. It was a moment when myth and story telling became a reality and it gave a real connection to the past.

I would also like to thank my grandfather's siblings, Eleni Confos (nee Galettis) and Max Galettis, for their assistance with confirming the information used in preparing this article. Happy birthday to Thea Eleni who celebrated her 100th birthday in January this year.

Postscript: The 'Galettis' Sarcophagus is a different sarcophagus to the one found on Kastellorizo in 1913 with a gold stefani inside.



The ossuary measures 0.44m high, 0.93m long and 0.53m wide. It is dated to AD150-200. The ossuary is referenced in books on Hellenistic sculptures due to the significance of its carvings (these are shown and described in the next column). References to its Kastellorizian founder are also in these books.

And what of the Government's offer to educate two sons? The eldest and youngest sons (of 6 sons) were selected. The eldest son Dimitris was educated in Athens as a teacher, later returning to teach at the Astiki school on Kastellorizo. Dimitris was one of the



Kastellorizian Child's Talisman

By Connie Gregory, Melbourne

In the last issue of *Filia*, a number of artefacts accompanied my article. Of particular interest was the triangular silver object with a central agate stone, as it was unfamiliar to readers.

My mother told me that this object was her good luck baby rattle in Kastellorizo, and that at one time it had small gold coins hanging from the three sides.

In explaining this talisman I defer to Loula Papamanoli, who states in the EOMMEX publication *The Traditional Jewel in Dodecanese Islands* that in Kastellorizo there was an abundance of amulets for babies and children incorporating gold coins.

Papamanoli states: 'Along with the "konstantinata" we also have the talisman, the triangular jewel that we met elsewhere ("funtis," and "karfovelona" in Chalki Island, "tsula" in Astypalia island etc). In Kastellorizo, the talisman has a stone set at the middle (evil avertive) and by its three sides flouria or other gold coins (i.e. venetica)...If the talismans are rectangular or square they are called "kastanakia"'

It took a lot of searching to find any information, before stumbling on the site <http://ageofimmortals.com>, which produced the above information. If you are interested in antique jewellery it is worth a visit.

Most of us know of those little tiny cloth pouches embroidered or beaded with a cross, containing cotton touched by holy water or oil, to protect against harm. These are called *Filakto*. I spoke to Nina Mangos in Melbourne, and she told me that the triangular metal talisman with the stone was also called a *Filakto*, and that when people took their

child to Church for the 40 days' blessing they also took along this *Filakto* and the *Mati*. She also told me that the coins around the object could be lires, flouria, Venetica or Konstantinata. Nina also said that in Kastellorizo they actually called it by the Turkish name *Humayili* (pronounced hum-ugh-ily).

My inherited talisman is very old and the gold coins were probably put to good use many years ago. I have yet to encounter a complete one, and if any reader has a photograph of one in all its glory, please let me know through AFK.



This very old talisman belonged to the writer's mother, Kyriaki (Sandra) Markos. Her mother was Maria Athanassiou Hatzizaphiras. Her grandmother was Glykeria Kannis.



Nina Mangos's mother's talisman with *Mati* (evil eye avertive) and Christian attachments.

Student Exchange 2012

Eleni Karavelatzi has been selected by the Principal of Santrapeia School to take part in the Inter-cultural exchange between Australia & Kastellorizo in August 2012. She is the daughter of Nektarios & Irini Karavelatzi. Many exciting cultural, educational & social events are being organised for her four week visit to Australia.

Thanks to the City of Perth and Harvey Stockwell from Sydney for their sponsorship. Thanks also to the following host families:

Perth: Lambi & Kathrine Bakaimis

Adelaide: Arthur & Cherrie Mangos

Melbourne: George & Rose Kailis

Sydney: Chrissie Verevis & John Andronicos



SPECIAL NOTICE TO MEMBERS

As many of you know AFK has received limited donations from generous members which help to fund many projects such as Student Exchange, the quarterly newsletter, *Filia*, and monthly electronic news. AFK relies on membership payments to continue these projects & services. All we ask is that you pay \$25 and payment can be made on-line or by cheque. Please ensure July 2011/ July 2012 membership fees are paid. To become a member, to advertise or for general information contact Marilyn Tsolakis, AFK Co-ordinator | + 61 423 776 896 | coordinator@kastellorizo.com | www.kastellorizo.com | PO Box 2118 Churchlands, WA 6018.



Greek idiolects explained

by Dr George Stabelos, Melbourne

According to Carr and Anastasi(1) “an idiolect is a form of linguistic communication indigenous to any given nation. It may shortcut the more formal use of syntax and employs vivid language. Examples include proverbs and expressions. Greek is especially rich in idiolectic expressions. From Homer onwards, imaginative use of words has been encouraged. There are numerous examples of the quick-wittedness of Greeks” and their ability to capture the essence and crystallise thousands of years of observation of life into a few words. We continue to explore some of these expressions at *Filia* and consider their possible historical origins.

“Your eyes fourteen” = “Τα μάτια σας δεκατέσσερα” (Ta matia sas dekatessera)

A direct translation to the English language does not quite make sense.

Meaning: keep your eyes open like you have 14 of them; keep your wits about you. The phrase is an enhancement of “your eyes four” (Ta matia sas tessera). Scholars believe it originated on the island of Chios in Ottoman times. It was said that if a Turk saw a Greek walking alone, he had the right to ask the Greek to carry him on his back. Thus, in Chios, people tended to walk in pairs. So if they met a Turk in the street, one of the Greeks carried the other on his back to avoid being pressed into service. As pairs of Greeks were constantly on the lookout for Turks, between them they had four eyes.

According to Carr and Anastasi(1) “It befits how an insecure society such as Greece was for most of its medieval and modern period, when public institutions (in protecting the rights of the individual) were weak or non-existent. It’s the dictum of rugged individualism; the ubiquitous foe or rival is always out there and one must be self-reliant and watchful in an often menacing world”.

“A donkey bursts” = “Σκαει γαϊδαρος” (Skai gaidaros)

Meaning: it is stiflingly hot. The donkey, a hardy Mediterranean beast, is known for his adaptability to hot weather. So if a donkey is in imaginary danger of bursting, it must be hot indeed. Also, someone who tries people’s patience can be said to “make a donkey burst”, an apt analogy as the donkey is the most patient of beasts (1).

Recommended reference: The above quotes and their explanations have been directly reproduced or paraphrased from the following text: (1) Carr P, Anastasi P. Your Eyes Fourteen ! The Mad Greek Dictionary 2007 Athens News.

Proverbs by Dr Paul Boyatzis, Perth

Proverbs

Athianó sakí then steki órthio

(An empty sack won’t stay upright).

A person without substance will not uphold his integrity

I stagóna pétra skávi.

(A drop of water can dig a hole in rock).

With patience one may reach great heights.

Kastellorizian Lexicon

The Kastellorizian word is in bold lettering with the demotic word in brackets.

Kandóuni	(goniá spitioú)	the corner in a house
Korgólakos	(fandasma)	evil ghost
Lipsárga	(anóisia)	stupid action
Maidhiá	(hrímata)	money
Malásso	(zimóno)	to knead
Mastrapás	(kipello gia nero)	tin jug for water
Máti kiras elénis	(ouránion tóxon)	rainbow
Mattoúfepse	(paragírase)	“lost it” mentally from old age
Mátsa	(thésmi / ánthon)	bunch / flowers
Pournélla	(thamáskino)	plum
Tsilathiá	(psári me kremíthia)	fish cooked with onions
Tsovrás	(rizéni soupa)	soup / plain with boiled rice