

Castellorizo's Defining Moments, 1910-1912

by Nick Pappas, Sydney



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While Castellorizo's economic stagnation has been traced to changing circumstances within a withering Ottoman Empire in the closing decades of the 19th century, three specific events in the period 1910-1912 contributed to the rapid trajectory of the island's decline before the islanders' revolt against their Turkish overlords in March 1913. One is relatively well-known, while the other two have long faded into obscurity. We re-visit them in this article.

Ottoman conscription – December 1910

The first was undoubtedly the Ottoman regime's abrupt introduction of compulsory conscription for Christian subjects of the Empire in April 1910. Previously, Castellorizo's males, like all young Christian males of the Empire, had been exempted from military service. But on Christmas Eve 1910, shockwaves reverberated around the island's harbour when a delegation of Ottoman inspectors arrived to announce the terms of the new conscription laws as they would apply to Castellorizo.

Many had hoped that smaller islands like Castellorizo would be exempted from the full impact of the Young Turks' announcement earlier that year, but the delegation's news created immediate panic. Despite a bold response from the island's *Demogerontía*, the reality facing the islanders was that all males under 50 would now be required for military service for up to three years. For an island almost totally dependent on quayside activity, this was an effective death knell.

In the ensuing months, up to 2,000 young males hastily departed, many for good. By March 1911, the situation had become so dire that the island's journal, *Filia*, felt compelled to plead with families for emigration to cease, arguing forlornly that 'η ξενιτεία δεν είναι για τον καθένα' – 'life abroad is not for everyone'. But the warning was not heeded and emigration continued in earnest during 1911. Another 2,000 or so were to depart by the end of 1912.

Community calamities - November 1911 - February 1912

Compulsory conscription was without doubt the major catalyst for this male exodus. But two lesser known, and no less defining, events were to reinforce for many locals just how condemned the island's fortunes had become. In a cruel twist of fate, the island's greatest expatriate benefactor, **Loukas Santrapés**, died suddenly in an Athens hospital on 14 November 1911 after falling ill in his home in Cairo. Santrapés had overseen and paid for much of the public construction on the island over the past decade and was viewed by many as a source of comfort and security in a rapidly-changing world.

His death served as an untimely omen for the superstitious locals that further calamities were in store. Schools were closed for a week, the bells of the churches tolled for an entire day and the island's fleet, moored in the harbour for winter respite, flew their flags at half-mast, but these outpourings of communal grief manifested as much an underlying unease about an uncertain future.

As if this wasn't enough for a small community grappling with abrupt economic stagnation after decades of affluence, the eagerly anticipated visit on 12 January 1912 of their local hierarch from Antalya, **Metropolitan Konstandinos of Pissideia**, turned to calamity when the much-loved Metropolitan died of a mysterious illness almost immediately upon his arrival. His visit had been intended to serve as a convenient distraction for the islanders from their recent travails, and many had viewed the visit as a moment for religious and ethnic celebration. Instead, the islanders flocked to the home of head-priest **Theodosios Simonides** where the Metropolitan lay, everyone in disbelief that this could have occurred on their island at such a desperate time.

The island's locally-born Ottoman governor, **Loutfi Bey**, paid an official visit to the deceased Metropolitan's side as a sign of inter-communal respect, and *Filia* commented that the outpouring of grief was 'without doubt the greatest Castellorizo had ever witnessed'. The bitter irony of the Metropolitan's body lying in state the next day under the central doorway of Santrapés' ambitious, but unfinished and unfunded, church of *Ayios Yeorgios* in the *Horafia* was sadly palpable. Every single member of the population filed past in bewildered grief, and, in a rare departure from strict tradition, the church was kept open throughout the night for the island's unmarried girls to be permitted to venture outdoors from their homes to pay their own respects to their departed hierarch.

This, then, was the internal background to the critical months that followed. These two bereavements were to cast a long shadow over 1912 as anxieties about increasing isolation mounted. The final catalyst for insurrection against the Turks was to be the Italian navy's decision in May 1912 to occupy all the islands of the Dodecanese group *except* Castellorizo. Frantic yet futile representations to Italy followed. When they came to nothing, it only took well-intentioned, but ultimately equivocal, messages of support from Athens to light the flame of revolt. But far from signalling a new era, the islanders' unilateral declaration in March 1913 of *de facto* union with a sympathetic, yet cautious, Greece merely provided further momentum for the downward spiral that had set in three decades earlier.

The spelling of the island's name can be spelled with a 'K' or 'C'. They are equally valid for different reasons.

AIR FRANCE



Intérieur de l'appareil

Booking Your Flight? by Nick Bogiatzis, Canberra

Thinking of flying to Kastellorizo?

No problems. The airline's local agent will provide a car to the aerodrome, and the airline staff 'is instructed to do everything to meet the wishes of the passengers as far as possible'.

What to pack? You are allowed 20 kilos of free baggage, and the next 20 kilos of excess is only charged at half rate. You may even take your camera on board though 'allowed only under certain conditions', unlike those travelling in the rest of Europe where cameras 'may not be retained by passengers in the aeroplane cabin'. Note though the advice that in the Mediterranean 'the winter temperature is often quite cool; the wearing of an overcoat and warm under-garments is therefore an advantage'. Nice to know your airline thinks of everything.

Children? Free under three, unless they want their own seats. And boys under 12 and girls under 16, a sign of the times, may only travel accompanied, with assurances, in writing, that someone will 'take charge and be responsible for them for the whole of the journey'. A parental declaration of approval is also essential.

Complicated? Not really. Kastellorizo was privileged, given at the time there were only two stops in all of Greece: Athens and Corfu. The island was part of the mighty network of international flights of Air France in 1936 – putting it very much within the international jet-set. The weekly service flew in on Friday and left Saturday, though unlike for other stops, no hotel, otherwise provided free, with meals, is recommended on the island. And you didn't really need a car to the aerodrome, as there were no cars on Kastellorizo, and your seaplane landed in the harbour.

You could reserve your ticket with a 25% deposit, and a 20% discount for a return ticket, though only 10% if you didn't get it immediately, and sought it within twelve months of departure, subject to proof of identity. Visas were needed from most countries, but certainly not Italy, as Kastellorizo was Italian at the time.

The cost? Athens to Kastellorizo comes to about 900 French francs, and London or Paris to Kastellorizo 2,850 francs. A good deal? In 2011 terms, the fares equated to €625 and €1,980 respectively.

And of course, if that didn't suit, you could always fly Imperial Airways, now British Airways, which also saw the value of Kastellorizo's harbour as a convenient stop to connect Europe with the Near and Far East.

And ladies, it is advised to also carry 'an evening dress which can be worn at the most important stops'. Of course.



Avion bi-moteur pour 14 passagers
en service sur les lignes Air France



Sharing my Kazzie Heritage

by Dr Ross Savvas, Adelaide

So why take ten of your best friends to Kastellorizo? After all, the last trip with other friends to Greece wasn't exactly a raging success!

This was a question I asked myself many times between April 2011 and April 2014. This was a group of friends and their spouses who I had been to university with in the 1970s. The bond between us is incredibly strong. But I didn't think that even this would survive a trip to Kastellorizo. How sadly I was mistaken.

The genesis of the idea came from Heather Allen, with the line "Wouldn't it be great if we all went to Greece and Ross showed us his heritage? Yes was the overwhelming response, except from me. In the end, I agreed and three years later, it began for some in Crete, others in Athens and all together in Mykonos.

Rhodes followed and to finish off Kastellorizo. What a way to end a holiday!

The overwhelming view was that Kastellorizo was the highlight of the trip to Greece. Why? Athens, just OK and apart from the antiquities, just another big city. Mykonos? Maybe we were all too old for it! (11 of us are in our 60s). Santorini... boring. Rhodes, excellent. Kastellorizo even better.

I had been there with my wife Di before, so I knew that there wasn't much to do and we would be at the beck and call of the weather! Nevertheless, when you go to an island like Kastellorizo, so far away, and the operator of your hotel says, "Hi Ross, remember me?" you know you are in for something special. That person was the delightful Roslyn Zempilas Geronikolas. Roslyn's family and mine had been friends for.... Well as long as I can remember and I had not seen Roslyn since I was 18 years old! From that moment, I knew this was going to be wonderful for my friends, and I did not want to come back to Australia and my legal practice. (I have since retired).

From the group's perspective, they were subjected to the flight with strong winds. It was the first time I saw anyone from this group, vaguely look like they were praying! Arriving in the dark was an experience, but once the sun rose and they saw the harbour, they knew that this was what they wanted to experience as my heritage. They had not been anywhere like it before. The words were.... charming....quiet....beautifulfishing village..... peaceful.

Peter (also known as "Doc") and Sue Jager, soon discovered the little bakery hidden away from the harbour. They were not going to share their sweets with anyone. I managed to introduce them to Strava and Katoumari, courtesy of the Megisti Hotel. The hotel managed to introduce the group to the joys of Mastiha! But for them, the real highlight was when they approached a small church and were asked by a lovely lady, if they wanted to look inside. The church was opened for them, and was soon followed by some koulourakia! Yes, Kazzie Filoxenia at its best!

Brian LeCornu, David and Sue Andrewartha and Liz Morissby, were big into walking. I am not, so my wife took them for long walks. The fascinating part for them were the stories Di told them about my mother Evthokia's, (nee Tsakalos) upbringing on the island – the caves where they hid from the Turks and kept their Greek culture alive, the history of the Knights of St John and the castle, and the

unique costumes of the island. For an Aussie and Kazzie by marriage, Di did us proud. She had listened and absorbed all those stories Mum used to tell us.

We all had a look at the Santrapeia School, which still looks like it did when Mum was a student there back in the 1920s.

For Lindy, there was so much that she has recorded in her travel diary: the water lapping while the older men of Kastellorizo enjoyed their morning coffees, enjoying skordalia and taramousalata with the stunning views at lunch time. She recalls the bells chiming three minutes late, but as Lindy said, she knows all about Greek time!

Heather and Brenton Allen also saw much of the island and took a strong interest in my family's time on the island. We showed them our family home. At least we think it is from the descriptions we got from my father. And the Fermanis home, (my uncle, Jack) which we recognised thanks to Silvia Parras and her family during our last visit. They also took time at the hotel to read the book by Nick Pappas *An Island in Time*, going through the photos and querying me on historical aspects of the island.

The last member of our group was the inimitable Kevin Hunt, a property developer from Melbourne. I mention this solely, because Kevin has a fascination with architecture, town planning and food, not necessarily in that order. All of his interests were met on Kastellorizo. Kevin would walk with Liz on their own and meet the locals, asking questions about the architecture, planning processes and business in general. He met the owner of the Lazarakis restaurant, so there was no way we were not going to have dinner there on the last night. The food was what I grew up with, and still eat regularly. For the group it was a treat, and with a stunning view as a bonus.

There was much discussion about the proximity of Turkey and the politics. They were surprised to hear of the food produce being brought in from Turkey, amongst other things. Equally, they were surprised to see the *Meis Express* dock and offload Turkish folk on a short weekend break. I wish my weekend breaks were like that!

Perhaps the only downside was that the weather did not allow us to go to the Blue Cave, nor go boating around the island. For me that was the second time, so 2015 beckons!

I suppose the last night of Kastellorizo really said it all. A great dinner with great friends and then retiring to the Megisti Hotel Terrace Bar for coffees, mastiha, Alpha and single malts. We were so happy, so loud and what a great treat to be dancing on the terraced bar in the rain, to the music of an Australian rock band with a Kazzie connection!

Yes, the friendship not only survived, but thanks to Kastellorizo, has strengthened. At a recent function everyone remarked that our friendship was stronger since the trip away, and there is much love between us.

As to returning to Australia, yes we did that. If I thought my first visit was emotional, then this surpassed it. Friends and Kastellorizo. What a combination. But more importantly, Kastellorizo now has ten new friends.



Student Exchange

I'm Evi Asvesti from Kastellorizo. I had the opportunity to visit Australia from the Student Exchange program that AFK organise. My experience will be one that I will never forget. I visited five major cities: Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. Every city had its own beauty and its different life style. While I was in Australia I went to places that I have never been before like a zoo and aquarium museums. I also had the chance to meet with the Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth at a reception they held for me. The Kastellorizian Association of Western Australia, and the Randwick Council in Sydney also hosted an event for me. I visited Parliament House in Canberra. Some of the places that I went to were Kings Park, Bondi beach, the Sydney Opera House. The ferry ride around Sydney harbour was very interesting and beautiful.

One of the lasting impressions was how different and big the schools are compared to Greece.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the families for their kind hospitality and everything they did for me. I met interesting people and made friends that I'll never forget. To Ms Tsolakis and AFK thank you for all your help and support and giving me this opportunity to experience a wonderful country like Australia.

Please note the following families hosted Evi Asvesti and if it wasn't for their hospitality and generosity, this Student Exchange Program may not have happened. Many thanks for your wonderful support.

*Christine, Felia and Kingsley Phillips, Perth
Spyros & Athena Foundas, Adelaide
Tina Fermanis and Chris Ulrik, Melbourne
Anna and Garry Redlich, Melbourne
Dianne Voyage-Roditis and Antonis Roditis, Sydney
Nick Bogiatzis and Vasilio Nihias-Bogiatzis, Canberra*



Student Exchange 2015

Applications for Student Exchange 2015 are now open. If you have a 15 year old teenager who does not always have the opportunity to travel and would like to begin the search for his/her cultural origins, then encourage them to complete an application form which you can access from our website. <http://www.kastellorizo.com/student-exchange-program/> Friends of Kastellorizo will be selecting students for next year's exchange program in the Australian school holidays that coincide with third term which is early October. If you have any queries, please contact Marilyn at coordinator@kastellorizo.com

Kazzie Calendars

If you haven't yet purchased your calendar for 2015, then you may like to place your order now before they sell out for Christmas. There are limited numbers available. Helene Pappas from Kazzigraphics is again offering the Kastellorizo annual 13 month calendar. They are available for \$25 including packaging and posting in Australia. (extra for postage overseas).

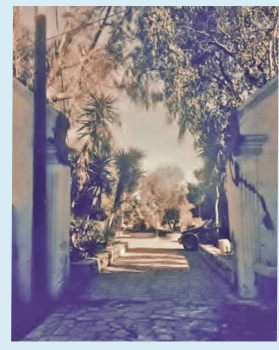
Contact Helene Pappas at this email address to place an order. kazzigraphics@gmail.com or you can call on +61411362299

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OR via bank transfer to the following account:

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You can also order online (via PayPal or credit card).
Once again, profits on sale go to Friends of Kastellorizo.
We would like to thank Helene Pappas for her generous support.



Easter on Kastellorizo 2014

Lavinia Mangos. Sydney. Aged 12



I was lucky enough to spend Easter on Kastellorizo this year. Even though I often spend some time on the island each summer, it was a different sort of experience for me and one that will always stay in my heart.

Even in April, Kastellorizo was still spectacular. Over that weekend it was cold and sometimes overcast, but this created a different mood to the limani.

There were so many things that made Easter special for me but one, in particular, was going to the Church of Aghios Konstantinos on Good Friday. I loved listening to the hymns during the church service and the epitaphio was decorated with the most amazing red and white flowers.

All over Greece, in particular, in the Dodecanese, there is a curious tradition that takes place all day on Easter Saturday. The local boys spend time making their dynamite sticks which they then light on the verandah of Santrapeia School to celebrate 'Christos Anesti' at 12 am. It made me wonder whether my papou, George Sechos, did the same thing when he was a little boy on Kastellorizo back in the 1920's.

The whole weekend was a taste sensation for me. After church on Good Friday, one thing I did enjoy eating were these really tasty clams from the island of Kalymnos.

The next night, in order to break our fast, I had Magiritsa, a traditional Easter soup made from lamb's head, neck, liver and heart. (I have to say that after I heard what I was eating, I gulped!)

Easter Sunday was also a food fest as we all feasted on the tender goat that had been cooked at the local bakery.

After eating all that food, it was time to get out of my comfort zone and go exploring up those mountains for a few hours. The higher I went the more amazing the view was. Even though I loved every minute of it, there were some hairy moments when I came face to face with some 'friends'. I didn't mind the wild goats dancing around up there, but it was the scary big black bull that I did not like much. As he came nearer I thought it was a good idea to stop taking photos!

Being a keen photographer, the walk was the perfect opportunity for a fantastic photo session especially as the sun set over this most magnificent little island that all my ancestors called their home.

Pascha 2014 will definitely be a memory that I will always treasure.

Name Change

Did you notice the logo to this edition of *Filia* has changed? After seven years of being known as *Australian Friends of Kastellorizo*, the more inclusive *Friends of Kastellorizo* has been adopted which more accurately describes the organisation.

The impetus for the name change was the recent fund raising drive for the recycling project on Kastellorizo which was a truly international response raising €45 000 in a short three week period.

The international nature of *Friends of Kastellorizo* is evidenced by the fact that our eNews is sent to over 1350 recipients worldwide and likewise, our quarterly *Filia* hard copy magazine is received by over 750 members across the globe.



Proverbs by Dr Paul Boyatzis, Perth

Proverbs

Evříke o Phíllipos ton Nathanaíl

(Saint Phillip finds Saint Nathanael)

Two of Christ's Apostles, good friends and very close to each other. Almost inseparable.

Two of a kind.

Horís astrapí then vrondá

(There is no thunder without lightning)

Indicates that in life nothing happens without a reason for it. There is always a follow up.

Kastellorizian Lexicon (Kazzy words in bold letters)

Vrasélia	vrahiólia	bracelets
Kasélla	mbaoúlo	Trunk (of clothing)
Tarássο	anakatévo	to stir (a liquid)
Gouliá	mboukiá	mouthful of food
Vríthia	revíthia	chick peas
Katsaristó	kinigitó	game of chasey
Korítses	korítsia	girls
Mounoutárou	ólla mazi	all together
Paráskio	tzáki	mantelpiece
Spirto tou kaminéttou	inópnevma	methylated spirits
Stravá	ídos baklavá	home made sweet
Zavriá	aristerá	left side

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