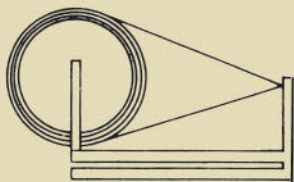




MINISTRY OF ENERGY, COMMERCE,  
INDUSTRY AND TOURISM

# CYPRUS HANDICRAFT SERVICE





*Lefkaritiko embroidery with bobbins*



*Cotton table cloth "lefkonitziatiko"*



*Traditional costumes*



# CYPRUS HANDICRAFT SERVICE

The geographical position of Cyprus, at the crossroads of East and West, has contributed to the formation of a different kind of folk art and handicrafts.

Cyprus folk art has of course been influenced by successive conquerors. However, like the art of all eras of the island it absorbed foreign elements and preserved its traditional character up until the beginning of our century.

With the introduction of industrial technology, folk art retreated in stages, first from the towns and then, gradually, from the villages and gave its place to mass production products which swamped the Cyprus market.

The main handicraft centres of Cyprus were Lefkosia, the Keryneia district, especially the townships of Lapithos and Karavas, the Karpass Peninsula, Akanthou, Morfou district, Messaoria, Koilani village, Pafos and the Marathasa district.

One of the main reasons of the development of folk art and handicraft is the abundance of raw materials such as cotton, flax, silk and wool for weaving and embroidery, pinewood and walnut trees for woodwork, clay earth for pottery, and cane and wheat stems for basket weaving.

Especially rich in excellent examples of folk art is the Museum of Folk Art of the Cyprus Studies Company, which is housed in the former Archbishopric in Lefkosia.

The main branches of traditional Cypriot folk art are weaving, embroidery, lace-making, pottery, woodwork, metal work, basket weaving and other smaller handicrafts.

Cypriot folk art is characterised by the primarily geometrical, severe designs, without lacking more freely patterned motifs from the plant and animal kingdoms, as well as themes from Hellenism and symbolic themes.

Today, more and more countries associate folk art with handicraft. They create, that is, contemporary handicraft based on the folk art of the country. In this way, folk art is revived into modern items which, however, contain the main characteristics of each area. So modern handicrafts are based on traditional folk art but at the same time are functional in modern life. They are original, of good quality, are used by modern people and have commercial value.

The Cyprus Handicraft Service was set up after the Turkish invasion in order to provide employment for refugees from the occupied areas who had great experience in the various branches of Cypriot handicrafts and folk art. The aim of the Service, which is attached to the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, was the systematic revival of traditional folk art on the basis of modern handicrafts.

The Cyprus Handicraft Service is housed at the Handicraft Centre on Athalassa Avenue in Lefkosia, where experimental workshops are conducted in the fields of embroidery, weaving, tapestry, woodwork, pottery, metal works and general handicrafts, garment making and leather works. In these workshops experimental samples are made under the supervision of suitably qualified personnel and also training is carried out. Every day many tourists and locals visit the workshops because they are of special interest and keep our heritage alive.

At the Handicraft Centre there are also archives and an exhibition hall. There is also a store where the objects made at the Handicraft Centre and on a private basis are sold.

Apart from the Handicraft Centre there are also stores in Lemesos and Pafos as well as production units and workshops in refugee camps and various villages in Cyprus.



*Coloured straw basket*



*Wooden bowl*



*Pine chest with engraved decoration*



*Paperknife with idol*



*Vessel with painted decoration*



## Cyprus Handicraft Service

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