CYPRUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS

THE **Latins** OF CYPRUS



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Commemorative photo of Saint Joseph's School in Larnaka (early British era)

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Foreword

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites of Cyprus are recognized as "religious groups". In a 1960 referendum, the three religious groups were asked to choose to belong to either the Greek Cypriot or the Turkish Cypriot community. They opted to belong to the Greek Cypriot community. The members of all three groups, therefore, enjoy the same privileges, rights and benefits as the members of the Greek Cypriot community, including voting rights, eligibility for public office and election to official government and state positions, at all levels. Moreover, the Armenians, Latins and Maronites, who vote in the Parliamentary Elections as part of the Greek Cypriot community, elect also one Representative each from their ranks to the Cyprus House of Representatives. These non-voting Representatives attend meetings, but do not participate in the House deliberations. Nevertheless, they are consulted on legislative issues of particular interest to their respective group.

The series of publications "Cyprus Religious Groups" is intended as a basic overview, an introductory profile on the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites of Cyprus. These short publications are by no means exhaustive on the subject and do not deal with differences of opinion and interpretation that may exist among scholars and other experts, on issues related to the three groups.

This publication series, initiated by the Press and Information Office, has been undertaken with the close cooperation of the Representatives of the three religious groups in the House of Representatives, and their significant contribution is deeply appreciated. They kindly undertook the preparation of the text and also provided the photographic material. They, therefore, deserve the credit and are also responsible for the content. The Press and Information Office undertook the overall coordination and production of the publications, including editing, designing and printing. It is our hope that this series will stimulate more public and scholarly interest about the Armenian, the Latin and the Maronite religious groups of Cyprus.

Director
Press and Information Office

A Message by the Representative of the Latin Religious Group in the House of Representatives, Mrs Antonella Mantovani



Dear reader,

On behalf of the Latins of Cyprus, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Press and Information Office for its initiative to issue this publication pertaining to the Latin religious group.

The presence of Latins (Roman Catholics of European or Levantine descent) in the area of Cyprus dates back to 1126, before the glorious periods of the Frankish and the Venetian Eras. However, today's Latin community essentially comprises of the descendants of Roman Catholics who settled on the island during the Ottoman and the British Era. Since 1960, the Latin community is constitutionally recognised as a religious group and has an elected Representative in the House of Representatives. The Latin religious group is fully integrated into the Cypriot society and the common link amongst its members is their Roman Catholic creed.

Dear reader, thank you for your interest in the history of the Latin religious group in Cyprus, its historical journey and its contribution to Cypriot society.

A Brief History



Kolossi castle in the Limassol district.

There is a longstanding link between Latins (Cypriot Roman Catholics of European descent) and Cyprus, dating back to 1126, when privileged merchants from Venice and Genoa settled on the island. However, the history of the Latin community in Cyprus actually began in 1192, when the titular Frankish King of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignan, purchased the island from the crusader King of England, Richard I the Lionheart, who had seized it in 1191. In his attempt to establish a Western-type feudal kingdom, the new lord of Cyprus sent emissaries to Western Europe, Cilicia and the Levant, inviting to the island bourgeois, noblemen, knights and warriors; consequently, a massive migration of Roman Catholic Christians and other peoples took place, to whom fiefs, manors and privileges were generously granted.

Frankish and Venetian Era: In 1196 the Latin Archbishopric was established in Nicosia, together with three Bishoprics (Famagusta, Limassol and Pafos). As a result, throughout the Frankish and the Venetian Eras (1192-1489 and 1489-1570, respectively), a number of Latin religious orders arrived on the island: Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites, Carthusians, Cistercians, Crusaders, Dominicans, Franciscans, Observantines, Premonstratensians (founders of the renowned Bellapais Abbey), as well as the religious-military orders of Saint Thomas, the Teutonic Knights, the Hospitallers and the Templars; the latter two were responsible for internal security and were based at Kolossi, where their Grand Commandery was located. This estate, referred to as "La Grande Commanderie," is also from where the famous Cypriot dessert wine, "Commandaria," derives its name, as it was produced at the vineyards of the region.



- *View of the Bellapais Abbey.*



- *The last Queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro, who reigned between 1474 and 1489.*

During the Frankish and the Venetian Eras, thousands of Roman Catholics lived in Cyprus, representing 15-20% of the total population, but exercising a strong influence, as they were the ruling class of nobles and aristocrats. The secular Latin population came from Aragon, Catalonia, Florence, Venice, Genoa, Marseilles, Naples, Pisa, Provence, Syro-Palestine and Tuscany. There were also a few affluent Armenian Catholics from the neighbouring Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. After the Fall of Acre in 1291, Cyprus became the easternmost bulwark of Christianity, the most important commercial centre in the Levant and probably the richest kingdom of all Europe.

Ottoman Era: Following the conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans between 1570-1571, thousands of Latin nobles and clerics were slaughtered or exiled. Others migrated to Rhodes, Malta, Lebanon and elsewhere, while several Latin churches were turned into mosques. At the same time, the Latin Church was essentially dissolved while the new rulers restored the autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus as the only representative Christian Church on the island. The few Latins who survived the massacres and chose to remain in Cyprus were given two options: either to become Greek Orthodox or to embrace Islam. However, being devout Catholics, many of them chose a third path: they became Linobambaki (Crypto-Christians), hiding their worship and holding onto the hope that the Ottomans would leave Cyprus. Legends also speak of Lusignans and Venetians who went into hiding on the Troodos and Pentadaktylos mountains and the Carpass peninsula, some of whom returned to Catholicism during the British Era.



• *Old post-card showing Saint Sophia's cathedral in Nicosia, which was turned into the Selimiye mosque by the Ottomans.*

Although most Latins perished, the Franciscans did manage to return and establish in 1596 the Holy Cross Friary in Nicosia and the Convent of Our Lady of Graces in Larnaka; these establishments were also used for the accommodation of European merchants, seafarers and travellers. At the same time, a small Latin community timidly began to form in the early 17th century, mainly in Larnaka, initially by Venetians, as the Most Serene Republic of Venice had entered into a peace agreement with the Ottomans in 1573. Contributing to the increase of Larnaka's secular Latin population was the presence of the consulates, which offered protection and employment opportunities to various Europeans.

Later on, during the 17th century, the Latin community was slightly strengthened by Capuchin monks, Armenian Catholics and Greek Catholics (Uniates). In 1646 the Franciscan brothers established the Terra Santa School next to the Holy Cross Friary, the oldest school still operating in Cyprus, at which thousands of students from all the communities of the island were educated, as were non-Cypriots who were sent there as boarders of the school. From the 18th century and, mainly, the 19th century onwards, the island's Latin population increased with the arrival of European bankers, diplomats, doctors, landowners and merchants, who mainly resided in Larnaka's Frankish quarter. The newly-arrived came from France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Malta and Dalmatia, while some of them were Levantines.

In 1844, sisters of the newly-formed Order of Saint Joseph of the Apparition settled in Larnaka, where they founded a convent, housing the first hospital and pharmacy of the island. They also founded Saint Joseph's School, the island's first school for girls which, in the 145 years it operated, accommodated and provided an excellent education to thousands of schoolgirls from all the communities of the island,



• *The Holy Cross church in Nicosia in the 1950s.*



• *Mediaeval map of Nicosia (1573).*



• *Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka (mid-19th century).*

while serving also as an important factor in the spread of Francophonie in Cyprus. With the numerical increase of Limassol's Latin population and in the spirit of fundamental reforms in the Ottoman Empire, known as the Tanzimat reforms, a Franciscan convent was established in 1850. Furthermore, in 1872 the erection of Saint Catherine's church began. Based on various estimates, the Latin community of Cyprus numbered around 400-600 persons in the mid-19th century, the majority of whom resided in Larnaka, with smaller numbers in Nicosia and Limassol.

British Era: With the arrival of the British on the island in July 1878, religious tolerance and a milder administration also came about, which particularly strengthened the already prosperous but small Latin community of the island. Participating in the first Legislative Council (1879-1882) was the landowner



- *The Béraud family gathered on its mansion's veranda in Larnaka (1890).*



- *Old photograph of the chapel of Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka.*

Riccardo Mattei, together with a Greek Orthodox and two Muslims. During the first decades of the British Era, the Latin community of Cyprus grew in number with the addition of Roman Catholics from Malta, Spain and Britain, a few Armenian-Catholic refugees from Cilicia, as well as some Maronites, who became integrated into the Latin community as they moved from their villages to the towns.



- *King James II de Lusignan (1463-1473). Visible to the right below is the Lusignan dynasty crest.*



- *Engraving depicting the impressive Famagusta Gate (1878).*

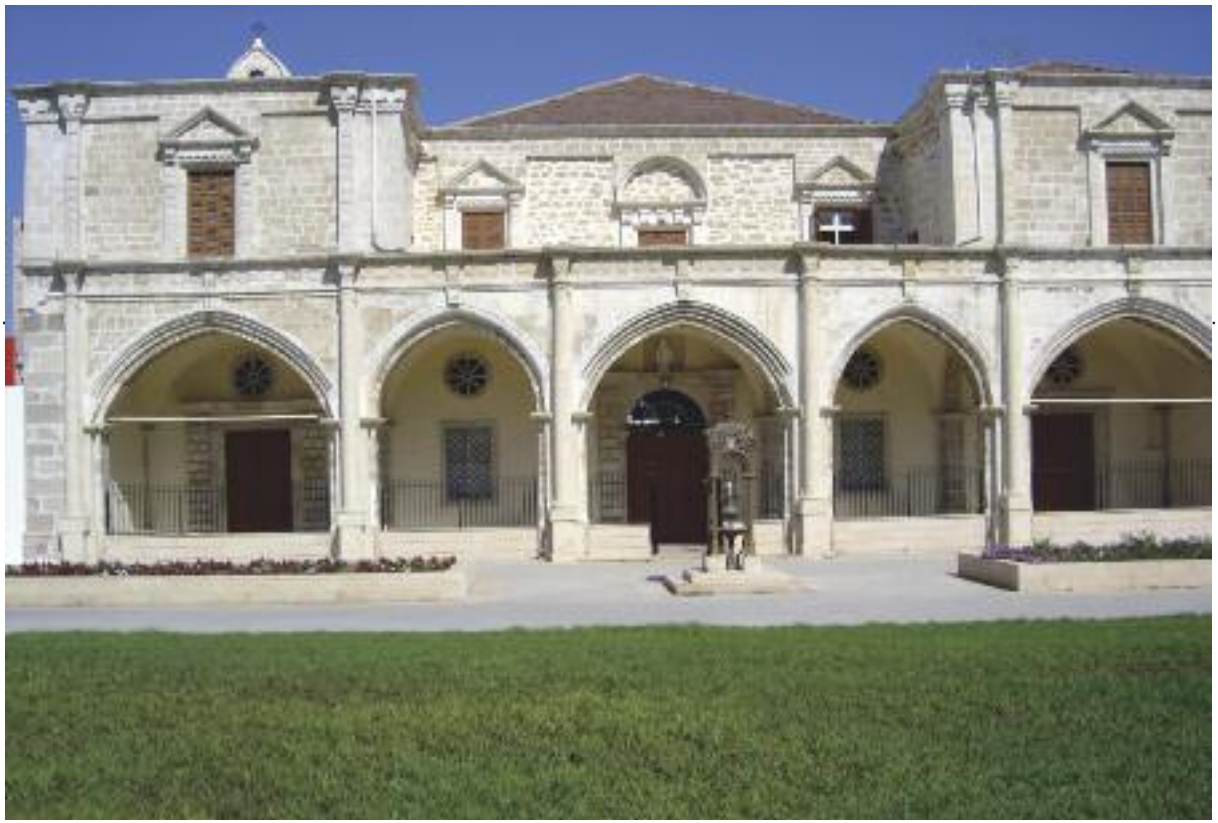


- *The Holy Cross church in Nicosia in the early 20th century.*

During the British Era (1878-1960), many Latins served as civil servants, entrepreneurs, bankers, doctors or merchants, amongst other professions. At the same time, Saint Joseph's School was established in Nicosia (1884), as well as the Terra Santa Schools in Limassol (1923), Kormakitis (1936) and Famagusta (1952), which greatly contributed to education on the island. Also established was the "Concordia" club (1903-1954) in Nicosia, which had a significant impact on the capital's social life. Over the years, the Latin-Cypriots gradually became more and more integrated into the wider Cypriot society, mainly through their education and work.



- *Commemorative photograph of Saint Joseph's school in Nicosia (early British Era).*



- *View of Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka.*





- *Saint Anthony's chapel at the Lapierre manor in Kontea (1962).*

- *View of Saint Catherine's church in Limassol.*

Independence Era: The 1960 Independence brought a new era for the Latins of Cyprus, who were recognised as a religious group and were now represented in Parliament by an elected Representative. During the 1963-1964 intercommunal troubles, the Latin-Cypriot community was not particularly affected. However, the second phase of the brutal 1974 military invasion by Turkey had an adverse impact on the Latin-Cypriot community as well: about 30 families from Nicosia, Famagusta, Kyrenia and Xeros became refugees; the renowned Bellapais Abbey, the Terra Santa Schools and Convents in Famagusta and Kormakitis, Saint Elisabeth's church in Kyrenia, Saint Anthony's chapel in Kontea and Saint Barbara's chapel in Xeros were seized, while Nicosia's Latin cemetery has since 1974 been inaccessible, as it is adjacent to the ceasefire line.

Despite its losses, the small but affluent Latin community of Cyprus has continued to prosper in the remaining urban areas, contributing culturally and socioeconomically to the development of the island. Moreover, the Latin schools continue to provide excellent secular education to schoolchildren, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Over the past decades, the dynamics of the Latin-Cypriot community have changed with the increased number of marriages with Greek-Cypriots. Moreover, the last 30-35 years have seen the arrival of thousands of Roman Catholics from Eastern, Central and Western Europe, South-East Asia and Latin America, some of whom have settled permanently in Cyprus.

Demographic Profile

According to available data, about 500 European Catholics lived in Cyprus in the mid-19th century. Based on the population censuses carried out during the British Era between 1881 and 1946, the number of Latins and other Roman Catholics in Cyprus ranged between 800-1.200 persons, while in 1960 there were 4.505 Roman Catholics, of whom 2.796 were of Mediterranean descent and 1.709 were British.

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1946	1960
Nicosia District	209	206	251	254	268	250	486	1.628
Limassol District	324	190	111	138	234	239	177	1.573
Famagusta District	41	47	65	35	64	62	81	750
Larnaka District	649	425	357	272	309	271	223	449
Pafos District	8	20	15	4	18	20	18	13
Kyrenia District	44	27	25	112	59	9	29	92
Total	**1.275**	**915**	**824**	**815**	**952**	**851**	**1.014**	**4.505**

Source: British Administration, Department of Statistics and Research of the Republic of Cyprus.

According to data from the community, Cypriot Latins (Roman Catholics) number about 2.300 persons, of whom about 50% live in Nicosia, 35% in Limassol, 10% in Larnaka and 5% in Pafos and some villages.

Moreover, according to the same data, there are about 8.500 Roman Catholic European Union citizens permanently residing in Cyprus, as well as about 15.000 Roman Catholic citizens of other countries temporarily residing in Cyprus.

Important Personalities

During the long presence of Latins on Cyprus, several members of the Latin community have contributed significantly and in a manifold manner to Cyprus' socioeconomic and cultural development.

Reference to some of the more notable members of the Latin community follows:

- Bruno Cannoni (1909-1998): He undertook the modernisation of Limassol's lighting grid.
- Dr. Giuseppe Carletti (1784-1845) and Dr. Luigi Carletti (1804-1871): Well-known doctors in Larnaka, who also offered their services to the consulates.
- Joseph Gaffiero (1877-1953): Limassol's District Engineer, who designed important buildings in Limassol and elsewhere.
- Gustave Laffon (1835-1906): A well-known poet, with works in French and English.
- Tomaso Madella (1888-1952): He served as Larnaka's Postmaster.
- Riccardo Mattei (1826-1893): A well-known merchant in Larnaka, member of the first Legislative Council and instigator of the first successful method for the eradication of locust in Cyprus.
- Giuseppe Cipriott Bayada (1866-1922): A civil engineer, he set up the Public Works' forge next to the Nicosia railway station and designed the harbour of Kyrenia and the old Limassol harbour.
- Giona Pietroni (1887-1967): He contributed to the work of the constitutional committee (1959-1960) and translated the Constitution into Greek.
- Sister Sophie Chambon (1847-1894): She worked tirelessly at Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka, offering care and comfort to thousands of poor, desolate and sick people.
- Ambrose Josephin (1864-1935): He established the first Police band.
- Armando Josephin (1931-2011): A prize-winning painter and composer.
- Edgar Feneck (1876-1934): A civil engineer at the Public Works Department, who placed the Venetian column in front of the Nicosia saray.
- Hugh Feneck (1872-1932): A land surveyor at the Department of Lands and Surveys, who surveyed the Carpass peninsula.
- Dr. Joseph-Irénée Foblant (1805-1864): Philhellene doctor, who provided free medical care to thousands of Larnaka's residents, to the very end of his life. In 1856 he played a significant part in the powder-magazine incident, preventing a serious disaster, thus saving the town of Scala.

- Dr. Annivas Francis (1904-1994): An eminent surgeon, who served for a number of years as Larnaka's Mayor and Chairman of Larnaka's Chamber of Commerce.
- Michel Houry (1895-1989): A distinguished lawyer and member of the negotiating group of the Consultative Assembly in 1947.
- Bankers Pio Usmiani and Amedeo Santi.
- Entrepreneurs Célestin Béraud, Felix Cirilli, Anthony, Giovanni, Peter, Umberto, Victor and Nino Mantovani, Joseph Pascottini and Anthony Pietroni. The Mantovani family company founded the first civilian airfield in Cyprus, which operated in Larnaka (1930-1935).
- Photographers Charles, Irma and Leopold Glaszner, Joseph Bourgi and John Foscolo.
- The Diacono, Lapierre, Roretti and Saletovitch families, who were major landowners.
- Arthur Isseyegh: Former Director of the Pharmaceutical Services of the Ministry of Health.
- Dr. Joseph Josephides: Former Member of the Tenders Review Authority, author and professor.
- Andreas Karayan: An internationally distinguished painter and author.
- Dr. Sylvain Béraud: An eminent professor, researcher and historian.
- Josephina Antoniou: Gender Equality Commissioner.

With regard to local administration, Dr. Annivas Francis served as Vice Mayor (1949-1962 and 1964-1967) and Mayor of Larnaka (1967-1975), Vincent Feneck served as Vice Mayor of Famagusta (1889), while other Latins also served as municipal counsellors. Antonio Usmiani, Michel Cirilli, Leopold Béraud and Paul Balthassar served on Larnaka's first municipal council (1878-1879). Thereafter, Antonio Mantovani served as a municipal counsellor for Larnaka (1892-1896 and 1901-1908), whereas more recently Josephina Antoniou served as a municipal counsellor for Larnaka (1991-2001).

Latin Representatives in the Cyprus House of Representatives since 1960:

- Anthony Pietroni (1913-1998): He was a lawyer, businessman and officer of the Cyprus Volunteer Force during World War II. He served as Latin Representative during 1960-1976.
- Felix Cirilli (1911-2008): He was a businessman, Treasurer of the Cyprus Red Cross and Honorary Consul of India in Cyprus. He served as Latin Representative during 1976-1991.
- Benito Mantovani: He is a shipping agent, tourist and travel agent, author of children's books and a founding member of the Cyprus-Trieste Chamber of Commerce. He has also served as Honorary Consul of Italy in Cyprus for 37 years. He served as Latin Representative during 1991-2016 and continues to support his community until today.
- Antonella Mantovani: She is a tourist and travel agent and was elected Latin Representative in 2016.



- *The Apostolic Nunciature (Embassy) of the Holy See in Nicosia.*

The Latin Church of Cyprus

A Latin Archbishopric and three Bishoprics were originally established in Cyprus in 1196, with a constant presence on the island throughout the Frankish (1192-1489) and the Venetian Eras (1489-1570). During these periods, various Latin Orders maintained an important presence in Cyprus and possessed large areas of land and numerous monasteries. After the Ottoman conquest of the island, the Latin Church was essentially dissolved and the new rulers restored the autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church as the only representative Christian Church on the island.

Since then, the presence of the Latin Church on the island was limited to a few Franciscan and, for some time, Capuchin monks, while between 1629 and 1684 there was a Bishopric in Pafos. Since 1847, a resident Vicar General for Latins has been serving in Cyprus, who comes under the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. As of 1973, the Vicar General is ex officio the representative in Cyprus of the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See located in Tel Aviv. As of 1900, the Vicariate is housed in its own monastery in Nicosia. Other than the Vicar General, 11 other Latin priests serve today (four in Nicosia, three in Pafos, two in Limassol and two in Larnaka). There are local parish councils (Nicosia, Larnaka). The Latin Vicariate is supported by an annual grant from the government.

Between 4 and 6 June 2010, the first Papal visit in Cyprus took place. During his visit, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI lodged at the Apostolic Nunciature (Embassy) of the Holy See, next to the Pafos Gate in Nicosia.



• *Our Lady of Graces church in Larnaka.*

Churches and Chapels

Latins have their own churches and chapels, as follows:

- In Nicosia there is the Holy Cross cathedral, which was first built in 1596 and again in 1642, while it was restored in 1863. The present church was built between 1900 and 1902 by a donation from the Queen of Spain, Maria-Christina, and with financial assistance by the Custody of the Holy Land; next to the church is the Holy Cross Friary, which was initially built in 1596 and was re-built between 1959 and 1961. Also in Nicosia, there are Saint Joseph's Convent and chapel (1884), Saint Barnabas' chapel, which was built in 1955 on the premises of the Terra Santa College, as well as a chapel in the old Latin cemetery (1957).
- In Larnaka there is the church of Our Lady of Graces, which was first built in 1596, while in 1724 it was replaced by a monastery and a larger church. The present church was built between 1842 and 1848 and was restored between 2000 and 2006. Also in Larnaka, there are Saint Joseph's Convent, which was built between 1846 and 1848, the convent's chapel (1853), as well as a chapel in the town's Latin cemetery (1933).
- In Limassol there is Saint Catherine's church, which was built between 1872 and 1879, next to the Franciscan monastery (1850), while it was thereafter renovated between 1979 and 1981. Also in Limassol there are Saint Mary's Convent and chapel (1965), as well as a chapel in the city's Latin cemetery (1905).
- In Mesa Chorio there is the Saints Cosmas and Damian chapel, which was built between 1994 and 1995.
- During the summer months, Mass is also held at Saint Mary's chapel (Troodos: 1932) and Saint Joseph's chapel (Prodromos: 1936).



• *Saints Cosmas and Damian chapel in Mesa Chorio.*



• *The old chapel of Saint Mary's Convent in Limassol (1947).*



The interior of the church of Our Lady of Graces in Larnaka, which is famous for its acoustics.



Saint Elisabeth's church in Kyrenia.

It is worth mentioning that Mass is held also at the Orthodox churches of Agia Kyriaki in Pafos and Saint Demetrius in Polis Chrysochou, since 1987 and 2006, respectively, after the kind permission of the former Bishop of Pafos Chrysostomos, now Archbishop Chrysostomos II and Head of the Church of Cyprus. Also, in 2013 the Orthodox church of Archangel Michael in Paralimni was kindly granted by the Bishop of Constantia-Famagusta Vasilios. Masses are also held in Pissouri (since 1996) and Ayia Napa (since 1997).

Also, the Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Perpetual Help of Sri Lanka have a small convent next to the Pafos Gate in Nicosia since 2003.

Finally, there are Roman Catholic churches in the buffer zone and the Sovereign Base Areas; these churches do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Vicariate.

The following Latin churches are located in the occupied areas:

- In Kyrenia there is the church of Saint Elisabeth of Hungary (1907). As of 1932, Mass is celebrated regularly by Nicosia's Latin priests.
- In Famagusta there are the Maronite church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1885, re-built in 1900), which Franciscan priests used to officiate, as well as the Terra Santa School chapel (1960). Both churches are located within the fenced area of Varosha and are not accessible because they are under military occupation by Turkey.
- In Xeros there was a small chapel dedicated to Saint Barbara (1930). It was demolished by the Turkish occupation regime in 1975 and a roundabout was constructed in its place.
- In Kontea there is Saint Anthony's chapel (1910), which was built and used by the known Lapierre family. Unfortunately, today it is in a pitiful state.
- As of 2015, Mass is celebrated regularly at Saint George's Orthodox chapel of Salamis in occupied Famagusta by Nicosia's Latin priests.



• *The historic Terra Santa College in Nicosia.*



• *Terra Santa College's graduates in Nicosia (1957).*



• *Typing class at the Terra Santa School for Girls in Limassol (1945).*

Educational Institutions

One of the most important fields in which the Latin community of Cyprus has made a substantial contribution is education. The island's Latin educational institutions, which have always been open to all schoolchildren regardless of origin, ethnicity or denomination, have educated tens of thousands of schoolboys and schoolgirls from all the communities of the island: Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Maronite, Latin and Jewish. As these institutions had boarding sections in the past, a large number of boarders from abroad also attended the Latin schools of Cyprus.

Currently, only two Latin schools operate: the Terra Santa College in Nicosia and Saint Mary's School in Limassol. The Terra Santa College is the oldest educational institution in Cyprus. It was established as a boys' school by Franciscan monks in 1646 and was initially housed next to the Holy Cross church. Since 1955, it has been operating in its own building in Acropolis, providing comprehensive education (Kindergarten, Elementary School, Gymnasium/Lyceum), while as of 1970 it has been co-educational; it currently has a total of about 400 students. Saint Mary's School was established as a girls' school by Franciscan nuns in 1923, under the name Terra Santa School for Girls, and was originally housed at the building where the offices of the Bishopric of Limassol are today. Since 1965, it has been operating under its current name in its own new building opposite the Law Courts, providing comprehensive education (Kindergarten, Elementary School, Gymnasium/Lyceum), while as of 2000 it has been co-educational; it currently has about 900 students. Both of these operate as private non-profit schools and cultivate multiculturalism. As of 2013, the



• *Saint Mary's School in Limassol.*



• *Commemorative photograph of the graduates of the Terra Santa School for Girls in Limassol (1958).*

Terra Santa College has become a model high school of the University of Cyprus.

Other Latin educational institutions used to operate in the past, leaving their mark in the history of education in Cyprus. Such were Saint Joseph's Schools in Larnaka (1845-1990), Limassol (1877-1921) and Nicosia (1884-1996), run by nuns of the Order of Saint Joseph of the Apparition; the Terra Santa Schools in Larnaka (1844-1939 and 1950-1956) and Limassol (1860-1939 and 1951-1956), run by Franciscan monks, as well as the Terra Santa Schools in Kormakitis (1936-1981) and Famagusta (1952-1974), run by Franciscan nuns of the Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. During 1999-2011, the Latin parish of Pafos operated the "La Souris Verte" kindergarten.



• *Saint Mary's School in Limassol.*



• *The "Archangel Michael" Hospice in Mesa Chorio.*



• *The "Terra Santa" Rest Home in Larnaka.*



• *Saint Joseph's Shelter for Foreign Workers in Nicosia.*

Community Organisations and Activities

The Latin community organises a wide range of charity, humanitarian, cultural and social events. Saint Anthony's Benevolent Society (1926) and Saint Joseph's Shelter for Foreign Workers (2000) operate in Nicosia; Saint Catherine's Benevolent Society (1958), Saint Francis' Shelter for Foreign Workers (2003) and "AGAPI" non-profit organisation (2016) for the support of the poor and the vulnerable operate in Limassol; operating in Larnaka is the Association of Saint Joseph, Protector of the Needy and the Poor (2011). The Latin community also participates in the "Caritas" Benevolent Organisation - Society of Cyprus (1974, re-organised in 2010).

There are also the Holy Cross parish library in Nicosia (1999), the Latin Youth Organisation (2002) and the Latin Community Women's Association (2017). The "Latin Catholic Centre" in old Nicosia, which was granted to the community in 2016 by the government, is expected to operate within 2017 and will house exhibitions, as well as community and cultural events.

The Latin community has the "Terra Santa" Rest Home in Larnaka (1972) - formerly known as "Villa Regina Pacis", built on the site of the old convent - which houses elderly regardless of their religion or ethnicity, the Latin Community Centre in Kato Pafos (2000) and the "Archangel Michael" Hospice in Mesa Chorio (2014), which cares for patients with incurable diseases.

The Latin community does not have its own mass media. However, local parishes have church newsletters and a quarterly letter is sent by the Representative to members and friends of the community (since 1991). Since 1999, the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (First Programme) has been broadcasting on a weekly basis a half-hour radio transmission for the Latin community titled "The Latins of Cyprus, yesterday and today" (every Friday, 16:30-17:00). As of 2008, the community has an official web page, www.latincatholicsofcyprus.com, hosting, among other items, the documentary "A journey through yesterday and today with the Latin religious group", while as of 2016 the informative Facebook page of the Latin Representative (Latin Catholic Community of Cyprus) has been in operation. The Latin Church of Cyprus' web site www.cypruscatholicchurch.org has also been operating since 2005.

Monuments



• *A nun is standing next to the monument erected in Larnaka in memory of sister Sophie Chambon (1847-1894).*

The Latin community has the following monuments:

- In the courtyard of the church of Our Lady of Graces in Larnaka there is the marble bust of the church's architect, father Serafino da Roccascalegna (1892).
- In front of the entrance to Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka there is a cast iron fountain (1895), while within the convent there is a commemorative marble plaque (1994), both in memory of nun/nurse Sophie Chambon.
- At Saint Joseph's Convent in Larnaka there are built-in marble plaques in memory of doctor Joseph-Irénée Foblant and nuns/nurses Philomène Praques, Victoire Teyssonnières and Anastasie Forbet (1971). All four of them offered their medical and spiritual services to every patient who needed them enthusiastically, conscientiously and selflessly.
- In the courtyard of the church of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in occupied Kyrenia there is a stone memorial (1941), which was erected by the Polish refugees who found shelter in Cyprus during World War II.
- Overhanging from the top floor of Saint Joseph's School in Nicosia there is the marble statue of Saint Joseph with the Christ (1956).
- In front of the entrance to Saint Mary's School in Limassol there is the marble statue of Saint Francis of Assisi (1965).



• *The famous Othello tower in Famagusta.*



• *Mediaeval map of Famagusta (1572).*

The Heritage of the Frankish and the Venetian Eras

The nearly four century presence of Latins (1192-1570) have left an indelible mark on Cyprus:

- The Franco-Byzantine architectural style was triggered.
- The Italo-Byzantine iconographic style took shape.
- Dozens of architectural monuments were erected across Cyprus.
- Dozens of words, names, surnames and toponyms of French or Italian origin entered the Cypriot dialect, many of which are still used today.
- The famed commandaria dessert wine, the oldest named wine worldwide, received its name.

With regard to architectural monuments (churches, administrative buildings and fortification works) constructed by the Lusignans and the Venetians on the island and surviving until today, the following are the most prominent:

- Bellapais Abbey, a unique example of gothic architecture across the Levant, located in the Turkish-occupied areas.
- The strong mountainous Pentadaktylos forts of Buffavento, Kantara and Saint Hilarion, located in the Turkish-occupied areas.



• *The Kyrenia castle in the Turkish-occupied town of Kyrenia.*

- The castles of Gastria, Kyrenia, Kolossi, Larnaka, Limassol and Pafos. The first two are located in the Turkish-occupied areas.
- The towers of Alaminos, Chirokitia, Kiti, Pyla and Xylofaghou.
- The circular Venetian walls of Nicosia, with 11 heart-shaped bastions and three gates, a Renaissance architecture model; part of them is located in the Turkish-occupied areas.
- The trapezoid mediaeval walls of Famagusta, with 10 bastions, four towers and two gates, are located in the Turkish-occupied areas.
- Saint Sophia's cathedral, the churches of Notre Dame de Tyre or Tortosa and Saint Catherine and the Chapter House (occupied part of Nicosia), Saint Mary's Augustinian Monastery, Stavros tou Missirikou church and the Lusignan mansion or Castelliotissa (free part of Nicosia), Saint Nicholas' cathedral, the churches of Apostles Peter and Paul, Saint George of the Latins and Saint Anne, the Carmelite Monastery of Saint Mary and the Venetian palace (Turkish-occupied Famagusta).
- The monasteries of the Carmelite Virgin Mary at Polemidhia and of the Virgin Mary Stazousa at Pyrga.
- The royal manors of Episkopi, Kouklia and Potamia.
- The royal chapel of Pyrga.

With regard to the influence on the Cypriot dialect, dozens of words used today originate from the periods of the Frankish and the Venetian Eras. For example, the following words are frequently used in today's Cypriot dialect:

- **Latin:** foutouniazoume (to get enraged), kallidjin (horseshoe), koukoumas (piggy bank), kouspos (pickaxe), mandilia (towel), mpoukkono (to fill/close the mouth), ploumizo (to decorate), pounga (pocket), rousoudin (measles), stouppono (to clog), vakla (sheep's tail), voukka (cheek), voukkos (bite), zivania (type of arak).
- **Provençal:** kouliazo (to filter), koumera (maid of honour), pouloustrina (New Year's monetary gift), rotsa (stone), splinga (pin), tatsa (stain), tsaera (chair), tsiminia (chimney), tsoura (goat).
- **French:** amanda (quietness), flandjin (liver), flaouna (Easter brioche), flokkos (mop), foukou (brazier), glipparo (to avoid/escape), koumandaria (a type of sweet dessert wine), kouza (jar), liverin (lever), mindjis (lean), pezounin (pigeon), podina (boot), protsa (fork), sende (loft), vlanga (patience), volidjin (beam), zamba (hip).
- **Franco-Italian:** dyspyrko (to grudge), kostonno (to bruise), marapella (damson plum), palaro (to power up), pinolia (cone seeds), pomilorin (tomato), pournella (plum), siourkazoume (to calm).
- **Italian:** ambousta (box/case), fallaro (to get confused), faraona (guineafowl), fkioron (flower), foundana (drinking fountain/tap), karkola (bed), katsella (cow), landa (stagnant water), landjefko (to lance/to injure) laportaro (to report an offence), lasmarin (rosemary), lountza (smoked pork), malappappas (idiot), mappa (ball), mappouros (tree cone), matchazo (to wrinkle), matsikoridon (daffodil), papira (duck), partaro (to side with), persiana (window louvre), pilantza (balance/ scale), platsa (expanse), potsa (bottle), rafkiola (ravioli), rialia (money), shipettos (shotgun), siniaro (to aim/to recognise), souppono (to soak), sponda (nail), stangono (to close tightly), strata (street), systarizo (to tidy), titsiros (naked), ttappos (bottle cap/short), xarniazo (to scrape), yiouto (to help/to suit), zamboukkos (sambucus) and the expressions karatellon (large quantity), mango mou (at least), mani-mani (quickly) and strakotton (intense drunkenness).
- **Venetian:** ghalina (female turkey), kandounin (alley, corner), karaolos (snail), kastia (tortures), kourva (turn), lamintzana (large glass jar), lavezin (stock-pot), pomparo (to pump), rembelos (punk/tramp), skarparis (shoemaker) and the interjection "sior".
- **Aragonese:** kouella (ewe), lotta (sow).

With regard to toponyms, of which there are several, the following are noteworthy:

- **From nobles:** Angolemi, Aglandjia, Alaminos, Amargeti, Anavargos, Chaleri, Choulou, Kiados, Fykardou, Gourri, Kapouti, Kondemenos, Kyvides, Lazania, Livera, Louroudjina, Mammari, Mari, Marki, Meneou, Meniko, Mora, Omorphita, Tala, Tersefanou, Vatyli, Yiolou, Zakaki and possibly Flasou and Pelendri.
- **From French:** Acheleia, Angastina, Aplanda, Bellapais, Inia, Kontea, Lizata, Masari, Pyleri, Scala.
- **From Italian:** Buffavento, Cape Gata, Gape Greco, Fontana Amorosa, Founji, Peyia, Phalia, Strakka, Terra and possibly Kornos.
- **From monastic orders:** Arodhes, Frenaros, Karmi, Spitali, Temblos.
- **Franco-Greek names:** Delikipos, Kazafani, Kritou Terra, Kritou Marottou, Lara, Lemba, Letymbou, Sandalaris.



• *View of the Latin cemetery in Larnaka.*

Cemeteries

The Latin community has its own cemeteries:

- In the Nicosia area there are two cemeteries. The old Latin cemetery, shared with the Maronites, started operating in 1935 to the west of Agios Dometios, but in 1974 it was abandoned, as it is adjacent to the ceasefire line. On the 2nd of November each year (All Souls' day), a visit to the grounds is allowed with an UNFICYP escort. The new cemetery, in the Nisou area, started its operation in 2007, on land granted by the government.
- Larnaka's Latin cemetery, to the south-east of the Orthodox cemetery, started operating in 1880.
- Limassol's Latin cemetery, next to the Fire Brigade station, which started operating in 1905, is no longer in use because no more burial space is available. Since 2007 the Latin community has been using Limassol's Maronite cemetery, which has been operating since 1998.
- The Latin cemetery in Mesa Chorio, to the south-east of the settlement, has been in operation since 1994.

There are also small chapels in the old Nicosia cemetery and the Larnaka, Limassol and Mesa Chorio cemeteries. The chapel in the Nicosia cemetery was built in 1957, the chapel in the Larnaka cemetery was built in 1933, while the chapel in the Limassol cemetery was built in 1905. Finally, the chapel of Saints Cosmas and Damian at the Mesa Chorio cemetery was between 1994 and 1995.

Before the 1974 Turkish invasion, there was a Latin family cemetery at the Kontea manor, at which burials were made between 1878-1965.

CHRONOLOGY

1126	The first recorded appearance of Latins (Roman Catholics) in Cyprus.
1192-1489	Frankish Era. Thousands of secular and cleric Roman Catholics settle on the island, which becomes an independent kingdom under the Lusignan dynasty.
1489-1570	Venetian Era. Cyprus becomes a colony of the Republic of Venice.
1570-1571	Conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans. The Latin Church is abolished and the Latins are exiled or they become Orthodox, Muslims or Linobambaki.
1593	The Franciscan Brothers return to Cyprus and build various establishments.
1627	The Capuchin Brothers arrive in Cyprus and build various establishments. They depart from the island in 1791.
1646	The Franciscan Brothers establish the Terra Santa School in Nicosia. It is re-named into Terra Santa College in 1947. It moves to its current location in 1955; it is inaugurated on 20 November 1955 by the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Giacinto Faccio.
1844	The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition settle in Cyprus and establish the namesake convent and school in Larnaka.
1848	The present church of Our Lady of Graces and Saint Joseph's Convent and School in Larnaka are inaugurated. The church is re-consecrated on 9 July 2006 by the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa.
25 November 1879	Saint Catherine's church in Limassol is inaugurated. It is re-consecrated on 15 November 1981 by the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Ignazio Mancini.
1884	The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition establish the namesake convent and school in Nicosia.
16 February 1902	The present Holy Cross cathedral in Nicosia is inaugurated.
1923	The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus settle in Cyprus and establish Saint Mary's Convent and the Terra Santa School for Girls in Limassol. It moves to its current location in 1965, operating henceforth as Saint Mary's Convent and School; it is inaugurated on 19 June 1966 by the Latin Patriarch, Alberto Gori.
1936	The Sisters of the Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus establish the Terra Santa Convent and School in Kormakitis. It is inaugurated on 15 November 1936 by the Commissioner of Kyrenia, Bryan Justin O' Brien. It is taken over by the Turkish invading troops in 1974.
1952	The Sisters of the Order of the Sacred Heart of Jesus establish the Terra Santa Convent and School in Famagusta. It moves to its own location in 1960 and it is inaugurated on 20 February 1961 by Abbess Arsenia Fantin. It is taken over by the Turkish invading troops in 1974.
6 August 1960	Anthony Pietroni is declared Latin Representative in the Greek Communal Chamber, with no other contestant.
16 August 1960	Independence of Cyprus. The Latins are recognised by the Constitution as a religious group and opt in a referendum (13 November 1960) to belong to the Greek-Cypriot community.
10 July 1970	Anthony Pietroni is declared Latin Representative in the House of Representatives, with no other contestant.
29 November 1972	The Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Erminio Roncari, inaugurates the "Terra Santa" Rest Home in Larnaka.
3 October 1976	Felix Cirilli is elected Latin Representative, securing 55,19% of the votes.
18 September 1981	Felix Cirilli is declared Latin Representative, with no other contestant.
3 July 1986	Felix Cirilli is declared Latin Representative, with no other contestant.
19 May 1991	Benito Mantovani is elected Latin Representative, securing 64,44% of the votes.
4 May 1996	Benito Mantovani is declared Latin Representative, with no other contestant.
7 May 2001	Benito Mantovani is declared Latin Representative, with no other contestant.
21 May 2006	Benito Mantovani is elected Latin Representative, securing 61,83% of the votes.
4-6 June 2010	Visit of His Holiness the Pope Benedict XVI to Cyprus.
22 May 2011	Benito Mantovani is elected Latin Representative, securing 72,39% of the votes.
5 December 2014	Latin Patriarch, Fouad Twal, and Bishop of Chytri, Leontios, inaugurate the "Archangel Michael" Hospice in Mesa Chorio.
22 May 2016	Antonella Mantovani is elected Latin Representative, securing 79,86% of the votes.

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