

14 Crimes of an Empire

[14 Εγκλήματα μιας Αυτοκρατορίας]

Elina Stamatiou

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The book is written by Elina Stamatiou, a journalist by profession. The author presents the stories of 14 men, aged between 17 and 37, who were subjected to torture and inhuman treatment by the British during the EOKA struggle (1955–1959), ultimately leading to their deaths. As the author explains in her introductory note, the book serves the need of the relatives of these 14 men to obtain answers regarding the circumstances of their deaths. The book, in particular, presents the cases of:

- Spyros Hadjiyiakoumi
- Charalambos Filippides
- George Christophorou
- Plato Stylianou
- Nikolas Yiangou
- Prodromos Xenophontos
- Loukas Louka
- Panayiotis Chysostomou
- Nikos Georgiou
- George Nikolaou
- Stelios Tritaios
- Andreas Panayiotou
- Vasilis Alexandrou
- Theodosia Chatzitheodosiou

The book consists of 15 chapters. The first 14 chapters are dedicated to the 14 men who, based on the evidence presented by the author, were all victims of torture. Each case begins with a headline that reflects the individual's death story, accompanied by a photograph of the deceased, reinforcing the fact that these were real people rather than just historical figures. The chapters are further divided into smaller sections,

supported by copies of photographs -some dating back to 1955-1959- including images of the deceased bodies, which are published without alteration. Additionally, the book includes copies of documents and information sourced from the State Archives, the Press and Information Office, personal archives of those who provided testimony to the author, and even records from English Major Michael Sturton. Particularly striking is the testimony of forensic scientists who admitted to having made false or inaccurate reports at the time due to fear for their lives under British rule. The book also features accounts from the relatives of the deceased. Chapter 15 is dedicated to Renos Lyssiotis, a survivor of torture.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the book is the inclusion of introductory paragraphs for most cases, often written in a poetic style. This literary choice appears to be intentional, reflecting the book's deep respect for the 14 individuals it portrays. In contrast to the disrespect shown to them by the British -both in life and in death- this approach restores their dignity and individuality.

In my opinion, this book should not be read solely as a historical or, to some extent, legal documentation of the torture committed by the British -crimes for which they remain unaccountable. It should also be regarded as an effort to reaffirm the fundamental right of families to be informed about the true causes of their loved ones' deaths. I highly recommend this book as a powerful and important read.

Anastasia Papamichael