RECREATING RURAL BRITAIN AND MAINTAINING BRITISHNESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: THE TROODOS HILL STATION IN EARLY BRITISH CYPRUS

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Abstract

Britain occupied Cyprus in 1878 for strategic reasons, but while these reasons were being questioned, it was decided to establish a hill station. This was the one thing that the British could agree on, namely that they wanted a space safe enough to protect them from the harsh summer, unhealthy towns and marshy plains of Cyprus. The Troodos Hill Station became the summer capital of the Cyprus Colonial Government within a year of the occupation of Cyprus. At Troodos, the officers of the civil and military establishments, expatriates and travellers, spent the sultry summer months. This paper will explore the original and changing role of the hill station and situate it within the colonial structure and imaginary. I will contend that it was vital in creating and maintaining British identity, namely the rural life of country Britain. It was only at the isolated confines of Troodos that the British could recreate the social and cultural setting of home, because it was only there where they could disengage from the social, political and cultural conditions of the cities. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Cyprus Government had a protective attitude to its position there against the demands of the military authorities for land rights.

Introduction

The Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli) Government occupied Cyprus in the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 4 June 1878, which ceded the occupation and administration of the island (but not sovereignty) to Britain. Cyprus was chosen as the place from which to protect imperial interests in the Near East and India, interests, both strategic and economic, that Russian expansion threatened and Ottoman weakness undermined. The architects of this policy saw Cyprus as strategically located and ideal for stationing troops and sent there a 10,000 strong army of occupation. They saw Famagusta Harbour as the perfect naval and commercial station in the eastern Mediterranean. But within months of the

occupation, uncertainties developed over the military and naval value of Cyprus. The decision to build the Troodos Hill Station stood in stark contrast to the uncertainties over the military and naval value of the island and the uncertainties over whether to act as if Cyprus was a British or Ottoman territory.[1]

Figure 1: The Location of Cyprus. **Source:** ©Andrekos Varnava.

Only Cyprus, of the British possessions in the Mediterranean, could have had a hill station, with Gibraltar and Heligoland being too small, Malta and Egypt too flat, and the Ionian Islands were given to Greece before the hill station craze. The place of the Troodos Hill Station within the British colonial structure and imaginary will be explored through the views and representations of members of the Cyprus government and the government in London, the military authorities and personnel visiting and/or serving in the island, and the newspaper reporters and visitors. In addition to what was said about the hill station, how it was represented in image – sketch, painting and photo – will also be explored and this will show how vital visual representations are to understanding colonial structures and imaginaries. This means that aside from conventional written sources, such as government records, newspapers, traveller accounts and diaries, the images in newspapers, traveller accounts and postcards, will also be analysed.

This article is structured into four segments: how the British justified the establishment of a hill station at Troodos; the political, military and social value of the hill station to the British in Cyprus; the importance attached to and how British rural life was recreated and British identity maintained; and finally the battle between the Cyprus government and the military authorities over the granting of rights over a section of land to the War Office.

The Decision on a Hill Station and Choosing Troodos

By 1878 hill stations were already an important feature of British colonialism. The Sub-Continent and South-East Asia were famous for them, with almost eighty hill stations in India alone and others in Burma and Malaysia.[2] In 1864 Whitehall recognised Simla, in the Himalayan foothills of northern India, as the summer capital of the Raj.[3] By the early 1870s almost all of the local governments in India migrated to the highlands for the summer and their political importance was highlighted by the construction of government buildings, including grandiose official residences in the late 1870s.[4]

Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the first high commissioner of Cyprus, knew well the system of hill stations in India where in 1877 he served as a member of the Council of India. He decided that Cyprus needed a hill station within two months of arriving.

Uncertainties over the military and naval value of Cyprus developed as the extremes of the Cypriot summer affected the British. While Whitehall and Wolseley denied that anything was wrong in or with Cyprus, the Liberal opposition questioned its value as a naval station and as a station for troops. As the reports about fever decimating the forces increased, the strategic value of Cyprus was questioned. The excessive heat, insalubrity and poor choice of camping grounds had resulted in fever and ague.[5] The extremes of the summers of Cyprus justified Wolseley's decision to found a hill station in September 1878, while uncertainties over Cyprus military and naval value remained unresolved.

Wolseley's uncertainty over where to establish his headquarters led to his decision on a hill station. British imperialism traditionally concentrated civilian and military establishments together. Wolseley wanted this continued in Cyprus, but found Nicosia, the capital during Ottoman times, unsuitable. He wrote to his wife on 31 July 1878 that Nicosia was "one great cess-pit into which the filth of centuries has been poured".[6] Wolseley rejected the house selected for him in Nicosia and took up the offer of Archbishop Sophronios III to establish his temporary headquarters at the isolated Metochi of St. Prokopios, about a mile beyond the walls of Nicosia.[7] A few weeks later, he reiterated his views on Nicosia to Lord

Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary, revealing that men were examining sites for a military cantonment where he would establish the capital.[8] On 3 September he informed Salisbury that a summer station was a necessity.[9] Wolseley sent men to Troodos and Kantara (in the Karpass Peninsula) and by October they had reported on suitable campsites.[10] Clearly, Famagusta was the best place for the garrison if it was intended to make Cyprus a stronghold, because it was the only place for a naval or coaling station, the two other major ports, Larnaca and Limassol, being open roadsteads and open to all winds. Kantara held a commanding position over Famagusta and this and other reasons made it the sound choice for the summer base.

Figure 2: Map of Cyprus. **Source:** ©Andrekos Varnava.

Meanwhile, London decided that Cyprus was unsuitable as a military base and removed most of the troops. By October, the Liberals and the newspapers, first led by Punch, and then followed by The Times, were attacking the choice of Cyprus as a place of arms,[11] so much so that the First Lord of the Admiralty, W. H. Smith, and the War Secretary, Colonel Stanley, visited Cyprus to determine its military value. The state of the troops alarmed them.[12] By December only a battalion and two companies of Royal Engineers remained.[13]

The end of the policy to use Cyprus as a military base did not alter the decision on a hill station. In December 1878, Wolseley decided on the southern spurs of the

Troodos Range,[14] and in January 1879 travelled there and chose the campsite where the government, garrison and married families were encamped in May 1879.[15] A sketch of the encampment appeared in the supplement to the Illustrated London News and this shows the use made of the overhanging branches to shade the tents.

Figure 3: Summer Encampment at Mt Troodos. **Source:** Supplement to the Illustrated London News, 18 October 1879.

Troodos was chosen before a decision was made on whether Famagusta Harbour would be developed into a naval or coaling station. When Stanley and Smith visited Cyprus, they had accompanied Wolseley to Famagusta where they entered and anchored in the outer harbour, joining Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby, the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station. Stanley noted that a reef running parallel with the shore constituted a breakwater "almost as good as Plymouth within which large ships can lie in perfect safety".[16] Wolseley believed that Famagusta would make a "good coaling station for a fleet watching the northern end of the Suez Canal", but its insalubrity needed remedying.[17] Hornby opined that with dredging and a new pier Famagusta would make a fine coaling station for a fleet watching over Egypt.[18] Captain Harry Rawson, a naval officer who had raised the British flag at Nicosia, and John Millard, a surveying officer from Malta, reported on the anchorages of Cyprus. They proposed to dredge Famagusta's inner harbour to twenty-four feet and construct a breakwater (with rock from the old quarries) a mile long beyond the reef allowing warships to anchor in fifty feet of water in the outer harbour. Millard considered that Famagusta had "very great" natural advantages "for both a mercantile and imperial harbour".[19] But in March 1879 Lord

Salisbury told the House of Lords that the Government wanted to build the harbour, but would not do so before Famagusta was made salubrious, and that was a local affair, and at the moment local revenue was focussed elsewhere.[20] Thus, the question was deferred.

The choice of Troodos was obvious, however. The elevation of Troodos ranged between 4,000 and 6,400 feet, compared with 1,800 to 2,100 feet at Kantara. Although Kantara would have served British military aims better, the camp at Troodos was beside Mount Olympus, the highest peak on the island at 6,404 feet, proving perhaps that the symbolism of ruling from the highest peak outweighed practical factors.

The Hill Station's Value to the Cyprus Government

The Troodos Hill Station had a unique political significance because of the organisation of the Cyprus Government. The norm of locating the civil and military establishments together was dispensed with during winter because the civil headquarters were at Nicosia and the military headquarters at Polemedia, three miles from Limassol. Thus only at Troodos were the civilian and military establishments united, giving the hill station a greater symbolic power than Nicosia, a power unique for hill stations. The symbolism can be taken further since Mount Troodos was one of the Olympi of antiquity and in British times, it was referred to as "the Cypriote Simla"[21] and "the Simla of Cyprus".[22]

The local government wasted no time in establishing an official presence at Troodos. The second high commissioner of Cyprus, Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Biddulph, commenced a summer residence in September 1879.[23] Tradition has it that the young twenty-four-year-old French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud supervised its construction.[24] Rimbaud had landed at Larnaca in December 1878 and worked for £6 a month quarrying stone near the villages of Oroklini and Liopetri,[25] but contracted typhoid and returned home. He returned in March 1880 and obtained the £200 a month job to construct, what he called, "The Palace of the Governor".[26] But Rimbaud did not oversee its completion, suddenly leaving Cyprus in June 1880. Rimbaud claimed that he left because of "arguments with the paymaster", but Ottorino Rosa, his Italian travelling companion claimed to have heard Rimbaud say that he fled for Egypt after accidentally killing a native with a stone.[27] Nevertheless, a future governor of Cyprus, Lord Winster (1946-1949), formerly a Labour MP, affixed on the front door a plaque in French, which reads:

> Arthur Rimbaud, French poet and genius, despite his fame contributed with his own hands to the construction of this house, 1881.[28]

Given that Rimbaud was not famous then, built nothing with his own hands, and did not even oversee the project's completion, Winster's choice of words were a prime example of a colonial governor (even a Socialist) inventing a local identity and tradition for the colonisers.

Sir Harry Luke, who served in Cyprus in various roles on and off between 1911 and 1920, described Government House Troodos as "an unpretentious affair".[29] To be sure it was not an opulent building, but it was a more fitting residence for a high commissioner than Government House Nicosia. The latter was a wooden prefabricated structure designed for the subcontinent and sent to Wolseley by the War Office. Wolseley sketched a plan of it for his wife, showing the single-story structure arranged like a barrack block to form three sides of a square.[30] The design was a standard military type, quickly thrown together by unimaginative army barrack draughtsmen.[31] Although Government House Nicosia was also put together by a famous figure, Sir Basil Zaharoff, the famous arms dealer, a later Governor, Sir Ronald Storrs, thought that it was put together "like a child's box".[32] When Wolseley arrived to move in on Christmas Eve 1878 a wind during the night had smashed most of the windows.[33] In 1889 William Mallock, the traveller, novelist, and political and social philosopher, predicted that it would not last. "It is not only entirely modern, but it will never become old. It will never become old, for it will have fallen to pieces first."[34]

The fact that it was rarely photographed, let alone painted, reflected the British embarrassment with it. A photograph (Figure 4) by John P. Foscolo, a French-Levantine photographer enticed to Cyprus from Smyrna by the British and appointed official photographer of the army, shows the building and grounds from a distance.[35] The sky dominates the photo, a feature of Foscolo's panoramic photographic style, minimising the importance of Government House. A photograph by Theodoulos Toufexis, published as a post card in 1907, focuses on the attractive aspect of the beautifully manicured courtyard.[36] In 1898 Ann Villiers, the daughter of William Haynes-Smith, the High Commissioner (1897-1904), made a rare painting of Government House. Her focus on the garden, admired for its collection of plants imported from Britain,[37] and the fact that only a corner of the building enters the frame of her painting, reflected the British view of the building. Almost thirty years later, in 1926, when Storrs arrived to start his term as Governor, his wife commented upon sighting the building: "the stables look good".[38] Ironically, it was only when five years later the Cypriots, under Storrs, burned down Government House that The Illustrated London News published the first pictures of it: before and after shots (Figures 5 and 6). Government House Nicosia may not have fallen to pieces as Mallock had predicted, but it suffered a far more humiliating fate in burning to the ground.

Figure 4: Government House, Nicosia. **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Popular Bank Cultural Centre, Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

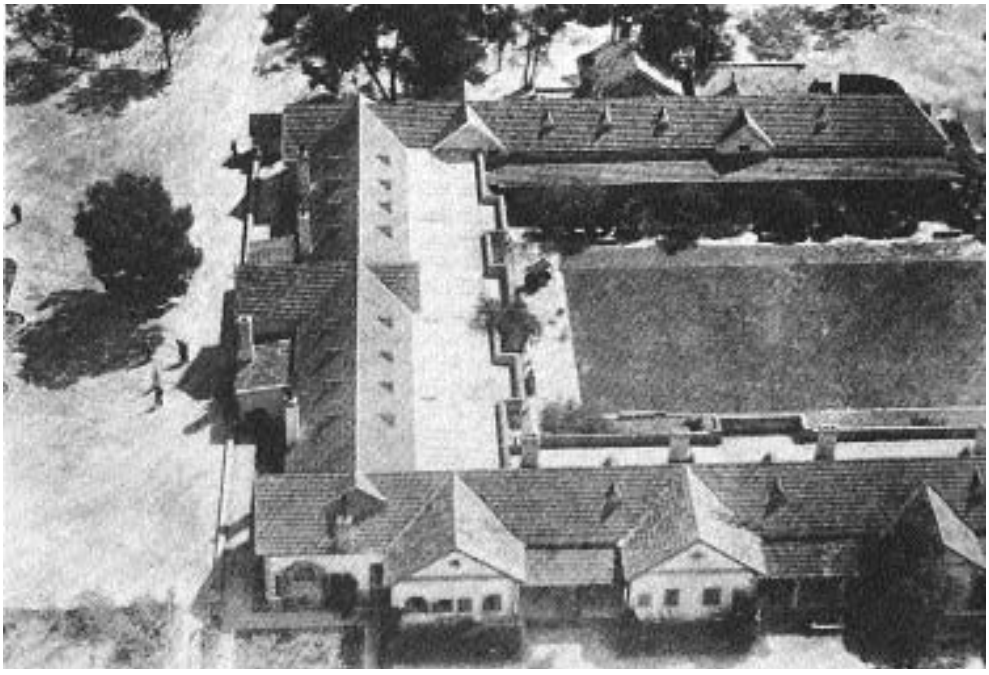

Figure 5: Aerial Photograph of Government House Nicosia. **Source:** The Illustrated London News, 7 November 1931.

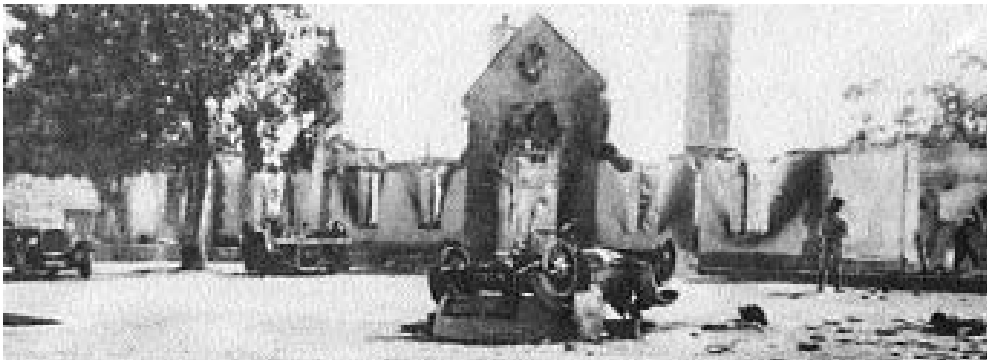

Figure 6: Government House Nicosia after its Burning. **Source:** The Illustrated London News, 7 November 1931.

On the other hand, a man on the spot designed the summer residence, Lieutenant G.A.K. Wisely[39] of the Royal Engineers, and others made alterations as the construction of the building progressed.[40] It was substantially constructed of local blue limestone with rusticated freestone dressings and mouldings.[41] French tiles were used instead of local red tiles, while a cellar was also added.[42] These and other additions and alterations resulted in an excess over the original estimate of £1,500 by 100 per cent.[43] One traveller characterised its style as Cairngorm (a part of the Grampians of Scotland), which literally means "blue stone".[44] No doubt the summer residence was designed like a Scottish lodge: something not inappropriate to Troodos' thick pinewoods. William Forwood, travelling through Cyprus in the early 1970s, believed that the summer residence must have given the high commissioners a "comfortable sense of being at home".[45]

Government House Troodos was repeatedly photographed and painted, reflecting its architectural appropriateness and the appealing natural scenery. Photographs by Foscolo reveal the rustic, rural, cottage and pastoral atmosphere of the hill station and a setting dominated by the mountains and woods.[46] One of these photographs (Figure 7) shows that, although the civil officers were at Troodos to work, the proximity of a (rather hastily constructed) tennis court to Government Cottage must have made relaxation attractive.[47] Sport and government work went hand-in-hand. A painting by William Collyer in 1886 shows Government Cottage (renamed that year to distinguish it from Government House Nicosia)[48] from a height and includes the mountainous backdrop.[49] Importantly, however, Collyer includes the British flag[50] emphasising the official British authority. Two years later, Captain Rudyerd painted Government Cottage, also from a height, capturing the fine old pines and the mountainous and cloud-enshrined background. Rudyerd's painting includes an inactive Cypriot native.[51] The European myth of the lazy native,

explored by Hussein Syed Alatas in the case of the Filipinos, Javanese and Malays, was very much a part of the British perception of the Cypriot – Orthodox and Muslim alike – and was exemplified in this representation.[52] In this painting the native clearly faces away from Government Cottage, reflecting perhaps the native indifference to the imperial ruler and the structures constructed by it. In 1898 Ann Villiers also painted Government Cottage and in contrast to her painting of Government House Nicosia, she does not shy from including the entire building in the frame.[53] This perhaps reflects the British embarrassment at Government House Nicosia, rather than any pride in Government Cottage.

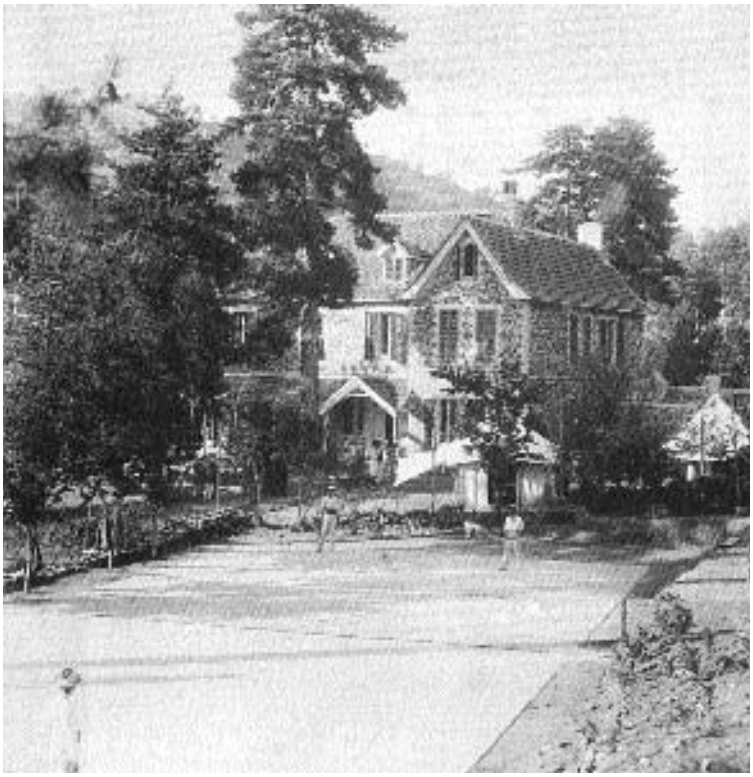

Figure 7: Government Cottage, Troodos. **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Troodos was equally important for the military and the men of the garrison who arrived before the civilian officials. Encamped under canvass, they formed the bulk of the community (at least until 1895 when the force was drastically reduced)[54] and given that the garrison was changed every year, the constant flow of new men must

have given the civil officials an added social incentive. The troops also provided much of the light entertainment. Sketches in The Graphic in November 1879 show them organising photo sessions, conducting plays and loitering around the camp.

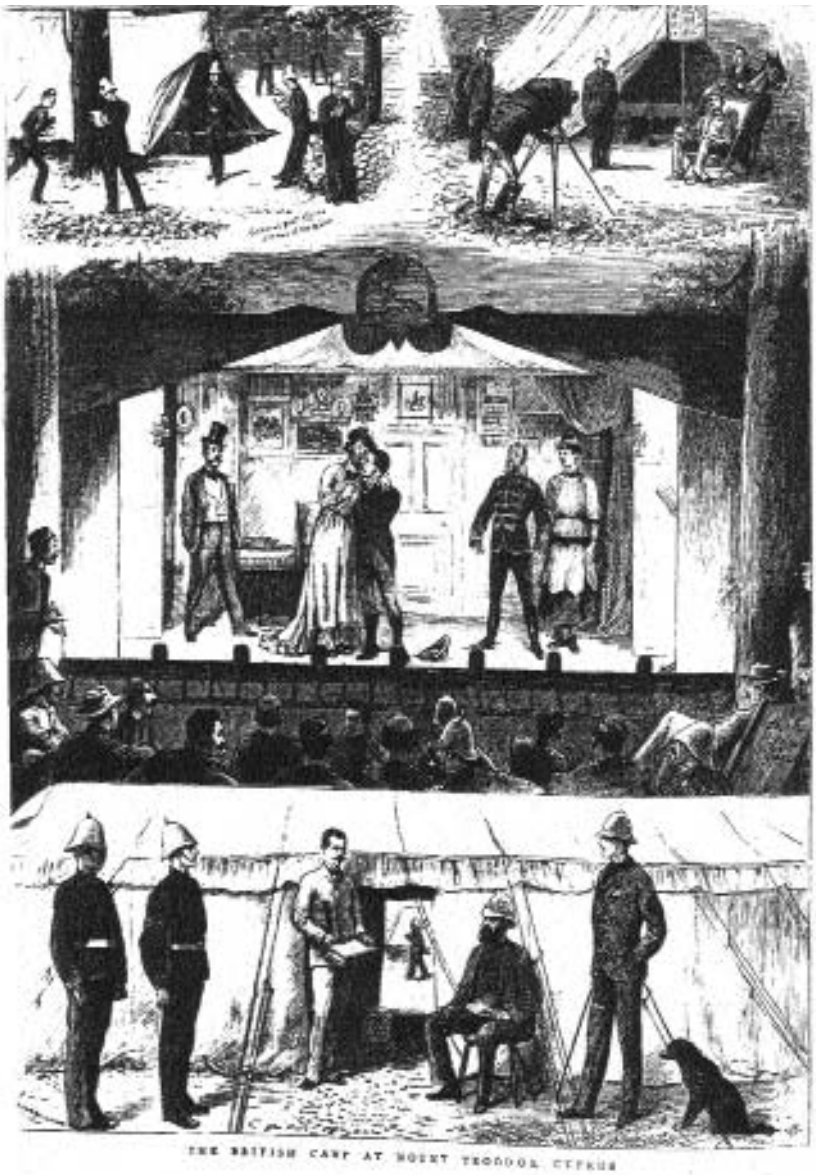

Figure 8: The British at Mount Troodos. **Source:** The Graphic, 15 November 1879.

During the Egyptian Wars (1882, 1885), Troodos became a base for troops and being away from the battle was a convenient place to sketch the forces for the public at home. In September 1882 The Graphic printed a sketch (Figure 9) of a parading regimental transport corps at Troodos, which captured the sloping mountains and thick old pines.

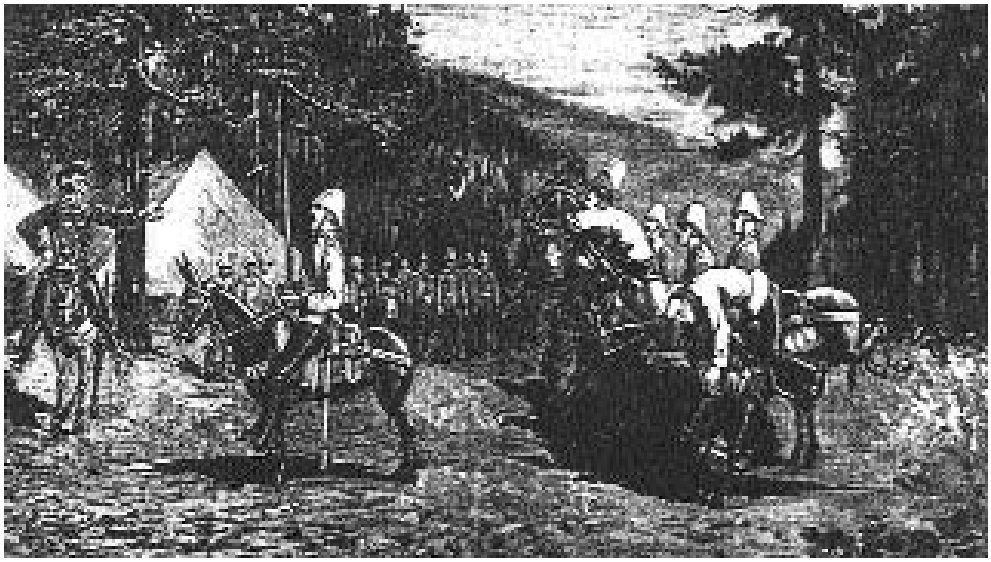

Figure 9: Parading a Regimental Transport Train for Egypt, Mount Troodos, Cyprus. **Source:** The Graphic, 23 September 1882.

There are numerous photographs taken by Foscolo of the encampments and the forces. The photograph (Figure 10) of the Connaught Regiment shows the troops playing polo on donkeys; indicating that sport figured prominently in the life at Troodos; and that even though there were not enough horses, the British were able to adapt to the conditions, because they wanted to play polo so much.[55] Another photograph (Figure 11) illustrates the pristine tents of the 1st York Regiment encamped at Troodos, revealing (as do others by Foscolo) that trees were cleared for the camps.[56] Some of the men were fine painters, including Colonel Hugh Montgomery Sinclair, of the Royal Engineers, who arrived in Cyprus in 1878 and became Biddulph's private secretary; Colonel Benjamin Donnisthorpe Donne, who came to Cyprus with his Royal Sussex Regiment in October 1880 and became commandant of the Military Police for Limassol; and Captain Rudyerd.[57] In an 1888 watercolour, Rudyerd depicts the precisely ordered white tents of the 1st York Regiment.[58] He emphasises the surrounds; the sky and pines dwarf the soldiers organising the camp. In 1887 the 1st Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment served in Cyprus,[59] and received from General Simpson Hackett, the Officer

Administering the Government (in the absence of the high commissioner), their Egyptian Medals at Troodos (Figure 12).[60] Moreover, the Cypriot muleteers that had served at Suakim were also informed to present themselves to the Commissariat at Troodos to collect their medals.[61] Troodos clearly served as the official summer-capital of British Cyprus and was even the preferred capital.

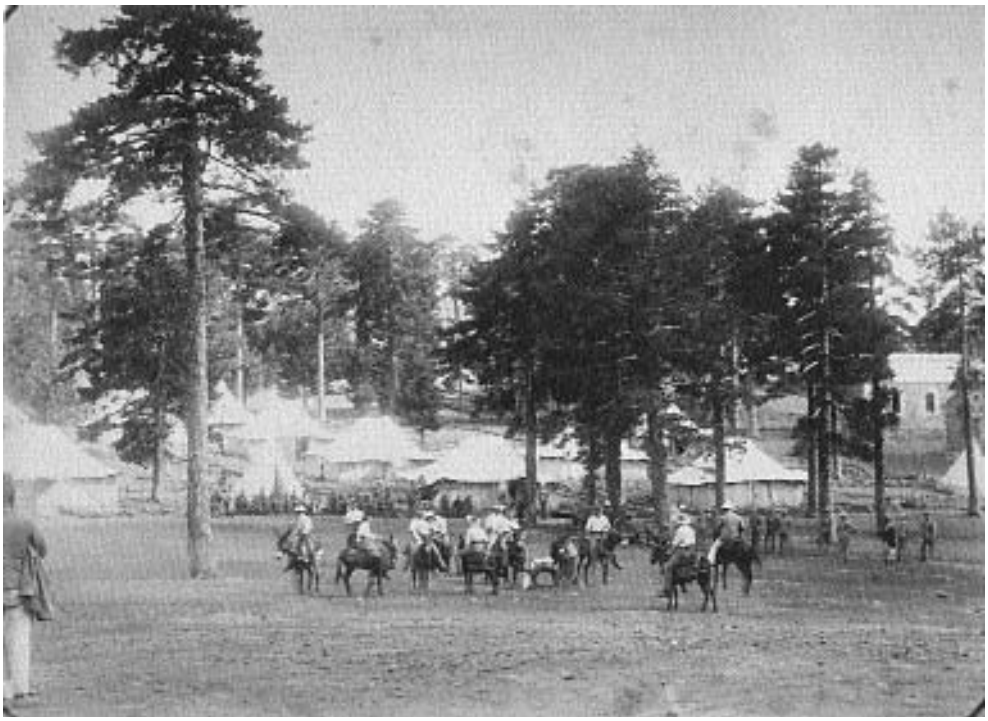

Figure 10: General view of S[outh] Camp (Connaught Rngrs), Mt. Troodos.
Source: Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Figure 11: View of Camp, York Rgt., Mt. Troodos. **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Figure 12: "View of North Camp, Troodos, presentation of Egyptian Medals to ½ Bt. Berks. Rgt, by General Hackett." **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Recreating British Rural Life and Maintaining Britishness

Dane Kennedy argues that the British "established close communities of their own kind in a setting of their own design" at the Indian hill stations.[62] Thus, the hill stations acquired a greater significance than the therapeutic attraction originally attached to them and from the political value officially credited to them. This was certainly the case with Troodos.

The hill station gave an official sanctioning to the English desire for the rural retreats and society, which Martin Weiner believed was at the heart of English society.[63] Society life in Cyprus was very limited, beyond the few official gatherings and celebrations, compared to Egypt, where a season of balls and other entertainments gave women something to anticipate. The men had it better. They had English clubs in Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol, which provided relief from the natives and the latest news from home in a familiar, masculine and group environment. Troodos had an added significance in the early years since the English club in Nicosia was not established until 1884, and did not move into an acceptable place until 1896.[64] While travelling on duty in the winter, men also had the chance to engage with nature, and pursue activities like climbing mountains and hunting (often together). But during the winter season these pursuits were much more personal and less communal. Troodos offered a cloistered natural and untamed environment for the British to recreate a familiar setting and pursue familiar pursuits together.

The annual trip to Troodos was an event that the British on the island looked upon with much anticipation. The Hill Station was reached only by a long, gruelling, steep climb entirely by means of human and animal (mule and horse) exertion, after a thirty-five mile and six-hour trip from Limassol without stop on the military road specifically connecting Polemedia with Troodos,[65] or three times that from Nicosia. Unlike India, where Kennedy found the emotional resonance of a religious pilgrimage,[66] in Cyprus the theme resonating was the anticipation of travelling to a Shangri-La. Mrs E.A.M. Lewis regretted not having the chance to visit Troodos before leaving Cyprus in 1893 because she was told of its:

> pleasant social footing when all, who are usually separated by long and difficult journeys, meet together from the various distant districts for once in the year: the impromptu tea-parties organised under the tree: the tennis-courts; the presence of the whole military staff, and their excellent band playing at the afternoon receptions at Government Cottage; these, and many other pleasant things make the annual migration to Troodos a very cheery time, to be looked forward to with a good deal of enthusiasm.[67]

A photo of one of the impromptu tea-parties taken in June 1882 reveals the women enjoying the company of a sizeable society and the men without military uniform.[68]

Foscolo's photo (Figure 13) of a tennis scene shows the women and men enjoying a game of mixed doubles, surrounded by Troodos' pines.[69] For women the annual migration was exciting because the life created at Troodos provided the socio-cultural invigoration that was lacking during the winter season when their lives were in the alien and lonely cities.

Figure 13: "Lawn Tennis Scene, Mt. Troodos." **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

The rural environment of Troodos attracted the men because it was invigorating. Anton Bertram, the Puisne Judge of Cyprus (1907-1911), best captured this feeling in the October 1909 edition of Travel and Exploration.[70] He structured the article to create anticipation in the reader. He continuously referred to Troodos, but did not start the section on it until six pages into the article and stated that he feared to have left himself no space, but wrote over three pages on it – a third of the article.[71] Troodos was the "culmination of Cyprus in more ways than one" and twice refers to "the enchanting hill-tops of Troodos".[72] The anticipation begins with the packing and sending of the luggage and furniture in mule-carts. Then speeding across the Mesaoria plain, past the "humming threshing floors", until the landscape changes and running water and hills covered in poplars, rosy oleander blossoms and red tiled roofs captivate the travellers. The speed exemplifies the escape from the natives to where a "new scene" of pines and panoramas awaits.[73] John Thomson, the famous Victorian photographer, fabulously captured such a scene in 1878.

Figure 14: Pines of Troodos. **Source:** John Thompson, Through Cyprus with the Camera in the Autumn of 1878, Sampson Low, London, 1879.

Hunting was pursued all-year-round and across the island, but more energetically during the Troodos season. With areas reminiscent of the Scottish highlands, the British hunted hare, mouflon (wild sheep indigenous to Cyprus), partridges, francolin and woodcock. During the first few years of British rule, army officers imported packs of hounds for hunting.[74] One anonymous writer lamented in 1892 that the Cypriots had so taken to hunting and it was very hard to find game.[75] The British even built a rest house at Stavros tis Psokas in the Paphos Forest in the heart of mouflon hunting territory to facilitate this activity.[76] Hunting tends to be instilled with concepts of manliness, but even women visitors to Troodos favourably commented on the hunt.[77] Although the British did not need to hunt to survive, it had vital socio-cultural significance. The activity at Troodos provided the opportunity to re-engage with nature in a collective activity. The hunts were also about proving a mastery over nature. Thus, when Hamilton Goold-Adams, the High Commissioner (1911-1914), took his private secretary, Harry Luke (then Lukach), on a mouflon hunting expedition, Luke went, as all good British officers did, but later privately expressed relief at missing his target.[78] His appreciation of the mouflon did not, of course, stretch to refusing to shoot at it. The hunt was vital in reasserting British identity in an alien place and reasserting a power over nature in a foreign environment, by recreating a pastime that was an intrinsic component of British rural life.

Both sexes enjoyed the idleness and recreation Troodos offered without worldly distraction. One principal pastime at Troodos was viewing the scenery and summit. The much-travelled Sir Harry Luke claimed that:

> on their peaks and slopes and among their valleys there is scenery which, I maintain, cannot be surpassed elsewhere in colour, in romantic outline, in fragrance of vegetation.[79]

Climbing Olympus became one of the binding social events. Major Benjamin Donne revealed that it was "the favourite promenade of Troodos Society to walk to the Summit of an evening".[80] William Butler, who accompanied Wolseley to the summit in 1879, basked at its immeasurable skyline and horizon;[81] Horatio Kitchener, who surveyed the island, adored it;[82] and Esme Scott-Stevenson, the wife of a government official, marvelled at it.[83]

Early artists and photographers who visited Cyprus were enthralled by the view from the summit. Tristan Ellis sketched it and Rudyerd painted it.[84]

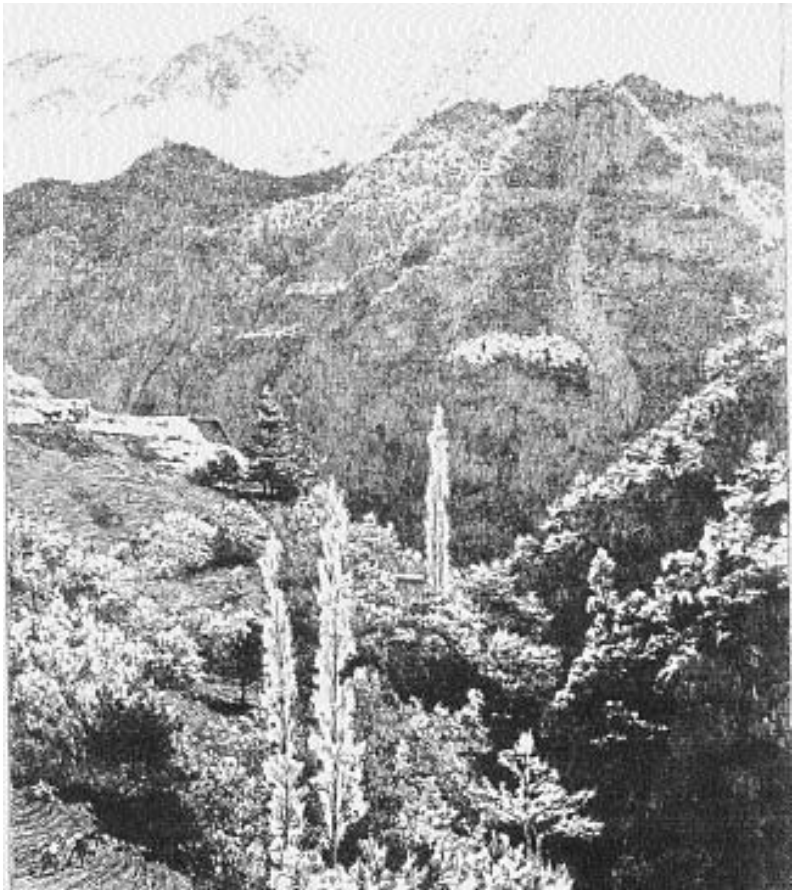

Figure 15: Troodos Summit. **Source:** Tristan Ellis, Sketch, Twelve Etchings of Principle Views and Places of Interest in Cyprus, London, 1879.

Both capture and emphasise the extraordinary panoramic view. The exception was John Thomson's photograph (Figure 16): the summit was flat, rocky and overgrown with shrubs. Very realistic and very bare: waiting for rejuvenation. Nevertheless, he still managed to describe its brilliance in words.

> … enveloped in gloom, drenched with rain, and benumbed with cold, the scene around us was weird and foreboding rather than extensive. Far down beneath our feet, clouds in grey masses hung over the glens, pierced here and there by the dark pine tops, and lit up at intervals into dazzling brilliancy by the lightning as it flashed.[85]

The summit had spellbound even Thomson and made up for his failure to capture it with his brilliant photo (Figure 17) of the forest and fine sketch of the sloping mountains.

Figure 16: Summit of Troodos. **Source:** John Thompson, Through Cyprus with the Camera in the Autumn of 1878, Sampson Low, London, 1879.

Figure 17: Troodos, Engraving from John Thomson Sketch. **Source:** The Illustrated London News, 16 November 1878.

Troodos provided the social, cultural and rural invigoration that both men and women craved after the bustle, alien and lonely life in the cities and towns. The establishment of the Troodos Hill Station was therefore about retaining the socio-cultural identity of British rural life back home, as a way of preserving 'Britishness' in a foreign colonial setting.

The march from Troodos to the plains for the winter season was unmentioned in accounts, but there was one representation, a sketch in The Graphic in 1880 (Figure 18). The march seems a rather slow, methodical and gloomy departure. Paradoxically, the people do not look very invigorated and their despondent appearance gives the impression of the sadness at the end of most holidays.

Figure 18: Marching from Mt Troodos to Winter Quarters. **Source:** The Graphic, 2 October 1880.

The desire for a haven was a major attraction of Troodos for the British. In 1879, the first summer the British encamped at Troodos, the famous explorer, traveller and engineer Sir Samuel White Baker and his wife spent more than three months at Trooditissa Monastery, five miles from the British camp.[86] Baker and his wife developed a close attachment to the monks and the sole native family.[87] The seclusion offered them the peaceful life that many English families experienced in rural Britain, but in a setting not of their own design. Baker wrote of his time there:

> It was a very peaceful existence. I shall often look back with pleasure to our hermitage by the walls of the old monastery, which afforded a moral haven from all the storms and troubles that embitter life.[88]

The retreat from "the storms and troubles" of life was Troodos's major attraction, but unlike Baker, who preferred to stay with the natives away from the British encampment, the colonial and military officials retreated from the natives. Kennedy argued that the British headed for the hills in India "for seasonal relief not merely from the physical toll of a harsh climate but from the social and psychological toll of an alien culture".[89] Hill stations have two aspects in common: they are a retreat to

something, and a retreat from something. The “retreat from” was from the heat and disease of the plains, the bustle and disease of the cities, and, whether intended or not, from the natives. Edward Said’s phrase “imaginative geography”, refers to the minds of the colonisers intensifying and reinforcing the importance of their own sense of identity by dramatising the distance and difference between it and the native.[90] The reinforcing of difference results in the “retreat to” being a retreat to a community space created to preserve British identity.

A space conducive to recreating British socio-cultural identity had to be untamed and away from the natives on what Butler called a “lonely Troodos”.[91] William Hawkins captured the loneliness in an oil painting. The pines seem to take on a human form, thus the emptiness of Troodos was attractive.[92] As Forwood remarked “it was the British who ‘discovered’ Troodos”.[93] Indeed, although Troodos became a resort, it never became a village. The British needed a blank canvass to recreate home.

The buildings that enclose home and community life were pivotal in the formation of a comfortable and familiar environment. The British lived under canvass although the Cyprus Government built about a dozen huts for officials. Some government officers built two-floored houses at Platres (the village south of Troodos) with broad balconies that commanded picturesque views of the sea horizons.[94] Two photographs (Figures 19 and 20) by Foscolo provide examples of these houses, and possibly one of these belonged to Falkland Warren, the first Chief Secretary of the Cyprus Government (1879-1891), who built a house near Platres. The house in Figure 19 had a commanding position of surveillance over Platres, as does the camp of soldiers on the side of the mountain. The British houses there were constructed outside the village in the northern environs close to Troodos. The British houses did not resemble the typical dwellings of the inhabitants of Platres, as was evident in Rudyerd’s watercolour of 1888.[95] Platres had 126 native inhabitants according to the census of 1881.[96] The “part-time” homes of the British were evacuated and closed-up when it came time to leave the hill station for the winter season. Tourists, like Rider Haggard,[97] purchased tents from the “Army and Navy”[98] and by the turn of the century a Miss T. Young from Nicosia operated a popular tent hotel at Troodos,[99] a feature that continued into the twentieth century.[100] The huts built for use by officials were also hired to travellers.[101] In 1905, an Egyptian, N. Houri, opened a small hotel at Troodos to cater for Egyptian officials.[102] By 1908, the Olympus Hotel had opened at Troodos,[103] and the Platres Hotel at Platres,[104] both belonging to the Cyprus Hotel Company.[105] During and after the First World War there was a hotel boom with more hotels constructed at Troodos and Platres, and others at Pedhoulas and Prodromos.[106]

Figure 19: British House Overlooking Camp and Village, Mt. Troodos (mine).
Source: Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Figure 20: View of Troodos looking towards the Salt Lake.
Source: Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Another requirement necessary to create the right socio-cultural setting was the imagined familiar location — both natural and architectural. This was the major difference between the Cyprus and India hill station experiences. In India Dane Kennedy reveals that the dominant architectural motif for houses was the Swiss chalet style because the British wanted to re-create the physical appearance of their homeland.[107] Although this contention seems rather questionable, it is not the place of this article to question it, but rather to provide a comparison with Cyprus. In Cyprus the British found the natural scenery, villages and monasteries, familiar. In 1879 Baker found that approaching Troodos was like entering "one of those picturesque vales for which Devonshire is famous".[108] He described Trooditissa Monastery as "a family of English barns that had been crossed with a Swiss chalet",[109] providing apt words to Rudyerd's 1888 watercolour.[110] Wolseley wrote in his diary that the villages in the area had a "Swiss air about them",[111] while Kitchener wrote that when approaching Troodos from the north, the villages of Pedhoulas and Prodromos resembled villages in Switzerland.[112] A photograph by Foscolo of Pedhoulas shows that this observation does not seem to reflect the houses, given their thatched roofs, although the church of the village does resemble Swiss-style chalet architecture.[113]

Figure 21: Village of Pedhoulas. **Source:** Andreas Malecos, "J.P. Foscolo", Nicosia, 1992. Courtesy of the Laiki Group Cultural Centre.

Once the hill station was created, some British saw other more exotic (Oriental) places in Troodos. At the turn of the century, Major D.G. Prinsep observed that the

scenery from Platres to Troodos was "very like that on the road to Murree in the Himalayas". Either he had fused in his mind the Indian and Cyprus hill stations, not being able to distinguish one from the other, or the British had created in Cyprus an imitation of the Indian hill station experience. Yet as he sat sipping tea on the grass with his party at Platres, he was reminded of picnics in England.[114] On the other hand, Harry Luke imagined that the view of the sunset over Paphos was "like the sunset of a Japanese print". The shapes created by the weight of the snow on the pines and their green, contrasted with the deep crimson of the setting sun, combined to "produce effects in colouring and design such as are seen in the works of [Ando] Hiroshige", the famous Japanese master painter.[115] There was a strange fusion of the Far East and the Indian Sub-continent in the way the only Mediterranean hill station was described and characterised by the British once it was built.

The Cyprus Government versus the War Office

The Cyprus Government's recognition of the importance of the Troodos Hill Station was reflected by its sensitive and protective attitude towards any granting of land rights to the War Office to establish an exclusive sanatorium.

The War Department desire for land rights at Troodos to establish a sanatorium for the troops in Egypt brought to the fore the Cyprus Government's protective attitude over the hill station. Biddulph had advocated the potential of Troodos as a summer resort for Europeans wanting to avoid the Levantine heat,[116] but the capitalists that formed a company in Alexandria to construct an establishment were crippled by the war of 1882.[117] But when during the Egyptian and Sudan wars Troodos became valuable as a rearguard hospital,[118] its therapeutic attraction increased. Regiments returning from the Suakim were invigorated by the climate.[119] In 1885 the War Office decided to establish a military station there for the troops in Egypt and the Sudan and requested rights over an area of land.[120]

The Cyprus Government was reluctant to cede land rights to the War Office. The Chief Secretary, Falkland Warren, advised the High Commissioner, Henry Bulwer (Biddulph's successor), that the sites the War Office selected to build a hospital and a bazaar would result in the contamination of the springs, which supplied water to the civil government and civilian and garrison camps. Bulwer also wanted more camping ground for the civil administration.[121] In April 1887 the War Office proposed that if it had the exclusive right to occupy land, it would "always be open to the Officer Commanding to allow civilians to camp within the lines, if feasible, but it…considered [it] essential on sanitary and other grounds that no such right should exist".[122] This incited Edward Fairfield, the Cyprus expert in the Colonial Office, to opine:

> It looks to me as if the War Department wanted to take all the available camping land, and leave nothing for our officers, who it should be remembered go up on duty and for the restoration of their health.[123]

Evidently, the local government was very reluctant to relinquish camping ground at Troodos to the War Office. Troodos, as the summer capital, had become the political and military headquarters from which the local officials ruled in a socio-cultural environment that doubled as a haven from the alien society and culture of the cities.

Clearly the Cyprus government was reluctant to give land at Troodos because of its socio-cultural and political importance. The War Office was forced to accept land on the condition that it would remain the Cyprus government's property and on "ceasing to be required…for Military purposes" it would revert to it.[124] But the land was not used. The Anglo-Ottoman agreement was not ratified because of Franco-Russian opposition and the troops stayed in Egypt.[125]

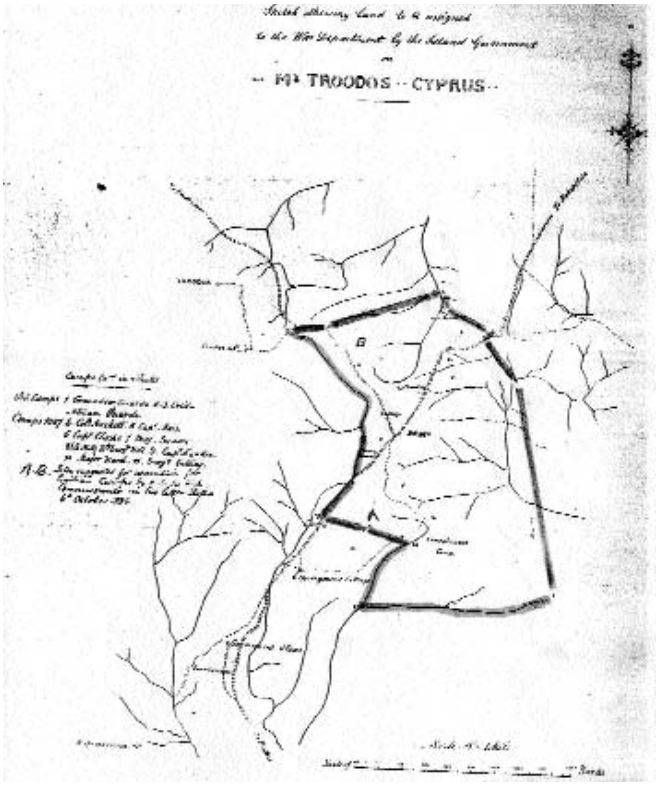

Figure 22: The Land Given to War Office, 1888. **Source:** SA1/1338/88, Capt. Ryder Main, RE, 14.7.87. I connected lines from directions on the map.

Conclusion

The importance of the Troodos Hill Station to recreating British rural life and preserving British identity outweighed its initial therapeutic attraction. At Troodos the British grafted an image of their own society and culture, imagined as it was, onto a bare canvass. It was only at the isolated confines of the hill station that a British community could be sustained, because only at such highlands could the British replicate the remembered socio-cultural world they left behind.[126] So because the hill station was so vital to the British on the island, the local government challenged the WO over its demands for land there.

In the 1930s H.V. Morton travelled the route set down in the Acts of the Apostles and wrote a wonderfully entertaining and very popular travel book In the Steps of St. Paul. The significance of what Morton thought of Troodos may have escaped the reader of the 1930s and indeed today's reader, but it is an apt way of ending this article.

> Mount Troodos dominates the island of Cyprus. It stands up in the west like a green tower lifted towards the cloudless sky. In the autumn it is on the mighty head of Troodos that the first wisp of grey gathers, a sign that rain is about to fall on earth parched since May.
>
> The guide-book says, with unconscious humour, that 'Mount Troodos, the ancient Mount Olympus, on whose heights gods and goddesses once met in solemn conclave, is now the summer seat of the Cyprus Government'.
>
> This suggests that the gods and goddesses were either officially evicted, or had departed of their own free will as soon as they heard of Queen Victoria and Disraeli. And the words contain, perhaps, a faint hope of warning. They seem to warn the traveller that he should not expect to turn a corner and suddenly come upon Persephone playing among the grape hyacinths, but that he should, on the other hand, be prepared at any moment to encounter Mrs. Browne-Jones, whose husband is in the audit department.
>
> As the sun fell towards the west, we climbed up out of the plain through vineyards and past villages clinging like wild bees' nests to the ledges of mountains. We entered a cool world of bracken and hushed woods, where every footfall is silenced on yielding paths of pine needles, and the mind wanders far away to the combes of Bournemouth.
>
> How strange that clear-eyed Athene, that Artemis with her bow and quiver, that the lady Aphrodite herself, should have haunted groves which seem designed by a benevolent providence to prepare the mind of a Government official for retirement to a house called 'Pine View'. And the strangeness of it grows, for, climbing to the top of the great mountain where Zeus once assembled his

thunderbolts, the surprised traveller comes suddenly on hard tennis-courts. Glades once sacred to the escapades of pagan gods are now sacred to the decorous games of Her Majesty's Servants.[127]

Notes

* An earlier version of this article was published in Exploring the British World, (eds.) Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, Kiera Lindsey and Stuart Macintyre, RMIT Publishing, Melbourne, 2004, pp. 1102-1133, an e-book that comprised selected papers from the British World Conference III, hosted by the University of Melbourne, 2-4 June 2004.

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