Different images of the same past.

The institutionalisation of historical narratives in Cyprus as reflections of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot nationalisms.

Source: MEKB, Kibris Tarihi 3 (Nicosia 2005) 90.
‘His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.’

1 Walter Benjamin, Illuminations (London 1973) 259.
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Introduction

Which words best describe the political and military events on Cyprus in 1974? “A Happy Peace Operation” when the “Heroic Turkish Army” came to safeguard “the Turks of Cyprus’” claim the schoolbooks that the Turkish-Cypriot schoolchildren learn their history from. ‘The years from 1963 -1974 the “Rums” (Greek-Cypriots) displayed such “savagery and barbarism that the world has seldom seen”’. Gruesome pictures show mass graves and killings and not once the Greek-Cypriot suffering for this or any other period is mentioned in the book. Greek-Cypriot schoolchildren and students are taught an opposing image in which “The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans” is an important, but negative element in the national narrative. “It was obvious that one day the Turks would try to grab Cyprus. The way that the state of the Sultan expanded, little Cyprus appeared like a weak mouse in the claws of a wild lion”. The Turks appear as uncivilized and expansionist and are held responsible for poverty, fear and atrocities.2

How can such a fundamental difference in the denomination and description of historical episodes evolve? History and memory play a crucial role in the identity of a society. Especially in countries that suffered from violent conflict in the recent past, historical events are coloured by memory and pain. In Cyprus, history, memory and remembrance are highly influential on people’s approach to the other society and the future of the island. Political and social debates, on both sides of the conflict are based on different perceptions of the same events. Since the official division of the island through the instalment of a United Nations army that controls the Green Line, the Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot communities live in separate societies. The Greek-Cypriots live in an official state, The Republic of Cyprus, which is a member of the European Union since 2004. The Turkish-Cypriots live in a self-proclaimed state, The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), which is only recognized by Turkey.

In both societies, there is a strong notion of nationalism present that strengthens the relatively new ‘states’3 in their political aims. This nationalism is very much given its substance by the use of history to create a feeling of belonging among citizens and historical events are used to strengthen political arguments (against each other). Therefore, the narrative

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3 Note that the word state is here used for both the Republic of Cyprus, an internationally recognised state, and for The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), which is only recognized by Turkey.
of the history of Cyprus has become a battlefield itself, with two societies trying to create their national pedigree from it, claiming opposite ‘truths’. School education, monuments, museums, myths and commemorations are the popular carriers of history in a society and transmit historical knowledge and heritage to new generations. Hence, the universal historical consciousness in a society is greatly determined by the way these carriers of the past express the historical narrative and depict important past victories and battles.

There is a long tradition of academic research into nationalism and its tie to historical consciousness. This tradition started in the 19th century, when ‘the nation’ for the first time became one of the leading principles in the world system. Different theories on nationalism and the growth of its importance became influential in the historical and sociological debate. In the historiography of Cyprus, two contradicting trends can be distinguished. Firstly, most writings of the history of Cyprus are very nationally shaped, either Turkish or Greek. Secondly, the past fifteen years a new debate among historians and sociologists has centred around the strong notion of nationalism that is present in the societies and its influence on the present situation. Nationalism in Cypriot societies has become a theme that received an increasing amount of interest and even some minor opportunities for discussion about the controversial role nationalism plays in Cyprus emerged. In this process, some historians - international as well as local - acknowledged that their colleagues and government had a very predisposed view on history. Some studies on history education, memory and nationalism in Cyprus emerged and small groups of professional historians and sociologists have published studies on the notion of nationalism in Cyprus (a.o. Papadakis, Bryant, Christou). At the turn of the century, this new research has gained more and more influence in the historical debate, however only few subjects in Cypriot history have been touched in this debate yet. No overview of the role of the historical narrative expressed in education, museums, monuments and myths has been conducted. This thesis will attempt to trace the theoretical background and implications of the distorted historical narratives in Cyprus and show how the narratives are expressed through education, museums, monuments, myths and commemorations.

The question posed and answered therefore uses the theories on nationalism, historical consciousness and its influence on reconciliation to apply these on the role that history plays in Cyprus. What historical narratives were institutionalised in Cyprus after 1974, on both sides of the conflict and what does this mean for the prospect of conciliation between the societies?

To answer this question, firstly, the theory on nationalism and historical consciousness will be explored to supply a theoretical framework. Secondly, history writing and the grand
narratives in Cyprus will be explored; are there more dissimilar narratives or are two discourses institutionalised? To explore the clashing opinions, four events in the history of Cyprus will serve as an example. Thirdly, the expression of historical events through history education will be investigated in depth. To make a comparison of the textbooks used in schools, the four previously described events will serve as examples. In addition, other educational elements will be shortly discussed. Fourthly, a chapter will be devoted to the expression of history through monuments, museums, myths and commemorations. In this chapter, some examples will serve to explore what narrative they express to the public. In chapter five, the recent developments in the field of history writing and education in the past few years, will be shortly analysed: Is there a way forward to a better-balanced use of history? Finally, a provisional conclusion will be drawn.

Before commencing on the first chapter, it is necessary to make a short note on the use of literature and sources in this thesis. My research is based on secondary literature and resources only, because of language and research restrictions. Since I have no knowledge of Turkish and only a minor knowledge of Greek, it was impossible for me to work with sources in those languages. In addition, no further investigation onsite or in files has been conducted, because this would require time consuming and extensive research that falls outside the scope and purpose of this thesis. Therefore, my assessment of the historical narrative and its expression in schoolbooks, museums, monuments, myths and commemorations is based on descriptions and analyses in secondary English language literature. Since, the subject of my thesis has met an increasing amount of interest by academics in the recent past, this literature will be sufficient to construct a well-founded examination.
Identity is a very important social construct for every human being alive. Who am I, who was I and where do I come from? These questions determine a person’s outlook on life and influence decisions, but can never be answered in an objective manner. Stories of childhood are usually told by elders, because you were too young to remember what actually happened. Nevertheless, after hearing the story many times for years you might tell the story if it is your own memory. You slowly incorporated it in the narrative of your life. Some uncomfortable memories might be pushed away in inactive brain cells, while other memories ‘are a good story to tell’ and are thus retold many times. All these memories are like little pieces that form the puzzle of your life, your autobiography. However, your consciousness of earlier episodes of your life fades and causes amnesia. Therefore, you distil the narrative of your life out of selective memories.

This process of developing a narrative and identity can also be distinguished in nations. The narrative of a nation is a profound base, but at the same time a constructive tool for nationalism. To describe this process of the development of a national narrative, first the meaning of the ‘nation’ and nationalism as a concept needs to be explored. In addition, the related concept of historical consciousness will be described. These two concepts, nationalism and historical consciousness will then be connected. Finally, a closer look at the development of nationalism in Cyprus will be taken, to provide a framework for the current historical narratives of Cyprus, which will be investigated in the next chapter.

**Nationalism as a concept**

The ‘nation’ as a concept is a much debated term and there are many definitions of the term ‘nation’. Benedict Anderson describes it in his renowned book ‘Imagined Communities’ as “It is an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. […] The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in
an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Finally it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”

In this definition, the ‘nation’ is a constructed idea; there is an imagined feeling of solidarity to a social group that is too big to comprehend. Hobsbawm reaches the conclusion that because of the difficulty to define the concept of a nation, no satisfactory criterion can be discovered for deciding which of the many human collectivities should be labelled in this way. Attempts to establish objective criteria for nationhood, or to explain why certain groups have become ‘nations’ and others not, have often been made, based on single criteria such as language, common territory, common history, cultural traits etc. According to Hobsbawm, this definition has failed, because it cannot explain why some groups corresponding to the criteria are not a nation, or why some nations do not correspondent to the criteria.

Despite the theoretical debates about the exact definition of what a nation is, many nations have emerged the last two centuries. All these nations, whether or not as officially recognised states, justify their existence because of the feeling of nationalism that is present among the citizens in the nation. Nationalism is an ideology “that places the nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote the nation’s well being. Nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’.”

This definition presupposes a concept of ‘nation’, but it does not suggest that nations exist prior to ‘their’ nationalisms. The words ‘or potential nation’ recognise the many situations in which a small minority of nationalists who possess a general concept of the abstract ‘nation’ seek to create particular nations ‘on the ground’. Smith and Hobsbawm, therefore both recognize the fact that a sense of nationalism can exist, without an actual nation. Nationalism is a fluid concept and its substance depends on many factors.

Hans Kohn made a distinction between ‘civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism’ in 1944. He described a ‘western’ form of nationalism, civic, that was based on the idea that the nation was a rational association of citizens bound by common laws and shared territory. In this ‘voluntarist’ conception of the nation, individuals have some latitude; although they must belong to a nation, in the world of nations and national states, they can in principle choose to

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4 Benedict Anderson Imagined Communities (London 1983).
7 Smith, Nationalism, 9.
which nation they wish to belong. The ‘eastern’ form of nationalism, *ethnic*, was based on a belief in common culture and ethnic origins, and as such tended to regard the nation as an organic, seamless whole, transcending the individual members, and stamping them from birth with a permanent national character. In this form of nationalism, therefore, no choice is possible. Individuals are born into a nation, and wherever they might migrate, they remain an intrinsic part of their nation of birth.

Despite the criticism on this theory by many scholars, and the recognition that such a sharp distinction is not applicable to all forms of nationalism, the dichotomy Kohn made between the two forms of nationalism still provides us a framework that is used when explaining nationalism. Therefore, a less rigid form of this dichotomy might help to explain the forms of nationalism and the use of history in Cyprus.

**Historical consciousness**

Historical consciousness is important for a nation to deal with its past and construct a solid base for the current political state of affairs. Historical consciousness deals with “*the area in which collective memory, the writing of history, and other modes of shaping images from the past in the public mind merge [*…*] Individual and collective understanding of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present time and future.*” In this process, a common past is created and/or preserved on a national level through institutions, traditions, and symbols. This common past is crucial in the construction of collective identities in the present and opens possibilities for commitment to collective goals in the future.

Exactly for this reason, historical consciousness and collective memory are important to create a feeling of nationalism. Providing the nation with a common past and make the nation’s members believe in this historical narrative as if it is their common historical background, strengthens the notion of collective identity and unconditional sympathy with fellow citizens. In order to serve the commitment of citizens, historical narratives and memories include a temporal dimension, conveying an idea of origins and development and of challenges overcome. The narrative defines a boundary between members who share the common past and those who do not. Hence, the narrative becomes a reflection of the

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10 Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 5-6.
11 Ibidem, 6.
current identity of the nation; a mirror of the pain and pride. Typically, four fundamental elements are embedded in this national narrative.

Firstly, the collective pain of a nation regularly is an important element in the narrative. War victims, lost land and challenges overcome create a strong bond between the current generation and the past generations that suffered from difficult conditions. Secondly, much emphasis is also given to the opposite side of the spectrum, pride. All nations like to show the prides of the nation: important battles won, courageous conquests, great scientific achievements and inventions, and important political achievements. This provides the members of the nation with a common feeling of pride and sometimes even of superiority. Thirdly, past acts of injustice committed by the ‘own’ nation are not cited and in some cases not acknowledged at all. The members of a nation do not want to be reminded of the injustice that their forbears committed since this does not conform to the picture of their great nation and impeccable past. Besides that, there exists a great uneasiness to apologize on a national level for past events or atrocities that happened outside of the current generation’s sphere of influence. Fourthly, the national historical narrative is in many cases very self-centred. The history of the nation is the central element of the narrative and histories of other nations or the region, receive very little attention or are completely neglected. In some cases, this self-centredness is taken a step further, by depicting another nation as a historical rival, to make clear who belongs to the nation and who does definitely not. Creating a historical rival also reinforces historical land claims and emphasises boundaries and exclusiveness.

The extent to which a historical narrative is shaped by these four elements depends on the notion and type of nationalism that is present in a nation. Despite the ideological, cultural and political differences, in most cases, nations create a national pedigree through their historical narrative. The recognition of and belief in this pedigree makes it possible to compare with other nations and collectives and strengthen national identity and faith.

The development of nationalism in Cyprus

Historical narratives in Cyprus are contested to a great extent and nationalism has flourished on both sides of the green line for the past few decades. In the Republic of Cyprus, Greek flags can be found everywhere, and in the North the muscles are flexed by a gigantic Turkish-Cypriot flag on a mountain north of Nicosia\(^\text{12}\) that makes the presence of the TRNC

\(^{12}\) In this thesis English names for cities and villages will be used as far as possible. Only when an English name is non-existent, the Greek or Turkish name will be used.
clear to Greek-Cypriots whenever they drive into the city from the south. The first roots of
the current forms of nationalism among Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots can be traced
back to the period that Cyprus was under British colonial rule. A short description of the
development of both nationalisms and the role of education in this development is necessary
to understand the current nationalistically shaped views on history and the opposing
historical narratives found on the two sides of the island.

The first signs of upcoming nationalism in both communities were set in motion after
the arrival of the British in 1878, which followed more then 3 centuries of Ottoman rule over
the island. Along with the change of power, the political system and social hierarchies on the
island changed to such an extent that nationalism got the opportunity to become a force of
power within the communities. Traditional structures of authority disintegrated and the elites
of the island lost their power and influence. Under the Ottoman rule the Greek orthodox
communities in Cyprus experienced freedom of religion under the so-called Millet system,
under which religious groups other than Islam were granted a special status. Both
communities, Greek-Orthodox and Muslim had a strong sense of community ties and their
law, politics and education were organized according to religion, hierarchy and communal
ties. When the British arrived, they brought with them a new political administration that was
based on equality and tempted to bring both communities under the same system of
governance. With the growth of literacy and the public sphere, through newspaper and other
printed media, a new platform was created to express beliefs and political opinions. In
addition, there was a strong bond between education and religion; most teachers were at the
same time clergymen and thus important persons in the public life of the village. The
teachers therefore exercised political power and were able to rouse the public opinion in a
great extent.\textsuperscript{13}

Because of the British new systems of jurisdiction and control, the authority of local
community leaders was undermined. Therefore, the local leaders and clergymen started to
use the language of religion and ethno-nationalism to safeguard their position and strengthen
the communal ties. Education was a crucial element in this process, because the British never
managed to gain full control over it and traditionally in both societies education was a sacred
rather than secular practice. The main aim of education was the transmission of ideology.
Greek-Orthodox education emphasised the primordial ties with Greece and to become
literate, students had to learn the languages of Socrates, the Bible and Byzantium, thus the

\textsuperscript{13} Rebecca Bryant, \textit{Imagining the Modern: Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus} (London 2004) 15-71.
languages of the intellectual history that the community was proud of. Therefore, to be educated and literate meant to be a ‘better Greek’. To become a ‘better Muslim’, students learned the languages of the Qur’an and poetry: Arabic, Turkish and Persian. In addition, with the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the identity of the Muslims in Cyprus became emphasised largely as ethnically Turkish. Therefore, the idea of “Turkishness” as an ethnic concept was relatively new and not based on 3000 years old primordial claims like the Greek-Cypriot ethnic concept. The Turkish claims were based on historical rupture and conquest as will show in the next chapter. Despite the differences, in both communities ethnic ideals were also ideas of civilization. Through education one became more civilized, and through becoming civilized, one became a better representative of their society. Therefore, students did not only learn to think nationally but became nationally. 

Greek-Cypriot nationalism evolved much earlier than Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, and was mainly propagated by the Church of Cyprus. Along with the Greek-Cypriot elite educated in Greece, the church resisted all attempts of the British to ‘de-Hellenise’ the island. The first animosities between the two communities started early in the twentieth century with some public violence. Only during the struggle of independence against the colonial rule, nationalism in both communities became a strong vehicle of organization. During the 1955-1959 EOKA armed struggle for Enosis (unification with Greece), the ‘Helleno-Christian Orthodox’ ideology reached its real peak. The Turkish-Cypriot sense of nationalism evolved as an answer to the Greek-Cypriot ideal of Enosis and propagated the opposite ‘Taksim’ (division of the island and unification with Turkey). A para military group, the TMT was created to realise this goal.

Schools were a fertile ground to find fighters for the violent struggle against colonialism. By the time Cyprus got its independence in a united form in 1960, as the Republic of Cyprus, both communities, through education, nationalist religious leaders and media, had capitalized nationalism as an ideology. Having sown the seeds of ethnic nationalist ideas solidly during the period of colonial rule, they became the main ground of struggle and violence that captured the island from the 1960’s until 1974.

After the violent years of the 1960’s, a Greek-rightwing coup was staged against the president of the Republic of Cyprus in 1974. The Turkish invasion that followed a few days

17 Rebecca Bryant, Imagining the Modern, 191-247.
later resulted in the ethnical division of the island. After these violent events and physical separation of the communities, the two forms of nationalism were intensified by the memories of losses and suffering. To strengthen their position in the ongoing conflict both societies used the past events and historical narrative to claim their rights to the island. This resulted in two diverging historical narratives that emphasised the ethnic ties and historicity to the island and left no space for different perspectives. To show how the strong notions of nationalism shaped these historical narratives after 1974, in the next chapter we turn to the Greek-Cypriot versions and the Turkish Cypriot versions of ‘Cypriot History’ expressed after 1974.
2. Diverging Historical Narratives

After the war of 1974 and the division of the island, in two separate territorial areas, the two communities lost communication and developed separate governing systems. While the Greek-Cypriots in the South continued to live in ‘The Republic of Cyprus’, Turkish Cypriots in the North lived in a “Federal Turkish Cypriot State” established by Turkey in 1975. In 1983, “The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (TRNC) declared independence, an action condemned by the UN Security Council. Turkey remains the only country in the world to recognize the TRNC. Amid this institutional separation of the communities and the violence that preceded this physical division, the nationalist sentiments in both communities and the connected nationalistic views on history developed into clashing sentiments and reinforced the so popular blame-game.

In order to explore how the nationally shaped historical narratives were institutionalised in the two societies from 1974 onwards, this chapter will focus on four periods or events in the history of Cyprus that are greatly contested and serve as political arguments. A description of the complete historical narratives in Cyprus would be too broad to make a clear comparison of the historical distortions present in both narratives. The four elements that will be discussed, are chosen on the base of their importance in the national narratives and implication for the creation of intolerance. The four examples are guided by a time-line, in order to place the described events in their context.

Before turning to these four elements, we first need to discuss the dynamics in both societies after 1974 that have created and still influence the dominating historical narrative. The political climate on the island has determined the historical narratives to such an extent, that history became politicised. The ‘historical truth’ was sacrificed on each side of the Green Line to empower political claims. Since, also internally views on history were determined by political orientation, in both societies - of which the Greek-Cypriot society serves as the clearest example- left-wing and right-wing historical discourses have emerged. A short description of their diverging interpretations of some historical events is therefore needed to understand the public historical discourses. Finally, before turning to the assessment of the four events, the influence of personal memories and the existing forms of nationalisms - ethnic and civic as described by Bryant- on the interpretation of the events will be shortly touched.

Post 1974 Politics and the historical narrative
Both, when Cyprus was still under British Colonial Rule and after its independence in 1960, nationalistic historical narratives were present in the two communities and gained influence to justify violence. However, because both communities did not have their own state, these narratives could not be institutionalized other than through education – which was still controlled by the communities separately - and political propaganda.

This state of affairs radically changed after 1974, when the communities came to live in separate territories and developed their own government, jurisdiction, borders and education-system. In other words, the two ‘nations’ became ‘nation states’ that had to build their model of citizenship and legitimize their existence. Even though the Greek-Cypriots continued to live in an already existing state, its borders and composition of population changed so dramatically as a result of the war that also their Republic had to redefine its political goals after 1974. The new TRNC, despite the fact that it is not internationally recognized as a sovereign nation state, built a political mechanism and citizen contract that works like in any nation state. “As far as The Turkish Cypriot citizens are concerned, their state exists and their passport, pensions and military duties are as real as these would be in any other state”. Therefore, for the purpose of comparison and theoretical defining, here we presume that after 1974 the two communities became institutionalized in ‘states’ – one recognised, the other not recognised - which had to justify their political goals and claims with a nationalistic historical narrative.

Left-Wing and Right-Wing versions of history in each society
The Greek-Cypriot historical narrative as publicly accepted after 1974, is not one concise story, but has met debate among Left-Wing and Right-Wing politicians and supporters. This resulted in two diverging ideas about the history of Cyprus and therefore it is difficult to appoint one common political narrative. Traditionally the Right-Wing parties have a much more rigid nationalistic view on history dictated by their political ideology and goals, while the Left-wing parties emphasise the cooperation in the past between Turkish- and Greek-Cypriots. As Papadakis demonstrated in 1998, two models of nationalism exist in Greek Cypriot society; the “Greek” model articulated by DISY (Democratic Rally), the largest right-wing party and the “Cypriot” model articulated by AKEL (Party of the Uprising of the Working People) the largest Left-wing party. The grand historical narrative is contested by

the two parties, because of the history of violence between the Left and the Right during the EOKA and EOKA B campaigns. The EOKA and EOKA B campaigns of violence in order to reach unification with Greece in the 1950’s and 1960’s, were not supported by the Left-Wing, who traditionally had close ties with the Turkish-Cypriot Left-Wing. Therefore, the Greek-Cypriot Right-Wing regarded the Leftist Greek-Cypriots as traitors. The Right-wing campaign of terror thus also aimed at Leftist Greek-Cypriot who were harassed, threatened and in some cases even murdered.20

Consequently, the differences in ideology, combined with personal experiences during the years of violence, have resulted in narratives that diverge and even contradict on certain elements. Whereas DISY and other Right-Wing political parties and their supporters use the rhetoric of “Hellenic-Christian ideals” which emphasise the primordial ties with Greece, believe in eternal conflict between Greeks and Turks and constant Turkish aggression, the Left wing AKEL supporters disagree with this patriotism. They prefer to speak of “Cypriotness”. In the past there was ‘peaceful coexistence’ between the communities and refer to the Turkish-Cypriots sometimes as their “brothers”. Left-wing supporters regard themselves victims of the patriotic Right-wing and try to reconstruct coexistence with Turkish Cypriots in their historical account.21

In the Turkish-Cypriot society a similar debate about history existed, and continues to exist, among the Left- and Right-Wing leaders and supporters after 1974. The National Unity Party (UBP), the largest Right-Wing party in the TRNC has a rigid and strongly nationalistically shaped view on history, in which Greek-Cypriots serve as the instigators of the conflict through their violent EOKA campaigns for Enosis and continue to pursue this nowadays. Furthermore, they believe in a historical tie with Turkey through martyrdom and believe to be part of the nation of Atatürk. The politicians and supporters of Left-wing Parties of which the Republican Turkish party (CTP) is the largest, traditionally had closer ties with Leftist Greek-Cypriots and have a less hostile view of history. They do point at the wrongs of the Greek-Cypriots, but also point out the Turkish-Cypriot mistakes during the 1950’ and 1960’s and recognise the suffering of the Greek-Cypriots from the Turkish invasion.22

22 Papadakis, Echoes form the Dead Zone, 103-112.
Accordingly, in both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot society historical views are contested among Left-Wing and Right-Wing political parties and movements. However, in both communities, politics have decided which of the two views should be institutionalised as the national past after 1974 and thus has become the dominant historical discourse. After 1974 Right-Wing parties and politicians have been in power for most of the time in both societies and therefore had the opportunity to institutionalise their vision on history on a governmental level in order to strengthen their political goals and claims.

The power of the Right-Wing (UBP) in the government of the TRNC for more than thirty years has propagated a public discourse that is strongly nationally shaped. The main political action and goal that had to be justified by the government is the existence of the TRNC. Since its foundation and immediate non-recognition afterwards there has been a need to justify the existence of the state towards its citizens and create a ‘nation’. “In other words what is remembered and registered as recent or old history is guided by the current projection that Turkish Cypriots constitute a national polity on their own.” as Nergis Kanefe describes this. To underwrite these claims there is no space in Turkish Cypriot history “for centuries-long complex networks of bi-communal existence under Ottoman or British colonial Rule”. Socio-economic hardship and sentiments of fear and injustice are emphasised and the idea of coexistence was abandoned. In the official Turkish-Cypriot account of history there is no space for bi-communality, coexistence or a common “Cypriot” identity, because this would undermine the claim to an autonomous Turkish-Cypriot State.\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) Nergis Canefe, “Citizenship, History and memory in Turkish Cypriot Society”, 391.
In the Republic of Cyprus, the Right-Wing political parties also dominated politics since 1974 and thus Greek nationalistic view on history has gained the most dominant position in the state policy. The ties with ‘motherland’ Greece have continuously been emphasised and a discourse of ‘superior Orthodox-Hellenic’ culture has dominated the expression of the national history. However, after 1974 the Left-Wing historical idea of ‘past mutual coexistence’ became an argument in the negotiations with the North for a solution and accordingly an accepted idea on a governmental level. This post-1974 shift in the historical narrative towards more inclusiveness of Turkish-Cypriots is feeded by the Greek-Cypriot idea that the entire island should be one state, as it was before the outbreak of violence, namely the Republic of Cyprus. This solution of a federal Cyprus has been the aim in the negotiations with Turkish Cypriots for many years now. By referring to earlier periods of coexistence, Greek-Cypriots hence hold an argument for the possibility of a federal state in which the communities can live together. However, this reference to past mutual coexistence does also reinforce their claims to suffering from the war in 1974. By emphasising that there was coexistence in the past, the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the violence caused by the Turkish army become less credible.

The influence of memories

Hence, in both societies, the dominating historical narrative has been shaped by extreme Right-Wing nationalistic predispositions and this has led to one-sided narratives and extreme views on the past events. This “dialectic of intolerance” as Paschalis Kitromilides has called this, causes the two communities not to accept any other view on history then their own. According to Jim Bowman this “dialectic of intolerance”, is strengthened by memory, because “as people remembered the extraordinary events, their memories have been rendered into narratives that give pulse and shape to those intimately involved in the conflict.” Often these partisan memories, in which personal stories are incorporated into the grand historical narrative, are marked by pain, torment and feelings of injustice caused by the recent violence.

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24 Note that the Republic of Cyprus officially consists of the whole island and that the Turkish-Cypriot state is an occupation, which is not legally recognised.
25 Yiannis Papadakis, Echoes from the dead zone, Across the Cyprus Divide (London 2005).
between the communities. Therefore, these memories strengthen the belief in the historical discourse of the nation and further reinforce opposing views on the same events.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{Ethnic and Civic nationalism}

Bryant has made a distinction between the ways both societies deal with their past based on Hans Kohn’s characterisation of the two forms of nationalism. According to Bryant, “both of the dominating nationalisms present in Cyprus appear to conform to these ideal typical models, and the manner in which they invoke ideas about forms of ‘natural’ relations that can constitute the basis for forms of historical proof.” The dominating right-wing Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, is a form of ‘Civic’ or ‘Euro’ nationalism and is therefore of a ‘constructed type’ which is capable of incorporating change into its historical account. The historical narrative emphasizes conquests and does not claim an ineluctable destiny for the island or themselves. Turkish-Cypriot therefore could take on the Turkish identity that was constructed by Atatürk. To stress their attachment to Cyprus, an emphasis is laid on the struggle and fighting during the conquests. Accordingly, martyrdom has become the central theme in the history of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{28}

The dominant Greek-Cypriot Nationalism can be characterized as a form of ‘Ethnic’ nationalism according to Bryant. In this version of nationalism Greek-Cypriots have always had an awareness of their ethnic bond and primordial ties with “Hellenism”. Greek-Cypriots claim a spiritual connection with their island through the unity of land, history and religion. ‘In their vision of history, the ancestors are linked to the present through an all powerful, unchanging “Greek Spirit”.’\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Bryant, Imagining the Modern, 207, 213.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibidem, 207, 213-214.
Contested historical narrative: four examples of historical distortion

To give body to the historical discourses that are present in both societies on the island, in this paragraph four events/periods in the history of Cyprus will be discussed. Most importantly, the events will demonstrate the ‘dialectic of intolerance’ between the societies, by uncovering the opposing interpretations of the events. Since the Right-Wing historical narrative is institutionalised by the government and accordingly has gained a dominant position, the four periods of history will mostly serve as examples for the nationalist Right-Wing historical discourse. Only when discussing the intercommunal violence of the 1960’s, the opposing Left-Wing views on the events will be given. Accordingly, the four examples are chosen for their representative function to lay bare the implicit biases that are present in the interpretation of history in each society, as mentioned in table 1. At the same time, these events serve in both societies as important pillars on which the narrative is built. To diminish the risk of assessing the events as independent unconnected historical episodes, the events will be accompanied by a time-line to put them in their historical context.\(^{30}\)

Firstly, there will be a short review of the ancient Greek influences in Cyprus. Secondly, the annexation of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire in 1571 will be discussed. Thirdly, the period of intercommunal violence in the 1960’s deserves some investigation. Fourthly, the Greek-30

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Cypriot right-Wing Military Coup in 1974 and the following Turkish military invasion will be assessed.

Ancient Cyprus: The arrival of the Mycenaeans

Cyprus has a long and rich prehistoric history, in which the island served as a cross road for trade among the eastern Mediterranean cultures and civilisations of that time. The culture of the island is influenced by successive waves of flourishing Aegean, Anatolian, Egyptian and Levantine civilisations. Archaeologists, linguist, philologists have conducted extensive research into Cypriot prehistory and agree in general that the influence of Greek speaking cultures on Cyprus was caused by a series of migrations form the Aegean in the Late Bronze Age. The Mycenaeans form the North Eastern Peloponnesus arrived around 1300 B.C. on Cyprus for regular commercial visits and throughout the century they started to settle on the island. Along with their settlement, their spoken language was spread and a written script was introduced. Archaeologists have also found distinctive Mycenaean pottery, which shows the production of goods and a flourishing trade.

This flourishing Mycenaean period is without a doubt an important phase in Cypriot ancient history, but previous and successive cultural influences have left important marks on the history of the island as well. In the current field of archaeology new excavations and research continues to shape and change the archaeological debate about the cultures, power and politics of ancient civilisations on Cyprus. In this discourse, the Mycenaean period serves as a single element in a broad archaeological discourse.

In Greek-Cypriot history, Cyprus is an island that has its roots in the Hellenic culture and has primordial ties with Ancient Greece. This claim is based on two aspects of history. Firstly, according to Greek mythology the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, was born off the southern coast of Cyprus 7000 years ago. This aspect will be discussed in chapter 4. Secondly, the arrival of the Myceaneans on Cyprus is seen as the proof of primordial Greekness of Cyprus. The arrival of the Myceaneans and their flourishing culture has been institutionalised in the historical discourse as the period in which the “Greekness” of Cyprus finds its roots. Especially the Right-Wing strongly Greek nationalistic discourse emphasises these primordial ethnic ties with Hellenic culture.

31 Klok, Afrodite en Europa, 18-23.
32 Ibidem, 18-23.
In Turkish-Cypriot history, the homogenous and genealogical line that Greek-Cypriots claim to exist between their Greek ancestors and the current Greek-Cypriot population is greatly contested. In the Turkish-Cypriot history, it is argued that Greek-Cypriot culture is mixed with and influenced by Turkish-Cypriot culture. According to the Turkish-Cypriot version of history, there is no purity or homogeneity, but *heterogeneity* and *factuality*.

*Cyprus becomes part of the Ottoman Empire*

In 1453 the Ottomans, under the leadership of Mehmed II conquered Constantinople. With his army, Mehmed set up a tight blockade of the city, and while controlling this blockade Mehmed had Ottoman ships coming to invade the city. A battle that only lasted one day secured the Ottomans of their victory. During the fighting, the Bytantine Emperor Constantine XI lost his life. After the Ottomans won the battle, three days of pillage followed. Finally, Mehmed II turned the city into the capital of the Ottoman Empire and renamed it Istanbul (which highly likely derives from *eis tin polin*, Greek for ‘in the city’).

The next more then hundred years the Ottoman Empire expanded and in 1539 the Ottomans for the first time attacked Cyprus with devastating results. The city of Limassol was destroyed, which caused the Venetians, who then ruled Cyprus, to fortify the cities of Nicosia, Famagusta and Kyrenia, out of fear for the ever-expanding Ottoman Empire. Finally, in the summer of 1570 the Ottomans held a full-scale invasion of Cyprus and landed on the coast of Larnaca with more than 60.000 troops under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha. A siege was laid on Nicosia and on 9 September, the city fell. To celebrate their victory the Ottomans looted public buildings, raped and murdered and thousands of people were taken as slaves. As the rumour of the massacre spread, Kyrenia capitulated without fighting. In Famagusta the Venetians resisted the Ottomans conquest and put up a defence. This defence lasted form September 1570 until august 1571, which marked the beginning of the Ottoman rule in Cyprus.

The fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans in 1453 and the annexation of Cyprus tot the Ottoman Empire have acquired key positions, in both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot narratives of history. In Greek-Cypriot history, the conquest by the Ottomans is a

34 Bryant, *Imagining the Modern*, 211.
catastrophe, while the Turkish-Cypriots see the event as great victory, which enforces their claim to the island.

In the Greek-Cypriot narrative, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is depicted as a disastrous event. It ended the glorious civilisation of the Byzantine Empire, which is seen by the Greek-Cypriots as their own cultural background. Despite the fact that Cyprus was at the time of the fall of the empire, not part of the empire anymore, the Byzantine Empire is regarded as inherent in Greek-Cypriot history. The fall of Constantinople happened because of the work of a traitor. The battle was full of bloodshed and deceit, as the Ottomans abducted Greek children from their mothers and turned them into Turkish fighters. In addition, the fall of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire is depicted in a similar way. Turkish fighters were barbarious, caused enormous suffering, and killed thousands of innocent people.  

The battle for Constantinople and the following conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans has obtained an important position in the Greek-Cypriot historical narrative because the events serve as examples for two important claims; the eternal conflict between Greeks and Turks and the ever-present Turkish aggression and expansionism.

In the Turkish-Cypriot version of history, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople has a completely different interpretation. The Ottomans are seen as the ancestors of the Turks and therefore Ottoman history is incorporated in the history of the Turkish-Cypriot nation. The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans serves as the beginning of Turkish-Cypriot history in Cyprus and is a powerful event to strengthen the Turkish-Cypriot historical claim on Cyprus. As mentioned before, Turkish-Cypriots found their historical claims on the idea of struggle and martyrdom to safeguard their culture. The battle for the conquest of Cyprus serves as evidence for this claim and is thus a powerful imaginary event.

Intercommunal violence in the 1960’s

The events that took place from independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 onwards, are in both historical accounts dominant, however the emphasis is laid on different aspects of the same events. This dominance of these events in the historical narrative is influenced by the role of personal memories in the grand historical narrative, as Bowman, Bryant and

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36 Papadakis, *Echoes from the dead zone*, 5-8.
37 Copeaux, “Otherness in the Turkish Historical discourse”, 401.
Different images of the same past

Papadakis have demonstrated. The memories of pain and agony are strong and still vivid. Hence, the events that caused these feelings become an important part of the historical narrative that people believe in. The strong presence of memory has caused the events that include most suffering to gain dominant positions in the historical narratives, observably in two contrasting approaches.

With the independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, Cyprus became a state in which the two communities were united and became responsible for their government together. Archbishop Makarios III was elected as president and Dr. Fazil Küçük as Vice-president. However, in the 1950’s tensions between the communities had already risen, because in the 1950’s Right-Wing Greek-Cypriots had fought for Enosis, unification with Greece. A guerrilla movement called EOKA was established and used violence against the Colonial government to reach Enosis; unification with ‘motherland’ Greece (which failed to happen, largely because Greece did not support the Enosis idea). Often the violence was aiming at police officers and as the British employed mostly Turkish-Cypriot men in their police force, intercommunal tensions rose. After 1960, the already existing tensions continued to obstruct political cooperation and caused disputes over constitutional issues; both communities’ politicians accused each other for frustrating the constitution of the republic. In the mean time, the relations between the

Different images of the same past

communities deteriorated steadily with harassment as a result. In particular, Greek-Cypriots harassed Turkish-Cypriots, but Greek-Cypriots were also harassed by paramilitary Greek-Cypriot nationalists. Numerous atrocities were committed on both sides. As a result the much less numerous Turkish-Cypriots tended to abandon their houses scattered in villages and towns where Greek-Cypriots were in the majority and grouped themselves together in enclaves where they could defend themselves. Both sides formed militia forces, the Greek-Cypriots EOKA B and the Turkish Cypriots TMT. In 1964 a small UN security force was deployed, but could hardly improve the situation. The violence and disputes continued until 1974.\(^{39}\)

In the Greek-Cypriot historical narrative, this period of history is a sensitive issue and causes debate among the Left and the Right. The Right-Wing historical narrative prefers to relativise the suffering of the Turkish-Cypriots or blame the Turkish-Cypriots themselves for the violence and harassment of the 1960’s. They point to the eternal Turkish treat and thus enlarge the setting in which the violence of the 1960’s took place. Hellenism was threatened and that is what the Greek-Cypriot nationalists were fighting for, from the 1950’s onwards.

The Left-Wing account speaks in very different terms about the violence. In their account of this period, Turkish-Cypriots and Left-Wing Greek-Cypriots are seen as equal victims of the Nationalist Greek-Cypriots. They emphasise the peaceful coexistence between Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots and blame the Right-wing ‘super patriots’ for the suffering of both in the 1960’s.\(^ {40}\)

The Turkish-Cypriot history gives us a completely different account of the events from the 1960’s onwards. According to the Right-Wing account, the immense suffering of the intercommunal violence in the years of the 1960’s caused so much distress and agony upon the Turkish-Cypriots that it was and still is, impossible for Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots to live together. These years of history form the central part in the narrative, as if they encapsulate the whole history of Cyprus. It is those years of violence against the Turkish-Cypriots upon which the claim for an independent Turkish-Cypriot state is based. The violence is portrayed as barbarous and immense, and thus has made the Turkish invasion of 1974 a necessary deed, as will show in the last paragraph of this chapter. The language that is used to describe the events of the 1960’s is very strong and does not leave any space

\(^{39}\) David Hannay, Cyprus the search for a solution (London 2005) 4-5.

for moderation; the Greek-Cypriots are portrayed as the eternal enemy that spread distress and suffering.\textsuperscript{41}

The Left-Wing account of the events of the 1960’s is much more moderated. The narrative does point at the suffering of the Turkish-Cypriots, but also admits the mistakes on the side of the Turkish-Cypriots. It is pointed out that also the Turkish-Cypriots formed a militia group, the TMT, and that not all Greek-Cypriots were involved in the violent actions.\textsuperscript{42}

1974: the Right-Wing Greek-Cypriot Coup and the Turkish military Invasion

On 15 July of 1974, the National Guard under the Direction of Greek officers staged \textit{a coup d’etat} against the Cyprus government, then headed by president Makarios. Nikos Sampson, a former guerrilla fighter was installed as the new president. A short bloody civil war with the political Greek-Cypriot opponents, particularly members of the left-wing AKEL party, followed. Moreover, Turkish-Cypriot enclaves were attacked in the days after the Coup. To ‘safeguard’ the Turkish-Cypriots, the Turkish government launched an extensive military invasion on the North coast of Cyprus on July 20.\textsuperscript{43} In two stages they occupied 37.2 percent of the island, finally stopping their military operation along the Green Line. During this Turkish invasion, many Greek-Cypriots had to abandon their houses and fled to the South of the island, while Turkish-Cypriots had to flee north.\textsuperscript{44} According to UN sources this ‘ethnic cleansing’ caused 225,000 people to become refugees in their own country, while approximately 2430 people were missing, 2200 Greek-Cypriot and 230 Turkish-Cypriots. Presumably, the missing persons were killed during battle or were executed during imprisonment. The exact number of refugees, deaths, and missing persons, vary according to the source. The UN condemned the Turkish invasion in resolution 353.\textsuperscript{45}

The Greek-Cypriot narrative pays little attention to the Coup of 1974 and focuses mainly on the Turkish invasion in 1974. The military coup of 1974 is not discussed extensively. The idea for Enosis is abandoned now and therefore the coup forms an ‘uneasy’ event in history.

\textsuperscript{41} Copeaux, “Otherness in the Turkish Historical discourse”,
\textsuperscript{42} Papadakis, \textit{Echoes from the dead zone}, 103-114.
\textsuperscript{43} Turkey said to act according to the Treaty of Guarantee (1960) between Great Britain, Greece and Turkey, in which the 3 guarantor powers agreed on “the duty to consult each other to preserve the territory and the constitutional order of the newly established state of Cyprus and, if such consultation did not lead to agreement on the steps that need to be taken, it permitted each of the guarantor powers to intervene unilaterally with a view to restoring the status quo ante”. In Hannay, \textit{Cyprus: The search for a solution}, 4.
\textsuperscript{44} Hannay, \textit{Cyprus: The search for a solution}, 5-7.
\textsuperscript{45} Klok, \textit{Afrodite en Europa}, 163.
In addition, it reminds Greek-Cypriots of a deed that was condemned internationally and locally.

The following military invasion of Turkey three days later, features most prominently in the history of Cyprus. This action is referred to as “The Catastrophe” and brought misery, injustice and illegal occupation to Cyprus. In every historical account the number of still missing persons, the percentage of still occupied territory and the personal pain and distress of refugees is narrated extensively accompanied by maps, gruesome photo’s and other evidence. This event may be considered as the key event in Greek Cypriot history, through which other historical events are narrated. It is the event that caused Greek-Cypriots to live in a divided country, made them loose their houses and justifies their views of the Turks as their enemy. The atrocities that the barbarous Turks committed on Greek-Cypriots outnumber all the atrocities committed on Turkish-Cypriots in numbers, severity and magnitude.

In the Turkish-Cypriot historical narrative, the Coup of 1974 is a grand absolution. It is presented as a mass movement by Greek-Cypriots, supported by all levels of society and not as an act of few extremists. This presentation of the coup as a movement supported by the Greek-Cypriot population mainly serves as a justification for the military invasion of the Turkish Army a few days later. In this so called Turkish “Happy Peace Operation” the Turkish-Cypriots were relieved from oppression by the Greek-Cypriots and finally Turkish-Cypriots were safeguarded form oppression and suffering from the Greek-Cypriots. After the war, Turkish-Cypriots could finally enjoy freedom and tranquillity.

The immense and widespread suffering this invasion ensued to Greek-Cypriots is omitted completely. Only the atrocities committed against the Turkish-Cypriots during the 1960’s and after the Coup of 1974, are extensively accounted and continuously mentioned.

Both historical narratives finish in 1974, but for two opposite reasons. For Greek-Cypriots 1974 signifies the violent and disastrous end of their independent nation. In 1974, Turkey illegitimately occupied one third of their country and caused the unjust situation that continues to the present day. For Turkish Cypriots 1974 signifies a new beginning. Finally, the Turkish-Cypriots could live in their own state, lost their minority status and could decide on their own governance. More importantly, they were released from violent oppression, discrimination and gained respect as an independent nation.46

46 Among others: Papadakis, Echoes from the dead zone.
The general account of the two, most of the times, opposing historical narratives given here, leaves us no space for details. A more extensive overview of historical details would be food for a separate thesis. Therefore, here is chosen to articulate the four important events in history briefly, to leave room for investigation into the institutionalization of the events in the narratives in both societies by means of education, museums, monuments, myths and commemoration. In the next chapters, we firstly turn to education, because as Bourdieu demonstrated schools are important sites for cultural reproduction, which transmit a cultural capital from the past.  

Before turning to the role of education in the transmission and anchoring of a certain historical discourse on both sides of Cyprus, it is interesting to briefly connect the theory of historical consciousness to the narratives of the two societies. As mentioned before four elements - pain, pride, self-centredness and denial of own committed atrocities – in many cases dominate the shape of a nation’s national history.

In both Right-wing nationalistic narratives, the four events that were assessed are narrated in such a way that they enforce the ideas of self-centeredness, pride, pain and omit self-committed atrocities. Pride is found in both narratives, Greek-Cypriots are proud of their Hellenic cultural background and ancestors and therefore fought for Enosis, while in the Turkish-Cypriot narrative the strong bond between Cyprus and the Turkish history and the willingness to battle and sacrifice is demonstrated. Pain constitutes the main component of the two narratives. Whereas Greek-Cypriots refer to the Turkish invasion and occupation as a disaster that caused suffering and mass killings and continues to live on, the Turkish Cypriots emphasise the suffering during the 1960’s that brought them such misery that a separate state was the only solution. Both stories also omit the atrocities committed by the own nation. The Greek-Cypriots prefer to leave out the intercommunal violence of the 1960’s and the coup of 1974. The Turkish-Cypriots prefer not to speak of the violence and mass killings that accompanied the Turkish invasion. Finally, both histories are self-centred and narrate only about the story of the own nation and only occasionally about the relations with nations other then their archenemy.

The Left-Wing accounts tend to be more moderate, and show past peaceful coexistence and tend to pay more attention to the suffering of both communities. However, as

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will show in the next chapters, they have lost the battle from the Right-Wing nationally shaped pasts when it comes to institutionalisation through education, museums, myths, monuments and commemorations.
3. Education and the Reproduction of History in Cyprus

The historical accounts described in the previous chapter have been institutionalised in the consciousness of the public through different means. The state’s influence on the shaping of historical or collective memory is possible through its control of the public environment. The government decides on which events are commemorated nationally, who deserves a statue and how museums are presented to the public. Undoubtedly, state education in public schools has the biggest influence on the public mind, because through education young people are shaped to become educated citizens. The state designs and approves of curriculum proposals and schoolbooks. It determines the school policy to a large extent and controls what knowledge, culture and heritage is transmitted to the new generations of the state. Therefore, many authors have documented the role of the educational system in constructing and reproducing discourses of national identity. ‘Schools are not only sides of cultural reproduction but also spaces where political struggles are identified, articulated and propagated.’

This function of education has a well-established history in Cyprus as Bryant has demonstrated. In the early days of nationalism on the island, education was the main vehicle of the reproduction of and even transformation into either the “Helleno-Orthodox” or the “Turkish” identity. After the events of 1974 and the break-up of the Republic of Cyprus, education continued to transmit this cultural heritage, but incorporated the events of the 1960’s onwards. This radically changed the message that was transmitted to students. Distress, injustice and even more intolerance were incorporated in national history. Christou demonstrates two major shifts in the Greek-Cypriot education system. First, the ‘Enosis’ views were abandoned and the view as Cyprus as an independent state began to dominate. Secondly, there was a distinct focus on educating the younger generations about the occupied part and the injustice attached to it.

The Turkish-Cypriot education after 1974 has been dominated mainly by a paradigm of ‘revenge’ as Neshe Yashin calls it. The idea exists that the Turkish-Cypriot victims, by the

49 See: Rebecca Bryant, “An Aesthetics of Self”.
50 Miranda Christou, “A double imagination” 289.
existence of their own state, have taken their revenge for all the injustice. Therefore, this paradigm is mainly constructed to justify the status-quo after 1974.  

To demonstrate how education in Cyprus after 1974 has been the main catalyst in the ‘dialectic of intolerance’ through the transmission of an intolerant, subjective and single sided version of history firstly the way history is taught will be explored by examining history textbooks. Some clear examples will be drawn from distorted history textbooks, used in the both societies. Following, a description will be made of other forms of cultural transmission in schools, such as the use of maps and other symbolic statements. Before turning to the next chapter about the role of monuments, commemorations, museums and myths in the larger society, we will again show the important interaction between history and memory in the teaching of history at schools.

**Greek-Cypriot History Textbooks**

In societies that are ethnically divided, where conflicts last for generations and in some cases are still going on, school education reflects the ongoing conflict. Since history education is the main field of study for the students in which they will learn about the events and capitalise their knowledge about the past, this subject is not only the most politicised course, it is also the most effective course in which to create a certain discourse about the past in the public mind. In the previous chapter four events in the history of Cyprus were assessed to lay bare the clashing accounts and the symbolic meaning of the events in the national history. Here the focus will be on the way these four events – Early Greek influence, The arrival of the Myceneans; The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans; The violent years of the 1960’s; the Greek-Cypriot Right-Wing Coup and the subsequent Turkish Military invasion- are depicted in history textbooks, for both primary and secondary education, and how this shaped the incorporation of a certain past in the mind of the student.

In the Greek-Cypriot education system, history is taught in ten grades, the last four grades of elementary school, the three grades of Lyceum and the three grades of Gymnasium. The system of the teaching of history is largely based on the Greek system and some textbooks are even imported from Greece. In primary education two books were published in the 1970’s and with some minor adjustments, they have been used over the past twenty years.

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In the 1990’s new textbooks were published in Cyprus for both Lyceum and Gymnasium. Those textbooks dealt exclusively with the history of the island and were together with the textbooks from Greece, the only books authorised by the government. The Greek and Cypriot books were used interchangeably.  

The assessment of the history textbooks that will be made here is based on secondary literature in which Greek-Cypriot history textbooks are discussed. Because of language restrictions, it was impossible to critically analyse the books personally. In addition, the dependence on secondary literature causes uncertainty on the frequency of the usage of the books in schools. However, as mentioned before, since the assessed books were the only authorised books by the government, we may assume they were used on a large scale in most of the schools. The examples that will be investigated are derived interchangeably from the following primary school books: «Team of ten writers» Istoria Kyprou, The History of Cyprus. For the 3rd and the 4th grade. From the Stone Age to Christianity. (Nicosia 1980) 143 pp. and Andreas Polydorou, Istoria Kyprou, The History of Cyprus. For the 5th and the 6th grades. Form the Roman Period to 1984 (Nicosia 1991) 143 pp. The authors of the books were teachers, primary school inspectors and primary school directors. 

The books for Gymnasium and Lyceum that will be assessed are from the series Istoria tis Kyprou, which consists of four different textbooks, two for gymnasium and two for lyceum. To show the projection of history in these textbooks the four historical events discussed in the previous chapter will serve as examples.

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The Arrival of the Myceaneans and the “Greekness” of Cyprus

Hellenism is the transcendental and trans-historical category informing the historical discourse in the textbooks, which implies historical continuity of Hellenism from ancient to modern times. One primary schoolbook that covers the Roman period up to present time is illustrated with a picture of a row of ancient columns on the front cover. Papadakis observes that as these columns are mostly associated with ancient Greek monuments, this illustration conveys the message that ‘Cyprus is Greek and nothing but Greek’. The “Greekness” of Cyprus is also implied by the vocabulary used in the textbooks. To denominate the inhabitants of the island, all the books employ the term Cypriots (Kyprioi) as equivalent to Greeks (Ellines), even within the same sentence or paragraph. Again, through this practise the authors try to strengthen the belief that from the period of the Mycenaeans the indigenous population of Cyprus was Greek and that the presence of others was parasitic.

To conceal this “Hellenic identity”, one of the books in the series Istoria tis Kyprou states in the foreword: “Many peoples passed over Cyprus and conquered her...But its inhabitants safeguarded its Hellenic character created since the Myceaeans settled in Cyprus...”

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56 Koullapis, “The Subject of History in the Greek-Cypriot Education System” 407-408.
57 Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus”, 7
The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans

The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans (who are depicted as Turks) is extensively narrated in a negative set of descriptions. The section about the Ottoman conquest of Nicosia in one of the primary schoolbooks starts as follows: “It was obvious that one day the Turks would try to grab Cyprus. The way that the state of the Sultan expanded, little Cyprus appeared like a weak mouse in the claws of a wild lion.” This negative tone is also found in the Gymnasium books, which describe the subsequent period under Ottoman rule as follows: “As a part of the Ottoman Empire Cyprus followed the fate of the rest of Hellenism. Insults, humiliations and oppression.” Detailed descriptions and illustrations of the torture and slaughter of “Greeks” by “Turks” enforce this portrayal. One image shows a “Turk” impaling a “Greek”. One primary schoolbook subsequently asks the students: “What kinds of torture did the Cypriots suffer at the hands of the Turks?” The tone that is set with these descriptions, images and questions, clearly depicts Turks as bestially savage and expansionist people and thus creates a very negative bias towards Turks and thus Turkish-Cypriots.58

The violent years of the 1960’s

The interethnic violence in the 1960’s is described only briefly and from an exclusively Greek-Cypriot perspective. The “mutineer Turks” were provocative and aggressive and therefore responsible for the conflict. The period is presented as a period of aggression by the Turks against the Greeks. “The Turkish fighter planes spread catastrophe and dead among the civilian population”. The Greeks are said to have suffered much more than the Turks, despite the fact that the number of Turkish-Cypriots suffering in those years was far greater than the Greek-Cypriot suffering was.59 However, one primary schoolbook describes the years 1960-1974 in the following words: “From 1960 when the Republic was created to 1974 Cyprus enjoyed unprecedented development in all sectors. The population had full employment and

58 Papadakis,” History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 6-9.
59 Papadakis,” History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 8-9
its life constantly improved”. Unfortunately, this quotation completely ignores the living conditions of the Turkish-Cypriots. One fifth of them were displaced and lived in poverty and isolation in the 1960’s.  

In both textbooks for Primary Education the term ‘compatriots’ was introduced with respect to Turkish-Cypriots. Unfortunately, as Koullapis observes this quite positive development lacks essential content because nothing else in the book refers to something ‘positive’ regarding the Turks or Turkish-Cypriots. Therefore, it remains questionable what the influence of this denomination is on the consciousness of the pupil. In the history textbook for lyceum, it is clearly stated that the Greek-Cypriot side until 1968, had regarded the Republic of Cyprus as a transitional state, which would lead to Union with Greece. This self-criticism of the own positions in the past, shows that in the present perception union with Greece is abandoned as a political goal. However, no other shortcomings, mistakes or injustices of the Greek-Cypriot community in the past are discussed.

These minor ‘positive changes’ are in line with the official state policy that aims for unification of the island. Unfortunately, they are too insignificant to make a real change in the overall nationalistic discourse in the books regarding the violent years of the 1960’s.

1974: The Military Coup and the Turkish invasion

In the textbooks, the military government of Greece and some of their fanatic supporters are held responsible for the division of the island in 1974. According to Koulapis, this “specific approach to this important event in the modern history of the island, enables Makarios’ depiction as a hero and on the other hand it gives the impression that the division of the island was an instant mistake made by some fanatics and not the result of a long lasting process (the fight for Enosis) whose beginning is dated back to the early fifties”. There is a great emphasis laid on the Greek-Cypriot refugees who had to abandon their houses after the Turkish invasion, but only minor attention is paid to the military events themselves. The question of the refugees and the presence of the Turkish army in the North are formulated in emotionally charged words. One textbook for Gymnasium mentions the foundation of a separate state in the North, but emphasises the fact that the state is illegal and not recognised by the international community.

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60 Ibidem, 9-10.
63 Koullapis, “The Subject of History in the Greek-Cypriot Education System” 409.
What can be concluded from the representation of the four episodes in history in the Greek-Cypriot textbooks, is that the strongly nationalistic, mostly Right-Wing discourse is institutionalised. However, the practice of degenerating ‘Turks’ and thus Turkish-Cypriots, between who no extinction is made, to barbarous enemies in all episodes of history and stressing the “Greekness” of Cyprus is not in line with the “official” historical narrative created after 1974. In this new outlook, more in line with the Left-Wing account in which ‘peaceful coexistence’ became important, Turkish-Cypriots were positioned as “Turkish-Cypriots” and not as “Turks” anymore. They had coexisted with “Greek-Cypriots” in the past. The new official narrative that was created to support the aim of unification in the future has not been incorporated in the history textbooks yet. The educational practise of describing Turkish-Cypriots as “Turks” or the other and the use of vocabulary with strong negative connotations have enforced negative stereotyping towards Turkish-Cypriots. Papadakis consecrates this to the fact that the history textbooks published after 1974 heavily rely on the historical model that was dominating among Greek-Cypriot historians in the 1960’s when legitimacy for union with Greece was sought.64

**Turkish-Cypriot History Textbooks**

In the Turkish-Cypriot educational system, history is also taught at both primary school, where it is a part of Social Sciences, and at secondary school where it is a subject on its own. The books that have been used up to 2004 –for the changes after 2004, see chapter 5- were produced at periods when the Right monopolised power on the Turkish Cypriot side with the aim of preserving the de facto partition of Cyprus. Therefore, the history of Cyprus is mainly presented as inherent of the history of Turkey.65

The two Turkish-Cypriot textbooks, that will be discussed here, were used up until 2004 for the teaching of history in Turkish Cypriot schools. How frequently the books were used in the schools is unclear, but since they are the only two books discussed in the secondary literature, we might assume they were the most important Turkish-Cypriot history textbooks. The following primary school social sciences textbook will be discussed: MEKB, Milli Egitim ve Kultur Bakanligi (Social Sciences for the 5th Class)66, of which the name and background of the author is unknown. The secondary schoolbooks Kibris Tarihi (The History

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64 Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 11-12
65 Ibidem 12-14.
66 «Author unknown», MEKB, Milli Egitim ve Kultur Bakanligi, Ilkokullar icin Sosyal Bilgiler 5. Sinif (Social Sciences for the 5th Class) (Nicosia, 1999).
of Cyprus) and *Kibris Türk Mücadele Tarihi* (The History of Turkish Cypriot Struggle)\(^{67}\) were both written or co-written by Vehbi Zeki Sertel, who was an active TMT member and subsequently member of the nationalist Right-Wing party UBP.

To assess how these books depict the historical narrative, the four exemplar periods of history will be discussed once more.

**Ancient Cyprus: The arrival of the Mycenaean**
The ancient history of Cyprus is hardly addressed and the books most definitely do not emphasise the early Greek influences. In the textbooks the history of Cyprus starts with the Ottoman conquest of 1571. Ancient history is regarded as insignificant and mostly left out the narrative. The few references made to the connection between Greece and Cyprus have a denying character. The books make clear that Cyprus has no historical connection at all with Greece and stress the importance of Cyprus for Turkey. In *Kibris Tarihi*, the author emphasises this by saying: "Cyprus is 600 miles away from Greece. Therefore, Cyprus has no strategic importance for Greece. The Greeks, who exist today in Cyprus, are not Greeks. They are, as many foreign historians have accepted, remains, relics of different nations that invaded Cyprus throughout history. Therefore Greece has in this sense also nothing to do with Cyprus...".\(^{68}\) To give this rejection of primordial ties with Greece more strength, in the Turkish-Cypriot books, Greek-Cypriots are designated as ‘Rums’, a Turkish term. Nowadays the term refers to three different categories; The Greek-Orthodox community living in the Ottoman Empire, present-days Greeks who live in Turkey and Greek-Cypriots. By using the term *Rum*, the books deny Greek-Cypriots their own identity and shows that they are different from Greeks.\(^{69}\)


\(^{68}\) Kizilyürek, “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”, 436-437.

\(^{69}\) Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 13-14.
The conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans

History in the Turkish-Cypriot textbooks starts with the conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans and according to this logic, Cyprus has been Turkish for three quarters of its history; From the Ottoman conquest until the British take-over in 1878.\textsuperscript{70} The vocabulary used in both the books implies a strong geographical and historical connection between Cyprus and Anatolia. ‘\textit{Our martyrs conquered Cyprus in 1571 for the cost of 80,000 martyrs’ lives. The Turks ruled Cyprus until 1878, for three centuries, and treated the native population in a very good manner. They brought freedom and justice to the island. The Turks developed Cyprus and built so many monuments, which gave Cyprus the Turkish Character. In short one can say that Cyprus is historically, geographically, strategically and economically tied to Anatolia and a part of Asia Minor.}’\textsuperscript{71} The author tries to demonstrate that Cyprus is Turkish because of the 80,000 Ottoman soldiers who became martyrs during the conquest of the island and the subsequent three centuries of Ottoman - thus Turkish – rule determine the Turkish character of Cyprus.\textsuperscript{72}

The violent years of the 1960’s

The period 1963-1974 is the central element in all the history textbooks. In the secondary schoolbook \textit{Kibris Tarihi}, this period is presented as barbaric onslaught of “Rums” against “Turks”. Aiming at eradication of the “Turks”, the “Rums” displayed such savagery and barbarism that the world has seldom seen. The period is presented in detail, day by day, when battles, killing, mass graves or displacements took place. To give these descriptions extra strength the books are illustrated with gruesome pictures and other graphic descriptions. One picture shows a man kneeling next to a pile of corpses from a mass grave.\textsuperscript{73} Some quotations

\textsuperscript{70} Ibidem, 13.
\textsuperscript{71} Kizilyürek, “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks” 436.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibidem, 436-438.
\textsuperscript{73} Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 14.
of the author will further demonstrate the biased and strongly ethno-centric narration of the events:

“When the republic of Cyprus was founded in 1960, the Greeks prepared a genocide plan to massacre all the Turks, in order to realise Enosis. [...] At the end of 1963, the Greeks, for this aim, attacked the Turks, and gave examples of unique barbarism, which are rare to be found in the world. [...] In 1964, Turkey sent warplanes to Cyprus. The coward Greeks and Greek-Cypriots disappeared. The 34 Turkish flagged warplanes made the Greeks and Greek-Cypriots vomit blood. [...] In 1967, Greeks and Greek-Cypriots attacked and looted two Turkish villages. Among the dead bodies, some were cut into pieces.” 74 These horrific descriptions, combined with illustrations create an account in which the Turkish-Cypriots become victims of the merciless barbarous Greeks and Greek-Cypriots.

The supplementary secondary schoolbook Kibris Türk Mücadele Tarihi (The History of Turkish Cypriot Struggle) is devoted exclusively to these years. The book is telling stories about the “spoiled Greeks” who were killing the Turks to achieve Enosis and the “Turkish Heroes”, who were bravely resisting to Enosis. A long quotation will give a clear example of the discourse in this book: “Greeks are dreamers and liars because the Greek throughout the history is asking for something. He demands dollars from Americans, and pounds from England. He demands money, he demands territory. For example from his neighbour Albania, he want Epirus, from Bulgaria, he wants Macedonia. In the past, he wanted from Turkey the whole western Asia Minor. Now he demands Cyprus. If he wants Egypt tomorrow because of some Greek element in Egypt, do not be surprised. In order to defend our rights and freedoms; we will resist you. And for this aim, if we don’t find a piece of stick or stone, we will take in hand the bones of our 80,000 martyrs who died for this land, and resisted to you.” 75

The fact that a separate book is dedicated to these years and uses strong nationalistic language and negative stereotyping, implies the centrality of the events in the 1960’s in the historical narrative taught at Turkish-Cypriot schools.

74 Kizilyürek, “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks” 438-439.
75 Kibris Türk Mücadele Tarihi (The History of Turkish Cypriot Struggle) in Kizilyürek, “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks” 441.
1974: The Military Coup and the Turkish invasion

In Kibris Tarihi, the secondary school textbook, the Coup of 1974 is described as follows: “As Greeks tried to materialise Enosis in 1974, Turkey intervened to hinder Enosis. Greeks who once resisted against the Italians by saying ‘OXI’, tried to do the same, this time with Turks. However, they had forgotten a point: in front of them, there was not an Italian but a TURK.” (Emphasis from the author of the textbook, written in capital letters.) The author continues to describe the subsequent Turkish military invasion, which is presented as the ‘grand finale’ of history that brought the Turkish-Cypriot victory. In this ‘grand finale’, there is space for the atrocities of the ‘other’: “After the Turkish operation had begun, the Greeks gave examples of unique barbarism in the defenceless Turkish villages. They buried alive, without exception, children, women, men and elderly men.” The author ends the description of the war in the following words: “During the operations towards East and West, the Greek and Greek-Cypriot forces knelt in front of MEHMETCIKK’S (a word for sympathetic, smooth and humanist presentation of Turkish soldiers) sharp sword, diffused and collapsed. These were coward Levant herds, what Grivas and Makarios called ankle-children of Greeks and considered undefeatable, who could only kill defenceless Turks. Were not thrown into the sea the grandfathers of the same nation on the 9th of September 1922 in Izmir? History is repeating itself. This time, the Turkish Armed Forces were defeating Hellenic imperialism in Turkish Cyprus.”

The invasion of the Turkish army in 1974, is in all books described as a “Happy peace Operation” that came to safeguard the “Turks of Cyprus”. The Turkish army is described as “Heroic”, while the suffering of the Greek-Cypriots is not mentioned. As Papadakis and others have observed “this version of history legitimised the partitionist aims of the Right through the argument that the two communities can never live together”.

Conclusion

The presentation of the four examples in the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot textbooks is clearly dictated by the Right-wing nationalistic discourse in each society and reinforces the ‘Dialectic of Intolerance’. Both the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot examples from textbooks demonstrate that a strong nationalistic rhetoric, with the aim to indoctrinate the young students with a nationalistic view and maybe even intends to create nationalistic citizens. In addition, there is a strong sense of exclusiveness and sometimes-even xenophobia.

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76 Kizilyürek, “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks” 438-439.
77 Yiannis Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 14.
present in the books, which almost naturally results in very strong negative images of the other in the mind of the pupils.

The interpretation of the same events in the textbooks used in Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot society consequently led to two opposing historical stories. In both societies the Right has monopolised the contents of the books, while left-wing interpretations of the events in the books are almost non-existent. The only exception is the introduction of the word ‘compatriot’ and some criticism on the Greek-Right wing coup in 1974 in one of the Greek-Cypriot books. These ‘new’ more left-wing elements in the narrative are in line with the official policy of the Greek-Cypriot government, which aims to include ‘peaceful coexistence’ and abandon the idea of Enosis, in order to reunite the island. However, these changes in the books are so minor that the overall discourse of exclusiveness and superiority continues to determine the narrative of the books.

The transmission of historical consciousness through other educational means

In addition to textbooks, there are many other forms of the transmission of history, heritage and memory in a school. On both sides of the Green Line the use of personal memories, photographs, maps, flags, symbols and slogans are used in education to give the incorporation of historical consciousness extra strength. As mentioned before, the textbooks that are used in schools employ citations of violent experiences and pictures to give body to historical events. Not only in textbooks, is the use of graphics employed. The images of mass graves, people in grief and other horrendous pictures are shown to the students, for example while visiting museums. However, reading repeatedly about memories of pain and suffering, and seeing photographs of dead bodies, has an immense effect on the students psyche. The stories and pictures create a story of horror that shows ‘the real face’ of “the enemy” or “the other”. As Nashin describes this process: “These photographs capture those moments in history, a past that is embodied in our souls and imply our unavoidable separation from those generalised ‘others’ who are responsible for this.” They were the perpetrators and we were the victims.

Another tool to visualise history and argumentation of a certain historical discourse is the use of maps in classrooms. As Anderson proclaims, maps are tool for a nation to imagine

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78 Neshe Yashin, “School is a textbook” 420. describes the impact of visits to the ‘Museum of Barbarism’ (see chapter 3), on Turkish-Cypriot school children. The frequency of the visits to museums is unknown.
79 Neshe Yashin, “School is a textbook” 420.
the geography of its domination and the legitimacy of its ancestry.\textsuperscript{80} In Cyprus the use of maps has also become an important tool to show the island as geographically and historically belonging to either one of the ‘motherlands’. Turkish-Cypriot maps show Cyprus lying off the coast of Turkey, Syria and Egypt, the vertical dimension is dominant on the map. Greece is consequently nowhere to be found on the map and sometime even a note is made that Cyprus belongs geographically to Turkey. Greek-Cypriot maps, on the contrary, emphasise the horizontal dimension of the map, which shows Cyprus as lying in the Eastern Mediterranean and the maps stretches far enough to include some of the Greek islands. In the standard maps used in many schoolbooks, the problem of the distance between Greece and Cyprus is resolved by placing Cyprus in a bottom-right box, and thereby positioning it alongside Crete.\textsuperscript{81} Consequently, the ‘nationalistically influenced’ maps that are hanging on the walls of the classrooms and the maps that are depicted in books become the geographic reality for students.

In both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot education the use of slogans is a strong method of reminding students of their national ‘duties’, the remembrance of their national history. In Greek-Cypriot education the slogan “I know, I don’t forget and I struggle” is written on posters in classrooms and has been the primary objective in teaching students about their past. The slogan is employed with the aim of “\textit{maintaining the students unwavering morale to struggle and understand, without prejudice or intolerance, their rights and responsibilities in a semi-occupied patrída that maintains a European outlook}”.\textsuperscript{82} A book was published for primary school under the title ‘\textit{Γνωρίζω, ∆εν Ξεχνώ και Αγωνίζοµαι}’ (I know, I don’t forget and I struggle) and the phrase has dominated the official and unofficial discourses on education in Greek-Cypriot society.\textsuperscript{83} Interestingly enough, on the north side of the Green line a similar slogan; “We won’t forget” (In Turkish \textit{Unutmam}) is used to remember the past and serves as a guideline in how to teach and remember the national past, or more accurately national memory. Pupils learn the impact of this slogan at an early age and are reminded of its purpose time after time.

The implementation of these phrases throughout education therefore implies a nationally shaped and restrictive method of teaching practice, which together with the biased books culminates in a monocausal and one-sided educational discourse.

\textsuperscript{80} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 163-164.
\textsuperscript{81} Yiannis Papadakis, “Greek Cypriot Narratives of History” 149.
\textsuperscript{82} Christou, “A double imagination” 291.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibidem, 291-292.
Other symbols in schools such as flags, statues and poems, further reinforce the dominance of nationalistic interpretations of the past and emphasise the role of memory in the interpretation of past events. Every Turkish-Cypriot or Greek-Cypriot school is decorated with national flags. Turkish-Cypriot schools have two flags at the entrance of their school: a flag of the TRNC and a Turkish flag. Most probably, those flags are also found inside the schools. Two other flags, the Cypriot flag and a Greek flag also richly decorate Greek-Cypriot schools. Also inside the school building, the flags are found. In Turkish-Cypriot schools, in addition to the flags, every school has a statue of Kemal Atatürk at the entrance, which reminds the students of their “Turkish” nationality. The great founder of the Turkish Republic is important to remind the students of their Turkish cultural heritage.

Furthermore, in Turkish-Cypriot education poems are of importance in the teaching of national culture and heritage. One Turkish-Cypriot poem recited in the schools morning prayer opens with the following words: “I am a Turk, I am right, I am hardworking” and it ends like this: “I give my whole existence as a present to the existence of Turkishness”. Hence, poems about the nation, national achievements or national suffering can be a powerful means to build collective memory and identity.

**Conclusion**

What might be concluded from this brief assessment of the teaching of ‘history’ in Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot schools is that in both educational systems the ‘dialectic of intolerance’ is nourished through monocausal, one-sided and nationalistically interpretations of the past. The dominant Right-Wing discourse leaves no space for diverging interpretations and pupils are being taught how to *memorise* their past, instead of critically assess the past. The slogans that dominate the educational practices put memory at the forefront and therefore make the past a static object, that should remind us of our national duties and rights. This leaves no space for teachers to transmit skills that are important in the appraisal of history. Critical thinking, multiperspectivity and open-mindedness are denied to the students which results in the formation of citizens that are nationalistically shaped and only believe in their own version of the past. Makriyianni and Psaltis therefore refer to the Cypriot education as a system in which national ‘heritage’—which is static and leaves no space for discussion—is taught instead of national ‘history’—which requires critical reflection. The passive

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84 Yashin, “School is a textbook” 414.
85 Ibidem, 414-415.
acceptance of one perspective in which there is no room for debate, creates the vicious circle of an ‘intractable conflict’.  

In the next chapter, the influence of memory and nationalism on the national historical narrative and its institutionalisation in society is considered by discussing museums, myths, monuments and commemorations. In what way do they contribute to ‘history’ as a part of the intractable conflict?

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4. Museums, Monuments, Myths and Commemorations

Despite the fact that education might be the main conveyor of a certain historical discourse to society, because it shapes the mind of future generations, there are other means by which a government or state can monopolise the historical discourse in a society. The foundation of museums and the final vote on what they display, the maintenance of monuments, official commemorations and the use of myths to promote, for example, tourism, are all means by which, sometimes explicitly and other times implicitly, the historical discourse is enforced and laid on a society. In this chapter, the display of history and heritage in a few Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot museums will be discussed in the context of their contribution to the ‘official’ historical narrative. In addition, the maintenance and destruction of monuments and other historical sides on both sides of the island after 1974 shows the power of politics over the truth of historical evidence. Subsequently, the cultivation of myths into the history of the island and their imaginative strength will be demonstrated. Finally, there will be a short note on the practice of commemoration of historical events in both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot society.\(^\text{87}\)

Museums
According to Anderson “Museums and the museumising imagination are both profoundly political. In some cases the proliferation of museums […] suggests a process of political inheriting at work.”\(^\text{88}\) On both sides of Cyprus, museums can be considered as being part of that process of inheriting. A great deal of the museums in Cyprus accommodates permanent exhibitions that display cultural, religious or historical artefacts, which form elements or serve as pieces of evidence of the national history. In some cases museums are designed to ‘tell a story’, the story of historical events or a certain important episode of the grand national history.\(^\text{89}\) Here the focus will be mainly on museums with the aim to ‘tell a story’.

\(^{87}\) Note that another vigorous conveyor of historical consciousness namely media – television, radio and newspapers - will not be discussed in this thesis, since during research not enough studies or academic reviews on the depiction of history through media could be found. A separate and extensive investigation into this subject matter is therefore food for further research.

\(^{88}\) Anderson, Imagined Communities, 178-179.

\(^{89}\) K. Hudson, Museums of Influence (Cambridge 1987) 140.
Turkish-Cypriot Museums

The TRNC houses fourteen museums. There are three icon museums, an archaeological museum, folk art and ethnographical museums, and six museums dedicated to historic persons or periods. Of the last category, here three museums will be discussed, to serve as examples for the museumising culture in the north of Cyprus. Due to research restrictions, not all museums could be examined. However, the three chosen museums serve as good examples of how the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus and the violent years of the 1960’s are depicted in museums. Therefore, an assessment of the role of museums in the institutionalisation of a certain historical discourse in society can be made.

The Turkish-Cypriot Museum of National Struggle was founded in 1978 and aims to tell the visitor a historical narrative of struggle and final victory after the Turkish invasion in 1974. The museum is housed in a modern concrete building on the Venetian Walls that was specially designed for the museum. It is situated next to an army camp, which underlines its affiliation with Turkish Nationalism. To emphasise this course of history, the museum is divided into three sections, the period from 1878 to 1955, period from 1955 to 1974, and the last section that covers the ‘peace operation’ up until now. This set up, makes the visitor of the museum experience the painful days of the Turkish-Cypriot people. At the entrance one can find a replica of the island of Cyprus, marking the Turkish-Cypriot monuments dedicated to martyrs and heroes. Next to this replica, a Turkish flag and a statue of Atatürk are found. On of Atatürk’s famous saying is painted on the wall: “Ne Mutlu Tukum Diyene”: Lucky the person who can call himself a Turk. The exhibit the visitor sees upon entering is a board with drawings depicting the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus by Sultan Selim and a painting showing Ottoman warriors on the walls of a city. At the main section, that is dealing with the events of 1963-1974, the museum exhibits photographs and paintings of Turkish-Cypriots as refugees, killings by Greek-Cypriots and mass graves. The plight of becoming a refugee is depicted dramatically for example with a photograph that shows a group of women on the run, holding both their belongings and children. The TMT fighters are commemorated, by the exhibition of pictures of dead TMT heroes, that are arranged in such a way that they form the TMT initials. Even guns are displayed to show the military superiority of the Turkish-Cypriots. The last section of the museum, devoted to 1974 and onwards, is light, spacious and gives the

Different images of the same past  

visitor the feeling of freedom and air, to experience what Turkish-Cypriots experienced after the “Happy Peace Operation”.  

In addition to this museum, the north of Nicosia houses another Turkish-Cypriot museum, called the “Museum of Barbarism”, ‘a place where violence persists to live’. The museum is situated in a house where in 1963 Greek-Cypriots shot a woman and her three children to dead. Mr Yusuf Guddum, the husband of the killed woman, kept the house as it was after the incident and still lives in one of the rooms. The museum is described like this “The date is the 24th of December, 1963….The onslaught of the Greeks against the Turks, which started three days ago, has been going on in all its ferocity; and defenceless women, old men and children are being brutally killed by Greeks. And Kumsal area of Lefkosa witnesses the worst example of the Greeks savage bloodshed […] This incident is a glaring example of Greek barbarism.” A photograph of the woman and her children has become a symbol of victimisation in Turkish-Cypriot society. To emphasise the horror, everything in the house is left untouched; bloodstains, hair and parts of the shoes of the children are still there. Pictures of dead bodies and mass graves are hanging on the walls of the rooms. Turkish-Cypriot children are taken to this museum on trips organised by school, to be reminded of the barbarous acts of the “Greeks”.  

A third, small but interesting museum to touch briefly here, is the Canbulat museum in Famagusta, a city now under Turkish-Cypriot control and which has a history of besiege and conquest. The museum is located within the Venetian Walls of the mediaeval city and marks the spot where the Ottoman warrior Canbulat fell during the siege of Famagusta in 1571. The tomb of Canbulat has for centuries played an important role in Turkish-Cypriot folk tradition, and is therefore housed in a special museum dedicated to Canbulat’s brave

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92 Yashin, “School is a textbook” 415-417.
Different images of the same past

During the Ottoman conquest of Famagusta, Canbulat, the Ottoman general, lost his life in the battle with the Venetians, when “*they positioned a wheel covered with knives at the Arsenal Bastion of the city walls, in order to cut to pieces any of the opposing army trying to force their way in. Canbulat, ‘one of the Ottomans bravest generals’ put the wheel out of action by riding his white horse onto it, his head being cut off and his horse torn to shreds in the process.*”

According to Scott, the Canbulat museum has its roots in a bloody battle, which established the Turkish presence in Cyprus, and the climax to a visit to the museum - the inner sanctum housing the tomb of Canbulat - is marked by a proliferation of the paraphernalia of war. Yet, it is not entirely comparable with the museum of Barbarism or of National Struggle, because it has a more nuanced reading than those museums. Next to swords and shotguns, the museum also displays ethnographic artefacts, antique ceramics and pottery, ornate bridal dresses, purses and scarves, which emphasises the civilian and female presence. Scott furthermore stresses that the museum lacks a clear message that integrates the story into the national narrative, because the link that is suggested between 1571 and 1974 is not clearly explained in the description of the events. However, there is obviously a strong narrative appeal and nationalist associations.

Taken as a whole the Canbulat museum can be placed in the Turkish-Cypriot historical tradition in which martyrdom is a source of national pride. The mere fact that a museum is contributed to the dead of a heroic Ottoman warrior, who lost his life during the conquest of Cyprus, reveals the deep-rooted attachment to martyrdom and sacrifice. The museum therefore fits perfectly in the grand national Turkish-Cypriot narrative in which the claim to Cyprus is based on conquest and struggle, instead of primordial ancestral claims.

**Greek-Cypriot Museums**

In the Republic of Cyprus, thirteen museums are listed on the website of the department of Antiquities, of which most display ancient artefacts, traditional goods or architecture. Eight of the museums are devoted to the display of ancient artefacts that were found in Cyprus.

Here we will discuss the biggest Archaeological museum found in Cyprus, the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. The examination of this museum is based on own observation. First, we

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94 Julie Scott, “Mapping the past: Turkish Cypriot narratives of time and place in the Canbulat Museum, Northern Cyprus”, *History and Anthropology* 13 (2002) 217.
95 Scott, “Mapping the past, 219.
96 Ibidem, 220.
Different images of the same past

Master thesis Marleen Brouwer

turn to a museum that is not listed on the department’s website, but which is nevertheless still open to visitors, ‘The National Struggle Museum’.

In addition to the Turkish-Cypriot “National Struggle Museum”, a Greek-Cypriot version exists, situated south of the dividing line and telling the story of the Greek-Cypriot struggle for Enosis. The museum is housed situated next to the Archbishopric ecclesiastical centre. This reinforces the centrality of the religious symbolism that can be found in the museum. The condition of the museum is deteriorating, due to the relative neglect of the museum, which can be explained by the change of the official outlook on history after 1974, in which the struggle for Enosis was abandoned.

The Greek-Cypriot Museum was founded in 1960, a year in which the idea of Enosis still was a political goal. The introduction to the museum explains the goal of the museum: “In the 1950’s Cypriots carried out a plebiscite in support of union with mother Greece. [...] Because Great Britain refused to respect the decision of the people, the Cypriots organised a secret liberation movement, the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters, EOKA. The struggle broke out in 1955 and all the people took part, even the children. After four years of unimagined heroism and sacrifice, the fight ended with the unjust London-Zurich Agreement. The museum exhibits illustrate the ethos and spirit of this struggle.”

The goal of the museum is illustrated again in paintings in Romantic style that show “the years of slavery” under Turkish and British rule. One painting portrays Cyprus as an imprisoned woman, guarded by a Turk. The second painting has the same composition, but now the Turk is a British Lion. In addition, the identification with Greece is further represented by the nom de guerre of Georgios Grivas, the military leader of the EOKA movement. He is called Digenes, who was a folk hero of the Byzantine Empire, supposedly the protector of the empire against infidel attacks. The association between the struggle and religion that became a powerful element in the Greek nationalism is emphasised further on in the museum, in the so-called execution chamber. This room exhibits a replica of a gallow, which is the symbol of Greek nationalism. It is surrounded by candles, the sacred lamp and pictures on the wall that are like icons. Furthermore, earth form the Acropolis and a laurel wreath of the National Theatre of Greece both covered with a Greek flag, are laid on an altar which is inscribed with the names of the ones fallen during the struggle. According to the museum guide, the room is arranged in such a way as to remind one of the most sacred part of a church; the sanctuary. Other rooms of the museum exhibit photographs, of important

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events during the struggle or of personalities. Personal belongings of the fighters are also on display. The British are depicted as the biggest enemies, but the Turks are referred to as ‘barbaric’ and form the next big enemy after the British.99

The second museum that will be briefly touched upon here is the Cypriot Archaeological Museum. The museum is located in Nicosia and falls under the department of Antiquities. It exhibits artefacts, statues, tombs, vases and all kinds of other antique objects that were excavated in Cyprus the past century. This is the biggest museum of antiquities in Cyprus; other small museums are located next to the side of excavation. In fourteen different rooms, the artefacts from different periods and influences are on display in a chronological order and thematical succession. The exhibition starts with the display of objects from the Neolithic period and continues to shows the influences of different cultures, such as Egyptian, Assyrian, Hellenic and Roman on the style of art. Finally, there are some thematic rooms, dedicated to bronze crafts, tombs and clay statues. 100 As Anderson claims, post-independent states inherited a form of political museumising of archaeology from their colonial predecessors, which shows the inheritance of ancient cultures.101 The Cyprus Archaeological Museum, founded in 1880, continued to function in the short period of independence after 1960 and is now still in use. Because the museum was founded before the outbreak of vigorous nationalistic sentiments in both societies, it was not created to support the nationalistic story of either one of the communities. Therefore the museum not been touched by the conflicts and Greek-Cypriot nationalism as much other museums, but it might still serve as a sensitive and effective tool for nationalism because it leaves space for interpretation.

The museum exhibits artefacts from different periods in Cypriot history and explicitly shows influences from different cultures that have flourished on the island. Despite the fact that the museum’s exhibition can be manipulated as a form ‘evidence’ for the Greek-Cypriot claim of ancient Greek ancestry, there is no clear narrative to be found in the museum that emphasises the “Greekness” of Cyprus. The exhibition could form a strong force of nationalist history; by means of its set up and provided descriptions, the museum has the ability to create a superior Greek discourse. It is clear that the exhibited archaeological

101 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 182-183.
evidence is in need of interpretation and the way the artefacts are exhibited now, does not push the visitor towards an exclusive or strong nationalistic discourse.

Conclusion

Overall, the conclusion can be drawn that the museums that were assessed in this section, do not serve or catalyse the official historical narratives on both sides of the island to the same extent. In the north of Cyprus, the three museums that were considered here, are in line with the national narrative and are therefore forces of institutionalisation of that narrative into society. The Museum of National Struggle and the Museum of Barbarism, clearly narrate a historical tale, which fits into the Turkish-Cypriot grand historical narrative. The means by which those museums express the narrative evokes exclusiveness and negativity towards Greek-Cypriots and Greeks. The Canbulat Museum is less outspoken anti-Greek and displays less suffering and pain, but clearly tells a story that reinforces another Turkish historical element of importance, that of martyrdom. By emphasising the heroism of an Ottoman martyr in the conquest of Cyprus, his bloody death and the victory he brought about, the element of martyrdom becomes vivid and thus an important element of history that is remembered.

The Greek-Cypriot museums express a more contradictory historical narrative. The Museum of National Struggle is an inheritance of the 1960’s. It is therefore a tribute to the struggle for Enosis, a policy that is now officially abandoned and an episode that does not serve as a central element in the historical narrative anymore. However, the museum expresses animosity towards the British colonial government and Turks, of which the last especially, still forms a central factor in the national narrative. The story that is conveyed in the museum is therefore not a generally accepted story anymore, but still maintains some fundamentals of the currently accepted historical narrative in Cyprus. The Cypriot Archaeological Museum, gives a far more moderated view on history, not only because the museum does not fall in the category of museums that ‘tell a story’, but also because it displays the archaeological diversity of the island of Cyprus. The museum is not designed to give the visitor an account of certain events, but shows the ancient cultural heritage of the island. The fact that both the Greek-Cypriot museums’ foundations date from before the division of the island explains their partly non-compliance with the grand national narrative as it evolved after 1974. The National Struggle museum nevertheless still serves as a strong vehicle of nationalistic conceit and exclusiveness. Finally, in the Cyprus Archaeological Museum, certainly, there are elements of the exhibition that fit in the historical narrative,
for example, it can serve as proof of the influence of ancient Greek culture on the island- and the question therefore arises if this museum is politically innocent in a society with such a distorted view on history.

Monuments and sites of heritage
Cyprus is covered with monuments, such as churches, mosques and ancient rumbles and excavations. Those tangible pieces of cultural heritage have often become political evidence and in some cases victims of the nationalist narrative. “Across the spectrum of contemporary archaeology few would deny that political realities impact powerfully and often negatively on both archaeological practice and interpretation. We hear more and more of archaeology’s role in the construction and legitimisation of cultural or ethnic identity, and of the destruction, sale and obliteration of archaeological pasts from their modern cultural contexts. Such ‘cultural cleansing’ is nourished by the consequences of war, nationalistic fervour and inter-ethnic conflict.” After 1974 in Cyprus heritage has been incorporated as an important element in the national narrative, which has had different consequences on the different parts of the island.

In the northern part of Cyprus, since the Turkish invasion and the foundation of the TRNC, archaeological sites have been destructed and systematically looted on a state level, to such an extent that a UNESCO report speaks of ‘cultural cleansing’. A number of monuments such as churches, monasteries, cemeteries, mosaics, icons and frescoes, were looted, destroyed, whitewashed or even removed, in order to erase the non-Turkish history and strengthen the Turkish identity. In 1995, 106 different monuments were affected by this Turkish-Cypriot practise of erasing the Greek or Orthodox historical sides that marked neighbourhoods or areas and gave them a Greek-Cypriot or Orthodox character. This situation of ongoing destruction in the northern part of Cyprus is not accidental and is not the result of unavoidable damage during hostilities. The historical past is best preserved in landscape or material culture and symbolised by monuments. Therefore, the systematic destruction in Northern Cyprus is a case of deliberate elimination of the Greek-Orthodox culture by the Turkish-Cypriot government. This destruction has not yet led to a complete

103 Knapp and Antoniadou “Archaeology, politics and the cultural heritage of Cyprus”, 24-28.
elimination of Greek culture and some sites of heritage are preserved, however usually badly
maintained. Moslem and Ottoman monuments on the other hand are preserved and
maintained and serve as national monuments.

The guidebooks that are printed to describe the Turkish or Moslem monuments
describe them, strikingly in line with their national narrative, as follows: “The Moslem and
Ottoman monuments firmly connect the history of North Cyprus with Turkishness.” The
various ancient Greek monuments that are still left, are described to refer to Roman or
Byzantine ages, but not to ancient Hellenic culture.\textsuperscript{104}

The practise of destruction and degeneration of Greek culture is in line with the
Turkish-Cypriot national narrative in which the Greek-Orthodox culture is dismissed as one
of the many cultures and certainly not perceived as linear with the current Greek aspects of
Cypriot culture. Therefore, all evidence that points at a solid presence of either ancient Greek
culture or Orthodox influences is destroyed. This radical policy enforces the Turkish-Cypriot
nationalistic narrative and might be the most controversial way to institutionalise a certain
discourse on society.

On the contrary, in the south of the island, in the Republic of Cyprus, archaeology flourishes
and monuments and heritage are excavated and well maintained. Resources are continually
invested in the development of young archaeologists for the future. A long tradition of
foreign expeditions to excavate ancient sites already exists. This interest in the excavation
and maintenance of cultural heritage is closely linked to its role in Greek-Cypriot national
consciousness. As Knapp and Antoniadou quote Silverman: “For a nation like the Republic
of Cyprus, with its obvious political attachment to images of Greek antiquity, the extensive
excavation and presentation of classical cities like Phapos, Kition and Ammathus are clearly
linked to a modern, national self-consciousness.”\textsuperscript{105} Therefore in the South of the island
archaeology and the maintenance of cultural heritage is struggling with an overburden of
popular memory. The ancient Greek cities and monuments are evidence of the linear Hellenic
culture and these primordial ties are still a dominant element in the national narrative of the
Greek-Cypriots. Therefore, divergent viewpoints on the interpretation of archaeological sites
still have a long way to go in the nationally shaped historical perspective.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{104} Julie Scott, “World heritage as a model for citizenship: The case of Cyprus”, \textit{International Journal of

\textsuperscript{105} Knapp and Antoniadou “Archaeology, politics and the cultural heritage of Cyprus”, 15.

\textsuperscript{106} Scott, “World heritage as a model for citizenship”, 112-115.
In addition, a short note will be made here about the erection of new monuments of remembrance after the war in 1974. Next to the maintenance or destruction of heritage, new monuments to remember historical events or war victims form a powerful medium to transmit the importance of certain historical events or periods in the history of a nation.

In the north of Cyprus, two striking monuments have been erected. The largest is the monument on Five Mile Beach, where the Turkish troops landed in 1974. Eleven grey cement columns rise at an angle of sixty degrees and point skyward and land inward. These columns are said to represent the 11 troubled years between 1963 and 1974. The inscriptions on the columns covey a clear message:

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Victory, Joy, Peace, Tranquillity,
All from our Army

They fought like heroes
Until the motherland came

May the enemy be shamed
For the massacres they have carried out
The Turkish community of Cyprus
Has suffered attacks in its own land

Let all men live as brothers
In freedom and peace.
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The themes addressed in this monument are also expressed in another big monument just outside the walled city of Famagusta. This monument is a complex composition of figures in watchful and defensive poses. At the basin lays a wounded soldier in the arms of his wife. At the top is the head of Atatürk, as the unifier of the Turkish nation and the symbol of unity in times of struggle.

In the south of the island, no such monuments have been erected. A few reasons can be found for this. Firstly, a “disaster”, namely the Turkish invasion of 1974, does not deserve a monument to remember. What can be commemorated are the victims of the war. However, since usually victims are remembered at the place were they lost their lives, these monuments should be erected in the north, to which there is no access. Above all, the government of the republic of Cyprus treats the division of Cyprus as a temporary situation, which will change again in the future. Therefore, no monuments that signify the division should be erected.

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107 King and Russell, “The cultural reconstruction of political reality: Greek and Turkish Cyprus since 1974” *Anthropological Quarterly* 55 (1982) 8
108 King and Russell, “The cultural reconstruction of political reality:” 8.
Overall, heritage, archaeological sites and monuments play a big role in the reconstruction of the historical narrative in Cyprus. In the North the Hellenic-Orthodox heritage is victim of ‘cultural cleansing’ on a serious scale, while the Ottoman and Moslem heritage was preserved and has served as an argument to strengthen the “Turkishness” of Cyprus. This is further reinforced by the erection of monuments that signify the Turkish-Cypriot struggle for their own nation. This strong Turkish-Cypriot nationalistic expression in the policy towards public heritage and monuments, partly finds an answer in the South. In the Republic of Cyprus, the influential “Philhellenism” in the historical discourse has influenced the treatment of heritage and monuments. There is a long archaeological tradition and ancient Greek sites form a reference to Greek culture. The heritage forms proof of the primordial “Greekness” of Cyprus.

**Myths**

Myths can serve as strong catalysts of nationalistic history writing and usually reach out to every part of society, because myths are tightly connected to oral traditions. The term myth has different meanings, but here is referred to a myth as a traditional story or a story that explains how human kind and the world came to their present form. Myths are so powerful because they usually feature a hero, heroin or heroic act that symbolises national characteristics. Especially ‘ethnic’ nationalism usually heavily relies on historical myths, because ‘ethnicity is largely ‘mythic’ and ‘symbolic’ in character, and because myths, symbols, memories and values are carried in and by forms of artefacts and activities”.

The most famous and imaginative myth that is tightly connected to the island of Cyprus, is the myth of Aphrodite. In Greek mythology, there are different versions of the myth of Aphrodite, but according to one of the most famous versions, Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Aphrodite the goddess of sex and love, was born out of the sea at a rock near the Cypriot south coast. She was born out of the castration of Uranus by his son Cronos. Uranus genitals fell in the sea and out of this fertility grew Aphrodite. The fact that a Greek goddess was supposedly born in the waters of Cyprus, ultimately serves the Greek-Cypriots with the primordial proof of the Greekness of Cyprus. Like Aphrodite, Cyprus was Greek since the beginnings of history. To proof this claim, Greek-Cypriots have pointed to continuities in rituals and costumes linked to Aphrodite from ancient to contemporary times. These claims

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were in line with research conducted by folklorists that aimed at the identification of surviving ancient Greek traditions into modern times. Mythology is thus strongly used to support the nationalistic view of history and as Papadakis describes, “If history has often been mythologised for political considerations, this serves as an instance where mythology was instead historicised.”

The incorporation of the myth of Aphrodite into the Greek-Cypriot national past is expressed in the society in many ways. Aphrodite is often used to serve as an attractive analogy for Cyprus itself. In tourist brochures, for example, Cyprus is called the island of love, the ideal place to get married. The traditional candies, which we know most commonly as Turkish Delights are renamed after the goddess of love, “Aphrodite Delights”.

How then do the Turkish-Cypriots deal with the ever-present appeal of the goddess to foreign tourists? Their solution is a mix of denial of the Greek origins of Cyprus and the appeal to tourists of western heritage. Their tourism posters, guidebooks and souvenirs call Cyprus “the island of Venus”. By changing the name of the Goddess from Aphrodite to Venus, the Greek origin of the myth is denied, but the “Western” appeal is maintained by using a Roman name.

Another example of the clashing views on history is provided by the denomination of the stone in the sea where Aphrodite according to Hesoid’s tale, raised from the foam of the sea. A combination of myth, history and legend causes the Greek-Cypriots to call the place ‘Petra tou Romiou’ (The rock of Romios). In this name the rock is associated with Digenis Akritas, a heroic guardian of the Byzantine Empire against ‘infidel’ attacks. Aphrodite, a mythological heroin, and Digenis, a legendary hero, are thus joined in one place, which expresses the Christian-Hellenic ideals. In Turkish the rock got the name ‘Gavur Tashi’, which translates in ‘The Rock of the Infadel’ and therefore denies any glorious Greek heritage.

The myth of Aphrodite is the most commonly known and used myth of the island. Other myths and legends - such as for example the earlier described Turkish-Cypriot worshipping of Canbulat - do exist, but are not as influential as the mythological story of Aphrodite. Ultimately, Aphrodite is known as the goddess of love, but has been incorporated into the battlefield of history.

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112 Papadakis, “Aphrodite Delights” 240.
Commemorations

Finally, a short review of the role of commemorations in the institutionalisation of historical narratives will be made. The commemorations of historical events emphasise their importance in the national consciousness. The form of celebration or remembrance shapes the public view on the symbolic importance of the events in the nation’s history. Usually those commemorations are annual and therefore a constant factor of remembrance. Due to research restrictions, here only an assessment can be made of which events are commemorated and only when known how the events are commemorated. However, by examining which historical events are chosen for national holidays or public festivities, an account can be made of the importance of certain events in the consciousness of the nation.

In Cyprus commemorations are tightly connected to battles, losses and victories, not only of the two communities, but also of the two motherlands. In the Republic of Cyprus, the start of the anticolonial struggle on April 1 1955 and the independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960(on October 1) are both commemorated. The Greek attempted coup of 15 July 1974, and the subsequent Turkish military offensive on 20 July 1974, known among Greek Cypriots as the "Anniversaries of the Treacherous Coup and the Barbaric Turkish Invasion" are also commemorated. In addition, Greek Independence Day on 25 April, commemorating the Greek uprising against the Ottomans and Greek National day on 28 April are commemorated with big public events. A ‘military parade’ takes place on the 25th of April with schoolchildren participating, carrying flags, wearing costumes and singing songs. Finally, October 28, ‘Ochi Day’, the Greek national day is a public holiday. 113

In the TRNC, commemorations form an important element in education and public life. A whole list of commemorations is held every year. Among others, Turkish Sovereignty and Children’s Day is celebrated on the 23rd of April, the Turkish Intervention, Peace and Freedom Day on the 20th of July, Zafer Bgyram (Victory Day) on the 30th of August and Turkish Republic Day on the 29th of October. On the 21st of December starts the Martyrs Week, an anniversary of the 1963 Bloody Christmas events. In some schools displays with photographs and writings about the events are on display. Poems are recited during this week and usually all the ceremonies start by placing the wreath at the statue of Atatürk, to express loyalty to the Turkish nation. On November 10, a commemoration of Atatürk takes place in

113 Papadakis, Across the Dead Zone, 127.
both Turkey and the TRNC. At 09.05 am, every year there is one minute of silence to pay respect to the founder of the Turkish Nation.\(^{114}\)

The days and events that are commemorated in both societies therefore contribute to the strong nationalist discourse. Events that in one society are commemorated as an invasion are celebrated in the other as freedom day. Both societies still pay respect to the national days of their ‘mother’ countries, with parades and festivities, which strengthens the public awareness of the bond with the ‘mother’ country.

**Conclusion**

Concluding, museums, monuments and heritage, myths and commemorations all play a role in the institutionalisation of the national historical narrative to a different extent. The Turkish-Cypriot museums assessed here are strong catalysts of nationalist feelings and express a very nationalistically shaped and exclusive past. The Greek-Cypriot museums have a slightly more contradictory role, because they express some elements of the national narrative, while they also express some historical elements that are by now either abandoned – the aim of Enosis as expressed in the National Struggle Museum - or imply a more diverse history – the presence of different cultures in the Archaeological Museum. The way that is dealt with cultural heritage and monuments in both societies is clearly in line with the national narratives. Whereas Greek-Cypriots heavily rely on the ancient ties with Hellenism, the Turkish-Cypriots prefer to deny those ties and emphasise the Ottoman and Moslem influences. In the Republic of Cyprus, this has resulted in an archaeological discourse that supports active excavations and preservation of Greek cultural heritage. However, it should be noted that not only Ancient Greek heritage is preserved, but also cultural remnants of other ancient cultures. In the North, the dominating historical discourse has resulted in ‘cultural cleansing’; neglect and even destruction of heritage that does not fit in the national historical narrative.

In addition, the most famous myth of the island has been capitalised by Greek-Cypriots to promote the island’s ‘true’ Greek roots. Because the Turkish-Cypriots cannot deny the existence and fame of this myth, they have found their way to discharge the myth from its Hellenic roots, by renaming *Aphrodite* into *Venus*. Finally, the commemorating culture in both societies is tied to that of the ‘mother’ countries. Both societies celebrate or commemorate events that are exclusively tied to their experience as a nation or the

\(^{114}\) Yashin, “School is a textbook”, 418-421.
experience of the ‘mother country’. Only in the Republic of Cyprus the independence of the state in 1960 is celebrated. This serves as the only example of a commemoration of a bi-communal event and is in line with the political aim of the Republic for a future bi-communal federal state. However, the celebration of Greek Independence Day and Greek National Day are clear examples of public expression of ‘Greek roots and ties’ and deny any Turkish-Cypriot right to the island. In the North no bi-communal experience is commemorated; commemorations are tied exclusively to the suffering and victory of Turkey and Turkish-Cypriots.
5. Recent developments: A step towards reconciliation?

As noted earlier a strong ‘dialectic of intolerance’ in the approach to the past exists in Cyprus. Both societies have developed a historical discourse that is exclusively tied to their nation and leaves very little space for diverging opinions. As Makryianni and Psaltis have demonstrated, this dialectic of intolerance has led to a vicious circle of an intractable conflict in which social relations are severely strained by ‘monolithic history’ and the absence of discussion. The institutionalisation of a national historical discourse in both societies has been channelled through different aspects of public life, of which education serves as the strongest and probably most influential force. Nevertheless, other parts of public life, such as museums, heritage, myths and commemorations attribute to the institutionalisation of the historical discourse as well.

Here, we will briefly discuss the current political state of affairs and the attempts to reform the national historical discourse on both sides of the Green Line. Both at the national level, as well as the civil society level, some movements towards an inclusive and tolerant historical discourse manifested themselves. However, the success of this attempt towards change remains to be highly dependent on the political will.

In societies such as the Greek-Cypriot society and Turkish-Cypriot society in Cyprus, which have been separated as the result of a violent conflict in recent history, the prospects of conciliation are severely limited by the opposing approaches towards the past. Since the conflict that separated the two societies is so recent, people have emotionally charged memories that dominate and are incorporated in their views on the past. Therefore, if the dialectic of intolerance is to be changed into a dialectic of mutual inclusiveness, peoples’ views on history need to radically change. This can only be done when the channels that institutionalise the dominating historical discourse start to tell a different, more inclusive story.

Over the past 12 years, negotiations between the two societies to reach a political solution have been going on under international pressure and UN mediation. Several times these negotiations reached a deadlock, because the leaders of the two communities could not find common ground on essential elements of the negotiations. In 2004, the island got close

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to a solution, when a framework for a political solution, the so-called Annan Plan (named after the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who led the negotiations) was put to referendum. The Turkish-Cypriots voted in favour of the plan with a convincing 64.9% percent of the votes, while more then 75% of the Greek-Cypriots voted against it. Since then the Republic of Cyprus has entered the EU, which gave them a ‘secure’ position and strong economic growth. Turkish-Cypriots kept living in an internationally non-recognised state that is highly dependent on Turkey. The negotiations have continued the past few years and some border crossings are now open to travel from north to south and vice versa.  

Nevertheless, if new negotiations want to make a real chance of success after the setback of 2004, both societies need to be willing to conciliate and communicate. The strong nationalistic and exclusive historical discourses present in both societies are an obstruction and need to change radically to reach a certain level of reconciliation. Obviously, not only the historical discourse is of importance to gain public support for an agreement, but surely does direct and influence peoples’ willingness to give and take in a negotiation.

Over the past few years the dominating historical discourses have received criticism on both sides of the island and some steps have been made in order to reform the historical discourse in both societies. In the TRNC in 2003, the Left-wing party CTP (Republican Turkish Party) won the elections. The party and its supporters - being in favour of reunification and critical towards Turkey - launched an initiative for the re-writing of Turkish-Cypriot history textbooks. In 2004 new textbooks under the old title Kibris Tarihi (History of Cyprus) were published. These new textbooks attempt to revise the one-sided narrative in the old textbooks, by including subjects such as socioeconomic life, political movements, labour movements, the cold war, political developments and intra-communal divisions. The new textbooks emphasise a common element in identity, “Cypriotness”, and do not exclude the “other”. The

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116 Hannay, Cyprus: the search for a solution.
117 MEKB, Kibris Tarihi (Nicosia 2005). There are three books in this series.
authors also encourage a loyal attitude towards the whole island of Cyprus and recognise equality between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. In describing the past conflicts, it is recognised that both sides suffered and encountered losses and thus the undesirability of conflict and war is underlined.118

However, the new textbooks do not abandon all the previously held nationally shaped elements. The books display history now from a “Turkish-Cypriot” perspective instead of a “Turkish” perspective. The books cover mostly “Turkish-Cypriot” issues such as social life, monuments, culture, press and political personalities. In addition, the term “Peace Operation” is employed instead of “Happy Peace Operation”; this continues to deny the experience of Greek-Cypriots. In the new books, also texts of left-wing novelists and poets, considered pro-Greek-Cypriot, are included. However, still all the included texts are of Turkish-Cypriot writers and no Greek-Cypriot poems or pieces of literature are included in the books. Finally, gender differences and minority groups still receive inadequate attention.119

The new textbooks, despite their general weaknesses, can be considered as a move away from the old one-sided nationally shaped model of history education in Turkish-Cypriot society. This change is accompanied by a general shift in orientation in some layers of the Turkish-Cypriot society the past few years that desire reunification of the island. The economic hardship and desire to break the political isolation have encouraged this shift. However, as the victory of the UBP (National Unity Party) in the 2009 elections proved, nationalistic sentiments still hold strong.120 The UBP, in favour of the TRNC as an independent nation and now holding a parliamentary majority, has a much more conservative view on history than the CTP. Therefore, the future of the new textbooks and reform of the educational program remains uncertain.121

In the Republic of Cyprus in 2004 an Educational Reform Committee, comprising of a group of academics was constituted at the request of the government. They wrote a manifesto-report for ‘Educational Transformative Reform’ in which they argued for the ideological re-orientation of education. Regarding history education the committee proposed

119 Papadakis, “History Education in a Divided Cyprus” 24.
120 It has to be noted here, that the Turkish settlers in the north of Cyprus form a major group of the society and are usually much more pro-Turkey than the Turkish-Cypriots. Their share in the votes for the Right-wing parties needs to be considered.
‘greater emphasis on the teaching of history through educational programmes and textbooks that correspond to European standards of peaceful coexistence, multiculturalism, respect for difference and the elimination of chauvinism, nationalism and intercommunal hatred’. In addition, they proposed a joint committee of academics, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, to revise the history textbooks. The practice of the import of history textbooks from Greece was firmly criticised.\textsuperscript{122}

The manifesto-report has brought about a political discussion, but until now no new textbooks have been published. DYSI and DIKO politicians have heavily criticised the attempt to bring about the, in one deputy’s words, “Self-castration of our Hellenic Heritage”.\textsuperscript{123} While AKEL and other Left-wing members of parliament support the initiative of the Minister of Education, the Right-wing opposition’s criticism is backed by the Orthodox Church. The Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Greek-Orthodox Church regretted it had not been consulted in spite of the Church’s ‘historic role’ in education.\textsuperscript{124} When the minister of education in his annual speech to mark the Name day of Archbishop Makarios, referred to ‘the emergence of illegal and extremist Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot organisations that resulted in the tragedy of 1974’ he received severe criticism of Church leaders. The Bishop of Paphos Georgios, described the incident as ‘a clear effort to distort our history’, while Archbishop Chrysostomos II said that the Minister should learn his history.\textsuperscript{125} The political battle over the reformation of history education has not ended yet and thus the rewriting of the books at the governmental level still meets obstruction by Right-Wing parties and the Church.

The initiative towards the revision of textbooks and historical dialogue has been strengthened by a few bi-communal civil society initiatives that aim for dialogue and inclusiveness. POST Research Institute Cyprus launched a project in 2004 called ‘Education for Peace’. During this project textbooks were analysed and teachers and educators from both communities were brought together for seminars. Through the project, POST aimed to strengthen the influence of the educational reforms since 2004 in Turkish-Cypriot society.\textsuperscript{126} In addition, another non-governmental organisation was established with the same aims. The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) has the mission to promote

\textsuperscript{122} Makriyianni and Psaltis, “The Teaching of History and Reconciliation” 58.
\textsuperscript{123} Paul Malaos, “Don’t touch our History Books”, Cyprus Mail 06.09.2008 Retrieved form EUROCLIO Archives.
\textsuperscript{124} Makriyianni and Psaltis, “The Teaching of History and Reconciliation” 59.
\textsuperscript{125} Stefanos Evripidou, “Minister draws fire over Makarios Day message”, Cyprus Mail 2009, retrieved form EUROCLIO Archives.
\textsuperscript{126} The website of POST Research Institute Cyprus: http://www.postri.org/3.htm retrieved at 19.08.2009.
productive dialogue and research on issues of history education, in order to strengthen peace stability and democracy. One of the priorities of the Association is teacher training on the epistemology and methodology of history teaching. For this purpose they organise seminars, discussions and forums for teachers and others related to civil society on both sides of the Green Line.\textsuperscript{127}

These independent projects and initiatives are supported by several international agencies such as the UNDP and USAID, and receive international political support, for example on EU level. However, as with the political local initiatives for textbook revision, also these civil society projects have often met local political obstruction. As mentioned before the success of the implementation of a reformed historical discourse in schools is greatly determined by the will of the ruling political parties. Left-wing political parties seem to be more open for change, while Right-wing parties do not want history to be ‘distorted’ by these initiatives. The politics of power is therefore stronger than the civil society initiatives and the process of change of the historical discourse seems only possible with the will of politicians.

What then under the current political changes and circumstances are the prospects for a shift towards a more inclusive, multiperspective and less nationalistic historical discourse on the island? So far initiatives for reform have been taken on an educational level only. To make those initiatives successful without unconditional political support, the involvement of civil society and the cultivation public support are of great importance. The greatest levels of support will be achieved when it is clearly explained that the nation will not loose its ‘national identity’. It has to be emphasised that the revision of textbooks or the reform of the educational programmes do not aim to change ‘historical facts’, but try to create multiperspectivity and inclusiveness.\textsuperscript{128}

Despite the political deadlock caused by the 2004 referendum, the past few years both societies have become part of the changing globalising world. The Republic of Cyprus is now an EU member state, while the TRNC remains internationally isolated. More and more voices in the north express their hope for future EU membership. At the same time the new generations in the South have more international opportunities and need to redefine their identity within the EU and the world. Only when these sociological changes are strong

\textsuperscript{127} Makriyianni and Psaltis, “The Teaching of History and Reconciliation” 59-60.
\textsuperscript{128} Niyazi Kizilyurek, “History textbooks and Nationalism” in Christina Koulouri, Teaching the History of South-eastern Europe (Thessaloniki 2001).
enough to develop further during the coming years, the nationalistically shaped identities might loose their appeal to the new generations. Along with this possible identity shift national history will need to be revised.

However, until 2009, these changes have only taken place on a very low level and as demonstrated trough the institutionalisation of the historical discourse, both societies still hold very strong nationalist sentiments. The discussion and critical assessment of the historical discourse consolidated on an academic level and since 5 years this discussion reached out towards civil society. Nonetheless, without the political will on both sides of the island, to transform the historical discourse on a wide public level, including the reformation of educational programmes and the redefinition of museums, heritage and commemoration cultures, the ‘dialectic of intolerance’ will continue to flourish the coming years and therefore continue to form an impediment for a political solution.
Conclusion

What can be concluded from the assessment of the institutionalisation of the historical narrative in Cyprus through education, museums, monuments, myths and commemorations is that strongly nationalistic and mostly exclusive interpretations dominate the public historical discourse and form a serious obstacle to the process of reconciliation on the island. Despite some debates between Left-Wing and Right-Wing politicians and citizens about the interpretation of the historical events and recent efforts to change the approach towards history in Cyprus, the dominating narratives are one-sided, monolithic and strongly nationalistic. As the four exemplary events in history that were discussed in this thesis show, two opposing nationalistic narratives were created and have caused a dialectic of intolerance that is difficult to change. The strong interactions between politics, national goals and identity on one side, and the interpretation of historical events and memories on the other side, have together created intolerant discourses, which are not easily replaced.

Memory played in both narratives a crucial role, because it linked peoples’ experiences of the violent events from the 1960’s onwards with the grand national narrative. Because both the narratives acknowledged the pain and suffering of their own people, it was easy for people to accept this narrative and personalise it through individual experience. This might be an explanation for the public acceptance and belief in the grand narrative; it made people victims of history and blamed the enemy for their suffering. This intermingling of memory and history has made the narrative so attractive and powerful.

The Turkish-Cypriot historical discourse is created to serve the main political goal of the TRNC, the justification of their state and the future existence of their own state. With the creation of a state after the war of 1974, there was a need for the creation of a national narrative to strengthen the ‘imagined community’ by providing citizens with a common past and feeling of loyalty. The creation of this narrative was based on the premise that Turkish-Cypriots’ rights on the island came forth from their conquest and martyrdom. In this narrative Turkey’s claims on the island are the only rightful claims and the Greeks and Greek-Cypriots serve as the archenemy. Despite the left-wing criticism and diverging views on history, the Right-Wing historical discourse was institutionalised steadily, and sometimes even aggressively, through different public channels in the TRNC. Right-Wing parties have
dominated the political arena, and thus had the power to determine the state’s historical narrative.

The nationalist claims that serve as the base for the narrative had already developed in the 1950’s, but only after 1974 a narrative with a beginning - conquest of Cyprus by the Ottomans - and an end - the “Happy Peace Operation” -, was created. As the assessment of the four events in history shows, the narrative was highly exclusive; it defined who belonged to the nation and who not, and highlighted the nation’s common pain and pride. The early Greek influences on the island are completely omitted to deny the Greek-Cypriot claim to the island. The beginning of the history of Cyprus is placed only centuries later, with the arrival of the Ottomans in 1571. This event receives major attention and serves as an example of the Turkish martyrdom. The violent years of the 1960’s form the central episode in history and in education, museums and monuments, this episode is expressed with an emphasis on victimisation and perpetration. Finally, the end of the historical narrative, the invasion of the Turkish army in 1974 closes the history of ‘oppression’ and ‘suffering’ and marks the beginning of the current Turkish-Cypriot nation.

This intolerant narrative has been institutionalised through education, in which a discourse of nationalism and memory was not only implemented through schoolbooks, but also through the complete educational culture present in schools. Symbols, ceremonies and habits were strongly attached to the ‘celebration’ of the membership of the great Turkish nation, founded by Atatürk. The nationalistic narrative is further institutionalised through the foundation of museums, with the explicit aim to narrate about the episodes of suffering on the hands of the ‘Rums’ or the martyrdom in the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus. The two museums dedicated to the events of the 1960’s, the National Struggle Museum and the Museum of Barbarism, have a strong sense of victimisation and perpetration and depict Greek-Cypriots and Greeks as barbarous. The other museum discussed in this thesis, the Canbulat Museum, shows the ‘glorious heroism’ of the Turkish ancestors and thus narrates about that essential element of the national narrative.

Furthermore, the Turkish-Cypriot policy towards heritage and monuments demonstrates that the national historical narrative determines the state’s policy towards cultural heritage. All, Greek or Christian heritage is neglected or even destroyed; cultural cleansing has taken place on large scale. The aim of the practice is to erase the early Greek influences on the island from history. At the same time, new monuments and statues have been erected to commemorate and symbolise the Turkish-Cypriot suffering and martyrdom that justifies the existence of the state. Commemorations and celebrations of both Turkish
national days and Turkish-Cypriot national days, further implies the ‘Turkishness’ of Cyprus. Therefore, the claim that Cyprus is geographically and historically a part of the Turkish history is again publicly emphasised. Finally the denial of the Greek roots of the Myth of Aphrodite, by renaming her Venus, is a clear example of the rejection of the Greek-Cypriot idea of the ancient Hellenic roots of Cyprus.

Overall, the Turkish-Cypriot narrative serves as a strong vehicle for nationalist feelings and is expressed through different public channels in a very consistent manner. In all the public channels discussed here, education, museums, heritage, myths and commemorations, the nationalistic and exclusive narrative is strengthened. Education and museums serve as the clearest examples that express the narrative partly or as a whole, through their ‘story telling’ set up. Other public channels such as heritage, myths and commemorations deliberately deny the history of ‘the other’ and strengthen the historical importance of the Ottoman presence and the Turkish-Cypriot suffering. All together these channels have institutionalised a distorted historical discourse of exclusiveness and stereotyping, which gained its dominant position to strengthen the new state’s political goals. Left-Wing views on history did not have the chance to develop into a powerful opposition to this discourse. However, the past few years with a short change of government to the Left, from 2004 until 2009, some minor changes, mostly in history education, have been made. The publication of more moderated history textbooks and some bi-communal projects, show that there is a potential for change towards a more inclusive history. Nevertheless, these initiatives so far were restricted to education only and turned out to be highly dependent on political will, which can never be fully secured.

In the Republic of Cyprus the dominant historical narrative has also been institutionalised powerfully, but has met more complexity due to the changes that were made to the narrative after 1974. The discourse combined both the strongly Right-Wing nationalistic Greek and anti-Turkish premise that was dominant before 1974 with the new post-1974 and Left-Wing principle of past ‘peaceful coexistence’ between the two communities. This resulted in a historical discourse that has been expressed in different manners in public and sometimes even conveyed contradictory messages to the public. The narrative as it developed in the days of early nationalism in which the ‘end of history’ would be reached after union with Greece, has been mainly abandoned after 1974. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the Greek primordial roots of the islands and its Greek-Cypriot inhabitants continued to be the main historical premise around which the historical discourse evolved. In addition, Turkey remained a
powerful enemy. However, the official discourse was adapted to the new political reality and goals, which resulted in a history in which a differentiation was made between Turks and Turkish-Cypriots. In the state policy regarding a future unification of the island, the historical element of past ‘peaceful coexistence’ between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots became powerful. The new element of peaceful coexistence was also stimulated by the growing debate between Left-Wing and Right-Wing, about the violence caused by the EOKA campaigns. This resulted in a slow shift from extreme exclusiveness to some form of inclusiveness.

However, this changing discourse has not been institutionalised in society to a great extent. Schools in the Republic of Cyprus still teach their pupils history from books that were published in the 1960’s, when Enosis was still the main goal and Turks (no differentiation was made yet in the textbooks between Turks and Turkish-Cypriot) were the archenemy. As the four historical examples clearly show in the examination of the Greek-Cypriot history textbooks, Greek superiority and Turkish aggression still dominate the narrative. The conquest of the Ottomans and the Turkish invasion of 1974 are depicted as catastrophic events and ‘Turks’ are stereotyped as barbarous and the archenemy. In addition, the ‘Hellenic roots’ of Cyprus are emphasised and the atrocities committed by Greek-Cypriots in the 1960’s are largely omitted. The strongly nationalistic narrative is further enforced through teaching methods and an educational discourse that emphasises the memory the atrocities and suffering, through the ‘I don’t forget’ slogan.

The museums that were assessed in this thesis also show the contradictive message that is conveyed to the Greek-Cypriot public. The existence of the “National Struggle Museum” is a clear example of a public expression of strong Right-Wing nationalistic sentiments and narrates about the struggle for Union with the ‘motherland’ Greece. The museum therefore transmits an extremely exclusive and xenophobic massage to the public. Even though the museum does not serve the official state policy, it continues to express a historical narrative to the visitors that strengthens their nationalistic sentiments. The Cyprus Archaeological Museum on the other hand shows a more inclusive and diverse history of the island and leaves more space for interpretation.

The state policy towards heritage is much more objective then that of the TRNC. Heritage, not only ancient Hellenic heritage, is conserved and maintained. Obviously, since most of the big historical sites are of Roman or Ancient Greek origin, the maintenance serves the historical claim of primordial ‘Greekness’. The myth of Aphrodite further enforces the power of this claim. The commemoration is also still very nationalistic, it commemorates and
celebrates victories and losses of the Greek-Cypriots and Greeks. However, in contrast to the Turkish-Cypriots, one bi-communal event is celebrated, the independence of the republic of Cyprus in 1960.

It can be concluded that even though the post 1974 historical narrative as officially supported by the government allowed some form of inclusion of Turkish-Cypriots through the element of ‘peaceful coexistence’, the institutionalisation of the national past after 1974 has never adapted to this change. Education, museums, and in some extent myths, heritage and commemorations, continued to express a historical narrative that is based on exclusiveness of the ‘other’, Greek superiority and victimisation. The debate between Left and Right about history has not yet resulted in the institutionalisation of moderated views on history, as the Right holds a strong position in the government and is backed by the conservative Orthodox Church. The most recent efforts to change the historical discourse on both governmental and civil society level, starting with the reformation of the educational historical discourse, have met political obstruction. The question thus arises if the government truly supports the ideas of “Cypriotness” and “peaceful coexistence”, or if the terms were only introduced in the state’s official policy in order to create international support during the negotiations.

Hence, the contradictive historical narratives institutionalised on each side of the Green line through education, museums, monuments, myths and commemorations have created a strong dialectic of intolerance. The discourse in each society is centred on a few major principles, the roots of the nation, the attachment to the ‘mother country’, the experiences of violence and suffering and the barbarism of ‘the other’. The historical narrative that evolved alongside the development of nationalism was based on these principles. After 1974, Turkish-Cypriot political goals further reinforced these stories of exclusiveness and while in the South the element of ‘past peaceful coexistence’ was integrated in the story, even there the national past continued to be strongly nationalistic and exclusive. Unfortunately, the Left-Wing views on history have not gained enough power to balance the two intolerant discourses.

A radical shift in the historical consciousness of both societies is needed to break the vicious circle of intolerance that obstructs the prospects for reunification. Not only schoolbooks but also the content of museums, the historical importance of heritage and monuments, the use of mythology and the culture of commemoration need to be critically assessed by both societies’ governments. However, as the recent attempts to revise schoolbooks and organise bi-communal projects to change the educational discourse show,
there is a need for political will, which is often difficult to find. Without the political back up to reform the national past, there is a long way to go to reach ‘historical reconciliation’. In the new era of globalisation, in which the nation state is losing power and the international globalised world is gaining influence rapidly, there might be prospects for change. However, when one has to rely on this sociological process only, the shift away from nationalistic shaped historical consciousness will be very slow.
List of Abbreviations

AHDR  
*Association for Historical Dialogue and Research*. A bi-communal Cypriot Non-Governmental Organisation.

AKEL  
*Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενων Λαού* (Greek for Progressive Party of Working People). A Greek-Cypriot communist political party founded in 1926.

CTP  
*Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi* (Turkish for Republican Turkish Party). A social democrat political party in northern Cyprus founded in 1970.

DIKO  
*Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα* (Greek for Democratic Party). A centrist Greek-Cypriot political party.

DISY  
*Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός* (Greek for Democratic Coalition). A conservative Greek-Cypriot political party founded in 1976.

ENOSIS  
Greek for *Union*. The aim of unification of the island of Cyprus with Greece.

EOKA  
*Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών*, (Greek for National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters). The Greek-Cypriot nationalist military resistance organisation that fought for the end of British rule over Cyprus in the 1950’s and pursued ENOSIS.

EOKA B  
*Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών*, (Greek for National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) B. The Greek-Cypriot para-military organisation that was founded in 1971 as a continuation of the previous EOKA. The EOKA B dissolved after the failed military coup of 1974.

EU  
*European Union*

POST  
Cypriot bi-communal Non-Governmental Organisation.

TAKSIM  
Turkish for *partition, division*. The objective of partition of the island of Cyprus into a ‘Turkish’ and ‘Greek’ part to ensure the Turkish presence on the island.

TMT  
*Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı* (Turkish for Turkish Resistance Organisation). The TMT was a para-military organisation founded in 1958 as a defense organisation to the Greek-Cypriot EOKA. The TMT also aimed for TAKSIM.

TRNC  
*Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*. The internationally non-recognised state declared independence in 1983.

UBP  
*Ulusal Birlik Partisi* (Turkish for National Unity Party). The biggest Right-Wing conservative political party in northern Cyprus founded in 1975.

UN  
*United Nations*

UNDP  
*United Nations Development Program*

USAID  
*United States Agency for International Development*
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