

CONSTRUCTED LANDSCAPES:

Visual Cultures of Violent Contact

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ABSTRACT

The impulses and concerns underlying this paper have to do with my uneasiness, discomfort, and fascination—as a scholar, researcher, and teacher—regarding two unusual monuments, both of which are deeply embedded in their surrounding ideational environments and the debates that arise from them. The first is located in the occupied area of Cyprus and takes the form of a huge flag, a national symbol, which is conspicuously unfolded on the side of a mountain and is accompanied by a commensurably large inscription that proclaims a strong nationalistic message. The second is located on the highest mountain of Crete—not far from the legendary birthplace of Zeus and on a site laden with memories from the occupation of the island by the Nazis and the ensuing guerrilla struggle against them by the British and the native Cretans, an event which it celebrates and commemorates. Inherent in the Cypriot monument is a condition of visibility that links it typologically with grandiose monuments such as Behistun or Mount Rushmore. The Cretan example might be seen as a distant descendant of Nasca plain, the Sicilian Santoni at Pallazollo Atreide, or even Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*. In terms of their positioning, scale, visual nature, iconography, material, motives, aesthetics and intentions these monuments constitute themselves as ideal sites of violent contact, iconic galvanizers of their subjects and students. As such they raise numerous issues—ethical as well as practical—of cognitive accessibility, decipherment, translation, and literal and/or metaphorical vantage points. Based on the fact that our world is increasingly becoming home to sites or monuments of trauma and memory (e.g. Ground Zero, Bamiyan, Gaza), my paper focuses on these two monuments in order to address a number of questions/problems: What is the precise nature of the visual rhetoric at work in these monuments? Is this rhetoric part of a universal language? What is the nature of their relationship with their immediate physical and perceptual environments, that is, the archaeologically laden cultural landscapes of Crete and Cyprus? What is implicated in the translation of these monuments to the discursive frequencies of Western academia? Is their reification as “objects of study” a legitimate strategy of access and translation?

INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with two unusual monuments, both of which are dramatically embedded in their surrounding physical and ideational landscapes, that is, landscapes “both ‘imaginative’ (in the sense of being a mental image of something) and emotional (in the sense of cultivating or eliciting some spiritual value or ideal)” (Ashmore and Knapp 1999: 12). One is an earthwork titled “The Immortal Partisan of Peace,” on Mount Ida, Crete (FIGURE 1). The other is an earthwork in the form of an enormous flag that occupies the south slope of Mount Pentadaktylos, Cyprus (FIGURE 2). Earthworks are usually monumental interventions in remote landscapes (Preamble and Preamble 1994: 466) in which they are meant to establish multiple dialogues. They are closely akin to the well known category of “geoglyphs,” such as the Nasca lines or the figures in the deserts of north Chile (Aveni 2000; Briones 2006). Compared to the vast time scales that challenge and fascinate the preoccupations of contemporary archaeological enterprise, both monuments are very recent as they were both created in the last thirty years. This, however, does not entail that the problems and questions that they pose or answer as material objects or as objects of perception have to do only with the topicality of the motivations that underlie their existence. Quite the opposite is true. In order to fulfill their communicative purposes both monuments have put to work a materiality and a visual rhetoric that is programmed to activate behavioral responses, the nature of which defies their cultural specificity and the constraints of their specific time and place.

To begin with, they are both characterized by a gigantism that programmatically clashes with and subverts the scale of their surrounding environments. I suspect that this trait is in part symptomatic of the recent globalization of communicational phenomena. You increase the volume or intensity of your message, so to speak, when you want it to be heard as far away as possible.¹ Second, they both offer themselves as ideal subjects for study and thought as they are equipped (to a certain extent) with a sufficient package of answered questions of archaeological or hermeneutical nature: we know by whom, when, and how they were constructed; we can place them relatively easily in wider contexts of interconnections; and questions regarding their purposes and function are easily apprehended—this is the case even if we take into account that such purposes and functions are not reified or solid ingredients of their make-up but are continuously generated and negotiated in the actuality of their social life. Consequently, these two monuments are ideal text-book

¹ It is no accident that the 9/11 attacks targeted the twin towers in New York, the physical scale of which was matched by their international iconic status. A manifestation of the same phenomenon was the destruction of the colossal Buddhas at Bamiyan, Afghanistan by the Taliban regime.

foils to a large number of comparable monuments all around the globe that are studied by various archaeologies but have so far remained resistant to any attempt for even a basic understanding of their nature as visual signs (Aveni 2000: 212-234; Briones 2006). In this respect, the cognitive package of these two monuments challenges us to reconsider the nature of the questions we pose as scholars and curious human beings regarding numerous monuments and the phenomena they entail.

Finally, both monuments are situated in heavily-laden archaeological and historical contexts bound by their nature to condition and dictate any stance and methodological approach towards them. One is embedded in the midst of Crete, an island in which scientific archaeology came of age as part of an effort to substantiate archaeologically a very influential myth of European origins (MacGillivray 2000; Andreou 2005). The other monument is in Cyprus, the large island of the Eastern Mediterranean, home to various archaeologies that since the 1950's have sought to redress a long history of neglect and dispersion induced by a long colonial past (Knapp and Antoniadou 1998). In this respect, the practice of archaeology in Cyprus is inextricable from the continuous forging and reinforcing of a national identity that roots itself into a very carefully researched past. The case of Cyprus is not unique. Since the nineteenth century, archaeology has provided nationalism with hard evidence, ideas, and symbols upon which the foundational myths of numerous states have been elaborately constructed (Meskell 1998; Smith 2001; Yalouri 2001; Abdi 2001; Yahya 2005; Andreou 2005). I will be suggesting below that the scale of archaeological research on Cyprus, its results, and their import, have in part contributed to the incommensurably enormous scale of the Cypriot monument at hand in this paper.

In diametrically-opposed ways, both monuments are inspired by and thematize violent contact as part of the life and history of the landscapes and the transcendental realities in which they are placed and which they aim to reshape and redefine. Below I explore various dimensions of this function. It is my view that in order to achieve their goals, both monuments are meant to elicit emotional and psychological reactions that are proportionally commensurate not only to their physical scale but also to the enormous intensity of the worldviews and circumstances that motivated them. In this respect, both monuments may be viewed as ideal, emotional galvanizers of their intended audiences. In the face of recent debates regarding the empathetic involvement of subjects in the production of historical discourses it may even be argued that the monuments cannot be cognitively understood unless one is subjected to the emotional force they incorporate in their nature (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003: 1-23). This emotional charge is in and of itself a problematic aspect of their nature since it

generates a very basic problem of approach or translation: to what extent is the student/teacher/researcher allowed to surrender to their rhetoric in order to test experientially their efficacy and import? Is their reification as “objects of study” a legitimate strategy of a meaningful and adequately productive engagement with them?

These questions become all the more urgent given that as the author of this paper I experienced many frustrations and dilemmas in my various preoccupations with them. I came across these monuments in the process of travelling and researching the subject of a course on the archaeologies and visual cultures of three Mediterranean Islands: Sicily, Cyprus, and Crete across the ages. I soon came to the realization that the history of archaeology in all three islands is part and parcel of their recent past and that this past involves their role as arenas of violent contact. How can this experience be meaningfully translated? To what extent is one able to tune into the violent-contact theme of monuments, sites, and landscapes without being experientially entangled in it? To what extent is my cultural profile of Greek origins allowed to inform my teaching and scholarly teaching about them? These questions may sound personal but I believe they address concerns of a more general order as they pivot around the problem of the translation and mediation of meaning and memory across cultures, time, and people (Le Goff 1992; Bradley 2002: 82-111; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003; Hodgkin and Randstone 2003; Makdisi and Silverstein 2006; Young 2003).

In the following pages, I discuss these monuments in terms of the particulars of their various contexts (physical, contextual, social, political). I will then proceed to address hermeneutical questions in terms of the capacity of these monuments to enlighten similar phenomena in other areas of the world. As these monuments are virtually unknown in western academia, I will try to be as explicit in my effort to consider them in their physical and historical frameworks.

THE IMMORTAL PARTISAN OF PEACE, CRETE

This monument is essentially an earthwork or a geoglyph, a two-dimensional image laid out on the ground and made exclusively by boulders assembled from its immediate physical environment. These stones take the shape of an easily recognizable human figure that seems to move to the right with an arm extended in this direction.² There are no immediately perceptible attributes except for what seems to be a wing or perhaps a pair of wings very prominently springing out of its back. The head lacks the usual diagnostic details of mouth or eyes. Despite its plain character, the figure is richly textured as the irregular stones that comprise it are loosely set to allow the interplay of

² The figure is 32 m. long and 10 m. wide.

light and shadow to animate its surface. Formally, this is a very rudimentary two-dimensional image that defies traditional conventions regarding proportions and scale. It could have emerged out of any prehistoric figurative tradition anywhere in the world. In this respect our figure is intentionally timeless and non-specific as it blends inobtrusively with the surrounding landscape.

The *Partisan* is situated on the small plateau of Nida, a small mountain plain at a high altitude on Mount Ida, or Psiloritis, in Crete. This site is home to an extremely sparse environment of rocky mountains, quietness, and beauty. It was consciously chosen by its creator, the contemporary German artist Karina Raeck, who conceived of the monument after having lived in the nearby village of Anoyeia for a few years in the early 1990's (Raeck 1995; Endlich 1995). Raeck became aware of the significance of the site, both because of her own research and because its local conceptualizations are part and parcel of the lifeworlds of the people of Anoyeia. The Nida plain has always been a valuable pasture and source of livelihood for the numerous flocks of sheep and goats of this pastoral community. An immensely rich oral tradition has preserved a large archive of memories of epic wars fought over rights of pasture against the rival community of Vorrizia on the south foothill of Mount Ida. As late as the 1950's oral bards were able to perform a small epic (*The Song of Nida*) that chronicles the bravado of the Anoyeians during a victorious battle that decided the fate of the plain circa 1870 (Marinatos 1956/1957: 245-248).³ This valuable source allows a rare glimpse into the various trajectories that connected the plain with Anoyeia, a charter myth, so to speak, with detailed references to toponyms and significant sites that mapped out this arena as an integral part of local memory, identity, and morality.

As elsewhere in Crete and the Mediterranean islands, the ecological history of this microcosm is a veritable and unique wonder (Rackham and Moody 1996: 27-29). Equally wondrous is its capacity to resist the intrusion of any aspect of modernity or "progress"—this despite the recent asphalt road and a tourist pavilion built during the period of the junta that governed Greece from 1967 to 1974. The plain is overlooked by the Idaean Cave. This is the famous cave in which Zeus was born, raised, and came of age. This most sacred site of ancient Crete enjoyed a long and uninterrupted history as a site of pilgrimage and cult already from the Bronze Age onwards. Extensive excavations in the nineteenth century and then again in the twentieth century

³ The song was performed orally for Marinatos and his colleagues in the mid-fifties, while they were on their way to the Idaean cave in order to conduct excavations. Marinatos saw to it that this little epic was recorded and transcribed for the first time. The performer, Marinatos reassures us, was an illiterate bard named Kourkoutis, who followed the oral performative mode of recitation in the company of his Cretan lyre.

produced a plethora of finds that often take pride of place in histories of Crete and Greek art but also in the mentalities of the people of Anoyeia (Sakellarakis 1988; Sakellarakis 1985). A few hours walk from the cave is the summit of the mountain, a site of contact between king Minos of myth and his god but also a site of contact between contemporary pilgrims who make their way to the chapel of the Holy Cross (Timios Stauros) in order to continue the primeval tradition of cult at peak sanctuaries—this is only to be expected in Crete where this type of cult is preserved by a millennia-old tradition. Not far from the cave is a little chapel in which the Anoyeians congregate on a yearly basis to celebrate the festival of the Ascension of Christ, another cult with celestial associations.

This is a brief and, to my view, insufficient description of this *conceptualized* landscape, that is, a landscape characterized by “powerful religious, artistic or other cultural meanings invested in natural features rather than in material culture or monuments...” (Ashmore and Knapp 1999: 11). In its long history the Nida plain has witnessed few human interventions in the form of monuments or other forms of material culture. A notable exception is the impressive altar that has been carved out of the precipitous rock right outside the entrance to the cave. This is, however, a cultic installation that was not meant to be seen from afar unless one considers the smoke from burnt sacrificial victims in antiquity. Today the altar is almost indistinguishable from its surroundings: its surface has eroded, cracked, and been sculpted back to its original ruggedness by the elements. Equally unobtrusive are the cylindrical sheepsheds (*mitata*), whose vaulted interiors have often been linked to well-known categories of the Aegean Bronze Age (Warren 1973). Consequently, the *Partisan of Peace* may be claimed to be the first truly monumental intervention in this multi-layered context. In this respect, its introduction ushered in a new order of unprecedented experiences. One wonders, therefore, what motivation warranted this “undoing” of a primeval situation and what its impact has been so far among those whose lives and identities are inextricably connected with the plain.

In local memory and identity the plain of Nida and its various inflections epitomize a perception of life as the continuous struggle against a rough and productively unyielding, yet deeply cherished environment. As we saw above, the plain has traditionally been at once a disputed resource and the stage on which the disputation was resolved by means of violent conflict. These experiences have shaped a very distinct sense of pride, toughness, and independence that feeds on centuries-old memories of resistance to foreign invaders and defense of local autonomy and freedom at all cost. During the Second World War Anoyeia played a leading role in the organization and implementation of the resistance against the occupying force of the

Nazis. In retaliation the Nazi forces instigated typically terrorist tactics, that is, they executed most of the male population along with many women and children. The whole village was burned down as well in August 13, 1944 (Beevor 1991: 316). The trauma of these events still looms large over the collective consciousness of the local population (Kiriakopoulos 1995).

The plain of Nida is also remembered and celebrated by means of local folk songs and extensive narratives for its role as the stronghold of the local and Cretan resistance against foreign occupation during the Second World War. I experienced this myself as a young student, when I lived and worked for two summers at the Idaean Cave (1985-86). Vividly remembered and proudly recounted, there were heroic stories of partisans who sought refuge and a hideout in the wilderness of the plain and the cave-holes of the surrounding mountains. A highlight of these memories involved the kidnapping of general Kreipe, the German commander of the occupation force in Crete, and his subsequent confinement on Mount Ida (Psychoundakis 1998: 263-271; Beevor 1991: 301-311). During the Second World War, Nida may have not witnessed an epic clash or bloody fighting but still it was implicated in a wider epic of resolute resistance, heroic acts, and just causes. This time its actual and symbolic role was that of a polar opposite of violent conflict as the Nida plain became a sanctuary or refuge from the insanity and cruelty of the war and the German occupation of Crete. It is in this context that the physical landscape of the plain witnessed an unprecedented transformation in its nature. In order to hinder the landing of enemy aircraft, the local partisans spread out rocks and boulders throughout the plain, which were cropped out of the local materials of the surrounding landscape (Raeck 1995: 46; Endlich 1995: 140). Labor-intensive and far-reaching as it was in scale and effect, this heavy gesture of defiance and strategic cunning was commensurate with the historical charge of the place. It also makes sense as an adoptive tactic aimed at preserving the physical and conceptual values invested in the landscape that was so drastically, but not irreversibly, affected by it.

It is against this subtly nuanced background that Karina Raeck chose to materialize her conception. Motivated by the well-known trauma that sits heavy on the consciousness of post-World War II Germans, she conceived this monument as a means of appeasement, conciliation, and as a tribute to peace and its value. Her creative idea is grand and far-reaching as it seeks to materialize the negotiation of a problematic situation in terms of a substantial symbolic statement. Moreover, Raeck wrote an entire book in which she chronicled the creation of the monument as a personal engagement with the people of Anoyeia and their memories (Raeck 1995). A major aspect of her creative process was that she boldly confronted and commemorated

numerous massacres and other atrocities perpetrated by the German occupying force against innocent civilians all over Crete. Her rationale was as complex as it is easily understandable, but its wider implications regarding the shifting attitude of contemporary German generations towards a disturbing past cannot be fully discussed here. To be sure, Raeck belongs to a generation of German artists and intellectuals who seriously problematized or even negated the traditional functions of public monuments as containers of essentialized memories or as gestures redeeming the tragic loss of human lives (Young 2003: 238-241).⁴ It is important, therefore, to stress that in order to fulfill her vision as an environmental intervention, Raeck consciously opted for a scale of expressive means that defied those of the Nida Plain and yet acknowledged, respected, and paid tribute to its conceptual charge. In other words, she sent out a big message in a big package that upturned the primeval norms of the physical landscape but attuned itself to the breadth of its symbolic significance. In doing so, she conceived the monument as an integral link to a multidirectional historic continuum. The materiality of the monument, its placement as a naturalized element in a perennial landscape of multiple social and ethical values, predicate its role as a bearer of multiple universal messages.

From a different point of view, it may also be useful to consider that Raeck's *Partisan of Peace* resulted in the *restoration* of a landscape created during the Second World War, as many of the rocks incorporated in her figurative geoglyph were the very same boulders that the anti-occupation partisans had used to prevent the landing of aircraft on the plain. Thus, the making of the monumental figure literally dissolved the historical impact of the Second World War on the plain while at the same time it established a permanent dialogue between past and present but also between the topicality of the plain and the universality of the noble message generated by it. This is so whether those engaged in the dialogue are the Anoyeians or the various visitors to this unique land and the international tourists to this part of Crete.

As its title and historical background indicates, *The Partisan of Peace* on the Nida plain celebrates peace as an ultimate value generated and maintained by means of acts of defiance. The monument symbolically embodies all those who have actively fought against tyranny, oppression, and violence. It is possible to think of it also as a memorial that negotiates the psychological trauma of the generation of its maker. At the same time, it makes amends for the trauma of the collectivity in which it belongs, that is, the community of the village of Anoyeia whose memories and sense of identity pivot

⁴ In the wake of traumatic events such as the terrorist attack of 9/11, there is an intense debate over what constitutes a monument/memorial. In this context, the relevance of the critiques and insights of this German "counter-monument" movement cannot be emphasized enough.

around the burning of the village in 1944 and the various massacres of innocent civilians at Anoyeia and all around the island. It is not accidental that Raeck, a foreigner and a woman engendering a role that defies traditional local stereotypes, managed to gain the confidence, understanding, approval, and cooperation of the community of Anoyeia for carrying out this project. Under Raeck's direction, the making of the *Partisan* involved the "undoing" of the constructed landscape of Nida by the very descendants of those who two generations ago had been compelled by the war to modify it. This was, of course, partly the result of practical necessity but the fact is that the contemporary Anoyeians were implicated once more in the "re-construction" of the landscape of the Nida plateau. This fact became part and parcel of the ideas and values that tie even more strongly the community of Anoyeia to the plateau of Nida, to its history, and to its place in a wider universe of ideas and values. The end result, the *Partisan of Peace*, is one that responds to various motivations. Here the individual creativity of one artist encapsulates the uneasy preoccupations of a distant nation and culture that is historically bound to carry the burden (and the concomitant responsibility) of a difficult and traumatic past on a global level. On the other hand, the monument enshrines the moral precepts of an entire community that is physically and conceptually connected with its surrounding landscape. Because of this, the community is ready to see the landscape of Nida transformed into an arena for the negotiation of wider, universal concerns. This cohabitation of the local and the universal, the individual and the collective, the past and the present, provide interesting insights into the capacity of places, environments, and monuments to map out active orders of collective experience that address worldviews, ideologies, and cosmological precepts. In this particular case, the actual size of the *Partisan* is commensurate with the historical charge of its physical context and the range of ideas that informed its conception and reception. Consequently, this well-documented monument may provide a good index against which similar but less well-understood monuments all around the globe may be understood. Moreover, the *Partisan* points to the multiplicity of strands that must always underline the monumentalization of various people's connectedness to their ideational landscapes.

In some ways, engaging in a contemplative dialogue with the *Partisan of Peace* perpetuates and rekindles the gravity of the historical situations it necessitates, if only because it actively points backward in its function as a memorial and a site of contact or pilgrimage. But in its commemorative role, this monument—as with many others like it—preserves in a state of unaltered suspension the intensity of the horror and cruelty that it negotiates. An immediate implication of this function is that the monument does not fulfill its role unless it somehow keeps the trauma it addresses alive as much as it

seeks to heal it. This is a paradoxical conflict of functions, especially in respect to the following two considerations: on the one hand, I believe this conflict or incongruence of functions affects its translation or discussion in various contemporary discourses. Reducing it to a case study among others against the framework of an “objective,” and therefore distant, methodological approach (anthropological, art historical, etc.) entails the danger of making banal the magnitude of its moral content—this is the case, however culturally-conditioned this content is. On the other hand, in order to tune in to the “frequencies” the concept of the monument/site of trauma entails, whoever enters into a dialogue with it has to surrender to its function as a galvanizer of intense or often negative emotions. At first glance, this black-or-white schematization of reception may sound too abstract but it conveys the dilemmas and frustrations of those involved in cultural mediation (archaeologists, art historians, anthropologists, historians etc.).

THE FLAG ON THE MOUNTAIN, CYPRUS

Equally problematic in its function as a galvanizer of intense emotions is another “traumatic” earthwork, one that occupies a position of physical and symbolic prominence in the occupied part of the island of Cyprus. Like the Cretan *Partisan*, this monument is gigantic in size, two-dimensional in nature, constructed of fieldstones (these painted in white and red), and deeply anchored to the ground.⁵ All these qualities are certainly constitutive of its significance and its active agency, but overall they are secondary to several traits that set it apart from the Cretan example discussed above.

First, in iconographic terms this geoglyph is much more specific than the *Partisan of Peace*. It takes the form of a huge flag that has been unfolded on the south slopes of Mount Pentadactylos (or Keryneia Mountains), the mountain range that runs along the north side of the extended central plain which, since 1974, forms the spine of a politically, ethnically, and culturally divided island. Since 1983 this flag has been the symbol of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which views itself as an autonomous state, one, however, that has not been recognized by any other state except for Turkey. Its unilateral declaration is an outcome of the tragic division of the island in 1974. Until that moment the island had been home to the Republic of Cyprus, a bi-communal state (Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots) that came into existence in 1960 following a long period during which Cyprus was a colony of the British

⁵ It is impossible to survey or acquire precise information on this monument. It certainly postdates the unilateral declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. It was already there when I first visited the island in 1988.

Empire. In July and August of 1974, an organized invasion of Turkish forces against the Republic of Cyprus ended in occupation, partition, displaced populations, and a tremendously problematic situation that so far has not been resolved and which cannot be fully addressed in this context (Markides 1977; Dodd 2001).

Second, unlike the *Partisan of Peace*, the flag on the mountain is accompanied by an equally prominent inscription in Turkish, which reads “it is a happiness to be a Turk” (NE MUTLU TÜRKÜM DIYENE), a famous pronouncement by Kemal Atatürk, the political founder and reformer of modern Turkey. The verbal rhetoric of the inscription is enhanced by the crescent-and-star motif, a quintessential symbol of national Turkish identity. This has been placed on the bare ground immediately above the inscription, thus reflecting the very same symbol that features prominently on the nearby flag. In these contextual circumstances of prominence and visual redundancy this telling inscription clearly spells out and complements the obvious message of this nationalistic monument that purportedly represents the Turkish-Cypriots of the island, a population element with roots that go back to the Ottoman period.

Third, unlike the Cretan monument, which is well documented in a book authored by its creator, Karina Raeck, the origins of the flag of the mountain are not easily or verifiably traceable in trustworthy publications or sources. The most commonly heard account of it in occupied Cyprus, which is also found in multiple pages on the web, views the monument as a memorial of a traumatic event, a massacre purportedly perpetrated by nationalist Greek irregular troops against Turkish civilians in August 1974. I have not been able to verify the veracity of this account. The theme of massacre is a *topos* of the collective accounts, rhetoric, and monuments of both sides. However, it is significant for the purposes of this essay that the flag of the monument is made to commemorate and continuously constitute a traumatic or violent contact.

Finally, the flag on the mountain differentiates itself from the *Partisan* in terms of its visibility and its directionality. It is carefully placed immediately north of the divided capital of Nicosia and on the line of a notional axis that connects Nicosia with the famous port of Kyrenia, a predominantly Greek city until the invasion of 1974 and now the capital of the authorities in charge of the north part of the island. The same axis may be extended all the way to Turkey forty or so miles across the sea. Interestingly enough, this is precisely the strategic line followed by the invading military forces of Turkey in 1974. By means of its altitude, its size, colors, and sharp contrast with the surrounding landscape, this flag is intentionally visible—at times even

phosphorescent—from miles away.⁶ It was undoubtedly meant to send a very strong message both within northern Cyprus and, what is more important, across the so-called “green” line, the buffer zone that divides the island since the intercommunal strife of 1963. Within the occupied territory of northern Cyprus, it signals an origin and an identity, a future and a legitimate status. The origin is that of the numerous Turkish settlers that were brought in from Turkey to use the land and houses of the displaced Greeks that fled to the south in the wake of the 1974 events (Turkish-Cypriots fled north from the south as well). The identity is that of the Turkish-Cypriots who are thus made to define themselves more in terms of a connectedness with whatever constitutes Turkishness rather than with the truly local experience of the historically Turkish element of the island. The future is the temporal dimension for the fulfillment of an untroubled, autonomous, and legitimate statehood. In this respect, the flag on the mountain may be understood also as a vision, a specter of a desired ideal condition that is constantly in the making.⁷ The gigantism of the flag, I propose, is inversely proportional to the status of a collectivity that enjoys an uneasy condition of non-existence in the international arena. But what is a dreamy vision for one ethnic element of the island is certainly a constantly existing nightmare for the other, the ethnically-Greek population of the island across the dividing line. The huge flag, splendidly isolated as it is, sends a simple and perhaps intentionally insulting message: it asserts, like a loud cry, the political and ethnic presence of the Turkish “other” in the occupied territory as a timeless and irreversible given. It does so by becoming year after year a natural and irreversible element of a landscape, which it proudly “brands” as an inalienable possession.

This “branding” of a landscape is literal and metaphorical. It derives its referential capacity from the actual branding (notation by means of a sign) of possessions, like cattle or enslaved human beings in the past (Caplan 2000; Schildkrout 2004). It is inherent in the symbolic function of a flag to signal possession of identity. It is also important to consider that in this case the “branding” becomes effective by means of a somatic association, which is made possible by local conceptualizations of land and landscape, at least for the Greeks of the island. In many cultures various features of physical environments are cognitively registered in terms of corporeal metaphors

⁶ Obvious parallels are monuments like the so-called *Candelabra of the Andes* at Pisco bay, Peru (NW from Nazca), the formidable *Giant of Atacama* in north Chile, or even Darius’ inscription and relief at Behistun, Iran.

⁷ As long as the Cyprus problem is unresolved, the function of the Flag is unstable. It is either a very “loud” slogan or a memorial-to-be of a foundational moment (of a state and an identity). For the latter function see the interesting discussion in Bradley 2002: 82-111.

(Guthrie 1993; Tilley 2004: 19-24; Pei-yi Guo 2003: 202). This is evident in the ancestral Greek name of the mountain with the flag, for *Pendadactylos* literally means “with five fingers” and owes its origin to a natural formation of the mountain. The bodily association is also inherent in the ethnic Greeks’ conceptualizations of the division of the island in terms of an image of the map of the island with a bleeding wound along the dividing line of the island. This is not simply a rhetorical effect in visual form but an actualization of a deeply felt experience of land as a human body. Since 1960 the map of the Republic of Cyprus (the non-occupied, south part of the island) is the main feature of its official flag, a symbol of state and local identity that combines corporate identity, both conceptual and physical. This corporate identity defines the body of an ethnic group that identifies itself with its land and its history. It is precisely as a foil to this collective sense of connectivity to the land conceived as state (and vice versa) that the Turkish-Cypriot flag on the mountain acquires its intended efficacy in its immediate context. In other words, the actual flag on the land is the navel of a body of state and people that have increased excessively the volume of their expressive means to cry out (to themselves and to everybody else) their uneasy sense of identity and lack of recognized statehood. This is a grandiose gesture but its monumental character does not necessarily imply power or confidence. As Joyce Marcus has recently argued, the emphasis on monumentality in the visual domain or architecture often derive from insecurity, lack of confidence, and the ensuing need for legitimization (Marcus 2003).

This need for gigantism as an inextricable element of a “constructed” physical/conceptual landscape may also make sense in other ways. In particular, it might suggest an awkwardness or uneasiness of the Turkish-Cypriots of the occupied part of the island when confronted with a vast archaeological landscape which is replete with material testimonies of a long, undisputed, and prominent Greek past that is alien and perhaps not understood. More than anywhere else, archaeology in the Mediterranean has been traditionally in the service of the construction of national identities and the conceptual environments that reinforce and legitimize them (Knapp and Antoniadou 1998; Smith 2001; Leriou 2005; Yahya 2005; Andreou 2005). Archaeology in north Cyprus can not play this role. As a result, alternate pathways that tie the population to the landscape must be construed and the flag on the mountain may be one of them.

CONCLUSION

I have presented two cases of constructed landscapes with monuments that shape their environments as much as they are shaped by them. Both monuments date to the last

quarter of the twentieth century but they are very little known outside their immediate environments. I have singled them out because they are both embedded in contexts heavily marked by archaeologies and histories that hinge upon the mythical foundations of western civilization. This dimension of the monuments has certainly shaped their nature as both of them are in constant dialogue with the historical trajectories that frame them. I have tried to suggest that the conceptual content of both monuments is constitutive of “traumatic” experiences. This is the case despite the fact that both employ figurative tropes (an angel and a flag) that in and of themselves do not directly suggest the extreme emotional intensity/violent contact that they are meant to generate. Finally, I have proposed that the gigantism of both monuments may derive from the fact that they are both at the service of a visual rhetoric that encodes and emits perceptions of cosmological significance. The Cretan *Partisan of Peace* may be seen as an angel/fighter that is deeply anchored in the historicity and physicality of its surrounding landscape while facing the heavens and its atemporal otherness. Its conception and referentiality derive from and address concerns that are individual and collective, local and universal, past and present. I would argue that precisely the same concerns are inherent in the conception of the Cypriot monument. The enormous flag on the mountain is supposed to give substance to a national dream or vision of collective existence. It appropriates a landscape already claimed by a rival vision, one constituted by the multiple archaeological and monumental threads that form the fabric of a long historical record.⁸ The multiple responses the enormous flag generates as object of vision and memory are equally and sadly traumatic on both sides of the dividing line that separates the island of Cyprus.

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⁸ A similar phenomenon of appropriation is documented in Israel, where the memory of physical presence, life, landmarks, and monuments of Palestinians has been systematically obliterated since the late 1940's (Benvenisti 2000). As I was able to verify during a visit in June 2004, the case of occupied north Cyprus does not involve obliteration of monuments but systematic suppression of any explicit references to historical Greekness.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. *The Partisan of Peace*, Crete. (Photo from Raeck 1995)



Figure 2. *The Flag on the Mountain*, Cyprus. (Photo by N. Papalexandrou)

