

declared them as "genuine". From then on the "world of stamps" and philatelists were on their guard, and for several years since, the Expert Committee of the Philatelic Society and the British Philatelic Association have been acquiring all the Sperati reproductions procurable and recording where other experts have similar material.

Sperati, 72 years of age, found his eyesight failing. He could no longer execute his work with that degree of accuracy necessary to satisfy his desire for perfection. Nothing enraged Sperati more than to be told that his forgeries were genuine. He tried every device to convince the unbelieving experts that he made the stamps himself.

The British Philatelic Society in co-operation with the Royal Philatelic Society of London have formed 500 collections to distribute among their members. Each collection is numbered so that any stamp from that collection coming on the market can be traced.

## **FROM ST. BARNABAS TO ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS**

This article is translated from the Flemish Society of Stamp Collectors magazine "DE POSTZEGEL", written by Dr. M. van Meensel.

Many collectors of Cyprus, have perhaps asked themselves how it is possible that the Highest Religious authority on the Island, Makarios, Archbishop of Nicosia, took such an active part in the "Struggle for Freedom", and on the 16th August 1960, upon achieving Independence, was honoured with the highest Civil Authority — The Presidency.

The reason for this "anomaly", according to Western thinking, can be seen in a commemoration block of stamps issued on the 25th April 1966, by the Cyprus Postal Administration.

The story on it is in the Greek language, in a condensed form. As it will interest many people, it is here translated with the necessary comment.

Cyprus, after Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean. It is situated south of the Turkish coast, opposite Egypt and has 600,000 inhabitants. From these 80% are, according to origin and language Greek, and of Greek Orthodox religion. 18% are Muhammedan Turkish and 2% are Armenian, Jews, etc.

From 1878 till 1960 Cyprus was under British rule. Before that for 300 years it was under Turkish domination and other "foreign rulers".

The conversion of the Island to Christianity took place during the time of the Apostles, or more precisely in the year 47 A.D. when the apostle Paul, accompanied by his disciple Barnabas — who came from Cyprus — sailed from the Syrian harbour Seleucia and landed on Cyprian soil. They were sent

out by the Christian Community of Antioch to preach the religion of Christ to the population of the Island.

The inspiring words of St. Paul and the knowledge of St. Barnabas about his fellow citizen had results.

They succeeded in converting the Roman Governor Sergius Paulus, as well as many important Cypriots. Tomaso, now called Politiko, St. Barnabas ordained the Cypriot Herakleides as the first Bishop of the young Christian Community. During the following 300 years practically the whole of the Island's population were converted to Christianity.

About the year 400 A.D. the Patriarch of Antioch claimed the right to ordain the Bishops of Cyprus, referring to the fact, that the conversion of the Island was instigated by the community of Antioch, while the Cypriots insisted on choosing their own religious leaders.

In 431 A.D. this question reached its culminating point and the Patriarch Johannes of Antioch referred to the Byzantine Emperor, to prevent, even by force of arms a new Bishop being nominated by the Church Community of Cyprus. The Concilia of Ephesus which was held about the same time pronounced itself in favour of the independence of the Cypriot Church.

In 488 A.D. under the reign of Emperor Zeno of Constantinople, sympathy was shown for the claims of the Antioch Community concerning the guardianship of the Cyprian Church Community. The whole question was re-disputed again and the Cypriot Religious Independence looked "black".

The situation was cleared up "through the direct interference of St. Barnabas himself".

According to the tradition transmitted by mouth, the Holy Barnabas was returned to his homeland Cyprus to die, but nobody knows where he was buried. In 488 A.D. in the "heat of battle" for religious independence, the Holy Barnabas appeared before the Archbishop Artemios, and must have told him that his grave was to be found under a breadfruit tree, at Salamis.

With great pomp accompanied by the whole Clergy, Archbishop Artemios the next day went to the stipulated place and gave the order to dig under the bread-tree. Soon a coffin was excavated, and in it, the well preserved body of Holy Barnabas, and on his breast in his own hand-writing, the "Evangelium" according to Matthew.

Archbishop Artemios hurried himself, accompanied by the representatives of the Cyprian Clergy to Constantinople, to submit this wonderful happening to Emperor Zeno himself.

A convoked religious Synod decided for the undisputed precedence of the Cyprian Church Community, and the Emperor of Constantinople awarded to the Archbishop of Cyprus the following privileges, "From today until the end of time".

1. The right of the Archbishop of the Island to sign his name in the Emperor's red ink: a privilege he had to share only with the Emperor.



THE  
LIBRARY  
OF THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE  
OF  
THE  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
1000 MUSEUM AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10029

1980

2. The right to wear an Emperor's Purple Coat for Church ceremonies.

3. The privilege to carry an Emperor's Sceptor, as a sign of his shepherdly dignity, instead of the curved staff with a cross, as the other Bishops.

These and other distinctions placed the Archbishops of Cyprus in great esteem by their compatriots, also his prestige in the Oriental Church was raised considerably and in order of dignity, since 488 A.D. the Cypriot Archbishop came fifth, immediately after the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. He also had the rank of Patriarch, though in general he does not carry this title.

To stress the remarkable privileges the Cypriot Church have enjoyed already for fifteen centuries and to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the discovery of the grave of St. Barnabas, a set of stamps of large dimensions was issued. It had to be large, 10.3 x 8.3 c.m. to copy a fresco, painted in the 18th century on the wall of St. John's Church at Nicosia.

In this painting, the whole story of this wonderful interference of St. Barnabas is depicted in four phases, with short comments in Greek.

1. St. Barnabas appears to the sleeping Archbishop Artemios.

2. Discovering the grave of St. Barnabas under the bread-tree.

3. Emperor Zeno receives Archbishop Artemios, who hands him the evidence found in the grave of St. Barnabas.

4. Emperor Zeno awards to the Cypriot Church Community and her leader, the special privileges.

Here is the origin of the remarkable privileges the Archbishops of Cyprus have enjoyed for fifteen centuries and which are making him of so much importance to the Island.

Also during the Western occupations of the Island (Venetians, Lusignans) in the Middle Ages, as well as under the Turkish rule, the Cypriot Church which has strong ties with her Orthodox tradition, was always suppressed. But always the Archbishops of the Island constituted a nucleus around which resistance, religious, as well as political, chrystallized itself.

By the time of Greek rebellion against the Turkish repression was without any compassion. They did not spare anyone and the then ruling Archbishop was tortured.

By getting some insight into the political and religious history of the Island going far back into the past, one understands better how religion and politics are intermingled in sunny Cyprus.

This also declares how Archbishop Makarios in spite of a fierce Turkish opposition has been for seven years, the undisputed religious and political ruler of the Island. He even dares to express himself in favour of the "Ennos-is" for connection of Cyprus with the Greek mother country.

Trans. from the Flemish by Mr. L. Frank.