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978-0-521-28546-9 - The Heart Grown Bitter: A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees

Peter Loizos

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THE HEART GROWN BITTER

A chronicle of Cypriot
war refugees

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Note. All captions to the photographs refer to land-holdings in 1969. Most of the people mentioned increased their holdings between 1970 and 1973. For the reason these figures were not updated, see Appendix 1, p. 191. The majority of these photographs were taken by the author, the remainder either by Dr Willy Guy (nos. 8, 9, 22, 29, 30) or persons unknown.

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PREFACE

This book describes how some of the Greek Cypriot inhabitants of Argaki, a village in western Cyprus, became war refugees and how they experienced the first year and a half of dislocation. They fled from Argaki in August 1974, when the village was bombed by aircraft from Turkey. Not long afterwards, Turkish troops occupied the village. The Turkish Cypriots of Argaki, some fifty persons, remained in the village, as did some thirty elderly Greeks. The book has two chief aims. First, to record how people initially experienced the dislocation of becoming refugees, and secondly, to commemorate the village of Argaki and its people.

Argaki villagers were the subject of my earlier work, *The Greek gift: politics in a Cypriot village*, so since their prewar life has already been described in some detail the people who form the subject of this book are more fully known than are most refugees. The first section of the present book reviews that life again, with rather different emphases. Because my father is from Argaki, my attachment to the community owes as much to sentiment and family ties as to the fact that I also studied it as an anthropologist. So that the reader can take full account of this, I have started the book in a more personal style than is usual; a second reason for this is that the formal impersonality of *The Greek gift* seemed inappropriate for the subject matter of this book.

The first chapter, which describes how I first visited Argaki, when I was not yet an apprentice anthropologist, is the most personal. As the book progresses, this element recedes, but never completely vanishes, although most of the writing is narrative, with interpretative asides. It has been written for a wider audience than a conventional anthropological study: there are few technical terms, and only rarely does the main text refer to scholarly works. Some readers may wish to consult the appendices on methods and general theoretical issues.

Many of the events related in the book were directly observed by me, although others were not. The first chapter is written from observations

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made while on a personal visit in 1966. The second blends events noted during the period of my major field research (January 1968–April 1969) with an account of the past as the villagers then perceived it, and with information from documents. But it has been written after more than ten years' reflection on the village – it is not an account of how I saw things in 1969. From 1969 to 1973 I made four short visits to Cyprus; chapter 3 is based partly on things seen and heard then (or earlier) and partly on things heard later, from the villagers as refugees. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are all reconstructions, based on what I was told by the participants in 1975. I was not in Cyprus for any part of 1974, the year described in these chapters. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are chiefly the events I observed in Cyprus in April 1975, and in the months from September to December of that year, but they inevitably rely also on information about things that happened when I was not there.

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I am indebted to George Skotinos for his permission to reproduce his painting 'Pentadaktylos' on the dust-jacket, and to Dr Willy Guy for allowing me to use a number of his photographs. Dave Ellsworth printed most of the photographs in the book, and Jane Pugh drew the maps. The manuscript was expertly and cheerfully typed by many people, but chiefly by Pat Blair, Ann Fry, Hilda Jarrett, Barbara Vernon, Joan Wells, and Marie Williams. I gratefully acknowledge the permission of Routledge and Kegan Paul to quote from the poem which appears on p. 27; to Penguin for permission to quote (p. 77) from Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, copyright the translator, Rex Warner,

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