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in Cyprus*

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The Museum of the History of Cypriot Coinage and the introduction of the euro to Cyprus

Eleni Zapiti

Curator of the Museum of the History of Cypriot Coinage

Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

eleni.zapiti@cultural.bankofcyprus.com

On 1 January 2008, the euro became legal tender in Cyprus, replacing the Cyprus pound. The Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Cyprus (the state bank) and other private banks organized campaigns designed to inform Cypriots about the new currency. The introduction of the euro in Cyprus began a new chapter in the history of Cypriot coinage, and helped revive the public's interest in the history of its coins. The Museum of the History of Cypriot Coinage ("the Museum"), the only numismatic museum on the island, played a significant role in the effort to provide information about the new currency to the Cypriot populace. This paper will demonstrate how, during the introduction of the euro, the Museum became an important centre of interest for individuals and institutions, and for the media in Cyprus and abroad.

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The introduction of the euro in Cyprus began a new chapter in the history of Cypriot coinage, and helped revive the public's interest in the history of Cypriot coins. During the introduction of the euro, visitors to the Museum increased significantly, making it a centre of interest for individuals and institutions, and for the media, in Cyprus and abroad.



This paper will focus on the interaction between the Museum and other institutions within the context of an educational campaign aimed towards the people of Cyprus, about the introduction of the euro and the history of Cypriot coinage. The interest in Cypriot coinage generated by the introduction of the euro enabled the Museum to reach a larger and more varied audience, and to become involved in projects undertaken by other institutions. The target audience of this interaction included four main groups: Young people and children, school teachers and educators, other professionals, and the general public. It is worth noting that the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation ("the Cultural Foundation") provides all materials and educational programmes free of charge.

1. Young people and children

The Ministry of Culture and Education has supported the Museum's educational programmes since the Museum opened in 1995. These programmes have always been designed so as to conform to the curriculum of the island's state schools. In 2006, with the pending introduction of the euro in Cyprus, a Ministry campaign to inform school children about the new currency was to be introduced in schools. As the only museum of coinage on the island, the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation believed the Museum would be the perfect place to develop a programme about the history of Cypriot coinage and the importance of coinage throughout history, this adding excellent support to the Ministry's campaign. We therefore developed and executed a project which included the presentation of a relevant subject in the thematic showcase of the museum and the design, preparation and publication of a new educational programme with an accompanying textbook.

Thematic showcase



All presentations in the thematic showcases are linked to the subject of a specific educational programme; as such we prepared the exhibition under the title *Influential Coins of Europe from Antiquity to the Present Day*.

The small size of the showcase required a condensed presentation. The Museum's associate architect-designer proposed a time-line printed on a non-toxic paper, along which we placed representative coins for each period, with corresponding descriptions in the right-hand margin. A brochure comprised of short introductory texts and coin descriptions accompanied the exhibition.

Educational programme

The educational programme is entitled *From Ancient Coins to the Euro*, and is designed to inform young people about the evolution of European 'common' coinage and its importance. The programme follows a simple and fascinating journey that begins with the Greek drachma and the tetradrachms of Alexander the Great, continues on to the Byzantine solidus, the medieval gros and the ducat, and concludes with modern coins, including the thaler and the euro. Historical Cypriot coins are also part of this journey, and are presented in the appropriate periods, providing pupils with an opportunity to undertake a parallel examination of local and 'common' coinage.

The first 40 minutes of the programme includes a slideshow and group discussion with the pupils. Following the discussion, students participate in an interactive workshop in the

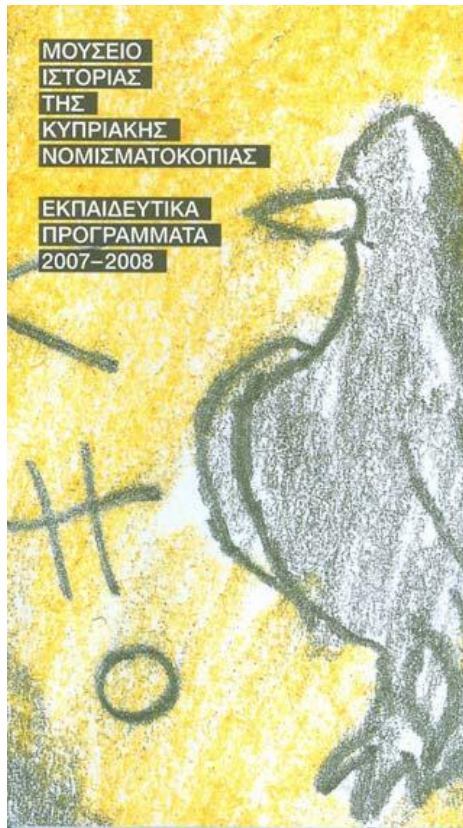
museum, for which they are provided with a textbook containing brief informative passages and interactive exercises.



These exercises set students a number of tasks, including describing and explaining the depictions on the coins, determining a mint mark and specifying the place of minting, calculating the denominations, and deciphering an inscription. Some exercises require the students to make a response to individual questions. Our associate architect-designer compiled and designed the textbook, which includes a poster featuring information about the euro folded into its back pages.



Visiting pupils expressed their enthusiasm for the Museum during the programme, with many declaring their intention to return to the Museum with their families. Their enthusiasm is also evident in the drawings these students create during the programme. The drawings are not abandoned in the Foundation's archives: every year they are presented in thematic exhibitions which are linked to a large event dedicated to children, or selected for publication in a special volume distributed free of charge to Cypriot schools. In the most recent volume published by the Cultural Foundation, the Museum tried to inspire drawings related to its forthcoming relocation. Pupils were asked to choose any showcase they liked and to create a drawing inspired by the material in the showcase. This particular volume presents all 20 showcases with brief historical texts and the corresponding student drawings. In this way, the volume is both a record of the Museum's showcases, and of its main activity: its educational programmes.



Φραγκοκρατία

1. Χάρης Κυπριανού, 10Επ Ε', Κόλυμακί Γ'
2. Χρυστάλλα Ιωαννίδου, 10Επ Ε', Αραδίππου Δ'
3. Ελένη Κάτσι, 10Επ Ε', Αγ. Λουκά, Λευκωσία
4. Αντριανή Τσιφορί, 10Επ Ε', Μενεού

The euro also appeared in two previous programmes. In 2002, on the occasion of the first circulation of the euro in Cyprus, pupils made drawings of euros featuring ethnic Cypriot symbols. Following this programme, the Cultural Foundation collaborated with a well-known Cypriot artist, Maria Loizidou, who created an exhibition in the lobby of the Bank of Cyprus headquarters that showed these student drawings in an original manner. She hung some of the drawings from the ceiling and affixed others to vertical panels, while the remainder were displayed on a model house and temple, or rotated on a carousel. The exhibition occupied the lobby for almost a month, in order to remind visitors of the Cultural Foundation's core activities, education and preservation, and to demonstrate how these activities are experienced by a new generation of Cypriots.



Each year approximately 5000 students aged 10 to 12 from about 60 Cypriot elementary schools participate in the Cultural Foundation's coinage programmes. Their teachers are positive about their experience. According to the Museum's evaluation questionnaire, they feel the programme to be creative and interesting, that it involves their students in the history of coins in an interactive manner, and that it references material previously taught in the classroom. The programmes have also inspired some teachers to prepare cross-discipline projects that combine multiple modules such as art, geography, history and mathematics.

Electronic application

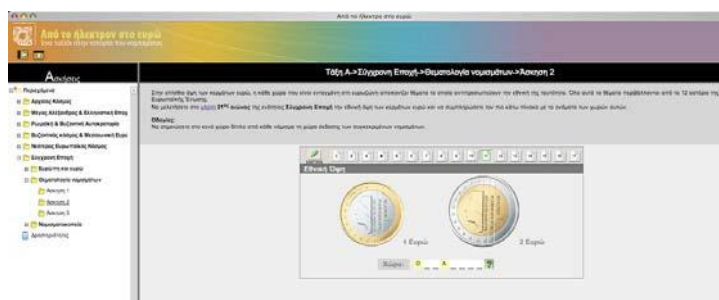
Given the positive impact of the programme, it was decided in 2007 to enrich it and develop it beyond the Museum in order to reach the broader public. A multimedia application, accessible via the Internet, was deemed to be an ideal solution.

All necessary materials were provided to a multimedia production company, and through close collaboration with the Museum, the application *From Electrum to the Euro: a Journey into the History of Coins* (“*From Electrum to the Euro*”) was designed and implemented. The team included Evangeline Markou, a numismatist, and Agathi Erotokritou, a teacher from the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Cyprus. Both professionals provided invaluable consultancy with regard to academic, numismatic and pedagogical issues.

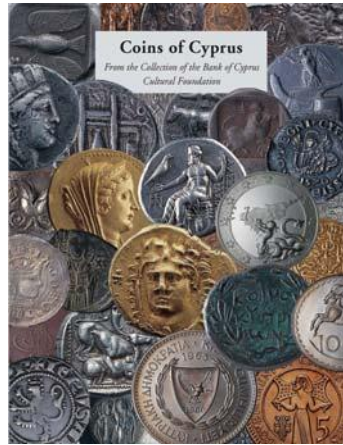
From Electrum to the Euro is available, in English and Greek, on the Cultural Foundation’s website (www.boccf.org). It features a chronological and geographical exploration of the history of strong currencies, from the earliest coins to the present day. The application is based on geographical maps adapted from six main historical periods and their chronological subdivisions. By clicking on highlighted areas on these maps, the corresponding coins and brief explanatory text appear in a pop up window, introducing the user to the specific subject. The history of Cypriot coinage is also part of the application. A map of Cyprus is enlarged as it relates to specific periods, providing users with an opportunity to learn more about individual coins.



The application provides further material of interest and educational value, with access to 50 interactive exercises. These were designed with the help of the Cultural Foundation’s associate teacher, in order to challenge users to search for information and test their knowledge in an appealing format. The exercises follow the historical periods delineated in the application, and cover subjects such as the minting of coins, coin inscriptions, recognition of coin iconography, attribution of coins to a particular issuing authority or place, coin values, circulation, and historical events.



The Cultural Foundation presented the application to the public in December 2007, on the eve of the accession of Cyprus to the euro-zone, together with its most recent numismatic publication, *Coins of Cyprus from the Collections of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation*.



New opportunities for cooperation with other institutions and collaboration on other projects are a direct result of *From Electrum to the Euro*.

Oikade – a worldwide electronic network

The Cultural Foundation has established a global project, *Oikade* ('Back Home'), in order to develop intellectual and cultural ties between Greek children living abroad and their homeland, Cyprus and Greece.

Oikade creates a "meeting place" via video conferencing during class hours. The programme is supported by its own website, which features various educational activities and news. The Cultural Foundation wishes to make this opportunity available to those children who want to learn about the new currency circulating at home, and about the history of Cypriot coinage as featured in the multimedia application of this project.

Pediki Chara – an educational magazine

The Elementary Schools Teachers Association edits this magazine, which is distributed to all Cypriot elementary school pupils. During the academic year 2008-2009, elementary school teachers, in order to maintain interest in the euro and in the importance of 'common' coinage, created a competition related to *From Electrum to the Euro* in *Pediki Chara*. As part of the competition, students must visit the website and answer several interactive questions.

2. School teachers

In the past, the Cultural Foundation offered special guided tours and presentations to teachers, subsequent to museology training at the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Cyprus. The Museum's hope, in designing *From Electrum to the Euro*, is that teachers will use this multimedia application as an on-line resource in the classroom. The Institute has been positive about the initiative, which is considered to be extremely useful for its museum education training sessions.

The Cultural Foundation also collaborates with the Ministry of Culture and Education in order to meet a joint target: the induction of teachers into the Museum's educational activities. In 2005 the Cultural Foundation organized a symposium at which curators presented various educational programmes and explained their objectives. A number of teachers who attended these programmes on a regular basis were given the opportunity to comment on their experience, and to offer examples of how the Museum could "come closer" to the school and vice versa. The participating educators described how they believed these programmes had the ability to open new horizons of knowledge, and how they could stimulate creative and critical thinking. The teachers' comments now constitute valuable feedback for the curators, who take them into consideration when designing new programmes.



3. Other professionals

The introduction of the euro in Cyprus offers an excellent opportunity for visitors to Cyprus to explore 2500 years of Cypriot coinage. The Cyprus Tourist Organization (CTO) operates a Tourist Guide School, which provides guides to tourists visiting Cyprus. The School invited the curator of the Museum to participate in its annual training seminar, so that the Museum could educate the guides about the history of Cypriot coins. Through these professionals, the Museum reaches a wide audience of tourists.

The Ministry of Finance organized a broad and informative campaign about the new currency during its introduction to Cyprus, and hosted its own booth at the State Trade Fair in Nicosia. Prior to the Trade Fair, the Ministry approached the Museum and requested a presentation on the history of Cyprus coins. The Museum provided the Ministry with *From Electrum to the Euro*, which the Ministry wished to make available at the trade fair, along with relevant printed material. Unfortunately, however, the project did not come to fruition, due to regulations prohibiting the participation of a non-governmental organization in a governmental presentation.

4. Wider public

Media

It is important to examine how an issue of general interest helped the Museum, a local private museum, to attract international attention. On 1 January 2008, on the occasion of the accession of Cyprus to the euro-zone, international and local media showed a keen interest in the history of its coinage, and the Museum proved once again to be an ideal source of information. For example, *Euronews* prepared a piece on the inclusion of Cyprus and Malta in the euro-zone, with special emphasis on the economy and coinage of each, for which a *Euronews* reporter interviewed a curator at the Museum. Reuters and EFE were among other agencies that received and disseminated information from the Museum, and presented it to a wider public. The Museum was featured in various reports in print, on the radio and on television. Articles appeared in newspapers and in magazines, including an article in *Sunjet*, the in-flight magazine of Cyprus Airways.



[View from the Cultural Foundation building]