

MANI AREA SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF AN AUSTRALIAN HELLENE

I am no historian, but I am of the belief that the Mani area was most difficult to be brought under control and therefore deals were done n between the Turkish “beys” and that of the Mani chieftains to save face on both sides. An annual tribute being paid to the Ottoman occupiers satisfied them. The annual tribute was obtained by the local Mani chieftains from piracy, brigandage, thievery, ransom and by robbing other towns, villages on their way to pay the annual tribute in Messenia and not on Lakonian territory. In this way, the people of Mani could always boast and rightly (in a legal technicality) so that they were never subject to Turkish control.

This sleight of hand and freedom of its people in Mani gave then the courage in later years to fight vehemently and with much bravery against the Turk during the year 1821 and onward. The true story of Mani and its people can only be derived from various English travellers who visited the Mani area and from accounts of those who were ransomed and survived their ordeal; including the people of Mani themselves. I would love to see some researcher sometime in the future be able to gather all of the threads and weave them into a story that is based on facts and not fiction.

I am also of the belief that oral histories have much more truth in them despite their many embellishments over time. In all cases there is some kernel of truth that can be extracted from them. We have much yet to learn of our past and so little time is ever spent on recording it. I am throwing a challenge out to all of those who have a Hellenic heritage, no matter how small that connection, to record their histories and place it on line somewhere. Don't ever think that where you are living is merely a normal run of the mill life style or it may appear boring because it may not seem interesting.

There are many people like ourselves who find such material extremely fascinating. You have to follow the threads of the news articles that are being extracted about the early Hellenic people in the USA and Canada to realise what life must have been like. Don't believe for one moment that your lives are not worth recording. WE as Hellenes are spread around the world and now with technology there is a new awakening, a new consciousness that is now being realised and we are wiping away the spider webs of time to realise our full potential as the Hellenic race. It does not matter where you live, what your occupation is, what career you have.

Every story, every yarn and anything of interest is important for future generations. Do not write only about those who are seen as being successful. Write and record about the small things in life, your friends, neighbours, the weather, festivals, about your neighbourhood, about the hardships, the sorrows and the good times. Some Hellene in the future will look back on our lives and say what a wonderful generation we all were and lucky to have been able to have the luxury to record our experiences.

Our stories will also give them pride and the courage to emulate and surpass us. I apologise for having written such a long piece of text at a time when I should be concentrating on the opening statement, but I just can't help my over enthusiastic and passionate nature when it comes to matters of the heart and what I believe is important for all Hellenes. I therefore ask for everybody forgiveness for my lengthy text. Peter Adamis